# Protecting Transformative Optimism in the Art Classroom: Exploring Aspirant Art Teachers' Shifting Ideals

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## Abstract

This extended, normative case study was initiated in response to my professional concerns regarding the capacity of student art and design teachers to defend and extend their personal ideals for future classroom practice. Placement in schools, a majority component of initial teacher education (ITE) in England, appeared to be limiting the hopes and disciplinary intent of many of my own students, instead exposing them to a context of increasingly standardised pedagogic expectation, lacking in agentic opportunities.

Through a qualitative study designed with Freirean intent, I employed visual methods and elicitation interviews to better understand how a cohort of ITE art students' ideals were altered or reinforced through adaptation or integration with placement classroom practices. Artistic data collected from nine participants was transcribed through novel application of Feldman's critical framework, and hybrid thematic analysis resulted in the presentation of six interpretive themes. Deductive codes were drawn from two influential sources: Dennis Atkinson's (2018) characterisation of an English neoliberal school art context, and César Rossatto's (2005) typology of teacher optimisms.

I found that aspirant art teachers arrived with ideals of an art education celebratory of the authentic attributes of the discipline, typically expressed as chaotic or organic in nature. They championed liberal, critical, and dynamic aspects of teaching and learning about art. On placement, homogenised expectations and reproductive curricula were frequently encountered oppressing students' agency, and participant cynicism grew. Some adapted their ideals to satisfy institutional requirements. Others described subversive attempts to enact personal aspirations, or a renewed sense of transformative purpose forged in ideal/real tensions.

It was important that I could use this knowledge to reconsider my own practices as teacher educator, to protect a pluralistic, dynamic visual art education in future secondary school classrooms. My findings suggest enhanced opportunity for focused dialogue, community, and critical reflection during ITE could strengthen future student art teachers' capacity to retain, and activate, their own ideals.

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## Acknowledgements

Thank you to my participants, whose curiosity, contributions, and critical friendship ensured this study was a compelling pursuit. Their generosity during challenging times is testament to a shared passion for excellence in art education. Through their insight might improvements in my practice be manifest.

Thank you to my supervisor, Fiona, for her expert and diligent coaching of me through a project of this scale. Not since my piano tutor has a teacher had to endure such frequent apologies for lack of progress, and her dogged belief in this work alone has enabled me to reach submission.

Thank you to my family for tolerating my 'hobby'. I hope my daughters have the good fortune to be taught by transformative optimists in all their future classrooms.

Last, thank you to those who have given their professional careers to making the compelling arguments for art making and appreciation as central in quality education, and those who continue to champion the value of teacher autonomy against prevailing winds. Jeff Adams, Denis Atkinson, Richard Cary, Pen Dalton, Elliot Eisner, Richard Hickman, bell hooks, and the many others whose intimidating intelligence foregrounds this research. Paulo Freire requires special mention for the role his principled work has played in shaping my own belief and commitment to social equity in the art classroom.


> The stronger the push towards the standardization of curricula, the pre-specification of outcomes for performance, and the use of isolated test items to measure achievement, the greater the need for arts, if for no other reason than to help students understand that there is another way to live, another way to think, another way to be in the world. (Eisner, 2001, p. 9)

# Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: William Richard Grant

Signature:

# Protecting Transformative Optimism in the Art Classroom: Exploring Aspirant Art Teachers' Shifting Ideals

## 1 Introduction

This dissertation is a case study, designed to better understand the ideals of secondary-phase student art teachers as they undertake initial teacher education (ITE) on a university-based postgraduate programme in Southwest England. As indicated in the framing of this study's title, I desired knowledge of these ideals to direct the development of my own practice as teacher educator – to, in turn, better 'protect' student art teachers' aspiration. To achieve this understanding, I first characterised ITE through synthesis and critical analysis of existing literature and research. I then gathered data through visual methods and elicitation interviews with nine participant student art teachers, and thematically summarised and discussed my resultant findings.

In this first chapter, my personal and professional rationales for undertaking this research are delineated. Chapter Two describes the 'lens' of this study – the theoretical perspective that shaped the research intent and informed the methodological design of this work, and Chapter Three the 'context' – the political, practical, time and place within which this work is sited. Lens and context are considered interdependent; as a researcher, teacher educator, and former art teacher, my positionality has been informed by experience, and this perspective in turn has inexorable influence on my latter characterisation of context. I wait until Chapter Four, after inspection of lens and context, to delineate the research questions that then informed the methodological design of the study. This format follows the natural order of my process; it was necessary to frame the case before phrasing the questions that might best provide answers to my previously indefinite interest in student teachers' idealism.

Chapter Five makes transparent the research methods employed in the empirical activity of this study. Here discussion is focused on the complicated (Rose 2016) nature of visual research methods, where the novel design of this study required particularly rigorous consideration. Chapter Five also describes my adoption of hybrid thematic analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006), with illustrated examples of coding conventions. There is some focused discussion here on the ethical concerns specific to visual methods (Ferguson et al. 2004).

Chapter Six relays the findings of my data analysis while simultaneously discussing the importance and relative value of each thematic component, critically considered in both theoretical and contextual terms. Finally, in Chapter Seven I seek to answer my research questions: summarising the nature of aspirant art teachers' ideals and looking again at the more ambitious aim of this work – how I might use this knowledge to shape my own professional practice; protecting, and potentially propagating, the transformative optimism of student art teachers.

## 1.1 Rationale

John Steers, for over 30 years General Secretary of the National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD), co-authored a memorable manifesto for art education at the turn of the millennium (Swift & Steers 1999). This optimistic manifesto questioned the art educational orthodoxies of the day, presenting instead a radical new premise for the subject centered on exploration of difference, plurality, and independent thought. Then, a decade later – when critically reviewing the failure of these suggestions to make a mark on continued curricular stasis – Steers offered an interesting aside:

> It is worth noting that creative thinking is often evidence in the work of the best PGCE students – what is it about the culture and demands of schools that too often sees once good students become rather ordinary teachers? (Steers 2009, 137)

Steers' rhetoric succinctly captures the fundamental concern that ignited this research – that a dissonance between potential and practice, ideal and institution, is diminishing art teachers' early experiences and their latent hope for transformational impact.

That I independently came to ask the same question prior to reading Steers' remark suggests this phenomenon is prevalent beyond my personal circumstance. Indeed, it transpired others have commented on issues allied to this trend. Noticeably, Addison and Burgess (2003, 158) optimistically frame tensions between the 'unrealism' of idealistic university-based art teacher education and the 'pragmatism' of classroom practice as potential space for learning, while adversely, Adams (2010,

684) laments a ubiquitous instrumentalism in art education, and the discipline's associated, unrealised potential for transformational learning.

While my perception of dissonance between secondary art education and the authentic potentiality of the discipline developed during my own classroom teaching (see 2.2), this crystallised as a critical concern when I began working in teacher education. In this role, I have come to consider myself responsible for two interrelated yet bifurcating outcomes. First, I have a professional duty to vocationally prepare alumni to teach secondary art and design. This is both the advertised premise of the programme and sustains visual art education's presence within secondary schools. Given art education has recently suffered funding reduction, lack of prestige, and an associated drop in popularity among pupils (Hill, 2018), there is a professional urgency in preparing art teachers effectively *within* prevailing pedagogic conventions (Collanus et al. 2012, 17). However, to cite Freire (1998, 23), I also believe 'teacher preparation should go beyond the technical preparation of teachers'. ITE should provide opportunities to critique current practice and nurture utopian hopes, where fostering 'constant and open curiosity' (Freire 2005, 15) latterly prepares the profession to defend its collective interests and rights.

Prior to undertaking this study, it was anecdotally apparent in my interactions with student art teachers that many find sustaining curiosity, critique, and their own ideals difficult - particularly when their disciplinary agenda contrasts with conventions encountered in secondary school art departments. As Atkinson repeatedly suggests, a teacher working against their 'personal frameworks of practice' (2018, p. 194) finds themself undertaking an intolerable process – until 'ownership of his [sic] teaching, of himself as a teacher, diminishes' (2004, p. 384). Brown's (2006, p. 680) pychopedagogic research suggests similar – that 'the dominant logic of teacher identity that has emerged from a culture of defined standards' suppresses difference and creates a 'metonymic link' between *difference* and being *unprofessional*; requiring student teachers adapt or suffer.

Given dichotomous responsibility for the sustainable efficacy of student art teachers within English secondary school orthodoxies, and the simultaneous cultivation of their personal ideals for art education's transformational potential – undertaking this study was important to my understanding of the inevitable friction, and how students might be directed to navigate it.

# 2 Lens

## 2.1 Situating Subject and Object

In this chapter my intent is to make transparent (i) my positionality as researcher, (ii) the epistemological lens applied in undertaking this research, and (iii) how its context might be characterised.

### 2.1.1 The Researcher's Lens

In 1.1 I made clear that my personal priorities and experience led to the conception of this study, and therefore in 2.2 I open with brief, transparent autobiographical analysis (Brookfield 2017) of these experiences.

I then, in 2.3 and 2.4, sharpen the lens that directs this study – the gradations of which are summarised in Fig.1. This begins in 2.3 through alignment to an interpretive worldview, within which a substantive perspective (Creswell 2013) of Freirean critical pedagogy provides the conceptual position. As Creswell suggests in his use of the term 'substantive', critical pedagogy 'folded into' (2013, 23) an interpretive framework affords a hermeneutic that inspects context with a particular regard for concerns of social justice. In this instance, I adopt a Freirean conception of social justice: one that questions orthodoxy, and validates professional autonomy, promoting education as a transformational, emancipatory act where learners integrate with the world, rather than fatalistically adapting to fit it.

In section 2.4 I explore Freirean scholar Rossatto's (2005) typology of 'optimisms' in some detail, due to Rossatto's development of Freire's writing on teachers' ideals, and his subsequent influence on this study. I connect the universal concepts put forward by Rossatto to the particulars of English education today.

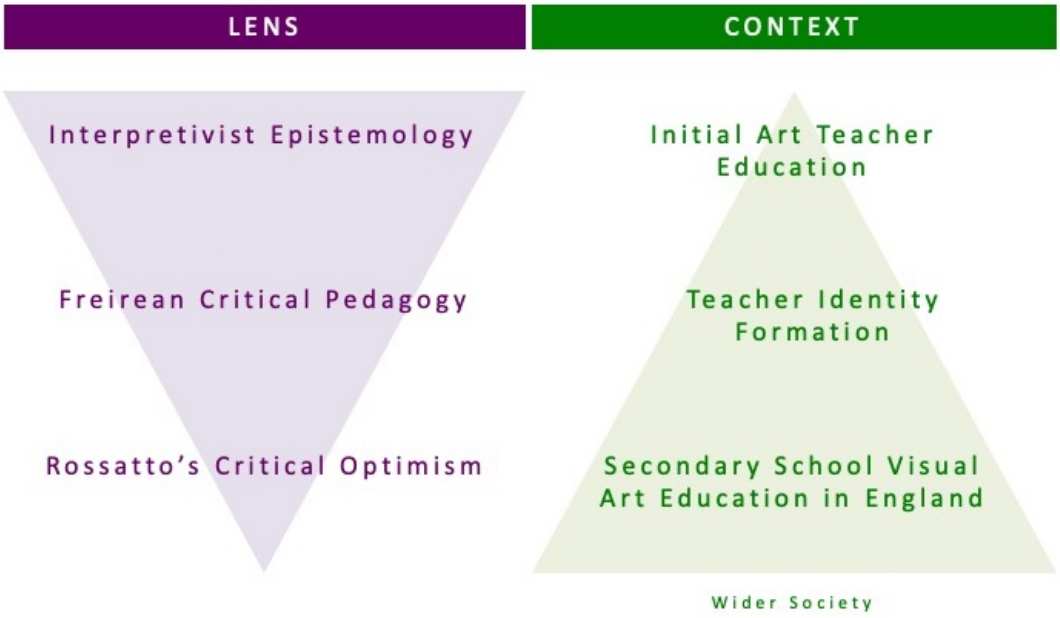


*Figure 1: The lens and context of this study*

The lens established through engagement with these authors' theoretical works is an applied interpretive approach; not designed to produce an abstracted view of a detached reality, but to work analytically in tandem with my own personal perspective as practitioner researcher.

### 2.1.2 The Study's Context

If 2.3 and 2.4 sharpen a lens, in Chapter Three I then employ this lens to inspect relevant contexts.

This begins in 3.1 and 3.2 with consideration of secondary school art education in England, its promising rationales and comparatively disheartening contemporary impact. Particular attention is given to the 'neoliberal disposif' (Atkinson, 2018) within which art education operates, and the impact this socio-political context has on the form and perceived function of an art education. Understanding secondary art education is significant; while my research does not take place here, the practice and potential of this space and the influence it has on ITE students is intimately interconnected with their ambition, ideals, and optimisms. In 3.3 I look at the nature of identity and personal ideals among student teachers, and at the theoretical literature surrounding initial art teacher education.

As illustrated in Fig.2, my narrative is at times circuitous and irregular, as lens is sometimes subsumed by context (for example in discussion of critical art pedagogy in the classroom, or in consideration of the interface between a neoliberal policy agenda and conservative pedagogical practices) and at other times pulls apart.

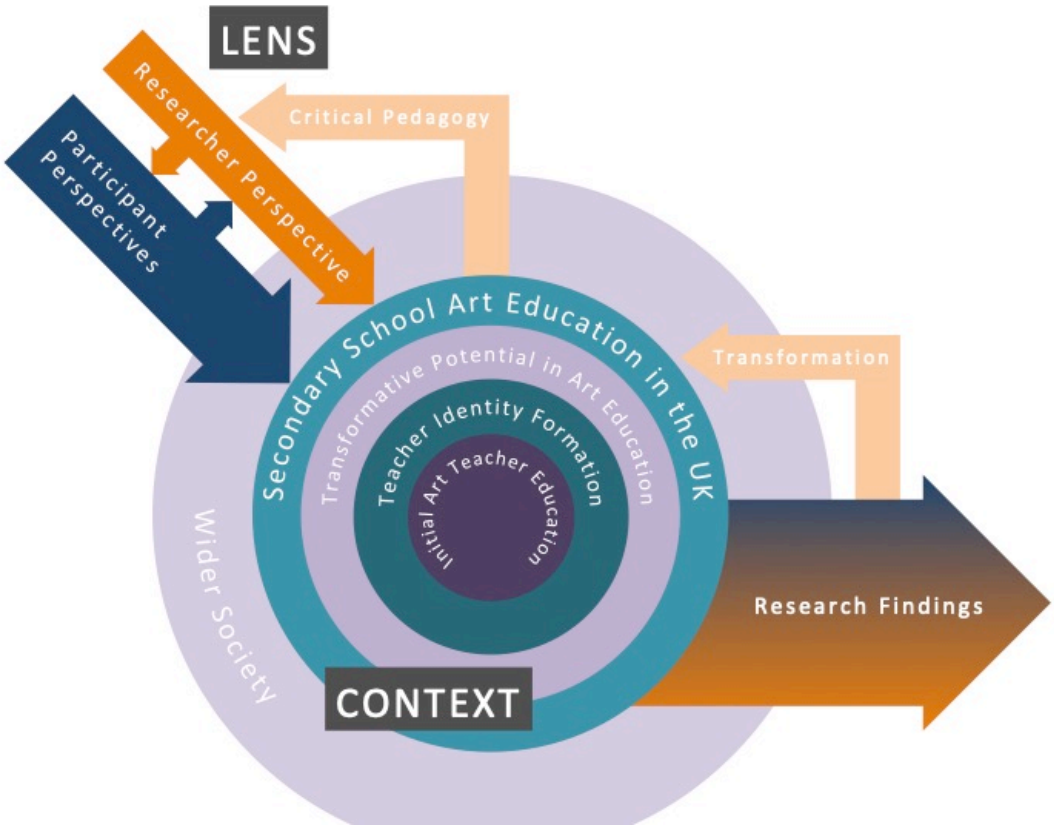


*Figure 2: The context and lens of this study illustrated dynamically. The concentric rings represent sequentially removed contexts of interest and the arrows directional perspectives.*

## 2.2 My Pedagogical Perspective

I agree with Ingram (2012), that research is strengthened by transparency around the researcher's perspective - an unavoidable, subjective influence on the design, interactions, and subsequent findings of any activity. Indeed, Simons (2009, 82) goes further than 'influence', describing academic inquiry not as 'disembodied, programme activity but rather…part of the way in which you engage with the world'. Given that my personhood has shaped this research, and my involvement within it,

this seems a reasonable contention – and one that then requires some communication of my 'lifeworld' (Bentz 1998) to avoid 'disembodying' the project. Therefore, below I briefly explore the personal experiences that led me to undertaking *this* study at *this* time, critically reflecting on the relationship between researcher and research.

Although I have been a teacher educator for five years, when asked I typically identify publicly as an art teacher. Reflecting on this habit I realised that the reason begins with the clarity such a functional designation affords my casual interlocutor. For the teacher educator there is no well-established archetype, perhaps partly because 'to teach' is frequently assumed a vocational disposition (Segall 2002) rather than a professional identity forged through active learning and reflection. Lack of public awareness of teacher educators' role undoubtedly has some relation to teacher educators' own uncertainty about the remit of their role (Berry 2008, xvii), which would at the least make a succinct dinner party summary difficult.

However, my self-designation as art teacher functions not just as public defence against misinterpretation, it also acts as private defence of my entitlement to practice as teacher educator. Much of my sense of self-worth as a capable practitioner is connected to my experiential knowledge of the profession into which my students hope to be received. Why do I feel such insecurity about assuming an authoritative pedagogic identity without maintaining an occupational epithet that is a relic of previous employment? Seasoned colleagues seemingly see no reason to do so. This study's genesis was arguably in part an attempt to assuage feelings of imposterism that I might harbour, both by fundamentally constituting academic endeavour but also as a means through which I might advance the efficacy of my provision as teacher educator.

Professional insecurity may partially explain why I initiated research. To understand why I have arrived at this specific object of interest however, I believe it useful to look back at my own educational experiences. Brookfield (2017) suggests four critically reflective lenses to employ to avoid naïve assumptions in teaching practice, one of which is autobiographical. He suggests that some struggle to consider this lens seriously, but in locating our experiences and how they influence our actions we can come 'to an analysis we feel captures something we've long been struggling to understand' (Brookfield 2017, 170). Here, understanding of my compulsion to protect ITE students' idealism.

### 2.2.1 Personal Narrative

When eleven, I arrived at the grammar school local to my home. The stroll to the school gate was less than five minutes, so there was little sense of cartographic journey into the unknown – but the grammar school ethos was revelatory after years in a small, liberal primary setting. The epistemology of a grammar school education is founded upon positivist ideals – this is a necessary requirement of an institution reliant on an outdated (Ramsden et al. 2011) conception of fixed intelligence to regulate admissions. Thus, as an adolescent I was subsumed into a routine of rote learning, textbook exercise, and monotonous cross-country runs, presumably with the objective that transmissive pedagogies would complement my pre-identified potential. Like many, in part I adapted (Freire 1974, 4) to this unfamiliar paradigm, but I also sought sanctuary apart from an institutional monoculture in the large sheds that constituted the art department. Thus, my own schooling was spent in tension – one part inculcating a pseudo-Victorian social conformity believed required of professional associations (the native destination of grammar school alumnus), the other hinting at a latent alternative: the transgressive and unorthodox agency afforded by the visual arts.

My myopic middle-class domestic context was unhelpful when making decision regarding my future. Neither of my parents were university-educated, my father abandoning the same grammar school aged 15 to apprentice in an engineering workshop, and my mother a nurse, were exceedingly keen I make choices for myself. What followed was four years in art school followed by further postgraduate study. During this time, ostensibly operating within the progressive domain of the visual arts, I was simultaneously unable to dissociate my attachment to measurable scholastic endeavour and orthodox conceptions of merit. I continued to live the paradigmatic tension of my grammar school experiences, albeit with some increasing sense of self-direction.

I remember at first refusing the notion of becoming a teacher, because I held the belief that an effective teacher must first have been a celebrated practitioner. That my epitomic pedagogue must first acquire some prodigious status before being worthy of practice says much about the philosophy of teaching common to my secondary school, as well as the dismissive disposition of a dogmatically meritocratic education.

Only after work in industry (as designer and then publisher) did I decide to teach – by this point, my mid-20s, my attitudes towards the qualities expected of a successful teacher had matured. I undertook my own Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and began teaching in a suburban London secondary school. I developed an interest in diversity in art education, noting as I had the white, female, middle-class students who filtered into the A-level course from a student body constituted by many ethnic groups of varied cultural capital. Research with my own pupils I had hoped, at the time, would provide some emancipatory pedagogy with which I might transform the aspirations of my many apathetic Asian male students. Instead, I came to realise that such naïve ideas were uncomfortably close to the popular cultural construct of teacher-as-white-saviour (Aronson 2017), and instead I looked to amend my teaching to meet the already distinct ambitions of my students at the time – an art education for aspiring medics, engineers, and business managers.

Reflecting now, through this autobiographical lens, I see a parallel relationship between this threshold moment in my practice and Freire's promotion of integrative pedagogies (1974, 4) – where teaching is designed in response to pupils' agency, rather than to standards of conformity. Despite some resultant success from this pedagogical turn, I was simultaneously made aware that the complexity of contextual power relations, between second-generation migrant families, self-identifying institutions of meritocracy, gendered ideas of subject discipline, and societal expectations placed on high-achieving pupils was beyond the scope of my grasp. I left thinking of the teacher as an important agent in questioning the ideals of wider society, but of the belief that an individual's capacity to affect change was fundamentally diminished by much larger forces. I was developing, if unrecognised, a position not dissimilar to the sceptical pessimism of traditional critical theorists (Bronner 2011).

This professional alienation was deepened when I next taught in the independent sector – a position of convenience assumed as I relocated to the Southwest of England. Here, maintenance of tradition was so valued that the school being named for a historical slave-trader was defended as more important than any contemporary revaluation of association. While recognising that educating the privileged offered opportunities to address social inequalities, the discomfort I felt working in such an environment was a significant factor in remaining in post for just one academic year. The tension between an institution unashamedly designed to conserve social order, and the socially progressive

criticality I increasingly viewed as a potent characteristic of visual art, collided in the art classroom to produce pedagogy unable to meaningfully achieve either outcome.

I was presented an opportunity at this time to transition into ITE at a local university. The yet unresolved tension followed; I would still celebrate the importance of erudite subject knowledge, while recognising that there were significant problematics with the canonical tradition that persisted in much school art education, including aspects of my own. On reflection, I still placed value on discrete art historical knowledge and technical skill as this was the measurable and portable cultural capital *I* had assembled during my years in the classroom (as pupil and teacher) –knowingly ignoring the conservative nature of doing so. This self-image as expert was valued as a tangible asset as I precariously approached my new role as teacher educator, but was problematic. As Berry (2008) discovered during her own transition from schoolteacher to teacher educator, overreliance on my experience led me to initially adopt a diminished teaching practice not dissimilar to the 'banking' model critical pedagogues would deride as requiring a pernicious dependence on the teacher (Irwin 2012).

Four years later, despite often introducing myself as art teacher, I feel comfortable questioning pedagogic convention while reflecting on my own practice and identity as teacher educator. I find myself in a position where I might take up investigation into the complex milieu of art student aspiration, ethos, and practice prevalent in ITE, the place of the visual arts in the contemporary classroom, and the resultant shape of my role – as intermediary between these contestable and mutable fields.

Taken together these experiences have shaped the pedagogical perspective of this research. My encounters with educational establishments founded on elitist principles and my struggle with art education's sublimation into conservative or irrelevant models of curricula have, over time, been instructional. I have not been emancipated from an oppressive position – I have profited from education and employment in elite institutions – but I have come to recognise how much contemporary educational practice is complicit with maintenance of social inequity, including in the art classroom. Any small transformation – of myself, my students, their pupils, or wider society – that may result from this work will therefore be testament not only to these months of research, but a lifetime of contestation between the way things are and the way they might be – 'the burden of

experience which…speaks to us of the possibility of a radically different order of things' (Blake & Masschelein 2003, 53).

As an art teacher educator, I directly operationalised my identity when undertaking this investigation. I recognise Darlaston-Jones' (2007, 25) ontological assertion that 'we bring to our research our own worldviews complete with bias and prejudice – it is not possible to spate the me from the research'. That is why communication of 'the me' is critical.

## 2.3 The Interpretivist Epistemology and Substantive Freirean Perspective of this Study

In this chapter's introduction I noted the influence of Creswell's 'substantive perspective' (2013) and in 2.2 acknowledged that, as researcher, it was important to share relevant autobiography. Normative concepts of knowledge as immutable, or objective, are unlikely to meet the demands of a study framed as such, where the phenomenon of interest exists almost entirely in the distinctive values and beliefs of participants.

### 2.3.1 Interpretivism

I consider it appropriate epistemologically to accept knowledge of the social, emotional, and ethical concerns of this study as subjective in nature. To me it is illogical, or at least unconstructive, to attempt objective quantification of the inevitably unstable ideals and associated interpretations of participants' personal experience. Therefore, I employ an Interpretivist epistemology to guide this qualitative research - following Morrow's proposition that qualitative research is 'the most useful approach to understanding the meanings people make of their experiences' (2007, 211). Denzin and Lincoln observe that 'all research is interpretive: guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied' (2018, 19), a sentiment that can, I believe, be seen as particularly relevant when the object, as well as the subject, of research is beliefs and feelings. Interpretivism accommodates recognition of my own inevitable, unavoidable subjectivity, and my belief that new understanding results from interaction with participants.

- Authenticity

In this study I posit value in the authenticity of participants' own truths (Becker 1996, 4) in combination with a transparent research process – not summative validation through any pretence of objective certainty. My own professional development – the essential aim of this exercise – is certainly not dependent on any conceptions of 'proof' (Flyvbjerg 2006, 224) to justify findings. Thacher writes convincingly of the unique value interpretivist research provides – as implications 'ripple through our network of convictions to reshape beliefs that are not themselves directly empirical' (2006, 1634). This is the result I wanted from this study – that in collecting and analysing data through empirical process, my own 'network of convictions' might be tested, reshaped, and transformed in ways which inform improved professional practice. In turn I hoped that this might ripple further too, transforming the experience of my future students, allowing them to teach art while protecting their personal ideals for practice.

Despite positioning participants' authentic contributions as the principal ingredient in this work, I concurrently believe that a perfectly accurate representation of participants' interpretations remains a fiction. The authenticity of this work is instead supported through application of Cresswell and Miller's (2000) three trustworthiness criteria, while participants' contributions were analysed with transparency and care. First, researcher reflexivity was important; methods were designed to accommodate transparent recognition of my values and biases, and self-referent commentary when discussing findings helps here also. Second, close participant collaboration was critical to ensure some clarity of voices. Collecting artistic data allowed for multiple modes of communication between participant and researcher, bringing individuals' interpretations into higher definition. Third, securing the aid of a 'peer debrief' (Creswell & Miller 2000, 129) wherein a reviewer reflects on the study during and after its operation, helped maintain authenticity – my supervisor closely involved with the evolution of this study's design and operation throughout, providing critical questioning on issues of authenticity.

### 2.3.2 Freire's Critical Pedagogy: A Substantive Perspective

This study's stance regarding knowledge in an educational context will now be explored with further specificity. Freire's critical pedagogy - deeply concerned with schooling's contribution to societal

alienation (Smidt 2014, 17), utopic educational intent (Gadotti 2017, 19) and the promotion of idealistic teacher characteristics (Freire 2005) - has been influential throughout this study. While thematic influences are discussed below, Freire's theoretical work is distinctive enough to be described as epistemologically substantive (Irwin 2012, 3), a worldview developed in and beyond the 1960s to facilitate transformative educational experience in the face of social injustice (Freire 2017). In this section, I rationalise the adoption of this epistemological lens, even while our educational contexts might be argued as distantly related – temporally, materially, and culturally.

I may not share Freire's experiences working with Brazilian peasants, but I do share a commitment to social justice and transformative pedagogies and feel it important to make this 'epistemological and political baggage' (Kincheloe et al. 2018, 243) apparent. As such, I want to be clear that Freirean ideas had overt influence not only in contextualising this study, but also on how I have conceptualised ideals of teaching and learning, designed participant instruction, reflected on participant attitudes, and analysed data. While Freire's philosophy was first conceived fifty years ago, he continued to update and refine his ideas to meet the growing threat, as he saw it, of neoliberalism to global education (Freire, P. in Rossatto 2005, 16), ideas which have been advanced since by others (Apple, 1999; Darder, 2017) – and which can be considered more pertinent than ever (Freire, A. in Rossatto 2005, ix).

Freire was wary of his philosophical assumptions being touted as 'blueprints of socio-political and epistemological beliefs' (Kincheloe et al. 2018, 235); any such formalisation potentially limiting researchers' agility in addressing the particular context and object of interest. Therefore, while I took a Freirean perspective in this study, I was not interested in dogmatic adherence to ideology. Also, given that contemporary 'critical pedagogy', having been adopted and diluted by many diverse actors, stands accused of 'a surfeit of meanings' (Apple 2011, 46) I felt it pertinent to clearly delineate the relation between Freirean concepts and this research.

- Aligning a Freirean Perspective with Interpretivism

Attempting to sit a Freirean perspective within an Interpretivist epistemology could be considered problematic. Where Interpretivists view all knowledge as socially, subjectively constructed, truth is in turn relative and contestable (Williams, 2016), whereas critical theorists typically view facts as

'crystallized historical products of social action' (Bronner 2011, 21). Here, truth is still subjective, but sited within a particular ontology of historical realism, where hegemonies manipulate individuals' awareness of their condition and interfere with the meanings ascribed to objects. The result is a shared purpose among critical theorists not apparent in the broad ends of Interpretivists – that research *must* attempt in part to 'create conditions for empowerment and social justice' (Kincheloe et al. 2018, 237) or else fail. In this study, I recognise that 'the validity of knowledge depends on social position' and that a reasonable response is the adoption of an 'emancipatory manner' (Rossatto 2005, 133) embodied in attempts to ensure my findings contribute to student teachers' best interests.

In considering this, I came to the view that critical pedagogy is not oppositional to Interpretivism, but a subset of 'sceptical' interpretivism, wherein emancipatory purpose and recognition that 'facts and values are indivisible' (Cary 2011, np.) are shared. I would also strategically align critical *pedagogy* with Interpretivism by distancing it from orthodox aspects of critical *theory's* epistemological assumptions. Blake and Masschelein (2003) argue that critical theory was marginal in Freire's development of critical pedagogy, with more viable connections evident with the new sociology of education. Equally, where critical theory has been criticised as failing to offer alternatives to the societal inequities at which it directs its ire (Blake & Masschelein 2003, 39), Freirean critical pedagogy stands in distinctive contrast - advocating undiminished 'critical hope' (Freire 2013, 128). Critical hope celebrates the idealism of a 'transforming practice' (Cary 2011, np.) that might democratise society through schooling, a sentiment that drove this research. Fig.3 graphically models the relationship between epistemological conventions applicable to this study.

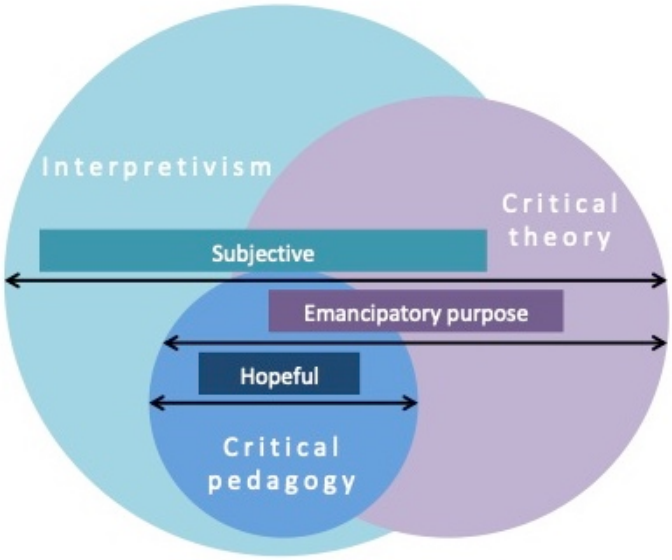


*Figure 3: The relationship between epistemological traditions, as conceptualised in the context of this study*

In this model no epistemological stance neatly aligns, but all overlap. When viewed this way it becomes apparent how I adopt a theory of knowledge that borrows from both an Interpretivist epistemology and a Freirean perspective. Creswell (Creswell 2013, 23) terms critical theory made relative in this way 'substantive'; it is a philosophical assumption 'folded into' the interpretive framework of this research, rather than a sovereign epistemology.

### 2.3.3 Distillation of Key Freirean Concepts for Application in this Study

The first Freirean tenet I adopt is the definition of education as unavoidably political (Irwin 2012, 9). For Freire this recognition was not observational, but a call to action - the gateway for individual educators' emancipatory choice. Ethical concern about such characterisation might be rationalised in a professional context (Department for Education 2022) by educationalists anxious about accusations of value indoctrination. However, from a Freirean perspective, attempts to conceal the value-laden intent of policymaker, pedagogue, or pupil is either naïve or itself a politically authoritarian, dehumanising stance (Freire 1998, 94).

> 'Education can never be neutral. Those who talk of neutrality are precisely those who are afraid of losing their right to use neutrality to their own advantage.' (Freire 2013, 131)

Freire instead writes 'whatever I know I know with my entire self: with my critical mind but also with my feelings' (2005, 54) – and that denial of this represents a stifling 'bureaucratization of the mind' (2005, 6). To avoid superficial enactment of Freire's concepts, I too recognise that 'though an educator I am also a political agent' (Freire 2005, 75). This realisation not only liberated me to approach this study with a lens unclouded by insincere objectivity, but influenced the object of my study, fuelling my interest in better understanding the feelings or ideals of my students as human agents. Indeed, I might argue, as Freire (1998, 100), that ideals themselves are inherently political – they represent an individuals' alternative to the present and therefore a latent intent to enact change. If student art teachers hold ideals, and institutional oppression arbitrarily inhibits these, I believe that problematic; potentially dehumanising and disempowering for both teacher and student.

Second, if education is a contestable act, I contend that pedagogies can be employed for progressive or traditionalist ends. While 50 years since *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was first published, pedagogies that reproduced dominant ideology or took an oppressive paternalistic stance remained the object of ire through Freire's career (Freire, 1998). While first taking aim at the despotism of the Fifth Brazilian Republic, it latterly became apparent that a globalised neoliberal politic had appropriated education as a means of maintaining profitable social inequities, a phenomenon Freire recognised (Freire, 1998, 126). Neoliberalism, as I argue in section 2.5, shapes the attitudes and actions of teachers and pupils in England perhaps more than ever, as we find ourselves 'surrounded by a pragmatic discourse that would have us adapt to the facts of reality' (Freire 2014, 1).

The Freirean conception of progressive or traditionalist pedagogic choices highlights several fields of dichotomous action and intent. The traits that Freire critiques are listed below, with the contrary alternatives of a critical pedagogy then correspondingly introduced. I believe making these key constructs apparent – even in a form as simplifying as a list – is important to the contextualising of this study as it provides the language with which current practices and participant data can be latterly described and analysed.

- Vertical Power

Here there exists a power imbalance which positions the pupil as object of the teacher's vocational charity rather than partner in dialogue. Traditionalist hierarchical structures such as these prevent dynamic interaction and instead 'within these same rigid vertical relations…the peasant consciousness is historically developed' (Freire 2013, 120). In this model, the teacher pays little attention to the 'syntax and semantics of the popular groups' (Freire 2014, 97), instead educational acts erase students' worldview and replace it with the ideology of a dominant class. This process is, according to Freire, often presented as means to save the oppressed from their circumstances; the material results of such 'messianism' (Freire 2017, 118) in fact upholds oppression.

- Banking education

Freire maintained that successful teaching was creating 'the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge' (1998, 30) – a dialogue. He was critical of those who characterised content as 'a set of things, pieces of knowledge, that can be superimposed on or juxtaposed to the conscious body of the learners' (Freire 2005, 130), terming mechanistically transmissive processes a banking model of education. Freire is constant in his concern that:

> '…for students, the more simply and docilely they receive the contents with which their teachers "fill" them in the name of knowledge, the less they are able to think and the more they become merely repetitive'. (Freire 2013, 109)

According to Freire, there are several reasons why a banking model persists. First, it allows the risk-adverse educator to retreat from discourse, instead 'enjoying the narcissistic pleasure of the sound of their own words' (Freire 2013, 110). Structurally, banking models are rarely challenged by traditionalist policymakers as they perpetuate the 'political amnesia that has become the hallmark of contemporary teaching', (McLaren, in Freire, 2005, xxix) stymying praxis that might encourage societal change. Problematically, the paternalistic egoism of such a pedagogy acts to ensure the pupil remains an object – 'an instrument of dehumanisation' (Freire 2017, 28) excluded from exercising autonomy or contributing to a dialogue. I also recognise how this structural dynamic oppresses the teacher – with Irwin (2012, 50) suggesting synergy with the Hegelian master-slave dialectic – the teacher becoming dependent on the pupil's domination for their authority.

- Adaptation and False Consciousness

To learn within a banking model requires adaptation – in a neoliberal context this includes having to 'adapt our hopes and our abilities to the new global market' (Aronowitz, in Freire 1998, 7). Adaptation involves the replacement of personal ideals and hopes for the future with the 'myths that deform us' (Freire 2005, 75) – a paradigm that offers illusionary choice, but ultimately insists that 'everything has already been worked out and taken care of' (Freire 1998, 126). Through remaking oneself – to adapt to such a context – a pupil is removed from their native epistemic order to try and meet the oppressive requirements of another, dominant one.

The result of educational models that expect student adaptation is, according to Freire, the development of false consciousness. The individual's critical faculties are domesticated, their previously held ideals are 'called not only useless, but positively impeding' (Freire 2014, 1), and the pupil defends the status quo rather than fight for freedom - which they have learned instead to fear (Freire 2017, 10).

- The Teacher/Student contradiction

Freire summarises the way teacher and pupil are defined within this orthodoxy of practice in the table reproduced below:

*Table 1: Paulo Freire's teacher-student contradiction tabulated (adapted from Freire 2017, 46)*

| Teacher | Pupils |
|---|---|
| Teaches | Are taught |
| Knows everything | Know nothing |
| Thinks | Are thought about |
| Talks | Listen - meekly |
| Disciplines | Are disciplined |
| Chooses, and enforces choice | Comply |
| Acts | Have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher |
| Chooses programme content | Comply |
| Confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional | |

| | |
|---|---|
| authority, which she or he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students | |
| Is the subject of the learning process | Are mere objects |

From the perspective of a critical pedagogue – and therefore this research study – holding such conservative concepts of pedagogic actors does not facilitate transformative educational experience (for teacher, pupil, or society), instead reinforcing patterns of inequality. For Freire an alternative approach to education was required for progressive societal transformation (Freire 2005, 69). In hopeful rejection of the concepts described above – vertical power, banking education, the resultant adaptation and false consciousness of pupils (and teachers) – Freire advocated substantive substitutes: horizontal power, dialogue, integration and conscientization.

- Horizontal Power

Learner and teacher meet as equal partners in the process of learning. This is widely, and erroneously, regarded as a weak point in Freirean concepts of pedagogy (Biesta 2017), as critics ask how the learners' limited experience and the teachers' academic knowledge can allow these interlocutors to be intellectual equals. At no point does Freire suggest the teacher and learner homogenous:

> Teachers and students are not identical…dialogue is meaningful precisely because the dialogical subjects, the agents in the dialogue, not only retain their identity, but actively defend it, and thus grow together. Precisely on this account, dialogue does not level them, does not "even them out," reduce them to each other. (Freire 2014, 107)

Parity is born from dialogue, which as a 'horizontal' act requires recognition that both teacher and learner are subjects equally invested in the pedagogical act. Schaull (in Freire 2017, v) would distil all Freirean concepts into a single guiding assumption on human nature – that 'man's (sic) ontological vocation is to be a subject who acts upon and transforms his world' – rather than the object of another's transformative intent.

- Dialogue

Perhaps the most powerful and recurrent concept within Freirean pedagogy is the notion that progressive acts occur within dialogic interaction. Whether this concerns a conversation between teacher and pupil or a pupil 'reading' the world (Freire 2014, 97), dialogue creates new knowledge where didacticism only repeats the old. This orientation does not, I would argue, make Freire a hypocritical author, as Biesta (2017, 6) posits in his logical meta-criticism. Here Freire himself is argued as dispensing bankable knowledge. I would instead suggest that Freire - never claiming hegemony - invites response to his writing – asking the reader to critically engage with the work, integrating his ideas where appropriate (Kincheloe et al. 2018, 235).

- Integration and Conscientização

Pupils should not be required to adapt to an existing, perhaps hostile, inequitable context. A critical pedagogy looks to learners as agentic, dialogic subjects (Freire 2013, 4), capable of integrative relations with their teachings. Education oriented to integration rather than adaptation is inherently progressive, as through facilitation of dialogue and the creative outcome of such activity, pupils become democratically engaged in building a new future – the pupil changes, as does the world in which they learn.

In direct opposition to false-consciousness stands Freire's concept of conscientização – the process of recognising societal contradictions: cutting through the 'ideological fog' that 'makes us myopic' (Freire 2005, 10), and discovering how social reality serves a dominant class. Freire contends that only by unmasking the fatalistic 'modernising discourse' of neoliberal ideology; the hegemonic meritocracy that teaches the oppressed are victim of their own ineptitude; the instrumental rationale supressing personal dreams to ensure efficiency of an inequitable economy, can teaching and learning be considered transformative (Freire 2005, 104).

- Optimism is integral to successfully enacting change

Freire's vision relies on a hopefulness that change is possible, an optimism that ideals and dreams have value and should be protected and promoted. Therefore, to fashion a future wherein

transformative education can be considered universal, it is important to remain optimistic even while powerful influences would seek to suppress this change. As Freire writes:

> …my response to the offense committed against education is to struggle conscientiously, critically, politically, and in a strategic manner against those who commit such an offense…what I cannot do is remain in it and drag it down by a sense of frustration and lack of esteem. (Freire 1998, 65)

I adopt the same stance in this study – when contextual literature or data suggests aspirant art educators are being denied the opportunity to develop practice built on the foundation of a personal, progressive idealism, I feel a conscientious duty to use this research to affect change. In my own practice I hope to take, in a 'strategic manner', action to prevent the suffocation of art educational idealism, that experience in schools does not force student art teachers to adapt their hopes – but integrate them into a new future for art education.

### 2.3.4 Defending application of Freirean concepts in the context of this study

I believe exploration of relevant Freirean concepts has demonstrated the conceptual synergy between critical pedagogy as a substantive theoretical lens and my rationale for wanting to undertake this study. There are, I believe, two further questions to answer regarding the appropriateness of referencing Freire's work today:

- Is critical pedagogy contextually transferrable?

Freire's philosophy is often considered synonymous with the post-colonial oppressed of Latin America and North Africa, with those his peer Fanon (2001) would term the 'wretched of the earth'. Transmuting concepts designed to address extreme social oppression for analysis of educational practices in English ITE could be problematic (Irwin 2012, 202). However, I would argue that even within Freire's most provocative early work there are signs that his ideas might be flexibly applied across context. Gadotti (2017) for one, is certain that Freire's work should be viewed as universally applicable, across educational and social contexts, and across these years since Freire's death. This is justified by a recognition that that 'contemporary' for Freire remains, perhaps in increasingly

powerful forms: today – his pedagogy valid because 'not only do we need even more democracy, more citizenship, and more social justice, but because schools…today face new challenges' (Gadotti 2017, 19).

- Is critical pedagogy relevant in the 21st century?

Many global changes have occurred since Freire published in the mid-20th century, and beyond checking transferability through space and place, it is also important to assess the continued relevance of critical pedagogy. In O'Shea and O'Brien's (2011, 2) view, the post-modern condition 'continually problematizes the human agent's capacity to confront and transform the ideology of the human world', rendering Freire's call for individual, transformative engagement with the world increasingly futile. Vast changes in connectivity, culture, and social narrative could make the emancipatory aims, and binary divide between progressive and traditional pedagogy contained in Freire's original works seem at times, if not naïve, less powerful (Irwin 2012). Indeed Irwin (2012, 134) argues persuasively that progressive pedagogic concepts, such as those proposed by Freire, largely *have* been adopted by educationalists yet have failed to affect system change. This is blamed on dilute forms of employment weakening the transformative potential of Freirean reforms.

Freirean appropriation – the domestication of his epistemology and its instrumental reduction – has perhaps damaged the reputation of critical pedagogy in contemporary times. However, in Freire's later writings, I see a forward-thinking reorientation towards the threat of an emerging neoliberal agenda. It is very much the fatalism engendered by this paradigm, a force that invisibly oppresses *global* societies, that critical pedagogues can seek to challenge through progressive educational practices today. Indeed, while O'Shea and O'Brien might have succumbed to the very fatalism against which Freire cautions, others such as Ryan suggest that today the voices challenging neo-liberal education are stronger than ever – some inspired by Freire's work, others by the faltering system itself:

> In the 40 years since Freire began his critique of education, there has never been a more sustained, intense, and extensive questioning of a system that heretofore basked in popular acceptance. (Ryan 2011, 88)

I am confident that a Freirean perspective can be theoretically relevant today, in any context, and particularly regarding the preservation of hopefulness among teachers and learners.

### 2.3.5 Summarising Freire's substantive and methodological influence on this study

Above, I made the case that a hopeful, emancipatory perspective can sit comfortably within a wider interpretivist epistemology. I then provided detail of the Freirean characteristics that constitute this perspective, to make transparent the influence this has had on my conceptualisation and contextualisation of this study.

The substantive perspective of Freirean pedagogy provided guiding principles helpful in delineating and sharpening, formally, my relationship to my research. These principles also informed my research design. While these methodological connections are discussed fully in 5.2 and 5.3, some illustrative examples of this synergy include:

- Asking participants for artistic data was a decision predicated on the concept of horizontal power– I wanted participants to feel confident working in a medium native to their educative experience – art – rather than imposing unfamiliar expectations
- Elicitation interviews were designed empathetically to encourage meaningful dialogue, rather than inquisition; a space where knowledge might be created between researcher and participants
- Inductive coding during analysis facilitated understanding drawn from participants' contributions. This represented an attempt to meaningfully integrate participant voice and researcher interpretation

A Freirean stance on research ethics was also taken, following Kincheloe et al.'s suggestion that within qualitative research where critical pedagogy features, ethics is:

> A belief and commitment to praxis…it is the researchers' ethical and moral responsibility to transform contexts whenever possible to achieve …well-being among participants.' (Kincheloe et al. 2018, 251)

indicating that my ethical responsibility extended beyond operational necessities such as ethics board consent (Darlaston-Jones 2007, 23). I therefore considered the undertaking of this study an ethical duty unto itself (given I consider it my professional responsibility to ensure my students are optimistic about the transformative potential of their ideals), and also that my participants were empowered and engaged through their involvement in the process.

### 2.3.6 Concluding remarks on the lens of this work

I established a substantive perspective of critical pedagogy, within an interpretivist epistemology, as the theoretical underpinning for the treatment of knowledge and understanding in this study. Subjective, impermanent, and formative – the emotive, values-laden data collected in answer to my enquiries was inspected via this critical lens. Participant's interpretations of common educative practices were sought and analysed, while the ideals, hopes and optimism of my participants were respected. The conceptual intent of this study, reliant on qualitative data, was not to establish objective or universal truth but to further understanding that might prove valuable to making specific, effective changes in my own praxis - to the benefit of future students.

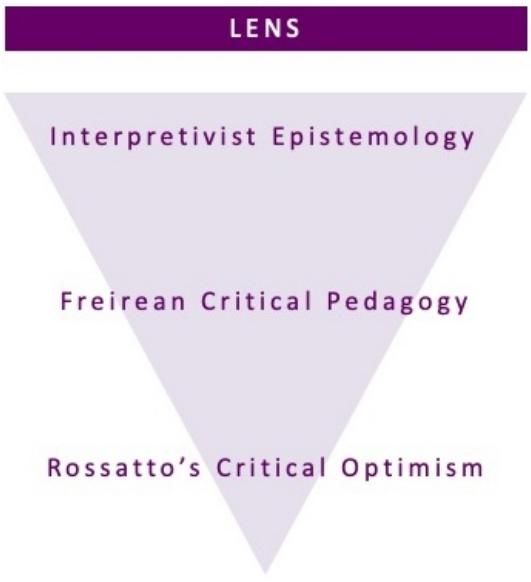


*Figure 4: The sharpening lens of this study*

In the next subchapter, I introduce and explore Rossatto's typology of optimisms (2005), which represents the most concentrated influence on this study's theoretical lens.

## 2.4 Rossatto's Critical Optimism

One issue raised by critics of Freirean pedagogy is the chequered quality of the work that has extended his theories (Freire, A. in Rossatto 2005, ix)). Rossatto however, was a long-term student and collaborator of Freire working in Brazil and latterly in deprived urban areas in the United States. He has first-hand experience of applying critical pedagogy as an emancipatory tool in the classroom and I believe, therefore, that not only is his work pertinent here, but that it authentically extends Freire's own foci.

In his typology, Rossatto (2005) describes four 'optimisms' that guide teachers' practice. While not all are desirable, he describes all as optimistic in that they comprise differing patterns of connection between hard work and improving teacher and students' lives; all 'connect one's social being with one's vision of the future' (Rossatto 2005, 84). This requires some recalibration contrary to optimism's anecdotal definition, as both blind and fatalistic optimism might at first be argued pessimistic views of educative transformation. However, Rossatto's semantic sensibility is that the conditions leading to blind or fatalistic optimism do not create pessimists, but misguided optimists – whose hopes are 'unwittingly assimilated into a hegemonic collective hierarchy' (2005, 50) rather than directed to agentic, emancipatory aims. The blindly optimistic teacher suffers 'historical amnesia' (2005, 50), irrationally repeating the traditionalist pedagogies that alienate and frustrate them, while the fatalistic optimist 'believes that although the future may be dismal, it is nevertheless the best that can be expected' (2005, 58).

*Table 2: Rossatto's typology of optimisms*

| Optimism | Characterisation |
|---|---|
| Blind | A naïve embracement of meritocratic ideologies (2005, 49) |
| Fatalistic | An immobilizing acceptance of an alienating reality and a dismal future (2005, 57) |
| Resilient | The overarching hegemonic order…is reproduced with the complicity and participation of those most oppressed by that order (2005, 69) |
| Transformative | Enables the student to see himself or herself as a vital participating agent in the collective process of social change (2005, p. 86) |

While these undesirable positions are relevant to this study, it is resilient and transformative optimism that are most likely to relate to potential ideals of ITE art students. Rossatto describes the resilient optimist as 'conforming to normative order, despite the fact that that order is for them an alienating reality…if you can't beat them, you might as well join them' (2005, 69). This resonated with some of my own classroom experiences, and commentary from many past student teachers. As such I argue in section 3.2 that friction between the neoliberal institution of schooling and the nature of our subject discipline is likely unavoidable. In short, resilience is frequently required when expectations around assessment metrics, pedagogic standardisation, accountability, canonical curricula, or disciplinary status come into contrast with the views and hopes of agentic art educators. As highlighted in 1.2, the ignition for this study was that dissonance between standardised school policies and students' ideals, requiring students abandon transformative intent, and adapt to endure. Rossatto describes the prospective result, something I feel ethically and professionally passionate about wanting to protect my students from facing:

> …on a conscious level these individuals remain within the status quo, while subconsciously grappling with the constructs of rejection and resistance. In other words, they are willing to sacrifice identity for success. (2005, 70)

Rossatto saw many teachers – and student teachers - in a state of resilient optimism too, disempowered 'as a result of the efficiency era' (2005, 124) – a neoliberal 'era' that, in English schooling has consolidated in the years since Rossatto's observations (Hill, 2011). He suggests, in relation to students who adopt this attitude, that the associated lack of assertive potential results either in the damaging internal conflict outlined above, or a disenchantment associated with 'destructive action' (2005, 104), which I contextualise here as teachers leaving the profession. The British government's school workforce census (2022) would appear to bear this out, with one in six teachers leaving after just one year in service.

For those that remain, the expectations of the neoliberal school challenge the innate aspirations of teachers who hold liberal or emancipatory ideals, resulting, Rossatto would suggest, in a sense of failure and guilt. This psychological toll often results in 'an attitude of defensiveness and aggression on the part of the teachers, and only rarely in a motivation to improve' (Rossatto 2005, 28), a

convention that I hoped to understand – and if encountered, suggest means to prevent – through undertaking this study.

### 2.4.1 Transformative Optimism

Engendering transformative optimism among all learners is an ambition I share with Rossatto. Here students and teachers creatively engage in knowledge construction and critical thinking, enabling them to see 'himself or herself as a necessary and viable participant in the collective process of social change' (2005, 81). In essence, this follows Freire's blueprint for effective teaching and learning – horizontal, dialogic pedagogies and democratic curricula facilitating, in turn, agency for societal integration.

Transformative optimism is achieved, among other means, when schools recognise the culture of their students, and when educators are involved in curriculum development. in the context of ITE, Rossatto stresses the importance of a program of teacher education having 'as a basic goal dialectical conceptualization of new pedagogies' (2005, 149), suggesting that here too it is important to avoid transmissive traditions.

Thacher suggests that to sustain their practice, teachers necessarily need to:

> …arrive at some view, however tentative and revisable, about how we should understand our ideals and obligations – about the ends we should pursue and the duties we should observe. (Thacher 2006, 1637)

I might argue that such reflexive process is only advisable in ITE when the agency required for transformative optimism can be activated, otherwise we risk catalysing the internal conflict of resilient optimism among student teachers. Most student teachers will be placed in schools with significant agentic restrictions; indeed, many encounter the twofold oppression of being perceived as naive student, within an autocratic educational environment.

Engaging with Rossatto's typology of optimism, I began to understand the challenge of my role as a Freirean teacher educator. I should pursue two ends: (i) prepare ITE art and design students to face inevitable professional friction, while simultaneously (ii) 'empowering teachers to empower students

in an on-going liberating process' (Rossatto 2005, 151) – protecting and promoting individual idealism.

I believe Rossatto's framework of optimisms is epistemologically relevant to the nature of this study. It casts the critical theorists' contention that the status of knowledge is indissolubly wedded to social position onto the discrete issue of teachers' ideals. Rossatto's recognition that 'perceptions about life and projections of the future, have great impact on…how educators see their position in the world' (2005, 1) sharpens this study's interpretivist, Freirean, perspective. Furthermore, his belief that 'teachers as transformative intellectuals have the potential to facilitate sociocultural change towards realizing a better society' (2005, 134) aligns absolutely with my sense of purpose in undertaking this work, following personal concerns about the diminishment of this potential in English art education today.

# 3 Context

Having defined the lens of this study, I next analyse the characteristics of its context. Critical inspection of the external frameworks that influence aspirant art teachers' shifting ideals is especially pertinent, given this study's Freirean interest in structural inequalities (Freire 2017). Critical pedagogy's recognition of knowledge as subjective, and social power structures' obfuscation or manipulation of this knowledge for asymmetric gain, requires that this contextualisation is not oriented to summarising objective truth. Instead, in this chapter, I present my interpretation of normative and potential practice in school art education and ITE. As such, throughout consideration of the concentric contexts relevant to this study (Fig.5), I make sure to reflexively recognise my own assumptions alongside the perspectives presented by others (Brookfield 2017).

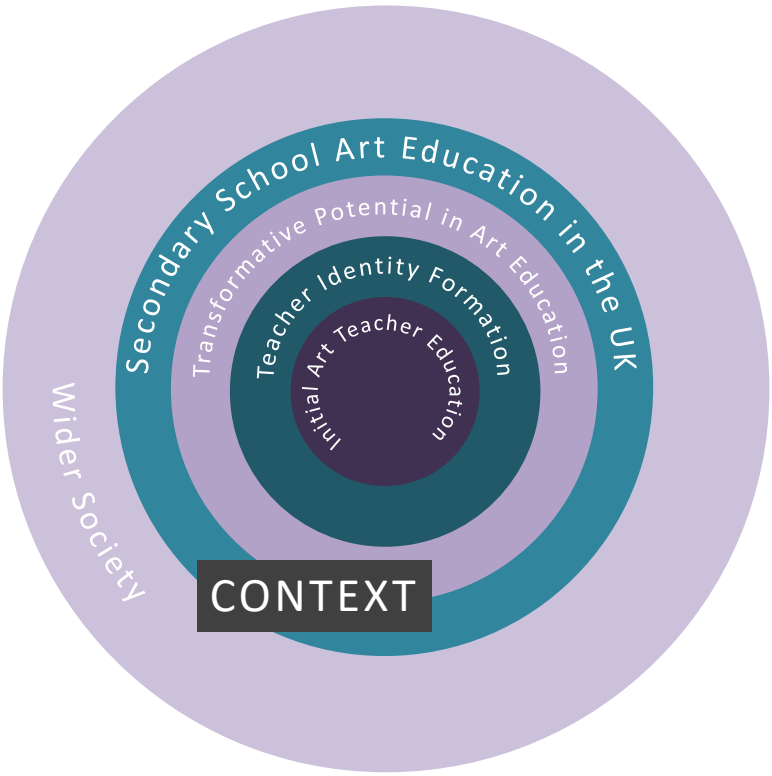


*Figure 5: The concentric contexts of this study*

To begin, in 3.1.2 I compare rationales put forward by theorists, practitioners, and advocates for secondary art education – including critical art pedagogies that promote a social transformation synonymous with Rossatto's desirable optimism. In 3.2 I compare these diverse models to widespread standards of practice in English secondary art education. Understanding the reality of art

education today – prior to collecting data – was important given its influence on aspirant teachers' development; this is where they either integrate with, or adapt to, convention, and where they might first face the 'heavy toll' (Rossatto 2005, 70) of tension between personal and professional intent.

To conclude 3.2, I look to Atkinson's (2018) writing, exploring how a wider neoliberal 'dispositif' might shape this English art education. This allows me opportunity, in turn, to reflect on the relevance and value of Rossatto's optimisms as a descriptive typology. In 3.3, the innermost contextual circles illustrated in Fig.5 - aspirant art and design teacher identity, ideals, and their educational provision - are critically explored, again with consideration of Atkinson's (2018) neoliberal dispositif, and Rossatto's (2005) typology of optimisms.

## 3.1 The Transformative Potential of Secondary Art and Design Education

Art education in the English secondary school has historically been justified through diverse and sometimes contrary rationales, many promoting the distinct transformational potentialities of the discipline (Robb 2019). Here I briefly survey prominent perspectives on the purpose of art education, for two primary reasons.

First, within the academic field of art education, rationales for study are of overwhelmingly prominent concern (Koopman 2005; Thomson & Maloy 2022). Second, my study is concerned with ideals – the hopeful intentions of aspirant art teachers. Therefore, understanding established rationales is important to my latter contextualisation of participants' own sense of professional purpose and limitations.

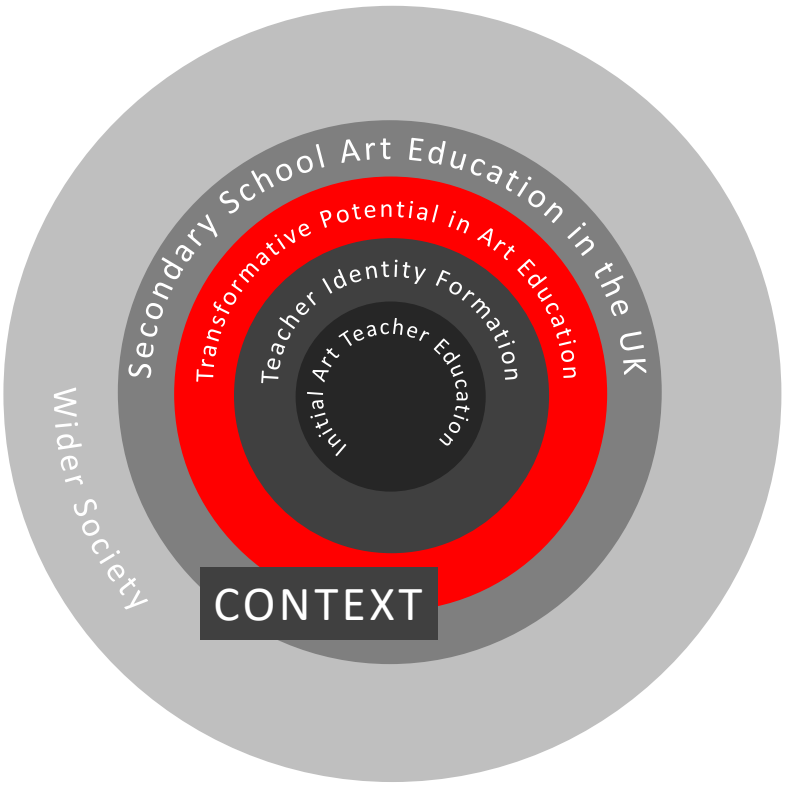


*Figure 6: The contextual relation of art education's 'transformative potential' to the central concerns of this study*

Hickman (2010b), on why art is taught, suggests a typology of three areas: social utility, personal growth, and visual literacy (Tab.3). I interpret these rationales as being predominately concerned with enacting transformation with, in turn, social, student, or subject centered ends. At this general level none are exclusive, and we might hope that society, the student, and the subject can all benefit from an art education.

*Table 3: Hickman's (2010b) rationales for art and design education*

| Rationale | Transformative End | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Social Utility | Society | The provision of technical artistic skills of profitable use in the creative industries |
| Personal Growth | The Individual Student | The opportunity to cathartically explore emotional expression |
| Visual Literacy | The Discipline of Art and Design | The capacity to analyse the persuasive elements of an effective television advertisement |

However, inspecting each in turn, a unified justification for art education becomes increasingly complicated. For example, social utility might be interpreted in several ways; first, the tangible value of an education in the arts as communal currency. We need buildings to live and work in, objects to use and enjoy, and imagery to convey emotion and concept, or else the human condition is diminished. The instrumental concerns of the discipline-based arts education (DBAE) movement, which found popularity in the 1990s, follows this rationale closely. Here proponents care for the intrinsic acquisition of artistic skills and sensibilities for application and admiration (Hickman 2010, 21). This rationale can be allied to social good – given the manufacture of quality artistic products to improve our collective lived, aesthetic, experience is impossible without disciplinary knowledge.

Eisner, a key architect of DBAE, argued that focus on the intrinsic qualities of art learning leads organically to instrumental benefits, promoting art education's capacity to develop critical judgement and a pupil's 'disposition to tolerate ambiguity' (2002, 10), while also celebrating the art class's capacity to attain 'the skillset students need to become productive workers' (2002, 34).

Second, in the applied arts, social utility is commonly defined in terms of productivity, or fiscal value; art education not as cultural edification but renumeration. The creative industries are frequently heralded as important to the British economy (Creative Industries Federation 2015; Cultural Learning Alliance 2020), requiring a pipeline of skilled art graduates. Indeed, Robb (2019) proposes this thread of utilitarian rationale as dominant in educational policy and English classrooms today.

A third social argument can be made: that art's relationship with wider society can be strengthened through connection between the classroom and contemporary artistic practice (Adams 2010). Urgency was associated with this cause in the 2000s (Atkinson, 2011), following Downing and Watson's (2004) exposure of the disconnect between school art and contemporary practice. Such a focus might transform the fractious relationship conventionally described between elite fine art and a cynical general populace (Wayne 2020), if such a cultural divide does indeed exist (questionable given the record popularity of modern art exhibitions (ALVA 2022)).

Fourth: some define an art education as useful in promoting social equity - providing platform and critical agency to individuals and groups dispossessed by asymmetric social orders. By this measure, art education could have a profoundly democratising impact on society (Gude 2009) – and given the connection such rationale might have to notions of transformative optimism (Rossatto, 2005), I here unpack it in more detail.

- Critical Art Pedagogy

Those who promote a critical art pedagogy align the subject discipline to Freire's emancipatory educational ends. As a prominent critical pedagogue, hooks celebrates the capacity for the arts to be affiliated with the dialogic, critical concerns of Freire, not least because: 'the function of art is to do more than tell it like it is – it's to imagine what is possible' (hooks 2015, 281).

This utopic potential, along with the collaborative, transgressive possibilities of art practice, is viewed by critical art pedagogues as a potential space where the technical rationality of wider educational practices might be directly contested (Adams 2013, 253). There exists a plurality of priorities among critical art educations, some focused on learner's lived experiences (Garber 2004; Ploof & Hochtritt 2018), others on explorative authenticity (Hausman et al., 2010), or critical redefinitions of creativity (Adams & Owens 2016, 7). While advocates of this persuasion often differ in their details, Cary (2011b) defines the qualities typical of a critical art pedagogy:

- Rejection of 'traditional art instruction emphasizing the improvement of specific production techniques' (2011, np), with a focus instead on an 'unabashedly idealistic' approach
- Rejection of the faux objectivity of modernist curriculum

- Rejection of economic rationales, where pedagogy as preparation for work diminishes the educative experience, where 'the alienated, disenfranchised student generally becomes the alienated, disenfranchised worker' (2011, np)

Instead, Cary encourages 'informed resistance' (2011, np) to traditionalist models of art education, alternately promoting pedagogies for Freirean critical consciousness. Essentially, all approaches to critical art pedagogy are preoccupied with facilitating transformative opportunities for learners, in opposition to practices that prepare them 'to take their place in the corporate order' (Aronowitz, in Freire 1998, 4). Freire was deeply worried that the curiosity of students and teachers was being 'suffocated' (Freire 1998, 79) by paternalistic, authoritarian policies. It is this continuing concern – that art education should champion the transformative 'luxury of experimenting' (Goule, in Freire 2013, xiii), dialogue to 'foster a critical attitude' (Smidt 2014, 42), and curricula recognising the humble value of 'joy' (Morris 2008, 61) rather than 'instrumentalised, or even homogenised' (Atkinson 2018, 7) pedagogy – that unites critical art education advocates.

Prominent throughout 20th century art education it is also possible to define multiple variations of liberal intent in school art, where personal growth takes priority. The most frequently encountered rationale in this space normally aligns with ideas of artistic self-expression as valuable for the learner's emotional transformation - opportunity for teenagers to present an authentic representation of their lived experience for cathartic, therapeutic, or reflective purpose. Boyes and Reid (2005, 3) suggest a template for this process – art 'giving vent to our creative urges', in turn building self-esteem which organically breaks down inhibition and improves communication through increasingly powerful art-making. Thus, an art education allows for self-image and artistic prowess to reciprocally improve.

If the self-expressive rationale requires a student-centered approach, then it can be positioned as important epistemological foil to increasingly predetermined, transmissive content elsewhere across school curricula (Hickman 2010). In turn, the arts become increasingly rare, and valuable spaces for 'transferable' expressive skills such as autonomy and creativity to be acquired – along with a self-awareness Ross (2007, np) terms the 'education of feelings' (in opposition to the logocentric education of rational disciplines).

I have some concerns, personally, about expressionistic justifications: art teachers are not therapists or psychologists and to pretend otherwise might prove harmful – just as presenting art as 'designed to help release pent up feelings…something to do which is relatively undemanding and harmless' (Hickman 2010, 44) diminishes the discipline.

Second, some suggest that art education is more than a medium through which personal growth, and associated attributes for future life and work – such as tenacity, innovation, or agency – are cultured. Art education, it is argued, can be linked to success in other, 'core' parts of the curriculum, a surrogate for cognitive development (Creative Industries Federation 2015). While evidence of this efficacy was persuasive enough to feature in national policy agenda (President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities 2011), it has largely been abandoned due to questions around research veracity (Huat See & Kokotsaki 2015; Londesborough 2021) and the self-defeating logic of championing arts education as subservient means to unrelated ends (Eisner 2001; Winner et al. 2013). A third view on art education's relationship with personal growth might refute arguments that rely on soft or transactional qualities, but instead the importance of cultural self-knowledge – that understanding of regional or social arts traditions is empowering.

Whether these internal benefits - emotional, cognitive or character-enriching are educational ends in themselves, rather than means to wider ambition, such as economic productivity or social cohesion, I believe debatable.

Hickman's final rationale for art education is visual literacy. Here, the onus shifts from artistic production to critique and appreciation. The premise of most who make this argument is an increasingly ocular culture, and the growing sophistication of image manipulation - in combination requiring learners acquire a critical way of seeing. As a persuasive advocate for visual literacy Duncum (2001) is interested in two outcomes – an art education that is a better fit for the visual interests of young people, and a broader, more critical subject discipline that moves beyond canonical traditionalism to include the comic book and TV advertisement. School pupils would here be transformed into engaged learners and critical citizens – albeit, detractors might argue, at the dilution of a disciplinary identity. A second, symmetrical purpose to the promotion of visual literacy: teaching learners to 'read' the complex coding of contemporary artistic practice may provide

democratising utility – better connecting rarefied cultural products of contemporary artists with young people and their lived experiences (Bamford 2006).

Last, critical engagement with images – learning to read artwork – can be positioned as a valuable activity to promote art and design education's capacity to improve empathetic understanding and tolerance in a globalised society (President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities 2011). A capacity to move beyond established comfort zones to live alongside those who look, think, and choose to express themselves diversely might be engendered through study of a diverse artistic curriculum (Maguire et al. 2012). With an increased awareness of issues of inclusion and equity in the classroom (Minnicucci 2021) brought forth by wider cultural and social events, this rationale holds a hybrid purpose - transformational impact on society as well as learners' visual literacy.

### 3.1.1 Beyond Hickman's typology

While Hickman's (2010) rationales for art education collectively cover a wide range of specialist argument they are porous and partial categories. For example, with regards their inter-relation - classroom engagement with contemporary art might serve social utility, an agenda of visual literacy, or likely both.

Equally there are advocates for art education who offer philosophical rationales that sit beyond these primary groupings. For example, there is the reflexive paradox put forward by Koopman (2005) – that art education's very value is in promoting a purposeful uselessness; that making art is self-evidently a good thing: fruitfully challenging notions of educational utility altogether.

Similarly, some take a view from the modernist tradition (Atkinson 2006); artmaking for its own sake. Indeed, this paradigm appears anachronistically influential in much school art today, drawing on modernist convention while contemporary practice abandoned these concepts decades earlier and our educational systems disregards all but instrumental capital (Robb 2019). I believe that most modernist rationales do little that might be described as transformative; it now constitutes a static orthodoxy in many art departments (Efland 1976; Grant 2020; Gude 2013), despite its original, emancipatory intent (Greenhalgh 2005).

Different again, Biesta (2019) offers an original perspective that aims at simultaneous liberal and social purpose, describing how art education might facilitate understanding of our place in and with the world – an ontological catalyst through which an individual might recognise themselves as agent rather than passive recipient of transmissive knowledge or objective experience. To me (despite Biesta's critique of Freire) this characterisation echoes a Freirean concept of progressive education as emancipation from oppressive worldviews, where artmaking may ignite 'the 'transformation of consciousness' (Hickman 2005, 26).

While on occasion the rationales discussed above are in tension (a focus on skill acquisition for fiscal gain is an awkward neighbour to critical questioning of the marketisation of artistic production), most co-exist and might be best illustrated as a constellation (Fig.7) rather than in discrete or binary terms.

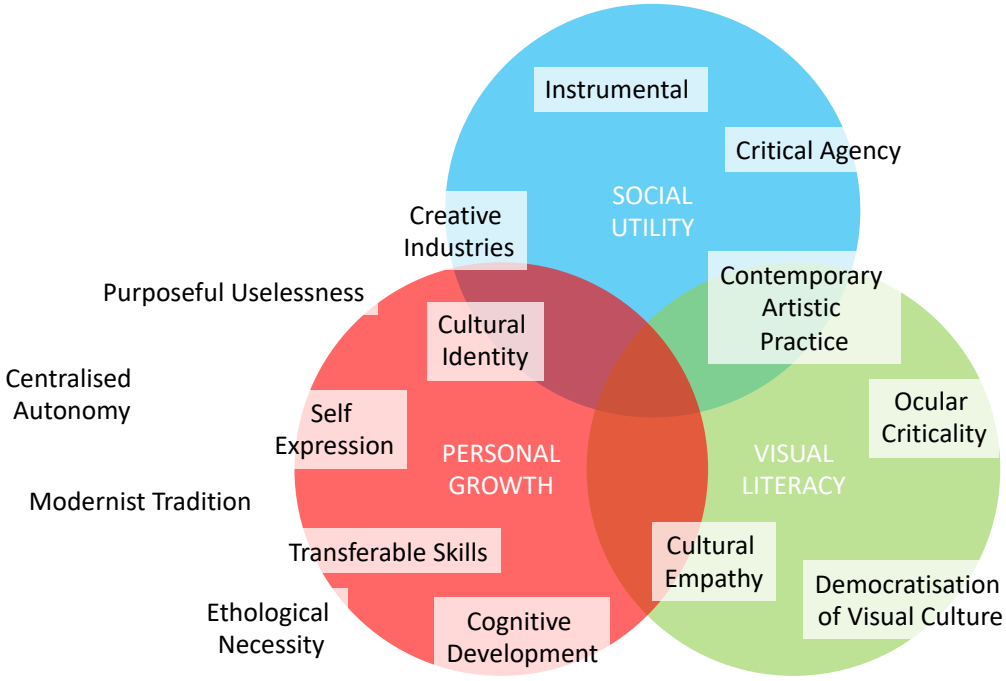


*Figure 7: A constellation of common rationales for art and design education*

### 3.1.2 Historical cycles of purpose

Robb's (2019) history of art education in the UK provides detailed analysis of cyclical shifts - to synthesise this narrative with Hickman's typology I would present English school art as essentially

four-phased. First explicitly economic utility is reason to introduce art education to school curricula in the 19th century; to supply skilled workers to the textile industry. Second, increasing interest in psychoanalysis and progressive post-war politics resulted in a shift to self-expressive priorities; an educational quest for student-centered ideals to counter the inhumanity of European war. Third, in the latter 20th century, as neoliberal idealogues sought to measure educational efficiencies, attempts were made to ensure art was not stereotyped as soft, or ambiguous. Simultaneously, Duncum (2001) and others (for example, Boughton, 1986; Hudson, 1987); argued that the new diversity of globalised media required visual literacy be prioritised too.

Fourth, it is possible to see *all* the above coexisting concurrently in England today (Fig.8), with previous phases each leaving residual legacies – sometimes harmonious, often not (Addison & Burgess 2005). As a result, many practical paradoxes sit within this milieu of art educational purpose. For example, when visiting schools, I have seen self-expressive mark-making assessed against external measurable criteria, or projects on the finer points of breakfast cereal packaging followed by another on painting to portray the horrors of war. It would seem there is little coherence across the country – even between classrooms – as to why and what art and design education should be; a situation maintained by the lack of significant central national criteria (Department for Education 2013), affording instances of art curricula 'collapsing into a superficial tour of different areas of making' (Ofsted 2023, 9).

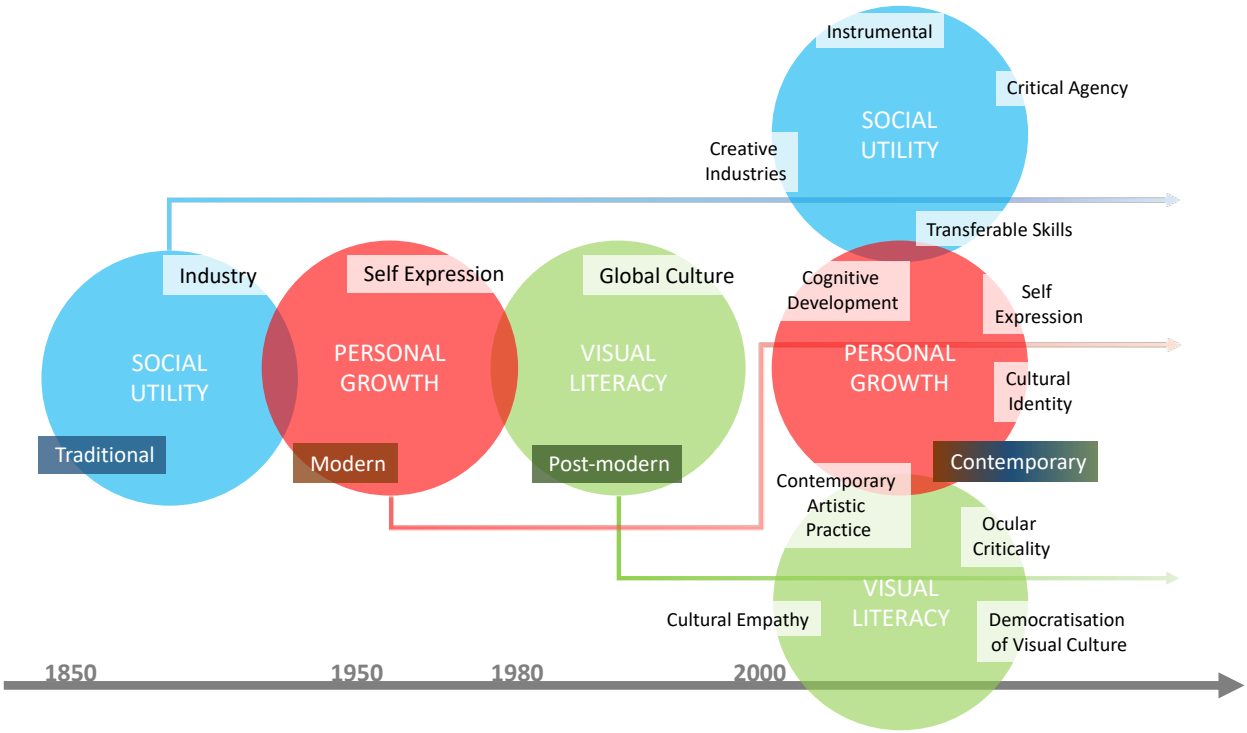


*Figure 8: The residue of rationale in art and design education*

Ross (2007) argues that a heterogenous function for art education, and the rich form that follows, is an appropriate model. However, while a pluralistic defence of art education may appeal to the postmodernist, I follow Siegesmund's (1998) concern, now decades old, that lack of central justification for art education makes it vulnerable to ideological attack, and ephemeral, cyclical curricular reforms.

The focus of this section has been on drawing forth arguments that rationalise secondary art education. I believe doing so has contextual value for my study – but remain aware to the limitations of summative simplicity. Practice in most secondary schools will not have coalesced in the same way an academic might prepare their theoretical arguments. It is likely that the departments encountered by student art teachers will have little or no formalised institutional intent beyond the mandate of the succinct National Curriculum. Indeed, Boyes and Reid found in art departments:

> An abundance of theories, cliches, and nuggets of received wisdom (as to why art should feature in the lives of the young) coexist alongside a lack of academically rigorous and methodologically sound research in the field. (Boyes & Reid 2005, 6)

While I argue below that an informal rationale is potentially materialising in many school art departments – an economic justification – I don't want to disingenuously suggest that aspirant art teachers' ideals immediately accord or abrade with a coherent, competing ideology upon entering art departments. Indeed, tensions that are experienced by student teachers may as easily be derived from encountering lack of purpose or a muddled sense of rationale.

## 3.2 The Contemporary State of Art and Design Education in England

In 3.1 I summarised prominent theoretical rationales for art education in England's secondary schools. These rationales constitute the 'could' or 'should' of art education; the hopes stakeholders hold for art education – ideals.

Here I compare these hopes to the common characteristics of art education in English secondary schools today. To gain understanding of this, I have synthesised surveys undertaken by diverse organisations interested in creative education in England ((Creative Industries Federation 2015; Cultural Learning Alliance 2020; NASUWT 2017; Ofsted 2023; Royal Society of Arts 2020; The National Society for Education in Art and Design 2016; Winner et al. 2013). I present this data next to my own professional experience, as I habitually spend time in, and talking to faculty of, upwards of thirty secondary school art departments across the region. I also look again to pertinent academic literature.

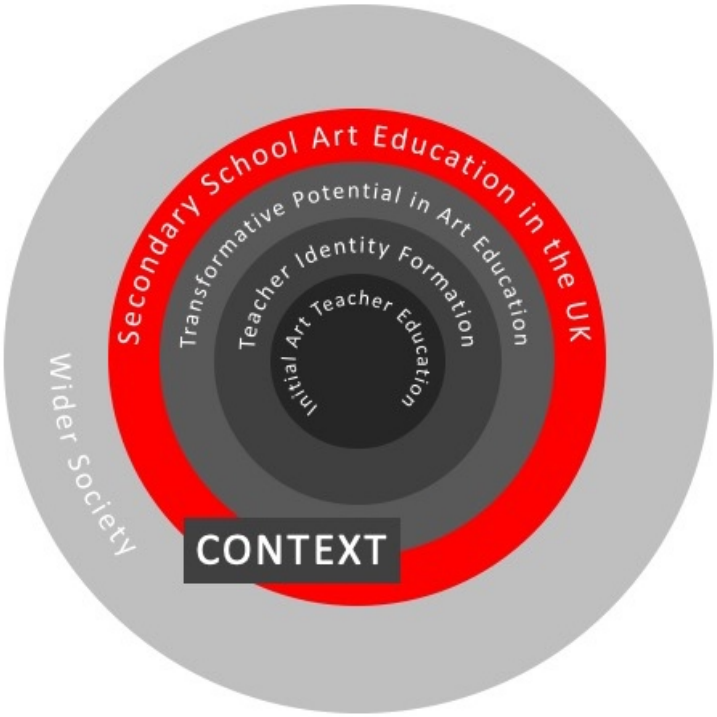


*Figure 9: The contextual relation of secondary school art education in England to the centre of this study*

- Prevalent Rationale

Despite the diversity of theoretical rationale for secondary art education, Robb (2019, 2) posits that in England today an economic argument overwhelmingly takes precedence, and that this has secured the subject's position for the foreseeable future. Robb's claim is substantiated by the frequency of advocacy for this rationale (Creative Industries Federation 2015; Londesborough 2021; Sorrell et al. 2014) - those who follow this technocratic rationale or tolerate it (Winner et al. 2013), to protect the subject's position in school curricula. It is increasingly common to see gross economic output of the 'creative industries' touted as reason to teach art (Cultural Learning Alliance 2020; NASUWT 2017).

I believe the increasing prevalence of economic rationales problematic - that an economic instrumentalist rationale for art education has had counteractive effect, contributing to the erosion of subject status. I next discuss the nature of this impact. First, while gross figures used by proponents – most noticeably the lobbyists Creative Industries Federation (CIF) and the Creative Industries Council (CIC) – these data are often tangential to the concerns of art educationalists

(Adams 2013a). For example, the CIC's headline: '3.2 million jobs in the UK creative economy' (2018), includes all with non-creative jobs in the sector, and those defined as 'creative' in other sectors. Less than one third of the jobs tallied involve 'creative occupations'– roles relevant to art students. Similarly, when the split of a £111.7 billion gross value-added sector valuation (2018) is inspected, noticeably half is generated through IT capitalisation alone, with just £9 billion of revenue generated by 'music, arts and culture'. This detail suggests the statistics misleading – for those happy to stretch definition of the 'creative industries' around an economic imperative they may remain persuasive, but I don't believe it a legitimate advocation of artistic study in school.

Data produced by Belfield et al. for the Institute for Fiscal Studies (2018) might be more pertinent. Here, a male arts undergraduate is projected to lose £100,000 in lifetime earnings in comparison to counterparts *who do not go to university*. Arts Council England reported similarly disappointing statistics around average earnings of artists - £16,150 annually (just over half the national average), with £6,020 earned from artistic practice (2018). Given the unequal distribution of opportunity and wealth within the visual arts, and the typical cost of entry to the sector (Devi 2021) I suggest economic gain as rationale for studying art, for personal or societal ends, as ethically questionable.

Aside from providing a workforce for the creative industries, a contemporary economic lobby in England defend art education as valuable as catalysing scholastic performance elsewhere – that 'learning through arts can improve attainment in Maths and English' (Cultural Learning Alliance 2017, 1), for example. The CIF suggest that 'Nobel laureates in the sciences are seventeen times more likely than the average scientist to be a painter' (2015, 1), but while interesting, this claim is wholly unsubstantiated by data (Londesborough 2021; Winner et al. 2013). The OECD suggests such a position 'reflects the view that the arts are important not in themselves' and 'may well have developed pragmatically – to save the arts because the arts are perceived as endangered' (2013, 15).

Over the last decade policymakers have not acted as interlocutors concerned about this endangerment might have hoped. Adams' (2013a, 272) resignation about a 'new philistinism' towards art education was initiated by the introduction of the English Baccalaureate – a proposal that ignored the arts in an 'arbitrary' selection of subjects awarded priority. In combination with other detracting narratives (the valorising of STEM study (Department for Business Innovation & Skills 2015), or the central financing of computer science education (National Centre for Computing

Education 2022)), the only outcome of today's economic argument has been an alarming 38% regression in GCSE arts entrants between 2010 and 2021, and a parallel 31% drop at A-level (Joint Council for Qualifications 2021).

### 3.2.1 Prevalent Pedagogies and Curricula

Given economic rationales steering the direction of educational policy (Ball 2017), associated metrics of value, and conjoined arguments for an instrumentalised art education, it is interesting to note disconnect between this context and much art classroom practice. Indeed, while some aspects of 21st century classroom practice have shifted significantly towards more instrumental systems art provision has, I argue below, remained surprisingly static, increasing the potential for disciplinary dissonance.

Atkinson (2006b) argues that modernist ideology still pervades practice across art departments, as was evidenced in the major review into 'the salient contents and foci of "school art"' (Downing & Watson 2004, vii) undertaken two decades ago. This curriculum is driven by modernist concepts of artmaking as self-discovery, self-expression, and formal elements of design, typically resulting in an 'insular' focus on acquisition of canonical skills – mainly painting and drawing (Atkinson 2006, 17). Below I chart this orthodoxy in three interconnected domains: curriculum, pedagogy, and outcome.

- Curriculum: A traditional curriculum valorising technical skills alongside conservative models of contextual studies, i.e., a chronological focus on Hickman's 'DAMP HEMs' (2019) – dead artists, mostly painters; heteronormative, European and male.

Where diversity is attempted, this often results in tokenistic content. I commonly encounter in secondary schools 'African Mask' or 'Day of the Dead' projects – rarely designed to access contemporary global arts practice, or authentic insight into specific cultural tradition. Claims that '…in relation to school art education there is a tendency to promote dubiously out of date curriculum models', and 'remedial' pedagogy (Atkinson 2006, 21), are substantiated by both Ofsted (2009, 2012), and Thomson and Maloy's (2022) recent review. Ofsted (2009, 24) noted shallow, superficial curricula where, for example, 'popular projects…too often overlooked the significance of symbolism and meaning in the art of different cultures', and in many classrooms, inspectors saw

'little opportunity for students to learn how to exhaust an idea, refine a skill or pursue depth of understanding' (2012, 19).

With regards curricula, it is interesting to note that recent policy developments I would consider positive – for example, Ofsted's move to focus on the 'substance' of curricula rather than teaching standards (Spielman 2017) – can be subsumed into conservative agenda. Indeed, the concurrent rise of a traditionalist concern for 'knowledge-rich' curricula (Gibb 2021), championed by policymakers as necessary revision of soft skills-based provision, seems likely to push art curriculum designers to cling to canonical study. While there may be benefits to critical engagement with traditionalist materials, through a Freirean lens I imagine this nudge towards the established, Gombrichian archive as more likely to result in 'essentialist instructional attitudes and techniques that amount to downloading a file of authorized knowledge' (Cary 2011) – a vertical education (Freire 2013).

- Pedagogy: Tendency towards formulaic pedagogies, predicated on either traditionalist artistic process (the silent observational drawing) or generic 'approaches that are incompatible…with the forms of progress in art and design' (Ofsted 2023, np).

Given the increasing accountability teachers face for pupils' results, formulaic pedagogies seek certainty through transmissive means. For example, and in extremis, in one school I recently encountered sketchbooks containing pre-printed tasks and instructions such as word searches and images pre-selected for transcription. Although arguably now dated, two of Ofsted's overviews of school art education illustrate this characterisation, for example:

> …[pupils] said that teaching in art and design lessons was becoming too similar to that in other subjects. This highlights a dilemma for those art and design teachers who wish to maintain an individual approach while at the same time responding positively to whole-school requirements. (Ofsted 2009, 17)

While in some schools – those Ofsted judged as most effective – pupils were offered agency and experimentation (2009, 39), in over half, narrow courses were only considered effective in 'terms of enabling students to gain…GCSE results' (2009, 18). Three years later, Ofsted's evidence suggested a trend towards increasingly 'repetitive' (2012, 18) art lessons, where top-down initiatives, particularly

around assessment, had led to activities with 'minimal impact' (2012, 1) – 'production line' (2012, 19) outcomes and limited curricula developments.

One popular generic influence on classroom practice in England today is a model of pedagogy informed by a thin interpretation of cognitive science (Hordern & Brooks 2023), distilled through vocational reading of Rosenshine (2012), the popularist guidebooks of Sherrington (2020), the recent prompt of regulators (Ofsted, 2023), and the pragmatism of school-based senior leaders. Here, learning is conceptualised as a mechanical process of remembering – the associated evidence-base (for example, Dunlosky et al. 2013; Sweller 2016) promoting copy, demonstrate, repeat, test and model as effective pedagogies, with introduction to this pedagogy now mandatory in English ITE (Department for Education 2019).

While some of this influence might be framed positively – certainly, much of the strategy Rosenshine summarises judiciously applied has good effect – its homogenous imposition can be described in sinister terms. Certainly, it presents practical dissonance when tactlessly attached to art learning. When previously pedagogy might have derived from the idiosyncratic, and at times anachronistic, artistic experiences of the teacher – pedagogy informed by cognitive science is increasingly rigid, didactic, and standardised. 'Dependence on whole-school training with little interpretation in the subject' (Ofsted 2012, 20) has diminished space for creative adaptation, and uniform expectations of lesson planning prohibits embodied, intuitive, or spontaneous activities. When a pupil's edification is conceived as successful memorisation and recall, this fits well 'with league table-driven practice, tests and examinations' (Thomson & Maloy 2022, 11), but not with the mutable, subjective mess of post-modern culture and the collaborative, contrary, visual arts (Adams 2013b). Gielen and De Bruyne (2012a), despite writing predominately on higher education, make an apt metaphorical comparison between contemporary art education and what they describe as a 'catering regime'. Here, neoliberalism has reduced the educative process to knowledge delivery, with quality measured as 'first and foremost not delivering outside the norm' (2012a, p. 3) – while the 'heartfelt involvement' of passionate art teachers, who 'need few pedagogic rules to evoke [learners] interest' remains immeasurable .

In demonstration of this epistemological misalignment: where the discipline of cognitive science valorises evidence of educational impact assessed through random controlled trials (Styles &

Torgerson 2018), *no* empirical study of this method has been undertaken in art educational research in the last twenty years (Thomson & Maloy 2022). For most art teachers, the process is not naturally conceptualised as scientific process but an artful one, relying on conceptions of cognition not effectively measurable by means reliant on positivist conceptions (Eisner, 2002a).

- Outcome: Given the prevalence of prescription, the perpetuation of 'school art' styles (Efland 1976) – dogmatic faux- expressive artworks, detached from contemporary artistic practices (Wild 2011) – is a logical outcome. Efland (1976, 41) maintained that the symbolic purpose of art made in schools was to present an illusion of freedom within the otherwise regimented expectations of the school – the artworks 'not as free as they looked'. This unique visual language is typically viewed as a self-defeating compromise:

> An insipid, but safe, authorized version of high art…[that] has impaled itself on both horns of its dilemma by adopting Modernist principles that relegate it to the margins of both the world of art and the world of education. (Cary 2011, np)

Prescriptive outcomes may have some short-term value – pupil's improved self-confidence when guided to make something they consider artistically impressive, in comparison to the anxiety of risk inherent to student-led processes. However, disconnection from genuine artistic practice – and the potential to build autonomy and confidence in ambiguity – makes such prescription problematic to many (Hardy 2007; Hickman 2007; Rayment 2007).

Perhaps the persistence of standardised artistic products is found in their capacity for comparable assessment. While this might not satisfy the terms of modernist artmaking, it does serve the requirements of reductive equivalency measures of pupil progress, making performance ranking, and review of teacher efficacy, possible. Adams (2011, 158) critiques this instrumentalism as antithetical to artistic value, having been designed 'under the misguided notion that things which can be readily tested are the most valuable components of education'.

- The Limitations of Generic Characterisation

In short, through consideration of the limited empirical evidence, illustrated with personal observation and theoretical commentary, I consider curriculum, pedagogy, and outcome in

secondary school art and design education as stretched across three inter-related planes of tension (Fig.10): rationale, method, and values.

First, concerning purpose – there are numerous contemporary and critical ends which can be served by an art education, combinations of which might be championed by aspirant teachers. Yet at policy level economic instrumentalism is principle, and at a practitioner, or classroom level, anachronistic notions of self-expression and formalism persist (Cary 2011).

Second, concerning implementation, despite the arts encouraging progressive inquiry and creative experimentation, subject pedagogy and curriculum seem in long-standing stasis, with traditional, predictable and transmissive characteristics. This may be attributable to (i) the domesticating influence schooling has long has on artistic activity (Duncum 2009; Efland 1976) compounded more recently by (ii) the significant influence of a homogenising cognitive science in educational policy expectations (Hordern & Brooks, 2023a).

Last, there is a dissonance between the outcomes valued within an art education, i.e., academic products measurable against external criteria, and the values perceived within many modes of authentic contemporary artistic practice, i.e., creative originality, subjective evaluation, and lionisation of process over product.

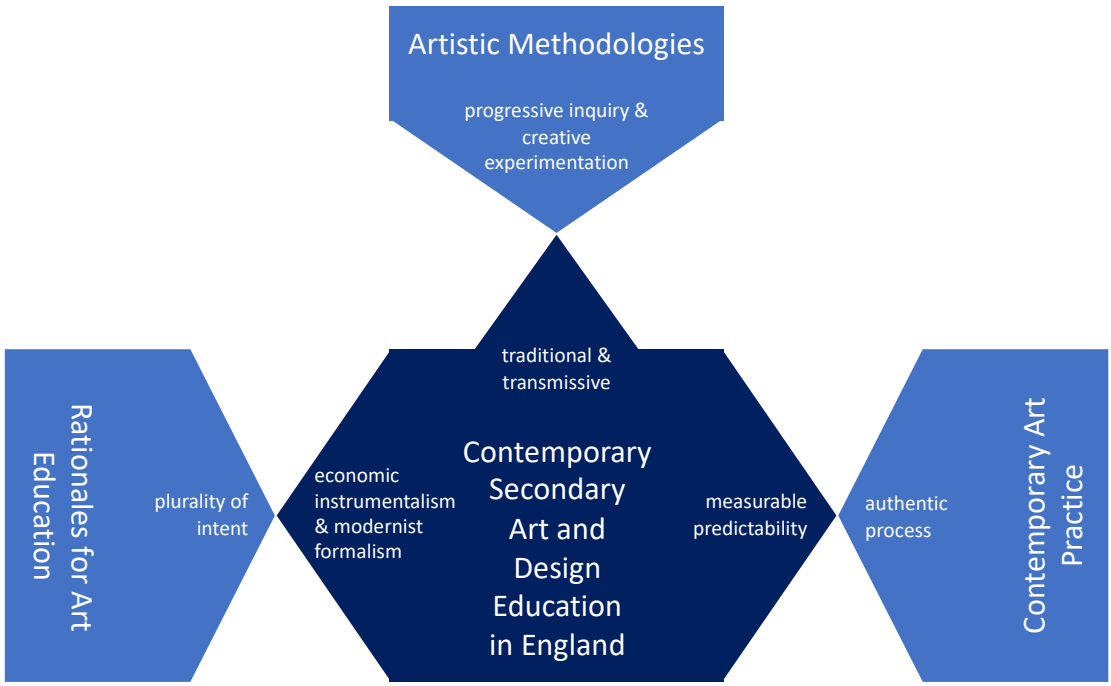


*Figure 10: The triple tension of contemporary secondary art and design education in England*

Specific attribution of these tensions is difficult, and their proposed existence is likely the result of many complex contextual factors, some explored below. Similarly, attempts to characterise art education in England will always be limited – illustratively useful, but not empirically certain. Clearly not all disciplinary teaching and learning operates along the pessimistic principles outlined here, and the agency of many teachers curtails this pervasive homogeneity.

- Resisting Tensions in Practice

Indeed, given the tensions described above, it would be unusual were individual educators not pushing back against orthodoxies. There is some evidence of progressive, authentic, and eclectic art in contemporary English classrooms - two examples briefly considered below. I hope that these examples may be indicative of other, underreported, work taking place across the country.

Chris Francis, a secondary school teacher in the town of Poole, has designed and published a curricular model – an 'artpedagogy' (2023) comprised of open statements on artistic characteristics. This typology of 'threshold concepts' (2023), arrived at through reflective practice, provides Francis' pupils with a disciplinary perspective that also facilitates success within the metrics of modern

schooling. While not a self-avowed critical pedagogue, Francis' curriculum encourages personalised exploration, creative disobedience, and critical questioning. A system demonstrably capable of providing both meaningful artistic experience and academic success, it has attracted a groundswell of interest, with over ten thousand teachers subscribing to Francis' digital resources. I consider Francis a constructive exemplar of Rossatto's (2005) transformative optimism, as his sophisticated practice looks to reconcile systematic expectations with an authentic artistic education.

Another, more radical, art educational project in some small group of English schools is the 'Room 13' initiative. Widely discussed in academic literature (Adams 2005; Souness & Fairley 2005), Room 13 is a global network of pupil-run art studios. In contrast to transmissive art classrooms, the project encourages pupil ownership of a space in their school, run as a commercial art studio. Room 13 is provocative in its paradigmatic challenge to typical educative power dynamics, the philosophy of communal ownership and creative freedom unburdened by scholastic bureaucracy critically confronting the limitations of the current traditionalist trend – again an example of transformative optimism in action.

Chris Francis and Room 13 do not represent a unified reaction to recent policy in English education, but their public profile suggests potential among art educators to address critical pedagogies to the tensions that define art education in many school contexts.

### 3.2.2 Understanding Practice through Atkinson's Characterisation of the Neoliberal Dispositif

To understand why the relationship between English secondary art education and wider society can be described as in tension, it is helpful to analyse the environment which transmissive, instrumental, and predictable practice has colonised. Atkinson has sought to do this (2004, 2011, 2018), borrowing a Foucaultian term to describe Western society today as structured by a neoliberal 'dispositif' – or total framework – that governs the knowledge structures and dynamic within a particular societal age. This neoliberal framework 'invokes participation grounded on a pre-conceived and highly regulated venture governed by economic prosperity and ambition' (Atkinson 2018, 60), manifest in schooling as 'proscribed conduct constructed through the signifiers of performance, assessment, progress and achievement' (Atkinson 2018, 15). Gielen and De Bruyne (2012a, p. 4) describe how this regime 'transforms a political ideology into a crypto-ideology, one that presents itself as the only

possible option with any sense of reality'. In so doing, the principles of this neoliberal dispositif have taken on a normative character.

Atkinson is anxious about how such a venture interacts with artistic epistemologies, and for him, the crucible of the subject's internal tension is located here. Two key observations Atkinson makes relate to the dynamic of artistic learning within a neoliberal dispositif. First, he calls current practice 'hylomorphic', where learning approaches are imposed on learners – a claim that might be illustrated with reference to the homogenising national and institutional policies that demand ubiquitous reference to instructional principles (Department for Education 2019; Ofsted 2023). Second, he considers 'transcendent' educative practice to dominate in art classrooms – didactic transmission of knowledge, or Cary's (2011b) 'knowledge download'. Both these features are natural to neoliberal education, which favours standardised processes and outcomes. He strongly argues for a new pedagogy better aligned to artistic principles:

> Producing the possibility for what I call disobedient potentials. Paul Klee made the point that art does not represent the visible, but makes visible; in a sense, it disrupts and is disobedient towards established ways of seeing and thinking.
> (Atkinson 2018, 94)

The aim – ontogenesis, or 'new ways of seeing, thinking and making and the creation of new worlds…an alternative approach to pedagogic work than that which is driven by economies of performance…' (Atkinson 2018, 18). This utopic rationale resonates with both Biesta (2019) and Freire's (2013) emancipatory aims, but for Atkinson a new approach is as much about authentic art practice as escaping socially oppressive systems. Through a pedagogy with ontogenetic purpose, the power of an 'aphetic' art education can be realised, where disobedient teaching and learning 'may fracture the parameters of instruction and pedagogic work and in doing so, effect a transformative dynamic' (Atkinson, 2018, p. 158). Institutional reluctance to embrace such a paradigmatically challenging approach is nothing new – indeed Plato was suspicious of the arts for their disruptive potential (Cary 2011) – and for the instrumentalist policymaker in pursuit of productivity, pedagogies of resistance, transgression or transformation threaten instability.

- Neoliberal Policy and the Shape of Secondary Art and Design Education

Policy within a neoliberal educational landscape (well documented by many - Adams, 2013b; Ball, 2017, 2018; Gordon & Whitty, 1997; Hill, 2011) trend instead towards a market model governed by measurable criteria. Stratagems such as published examination data, external audit, and managerial autonomy are founded on the understanding that parents will be enfranchised to exercise choice about their children's' schooling, promoting improved standards through the 'hidden hand' of competition (Ball 2017). To compete effectively, school leaders must improve productivity (through increasing teacher accountability), focus on the visible metrics perceived important to stakeholders (academic qualifications), and closely follow central statutory policy for maximum favour within this quasi-market (curricula expectations, resource allocation, structural organisation).

I, like Atkinson, would connect this wider context and the form of much contemporary art education in England. The tensions that dictate its general shape – those of purpose, form, and process explored above (fig.13) – are maintained by the accountability metrics and centralised controls typical in neoliberal schooling.

- Accountability

First, as Atkinson (2011, 36) writes on accountability: 'the pernicious problem with audit and control is that it tends to predicate what practice is or should be'. If the surveillance of teaching efficacy encourages 'a normative canopy' (Atkinson 2018, 7) of homogenous pedagogy and dictatorial expectations of pupil behaviours in pursuit of performative productivity, it limits the potentiality of the art classroom. I would suggest artistic disciplines the most damaged by the austere models of behaviour management now commonplace. Interactions with pupils that might challenge, or transgress convention, initiating the immanent learning process Atkinson associates with artistic learning (2018) - are frustrated when contextual lenience is denied, and the possibility of artistic risk discouraged.

The 'imposition' of a classroom culture, rather than allowing teachers to 'tap into what interested and enthused pupils' (Ofsted, 2009, p. 24) was already highlighted as a risk a decade ago. Since then, the derivative franchise model of multi-academy trust (MAT) reform has proven an accelerant of

imposed practice that militates against creativity (Maisuria 2005), with many MATs centrally developing mandatory institutional teacher training, lesson planning, and curriculum models in pursuit of efficacy (West & Wolfe 2019).

- Centralised control

Second, where art education fails to meet the expectations of the economic instrumentalism of neoliberal schooling, its status – and associated uptake, funding, and time allocation – suffers. The NASUWT are clear; neoliberal 'policy priorities will lead to a reduction in the teaching of creativity and creative arts subjects across the UK' (2017, 45). For example, tightening accountability around percentile of pupils entered for the English Baccalaureate, mandated by the DfE (2019a), nudges schools away from arts provision without making this explicit (Royal Society of Arts, 2020). Gast (2021) recently reported to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Arts Education that this decline was indicative of public 'perception of value' – in a context where pupils and parents now view value in fiscal terms. Thomson and Maloy (2022, 14) similarly found that 'increasing performativity, privatisation and commercialisation of education' is strongly correlated with decreasing enrolment and status in the subject discipline.

Twenty years ago, Harland et al. (2000, 4) were cynical about policy-makers' promotion of extra-curricular arts provision – suspecting a 'hydraulic' process wherein the arts become 'leisure-time activity', removed from core curriculum. Adams noted a decade later that the arts continued to be sustained 'through dedication, commitment and passion rather than by state resources' (2011, 157), while CIF's (2015, 9) research suggests the arts 'are increasingly becoming a privilege rather than an entitlement'. The NASUWT (2017, p. 45) note Ofsted's reference to 'creative subjects being offered as extracurricular activities as a form of curricular enrichment' over creativity being a core concern.

The outcome, I argue, is that art is not a secure constituent of English curriculum: the statutory expectation that art features in every school's provision has been diluted, not mandated for the academies that constitute 80% of all English secondary schools (Office for National Statistics 2022). It is in academies where the largest reduction in time allocated for the subject can resultantly be seen (The National Society for Education in Art and Design 2016).

### 3.2.3 The Alternative, Inter-related Influence of Modernist Formalism on Secondary School Art and Design Practice

While suggesting neoliberal ends and artistic ideals are primary antagonists in the tension of school art education today, I also note that frictions preceded neoliberalism's advent – in the tenacious orthodoxy of school art styles (Efland, 1976) and the associated influence of a domesticated modernist formalism (Cary, 2011), for example. On this, Atkinson positions art teachers as not *only* captive to imposed systems, but also passionately attached to a reproductive model of modernist teaching (2006, 20).

If modernist rationale – a humanist concern with self-expression and aesthetic originality - has been uprooted within wider visual culture (Atkinson 2011), it is understandable that educators may yet cling to this function for stability. Indeed, this melancholic tendency for art educators to maintain modernist practice paradoxically interacts effectively with the tenets of neoliberal schooling, traditional notions of canon and technical proficiency acting as measurable units of knowledge. On reflection this is perhaps unsurprising, given modernism and the positivism that undergirds the 'new science' (Hordern & Brooks 2023) of classroom learning might both be described as 'contemporaneous denominations of the same cultural currency' (Cary 2011, np).

From a critical perspective, I posit a wider paradigmatic tension between artistic liberty and the institution of schooling. Within rules-based scholastic cultures, Foucault's (1977) concept of disciplinary power (wherein pupils police their own behaviours to match systematic orthodoxies) dictates much sanctioned action. Following this logic, Duncum (2009, 235) suggests that school art has more in common with the rational instrumentalism of schooling than the 'unpredictable and irrational' elements of authentic artmaking. Certainly, it has proven difficult for educators to introduce contemporary or post-modern artistic pedagogies into the secondary school (Downing & Watson, 2004), given the challenge critical, social, and transgressive approaches present to the normative ends of the neoliberal school.

### 3.2.4 Returning to Rossatto's Typology of Optimisms and the Student Teacher

Fig.11 illustrates the means, described above, through which I believe a neoliberal dispositif calcifies the tensions of school art. It would be reductive to suggest a symmetrical antipathy between

Rossatto's transformative optimism and the reality of contemporary practice in the neoliberal school. However, those making Freirean critique of contemporary English school art education (Adams 2013b; Atkinson 2018; Dalton 2001) might suggest that doing so concisely summarises the fractious context into which new teachers are introduced to the profession – where a pragmatic neoliberal instrumentalism shields reproductive convention from progressive personal idealism.

Many prospective art teachers approach their training hoping to transform the lives of their students (Addison & Burgess 2005, 128). The conditions described here suggest that idealists hoping artistic rationale, pedagogy, or curriculum might transform learners, beyond providing means to succeed *within* a neoliberal dispositif, will likely be limited, assimilated, or shattered (encouraging cynicism or resignation). However, despite this depressing view, I don't view the perpetuation of instrumental orthodoxies a foregone conclusion. A Freirean lens requires hope – that friction between teacher idealism and neoliberal structures might create the very conditions to spark critical change (Freire 1998, 7).

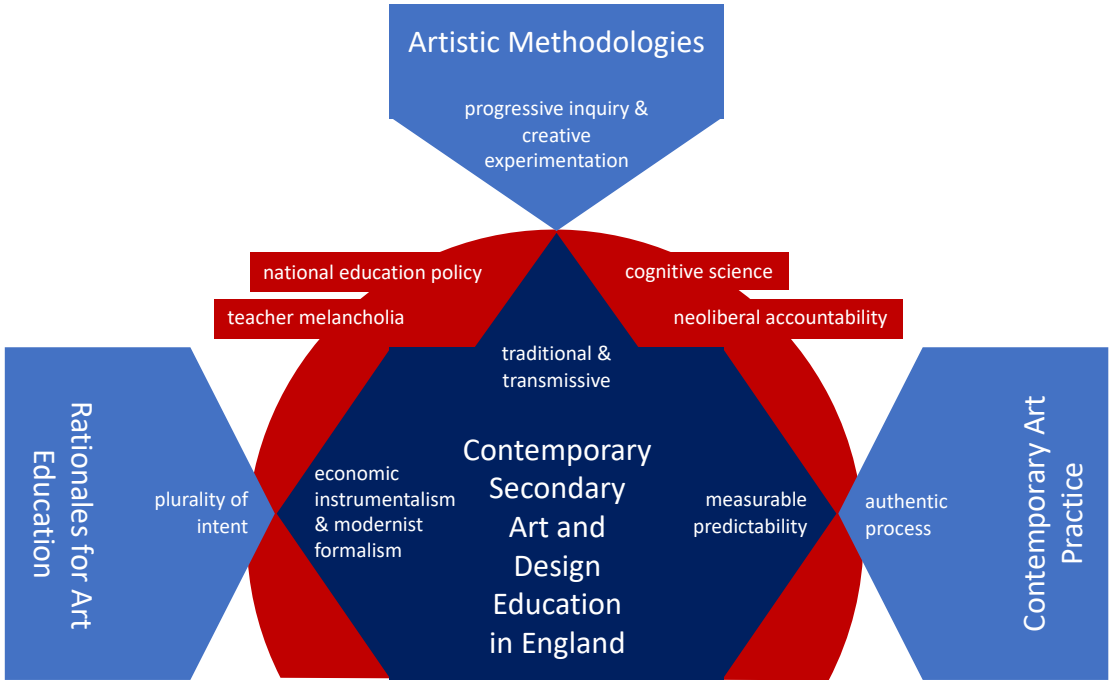


*Figure 11: The contextual shell sustaining disciplinary tensions in secondary art and design education*

Established art teachers are not all blind, fatalistic, or resilient optimists (Rossatto 2005) ignorant to, or complicit, in the reproduction of a hegemony repressing art education's transformative potential.

There are clearly those who demonstrate characteristics of the transformative optimist – Chris Francis and the Room 13 participants illustrative examples. Here we see teachers refusing complicity with orthodoxies, despite the personal risk, or those who negotiate compromise – integrate – to meet their own ends alongside those of the neoliberal institution.

Novice teachers, however, are liable to feel they must adapt to the context into which they step. They are unlikely to have the knowledge or power to refuse or integrate their ideals with the practices they encounter in the classroom, even if they wished to. They are also likely to experience disciplinary tensions keenly, given their recent experiences of authentic artistic practice, their etic perspective, and the typically idealistic introduction to art education of campus based ITE activity.

### 3.2.5 Summary

This section has secured a contextual interpretation of secondary school art and design education in England, crucial to understanding student teachers' experiences in this context. However, the site of this study is a yet more focused space: the ITE programme. Section 3.3 offers a focused review of research, policy, and theory relevant to art and design ITE, and how students' experiences and identity formation here might influence their attitude to school placement.

## 3.3 Initial Teacher Education and the Development of Art and Design Teacher Identity and Ideals

Reviewing common practice in English art education provides valuable understanding of the context student teachers encounter when first entering the classroom. However, this encounter takes place within a more specific context again – as a statutory component of an ITE programme. Therefore, it is equally important to understand how student teachers' ideals develop both on *and beyond* school placement. In 3.3 I (i) review research and theory that explores relevant aspects of the 'becoming teacher' (Hetrick & Sutters, 2014) experience, (ii) consider this in the context of ITE policy and practice in England today, and (iii) reflect on the specific nature of the ITE programme at the centre of this study.

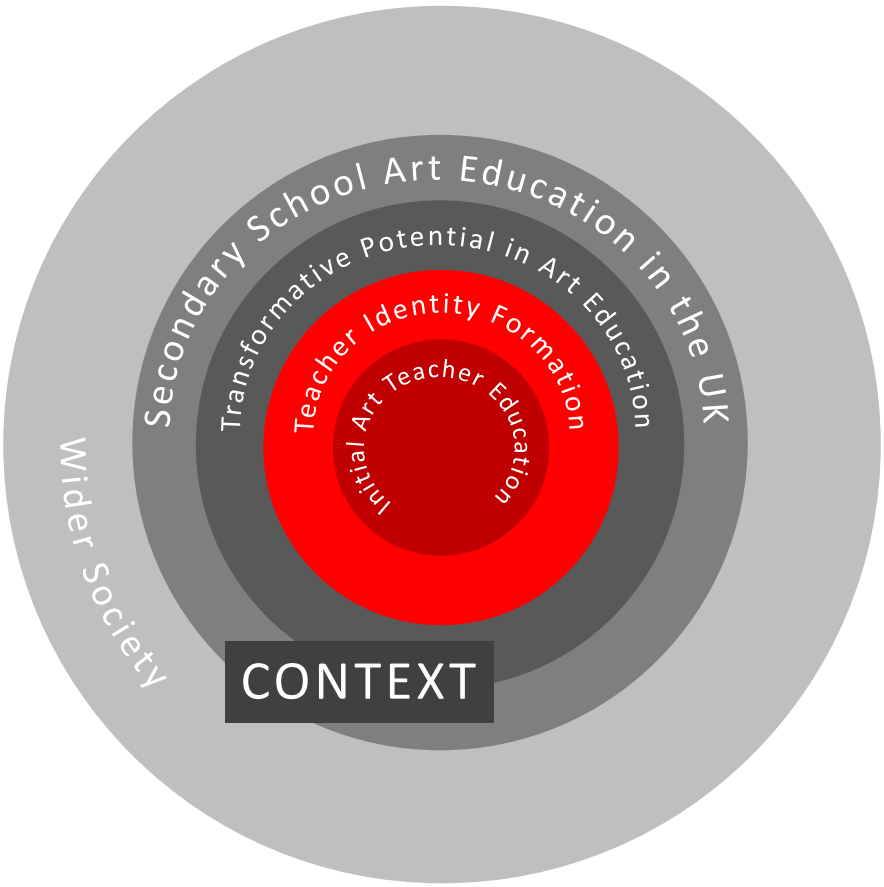


*Figure 12: The inner context of this study: ITE Art and Design education*

### 3.3.1 The 'becoming teacher' – challenge and change in identity and ideals

ITE students are referred to in various terms: student teachers (Atkinson, 2004; Hanley & Brown, 2017), trainees (Duggan & la Velle 2019), pre-service teachers (Bae 2014), becoming-teacher (Hetrick & Sutters, 2014) or teacher candidates (Kraehe & Brown, 2011), for example. I consider these terms interchangeable, as while there is some variation in usage, all refer to a person undergoing the initiative education required to enter the teaching profession. Most literature conceptualises ITE as a liminal space of flux (Chong & Low 2009; Hanley & Brown 2017; Thorpe & Kinsella 2021), where knowledge, identity, and values are challenged and changed, 'an unfolding of subjectivity' (Hetrick & Sutters, 2014, p. 16) leading to ongoing and lasting transformation.

Characteristics of this flux include navigation of new connections between personal and professional identities (MacDonald 2017), associated crises of confidence (Hetrick & Sutters 2014), and resultant questioning of assumptions and values held prior to teacher education (Kenny et al., 2015). I don't

assume that student teachers submit passively to change, and it is helpful to view this flux as a negotiation (Grushka & Young, 2014; Skåreus, 2009a), conscious or otherwise, between where a student teacher is willing to go and where they are being asked to travel by the requirements of the profession and their ITE studies.

Some suggest common pathways through this flux; continua along which student teachers travel. These conceptual continua are occasionally antagonistic, with, for example, Kowalchuk (1999) suggesting student teachers move from self-serving survival to altruistic concern for pupils, while MacDonald conversely suggests a 'shift to surviving as opposed to understanding how to improve…' (2017) as her own experience. Szekely (2004, 18) highlights the gradient from 'theories of the university to practical realities of public school' as the defining shift in focus, and Chong & Low (2009) chart a similar slip towards the 'realism' of the classroom. Collanus et al. (2012b), in a study comparative in approach to this one, note that their student art teachers typically moved from focus on individual pupils' learning at the start of their placement through to pragmatic, managerial concerns after time in school:

> The dominant discourse had changed from ideals…to the practice of a teacher as a time manager, organizer, planner and question formulator. (Collanus et al. 2012b, 14)

Hanley & Brown (2017), through a critical lens, conceptualise this pragmatic turn as a distinct outcome of neoliberal instrumentalism in school education. Here, while many students 'began with an altruistic conception of what teachers do', this was 'drastically altered with greater experience' (Hanley & Brown 2017, 355) as students adopted exam performances, or league tables as measures of value. In the view of the authors these two positions – that of the novice concerned with social justice and of the recently proselytised – represent 'fundamentally opposed views of human agency and perhaps cannot be reconciled' (2017, 355). Student teachers abandoning nascent ideals, adapting to external, irreconcilable, normative standards, is the immediate concern to this study.

### 3.3.2 Becoming an Art and Design Teacher

For the student art teacher, I can consider disciplinary continua of change. First, from artistic criticality and contemporality to 'collective amnesia' (Addison & Burgess, 2005, p. 137) in the face of

standardised schooling. Indeed, several authors suggest that student art teachers, *more than peers*, face a challenge to their identity when entering a school. Noting that arts teachers have the lowest rate of retention, Scheib (2006) suggests this due to their unique skills being particularly undervalued, for example.

Bae (2014, 58) notes that one artistic skill specifically – a confidence to take creative risks – erodes during pre-service experience, with 'adoption', or imitation, of teaching methods witnessed in schools prioritised. Such reproduction stymies development of innovative pedagogies and hobbles opportunity for student teachers to employ classroom strategies native to their artistic experiences (Thorpe & Kinsella 2021). With standardising teaching practices and formulaic lesson planning increasing in school art departments (Atkinson 2011; Freedman 2007), exacerbated by recent policy reform (Department for Education 2019), student art teachers' agency appears in decline. Bae (2014, 64), as response, puts the art teacher educator, me, in the role of advocate – suggesting I engage with students' mentors in schools 'robustly' to make clear the dangers of reproductive, transmissive art educational practices. This is work I am willing to undertake (albeit, telling art teachers to be more creative requires diplomatic agility). However, as Thorpe and Kinsella explain, it is infrequently individual mentors who refuse student teachers space for agentic creativity in their classrooms, rather 'the apparatus of scrutiny via high stakes systems' (2021, 543). Teachers, alongside student teachers, are obliged to conform to institutional expectation, with contractual accountability.

Addison and Burgess suggest that the 'disjunction' between school cultures and the character of artistic knowledge ensures the gap 'between disciplinary and pedagogic personas is perhaps more pronounced in art and design that in other school curriculum subjects' (2005, 128), and acutely noticeable to the novice. Their ITE students are characterised as starting the programme 'fired up by the desire to reconceptualise the art curriculum', while after school experiences 'the status quo is assured, art becomes merely a means of cultural reproduction' (Addison & Burgess 2003, 160). Given the hardship of contesting pedagogical norms within 'current curriculum and inspection frameworks' (Atkinson, 2005, p. 26) that refute artistic traditions, or resisting policy that devalues the subject's contribution entirely (Thorpe & Kinsella 2021), Atkinson questions the legitimacy of school art education altogether. Undoubtably, those first experiencing conformative school cultures

after one of open-ended artistic practice might, as Dafiotis (2012, 142), find it ‘an unwelcoming place’.

Dafiotis’ (2012) recognition that most who begin art teacher education self-identify as artists on arrival highlights the second disciplinary ITE continuum of change – that of identity, from artist to teacher (Dalton, 2001). Related to the shift in activities outlined above, from agentic and creative to standardised and conformative, there are challenges in navigating the associated shift in identity too. Blair & Fitch encountered student art teachers who ‘felt a deep-rooted sense of frustration’ the cause of which was ‘the conflict between the dual roles…they were expected to take on: namely those of artist and teacher’ (2015, 93). Thorpe & Kinsella (2021, 542) write of art teachers being ‘torn’ between artistry and policy compliance, while Atkinson characterises this schism as requiring ITE students to occupy ‘conflictual discursive positions between…[their] desire for a particular pedagogy and the demands of…[their] tutors for a different approach to pedagogy’ (2004, 392). Freire considered such a reality as requiring a ‘divided consciousness’ (Lincoln et al. 2018, 137), if artistic action might be promoted in a system defined by instrumental rationality (Denzin & Lincoln 2018, 103).

Hetrick & Sutters (2014, 24) argue that in this instance ‘prior knowledge cannot copenetrate with disjunctive lived experience’; students must abandon their artistic ideals and concede this identity to that of schoolteacher or abandon their own education. In contrast an earlier, Australian, study by Grauer (1998), found preservice teachers emulating classroom orthodoxies when on placement, but that this ‘did not necessarily translate into a substantial belief change’ (1998, p. 362). Here a dual layer of identity is at work, with professional requirements and expectations a superficial surface, or socially established façade (Goffman 1959), below which personal philosophies still thrived. Where she found a significant dissonance of values, she conceptualised this as productive. Preservice teachers were forced to rationalise their actions through critical reflection. A process of adopting practices, while developing potentially conflicting personal priorities, may paradoxically represent a more sustainable way to navigate the flux of ITE than one where inconsolable positions are highlighted.


*Figure 13: Continua of change in initial art teacher education*

Fig.13 draws together the 'tensions' that theorise a student art teacher's experience. This is largely typified as an uncomfortable journey towards the concerns of effective practice within current systems of education. This is not surprising, and while some authors describe legitimate concerns (Addison & Burgess 2005; Bae 2014; Chong & Low 2009), it would perhaps be problematic for a professional qualification to prioritise criticality above preparation for classroom careers.

However, what I believe disheartening, is that preparation for practice might require repression of creative, critical, artistic, or idealistic ambitions. To understand the extent to which English ITE might be described as repressive, and to centre the specific student experience on the programme of this case study, next I analyse policy and practice prevalent today.

### 3.3.3 A policy framework and potential tensions: an echo of secondary education in England

Designing ITE to guide student teachers through the flux of transformative continua outlined above is a challenging endeavour. In England, the 'core' of ITE curriculum – the Core Content Framework (CCF) – is centrally mandated (Department for Education, 2019) in policy that details the statutory

entitlement of beginning teachers. These entitlements transcribe the Teachers' Standards (2011) into a long list of declarative and procedural capacity statements – authorised knowledge for classroom application.

In national documentation, the vernacular noun for student teachers is 'trainee' (Department for Education 2019), a homogenising convention I believe suggestive of the vocational nature of both policy content and policymakers' philosophy on teacher education, i.e., as a transmissive, instrumental process. This assertion is confirmed by the perceived need for a centralised curriculum, and when the literature informing the CCF is inspected. Heavy investment in Rosenshine's (2012) *Principles of Instruction* - presented as canonical knowledge - militates conformity over reflective practice. Echoing the contemporary practice in secondary schools explored in 3.2, this is also, noticeably, instruction with no epistemological relationship to artistic modes of knowledge.

As in secondary school classrooms, learning how to teach is conceptualised as remembering or banking (Rossatto 2005, 96) substantive knowledge – in statements such as 'working memory is where information that is being actively processed is held' (Department for Education 2019, 11). For the 'trainee', their capacity to apply strategies learned in reading pre-selected research, and through mimesis of 'expert colleagues' (Department for Education 2019, 5) in school, is assessed. As a result, I would suggest this mandatory curriculum enforces, rather than explores, the continua of Fig. 16 – movement towards pragmatic conformation with standardised pedagogies.

Such top-down technocratic expectation might be considered an unassailable threat to ITE's capacity to encourage criticality among student teachers – marginalising opportunities to innovate, take risks, or transgress convention. As Atkinson would describe, a 'kind of cloning process, a kind of ventriloquism' (2004, 384). However, current policy does allow providers to augment this 'core' curriculum, a requisite flexibility where stakeholders with differing priorities (universities, schools, and other private parties) can all provide ITE across a fragmented market. Therefore, for the critically minded teacher educator, like myself, there is capacity to transcend technical curricula requirements. Duggan & la Velle (2019) found that university-based teacher educators habitually innovate *around* policy – as one participant commented: 'we tend to take whatever the latest edict from the government is and sort of take it apart and put [it] back together again' (2019, p. 108). Teacher educators in Duggan & la Velle's study were proud of their capacity to agentically interpret

policy and promote criticality among student teachers. Such a pride in the artful translation of technocratic intent for critical means may be limited to those working in university based ITE, a 'terrain of social struggle' where committed teacher educators take the risk of seeking 'state provision while at the same time opposing administrative and institutional needs' (McWilliam 1992, 10). School-centered programmes, in contrast, are characterised by Duggan & la Velle (2019, 108) as reducing 'the profession to a craft' through elementary delivery of statutory requirements alone.

When designing the ITE programme at the centre of this study, I covered the requirements of the CCF, but also promoted five additional foci: criticality, autonomy, disciplinary expertise, and a concern for context and equity in the classroom. I try to present a programme inclusive of both normative and critical content, and that reveals to students where artistic traditions may be in tension with those of contemporary education. Wherever possible I seek to provoke dialogue between the real and ideal during new teachers' education, while avoiding (as far as is possible) the imposition of my own beliefs.

I include critical content as I recognise that ITE is potentially the most powerful place to question assumptions about art pedagogy, before systems and structures are internalised and become invisible to student practitioners (Dalton 2001, 66). The pressures placed on experienced art teachers often deny opportunity for reflection on practice – in comparison ITE could be a ripe location for school art to undergo critique (Addison & Burgess 2003a). Equally, for teachers to learn how to agentically design 'holistic and dynamic' arts processes – i.e., those more closely related to authentic artistic practices, they need this modelled during their own training (Cahnmann-Taylor & Sanders-Bustle, 2019). Therefore, I have designed curricula responsive to the progressive and contemporary concerns of student teachers, encouraging learning through artmaking, reflective and dialogic critique, and leveraging peer knowledge to engender a horizontal classroom.

However, I am simultaneously aware that students who join the programme rightly expect the instrumental knowledge for them to succeed in a teaching career, and as new professionals, success is measured – by school-based colleagues and managers if not students themselves – against normative standards. My aim, therefore, has been to deliver a balanced curriculum; instrumentally instructive at times, while promoting critical reflection. As Sheffield et al. (2020) note, the different landscapes of the university and the school 'may create a strong sense of cognitive dissonance

between what pre-service teachers expect and what they experience' (2020, 304). I believe that not preparing students for such dissonance, to identify and understand how reality may differ from their ideals, would potentially harm their development, or lead to abandonment of personal hopes and ideals.

Reflecting on Fig.13, I recognise that my ideal is that students do not abandon the idealistic, artistic, personal or critical concerns that the literature suggests are eroded during ITE provision. Clearly, pragmatic, and instrumental understanding is requisite to manage and lead an art classroom – but I might hope that acquisition of these prosaic qualities does not concurrently necessitate the abandonment of hope. Therefore, I conceive my work as successful where graduates leave with a professional desire to *remain within* the ambiguous flux characteristic of ITE. Capable of drawing on pragmatic and idealistic, or critical and imitative strategies, or synthesising aspects of these as appropriate, this graduate commits to continuous reflective practice. Such an outcome could represent Freirean integration (Freire 2013, 4), where a students' own worldview meets with reality to construct a third, shared space.

One of the motives for this study's conception was a sense that this delicately balanced outcome was proving difficult to achieve when student teachers' first encounters with the contemporary art classroom, during ITE placement, stood in such stark contrast to many of their expectations; my experiences suggesting it was during their school placements that student teachers felt most vulnerable, naïve, or challenged.

### 3.3.4 The School Placement

It is a statutory requirement that ITE provision includes 120 days of school-based experience (Department for Education, 2022). Here, student teachers are expected to shadow experienced mentors, learning to apply their theoretical knowledge. As has been highlighted, placements are often where student art teachers first confront the reality of school orthodoxies, and resultantly where idealistic ambitions might be tested. They can be considered the crucible of identity realignment; hopefully 'launching an optimistic professional outlook' (Hovanec 2011, 1), but considering the landscape surveyed through 3.2, likely frustrating preconceptions about the potentialities for art practice.

In this ITE programme, two 60-day placements are undertaken in different schools, almost uninterrupted, with large blocks of campus-based activity before, in-between, and after. As a result, the culture of campus criticality and the vocational learning of school placement might feel disjointed to student teachers, and the dissonance between the 'what if' of university debate, and the 'what now' of the school – pronounced. On placement, the student teacher's mentor – an experience member of the school's art faculty– is highly important in shaping outlook and progress (Hovanec 2011, 37), and if this relationship falters it can have lasting consequence for the identity and confidence of students. I would suggest that the easiest way to ensure a positive mentor relationship is to acquiesce to their demands or mimic their practices; even the more critical or creative student might temper their ambition or ideals to protect this professional bond with their vocational assessor. As programme lead, I can introduce mentors to my programmatic intent, attempting to broker their participation in the protection and promotion of student teachers' agency. However, given that mentors remain accountable for the learning of their pupils and embedded within the tensions of conventional school art practice (Thorpe & Kinsella, 2021), their caution towards novice attempts at transformational pedagogy might be expected. Indeed, despite good relations with school-based colleagues this frequently occurs.

Fig.14 illustrates how bifurcated ITE programmes (input on campus and school placement) potentially intensifies rather than reconciling the flux of moving through ITE, presenting as it does paradoxical expectations and instructions, spread across the 'unrealistic' campus and the 'pragmatic' school (Addison & Burgess 2003a, 158).

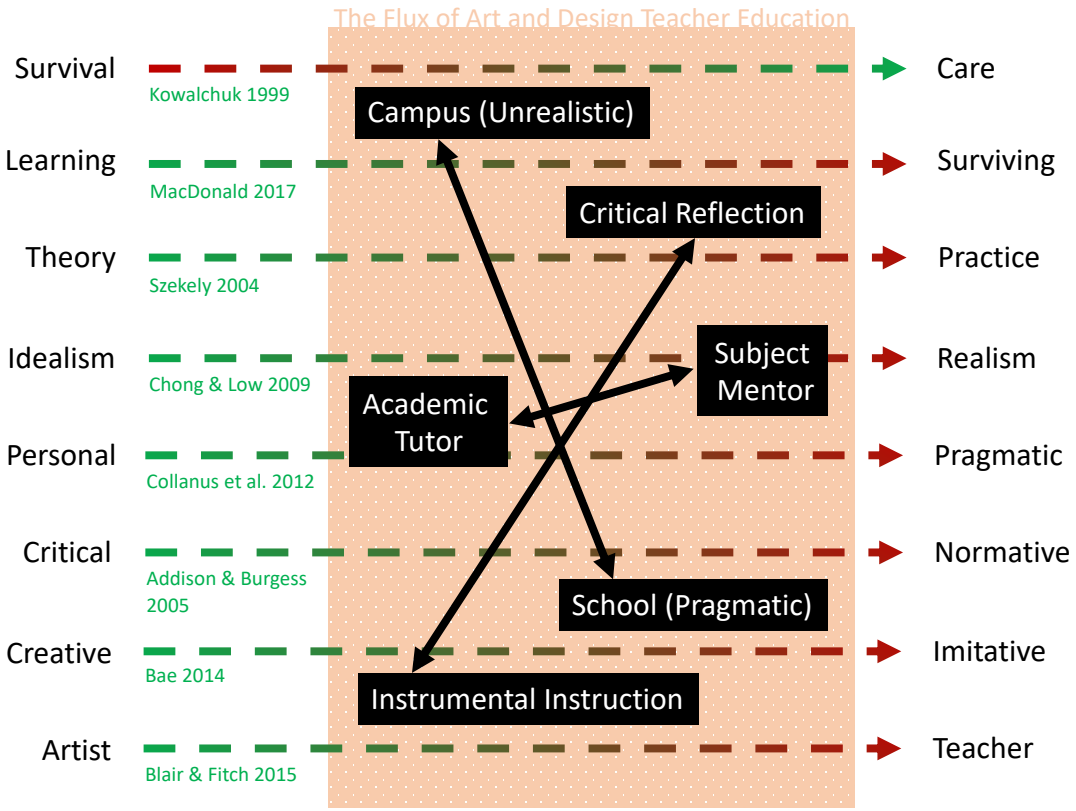


*Figure 14: Continua of change in initial art teacher education, with bifurcate influences illustrated*

As student teachers confront the inevitability of identity change, and weigh the (potentially divergent) contributions of theorist and practitioner, it is important to recognise the 'considerable' affective and intellectual support required to avoid burnout (Klein 2008, 377) and develop a sustainable identity (Sheffield et al. 2020, 303). Frequently, success in teacher education is framed as 'survival' (Kowalchuk 1999; MacDonald 2017), a pessimistic interpretation that I would rather avoid. What *is* evident is that ITE is challenging, and that student teachers require strategies to navigate this challenge – self-initiated and institutional. I feel the programme on which I work offers strategic support – student satisfaction reports and retention rates suggesting so. However, while students largely 'survive' this programme, it is not clear that students' ideals 'survive' too.

### 3.3.5 'Surviving' Art and Design ITE

Challenges to the identity and ideals of an ITE student are frequently referred to as symbolically violent 'conflict' (Atkinson, 2004); I next review theoretical suggestions through which student art teachers might broach such conflict. First, the artist/teacher model is characterised as a conceptual

identity that reconciles the arguably conflictual priorities of the artist and teacher, navigating the flux of ITE through unification. The 'fictions' documented by Hetrick (2017) represent a second, fragile means of potentially 'circumventing' the flux, through the utilisation of imaginative fantasies. Third, I look at the literature that reconceptualises the tensions of ITE as opportunity for student development, where paradox and frictions are illuminating, rather than tiresome.

- The Artist/Teacher

As documented by Daichendt (2010), a large field of thought on the artist/teacher identity has developed. Proponent's position artistic and pedagogic identities as symbiotic, and some teacher educators lean heavily into this philosophy to promote the artistic tendencies of their students while preparing them for service (Freelands Foundation 2023; Burgess, in Unwin 2020). While noble, such an approach is not without critique, given the demand 'when both artist and teacher are expected to exist simultaneously within the same person' (Blair & Fitch 2015, 95). As Horwat's research suggests, this can force art teachers 'to straddle two conflicting worlds' (2016, p. ii) – their art practices and teaching careers. The 'artist/teacher' has also been challenged by critical thinkers who see such an approach as another imposed standard of practice – one that pushes against neoliberal norms, but makes the individual teacher responsible for double work, while exposing them to the risk of institutional rejection (Wild 2022). While these critiques have convinced me to avoid explicit promotion of the artist/teacher model, it may be that such a conception is helpful for student teachers balancing their developing identity.

- Fantasy

Hetrick puts forward another conceptual means through which student art teachers navigate ideal and reality, suggesting that to 'circumvent or endure reality, especially those realities that may be displeasurable at times, such as teaching' (Hetrick 2017, 40) novice teachers employ 'fictions'. Hetrick (2010, 42) initially suggests that her ITE students attached themselves to unconscious 'savour' fantasies, associated to their interests in social justice (and informed by media portrayals of art teachers). She goes on to develop this theory into a nuanced set of fictions lionised by student art teachers: the knowledgeable martyr, adored carer, and the 'ideal-ego', a bricolage of previous

teachers encountered by the novice. The danger of reliance on fantasies to 'endure reality' is highlighted by Hetrick:

> When student teachers get too close to their own fiction(s) and they soon realize it is only imaginary, an image, a deception – it is a product of their own positions – which can lead to frustration or hopelessness when teaching in real life does not effectively equate. (2017, 43)

Atkinson also expresses concern where student art teachers' ideals of the 'good teacher…tend to fall away or are shattered in the heat of the experience' (2018, 67). Taking a pessimistic view, he considers 'mechanical and prescriptive approaches' (2018, 5) to pedagogy as requiring art teachers to exercise 'disobedience towards personal frameworks of practice', an often 'intolerable' expectation (2018, 194). Dafiotis echoes this tone, suggesting that in many instances school art teachers 'cling to their artistry and tend to downplay, or even deny, the education dimension of their professional identity' (2012, 142).

Hetrick concludes with more optimism - relevant to the purpose and design of this study - highlighting the role teacher educators can play in helping future teachers explore their fictions and work through 'their dynamic tensions of identity (re)construction' (2017, 46). Hanley & Brown, after researching their student teachers' changing priorities, came to similar conclusions: that it was possible for teacher educators to encourage students 'to remain attentive to how desires or wishes influenced their perceptions' (2017, 366) of school teaching, and look to meet halfway.

Neither the artist/teacher identity, nor reliance on fictions to endure, present as critical practices. In both instances, fatalistic acceptance of standardised approaches coexists with a coping mechanism allowing the individual to gain personal sustenance elsewhere.

- Reconceptualising tension as opportunity

Above, I have outlined the ways in which initial art teacher education can be defined by tension, or friction, in a manner that echoes school art itself – a comparison noted elsewhere (Duggan & la Velle 2019). In both contexts, the epistemologies of art and school, personal and professional needs, and the idealism of the novice and the pragmatism of the institution chafe. These tensions are frequently

characterised as the damaging outcome of a flawed systematic approach to teacher education, and school art education in general (Thorpe & Kinsella 2021). There is likely some exacerbation of these frictions due to the 'schizophrenic' (Duggan & la Velle 2019) nature of ITE – where campus-based activities are liable to contest the actions student teachers are mandated to perform on school placement. Tension or friction is in turn linked to low teacher retention (Scheib 2006) and the perpetuation of uninspiring, irrelevant curriculum and pedagogy in art classrooms (Atkinson, 2018). However, not all commentators share this pessimistic view.

Some position friction as the spark for growth or development (Devitt et al. 2012; Kenny et al. 2015). MacDonald ultimately persuades herself that navigating 'the crucial void that remains between expectations and experience in practice' (2017, 165) develops revealing problem-solving skills, and that student teachers should be 'encouraged to linger in the transient space between artist and teacher' (2017, 171). Garber suggests that if there was no gap between reality and ideal, then there would be no motivation to improve:

> To implement a transformative practice, teachers need to feel a tension between their beliefs in transformative practice and what they do in the classroom…they need to embrace their roles as teacher intellectuals and believe in the possibilities of what they are doing. (Garber 2004, 13)

Hanley & Brown (2017), critical of the shift in student teachers' priority from idealistic 'activism' to pragmatic instrumentalism, still characterised this tension as fruitful, when 'the learner develops by reflecting upon the persistent mismatch' (2017, 364). Their description of a student teacher's journey suggests an idealistic start, quickly challenged by the necessity of practice mid-experience, 'leaving little opportunity for intellectual adjustment' (2017, 361), but followed by a late explorative recalibration. Productive reflection is perhaps only possible if the dual identity of artist and teacher, and other tensions inherent to art and design ITE, are overtly identified in ITE curricula (Blair & Fitch 2015) rather than asking students to face transformational stress and self-doubt alone.

I would consider such earnest transparency a critical strategy, making apparent to students the structural tensions of teacher education, and the difficult fit between the progressive, questioning tendencies of university-based teacher educators and the orthodoxies of school art education.

### 3.3.6 Suggestions for critical practice in art and design ITE

The transmissive, reproductive, direction of teacher education policy in England is problematic from a Freirean perspective. Suggestion on how this situation might be improved echoes Bae's (2014) call for teacher educators to act as advocates for system reformation, with Ploof & Hochtritt (2018) positioning teacher educators as 'activists' who can press for socially just educational practices in schools. This 'activism' could be linked to Duggan & la Velle's (2019) findings - that teacher educators can artfully reinterpret policy, but also intimates that a more public oppositional stance might be required.

- Critical ITE curriculum and pedagogy

Aside from lobbyist activity and ensuring student awareness of the tensions inherent to their experience (Blair & Fitch 2015), three key strategies are typically suggested as required from a critical advocate or activist in teacher education. First, teaching critical reflection (Grauer 1998; Hovanec 2011; Klein 2008), second, encouraging a social-justice oriented stance (Kraehe & Brown 2011), and third, facilitating autonomy on school placement (Collanus et al. 2012b; Garber 2004; Kuster et al. 2014). If students cannot view themselves as agents of change, capable of critically responding to their classroom contexts with intent to improve their pupils' lives, they may be reduced to one of Rossatto's (2005) less desirable 'optimisms' – blind or fatalistic. It is clearly impossible to achieve 'emancipatory education if institutional structures constrain the identities of teachers, their imagination, and their practices' (Garber 2004, 13), or protect the ideals of new teachers if denied opportunity to autonomously explore their approach.

Ploof & Hochtritt's call that social justice art education must be a collective endeavour – 'not an individualistic academic exercise' (2018, 39), feels appropriate to an ITE context. Here, the campus-based aspects of a programme might be reserved for collaborative activity, facilitating reflective and dialogic means of knowledge creation to counter the inherently individualistic experiences of school placement. Collanus et al. (2012b) offer further suggestion based on critical research with art ITE students. they advocate for pedagogies that 'embrace multiple forms of knowledge in arts education' (2012b, 9) – suggesting a breadth of sessions that introduce diverse artistic disciplines. They also recommend that 'meta-level knowledge of the subject area should be given more

attention' (2012b, p. 18), such that identity development can be supported. The authors' description of 'meta-level' knowledge is reminiscent of Counsell's definition of 'disciplinary knowledge' (2018) – that which introduces the epistemological traditions and contemporary potential of art education. Here, explorative pedagogies might include discussion, workshop, debate, or research activity – constructive agentic undertakings.

While these strategies are admirable means to empower students to improve *future* school systems – they are also catalyst for enflamed tensions within *current* systems. Kraehe & Brown's (2011, 489) press for ITE curricula to include exploration of 'how large structural conditions impact learners', to encourage critical consciousness among preservice teachers, is undoubtably important but must be handled carefully such that student teachers don't antagonise or patronise colleagues in their placement schools.

- Challenges of Critical Art and Design ITE

McWilliam counsels that critical pedagogy in ITE can be dangerous or undertaken inadequately. Most obvious is the potential for critical issues of equity and empowerment to be superficial topic of conversation, or 'rhetorical garnish' (McWilliam 1992, 5) rather than an authentic emancipatory curriculum constituent. Equally, there is potential for critical teacher educators to inadvertently censor those they purport to advocate for; as Garber writes: 'in our zeal to convince our students about the need for social change, we may silence their voices' (2004, 13). Carelessly managed, promotion of transformative methods, ideals, or ideas might easily become, ironically, a transmissive approach itself and/or marginalise the 'needs talk' (McWilliam 1992, 11) of student teachers own priorities.

I felt it important to remain cognisant, as I undertook this study, that the purpose was not to *promote* critical pedagogies, but to seek ways to *employ* critical pedagogy as a means to encourage students to, in turn, activate their own diverse ideals during their ITE experiences and beyond.

### 3.3.7 A Personal Perspective on ITE in England

Considering the above, teacher education that facilitates critical reflection and student agency appears taxing to maintain and when achieved, always at risk. Unless students can be encouraged to take their own hopes forward, rather than committing to preconceived models of classroom success, then the tensions of identity transformation will not realise their productive potential. Instead, these tensions will continue to be circumnavigated or ignored and result in suppressive outcomes, or in student alienation and failure. Viewed more widely, if ITE is itself reduced to 'banking' process, alongside the concurrent practices and expectations of secondary schooling, then the 'historical amnesia of blind optimism' (Rossatto, 2005, p. 50) will result in the perpetuation of hegemonic pedagogies at both levels.

Not to act – not to undertake this research and seek better ways to achieve emancipatory ends would be to resign oneself to fatalism and enable the reductive slide of teacher education towards a programme of technical instructional. It would certainly diminish opportunity for students to be autonomous agents of change – my hope for those who enter the profession. In 1998 Giroux cited Freire as having said:

> Whenever the future is considered a pre-given – whether this is as the pure, mechanical reproduction of the present, or simply because it is what it has to be – there is no expectancy in the struggle, which is the only way hope exists. There is no room for education, only training. (Freire, in Giroux 1998, 2)

Therefore, I am certain that more must be done in my own practice to protect and develop new students' own artistic, critical, progressive ideals whenever found. I do not consider the future pre-given and remain committed to transformational optimism with regards the promise of a teacher education that equips student teachers to affect change in their future careers. Unlike many student teachers, currently obligated to repress their utopian dreams – I refuse to lose 'the battle' (Freire, in Rossatto 2005, 19) and hope to leverage my position as a progressive educator.

I hope to help student teachers remain idealistic about the transformative possibilities of art education while operating within structures that have for a long time, according to Freire (1998, 7), turned many educators to fatalism and pessimism. This study can only be part of an ongoing process

to address this challenge, but I hope a powerful opportunity to better understand how my practice might improve, for student teachers, the secondary school classroom, and wider society.

# 4 Research Questions

Chapter Two delineated the perspective of this study. Through this lens, I took an interpretivist, Freirean view of reality. Chapter Three described the context within which I undertook this study. Here, concentric concerns suggest a paradigmatic move towards conformity. This was evidenced in ITE policy, the resultant development of student teachers, and the wider activities of English secondary art education. The literature suggests that while not ubiquitous, transmissive pedagogies, technocratic curricula, and an associated sense of fatalism, or diminished agency among practitioners is prevalent in all contexts. This troubling context suggested rich grounds for Freirean enquiry, and hope that new understanding might then be transformative in turn.

Reflecting on lens and context, I conclude this review by distilling three focused research questions. These questions bridge what I knew, or felt I knew, prior to empirical investigation and the methodological design and data collection that followed. To arrive at research questions, I found it helpful to start in reductive terms:

I did *not* intend to undertake interventionist activity, as I wanted first to understand the perspective of my ITE students. I needed to ascertain how their experiences in the 'flux' of teacher education interacted with that described in section 3.2.

I did *not* want to discover how to effectively, but paradoxically, press critical arts pedagogy on my students. I did want to borrow from this field to focus my own academic lens, and I also recognised that critical pedagogy has and continues to inform my own teaching practice – the desired product of which is not imitative students, but agentic students.

I did *not* want, in undertaking this research, to discredit or attack the practice of my peers in schools – mentors who support ITE students in the classroom. While the literature, and my experience to date, would suggest that the school placement can be a space of tension for the student art teacher this is not universal, and rarely the responsibility of any individual. As Addison & Burgess (2003) make clear, the teacher mentor often experiences similar tensions, and typically has even less opportunity to reflect on progressive solutions that ITE students. My focus for future action can only

meaningfully be those aspects of ITE that I have authority over: the curriculum, campus pedagogies, and communication with mentors.

The title I ascribed to this endeavour was therefore: Protecting Transformative Optimism in the Art Classroom - Exploring Aspirant Art Teachers' Shifting Ideals. This recognises the limits of the study – that it is explorative only in the first instance. It also makes clear my commitment to Rossatto's (2005) transformative optimism; student teachers' capacity to see themselves 'as a necessary and viable participant in the collective process of social change' (2005, 81).

To effectively support student teachers in maintaining, or developing, this optimism first required understanding of whether they consciously see themselves as active participants in social change, and if so what ideals guide their practice. I wanted to know the strength and lucidity of these initial ideals, and from where they may be derived. The first requisite step to knowledge therefore becomes answering:

What hopes and ideals do aspirant art teachers bring with them when they begin their initial teacher education?

Following, I wanted to better understand how these hopes and ideals then 'shift' as student teachers undertake school placement; to what extent they abandon, strengthen, replace, or adapt their pedagogic goals as ideals collide with reality. Step two requires understanding of:

How the hopes and ideals of aspirant art teachers interact with practical orthodoxies and institutional rationales encountered during their ITE school experiences?

Reflecting on answers to these first two steps would, I hoped, then equip me to critically consider my own practice – the design of our ITE programme, the curriculum and pedagogies within, and the student experience. This would in turn facilitate construction of an evidence-informed answer to my final concern:

How might my teaching practice better defend those students' ideals precluded by procedures encountered in practice, such that they retain the transformative optimism to realise a socially transformative pedagogy?

These three questions, sparked by my own professional inquisition, and fuelled through construction of this lens and context, shaped the following methodology, data collection, and analysis design.

# 5 Method

## 5.1 Introduction

In previous chapters I refined both the conceptual lens and theoretical context that frame this research, culminating in the phrasing of research questions designed to provide understanding of the phenomenon of my interest.

Here, I explain the research design process that followed. I considered it important to tailor a methodology that harmonised with the theoretical context for this study, not least because consistency of intent and implementation is a key indicator of rigour in qualitative research. As Aper (1995, 7) makes clear, conformation with any methodological orthodoxy is only of secondary concern, while the degree to which methods are chosen to meet research purpose is paramount. As an example - given the value this study ascribes Freire's democratic conceptualisation of pedagogic practice (1998), I felt it important to use a dialogic method of data collection. Similarly – given critical analysis led me to conclude the contemporary educational context of this study undervalues visual art activity – I considered use of visual methods important, demonstrating my conviction in artistic activities' potential in the classroom and as research tool (Hickman 2007).

Alongside alignment of theory and method, I was keen that my research process was also a good fit for the practice-oriented intent of a professional doctorate (Bourner et al., 2001). I felt it important that the methodology was bound to my site of practice, hence the use of case study – and that methods were chosen within which I was actively involved.

In 5.2 I clarify the benefits of case study in providing inductive and deductive data across multiple methods in answer to Interpretivist questions, and the appropriateness of doing so given the context of the phenomenon of interest. In 5.3-5.6 I explain the rationale for selecting methods, and how I chose to characterise these. Visual research methods and elicitation interviews are critically inspected as appropriate mechanisms for addressing my research questions, their application in previous studies is evaluated, and their inherent limitations are reviewed. In 5.7 my analytical process is described.

In 5.8 I return to discussion on the relationship of researcher to research and report on the wider ethical considerations I made during this study. I focus on the relationship of participant and researcher and the idiosyncrasies of working ethically with visual data. 5.9 is a summary of my methodological framework.

## 5.2 Methodological Overview

My decision to employ case study methodology was linked to conceptual lens and theoretical context. Crowe et al. (2011, 7) discuss how a theoretical lens should not 'constitute a straitjacket' when designing methodology, but I felt synergy between theoretical and practical concerns important. My Freirean perspective necessitated a participant-respectful approach, rather than a method that reduces people or places to abstract data. Similarly, research questions that concern themselves with activity taking place in a specific time and space, and with specific social groups (Crowe et al. 2011), called for a methodology that drew a boundary around my interests. Lastly, a study dependant on critical discussion of multiple mercurial phenomena – ideals, art, education, and my own practice - called for a methodology open to 'personal and intuitive' (Simons 2010, 117) modes of interpretation.

This decision was also informed by noting favourable comparison between Stake's (2000) key arguments for case study: it's appropriateness for (i) addressing explanatory questions, (ii) challenging previously held assumptions, and (iii) producing findings of specialised depth, and the needs and nature of my research. I found it interesting that Stake was himself uncertain whether case study could be described as methodology, suggesting it instead a means of choosing phenomena of interest. I accept that the adaptability of case study seemingly prioritises the requirements of research questions over representing a pre-set theoretical framework (Flyvbjerg 2006, 242). In turn however, I would suggest that malleability allows research undertaken with a pre-stated perspective (such as my Freirean perspective) to harness case study to distinctive objectives (Harland 2014, 1115), at least when these objectives do not include theory-building. Therefore, I felt confident employing case study – as means of organising and operationalising my qualitative intent, and one particularly suited to addressing 'explanatory 'how', 'what' and 'why' questions' (Crowe et al. 2011, 4).

In addition, I was a practitioner in the site of interest, rather than an external agent. I therefore held preconceived ideas about what was happening in this space and needed a methodology that facilitated academic improvement and reconstruction of an existing, vocational understanding.

> Case researchers enter the scene expecting, even knowing, that certain events, problems, and relationships will be important, yet they discover that some of them this time will be of little consequence (Stake 2000, 441)

Stake's description of a case researcher starting with preconceptions, yet open to discovery, aptly describes how I felt before undertaking this research. Flyvberg (2006, 236) defends learning conceived in this way – as not just generating new understanding but the 'casting off' of preconceived notions, views, or assumptions as a powerful outcome of case study. Given my critical perspective, the opportunity to identify my own assumptions and refine my own understanding was a key rationale for case study.

I was also drawn to Stake's (2000, 448) view that knowledge generated from case studies is not intended 'to represent the world, but to represent the case'. It was intrinsic interest that led me to design a study focused on the issues, contexts, and interpretations of a singular real-life context – the hoped-for product of which Stake would describe as 'thick description' (2000, 439). Echoing Stake's concept of thick description, Flyvbjerg (2006, 238) suggests that a 'dense' case study 'is more useful for the practitioner than…high-level generalizations of theory' – that encountering 'dense' narratives within a case is a sign something rich may be uncovered. Harland notes the value of this case study characteristic – its specificity of purpose and output – in an HEI context nearly synonymous with mine:

> Case study…firstly benefits the researchers undertaking the project and then…it can have utility for others. In higher education, beneficiaries typically include an academic's students (Harland 2014, 1114)

Knowledge gained through this study's findings may be of great use only to me, but *in my use of it* its impact may ripple out beyond the bounds of the case – to students, school pupils, and wider society in turn.

To this point, Stake's description of case study matches the nature of my methodology – bound within a naturalistic context, targeted towards intrinsic knowledge, and initiated with personal purpose. Next, I define the prefixes that I chose to shape the specific methodological character of this case study: an (i) extended, (ii) found, (iii) normative case.

- Extended

There are a few aspects, conceptual and practical, where I might move beyond Stake's definition of case study to provide more targeted description. First, given this study was 'to understand a specific issue, problem or concern' (Stake 2000, 437), I initially assumed this case might be 'intrinsic', following Stake's typology. Instead, recognising the Freirean perspective of this study, I came to describe it as an 'extended' case – seeking to 'describe how everyday practices in specific places are connected to larger structures and processes' (Schwandt & Gates 2018, 345). While interested primarily in the internal case dynamics – my own practice and my students' experiences – I also acknowledged that these exist within and are impacted by larger structures and processes; Atkinson's (2018) neoliberal dispositif, for example. Partly I was looking to understand if my participants were conscious of this, and how their idealism was affected – therefore the 'extension' epithet matched my hope to link analysis with broader narratives – not generalising but contextualising thoroughly.

- Found

Switching from Stake's to Ragin and Becker's (1992) typology of case study, I applied a further descriptor – labelling this a 'found' case. There is an existing empirical unit within place and time: the HEI ITE programme that I facilitate. I play a part in that phenomenon, but it was not created for study, nor was a boundary introduced to cut the programme and the students within from a larger natural unit. While it was clearly important to recognise the case as 'a complex system, and that the process of casing should be viewed through a critical realist lens' (Schwandt & Gates 2018, 342) – the PGCE course is socially constructed, it exists alongside similar courses in different subject disciplines and alongside similar subject courses at alternative universities – there was an organic boundary to the edge of this study. I recognised also that the experiences and interpretations of participants would be formed through many more channels than the course content alone – indeed

better understanding of these other channels was a key rationale for study, but the bounding of the case was seen as vital to understanding the space in which I collected data.

- Normative

My intent to explore interpretations of participant idealism made me confident in describing this case as 'normative' (Schwandt & Gates, 2018, p. 351), where normative implies comparison between reality and ideals. While many interpretive studies identify the ideas that inform participants' actions, Thacher (2006, 1632) argues that a normative case study can do this while 'contributing to our understand of important public values'. Given I look in this case study to compare interpretations of experienced reality with participant ideals and that this phenomenon is related to concepts of social, educational, and ethical values of autonomy, equity, and power – a normative epithet felt appropriate.

Less common than case studies seeking description only, adopting a normative approach seemed especially apt for Freirean study. Normative studies adopt a 'committed' (Thacher 2006, 1637) pose, to produce a convincing argument to instigate change, rather than the detached tone of some interpretive case study.

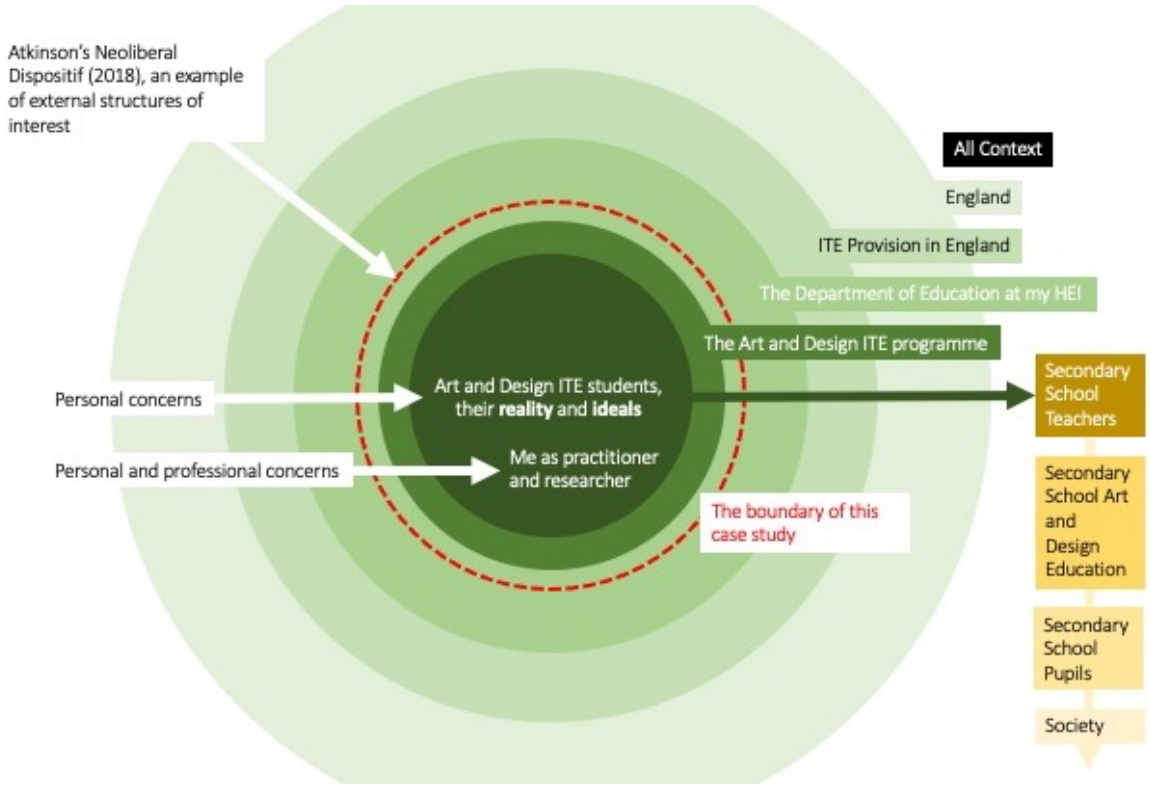


*Figure 15: Here the boundary of the case study is illustrated, with context rippling beyond this space and time of study. Some external factors that influence thought and action within the case highlight why it might appropriately be labelled as extended.*

### 5.2.1 Case study and methods

A frequently noted advantage of case study (Crowe et al., 2011; Harland, 2014; Idowu, 2016; Stake, 2000) is the potential for multiple methods, which it is argued add authenticity to understanding while allowing for deep contextual knowledge (Creswell et al., 2007). In this study, the opportunity to diversify methods was exploited by generating oral, artistic, and written data to provide authentic, interpretive source materials – authentic because in combination they represent the complexity of the issues of interest. The following sections present these methods in turn:

- Participant-generated visual method
- Semi-structured, empathetic elicitation interviews

Both were chosen, as was case study methodology, with the conceptual lens and theoretical context in mind, and with direct relation to the intent of research questions.

## 5.3 Methods

Undertaking a qualitative case study, I chose methods with recognition that the data produced would be unstable, subjective, and partial. People do not often give clear meanings to things and in choosing methods I wanted to 'respect that confusion and inability to be decisive by not giving things a more stable meaning that the people involved do' (Becker, 1996, p. 6).

To accommodate for this mercurial nature of qualitative data, I approached this study with structurally robust intent. Fig. 19 is a tabulated summary of my methodological processes, conceptualised as a series of logical steps originating in the research questions, moving through participant instruction, to three latter strands of interpretive action facilitated by data collection. These strands cumulatively result in four 'products', including: the interpretations of artefact by researcher, interpretations of participant intent by researcher, interpretations of artefact by participant, and communal reinterpretations of artefact by researcher and participant.

I aligned my approach with Drew and Guillemin's (2014, 55) description of a rich visual research process termed 'interpretive engagement' wherein data can be defined widely, as 'sets of images generated by participants, the participants' reflections on the image…the researchers' reflection…[and] interview in parallel with the image production' (2014, 56). Similarly, there is structural relationship with Wright's (1999) typology of looking: looking through, at, and behind – three modes Banks (2001, 10) in turn associates with realist, formalist, and expressive 'strategies of authorial intention' or as I conceive, strategies of research engagement. Here the interpretative engagement of the researcher, the participants and an anticipated audience are all enabled without assigning primacy to one. This inclusive approach to data collection and classification was used to avoid either accusation of conceptual partisanship described by Pauwels (2013, 3), who notes that (i) naïve realists – who interpret the visual literally - overlook the 'constitutive character' of the visual while (ii) others have reduced the visual to 'purely abstract arbitrary constructions'. Democratic treatment of stakeholders – researcher, participants, and reader, and an inclusive approach to data collection, also felt appropriate given my Freirean perspective. Indeed, diverse interpretative products were not gathered to provide greater 'validity' through triangulation, as seems common

rationale in visual elicitation practices (Ganesh 2012), but to better represent the complex and at times contradictory nature (Croghan et al. 2008; Weber 2012) of images, and participants' ideals.

As such, the artworks produced as part of this study stand as data, *and* as formative 'step along the way' (Banks 2001, 178) of my analytical process – the inherent qualities of the works important, but no more important than the 'analytical and conceptual possibilities' of the visual as catalyst for further data collection (C. Knowles & Sweetman 2004, 6).

*Table 4: The methodological steps of this study, with associated theoretical rationales listed*

| Object | Interpreter | Purpose of interpretation | Product | Purpose of product | Important in recognition of: |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Research Questions | Researcher | Research planning | Participant instructions | Align research process to intent | |
| Participant instructions | Participant | Participation in visual method | Artistic artifact | Visually communicate response to instruction | **'ocularcentric'** culture (Mitchell 1994) |
| Artistic Artifact | Researcher | Initial analysis of artistic artifact | What the maker might have intended to show, as interpreted by the researcher | Interpret participant intent ('Looking at' the artwork – Wright 1999, 38) | 'Participant artworks are not objective 'windows into participants lives', but the 'product of the task that was set and how this was framed,' (Croghan et al. 2008, 348). Drew & Guillemin term this **contextual reading** of participant artworks a 'window to identity,' 'a means to access the inner…perspectives of the participants' (2014,56).<br><br>**'Polysemic'** nature of images (Mannay 2016, 65) |
| Artistic Artifact | Researcher | Initial analysis of artistic artifact | What the researcher interprets the artwork to show | Interpret the artwork ('Looking through' the artwork – Wright 1999, 38) | 'Making meaningful interpretation of an artwork 'contingent on knowing its creator's intentions is… problematic' (Lomax 2012, 228) |
| Artistic Artifact | Researcher and participant together | Elicitation interview | What the maker intended to show, and dialogue to *remake* what the artifact shows | Understand participant intent and collaboratively interpret this intent in context ('Looking behind' the artwork – Wright 1999, 38) | 'What the maker **intended** to show' (Mannay 2016, 64)<br><br>'The artwork itself **holds limited meaning until discussed** – 'made' again at the site of interview wherein 'the interviewees (and interviewers) perform their social identity' (Rose 2016. 323)<br><br>'Academics can be seduced by their own commitment to a symbolic way of seeing, **academics cannot necessarily read a truer account of the meanings intended by visual images than other audiences**; and all theories and applications of interpretation are bounded within these limitations.' (Mannay 2016, 131) |

## 5.4 Participant-generated Visual Research Method

While Skareus (2009, 181)was enthusiastic in suggesting the potential for visual research in investigation of 'teacher's emotions in/about their practice' over a decade ago, there remains a lack of literature that connects visual methods and educational research (Eisner 2019; Hickman 2007; Moss & Pini 2016; Russell 2007; Wall et al. 2012). To avoid criticism of their use for superficially

novel reasons (Drew & Guillemin 2014; Mannay 2016), I below make clear my conceptual and methodological connections, and the advantages I believe visual methods held for my research.

Hickman (2007, 316) suggests that within an interpretivist epistemology where reality is 'multiple and dynamic', the visual is an appropriate way to record and interpret events 'in a way which exposes a greater number of realities'. Congruently, Rose (2016, 6) promotes visual research as helpful in understanding the 'cultural construction of social life in contemporary Western societies' – a visual that she posits as never innocent but nevertheless a useful, interpretive record. I wanted to leverage this potential to collect rich data, harnessing artworks' layered connotations.

Manny (2016) rightly suggests caution in deploying visual methods without good reason; some participants might feel acute anxiety about artistic processes. While Rose (2014) argues that study participants are often more conversant with image production than acknowledged in research literature - here I hoped that participants would be comfortable in creating artworks; a shared characteristic of student teachers on the PGCE programme being a background in visual arts practice. As such participants were competent in visual communication, perhaps even considering it their 'first language for considered and reflective reporting' (Hickman 2007, 322).

It seemed good reason therefore to begin data collection with a participant-generated visual method. Not only was lack of artistic experience among my participants (often cited as a weakness in visual research methods (Allan & Tinkler 2015; Eisner 2019; Rose 2014)) mitigated, but the process might have empowered participants, who had 'direct control over the artefacts…used to represent themselves' (Barley & Russell 2019, 224), as they decided 'when, what and how to represent their subjective worlds' (Mannay 2016, 22). I knew that collecting visual data from artists could provide 'narratives that convey what respondents want to communicate in the manner they wish to communicate' (Chalfen 2012, 5), encouraging a critical authenticity and providing unique insight.

While this research was not strongly participatory – I designed and initiated the study unilaterally – I still felt this work collaborative in nature. Rose (2014, 29) lists the inherently collaborative nature of visual research as a 'special strength'; in this study participant responses were mediated through their context and our interpersonal dynamic, as much as the instructions I produced. This collaborative, empowering characteristic of visual methods had, I felt, direct synergy with the

Freirean perspective of this study, rooted in collaborative conceptions of pedagogy that recognise learners' lived experience (Freire, 1998). Similarly, I hoped that participation might provide opportunity for immanent transformation among participants who could, through reflective artmaking, consolidate or refine their rationales for practice – a valuable, Freirean derivative of my primary intent.

### 5.4.1 Advantages to Visual Research

Beyond conceptual alignment with the purpose and participants of my study there were further benefits to visual methods. Hall and Wall (2016, 211) summarise some of these: 'participants volunteer more readily…stay longer…[and] report finding the experience less intrusive than interviews'. The attraction participation in visual research has for 'ordinary people' is echoed by Chalfen (2012, 2) and Margolis & Zuniarwad (2018); I might suggest this especially potent when working with artists. These factors recommended the approach when working with a small group of participants, committed to maintaining high ethical standards throughout.

Visual methods also provide opportunities to gather evidence that cannot be communicated easily using other means (Eisner 2019; Hall & Wall 2016; Rose 2014) or which might remain vague if not formalised pictorially (Kirkham et al. 2015), through an interpretive process that necessitates participant reflection (Rose 2014, 28). Indeed, Harper goes so far as to suggest a biological imperative:

> The parts of the brain that process visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information. Thus images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness that do words (Harper, 2002, p. 13)

I was keen to exploit the value visual methods have in accessing (through the diverse information they might contain) concepts difficult to communicate otherwise, *and* the 'unknown unknowns' (Allen 2011, 492), the immanent things unconsidered prior to participation. Several proponents for visual methods claim the approach as valuable precisely because it can grant access to materials, memories or emotions that might otherwise not be revealed by participants (Allan & Tinkler 2015; Croghan et al. 2008; Hickman 2007). As Weber notes:

> The reason we need and create art has to do with its ability to discover what we didn't know we knew, or to see what we never noticed before, even when it was right in front of our noses (2012, 45)

Alongside the potential to unearth new considerations, I saw that visual methods might challenge my preconceptions, both conscious and subconscious. As someone who has studied the theoretical literature surrounding art teacher education, undertaken a PGCE programme, and worked with student teachers for a decade (as school mentor as well as university tutor) – it was important to make what feels familiar to me strange, following Mannay:

> …self-directed visual data production provided a gateway to destinations that lay beyond researchers' repertoires of preconceived understandings of individuals, place and space; unravelling the diversity of experience... (2016, 41)

My purpose was improvement of my practice in such a way that the idealism of aspirant art teachers might be better protected. I couldn't learn how I might do this through my own assumptions and observations of student actions alone, thus the importance of 'unravelling the diversity' of others' experiences and interpretations.

### 5.4.2 Conceptualising the Contributions of the Visual

Recognising my research as an ongoing process of 'unravelling' was helpful, because it reminded me that participant artworks were not objective 'windows into participants lives', but the 'product of the task that was set and how this was framed,' (Croghan et al. 2008, 348). Drew & Guillemin (2014, 56) term this contextual reading of participant artworks a 'window to identity,' 'a means to access the inner…perspectives of the participants'. While this conceptualisation of visual methods appears popular (Beltman et al. 2015; Freer & Bennett 2012) I remained cautious of this modest modernist paradigm. Assuming an artwork as a direct cypher for its creator alone – that the most 'salient aspect in understanding a visual image is what the maker intended to show' (Mannay 2016, 64) was, to my mind, conceptually naïve. Weber (2012, 43) describes a continued conceptualisation of image as uncomplicated window to participants' 'external and internal "realities"' as a troubling tendency in our post-postmodern context.

Such a position ignores two essential dimensions of interpretation justifying the use of visual methods – that the works may contain aspects revelatory of the creator's *sub*conscious (Katz-Buonincontro & Foster 2012; Skåreus 2009), the communication of which they were oblivious to, and that the works might 'have their own agency' (Rose 2016, 21) apart from the creator. Skareus (2009, 170) promotes this second perspective – that of viewing the artwork as an 'independent statement' with 'intrinsic communicative value' – as justification for attributing greater value to the researcher's 'interpretative preference'– a position perhaps more closely aligned to a contemporary artistic paradigm (Charman & Ross, 2004) than the traditionalist auteur concepts (Rose, 2016a) of the majority research community. If the work only provided 'what the maker intended to show' (Mannay 2016, 64), why not interview participants to ask them what they *would* include in an artwork, and circumnavigate the requirement they make it? Ironically, this is a model advocated by Glaw et al. (2017) and Katz-Buonincontro & Foster (2012) in their research studies. Both rationalise elicitation interviews as a triangulation exercise - checking that they did not misinterpret the visual data - according to their participants' intent. Seeking to minimise dissonance between participant intent and researcher interpretation suggests an objective conception of the visual - to my mind a strangely quantitative tendency in works titled to suggest qualitative intent.

I find it easier to accept that an artwork can tell me something of its maker but holds only limited meaning until discussed – 'made' again at interview wherein 'the interviewees (and interviewers) perform their social identity' (Rose 2016, 323). Indeed, elicitation interviews have been justified through the uniquely collaborative potential of such an enterprise (Croghan et al. 2008; Pini et al. 2016). Combining perspectives, I therefore adopted a post-modern conception of an artworks' heuristic value – split between the creator's intent and the socially constructed contextual of the artwork when remade through conversation.

This dual model would have satisfied my desire to understand participant's conscious intent, and to mutually deepen, and deconstruct their formative thoughts through collaborative interview discourse. While this elicitation interview might, in isolation, allow participant and researcher to uncover ideals, ideas, and interpretations not *consciously* included in the artwork, and contextualise those that are (as admirably achieved by Kirkham et al. (2015)), I felt a more rigorous process was required to promote this possibility.

Through independent consideration of the formal qualities of participant artworks prior to interview, I could make suggestion at participants' *sub*conscious rationales, or at least generate interpretations for discussion during interview. Such a process was also important in the recognition of images as polysemic, acting differently on all viewers, by providing an alternative interpretation of artworks for comparison against those stated by participant, or co-constructed, during interview. Lomax (2012, 228) argues pragmatically that making meaningful interpretation of an artwork 'contingent on knowing its creator's intentions is…problematic', as we may never learn these intentions. I would argue the same case from a conceptual position – that we should avoid interpretation reliant on knowledge of a creator's intentions even when available. Using images as data allows us to (and in some respects demands that we) transcend monosemic interpretation, reflecting holistically on the viewing of images in research, in particular 'the specificity of that viewing by different audiences' (Mannay 2016, 80). Thus, I rejected auteur conceptions of visual data used in isolation – but accepted them alongside multiple interpretive perspectives in a 'more critical mode that seeks to confront established ideas with one's own viewpoints and visual experience' (Pauwels 2013, 11) as well.

These considerations underpinned the importance of my visual methods, recognising the modes of viewing summarised through Wright's (1999) typology as: (i) looking *at* the work to suggest potential intent, (ii) looking *through* the work to form my own interpretations, and (iii) looking *behind* the work with participants to 'remake' shared interpretations. Once I had established my own conception of visual data's value, I next designed a process to collect data.

### 5.4.3 Visual Research Design

Given Rose's position as an authority on visual research, whose own epistemological foundation echoes Freire (Rose 2016, 328), I began my own research process with her six-stage model in mind. However, as her format is designed explicitly for photo-elicitation research, I reworked this into a more inclusive five stages (removing the 'printing' stage): (i) planning, (ii) participant briefing, (iii) elicitation-interview, (iv) analysis, and (v) presentation. Below I describe the first two stages – discussing the development of my method and the processes of briefing participants, guiding their participation, and collecting artworks. In 5.6 I expand on my interview design, analysis in 5.7, and the presentation of findings following in Chapter Six.

I asked nine student art teacher participants at the start of their teacher education to pictorially represent 'an ideal art education', in a medium of their choice and limited in scale (to reduce performance anxiety). I hoped to gather artworks imbued with the idealism of participants *before* they entered placement schools, and given visual methods tend to fix 'a moment in time' (Croghan et al. 2008, 351), I felt this 'fixed' data appropriate in capturing their ideals at that moment.

The request made of participants during an initial briefing was carefully constructed, as I recognised that this instruction would have an intrinsic relationship with later interpretation of artworks (Drew & Guillemin 2014, 59). The briefing was opportunity to establish trust (Rose 2016), and was delivered to potential participants in a group setting for purposes of parity, and to promote the collegiality of my endeavour. Further communication (once participants had informed me of their willingness, and given initial consent) took place online, with the administration of schedules and participant queries handled in this way. Two potential participants expressed anxiety about finding the time to make artistic responses and I discouraged their involvement; I did not want to impinge on their studies, nor risk conflicting responsibility had they the need to pull out later. One decided to participate regardless.

My written instructions imitated those encountered in A-level Art study (AQA 2021; OCR 2020), so participants (who had all completed this qualification) felt confident to interpret and engage with requirements. Terminology well known to the participant demographic was employed:

> 'to produce an artistic response to an initial starting point, in much the same way as your GCSE or A-level students might'

I provided three thematic 'starting points' such that participants might employ agency when initiating visual interpretation. All three, however, had strong thematic relevance to art education conceptualised as opportunity to affect authentic change among learners:

- The Utopian Art Education
- A Transformational Art Class
- How I hope to make an impact as an aspirant art teacher

I looked to imbue instructions with balance on two conceptual planes. First, providing space for immanent discovery while also an intelligible framework, and second in considering the balance between autonomy afforded to participants, against my ethical duty to ensure they did not feel overburdened. I aimed to encourage authentically diverse responses, although thematically relevant and comparable, through the delicate weighting of explicit instruction against exploitation of the visual's potential. I would characterise this paradox (Pauwels 2013) as a creative tension for both me and participants, rather than a methodological problematic. I hoped instructions remained open-ended enough to 'produce disturbance' (Hall & Wall 2016, 219) against my preconceptions, while simultaneously allowing for 'crystallisation' to occur, wherein participants might capture 'complex experience in a single piece' (Hall & Wall 2016, 213).

The wording was neutral in tone to avoid, as much as possible, guiding participants in any partisan direction. I wanted phrasing that encouraged participants to feel empowered to 'reappropriate' my instruction for their own purpose (Croghan et al. 2008, 350). I felt participant ownership of the process important in facilitating latter opportunity for them to meaningfully inhabit the role of 'the expert' (Rose 2016, 316) in conversations about their outcomes. As such, while I was prescriptive to a point with regards the time, scale, and deadline for completion of a response I also made clear that I was willing to compromise on any of these regulations if students chose to abandon them. Criteria were explained as suggestive, not restrictive, in line with Mannay's (2016, 95) proposal that 'it is often useful to have a range of options, rather than dictating particular data production techniques'.

As they undertook the artmaking process over the three weeks allocated, I hoped that conceptualising and constructing an artistic response might act to deepen personal reflection on the issue of interest. As 'visualistas' (Mannay 2016, 138), I considered that my participants might habitually 'work out what they know, think and feel in the process of generating images' (Allan & Tinkler 2015, 805). While it might be more conventional for visual researchers to ask participants to draw in their presence (Ingram 2012; Katz-Buonincontro & Foster 2012) my intention was always to allow participants a reasonable window of time to produce their works solo, so that anxiety of having to produce a work in a particular space, time, or with a particular audience, was reduced (following Kirkham et al., 2015).

Furthermore, participants were afforded choice in their materials (ensuring they felt comfortable in their artmaking) to capitalise on the 'skills, knowledge of techniques, and familiarity with materials' that Eisner (2019, 7) claims critical in allowing participants to 'effectively disclose what one has experienced emotionally'. While Banks (2001, p. 51) suggests that form and content might be 'analytically separable' in visual research I felt, as Eisner appears to, that an artworks' form and its content are interdependent. One of the few guidelines provided in the instruction – as explained above – related to the scale of the works, which I wrote might be best at size A3 or smaller. Feeling constrained by this description of a two-dimensional picture plane, one participant enquired whether they might model a ceramic response. Happy to grant this request, provided it did not unduly cost the participant personally (financially or temporally), I was glad to observe that this individual, at least, was exercising autonomy to harness their communicative skills with a particular material.

### 5.4.4 Collecting Visual Data

Once the deadline had been met, I asked participants to send me – without written accompaniment – a digital image of the work.

These images are mostly collated in Fig. 20-27; one participant, Sam, was not able to send a digital image but described their artwork during elicitation interview. This frustrated my hope to interpret their artwork myself, prior to interview – but was simply the result of the participant's technical limitations.

Otherwise, this allowed me to independently interpret the artwork before elicitation interviews. Without this opportunity, two valuable data 'products' would have been lost – my unmediated interpretations of the work, and my interpretation of participant intent prior to interview. Asking participants to submit work in this manner may, without reassurance, have made them feel discrete judgement, in a manner more challenging than presenting the works personally. Indeed, this is arguably what *was* happening, and so I took care to reassure participants that artistic aptitude was not under examination, and that they would have full course to explain and explore their design during interviews.

Given the digital context of the elicitation interviews I did not immediately receive the physical works produced by students. I latterly did collect the works; helpful for analytical purposes, and I felt an ethical compunction that not to do so might lead the participants to feel their contribution devalued in some sense. I also felt as though this represented a diligent approach in ensuring I had secure access to the artefacts for the duration of writing this study.

Details surrounding the analysis of data, which began at this point in the research process, and the further stages of data collection, are discussed in the following sections.

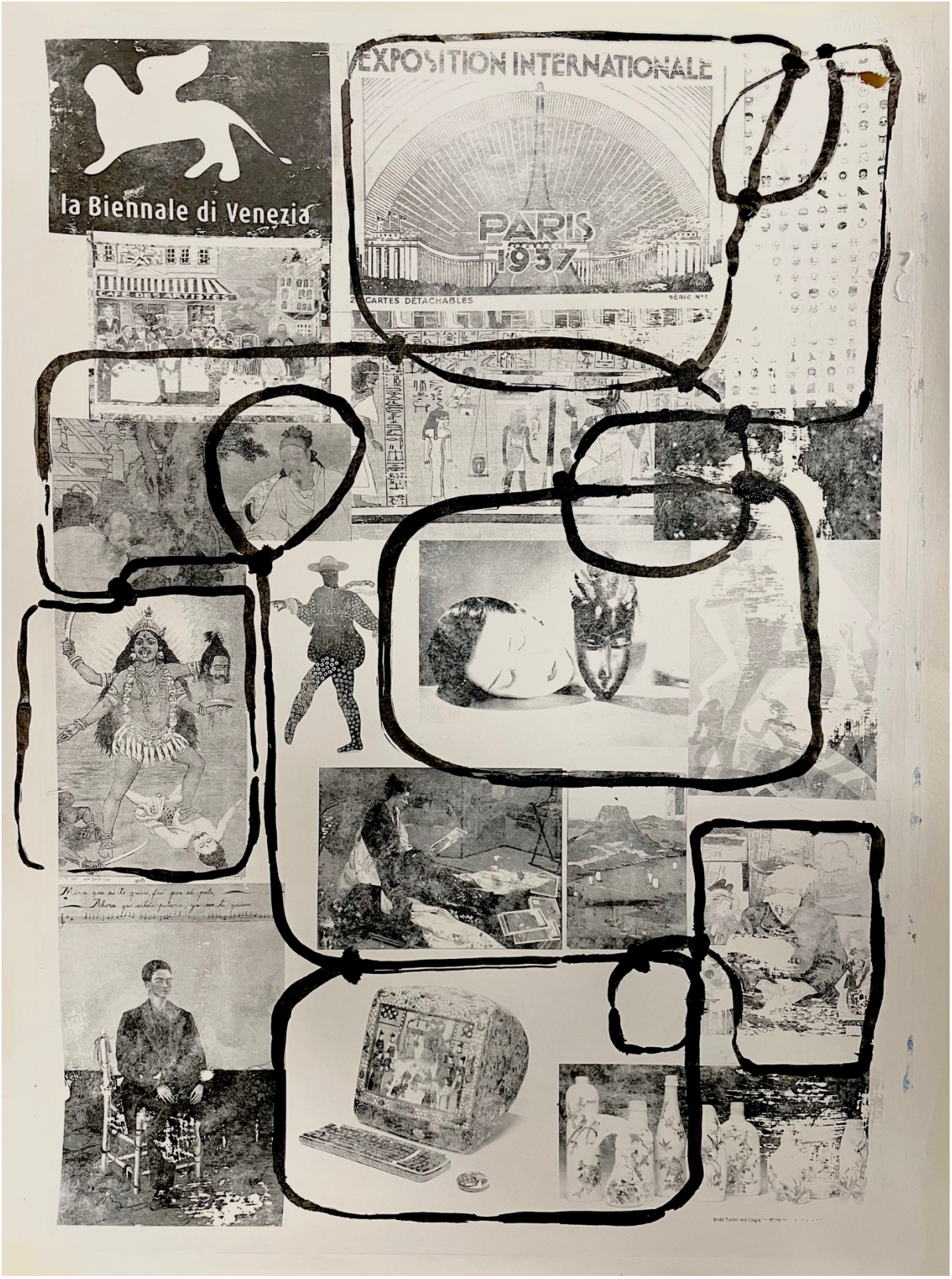


*Figure 16: Ashley's Artwork - Indian ink and toner on paper*

*Figure 17: Elliot's Artwork - conte, graphite and watercolour on paper*


*Figure 18: Evelyne's Artwork – biro and toner on paper*

*Figure 19: Lesley's Artwork – pen on paper, thread (presented rolled and sewn on the short edge)*

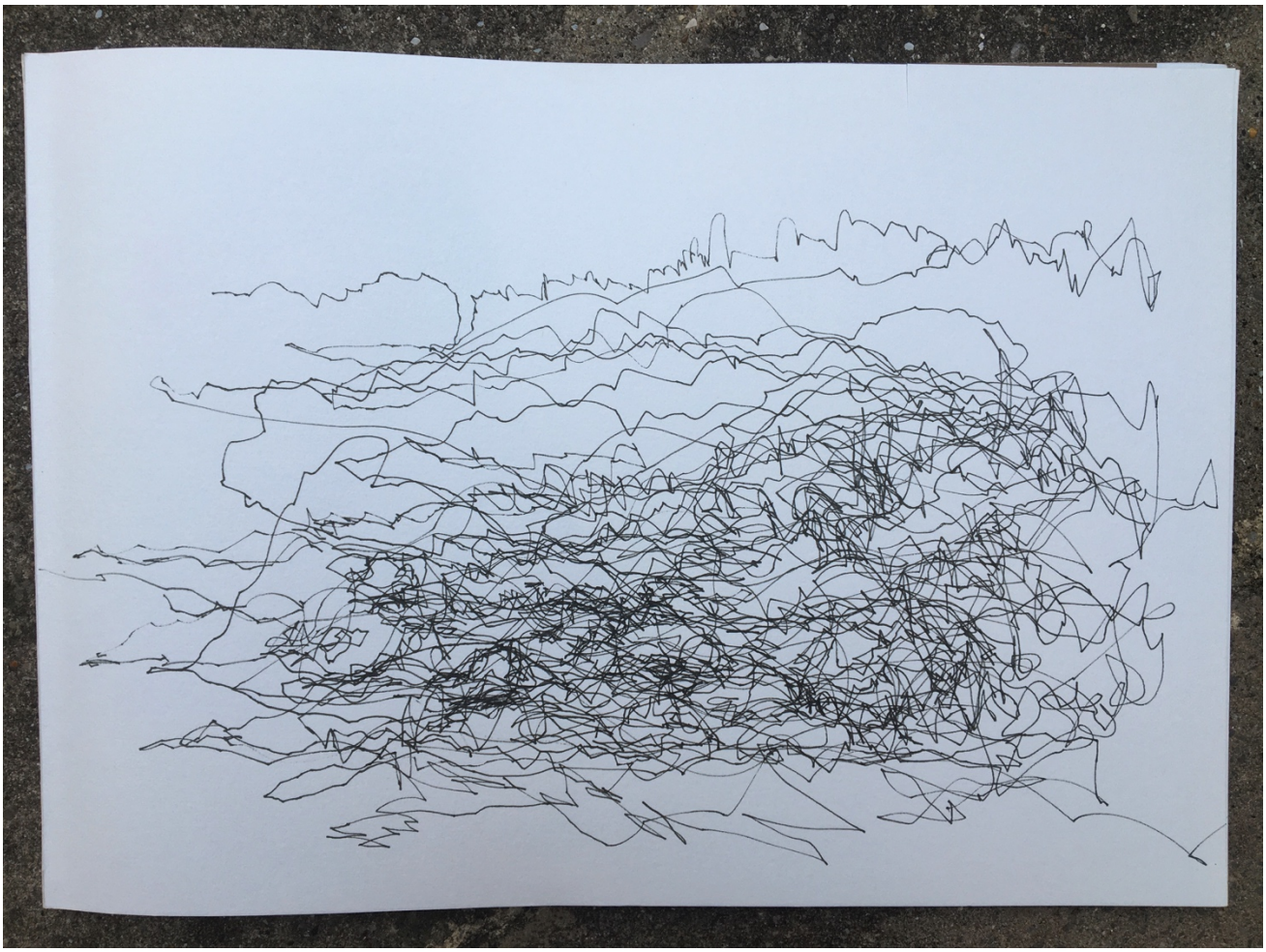

*Figure 20: Morgan's Artwork – pen on paper*

*Figure 21: Nicky's Artwork – ceramic glaze on fired clay*

*Figure 22: Paris's Artwork – photocopy, cardboard, glue (details, from a larger isometric construction)*

*Figure 23: Robin's Artwork – wool, plastic ribbon*

### 5.4.5 Ethical Visual Methods

While ethical concerns generically important to this study are relayed in 5.8, I felt it appropriate to include some discussion here around the discrete ethical considerations of visual methods.

Often ethicists in visual research are concerned with the possibility of harm resulting from recognisable representation of participants (Te Riele & Baker 2016, 234) featuring in the work, a problem most acute when researching sensitive themes and employing photography. Given the nature of my instructions to participants I viewed recognising them in subsequent publication as unlikely, although I remained alert to this risk in case, for example, a participant employed self-referential imagery – they did not. Also important was ensuring participants awareness that, with their consent, photographs of their works could be more widely disseminated if the research were published. The reach of such publication would, relatively speaking, be small – but I wanted to recognise my participants' rights as originators of artwork. I formally ensured this was clear throughout participation.

Beyond these concerns, I followed Te Riele & Baker's (2016, p. 241) conception of consent as a continual 'process', rather than a threshold, or one-off form to sign. This fluid approach to consent has been similarly promoted by the Visual Research Collaboratory (Howell et al., 2014) who write on the ethical importance of on-going negotiation between researcher and participant. Given the unpredictability of how participants might have chosen to respond to my instructions, I could not fully know prior to gathering data what participation may entail (Ingram 2012, 86). As such I confirmed with participants whenever viable that they were happy to continue, and that the way I was using their materials was appropriate – from receiving the works, through to any imagery featuring in this dissertation.

My duty of care to participants also asked me to remain aware to other concerns unique to visual research. Firstly, as competent artists participants were hoped confident in communicating artistically, but this might also have manifested self-imposed measures of quality, to avoid professional 'embarrassment and discomfort' (Mannay 2016, 86). I reassured participants that the perceived quality of their artworks was not being judged (the power dynamic between myself as teacher and participant as student made this reassurance particularly important) (Rose 2016, 317).

Secondly, the reflective nature of artmaking might have led participants to 'a new view of their social-existence' (Harper 2002, 21) and, both personally and given my Freirean approach, I wanted to ensure any revelatory outcome could only positively affect the participant's identity as aspirant art educator. Making 'the familiar strange' (Mannay 2016, 28) was important, as it allowed for new perspectives on subjective worlds, but there were clear ethical responsibilities that accompanied this. This included making my intent as researcher clear from the very beginning – a clarity of purpose Hall & Wall (2016, 218) promote as paramount given that visual methods 'have attributes of technical and creative challenge, of structural looseness or tightness' that might otherwise cause participant anxiety.

While working with experienced artists likely emotionally aware of their practice, I also did what I felt appropriate to prepare in case artmaking (or elicitation interview) triggered 'sensitive areas of discussion', or 'elements of [participants'] lives that they manage to defend from consciousness in their everyday existence' (Mannay 2016, 110). This included sending an email partway through artmaking to remind participants of their right to leave the study without explanation, and the technical modesty of my expectations, to relive any self-initiated pressure that they produce something profoundly personal. In later stages this also included a pre-interview reminder that participants should not reveal anything about themselves that they would rather not, and that if they retrospectively wanted me to remove any comment I would (this option was not exercised by any participant). I also prepared prior to interview a parcel of website addresses that I could use to direct student participants to university support services if I felt sensitive issues had surfaced.

Lastly, as already discussed, I looked to limit participants to a three-week window to complete their work, protecting them from undue focus on this response during a busy academic course. Mannay (2016, 87) argues that the time it takes to participate in visual methods is a 'fundamental problem' with such approaches. I disagree with framing this quality negatively, given that the extended time it takes to produce an artwork also represents a unique opportunity for participants' ideas to meaningfully coalesce, a quality that Mannay (2010, 107) paradoxically recognises herself. However, it was certainly my responsibility to clearly advertise my expectations for participant engagement, and design instructions avoiding undue imposition.

## 5.5 Transcribing Visual Data

As has been detailed, visual responses were submitted by participants before interview, to allow me personal interpretation of the works prior to discussion. This schedule was designed for multiple data 'products' - diverse interpretations of participants' artefacts - to be generated for analytical comparison. As Mannay (2016, p. 64) describes, there is often 'juxtaposition' between the viewer's reading of an image and the creator's intent, and I wanted data that allowed me to explore this. However, at this point I realised that rigorously transcribing visual data was not a straightforward task.

While visual research may increase the richness of research (Glaw et al., 2017), I came to recognise that images are almost always contextualised in relation to other genre (Croghan et al., 2008) – including written text and conversation. While philosophically intriguing to imagine research where images *alone* are analysed (through image?), and accessed by the audience as image, such an endeavour in its pure form would be communicatively challenging and questionably narrow. The polysemic nature of images would likely result in much meaning being lost (Barley & Russell, 2019) without some textual mediation. This necessitates some compromise, given the unique qualities of visual images, as Rose (2016a, p. 22) writes, are 'not reducible to the meanings carried by…other things', including written language. It is not commonplace to intelligibly communicate through uncontextualised imagery:

> While vision may be a privileged sense in some Euro-American contexts, these societies are also strongly in the thrall of language…containment [of the visual] is largely effected by language, by placing the visual and visible aspects of culture within a language-based discourse. (Banks, 2001, p. 8)

Resultantly, some researchers (Banks, 2001; Cahnmann-Taylor, 2017) remain cautious about visual methods capacity to deliver valid findings; much of this crisis of credibility located not in data collection, but in the opacity of the subsequent analytical process (Chalfen, 2012; Pauwels, 2013). While there is much literature associated with visual methods (indeed, Cahnmann-Taylor would suggest there is more literature describing arts-based research than arts-based research being undertaken (2017, p. 12)), typically 'reports never describe how the pictures are actually looked at'

(Chalfen, 2012, p. 10), and 'detailed discussion of…coding process in the literature are rare' (Rose, 2016a, p. 325). As an advocate for the potential of art making in educational research, it was important to me that the analysis of visual data was undertaken with rigour and transparency.

While my reading confirmed Chalfen and Rose's observations of underreporting on the looking at and transcribing of visual work, there does exist a some named analytical practices within visual methodology literature, such as content (Rose, 2016a), or compositional analyses (Russell, 2007). Here I briefly explain why these practices did not offer me effective means to transcribe my data.

First, content and compositional analysis both employ transcriptually reductive processes – they simplify the visual through a dismantling of the constituent parts. There are occasions where this is useful analytical process, for example with very large data sets – but as Pauwels (2013, p. 6) comments, content analysis 'is hitherto not very well adapted to explore the full richness and the holistic potential of the visual'. Instead, it typically involves counting decontextualised elements of content in a pseudo-quantitative manner. This often results in a superficial understanding of form that misses the 'motives animating the construction of the document' (M. Ball & Smith, 2011, p. 2). While such a technique might claim reliability, in the transcription of my data, and as Ball and Smith (2011, p. 7) recognise, this would be 'bought at the expense of validity'.

Beltman et al.'s (2015) study of student teachers' identities is an example of what I perceived the inconsistency of content analysis. The researchers first report transcription designed to be objective: counting 'key elements' (2015, p. 230) in participants' drawings, and focusing only 'on the content' (2015, p. 239)). However, they lapse into unsystematic interpretation: 'His enactment of his teaching identity can be viewed as a capacity to encourage the enjoyment of learning…he sees learning as fun and as the way to encourage students' (Beltman et al., 2015, p. 232). The expectation that visual researchers might circumnavigate interpretation to meet standard expectations of rigour, seems unsustainable unless the visual is transcribed to diminished data sets that fail to capitalise on the very potency of artmaking's rich meanings.

Russell (2007, p. 44), in an example of 'compositional interpretation' writes about 'looking at the content, colour and spatial organisation of the images…[then] coded to draw out the common themes associated with what pupils viewed as important'. While this suggests transcription of the

*form* (as well as the *content*) of visual data, I felt there were problems here too – first the assumption that the researcher's interpretation might automatically correlate with the 'view' the participants expressed. That there is a language of images, following 'quasi-grammatical rules' (Banks, 2001, p. 10) feels naïve given the contextual, transient relationship between images and meanings. Furthermore, the conceit that the viewing process is naturalistic appears equally problematic to me. The notion that we might look at content, without a transparent research framework, and identify 'themes', neglects to consider in my opinion, the true character of looking. While Russell concedes that the viewer generates meaning rather than the image (2007, p. 47) – exactly *how* this generation occurred – how data was transcribed – remains opaque.

A third analytical model – 'interpretive engagement' (Drew & Guillemin, 2014, p. 58) – employed during my data collection, lacked guidance on transcription. Here Drew and Guillemin (2014, p. 60) view the visual not as discrete research data, but a midpoint in the collection process - a catalyst for latter participant elicitation.

Sourcing a transcriptive model was frustrated by the paucity of visual research in education, particularly given much methodological literature 'centres on photography and film' (Bland, 2012, p. 236). However, my underlying problematic, seemingly unresolved in much visual methodological literature, lay paradoxically in the notion that artworks provide something text cannot (Eisner, 2019; Harper, 2002; Simons, 2010), while precedent often involved opaque transcription of artwork into words (Rose, 2016a). Ekphrastically transcribing artwork into analysable data while minimising conceptual corruption appeared a challenge necessitating creative compromise (Mannay, 2016, p. 133), to avoid producing avant garde visual essays (Berger, 1972), or textual transcription so literal the distinction of visual data is negated (Allan & Tinkler, 2015)

I began to recognise that 'esoteric methodological devices' (Gray & Malins, 1993, p. 3) may be the way to conceive a rigorous transcriptive approach. Clarity of method would provide credibility (Savin-Baden & Mimpenny, 2014; Skåreus, 2009b). I did not want to reduce rich artwork to diminished data for the sake of rigour, so rigour was instead conceptualised as transparency of purpose and process. Also important was synergy between any transcription framework and my research intent (Aper, 1995; Drew & Guillemin, 2014) – meeting my needs more important than following conventions.

As I viewed it, this 'esoteric' process *had* to begin with transcription of visual into verbal. However, I latterly realised that the transcriptive process begins not with translation, but with a look. While it often is, the notion of looking should not be considered an objective or naturalistic activity – it is a cultured and subjective act (Banks, 2001) – requiring consideration of subjective analytical processes (Bland, 2012). Not only is the subjectivity of seeing often ignored, but the ubiquity of visual stimuli amplifies the illusion that we are all expert at engaging with these materials (Mannay, 2016) – it is 'a taken-for-granted, unexamined part of living and not a subject of systematic inquiry or an articulated part of scholarly method' (Weber, 2012, p. 42).

Mannay (2016, p. 74) suggests that, when necessary, visual 'reading can be guided by theoretical frameworks, for without theory, arguably our seeing is blind or tends to rest on unexplained views and expectations'. This led me to consider a theoretical, subjective framework for 'looking'. Given the eye was my own, I felt the most authentic way to situate this looking was from a standpoint defining the way I have been looking for at least a decade – that of an art teacher.

- Transcription from an Art Teacher's 'Standpoint'

Standpoint theory is commonly associated with feminist or working class concepts of knowledge (Cockburn, 2020); those asserting a unique standpoint from which to critique conventional authority. While this study is aligned to a Freirean perspective, rather than a concept of knowledge native to my person, I would argue the critical intent of Standpoint and Freirean lenses synergistic. Therefore, I felt confident borrowing from standpoint theory in establishing my transcriptive 'eye'.

I borrowed sensitively – recognising that I 'view' from the privilege of a white European male claiming professional identity as my standpoint. I did not want to patronise those whose own theories finds power in knowledge unique to the underprivileged (Harding, 1986), but adopted such a mechanism to rationalise why *my* looking (and transcription) can be considered rigorous in a study questioning orthodoxies that supress the agency of art teachers' transformative potential. Although I am not *only* an art teacher, I felt this substantive aspect of my self-identity an effective place to secure a relevant, transcriptive perspective. Standpoint theory does not essentialise the perspective of a demographic - I don't assert that all art teachers 'look' in the same way to imply rigour in my research method. If anything, I seek the opposite: to be transparent that my looking has been as

cultured as any; as Berger (1972) writes, 'when we look at visual artefacts we are always viewing them in relation to ourselves'.

Believing that all visual perspectives are unique, and that in visual research particularly, 'the standpoint of the observer cannot be ignored' (Prosser, 2007, p. 18) - the art teacher's standpoint seemed appropriate for transcription of my visual data. Partly, I believe this due to the professional inheritance such an identity provides regarding technical scrutiny, assessment, and reflection on visual works. More so it seems pertinent given I identify as an art teacher, participants are aspirant art teachers, and the stated aim of this research is to help improve ITE provision for future art teachers, thus centring this perspective in my method seemed apt.

Once I felt confident in my art teacher standpoint as methodological perspective, I began consideration of native means to authentically transcribe artworks. However, in my experience as art teacher, there has not been open discussion on the theoretical underpinnings of how to describe, or write about artwork, despite the prominence of this task. Indeed, while art criticism, or critical study – 'the act of analysing and evaluating any type of art' (Hickman, 2019, p. 2) – is undisputed as a key concern, this is typically dependent on the idiosyncratic interest and perspective of individual teachers (Hickman, 2019). There is some discussion of frameworks for critical study within academic literature - Addison's (2010a, p. 191) 'Object-based Analysis', which prioritises the record of 'Empirical' and 'Functional' analyses, Harvard's Project Zero (2006) framing critical visual studies around their broader research on 'thinking dispositions', and Hickman (Hickman, 2019, p. 7) suggesting a model named 'React, Research, Respond and Reflect'. While these approaches vary, they all essentially evolved from one common source – Feldman's (1970) framework for art criticism.

Feldman's model is based around four transcriptive activities: description, formal analysis, interpretation, and evaluation, and has been widely applied (typically unreferenced) in classrooms for half a century (Hickman, 2010a, p. 5) – 'the most prominent and thoroughly examined art criticism format in art education' (Hamblen, 1985, p. 2). *Description* closely resembles compositional analysis– a detailed record of the physical appearance of an artwork. *Analysis* asks the observer to record inferences around plausible creator's intent, method, conceptual themes, and characteristics – for example, whether the object projects harmony or dissonance (Jones, 2008). *Interpretation* allows the critic to express their opinion – to transcribe conversation between subject (viewer) and

object (artwork). *Judgement*, lastly, asks for a summation of the extent to which the work meets the criteria presumed of it.

Given the prominence and longevity of the Feldman model in art education it felt appropriate to apply to my transcription. I was encouraged by Geahigan's assertion that art criticism, such as that of the Feldman model, can be understood not only as an aesthetic activity but as a 'mode of inquiry' (1999, p. 6), and Eisner's argument that art historical 'connoisseurship', might be an effective tool in educational research (1976).

I chose to write against all four activities, approximately 1000 words for each art object, but with my *Interpretation* component occupying on average 400 words of each. Two reasons for this prioritisation, the first instrumental: in piloting this method, I found the interpretative section of the text was the richest with regards latter code generation. Where content was aesthetically descriptive or theoretically analytical rather than thematically conceptual, there was less information of interest to my aims. This is not to suggest descriptive portions of text were superfluous – as Geahigan makes clear, description can still involve 'emotive language' (1999, p. 14) – just less frequently than within interpretive sections. Second, Eisner (2019, p. 6) suggests distinctive data is captured when arts researchers prioritise the evocative over the descriptive – as 'the evocative has as its ambition the provision of a set of qualities that create an empathetic sense of life in those who encounter it'. I consider this to denote, in this instance, that my interpretative (or 'evocative') transcriptive data might better convey my insights than the descriptive.

Illustrative transcriptive examples in each Feldman category from Nicky's artwork:

> Description: 'It's surface while glassy smooth in texture, ripples, or bubbles with undulating form – extrusions that rise and dip from the topography of the object's surface.'
>
> Analysis: 'While it might be positively interpreted that they have felt a confidence in applying their own visual language to the issues in question – engaging their personal ceramic vocabulary in order to communicate idealistic or utopian concepts – it also suggests they are unconcerned about expressing this hubristically.'

> Interpretation: 'The ball might be an organism undergoing natural growth – each mountain peak on its topography actually a bud or floret, metaphoric of the possibility that art can be an additive activity for those young minds who engage.'
>
> Judgement: 'Do they here hide their naivety of the tensions present between their aspirations and the realities of formal educational provision, by relying instead on a craftsperson's security of process and outcome?'

Feldman's model, while persuasively tenacious, is not above criticism. Hickman (2019) suggests the framework places too much value on formal visual elements, and not enough on contextual factors. This attack was more firmly made by Geahigan (1999, p. 16), who felt formalist approaches to art criticism - that treat 'a work of art as a self-sufficient entity…' outdated; concerned that uncontexualised critique is disingenuously partial. I believe this fair critique, but as a transcriptive framework for my data, the context of participants' artwork was well known and elaborated upon in elicitation interview.

Second, given that Feldman's model embraces the subjective, a common criticism is what Banks calls 'the art history problem':

> 'in which the subjective opinions of elderly white men pronouncing on pictorial composition, fineness of line and other attributes of fine art are then used as the basis for completely unverifiable and unquantifiable claims' (Banks, 2014, p. 402)

I am confident rejecting this critique too, as I make no claim to objectivity or indisputability – my interpretations are not imagined a 'truer account of the meanings intended by visual images' (Mannay, 2016, p. 131) because I view them from the standpoint of an art teacher. Indeed, not only have I been transparent about the subjectivity of transcript authorship, but I only imbue the resultant data with the authority to represent my interpretations.

Further analytical process is not discussed here because transcripts were not analysed until after elicitation interviews had been conducted. This was scheduled to avoid any analytical findings directly informing the semi-structured interview. While I wanted to interpret the artworks prior to discussing them, to provide multiple perspectives and ensure rich talk – I did not want this interpretation to coalesce into pre-defined analytical assumptions, prior to collection of all data. I wanted, following Russell's (2007, p. 48) advice, to latterly 'marry' written, spoken, and visual – to

thematically analyse all aspects simultaneously, in the hope that code generation would therefore less likely favour one perspective. The hybrid thematic analysis that I used to generate codes and themes from these visual transcriptions, alongside interview transcriptions, is therefore discussed in section 5.7.

## 5.6 Semi-structured, Empathetic Elicitation Interviews

Analysing artworks without comment or clarification from the maker might provide knowledge of phenomena of interest (to validate the use of an arts-based method this must be the case), but I knew this could be enriched through complementary methods – typically the elicitation interview (Al-Yateem, 2012; Croghan et al., 2008). As Kirkham et al. (2015, p. 19) explain of their study using participant-generated visual data, 'the combination of image and account…produces a vivid, dynamic gestalt, enabling us to get closer to what the actual experience…is like for that person'.

This dynamic provided opportunity to achieve 'nuanced understanding of participants' emic perspective' (Barley & Russell, 2019, p. 239) in a way that singular data collection could not. This was critical given the conceptual fragility and complexity of participants' emerging positions on their idealistic art education. Interview was therefore not conceptualised simplistically as ratification of artwork's meaning. I wanted opportunity to learn about aspects of research participation inaccessible through the artworks presented. This included elucidation of participants' artistic intent, but also insight into the participants' cognition when reading the instructions provided, and their thinking throughout artmaking. Allan and Tinkler (2015) write convincingly on conceptual marginalisation in visual methods – how the pervasiveness of the art object, its literal and theoretical presence, can occlude valuable, more expansive discussion. One method they advocate for prompting breadth of conversation includes 'engaging more with production processes' such that 'our understanding of how images have been put together as 'sign vehicles' to express previous experience and make sense of the world is enriched' (2015, p. 805). I was keen to ensure that artworks were not discussed as static denotations of fixed ideals; I wanted to explore participants' artistic *processes*: ideation, development, construction, and reflection - such that interview data might capture the propagation of ideals, aware that development might occur in the very act of making contributory works.

Chalfen's (2012, p. 14) rationale for interview – designed to 'ask the picture-makers what they see…and to neutralise any bias we bring to our observations and conclusions' was incompatible with the analytical worth I located in diverse interpretations. While I was hopeful that the visual and verbal would produce a complementary data set, I also appreciated Croghan et al.'s (2008, p. 346) warning against assumption that the two automatically 'strengthen one another' through replication or clarification of participants' positions. As Russell (2007, p. 42) encountered – sometimes a participant's interpretation of their work bluntly contradicts the understanding of the researcher or is internally contradictory – but where mine and participants' interpretations differed, colluded, or where intrinsically paradoxical or collaboratively constructive – these were the spaces where I hoped to learn. I felt dissonant data could be as effective in providing answers against my research questions as synergistic interpretations.

I also recognised that elicitation might sharpen the communication of both participant-as-maker and researcher-as-viewer through providing a 'chance to object to a certain interpretation' suggested by the other (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 581). As participants spoke on their artworks and ideals, I was visible in conversation, contributing to an emerging, shared understanding of the concepts under discussion ((Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018b; Fontana & Frey, 1994). Recognising interview as dialogue, rather than attempting to diminish or obfuscate my contributions and implicit presence in participants' responses felt an important way to remain aligned to my Freirean perspective (Smidt, 2014, p. 42) – prioritising the constructive potential of talk. As Walford (2001, p. 95) writes 'what is said will be co-constructed', while the words of Fontana and Frey (1994, p. 368) describe my own concept of interview perfectly when they posit interviewers as 'part of the interaction they [themselves] seek to study'.

To clarify the conceptual situation of my interviews; I followed Brinkmann and Kvale (2018, p. 587) in choosing a position somewhere between 'research instrument' and 'social practice'. I recognised that at times interview data is articulated report, while at other times it is co-constructed outcome of the occasion of the interview. Once acknowledged that multiple forms of data are presented in interview – that it is itself a meaning-making dialogue – other complexities can be embraced as beneficial (in that they represent authenticity) to the integrity of the research.

### 5.6.1 Interview Design

Brinkmann and Kvale (2018, p. 588) posit that 'interviews often represent the most adequate means of knowledge production' for researchers interested in objects of 'human experience in a postmodern conversational world' such as mine - the changing ideals and multimodal interpretations of aspirant art teachers. However, they caution against assumptions of neutrality in the knowledge produced, that the interview is 'a historical arrangement that builds upon and reinforces a number of ideological constructs, some of which might be problematic' (2018, p. 591). Many of these problematics are located in the influence of the interviewer, who may have opaque agenda, assert an asymmetrical power dynamic, and conventionally holds monopoly of interpretation. While I recognised that formalised collection of data is inevitably inorganic, I was anxious to mitigate such problems where possible.

Using visual data as a catalyst for conversation was useful in moderating Walford's (2001, p. 84) concern that the prevalence of interview in qualitative research narrows cultural understanding to 'spoken word' alone. The presence of the art object was also methodologically helpful in empowering my participants to act as expert (Rose, 2016a) in conversation, tilting the power dynamic into a more equitable position – lessening opportunity for interpretive monopoly. In elicitation interview:

> 'Direct eye contact need not be maintained, but instead interviewee and interviewer can both turn to the photographs as a kind of neutral third party' (Banks, 2001, p. 88)

Still, I was keen that interviewees felt valued, their interpretation respected, and the experience a positive opportunity for meaningful professional reflection. This required looking beyond the intrinsic capacities of elicitation; I didn't want to just retrospectively note my asymmetric influence but ensure participants and I proactively attempted dialogue on a more horizontal plane (Freire, 2014). In the context of my interviews, I promoted this parity through ensuring conditions favoured the participant's comfort, confidence, and capacity to communicate such that they felt their contribution as of equal value to mine in the construction of new knowledge, despite the social and cultural baggage associated with research participation (Fontana & Frey, 1994). I embraced the 'empathetic' interview – which 'emphasizes taking a stance' (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 363) as a 'method of morality' well aligned with my Freirean perspective, 'to restore the sacredness of

humans before addressing any theoretical or methodological concerns' (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 365). Rather than adopting an inquisitorial role, I recognised my capacity as interviewer to:

> …become an advocate and partner in the study, hoping to be able to use the results to advocate social policies and ameliorate the conditions of the interviewee.' (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 364)

I was hopeful the interview experience might not only collect, or create, data, but prompt participants to formalise and embrace their own idealism and strengthen their emerging professional identity. Thus, both participant and I might meaningfully gain from our dialogue, as well as the future students I was anticipating the primary beneficiaries of insights gained through my findings.

A fully structured interview – with inflexible pre-set questions – while claiming an empathetic approach would therefore have been incongruous, and unhelpful against my research aims. Similarly, given participants' verbal contributions would be linked to diverse visual objects, likely to require divergent enquiry, I needed to anticipate space in the interview for heterogeneous conversation (Pini et al., 2016, p. 61). Therefore, I took a semi-structured approach, allowing participants freedom to lead, and me to respond. This format was heavily influenced by Brinkmann's (2018, p. 579) contention that interview – as a social construct with research purpose – might never be described as unstructured but might be designed 'flexible enough for interviewees to be able to raise questions…' and '…make better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogue'.

My interviews, therefore, were designed in two indistinct segments. The first portion was structured only by the artwork's presence – following Rose's suggestion that once the participant had explained their intentions 'the interviewer then pursues and develops whatever topics emerge' (Rose, 2016a, p. 322). Unlimited opportunity for discussion development seemed appropriate given my phenomena of interest were the unknowable personal ideals held by participants. I also felt participants – accustom to the open dialogue of an artistic 'crit' (Ralske, 2011) - were more likely to be empowered and at ease, happy to discuss 'aspects of their experience that might otherwise have been inaccessible' (Croghan et al., 2008, p. 355), if the interviews began conversationally rather than formulaically.

As such, prompts employed in interview included phases such as:

- Can you begin by talking me through your thought process prior to, and during, the construction of this artwork?

- Can you explain whether your artwork suggests a particular narrative, or is intended to communicate a general art educational ideal?

Typically, after initial prompt, discussion was proactively governed by participants and provided 'focused and detailed descriptions with little guidance from the researcher' (Croghan et al., 2008, p. 347). Through this segment I simply pursued topics, seeking to induce further depth of interpretation.

Once I intuited that participant-led conversation was organically concluding, I then looked to a short list of prepared questions, inspired by themes derived from literature (if not already arisen). While this second segment might be characterised as *more* structured than the first, it was still an open forum. For example, if the initial elicitation conversation was naturally directed to a participant's idealistic interest in a specific pedagogic concern such as inclusivity, or cultural awareness, the conversation was then guided to elicit their interpretation of broader, thematic issues. My 'flexible set' (Gooding-Brown, 2000, p. 41) of prompts included questions such as:

- Do you believe that art education can have an impact on wider social issues?

- Are you optimistic about being able to make a change in young peoples' lives? Do you think your art teacher made a difference in your life? How?

I felt it important to mark, in transcription, where I introduced themes for discussion. I was then able to maintain clarity regarding where *only* inductive coding might be applied – to avoid forcing the data. Were this division not recorded, I might have produced disingenuous data, attributing themes as important to participants when I had introduced them. Not to introduce these latter questions however would, I felt, miss an opportunity to understand participant viewpoints on issues critical to

my thematic interests – viewpoints that might (or might not) have been unaddressed in the wandering conversation of the first segment.

Undertaking a single elicitation interview in the early weeks of participants' ITE experience would have provided insight into participants' initial ideals. However, I was particularly concerned with how these ideals might be impacted as vocational placements are experienced by students moving *through* ITE. As such, longitudinal data was required – that would allow me to maintain conversation with participants over time. Therefore, I undertook a second interview as participants concluded their school-based placements and hoped that comparison of data gathered at this point (six months after the first interview) with that originally collected would prove revelatory. The nature of the second interview echoed the first – empathetic and semi-structured, with two segments allowing for organic discussion and then thematic prompts.

I had thought originally to provide participants opportunity to read the transcript from their first interview before meeting again – facilitating recollection of their earlier commentary before re-entering topical conversation. However, on reflection, I felt that returning record of that first meeting might influence participants' further comments, and instead provided - prior to meeting - an image of their artwork to reinitiate conversation. Key questions here included:

- Looking again at your artwork, do you feel differently about it?

- If I asked you to make a new artwork now, how would it differ?

Thematic prompts were less prevalent in this interview, partly because some participants now had the understanding and confidence to talk without need for any prompt, and partly because there was a lot to discuss following practice experience. Nevertheless, some thematic questions prepared for the second segment of the second interviews included:

- Are you still optimistic about being able to make a change in young peoples' lives?

- Are you hopeful that you will be able to remain idealistic, or even practice ideally, when you begin your career?

I expected this conversation to be more reflective than anticipatory – although as will be seen in the findings, several participants were still interested in projecting to the potential opportunities or challenges inherent to their future careers.

### 5.6.2 Interviewing in Practice

Given my commitment to empathy during interviews, two spaces were used based on participant preference: an online forum and my university office. In both, recording was used to orthographically capture conversation verbatim to preserve the authenticity of participant voice (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Morse, 2018). While some interview data might have been effectively captured through note-taking or subsequent recollective writing, and some researchers remain wary of the impact a symbol of surveillance (such as a Dictaphone) might have on participant contributions (Al-Yateem, 2012) – I deemed the benefits of orthographic record to outweigh any concern. Pragmatically, the presence of an artwork required both interviewer and participant to frequently direct our focus, both physically and conceptually, to the object of discussion, precluding simultaneous note taking. Conceptually, for me to selectively record key contributions would be methodologically illiterate, given that I couldn't be certain which aspects of interviews might prove meaningful until data analysis.

Most interviews were conducted remotely, using a virtual learning environment which participants, as students habitually using the same programme, knew well. I established an exclusive online 'room' for interviews, to differentiate from participants' experience of studentship on their ITE programme, and to ensure that no third party had access to the recordings in-between interview and their removal to a secure, password-protected external device. One participant, Ashley, chose to meet for interview in person and we talked in a private but open office. While I did not expect interviews to err into controversial or sensitive subject matter, nor for the participant to feel threatened by my questioning, I followed ethical orthodoxies of the teaching profession when talking privately with a student. For example, I ensured the participant was sat near the door unimpeded,

that my colleague was local but beyond earshot, and that the participant understood how I was recording our conversation – reiterating the research purpose prior to starting the Dictaphone.

In all interviews, I reiterated the rights of participants prior to questioning and checked frequently that participants were happy to continue.

### 5.6.3 Interview Transcription

The transcription of interview data was less conceptually challenging than visual data. However, there were still several decisions to make. First, I knew I wanted to transcribe the data myself. While laborious, personally handling the data was an invaluable opportunity to re-familiarise myself before analysis, and to remain empathetic of my participants' humanity, their individual ideals and hopes. It reminded me that this study was a partnership between participant and researcher and avoided artificial distancing between the experience of interview and the transcription, as might have happened had I sent the recordings for external transcription.

Second, while transcribing, I decided wherever possible to record all speech faithfully as encountered, and to mark any prolonged moments of reflection or silence too. The mumbling, or guttural sounds made by a participant might reflect certain concerns – a stumbling dialogue tentative reflection, or uncertainty, for example. Where a participant trailed from a sentence, or renegotiated their wording, I wanted this recorded as a potentially illuminating example of indecision. Similarly, I used italic lettering to evidence particular verbal stress - in case this demonstrated importance for the speaker. The exemplar section below, evidences the importance of this detail, with the italicised stresses particularly valuable in demonstrating the participant's priorities.

> …going from a job that I...didn't…was never very engaged with, umm the last few years' worth of work with not feeling an engagement really with what I was doing, just getting the job done to the *complete* extreme other end of the scale to doing something where I care about every fragment, every step becau…it means *so* much and just that as a gear change has been extraordinary… (Morgan, EI52-59)

Last I decided how to format my transcripts: I typed into a Word document, with line numberings, such that documents were then easier to navigate, mark-up, and reference during analysis. I used

the first letter of participants' pseudonyms, and a R for researcher, to identify who is speaking at each point and a dashed line to mark when thematic questions were introduced.

While at times the transcription process was arduous (100,000 words were produced) it was enlightening to actively relisten to participants' voices. I was reminded of two key rationales for this elicitation enterprise - to 'make again' (Rose, 2016a) the interpretive meaning of visual works through discourse, and to extend data – the visual work a diving board into a wide pool of ideas and ideals. A timeline for the collection and preparation of data through elicitation interview can be seen in Tab.5.

*Table 5: A timeline for transcription of interview data*

| **Date** | **September** | **October** | **November** | **December** | **January** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Interview Activity** | | Production of visual responses | First elicitation interviews | Transcription of first elicitation interviews | |
| **Participant Experience** | Start ITE programme | Campus-based study | | **School experience** (Placement A) | |
| **Date** | **February** | **March** | **April** | **May** | **June** |
| **Interview Activity** | | | | Second elicitation interviews | Further transcription |
| **Participant Experience** | **School experience** (Placement A) | **School experience** (Placement B) | | | Finish ITE programme |

In this section I have described the conceptual nature of my empathetic, semi-structured, two-part elicitation interviews. I have also explored the practice of undertaking interviews and the subsequent transcriptive process. My analytical approach is described next, in section 5.7.

## 5.7 Thematic Analysis

For both visual and verbal method, my transcriptive processes produced qualitative textual data products. As such it was possible to apply thematic analysis consistently across the whole corpus; a process outlined below.

It should be noted that while chronologically possible to iteratively analyse the transcriptions of visual data and the first elicitation interview prior to the second interview this potential advantage of thematic analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p. 83) was intentionally not applied. I wanted to avoid analytical findings of the first data products informing my approach to the second interview. While I took the opportunity to *interpret* artworks prior to discussing them, I did not want this to coalesce into premature analysis.

- The Process of Thematic Analysis

One benefit of a consistent data format was the potential to group textual data by participant, and thematically analyse concurrently. Below, examples can be seen of concurrent, participant-specific, coding matrices which facilitated simultaneous consideration of codes generated across all data. This allowed me to reflect on participants' changing ideas and make direct comparison between my interpretation of their artwork and their own.

I also believe the inherently 'recursive' nature (Harland, 2014, p. 1117) of the analytical process, wherein I conceptually moved between data, theory, my developing ideas and back to the data, was more effectively managed where data was consistently formatted. A good example can be seen in my capacity to note the requirement that 'asymmetric' deductive code categories be added upon starting analysis – detailed later in this section. Denzin & Lincoln expand upon this movement metaphorically, describing analysis, evaluation, and interpretation as 'like a dance' (2018b, p. 757) - refuting linear, mechanical conceptualisations of this relationship. In this study, once all data had been collected, I 'danced' through texts in turn simultaneously, individually, collectively, and comparatively – always (although they had been transcribed) with the original artworks now in view. Collecting the original artworks allowed me to keep them present throughout analysis – ensuring the visual was implicitly, or subliminally, referenced.

I was looking to 'marry' (Russell, 2007, p. 48) components together, in part like Kirkham et al. (2015, p. 404), where 'sections of text were examined alongside the relevant image and a clustering of thematic materials was made'. I had the textual transcription of the visual already, produced in part to make transparent my subjective interpretation of participant submissions, but also to aid the process of bringing together visual and verbal interpretations. For example, it was possible to make

connections across media and idiomatic planes: an artwork described as visually ambiguous (regardless the subject matter), could be compared to a participants' interview, where they might speak of being confused, or undecided. I was also hopeful that where the vernacular, the visual, and my own interpretative texts were reviewed in harmony it might stabilise the prescription of thematic codes. As such, I believe I present themes that blended data authentically: not speaking *for* participants, over-representing their voice uncritically, nor overemphasising me as expert (Drew & Guillemin, 2014).

My analytical process took direct influence from Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-stage model. I have already explained in detail how the first stage – the orthographic transcription of data – was conducted and as Braun and Clarke suggest, while at times an arduous exercise, it certainly helped me 'immerse' myself in the data (2006, p. 92).

Analysis progressed into the second stage, as I began 'writing notes on the texts' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 95) – active in a search for pre-defined concerns, intriguing or engaging passages picked up during my transcriptive engagement, and for patterns previously unknown. Codes – 'short strings that represent categories and that briefly state what the information is about' (Glaser & Laudel, 2013, p. 10) – were attached to words, phrases or blocks of text. This was a careful process of pruning, picking, sorting, and reflective revaluation.

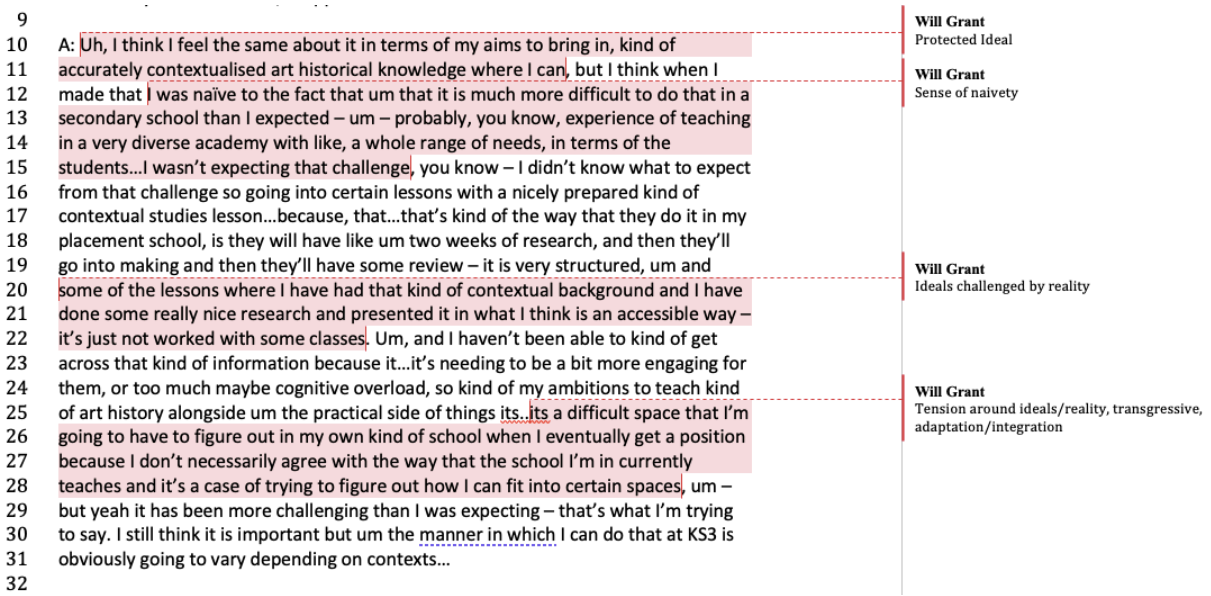


*Figure 24: An example of inductive code generation as mark-up on a participants' interview transcript*

I used two screens to display data (such as transcribed visual data and elicitation interview data) simultaneously, and at times printed documents for ease of comparison.

Throughout the formative marking of codes, I was acutely aware of my agency, of Braun and Clarke's dismissal of themes characterised as 'emergent', as if I was not an active subject in selection (2006, p. 83). While I had worked to gather participant's voices with methodological authenticity, the process of code identification in thematic analysis makes apparent that as researcher it is me 'who ultimately cuts and pastes together the narrative' (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 368). I do not view this analytical limitation as conceptually problematic (I don't claim to 'give voice' to my participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83)), given that my positioning within this study has, I believe, been clear throughout.

Before discussion of how I implemented the latter stages of Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis model, I will first make clear my coding processes. I felt strongly that the form of my codes should 'map to' the function of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). I first wanted to understand the ideals of student art teachers, to capture 'the issues of importance to participants themselves' (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 218); as should be the concern of any Freirean study. The nature of this phenomenon: interpretive, personal, mutable, and internal, required opportunity to respect the participants' inimitability through inductive code generation.

However, I also wanted to understand how contexts of experience impacted on participant ideals and had established a theoretical definition of this context – as described in Chapter Two. Therefore, I simultaneously searched data deductively, using an a priori template of codes derived from this theoretical framework.

I decided on a hybrid approach to coding following the precedent set by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), feeling there was neat synergy between the heterogeneity of Drew and Guillemin's (2014) concept of 'interpretive engagement' and the way data was latterly hybrid analysed, both celebrating diverse perspectives.

As described in section 5.6, deductive coding could not occur with data provoked by questioning derived from Freirean theory – otherwise the result would have been a feedback loop of data and

code. Hence the importance of, within interview transcripts, ensuring a delineation between those sections that were appropriate for deductive coding, and those parts where only inductive thematic codes were applied.

### 5.7.1 Theoretical/Deductive Codes

On normative case study analysis, Thacher (2006b, p. 1659) writes that intent might be to 'pit a clear initial judgement about a case against a clear contrary implication from existing normative ideals', or as Schwandt and Gates (2018, p. 352) summarise, an analytical approach that 'combines matters of fact with ethical judgements'. In my view, this critical and comparative compulsion is compatible with thematic analysis and represents a valuable means to connect the extended context of this case and participants' data contributions. While inductive codes provided insight into aspects of participants' experiences and ideals, through 'theoretical thematic analysis' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88) I was able to explore the tentative connections *I* was developing between my participants' interpretative contributions and the wider context (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297).

Regarding generation of a deductive code template – a 'start list' of codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 58) – I chose to reference two key texts.

First, I adopted terms defined in Rossatto's (2005) typology of optimisms, itself built on Freirean foundations of teacher dispositions. As explored in Chapter Two, Rossatto (2005, p. 81) outlines four 'optimisms' that describe teachers' attitudes: blind, fatalistic, resilient and transformative – with only the last disposition producing a teacher who sees 'himself or herself as a necessary and viable participant in the collective process of social change'. Given the relevance of this work to me – a shared interest in how outlook might impact on one's vision of the future, how ideals might be protected and enacted, I wanted to code my data's relevance to this typology:

1) Blind Optimism – a naïve embrace of meritocratic ideology
2) Fatalistic Optimism – an immobilizing acceptance of an alienating reality and dismal future
3) Resilient Optimism – complicity to a normative order, despite alienation
4) Transformative Optimism – belief in oneself as participating agent in the collective process of social change

I also recognised the need to extend this typology to identify *non*-optimistic participant content. While Rossatto's blind, fatalistic, and resilient categories are non-ideal professional perspectives , Rossatto considers them 'optimisms' because all four constructs assume that through hard work life can be improved. Therefore, I added the additional deductive codes:

5) Pessimism – a belief that it is not possible to affect improvement in the lives of pupils
6) Cynicism – a questioning of the efficacy of practice to affect improvement
7) Unplaced Idealism – an unresolved or ambiguous, positive outlook for future practice

My second source for deductive codes was Atkinson's (2018) characterisation of a neoliberal disposif as the institutionalised ontology of art education today, explored in Chapter Three. Given I agree with Atkinson that these attributes may represent the prevailing context of English school art education, I wanted to code the extent to which these conditions were encountered by participants, and their developing views in relation to their own ideals:

8) Prescription – increasingly prescriptive teaching practices
9) Mechanisation – increasingly repetitive teaching practices
10) Instrumentalisation – increasingly economic rationales for teaching practices
11) Homogenisation – increasingly generic teaching practices

12) Hylomorphic practice – pedagogic strategies imposed on learners
13) Transcendent practice – knowledge given to learners from an external source

As I began identifying codes within the transcription texts, I came to realise that these codes were incomplete; it was of interest to understand not only where participants' contributions might be linked to Atkinson's teaching practices, but the asymmetric pedagogical concepts too. I therefore added six codes to record participant's references to teaching Atkinson would potentially favour:

14) Emancipation – agentic teaching practice, or teaching that encourages agency among pupils
15) Humanisation – localised, and learner-relevant teaching practices
16) Inherentalisation – teaching practices that accept art education as inherent rationale

17) Diversification – diverse or pluralistic teaching practices

18) Automorphic Practice – learner-centered pedagogic strategies

19) Immanent Practice – knowledge constructed by or within learners

It might be noted that these categories echo Freirean concepts, but rather than inference of additional theoretical meaning, I chose them as oppositional language to the concepts identified in Atkinson's writing.

Once this template had been decided I was able to explore all data to identify where I felt codes might be matched. This involved multiple reading of all data while deductively coding –with each code in mind.

| | Pessimism | Cynicism |
|---|---|---|
| Elliot Artwork | | 78 |
| Elliot Early Interview | 190 | 103, 180, 197 |
| Elliot Late Interview | 75, 274, 279 | 23, 119, 145 |
| Leslie Artwork | | 84 |
| Leslie Early Interview | | 26, 192 |
| Leslie Late Interview | 238 | 75, 207, 211, 231, 238 |
| Morgan Artwork | | 328 |
| Morgan Early Interview | | |
| Morgan Late Interview | 48, 54, 172, 362, 422 | 62, 370, 382, 404, 468 |
| Nicky Artwork | | 89 |
| Nicky Early Interview | 172 | 28, 242, 251, 266, 279 |
| Nicky Late Interview | 124 | 32, 86, 109, 148 |
| Paris Artwork | | 52 |
| Paris Early Interview | | 23, 41, 154 |
| Paris Late Interview | 207, 308, 357 | 83, 116, 233, 260, 321 |
| Robin Artwork | | 52 |
| Robin Early Interview | 127, 264, 287 | |
| Robin Late Interview | 71, 200, 344, 378 | 89, 93, 200, 217, 396 |
| Ashley Artwork | 8 | 35 |
| Ashley Early Interview | 13, 446 | 352 |
| Ashley Late Interview | 22, 95, 99, 108, 240 | 12, 171, 379 |
| Evelyne Artwork | | |
| Evelyne Early Interview | 265, 278 | 69, 189, 304 |
| Evelyne Late Interview | 73, 173, 290 | 93, 113, 129, 191, 211 |
| Sam Early Interview | 101, 131, 167 | 11, 150, 162, 185, 194 |
| Sam Late Interview | 10, 39, 58, 179 | 62, 197, 208, 255, 309 |
| Frequency | 26 | 67 |

| | Emancipation | Humanisation |
|---|---|---|
| Elliot Artwork | 27, 50 | 50 |
| Elliot Early Interview | 293 | 130, 265 |
| Elliot Late Interview | 22, 56, 71, 176 | 38, 110, 145, 172 |
| Leslie Artwork | 76 | 10, 45 |
| Leslie Early Interview | 13, 89, 378 | 33, 119, 124, 163, 215 |
| Leslie Late Interview | 40, 289 | 22, 49, 143, 185 |
| Morgan Artwork | 38, 42 | 36, 42, 59 |
| Morgan Early Interview | 43, 246 | 19, 43, 292 |
| Morgan Late Interview | 36, 175, 180, 262, 426 | 26, 108 |
| Nicky Artwork | 68 | 54 |
| Nicky Early Interview | 103, 195, 288, 317 | 152 |
| Nicky Late Interview | 38, 86, 166 | 62, 166 |
| Paris Artwork | 74 | 46 |
| Paris Early Interview | , 232, 242, 272, 298, 377 | 7, 200, 232, 268, 298, 364 |
| Paris Late Interview | 41, 74, 98, 308, 357, 409 | 74, 213, 308 |
| Robin Artwork | 55 | 63, 79 |
| Robin Early Interview | 59, 79 | 75, 173, 180, 324, 346 |
| Robin Late Interview | 45, 115, 123, 208, 245 | 66, 115, 135, 305, 401 |
| Ashley Artwork | | 82 |
| Ashley Early Interview | 273, 498 | 51 |
| Ashley Late Interview | | |
| Evelyne Artwork | 14, 24, 37, 56 | 26 |
| Evelyne Early Interview | 93, 161 | 100, 129, 182 |
| Evelyne Late Interview | 138 | 101 |
| Sam Early Interview | 60, 282 | 39, 51, 73, 162, 291 |
| Sam Late Interview | 65 | 65, 129, 234 |
| Frequency | 76 | 90 |

*Figure 25: Illustrative examples of deductive coding matrices; a catalogue of frequency for the codes 'Pessimism', 'Cynicism', Emancipation' and 'Humanisation' across all 26 data sources*

To review the frequency and location of each deductive code, I produced a matrix listing line number against source. In isolation, this would be an impoverished resource for the qualitative researcher, so I also collated the text related to each reference, as illustrated below:

| Ashley Artwork | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pessimism | faded, grey scale tonality | | | | |
| Cynicism | comment on the arbitrary nature of curricula content in secondary art education today | | | | |
| Unplaced Idealism | I might find the ambition of this collection overwhelming | we don't see a melting pot of multicultural society, but projections of exoticism | perhaps it's a personal collection of curricula Ashley is excited about teaching in her utopian future | | |
| Prescription | often stale and stereotypical | | | | |
| Instrumentalisation | we celebrate the many contributions the visual makes, and has always made, to profound aspects of our lives beyond the aesthetic | | | | |
| Transcendent Practice | How does the student as maker fit into this puzzle of appropriated images? | opportunity for hungry students to absorb and analyse existing information rather than create knowledge through imminent or tacit action | | | |
| Humanisation | art permeates all aspects of human experience | | | | |
| Inherentalisation | a strong trend towards visual literacy | | | | |
| Diversification | Many are recognisable as culturally diverse. A panel of ancient Egyptian hieroglyph butts up against an oriental silk panel below which we see a Hindu deity with multiple arms holding a gruesome (if stylised) decapitated head. | an outward looking activity that can enlighten the participant to the culture of the 'other' | I see this as a celebratory collection of unity in difference – how we might view art education as a way to build understanding and in turn respect for those different to ourselves | These images are diverse (while harmonised through the means of their production), which feels important in the intent of this work. | |

*Figure 26: Sections of text from the transcribed Feldman's analysis of Ashley's artwork that related to deductive analytical codes*

I also constructed further matrices from deductive code frequencies, to act as analytical aids. For example, Fig.27 illustrates the frequency with which I identify relevance to Rossatto's optimisms across interviews, allowing me to track the change between participants' pre-school placement, and post-placement. As will be explored in 6.3, this data suggested that school placement led to significant increase in references interpreted as fatalistic, or resilient, in character.

| | Rossatto | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Blind Optimism | Fatalistic Optimism | Resilient Optimism | Transformative Optimism |
| **Early Interview Focus** | | | | |
| Elliot Early Interview | | 335 | 343 | 137, 238 |
| Leslie Early Interview | | 26, 154 | 419 | 33, 197, 370, 378, 400 |
| Morgan Early Interview | | | 30, 34 | , 191, 230, 236, 241, 261, 270 |
| Nicky Early Interview | | 91, 201, 228, 233, 242 | 103 | 152, 288 |
| Paris Early Interview | | 23, 385 | | , 210, 257, 272, 298, 308, 348 |
| Robin Early Interview | | 127, 190, 264 | 190 | 13, 180, 324 |
| Ashley Early Interview | | 408 | | 453, 489 |
| Evelyne Early Interview | | 224 | 182 | 62, 164, 298, 312 |
| Sam Early Interview | | | 162 | 60, 133 |
| Frequency | 0 | 16 | 8 | 40 |
| | | | | |
| **Combined Pre-Placement** | | | | |
| Frequency | 2 | 17 | 9 | 56 |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| **Late Interview Focus** | | | | |
| Elliot Late Interview | | 23, 75, 282 | 41, 122, 288, 301 | , 132, 302, 331, 355, 363, 367 |
| Leslie Late Interview | | 175, 231, 252, 289 | 101, 106, 127, 143, 246 | 40, 157, 185, 327 |
| Morgan Late Interview | 161, 404 | 59, 65, 327, 382, 461 | , 70, 180, 254, 426, 461 | 21, 31, 240, 244, 308, 493 |
| Nicky Late Interview | | 78, 86, 109, 148 | 47 | 172, 199 |
| Paris Late Interview | | 260, 321, 357 | 123, 252, 338, 433 | 92, 213, 252, 299, 400, 409, 4 |
| Robin Late Interview | | 71, 93, 294, 344 | 194, 217, 320 | 305, 320 |
| Ashley Late Interview | 99 | 115, 240 | 10, 30 | 171 |
| Evelyne Late Interview | | 191, 290 | 79, 101, 164 | 138, 159, 241 |
| Sam Late Interview | 88 | 114, 255, 402, 447 | 65, 93, 129, 281 | 53, 179 |
| Frequency | 4 | 31 | 35 | 34 |

*Figure 27: Frequency of Rossatto's typology of optimism deductive code occurrences in interviews*

Last, to simplify interpretation of change between prior and post-placement deductive code frequency – of critical importance to my research question concerned with interaction between participant's ideals and school-based experience – I created a visual 'heat map'. I did so at an individual participant level, and holistically, to navigate the trends between and among participants. I might note, this was not an attempt at quantitative research, but a visual shorthand to allow me to locate, extract, and thematically link qualitative meaning in participants' data.

Fig.28 illustrates this process: it was clear from this sample that both participants saw a marked increase in post-placement comments linked to the concept of resilient optimism, but Leslie's second interview produced a much greater sense of cynicism than their first, while for Elliot the change noted was towards pessimism.

| Interview Change Chart | Pessimism | Cynicism | Blind Optimism | Fatalistic Optimism | Resilient Optimism |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Post-Placement | | + | + | + | ++ |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | Rossatto | |
| Individual Heat Charts | Pessimism | Cynicism | Blind Optimism | Fatalistic Optimism | Resilient Optimism |
| Elliot Artwork | | | | | |
| Elliot Early Interview | | | | | |
| Elliot Late Interview | ++ | | | ++ | ++ |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Leslie Artwork | | | | | |
| Leslie Early Interview | | | | | |
| Leslie Late Interview | | ++ | | + | +++ |

*Figure 28: Colour-coded 'heat maps' to identify individual and holistic changes in deductive code frequency between pre and post-placement interview sessions*

### 5.7.2 Inductive Codes

Aside from generating my theoretical code template, 'I did not want to close myself off to observing things I had preconceived as not relevant' (Ingram, 2012a, p. 67). I felt it important to respect participants' contributions through identifying themes strongly linked to the data themselves (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Taking time to codify and consider inductive concerns was critical given my Freirean recognition of participants' contribution to this work – and the capacity in case study to learn from the native qualities of my data (T. Harland, 2014).

Therefore, many codes were contemplated during this analytical stage, at times a messy process – unlike deductive coding where order had been preestablished. As Glaser & Laudel (2013, p. 9) discuss, in qualitative data there is typically a 'dilution' of relevant information across potentially less-relevant material, and as such inductive coding requires in the first instance generation of 'large numbers of codes that cannot anymore be memorized and handled' (2013, p. 20).

Ultimately, three 'sifts' of the developing inductive codes were required to result in an intelligible resource for defining thematic findings. The first reading produced hundreds of potential codes, sometimes repeated across participant and source, but at other times contextually specific.

| Morgan Artwork | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Walking, moving | 4, 24, 4 | 4 |
| Journeying | 4, 42, 6 | 3 |
| Drawing | 12 | 1 |
| Chaos | 14, 17, | 3 |
| Confusion | 14 | 1 |
| Patterned | 17 | 1 |
| Process | 24, 35, | 3 |
| Action | 35 | 1 |
| Purpose | 24 | 1 |
| Experience | 42, 53 | 2 |
| Arbitary, ambiguous | 46, 78 | 2 |
| Performance | 53 | 1 |
| Indecision | 64 | 1 |
| Quakes | 71 | 1 |

| Nicky Artwork | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Sculpture | 4 | 1 |
| Asymmetrical/Chaotic | 6, 42 | 2 |
| Organic/natural | , 53, 56 | 6 |
| Textural | 10 | 1 |
| Movement/fluidity | 17 | 1 |
| Contol | 89 | 1 |
| Confidence | 25, 84 | 2 |
| Perspective | 37 | 1 |
| Energy/enthusiasm | 71 | 1 |
| Paradoxical | 46 | 1 |
| Transgressive ped. | 51 | 1 |
| Growth | 53 | 1 |
| Revolution | 65 | 1 |
| Ambiguity | 77 | 1 |
| Naivety | 86 | 1 |

| Paris Artwork | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Paint, photography, sculp | , 16, 26 | 3 |
| Chaotic/scrappy | , 46, 90 | 3 |
| Ambiguous | 9, 26 | 2 |
| Fragments | 16, 90 | 2 |
| Political | 26 | 1 |
| Perspectives | 34 | 1 |
| Plurality/Duality | , 39, 84 | 3 |
| Layered/complexity | 46 | 1 |
| School art | 52 | 1 |
| Revolution | 67, 93 | 2 |
| Flexible | 74 | 1 |
| Tension | 77 | 1 |
| Indecision | 86 | 1 |

| Morgan Early Interview | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Positivity | 17 | 1 |
| Biographical Reflection (fa | 39, 356 | 4 |
| Ref. to undergraduate | 27 | 1 |
| Adverse family A&D Ed ex | 30 | 1 |
| Tenacity | 34, 74 | 2 |
| Biographical reflection | 58, 324 | 4 |
| Collaborative learning | 45 | 1 |
| risk-taking pedagogies | 45, 230 | 2 |
| Journey | 46, 150 | 5 |
| Excited/thrilled/enthused | 24, 356 | 5 |
| Care | 55 | 1 |
| Fragmented schooling | 76, 324 | 2 |
| Professional isolation | 76 | 1 |
| Confident | 96 | 1 |
| Walking | 17, 139 | 2 |
| Research & Practice | 123 | 1 |
| Process/change/liminal sp | 50, 188 | 4 |
| Control | 127 | 1 |
| Tension | 127 | 1 |
| New Perspective | 139 | 1 |
| Identity change | 50, 230 | 2 |
| Gratefulness | 188 | 1 |
| Organic | 237 | 1 |
| Inclusion/accessability | 58, 265 | 2 |
| Ref. to PGCE content | 258 | 1 |

| Nicky Early Interview | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Fluid | 4 | 1 |
| Cross-curricular | 4 | 1 |
| Paradox | 7 | 1 |
| Artist/teacher practice | 44, 172 | 2 |
| New challenges | 53 | 1 |
| Naivety | 68 | 1 |
| Anxiety | 75 | 1 |
| Budgetary constraints | 77 | 1 |
| Biographic reflection (sch | 17, 330 | 5 |
| Cautious about experime | 93 | 1 |
| Stubbornness | 104 | 1 |
| Excitement | 31, 394 | 2 |
| Outsiderness | 55, 334 | 2 |
| Politics | 79, 281 | 5 |
| Control | 239 | 1 |
| Ref. to PGCE content | 320 | 1 |
| Chaos | 381 | 1 |
| Changing ideals | 394 | 1 |

| Paris Early Interview | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Changing perspective | 14 | 1 |
| Blank canvas | 15 | 1 |
| Overwhelming | 15 | 1 |
| Research and practice | 63, 295 | 5 |
| Anxious (about hopes) | 20 | 1 |
| Faith in education | 47 | 1 |
| Biographic reflection (sch | 54 | 1 |
| Rebellion | 67, 123 | 2 |
| Troubled school experien | 73 | 1 |
| Ref. to undergraduate | 89 | 1 |
| Pluralistic, multifaceted | 14, 344 | 2 |
| Transgression/anarchy | 77, 397 | 3 |
| Collective pedagogies | 08, 382 | 5 |
| Togetherness | 28, 157 | 2 |
| Criticality | 177 | 1 |
| Cross-curricular | 200 | 1 |
| Dialogue | 200 | 1 |
| Play, risky pedagogies | 42, 428 | 3 |
| Creativity | 242 | 1 |
| Ref. to PGCE content | 263 | 1 |
| Pastoral concerns | 268 | 1 |
| l'art pour l'art | 377 | 1 |
| Enjoyment | 397 | 1 |

*Figure 29: The first sift for inductive codes, illustrated through a sample of two of three participants' data sources*

I next 'pruned' esoteric references – codes appearing once, and which on second read did not produce a significant sense of relevance or need for further inquiry. This process was undertaken in concert with a colour coding project –to group codes considered synonymous, or conceptually associated.

The result was a bewildering data set (see Fig.30) and associated key (see Fig.31). While I needed to produce a succinct set of codes for analysis, I also thought it prudent to maintain this mid-point 'snapshot' of inductive codes. This enabled me to consult a higher-resolution set of 'proto-codes'

where my latter analysis might benefit, and I recorded frequency and change (pre- to post-placement occurrence) at this stage too.

| Morgan Artwork | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Walking, moving | 4, 24, 4 | 4 |
| Journeying | 4, 42, 6 | 3 |
| Drawing | 12 | 1 |
| Chaos | 14, 17, | 3 |
| Confusion | 14 | 1 |
| Patterned | 17 | 1 |
| Process | 24, 35, | 3 |
| Experience | 42, 53 | 2 |
| Arbitary, ambiguous | 46, 78 | 2 |
| Performance | 53 | 1 |
| Indecision | 64 | 1 |

| Nicky Artwork | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Sculpture | 4 | 1 |
| Asymmetrical/Chaotic | 6, 42 | 2 |
| Organic/natural | , 53, 56 | 6 |
| Textural | 10 | 1 |
| Movement/fluidity | 17 | 1 |
| Confidence | 25, 84 | 2 |
| Perspective | 37 | 1 |
| Energy/enthusiasm | 71 | 1 |
| Paradoxical | 46 | 1 |
| Transgressive ped. | 51 | 1 |
| Growth | 53 | 1 |
| Revolution | 65 | 1 |
| Ambiguity | 77 | 1 |

| Paris Artwork | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Paint, photography, sculj | 16, 26 | 3 |
| Chaotic/scrappy | , 46, 90 | 3 |
| Ambiguous | 9, 26 | 2 |
| Fragments | 16, 90 | 2 |
| Political | 26 | 1 |
| Perspectives | 34 | 1 |
| Plurality/Duality | , 39, 84 | 3 |
| Layered/complexity | 46 | 1 |
| School art | 52 | 1 |
| Revolution | 67, 93 | 2 |
| Flexible | 74 | 1 |
| Tension | 77 | 1 |
| Indecision | 86 | 1 |

| Morgan Early Interview | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Biographical Reflection (f | 39, 356 | 4 |
| Ref. to undergraduate | 27 | 1 |
| Adverse family A&D Ed ex | 30 | 1 |
| Tenacity | 34, 74 | 2 |
| Biographical reflection | 58, 324 | 4 |
| Collaborative learning | 45 | 1 |
| risk-taking pedagogies | 45, 230 | 2 |
| Journey | 46, 150 | 5 |
| Excited/thrilled/enthusec | 24, 356 | 5 |
| Care | 55 | 1 |
| Fragmented schooling | 76, 324 | 2 |
| Confident | 96 | 1 |
| Walking | 17, 139 | 2 |
| Research & Practice | 123 | 1 |
| Process/change/liminal s | 50, 188 | 4 |
| Control | 127 | 1 |
| Tension | 127 | 1 |
| New Perspective | 139 | 1 |
| Identity change | 50, 230 | 2 |
| Organic | 237 | 1 |
| Inclusion/accessability | 58, 265 | 2 |
| Ref. to PGCE content | 258 | 1 |

| Nicky Early Interview | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Fluid | 4 | 1 |
| Cross-curricular | 4 | 1 |
| Paradox | 7 | 1 |
| Artist/teacher practice | 44, 172 | 2 |
| New challenges | 53 | 1 |
| Naivety | 68 | 1 |
| Anxiety | 75 | 1 |
| Budgetary constraints | 77 | 1 |
| Biographic reflection (sch | 17, 330 | 5 |
| Cautious about experime | 93 | 1 |
| Stubbornness | 104 | 1 |
| Excitement | 31, 394 | 2 |
| Outsiderness | 55, 334 | 2 |
| Politics | 79, 281 | 5 |
| Control | 239 | 1 |
| Ref. to PGCE content | 320 | 1 |
| Chaos | 381 | 1 |
| Changing ideals | 394 | 1 |

| Paris Early Interview | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Changing perspective | 14 | 1 |
| Overwhelming | 15 | 1 |
| Research and practice | 53, 295 | 5 |
| Anxious (about hopes) | 20 | 1 |
| Biographic reflection (sch | 54 | 1 |
| Rebellion | 57, 123 | 2 |
| Troubled school experien | 73 | 1 |
| Ref. to undergraduate | 89 | 1 |
| Pluralistic, multifaceted | 14, 344 | 2 |
| Transgression/anarchy | 77, 397 | 3 |
| Collective pedagogies | 08, 382 | 5 |
| Togetherness | 28, 157 | 2 |
| Criticality | 177 | 1 |
| Cross-curricular | 200 | 1 |
| Dialogue | 200 | 1 |
| Play, risky pedagogies | 42, 428 | 3 |
| Ref. to PGCE content | 263 | 1 |
| Pastoral concerns | 268 | 1 |
| l'art pour l'art | 377 | 1 |
| Enjoyment | 397 | 1 |

*Figure 30: The second stage of inductive coding, as illustrated through a sample of two of three participants' data sources*

| Colour Code Key | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Pastoral/Care | | Artist/Teacher practice |
| | Organic/Natural/Growth | | Alternative Pedagogies |
| | Flux/Chaos | | Problematic school systems/orthodoxies |
| | Journey/Change | | Biographic reflections |
| | Ambiguity/Complexity/Layers/Boundaries | | Ref. to PGCE/research |
| | Anxiety/Naivety | | Politics |
| | Overwhelmed/intimidated/challenged | | Ideals (Challenged/Changed/Strengthened) |
| | Confidence/Excitement/Enjoyment | | Outsiderness |
| | Humility/Pragmatism/Compromise | | Authenticity |
| | Tenacity/criticality | | Artistic medium |
| | Control/Balance/Harmony | | New Perspectives |
| | | | |
| Total Frequency Key | | | |
| 63 | Pastoral/Care | 21 | Artist/Teacher practice |
| 43 | Organic/Natural/Growth | 103 | Alternative Pedagogies |
| 42 | Flux/Chaos | 61 | Problematic school systems/orthodoxies |
| 37 | Journey/Change | 43 | Biographic reflections |
| 48 | Ambiguity/Complexity/Layers/Boundaries | 15 | Ref. to PGCE/research |
| 22 | Anxiety/Naivety | 15 | Politics |
| 23 | Overwhelmed/intimidated/challenged | 43 | Ideals (Challenged/Changed/Strengthened) |
| 37 | Confidence/Excitement/Enjoyment | 13 | Outsiderness |
| 15 | Humility/Pragmatism/Compromise | 15 | Authenticity |
| 7 | Tenacity/criticality | | Artistic medium |
| 8 | Control/Balance/Harmony | 3 | New Perspectives |
| | | | |
| Change Key | | | |
| +++ | Pastoral/Care | ++ | Artist/Teacher practice |
| --- | Organic/Natural/Growth | +++ | Alternative Pedagogies |
| - | Flux/Chaos | + | Problematic school systems/orthodoxies |
| - | Journey/Change | -- | Biographic reflections |
| -- | Ambiguity/Complexity/Layers/Boundaries | - | Ref. to PGCE/research |
| + | Anxiety/Naivety | -- | Politics |
| ++ | Overwhelmed/intimidated/challenged | ++ | Ideals (Challenged/Changed/Strengthened) |
| -- | Confidence/Excitement/Enjoyment | -- | Outsiderness |
| ++ | Humility/Pragmatism/Compromise | -- | Authenticity |
| + | Tenacity/criticality | | Artistic medium |
| --- | Control/Balance/Harmony | - | New Perspectives |

*Figure 31: The key to colour coding at the second stage of inductive code identification and sorting*

Judicious amalgamation of codes resulted in a final set of ten codes, each significant enough to inhibit further reduction. To produce further variations of data organisation which might provide insight, I produced additional matrices, limited to codes recorded on multiple (2+, or frequent (3+) occasions, providing distillate, if less nuanced, versions of the data.

| Morgan Artwork | | | | Nicky Artwork | | | | Paris Artwork | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. | | Potential Code | LN | Freq. | | Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Walking, moving | 4, 24, 4 | 4 | | Asymmetrical/Chaotic | 6, 42 | 2 | | Chaotic/scrappy | , 46, 90 | 3 |
| Journeying | 4, 42, 6 | 3 | | Organic/natural | , 53, 56 | 6 | | Ambiguous | 9, 26 | 2 |
| Chaos | 14, 17, | 3 | | Movement/fluidity | 17 | 1 | | Fragments | 16, 90 | 2 |
| Confusion | 14 | 1 | | Confidence | 25, 84 | 2 | | Political | 26 | 1 |
| Patterned | 17 | 1 | | Perspective | 37 | 1 | | Perspectives | 34 | 1 |
| Process | 24, 35, | 3 | | Energy/enthusiasm | 71 | 1 | | Plurality/Duality | , 39, 84 | 3 |
| Experience | 42, 53 | 2 | | Paradoxical | 46 | 1 | | Layered/complexity | 46 | 1 |
| Arbitary, ambiguous | 46, 78 | 2 | | Transgressive ped. | 51 | 1 | | School art | 52 | 1 |
| Performance | 53 | 1 | | Growth | 53 | 1 | | Revolution | 67, 93 | 2 |
| Indecision | 64 | 1 | | Revolution | 65 | 1 | | Flexible | 74 | 1 |
| | | | | Ambiguity | 77 | 1 | | Tension | 77 | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | Indecision | 86 | 1 |

*Figure 32: The third stage of inductive coding, illustrated through a sample of one of three participants' data sources*

| Colour Code Key | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Pastoral/Care | | Artist/Teacher practice |
| | Organic/Natural/Growth | | Alternative Pedagogies |
| | Flux/Chaos | | Outsiderness |
| | Journey/Change | | Authenticity |
| | Ambiguity/Complexity/Layers/Boundaries | | Problematic school systems/orthodoxies |
| | Anxiety/Naivety | | Politics |
| | Overwhelmed/intimidated/challenged | | Biographic reflections |
| | Confidence/Excitement/Enjoyment | | Ref. to PGCE/research |
| | Humility/Pragmatism/Compromise | | Ideals (Challenged/Changed/Strengthened) |
| | Tenacity/criticality | | New Perspectives |

| Total Frequency Key | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 106 | Pastoral/Care | 152 | Artist/Teacher practice |
| | Organic/Natural/Growth | | Alternative Pedagogies |
| 79 | Flux/Chaos | | Outsiderness |
| | Journey/Change | | Authenticity |
| 93 | Ambiguity/Complexity/Layers/Boundaries | 76 | Problematic school systems/orthodoxies |
| | Anxiety/Naivety | | Politics |
| | Overwhelmed/intimidated/challenged | 58 | Biographic reflections |
| 37 | Confidence/Excitement/Enjoyment | | Ref. to PGCE/research |
| 15 | Humility/Pragmatism/Compromise | 46 | Ideals (Challenged/Changed/Strengthened) |
| 7 | Tenacity/criticality | | New Perspectives |

| Change Key | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Pastoral/Care | ++ | Artist/Teacher practice |
| | Organic/Natural/Growth | | Alternative Pedagogies |
| - | Flux/Chaos | | Outsiderness |
| | Journey/Change | | Authenticity |
| + | Ambiguity/Complexity/Layers/Boundaries | + | Problematic school systems/orthodoxies |
| | Anxiety/Naivety | | Politics |
| | Overwhelmed/intimidated/challenged | -- | Biographic reflections |
| -- | Confidence/Excitement/Enjoyment | | Ref. to PGCE/research |
| ++ | Humility/Pragmatism/Compromise | ++ | Ideals (Challenged/Changed/Strengthened) |
| + | Tenacity/criticality | | New Perspectives |

*Figure 33: The key at the third stage of inductive code identification and sorting*

| Elliot Artwork | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Chaotic design | 6, 58, 69 | 4 |
| Organic/natural | 16, 39, 5 | 3 |

| Leslie Artwork | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Growth/nurishment | 5, 76, 89 | 5 |
| Perpetunity/Infinity | 3, 27, 69 | 3 |
| Reproducing, repeating | 4, 49, 89 | 4 |

| Morgan Artwork | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Walking, moving | 4, 24, 4 | 4 |
| Journeying | 4, 42, 6 | 3 |
| Chaos | 14, 17, | 3 |
| Process | 24, 35, | 3 |

| Elliot Early Interview | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| School art' tension | 160, 167 | 4 |
| Layered | 300, 306 | 3 |

| Leslie Early Interview | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Boundaries (prof./self-imp | 5, 60, 75 | 3 |
| Growth | 370, 281 | 4 |
| Biographic reflection (scho | 337, 384 | 6 |
| Engagement/excitment | 344, 381 | 3 |

| Morgan Early Interview | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Biographical Reflection (far | 39, 356 | 4 |
| Biographical reflection | 58, 324 | 4 |
| Journey | 46, 150 | 5 |
| Excited/thrilled/enthused | 24, 356 | 5 |
| Process/change/liminal spa | 50, 188 | 4 |

| Elliot Late Interview | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Intimidated/anxious about | 288, 338 | 4 |
| Biographical reflection (sch | 170, 178 | 3 |

| Leslie Late Interview | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Pastoral concerns (positive | 42, 148, | 3 |
| Individual/emotional conn | 42, 52, 5 | 5 |

| Morgan Late Interview | | |
|---|---|---|
| Potential Code | LN | Freq. |
| Strength of conviction/idea | 40, 493 | 3 |
| Journey/Paths | 26, 464 | 3 |
| Transgression, 'bending' 'g | 76, 495 | 4 |
| Artist/teacher practice | 21, 422 | 3 |

*Figure 34: Inductive codes where frequency = 3+, illustrated through a sample of all of three participants' data sources*

I eventually felt that these codes, their position, and frequency, provided a rich interpretation of participants' contributions – certainly enough to finalise themes.

### 5.7.3 Searching for, Reviewing, and Delineating Themes

The third, fourth and fifth stage of analysis – the search for, review and definition of themes – all act to arrive at secure identification of key threads for discussion. Given the inherently interpretive, qualitative process of identifying patterns of code, and next defining these as of thematic value, no 'hard and fast rule' (M. Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3356) could conveniently be applied. I was not interested in rigidly predetermining the number or character of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; M. Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Instead, my iterative interaction between text, codes, and themes might be metaphorically comparable to the gradual improvement of definition in a digital image, pixels rendered with increasing clarity. The whole composition simultaneously moved from fuzzy to firm as changes were made, loose ends deliberated, and connections made and remade. As Glaser and Laudel (2013, p. 10) suggest, this step was, unavoidably 'dependent on the analyst's creativity and ability to recognize patterns' – 'an ill-structured activity for which no algorithm can be provided' (2013, p. 2).

Recognising patterns was a three-fold creative process. First, tentative semantic themes were formalised through weighing the quantity, context, and character of codes. Where this data cohered,

thematic description was sought, and where it did not distinctions between different themes was clarified (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 97). At times, codes were combined to form themes with strong foundation, or inductive codes were yoked to deductive categories, twinned if thematically concurrent (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p. 88). On other occasions themes were established solely on the distinction of a particular code. Where theoretical codes were *not* found to be present in the data they were not abandoned – dissonance between a priori theory and participant data was recorded as of interest for potential establishment of absent themes (Glaser & Laudel, 2013, p. 22).

These semantic themes identified the significance of patterns in the data and led to subsequent opportunities for latent level meta-thematic analysis. Braun & Clarke describe this layer as important when starting to:

> …identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies – that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 90)

Second, given the critical nature of this study, I felt using codes to access latent themes – those that illuminate underlying assumptions and ideologies encountered and communicated by participants – was of great importance. Semantic level patterns alone would not have answered my critical research questions. 'Interrogation of patterns within personal or social meaning' (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297) however – the analysis of themes themselves with reference to theoretical context – did allow me to achieve this.

For example, a strong semantic theme identified across many participant artworks was that of organic forms – soft, curvaceous, or dendroid in shape. This finding was valuable for latent level analysis pertinent to my research questions – i.e., that these forms suggested an idealistic art education common among participants - characterised by pedagogies nurturing an organic development in learners' individual creative interests.

Third, while concurrent coding and thematic establishment across the data corpus provided insight, I also felt it necessary to cross-reference the contextual origin of each thematic concern. It was interesting, both conceptually and for methodological transparency, to know if a theme has originated, for example, solely in my transcriptions of participant artworks (from within one

method), or the contributions of an individual (from one participant), in comparison to those present across source or multiple participants. As such – using comparative tabling, I was able to weigh the relevance of relationships between themes and their origin, rather than claiming all relative. For example, when several participants started talking cynically about the attitude and direction of 'higher ups', or senior school leaders – it was important to know whether their view on colleagues was formed through direct experience (i.e., mentioned post-placement), or whether they had entered their teaching experience distrustful of authority.

It was at this point, once data had been thematically analysed, that I undertook the sixth stage of Braun and Clarke's model: telling 'the complicated story' (2006, p. 100) of the data through detailed report – Chapter Six.

## 5.8 Ethical Considerations

When describing the design and operation of this study I have attempted to illuminate ethical dimensions of my decisions. I also discussed the ethics germane to visual methods in 5.4. However, there are some additional ethical actions pertinent to this study that it felt important to highlight in isolation. These concerns are centered on the relationship between me and my participants, and our scholastic dynamic.

Within the design of any educational research involving student participants, critical inspection of pressure placed on the responsibility of the more powerful agent is undoubtedly important. Where double agency is encountered, in this instance me working as researcher with my students, therein lies possibility for 'conflicts of interest and threats to ethical principles in the relationship' (Ferguson et al. 2004, 59).

A review of published studies methodologically alike to mine revealed little of precedential value. Freer et al. (2012), and Collanus et al. (2012b) report nothing of their ethical considerations when working with student participants. Beltman et al. (2015, p. 229) don't elaborate on ethical concerns beyond clarification that participants were well informed that 'the submission of the drawings was not related to any assessments in the course'. I questioned their decision to 'assume' that 'if

drawings were handed in that consent was given to include those in the study' (Beltman et al., 2015, p. 229) – as this suggests participants may not have been told *how* their drawings (of identities as pre-service teachers) were used. This is an ambiguity I avoided through the considerations below, as I felt lack of clarity would infringe students' right to privacy.

To begin, I asserted that while I hold responsibility for my students, as an academic I balance this moral obligation against responsibility for discipline advancement. In this arena, the participation of my own students was especially valuable, important for my practice, participants, and wider society:

(i) For me, deploying visual research methods incorporating novel analytical approaches represented an opening of new possibilities for future studies. I also felt that refining my knowledge of these methods would make me a more capable supervisor when working with students interested in similar approaches themselves – strengthening my own professional practice as a developing academic. Further, findings from this study critically informed the taught post-graduate course I lead. While benefits for future students are outlined below, this has also had positive impact on my confidence and quality assurance of materials I teach.

(ii) There had been no equivalent research conducted previously in England, exploring the specific contexts of aspirant art educators. This seemed remiss, given that this demographic might be expected the most visually literate ITE students and therefore particularly well suited to participant-generated visual research. I hoped that this study would allow participants – as student art teachers – to contribute to the body of understanding concerning their developmental journey, providing opportunity for empowerment. In valuing their voice within research, I hoped that they would feel connected to a wider community of practitioners dedicated to the future quality (and consequences) of school art education. I believe participants found reflection and discussion on their identity as educators a valuable opportunity to engage with their sense of self. I knew it typical for student teachers to critically reflect on their context and practice during initial teacher education (McCartney et al., 2018), and participation in this study amplified this process. While I understood the risk that participants could become anxious or negative about their future agency and/or aspirations – I did not see this. Rather, participation appeared to have positive impact on the certainty, validation, and strength of participants' thinking on practice, identity, and their personal ideals.

(iii) The benefactors who I hoped would most immediately gain from this research were future ITE post-graduate students. Indeed, it is for the sustained well-being, and autonomous efficacy, of these individuals to practice with transformative optimism that I undertook this research. I believe this study will facilitate a course more effective in promoting autonomy and protecting ideals, in a contemporary context where retention rate of teachers worsens annually (National Statistics, 2022) – a phenomenon linked to powerlessness among teachers (Smith, 2019). Further, the wider community who may then feel the impact of this research are the secondary school pupils taught by future graduates of the reformed programme.

While there are arguably methodological strategies that would enable me to do something similar without direct involvement of my own students (for example research with ITE students at another university), I felt the benefits outlined above compelling. It is also my practice that I have the agency to amend based upon my findings, therefore, the recruitment of participants from among my own students was justified not as a 'convenience' (Ferguson et al., 2004, p. 62), but an epistemological necessity.

Given I worked with student participants, the following conditions were applied to mitigate potential ethical threats. First, if announcements of participant recruitment with university students are 'characteristically vague' (Foot & Sanford, 2004, p. 257), I ensured mine were personally communicated, with full clarity of expectation and purpose. I explained the nature of the study discursively and transparently through an initial presentation to prospective participants (BERA, 2018, p. 16). A participant information sheet and consent form to be signed (BERA, 2018, p. 9) were available to prospective participants as paper copies, with contact information included, and clear conditions regarding participant's right to terminate involvement at any time. Students could then consent to volunteer fully informed – although I did not ask them to volunteer during my introductory exposition on the study (to avoid feelings of an immediate duty to do so). I asked them to affirm their participation via student-initiated email contact – while taking no action if disinclined - so that this was a private, considered, decision.

Second, I made clear the separation between participation in this study and students' own programme of learning – avoiding the mistakes made during Shi's (2007, p. 205) action research project, whose lack of clarity led students to complain 'whether they really had the choice of not

participating in the research'. This separation was reinforced during the study's operation through the interviews being conducted outside of the students' usual seminar space. This division was helpful for me, as I could better differentiate between lecturer and research mode of practice.

Foot and Sanford (2004, p. 258) argue that informed consent may be problematic in instances of student participation, as it can act to disempower participants, 'or at least cancel out the effects of right to withdraw'. While I appreciate that the process of supplying consent may represent some symbolic pressure to maintain participation, I countered this implicit pressure with my third consideration: explicit repetition of participants' rights and clarification of their scholastic priorities as students when we met for interview. Regardless minimisation of extrinsic coercion, pressure inherently remained on my students to maintain participation simply due the power dynamic of our relationship. Given this, throughout the study I followed the advice of Fergurson et al. (2004, p. 64) in constantly and comprehensively observing 'student participants for signs of reluctance to continue' and would have, if necessary, acted to remove them proactively and unilaterally from the research as fiduciary prerogative. This was not required of me.

Further, no extrinsic reward (or course credit) was offered to volunteer participants, and no deceptive practices took place that might represent an obvious invasion of privacy. Mutual trust was a necessary element of the researcher/participant dynamic here (Ferguson et al., 2004; Shi, 2007), and as noted above, I feel the result was a situation which allows students to 'believe they have benefited educationally from participation' (Foot & Sanford, 2004, p. 257).

The final consideration to ensure prospective student participants were protected from any abuse of power manifest in coercion, intentional or otherwise, included ethical approval from relevant committee. The ethics committee remains a 'key safety net' (Ferguson et al., 2004, p. 62) when working with captive participants, and in this instance my proposals passed through two university faculty ethics committees.

## 5.9 Methods Summary

In this chapter I have described and discussed the methodological decisions made during the design and operation of this study. Here I summarise the models employed, uniquely suited to meeting the needs of my research questions, providing findings both authentic and specific to this normative case study.

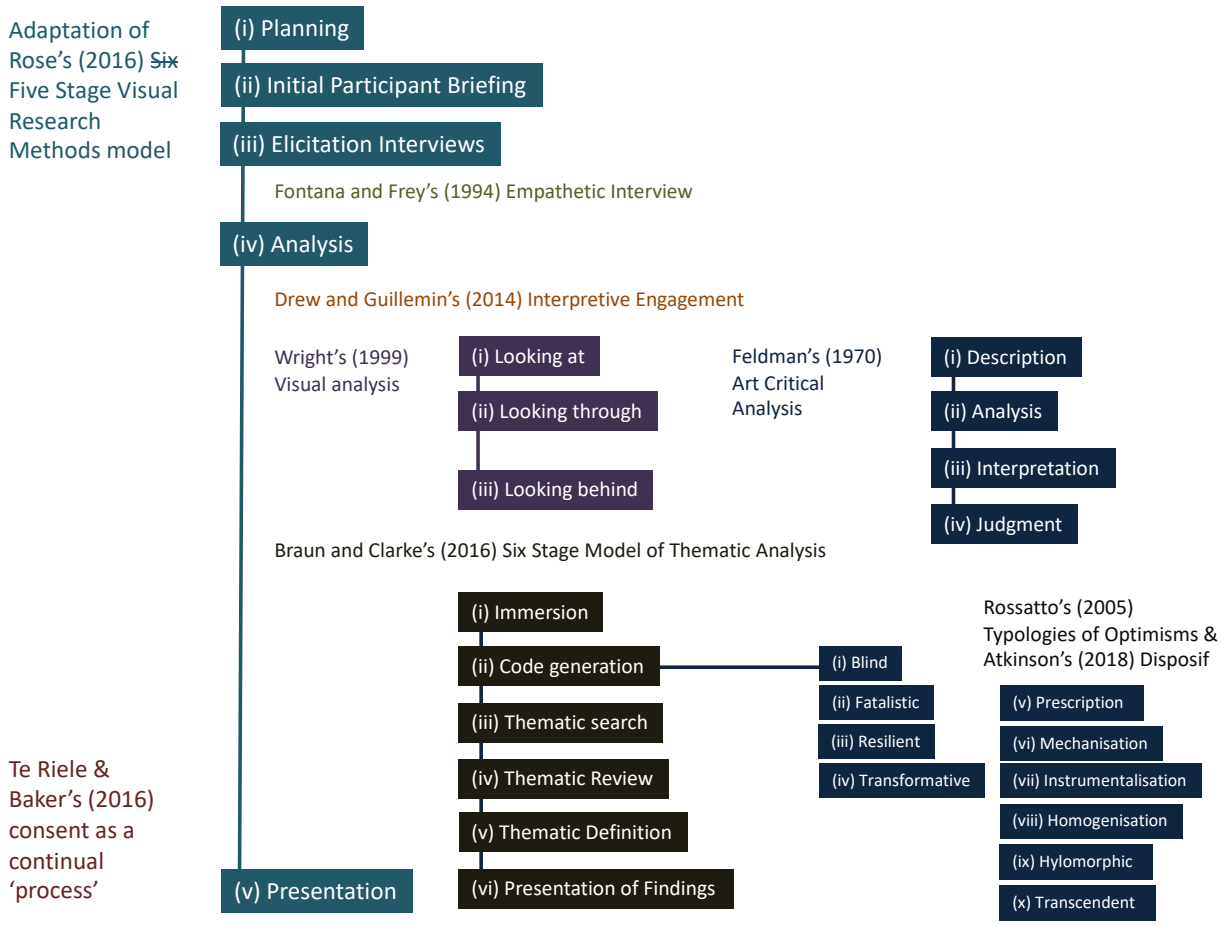


*Figure 35: An illustration of the theoretical frameworks that informed the methodology of this study*

First Rose's model of visual research was amended to suit artistic (not photographic) data and used as an undergirding framework for proceedings. Rose's (2016a, p. 328) assertion that visual methods are directly connectable to critical purpose due to the visual's relation to context, the potential for transparency and reflexivity, and a tradition of successful visual research with emancipatory ends, made conceptual methodological alignment to my Freirean perspective secure. Fontana and Frey's

(1994) model of empathetic interview informed my data collection, and Drew and Guillemin's (2014) 'interpretive engagement' was very influential in my interaction with visual data, which I conceptualised as polysemic (providing multiple perspectives). These processes satisfied my Freirean intentions too, highlighting my duty of care to participants – in upholding respect for their subjectivity, engendering horizontal dialogue, and in recognising the authenticity of their contributions. In concert with Drew and Guillemin's (2014) writing on visual methods, I found inspiration in Wright's (1999) typology of looking – together these constructs helped me organise the value of each method and my associated analytical approach.

To transcribe visual data, I employed a process informed by Feldman's (1970) art critical framework and did so through assertion of my identity as a teacher of art. Braun and Clarke's (Clarke & Braun, 2017) model of thematic analysis structured my actions once I had transcribed data into text, and I generated codes inductively and deductively. The categories I included in my deductive code template were derived from the work of Rossatto (2005), whose typology of optimisms have direct lineage from Freire's (2005) own writing on teacher disposition, and Atkinson (2018), who expresses a related, critical view specific to contemporary art educational practice in England.

Cutting across the operation of this research, my ethical approach was most immediately influenced by Te Riele and Baker's (2016) comprehensive suggestions for visual methods, in particular the concept of consent as a continual process.

I felt satisfied while undertaking this research - talking with participants and latterly spending time with their artistic and verbal contributions - that the processes employed had been in constructive alignment (Biggs, 1996). My personal and professional intent, perspective, and contextualisation of the study, my research questions and methods, and the analytical treatment of data seemed to lock together effectively, despite the process requiring periods of interpretive 'messiness' (Cook, 1998). The quality of participant contributions was a gratifying result, and I hope in the findings that follow I have done justice to their collegiate candour.

# 6 Findings

In the previous section I discussed this study's design, with only the final stage of Braun and Clarke's (2006, p. 100) thematic analysis left incomplete – telling of 'the complicated story'. Here I navigate the frayed ends and knotty implications of my codes, stitching together thematic interpretation that guided me towards new, authentic understanding. This inherently reductive process was required such that from a complexity of data I might 'convey a vicarious experience to the reader' (Idowu, 2016, p. 187) – my experience as practitioner researcher – and in turn write an intelligible story of my own learning. I hope that these findings develop my capacity to defend idealism in art education, such that the transformations that participants aspire to enact can endure in their own, and future cohorts', classroom practice. I recognise that the outcome of this endeavour is not a resolution, instead in 'teasing out the complexities' (Edwards, 2002, p. 161), I define the issues, priorities, and opportunities for my practice moving forward.

I identified six themes that to me defined participant's contributions, and critically analysed each in turn. While presenting findings, I simultaneously discuss these in context – drawing links between the practical and theoretical and the specific and general. The themes include: 6.1 shape, 6.2 journeys, 6.3 recognising reproductive orthodoxy, 6.4 bifurcating curricula concepts, 6.5 identity reflections, and 6.6 the terms of transgression. While identified as separate concerns, these themes. presented in narrative order. interact closely to describe the experiences of my nine participants.

Throughout this chapter, for the sake of legibility, when I reference participant data I employ acronyms and line numbers to identify the source transcript. These acronyms are as follows: AT - artwork transcription (my interpretive transcription of the participant's artwork), EI - elicitation interview (the first elicitation interview, prior to school placement starting), and PPI (post-placement interview). For example, where a verbatim reference is marked 'Morgan PPI35', this indicates the data as the thirty-fifth line of participant Morgan's post-placement interview.

## 6.1 Shapes: The Chaotic Flux and Organic Form of an Ideal Art Education

The first theme that I drew from the data was that of *shape*. Both artmaking and interview included a wealth of descriptive potential, and participants used these opportunities to depict two distinct conceptual shapes.

One shape was chaotic – describe by Nicky (PPI4) as 'weird, and malleable', or in my transcription as 'staccato, with jagged geometrics dominant, occasional curvaceous interruptions, and a collective confusion of knotted marks' (Morgan AT18). Elliot (EI25) describes their artmaking process as trying to visualise something 'that's not really pinpoint-able' – requiring indistinct forms. In my view, this reoccurrence suggested two potential meanings: participants' bewilderment on entering a complex professional context, or alternatively, a celebration of artmaking's disruptive disposition.

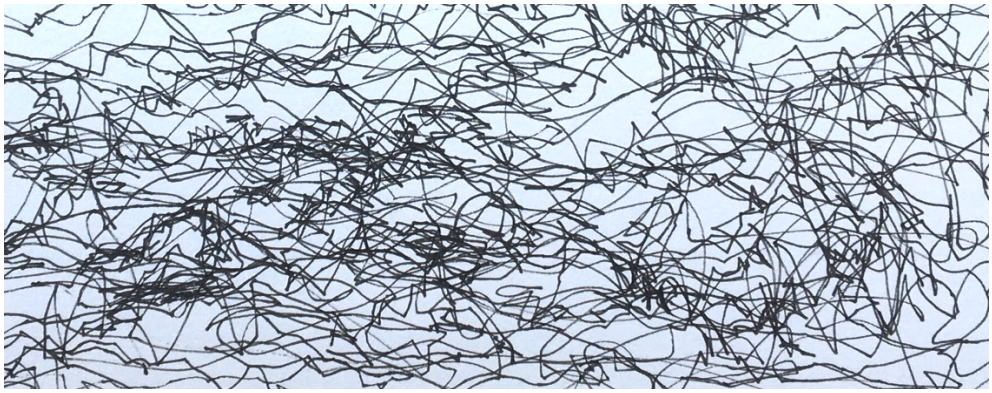

*Figure 36: detail from Morgan's artwork – 'jagged geometrics dominant'*

The second shape was organic – sometimes figuratively as in Lesley's metaphoric artwork: 'a lemniscatic curl…empowered by the graphic of a repeating tree, whose branches become the roots of another' (Lesley AT28-30), and on other occasions in abstract: 'a web of connectivity, an organic process or a natural state of equilibrium' (Evelyne AT38). Participants almost always associated this shape, connoting growth, and nourishment, to an automorphic art education – wherein learners' skills and ideas expand following rhizomatic or pluralistic pathways rather than predetermined linearity.

*Figure 37: detail from Lesley's artwork – 'a self-sustaining force for future growth'*

### 6.1.1 A Chaotic Flux: Celebrating the Unpredictability of the Artistic Act

As explored in 3.3, literature on ITE often refers to becoming a teacher as a disruptive, or chaotic (Chong & Low, 2009; Hanley & Brown, 2017) process – concepts of identity challenged and reformed, values examined, and intent questioned. Resultantly, this space can be conceptualised as one of 'flux' (Thorpe & Kinsella, 2021).

This tumultuous dynamic was a strong theme through my participants' early contributions. Codes frequently referenced 'chaos', 'ambiguity', confusion' and 'flux', with the final amalgamated codes of 'Flux/Change' and 'Ambiguity/Complexity' occurring on no less than 79 and 93 occasions respectively across participant-generated data, and both noted repeatedly against participants' artistic contributions too.


*Figure 38: Ashley's Artwork – 'a patchy texture of infidelity'*

For example, when I transcribed Ashley's artwork, I recorded that photographic images 'jostle for attention, overlapped in places…[with] a patchy texture of infidelity' (Ashely AT5-8), a formal composition as metaphor for the competing, inchoate demands of teacher education, perhaps. However, in my interpretive transcription of Elliot's artwork, this chaotic form was instead associated to artistic method:

> 'I might consider the layers of material here indicative of a chaotic and authentic, developmental process – in contrast to the rigorous logic illustrated in the presentation sketchbooks of exam classes.' (Elliot AT58-60)

Similarly, my interpretation of Evelyne's submission:

> 'a scrapbook of ephemera and marks; suggestive of an iterative process rather than a coherent objectives-led activity.' (Evelyne AT51)

*Figure 39: detail from Elliot's Artwork – 'a chaotic and authentic developmental process'*

Indeed, rather than referent for ITE experience, I feel in most instances chaotic motifs embodied an idealistic artistic education – one facilitating authentic artistic experience for learners – that recognises the discipline's 'ragged edges' (Evelyne AT6) and the unpredictable, 'irrational, often subversive nature of popular culture' (Duncum, 2009, p. 232). Participants, who expressed a 'mad kind of energy' (Morgan PPI234), who 'want students to go mad and enjoy art' (Paris PPI359) and express excitement about the 'rocky ride' of upending classrooms where 'the teachers are bored and the kids – they're bored' (Sam PPI198), are clearly optimistic about encouraging gusto –an anarchic

enjoyment even – among prospective pupils. Chaos, conceived as carnivalesque criticality of convention rather than a destructive force, offers a free and frank state of creative potential, an idealised arts education at odds with the conformative rigour of institutional schooling. Duncum, advocating for a 'playful pedagogy' marked this dichotomy with interesting nuance – referencing Barthes' (1975) use of *plaiser* to denote the 'conformist pleasure' of an education under the control of social order, and *jouissance*, 'an intense, blissful ecstasy produced by evading and transgressing the social order' (2009, p. 234). I might interpret many of my participants' pre-placement contributions suggestive that they, as Duncum, believe an ideal art education as facilitating authentic *jouissance*, perhaps reflecting on the abandon of their undergraduate education.

Several participants did draw on their undergraduate art education as inspiring their idealism – Elliot (EI277) recollecting opportunities to 'obsess' over experimentation, Leslie (EI169) the openness of tutors, and Morgan the autonomy (EI29). Paris (EI89) describes the 'radical difference' between secondary schooling – from which they withdrew themselves, and art school which they had applied for as 'an idea of wildness and anarchy and freedom' (EI171). It was clear from their contributions that Paris, and others, were drawn to chaos as a creative – if disruptive or unpredictable – force rather than a forbidden condition.

While reminiscences may occlude reality (to what extent does success within the structural standards of higher education represent transgression of social order?), the dynamic liberty of art school cited by participants evidently shaped their pre-placement idealism; potentially into the graphic chaotic forms of their artworks. Also beholden to the managerial accountability of neoliberalism (Gielen & De Bruyne, 2012b), the art school nonetheless foregoes many of the arbitrary oppressions synonymous with secondary schooling (uniform/mandatory attendance/punitive sanctions) and therefore presents a comparative utopia for participants interested in playful, passionate, or personal pedagogy. For me this is meaningful, as I need to consider the means to connect art school tendencies and school art orthodoxies if I hope to nurture these student teachers' nascent hopes. I might also seek to contextualise similar expectations; the developmental needs of secondary school pupils are not the same as those who self-select to latterly attend art school, and equally, not all student art teachers have a free-brief fine art bias (indeed a small majority apply from applied art disciplines).

Referencing undergraduate experience for different emphasis, in Ashley's collage (Fig.38) they expressly press the postmodern ideal of a cultural maelstrom – 'hieroglyphics as being maybe related to like emojis…' (Ashley EI49) – as preferable to commonly observed hierarchies of Western canon (Elkins, 2002). The 'chaos' here is not a physically frenetic classroom, but a problematisation of the disingenuous, and arguably oppressive, simplicity of contextual studies (Hickman, 2019); to disrupt 'prescriptive…mapped out' (Ashley EI257) curricula.

Given the artistic prompts provided, that some participants chose to delineate an idealised liberatory art education through dynamic mark-making was unsurprising. However, I sensed that the disruption or flux of ITE might have revealed the emergent nature of some participants' idealism, implicitly impacted artmaking too. For example, in some compositions an unresolved, or reconfigured response to the prompts is suggested. Holding indistinct, developing, ideas about what might be possible and preferable is not unexpected at this early stage of a student teacher's professional development (Hetrick & Sutters, 2014), thus the commonality of 'unplaced idealism' across almost all pre-placement interviews. For Paris (EI268), unplaced idealism was sparked by the academic reading required on the ITE programme; 'I really got, really, really fired up with everything I was reading um yeah I was really ignited', while Morgan's (EI125) familial connection; 'my whole life I've been kind of – in a very positive way – really saturated by, you know hearing stories and experiences…of work and in art education' fuelled an abstract enthusiasm still requiring personal refinement.

The ambiguity inherent to most participants' artworks suggests that pre-placement student teachers are yet to adopt a clear perspective on practice. This finding sits in contrast to Rossatto's (2005) suggestion that teachers hold definitive, if not always conscious, desirable, or visible attitudes to the efficacy of educative practices. The frequency of the code 'unplaced idealism' in contrast to Rossatto's undesirable optimisms – blind, fatalistic, and resilient, in pre-placement interview carries potentially positive implication: that these ITE students remained open to transformative influence regarding their own maturing hopes and ideals.

In contrast, while 'Flux/Change' and 'Ambiguity/Complexity' continually reoccurred in artwork and pre-placement transcripts, post-placement 'flux' was noted only twice, in Paris' anomalous

interview. In this instance, Paris was reflecting on how their values might have changed since placement, for example:

> If you had asked me in another point throughout the year, I would have almost gone diametrically opposed to what I said there but…I am a very fluctuating person and full of paradoxes…so, I have gone full circle and I, I think I still believe the ideas that were behind that um, that work. (Paris PPI18-22)

They latterly describe their ITE experience –constant re-evaluation of past concepts and beliefs about teaching, art, and their rationales for practice – as 'schizophrenic' (PPI33) in character; a potentially undesirable summary, but which Paris celebrated as authentic learning process.

In post-placement interviews, there was a significant shift away from direct description of an idealised art educational 'shape'. This could be interpreted in multiple ways, but I believe the strongest possibilities include (i) participants abandoning or suppressing idealised forms – chaotic or otherwise – progressive intent erased by experiences of conformative or prosaic practice, or (ii) they focused on critique of standard practices, rather than promotion of personal ideals, in latter interview contributions. As an example of the former, Morgan starts excited about 'helping every single student feel as though they have the space to take risks, to grow…' (EI230), but ends worried that 'I can't do this…maybe I can't or shouldn't be an art teacher' (PPI362). Lesley, meanwhile, moves from indecision: 'you don't really change people at their core, I don't think…ah I don't know…' (EI154) towards 'profound' (PPI40) realisation of the power student-led artistic activity might provide.

My inductive coding suggested that abstract references to ambiguity or flux were exchanged for a swell in data linked to problematic school systems and educational politics (freq. 55) and nonconformist pedagogies (freq. 73). Deductive coding simultaneously suggested a swing towards cynicism (freq. 57 in comparison to 27 in pre-placement transcripts) in post-placement interviews. Collectively, I would hope that these patterns suggest participants sharpened the abstract 'shapes' of their idealism to talk with more pointed critique of convention and more specific understanding of alternative practices, rather than abandoning them.

While participant cynicism is explored in 6.3, and their ideas on alternative pedagogies in 6.7, I feel it important to note the *process* of shape change here. As participants move away from abstract conceptions of idealism, either as they adapt to orthodoxies of practice and associated blind optimism (Rossatto, 2005) or formalise concrete strategies of resistance – my capacity for influence, as teacher educator, likely diminishes. Their contributions here suggest that as their previously malleable beliefs coalesce, as they progress through immersion in practice, this dilutes their capacity to maintain distance between their personal ideals and professional experience.

### 6.1.2 An Organic Motif: A Natural Metaphor for Change

The organic forms described by participants offer an alternate, if not oppositional, idealised art education. Two participants, Evelyne and Lesley, independently employed figerative natural forms in their artwork; trees with outstretched branches. Three others made abstract, but definitive, reference to organic forms; Nicky's nut-like ceramic, Elliot's 'fragmented form of a sapling branch' (AT16), and Morgan's rythmic line. Broadly, such connotations reminded me of art education for personal growth (see section 3.1) – as spontaneous opportunity for 'our creative urges' (Boyes & Reid, 2005, p. 3) to sprout, or as shelter for a tender 'education of feelings' (Ross, 2007, p. np). Anecdotally, vague notions of encouraging personal growth are the rationale most frequently presented when I interview applicants for the ITE programme; it is therefore logical that such priorities might remain at the time participants made these artworks. If chaotic compositions conceptually contrasted the rule-based systems of formal schooling, so too organic shapes present as foil to mechanical standards of pedagogic processes (Hickman, 2010b).

Evelyne coupled their multimodal depiction of arborial forms with script (Fig.40), providing insight into their visual intent– pupils conceptualised as trees, where the educator facilitates growth. In comparison to the ambiguity inherent to the chaotic shape, here we see a 'concrete communication of intent' (Evelyne AT24) – a manifesto for future practice. This is not to suggest simplicity; in transcribing the work I judged it paradoxically 'a chaotic jumble of images about organised systems' (AT77/8), Evelyne describing it similarly:

> …lots of layers, because I felt that, that's you know – education's full of layers…in particular in the art classrooms it needs to be able to facilitate students going in their own independent paths so…I wanted to try and use that to visaully express

> those layers, and…you can see through tree branches and leaves, all these individual roots that pop out and I think that that was a pretty good representation of how, of what a student's education should be. (Evelyne EI94-102)

I was interested here in the connection between concepts of chaos and that of organic forms; the complexity of natural growth may manifest as visually chaotic but follows developmental patterns. Evelyne makes this connection in their work and words, and pre-placement maturely apprecites the significance of this twofold shape to their ideal teaching and learning.


*Figure 40: Evelyne's Artwork. The handwritten text cites Freire (1990): 'The teacher is of course an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profiles, can shape students...'*

Nicky's artwork also presents a concurrent consideration of chaotic and organic shape, where enigmatic form 'conveys…inner tension while also presenting a glass-like surface of rich ceramic glaze, not at all threatening but cool, inviting touch' (AT46-48). In my interpretation of this object, I saw the surface as symbolic of a suffocating school art style - 'a superficial film of banality' beneath

which ‘agitates a bubbling potential for dangerous, exciting and transgressive transformation’ (AT50-52). Ironically, in conversation Nicky described a contrair intent, albeit with similar conceptual underpinnings. They spoke of the discipline deceptively presented as flexible, suggested by the object’s dynamic surface, when ‘it can also be quite – you know – restrictive’ (Nicky PPI6), a quality communicated using a hard ceramic medium.

> I always thought that art and design was this thing where we just go into schools, there would be all these resources, and we’d have this fantastic time with all the students, making amazing sculpture and drawing based on whatever we want…but I’ve realised you are very much confined within policy…I think I’m a little anxious of that really. (Nicky PPI68-75)

While Nicky’s pre-course expectations might read as naïve, it is interesting that *pre-placement*, their ITE experience has already triggered anxiety about suppressed creative freedom. When I speak to Nicky after placement, they are relieved to have had space to experiment, but still recognise the tension between art: ‘all about change and expressing yourself how you want’ and education: ‘almost like the polar opposite’ (Nicky PPI89/90). They resultantly describe the hypocrisy of art teachers who encourage curiosity among pupils while dictatorial in expectation: ‘ha, we’re kind of “do whatever you want – but you have to do it this way to get this grade”’ (Nicky PPI92/93).

*Figure 41: detail from Nicky's Artwork – 'cool, inviting touch'*

In contrast to this complexity, the exterior of Leslie's neatly curled ouroborosian maquette (Fig.37) refutes chaos, celebrating a cycle of sustenance – art education as a universal 'self-sustaining force for future growth' (AT36). As clarified, they hoped to communicate a 'feeling of growth, or sort of boundless energy, and then yeah it was very symbolic and this sort of nurturing and things growing – but kind of a circularity to it as well' (PPI79/80). At first this reads as a clear idea, but confused me in transcription; did this suggest comfort in a reproductive curriculum, or is it a progressive spiral that Leslie aspires to?

Unlike Evelyne's conceptual certainty, it transpired that Leslie, in their artmaking, was unsure: 'I've already looked at it and through 'Oh that's a bit weird, why did I do that?', 'maybe I'd do this next time' (PPI119) – an uncertainty illustrative of participants' developing pre-placement priorities.

While I might attribute some symbolic application of dendriform to a general interest in learner development, repeat references to organic conceptions of growth suggested to me a shared interest in a particular pedagogic approach too. Evelyne's artwork denotes pupils growing in indeterminate

direction while the teacher, rather than prune, guides its idiosyncratic progress. Elliot's (PPI137/8) organic aesthetics advocate for pupils' experimental freedom at odds with the traditionally 'intimidating walls' of an 'esoteric' art education. For Micky (PPI286-8), encouraging pupils to adopt a critical curiosity requires heterogenous shape: 'not…pushed through a kind of industrial process…it's got to be more organic than that…it's going to be unique to each of those students'.

I note in these ideals, in particular Micky's refutation of 'industrial' processes, a direct link to Atkinson's neoliberal disposif, where an efficient, mechanistic pedagogy is incentivised (S. Ball, 2017). Here, 'risky' (Adams, 2010) pedagogy that celebrates uncertainty, or allows for circuitous or iterative organic processes, threatens measurable success. In post-placement interviews I coded a dramatic increase in reference to pedagogical 'mechanisation', and a decrease in references to 'humanistic' models of education; those recognising the distinct characteristics of individual learners.

For example, pre-placement Sam (PPI51) conceptualised their classroom as a home for learners: 'it needs to feel safer than anywhere else in the school and it also needs to feel as if it is owned by the people who use it' – such that pupils take creative risks without fear of judgement. In contrast, post-placement Sam (PPI144) spoke about teachers they observed 'following a…rota', 'putting on a persona' and 'fitting into a criteria' – mechanical actions cynically attributed to a submissive profession where 'it feels a big risk to put yourself at odds with the authorities that are running the school, um by just doing it differently' (PPI114). Sam's ideal space had post-placement become 'a tiny box, just squashed in and that was that' (PPI15).

After encountering mechanised pedagogies in their school too, Evelyne (PPI79) spoke disparagingly of a pre-printed resource pupils completed during art lessons: 'I really resent these booklets (!), I really resent their kind of, you know like: "here's a picture, can you copy it?"'. It is easy to imagine how the fatalistic presupposition of this booklet, in contrast to the latent potential of a blank page, might frustrate the ideals of the artist behind Fig.40.

In tandem with the 'mechanised' classroom, wherein predetermined outcome is encouraged over the organic uncertainty of a wandering individualism, Atkinson (2018) decries a prevalence of hylomorphic practice, where standardised pedagogies are imposed on pupils. In contrast I imagine an *auto*morphic classroom, where pupils exercise agency in accessing their preferred processes and

materials. In Robin's textile artwork, they described an idealised pupil journey towards autonomy with fading teacher intervention, and Paris centered learners' playfulness and embrace of risk in their ideal practice – worried about automorphic opportunity being overshadowed by 'anxiety about assignments and you know homework and stuff' (PPI232).

Both Robin and Paris were dismayed on placement. Paris – in what they described as a controversial exchange – was told by a colleague that '[pupils] need to learn to draw accurately – that's what the examiners want, and that's what we want…so you know they get successful in their grades' (PPI83), suggesting a hylomorphic pedagogy informed exclusively by external measurement. Robin moved to a more pragmatic position after placement, still hopeful to facilitate learners' independence, but doubtfully: 'I just don't think that's really possible necessarily' (PPI71). This experiential caution is perhaps sign of pragmatic maturity rather than despondency; while the pluralism of an organic pedagogy might be valued, *too much* freedom could certainly disconcert the unequipped learner. While circumspect on pupils' capacity to self-manage, Robin records successful creation of a participatory classroom, on the one occasion the host department allowed it:

> I just said "what do you want to learn?"…it seems so simple – just ask them what they want to learn, and then you'll get more engagement – it's not like ground-breaking or anything, it's pretty obvious but um yeah I think that's a really important thing. (Robin PPI135)

Data suggested that participants' placement experiences were frequently defined by a mechanistic, hylomorphic, art education, the conceptual shape of such undoubtably rigid, angular, unforgiving – in stark contrast to the organic idealism that flavoured participants' artworks and elicitation.

As idealistic, amorphic, ambiguity was sharpened into pointed critique of normative practice in participants' later interviews, I noted a transmutation of organic abstractions too. Here however, that organically shaped interest in 'humanist' pedagogies seemingly transfers to explicit concern for the pastoral growth and personal wellbeing of pupils.

The vocabulary was maintained – that of 'growth' and 'nurture' – but post-placement participants moved towards a pupil-centered concept of idealised practice. This shift from self to pupil priority is well documented in ITE (Burn et al., 2003; Lamote & Engels, 2010), but it is interesting to note

among my participants a potential dynamic wherein increased care for pupils might be linked to decreased interest in pedagogical idealism.

For example, on placement Leslie (PPI175) felt they 'haven't had as much opportunity to do some lessons that might be, or feel, more invigorating to the subject', while tasked with teaching PSHE which they thought they 'would absolutely hate'. Leslie came to realise that this latter space allowed for more authentic connections to pupils:

> I've actually really enjoyed doing it…maybe the more pastoral side of things in that sense I maybe wasn't expecting to enjoy and now I'm maybe feeling I'd like to do a little bit more of that? (Leslie PPI160)

Two participants became increasingly cynical of school-based colleagues' pastoral care, to the extent that this took priority in their own professional development. Robin (PPI323) worried over glib treatment of pupils disclosing 'really personal things' that may have safeguarding implications – 'colleagues who laugh it off, shrug it off or eyeroll' such that they became knowingly anxious about acquiring an equally apathetic attitude. Sam (PPI172) viewed colleagues with homogenous middle-class experience as incapable of connecting with diverse and socially disadvantaged demographics being taught: 'they've all got the same aspirations and the same background, and that means that they are so alienated from the kids'. In Sam and Robin's post-placement reflections, and that of others, nourishment earlier insinuated as requisite for authentic subject knowledge becomes parental concern for pupils' security and growth.

It is difficult to criticise a turn towards human compassion as an emergent practical ideal. However, it would be disappointing if a pupil wellbeing crisis (Commission on Young Lives, 2022), and the energies required to support learners' health and development, came at the cost of a progressive art pedagogy. While abstract organic reference reduced in concert with expanding reference to pastoral growth – an interest in 'humanisation' of art education does persists in some interviews. I might suggest symbiotic connection between pastoral and pedagogic wellbeing; for example, Elliot spoke of engaging classroom activities as, 'getting the students to be present in it as opposed to just copying' (PPI39) in a manner arguably beneficial to both pedagogical dynamic and pupils' mental health. Leslie too describes a threshold moment in latter conversation; that to successfully plan…

> …what you want to deliver and how you want to make lessons exciting…suddenly you realise that you just have to understand the students first and foremost. (Leslie PPI185)

This recognition of the relational dynamic between pupil and teacher, valued for instrumental pedagogic success *and* as pastoral priority demonstrates to me a resilient faith in personalised practice among participants. I would argue that this faith has more in common with Freirean pedagogy (2005), where the lived experience of the learner and the democratic classroom – organic forms – feature prominently, than those placement contexts critiqued by participants as indifferent to pupils' singularities.

### 6.1.3 Theme One Summary

To conclude, two common, interconnected thematic shapes reoccurred in early idealistic conceptions of art education among participants. The first explored was that of chaos, or flux – an ambiguous shape celebrated as an authentic component of artistic practice in comparison to hylomorphic school curricula. Post-placement, some participants made this explicit, referencing specific transgressive pedagogies, coupled with critique of standard, sterile models of art education. The second was an organic form; primarily associated with the spontaneous growth of an art student as they construct their own iterative developmental pathway. In later interviews, many participants speak in more certain terms about commitment to pastoral concerns – with concepts of growth latterly connected to pupil wellbeing rather than pedagogies.

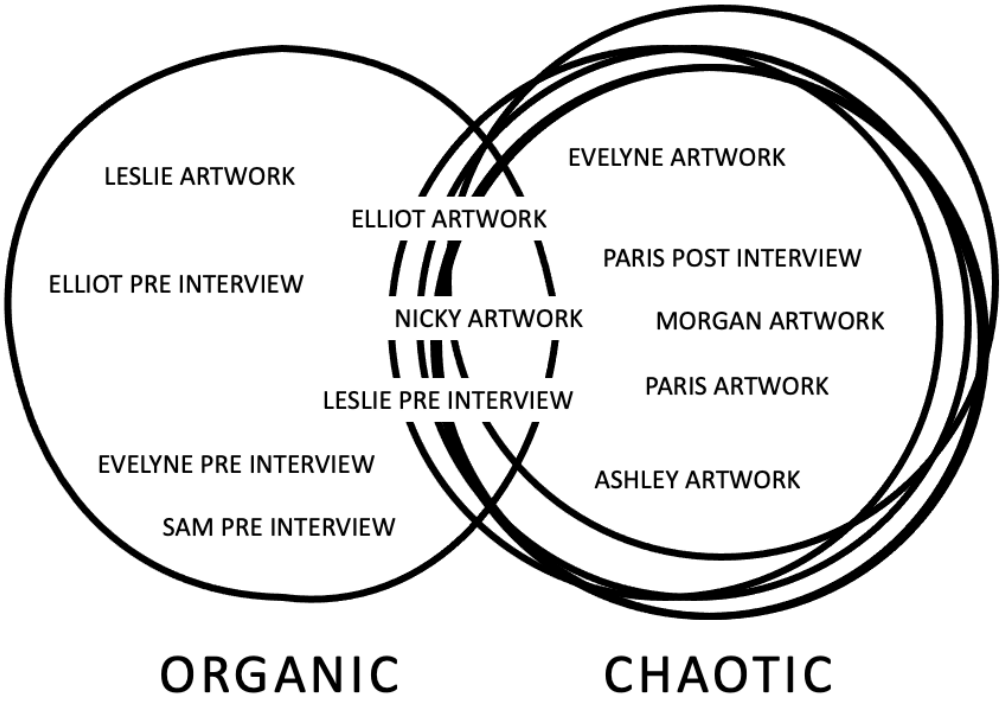


*Figure 42: Data sources where more than three instances of codes relating to 'organic' or 'chaotic' modes of art education were identified*

As can be seen (Fig.42), for some participants both forms occur concurrently, while for others one took priority. For only one participant, Robin, did neither organic or chaotic form significantly occur – here the onus was placed on a metrical pattern, one with more formal order than either anarchic flux or natural growth.

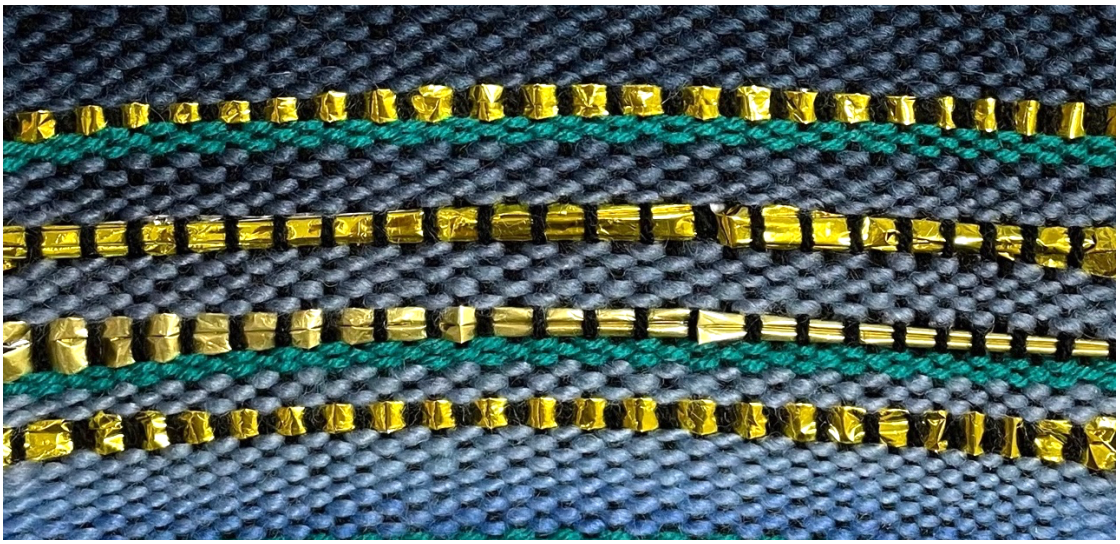

*Figure 43: detail from Robin's artwork – the only submission neither overtly organic nor chaotic in form*

The chaotic and organic shapes that dominated visual data and interview vocabulary suggest to me that participants entered ITE with ideals inconsistent with the expectations of formal schooling. They prioritised liberty – to think, make, and reflect in personal and progressive directions – when the neoliberal art classroom values linearity and prediction. For me, it is interesting to note that participants brought these ideals to the ITE programme, and that therefore my curriculum did not create conflict between ideal and real – but does have responsibility to address what appears an unavoidable friction. If effectively handled, this friction could ignite a plurality of creatively transgressive pedagogies targeted at authentic artmaking, and a healthy interest in the holistic wellbeing of learners. In comparison, some data suggested the potential for negative products of this friction, including destructive cynicism, or idealism exchanged for a blind optimism.

## 6.2 Journeys: The Steady Slide Towards Cynicism

The first theme charted idealistic, if ambiguous, chaotic and organic forms slipping away over the process of school placement. The second theme, explored here, charts an aspect of this journey with more specificity. Looking primarily at deductive codes related to Rossatto's (2005) optimisms I observed participants cynicism increasingly, as their transformative optimism for future practice shifts, collectively, closer towards resilient or fatalistic attitudes. Before looking to illustrate this shift with reference to participant contributions, I thought it helpful to tabulate a summary of Rossatto's concept of teacher optimisms:

*Table 6: A summary of Rossatto's (2005) four optimisms*

| | Blind Optimism | Fatalistic Optimism | Resilient Optimism | Transformative Optimism |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Undesirable | Undesirable | Undesirable | Desirable |
| A teacher with… | A naïve embracement of meritocratic ideology | An immobilizing acceptance of an alienating reality and a dismal future | Conformation to normative order, despite the fact that that order is for them an alienating reality | A view of themselves as a necessary and viable participant in the collective process of social change |
| | Blind optimism can implant fatalistic | This is a classic cycle of | If you can't beat them, you might as | Teachers must become |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | views. Schools become complicit with the historical amnesia of blind optimism, which enables forms of instruction such as "banking" or memorization, resulting in student alienation and frustration…students loose hope and waste their lives and time reacting…especially when pressed to study for exams, as if the exams would determine the sole purpose and centeredness of their educational experience. (50) | socioeconomic reproduction…this attitude can still be termed as optimistic in that the fatalistic optimist nevertheless believes that although the future may be dismal, it is nevertheless the best that can be expected (57)<br><br>[students and teachers] basically accepted the situation and avoided taking any responsibility for challenging the social order of the school. Thus, they played a fatalistic role; they perceived an injustice but accepted it as a normative social order. (64) | well join them…the overarching hegemonic order…is reproduced with the complicity and participation of those most oppressed. (69)<br><br>This struggle… causes conflict within the person and this tension takes a heavy toll…on a conscious level these individuals remain within the status quo, while subconsciously grappling with the constructs of rejection and resistance. In other words they are willing to sacrifice identity for success. (70) | transformative intellectuals who practice a pedagogy in which both teachers and students become agents committed to the study of daily life, as opposed to memorization. (127) |

To extend Rossatto's typology as analytical codes, I employed further terms - cynicism and pessimism among them. This was to recognise instances where participants spoke of practice *without* optimism – as Rossatto (2005, p. 57) explains, even among the undesirable optimisms outlined above they suggest a hopeful outlook, whereas the pessimist or cynic might despair or reject that which they encounter.

| Pessimism | Cynicism | Fatalistic Optimism | Resilient Optimism | Transformative Optimism | Unplaced Idealism |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | + | + | ++ | - | -- |

*Figure 44: A heat chart of changing Rossatto-related deductive codes between pre and post-placement data*

While not assuming any statistical significance, I found it helpful to begin by noting on a 'heat chart' (Fig.44) pronounced changes interpreted across these categories between pre-placement and later interviews. Instances of unplaced idealism shrank substantially, while transformative optimism also receded. Pessimistic comment remained unchanged, while cynical and fatalistic optimism were noted more frequently. The largest change was an almost quadrupling in the code 'resilient optimism' (from 9 to 35), suggesting that placement experience may have led to participants, to some extent, communicating that they need 'sacrifice identity for success' (Rossatto, 2005, p. 70), i.e., forego their agency, to survive and thrive in contemporary classroom practice.

### 6.2.1 Pre-placement Idealism

Across all pre-placement transcriptions, transformative optimism was noted twice as frequently (56) as all three undesirable optimisms combined (28). This was not surprising - I would hope new student teachers hold ideals that refute the conditions for blind, fatalistic, or resilient optimism. More frequent again (69) were instances of 'unplaced idealism' – such as Paris' developing interest in connecting to contemporary artistic practice, or Sam's passion for a candid studio environment. In combination with the prevalence of transformative optimism this suggests, perhaps, a plurality of hopeful starting points, rather than a unified interest in social justice. The fragile potency of these hopes is manifest in the trepidation communicated by many in early interview, and best summarised by Morgan, who used their artmaking to metaphorically explore the journey of becoming a teacher:

> … I feel…completely thrilled to be here, but you know nervous – nervous about my kind of emotional journey I suppose and being very aware that it's kind of a physical and mental transformation…I just kind of want to soak everything up! (Morgan EI97-106)

Morgan's resolve to embrace the journey despite its tests has rationale in personal context; their parent left their role as an art teacher after suffering mental ill health brought about by stress, and Morgan therefore predicted a retributive sense of purpose:

> She was just completely unsupported and completely isolated, and that kind of, those kind of attitudes I guess I feel really determined to be a part of shifting or changing… (Morgan EI125/6)

This heightened sense of contesting injustice may be atypical of the group, but Morgan's belief in their ability to affect change does illustrate a collective pre-placement transformative optimism.

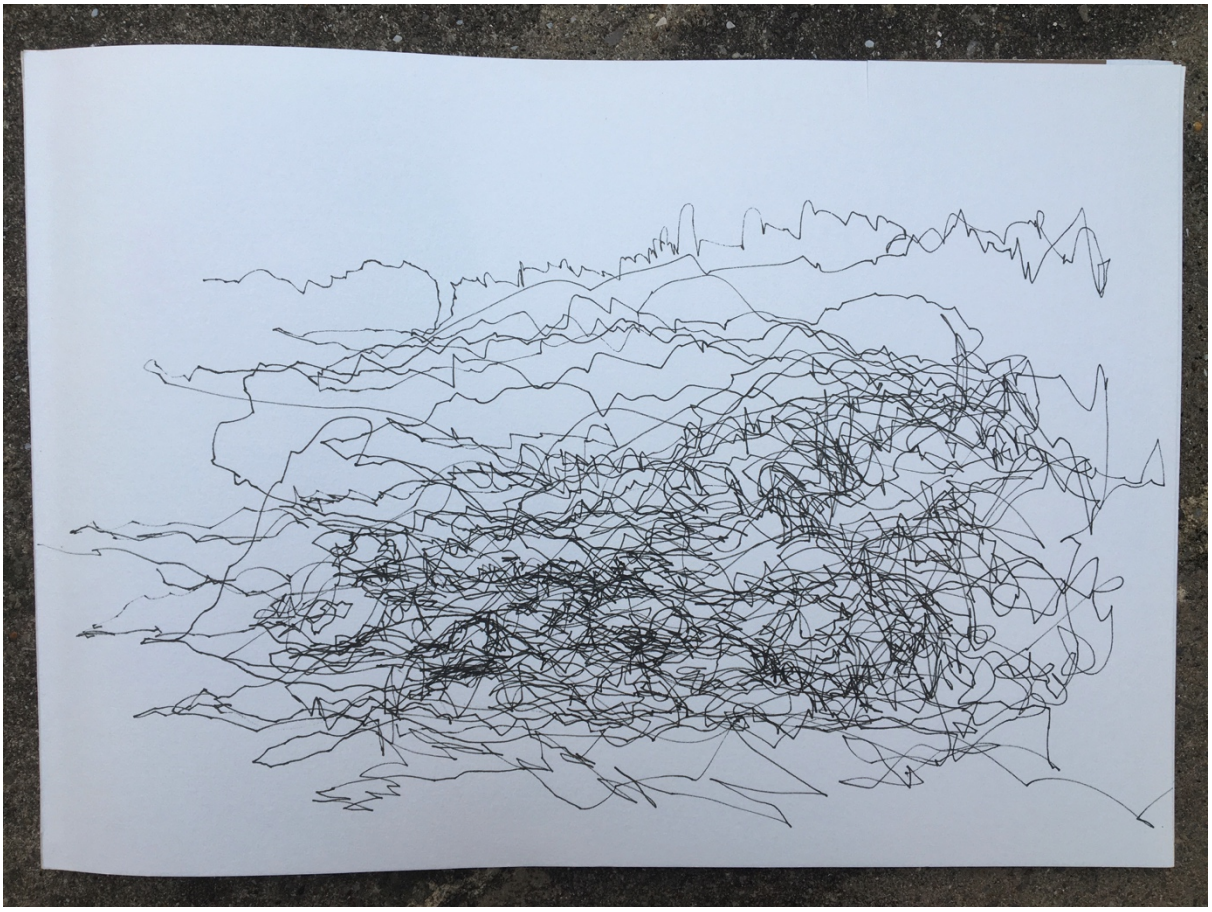

*Figure 45: Morgan's Artwork – Walking Drawing*

Paris (EI25) speaks pre-placement of a related paradoxical compulsion - despite having their 'incredibly romanticised idea of theatre um being you know this amazing vehicle to change society' dismantled 'as a stupid thing' in a previous creative career.

> I didn't want to once again apply those idealist concepts into art education, but probably I can't help myself – I will be doing exactly the same! (Paris EI29-31)

For Paris (EI61/62), it transpired, the catalyst for transformative intent was not the health of a parent, but frustration with the didactic education they encountered in 'a Catholic school very stuck ummm in very, very traditional pedagogies'. Aside from Morgan and Paris, Leslie demonstrated most interest in transformative practice pre-placement, and for them this was tied to professional experiences in the advertising industry. Here they describe an industry undergoing its own transformation, in their interpretation - from patriarchal exploitation to inclusivity; 'getting rid of antiquated stuff…a bit gross but a *Mad Men* type mentality' (Leslie EI382). They expressed passion for empowering pupils such that the arts become accessible to 'people from less well-off backgrounds or ethnic minorities' (EI375), affecting positive social change in the media.

Binding these participants with explicit intent to transform societal convention was personal experience of injustice, whether familial, scholastic, or vocational. It is therefore interesting that these three participants most effectively maintained some degree of transformative optimism throughout and beyond their school placement (as explored in 6.2.2).

For other participants, Elliot, Ashley, Nicky, and Sam especially, there was little explicit reference to social justice at the start of their ITE journey. Instead, these participants demonstrated diversity of intent, whether a commitment to deepen the rigour of art education (Ashley), challenge the primacy of assessment (Elliot), or improve the visibility of the discipline (Nicky), for example. They also demonstrated more unplaced idealism – hopeful for the future, but at times uncertain about the object of this optimism.

For many, both those with explicit intent and those developing abstract optimism, these feeling were amplified by the first few weeks of ITE study on campus. For example, Nicky (EI396) spoke of 'noticing a change in how I'm approaching things', and Paris (EI14) of 'shifting perceptions and ideas about what we think of art education'. Morgan describes being:

> In the thick of the course…my kind of transformation that is already taking place, um, and yeah the kind of questions – the questions that its thrown up over these last few weeks…astonishing – chunks of inf…new information. (Morgan EI13-16)

This evidence of participants' perspectives shifting early during ITE suggests that regardless their certainty of intent prior to the programme, pre-placement ITE – when students are still 'fired up' (Addison & Burgess, 2003a, p. 160) about reconceptualising art education, might be invaluable opportunity to promote criticality and transformative optimism, while also preparing student teachers to face forthcoming challenges. Although a short period of time, typically a month, there is chance here for me to consolidate and strengthen idealisms against the tests to come, and temper student teachers' experience of the inevitable 'disjunction' (Addison & Burgess, 2005, p. 128) between their hopes and reality.

### 6.2.2 A Developing Professional Cynicism

While not all participants began their ITE journey naïve to classroom realities, not many displayed significant cynicism during pre-placement interview. Given I chose to define cynicism as 'a questioning of the efficacy of practice to affect improvement' when designing my codes (see 5.7), I might not expect to see this among aspirant practitioners. Only Nicky and Sam displayed preliminary cynicism about what they anticipated from their placements; both having had prior experience working in school-settings.

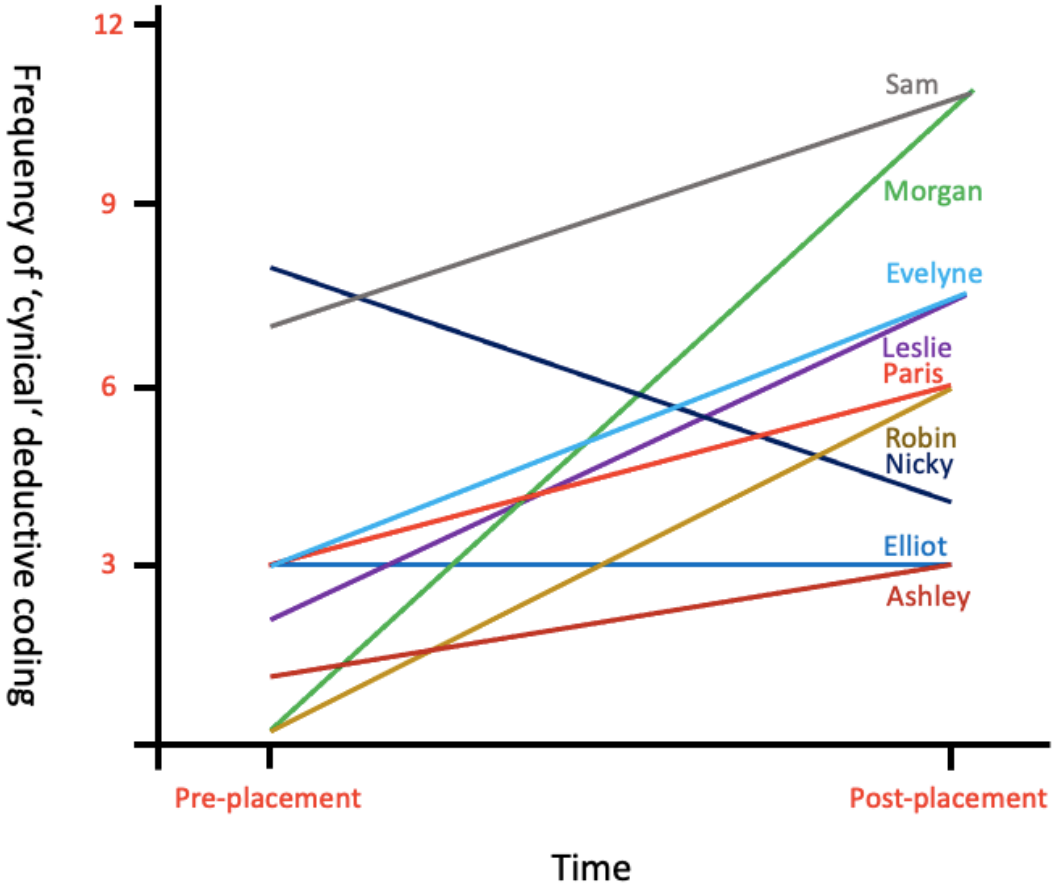


*Figure 46: A graphic illustration of the typical slide towards cynicism displayed by participants after school placement*

Sam is perhaps most negative here, expressing concern for 'rigid' (EI131) curricula, the politics of the workplace, unwelcoming 'shut in' (EI119) art departments and supressed teenage expression. Their artwork, a figurative art department building modelled on Rembrandt's house and studios – representative of a welcoming blend of domestic and artistic sensibilities – is placed in opposition to 'how I think schools actually are, which is not actually that nice – ha' (EI97). This cynicism is only exacerbated by placement experience, where they still describe the provision as 'too shut in…not related to anything outside' (PPI309), and elitist or fixed in notions of artistic ability – perpetuating a wider societal myth of natural talent that Sam views as restrictive.

> They don't ever think [art] is something that you can teach, and that everybody has a right to … work visually rather than in words, and stuff, and it disappoints me that they don't – they – that it's…the thing that disappoints me is that they've lost that belief that everybody can do it (Sam PPI60-64)

Sam, despite this critique of common practice, continued into a teaching career following ITE, suggesting to me that cynicism is not automatically a negative professional attitude but could be a formative one: 'It's hardened me, it makes me want to be, want to be um, head of a department so I can run it how I want' (PPI53). Indeed, in Sam's instance I might consider their cynicism bedfellow with a developing transformative optimism; they are certainly not willing to conform to normative order, and their criticality provides personal motivation to improve the social equity and accessibility of art education.

Nicky initially draws on their partner's frustrations to imagine placement as an oppressive space where the arts are devalued:

> my partner is a primary school teacher so she'll come back and so oh I've got all of these amazing ideas, but I can't do them because it doesn't adhere to the display policy that the school has in mind…so, I've realised…the fact that the school does have – to an extent – a possible agenda, so if you start making all this like um, artwork that could maybe –presents an image that the school doesn't like, you know what happens then? I think its, I'm cautious I think, at this point in time. (Nicky EI85-94)

Uniquely, and perhaps in part due to their heightened concerns pre-placement, Nicky is the only participant for whom cynicism reduces post-placement. This could be because they enjoyed a placement where they were afforded freedom to design curricula and employ their ceramic skillset autonomously, and where their insight and ideas were welcomed by mentors as 'it kind of freshens up their ideas' (Nicky PPI84).

For most, this was not how they describe placement experiences, and for many who began with a credulous outlook school experience challenged this. Micky, who displayed the most dramatic slide into cynicism related this at different times to (i) misleading GCSE student recruitment practices, (ii) an institutionally instrumental onus, (iii) anxiety about employment and (iv) a disheartening lack of departmental community – where professional development sessions, consisting exclusively of complaints, are 'missed opportunities' (PPI65) to make progressive decisions. Missed opportunity is also noted in a vignette typical of participants' encounters with an instrumentalism suppressive of both student teacher and school pupil's curiosity:

> A young student – said to the teacher quite loudly, um 'why do we have to do art lessons?' and you know I had kind of smiled and was quite sort of excited about this moment, but it was just ignored and umm…it wasn't responded to by the teacher. (Morgan PPI79)

For Robin, prescriptive pedagogies, and their mentor's didacticism ('it is just one teacher's way of doing it, and she is telling me that that is the way I have to do it, but maybe I can find my own kind of way around things' PPI217) sparks comparison between placement reality and their idealistic vision – a comparison made by Ashley and Evelyne too:

> I don't necessarily agree with the way that the school I'm in currently teaches and it's a case of trying to figure out how I can fit into certain spaces, um…it has been more challenging than I was expecting (Ashley PPI27)

> I really resent their kind of, you know like: 'here's a picture, can you copy it?' – and I think it is probably those kind of…yeah it wouldn't be in my ideal situation. (Evelyne PPI82)

Interestingly, comparable with Sam's decision to continue into a teaching career, Morgan describes how the new knowledge they have acquired – understanding the extent to which current provision derivates from their ideal – *strengthens* their transformative optimism, rather than diminishing it:

> I feel more – more determined than I have done about it. Now that I feel I've had a…you know, I've dipped my toe in…I feel utterly determined because it's about those young people and their lives. Yeah, yeah. (Morgan PPI493-501)

For those who feel their idealism fiercely (Morgan, Robin and Evelyne included), I might suggest creeping cynicism not a damaging acquisition but a motivational stimulant of a transformative optimism, a requisite component for continued criticality. The important qualifier here would, to me, be that cynicism on the efficacy of institutional and observed practices might motivate, while cynicism over one's own efficacy – and conformation to a normative order – would provoke transition to fatalism or blindness.

While for many then, a critical cynicism confirmed their contrary commitment to be transformational, for Ashley there was a different outcome. Here, cynicism was pointed towards their own efficacy. They describe their early ideals as naïve and question their hope that their lower

socioeconomic background might make them, and the subject, more relatable to pupils from similar contexts.

> I thought I'd just be able to kind of raise my voice to an extent and everyone would fall silent, which is stupid to expect…Um, I guess my ideal when I went into the course was kind of thinking about um how I could improve life chances of a variety of children…kind of being able to be a role model and advocate for being aspirations and kind of – because I have, am from a lower socioeconomic background so I thought I could relate to students from those kinds of backgrounds so just kind of…yeah (Ashley PPI160-176)

While Ashley notes the problematic systems of their placement school (stale curricula, pre-printed workbooks, low expectations) they perversely hold themselves to account for the perceived failings of their practice and pessimism becomes prominent. Ashley (PPI115-7) speaks of how their enthusiasm 'dwindled a little bit um while on placement', how they retain 'that sense of optimism that I had when I went in but it's more of a struggle now'.

> It feels irreversible as well, you know I come home every day and that damage definitely feels like I've taken something away from what I want to do and I don't know how easy it will be to kind of build back. Ashley PPI240-242

I interpret Ashley's anguish as aligned to Rossatto's (2005) resilient optimism; suffering the inner conflict of conforming to practices they fundamentally disagree with and subsequently feeling their identity, and ideals, need be sacrificed to sustain such practices. Atkinson (2018, 194) considers such work an 'intolerable process' for art educators, and indeed, uncertain whether a teaching career is worth such a sacrifice, Ashley insecurely pins their hopes on finding a school that can support their personal ambition for art education.

Categorising cynicism as productive and pessimism as destructive is perhaps disingenuously simplistic. Similarly, I cannot wholly associate cynical criticality with transformative optimism, given Fig. 52 illustrates cynicism increasing across the cohort, while transformative optimism generally decreases, despite the tenacity of some.

While such clarity might prove useful in ITE programme design decisions - for example through pre-placement curricula that frames school experience as critical opportunity as well as vocational

development; pre-emptive emphasis and contextualisation of *systematic* problems - it would not recognise the complexity of participant journeys. For example, many who emerged with renewed transformational hope also spoke paradoxically about fatalistic feelings or described moments of resilient optimism. Morgan, the most developed cynic, may have reconfirmed their ideals post-placement, but also suffered some of the turmoil described by Ashley, unconvincingly explaining that: 'I'm aware of sounding negative, which I don't want to be' (Morgan PPI65).

Similarly, Leslie's cynicism increased yet their optimism slipped from transformative to a primarily resilient form, with aspects of fatalistic thinking too. Post-placement they are particularly troubled by reproductive orthodoxies, where pupils are encouraged to imitate those successful in previous years: 'this idea of an outcome being something standardised to the point that we are not ever doing anything new, it just, I just felt a bit deflated after that' (Leslie PPI231).

So perhaps, instead of celebrating critical cynicism buttressing personal ideals against normative practice, it might be suggested that the typical participant experienced optimism divergence; some doggedly retained significant transformative idealism (Paris, Elliot), while most saw slippage into an illogical admixture of three attitudes Rossatto identifies: fatalistic, resilient, and transformative too (Leslie, Morgan, Robin, Sam). The challenge for teacher educators in the context of this interpretation of ITE journey, becomes the preservation of transformative optimism among students as *most* prevalent perspective rather than the *only* common optimism.

### 6.2.3 Theme Two Summary

This theme – a journey from idealism towards a 'fatalistic cynicism' has proven more complicated than that title suggests. Cynicism, and fatalistic optimism (alongside resilient optimism) did rise among most participants after experience in a school art department. However, most participants maintained, perhaps paradoxically, some degree of transformative optimism or other personal ideals, in concert with a critical cynicism of others' practices. It might be discouraging to see student teachers' transformational hopes ebb so early in their experience, rather than imagine a system of schooling where these are realised or extended, and for some – such as Ashley – their account of placement is upsetting for a teacher educator who cares for their students. Indeed, the frustration that a student teacher might be discouraged or feel inhibited by time in school – an opportunity for

experiential learning that should facilitate opportunity for curious, agentic understanding – reinforced my sense of purpose for this research.

There were positive signs too. Aside from Ashley's example, participant pessimism is rare, and there is an almost complete lack of evidence for blind optimism among participants, before or after placement. As the most pernicious state, where both teacher and pupil have abandoned hope and fallen into the alienating pedagogical habits that reproduce hegemonic outcomes: banking models of memorization and impersonal didacticism, it is a relief to see student teachers refute this perspective. Given that two participants speak of pre-printed booklets relied upon as teaching resource, and others discuss inflexible or outdated curricula, hylomorphic teaching practices, and colleagues captive to assessment criteria, it would have been possible to habituate these practices uncritically. Indeed, given their position within the power dynamic of a school placement, that they resisted doing so suggests a confidence in the continued prospect of alternatives. Consider Morgan's experience, wherein, while becoming a teacher they hear a colleague's admission:

> He said very sort of adamant and enthusiastically, um "I don't know how much longer I can keep doing this – I don't, there's no creativity, I'm so tired of, of, of these, this formulaic approach. I've got no – I could do it with my eyes closed" (Morgan PPI404)

In such a context it is clear to me that ideals – personal image/s of a preferable future for art education – might provide an invaluable branch onto which a student teacher can cling in the face of unabashed blind doubt. Ashley's disheartening words take my thinking further again; not only do student teachers benefit from firm grip on their own transformative optimism before school experience, but they need reminders that the failure of reality to match their hopes is not a deficit on their part, rather systematic inadequacy of contemporary classroom practice to realise the potential of art education.

## 6.3 Recognition of Reproductive School Art, and the Influence of 'Higher Ups'

In the previous sections I illustrated the shape and direction of participants' ideals with reference to some influential placement experiences. I interpreted among participants a move from abstract

ideals towards concrete criticality, and from transformative ideals towards an enigmatic blend of optimisms, alongside a growing cynicism of normative practices. Here I look at a third theme, the controlling systems of schooling that were most frequently mentioned as oppressing pre-placement idealism: (i) reproductive curricula and (ii) senior leadership's standardisation.

Fig.47 is an attempt to graphically relate this trio of themes. Pre-placement, the organic and chaotic shapes of unplaced idealism, and nascent transformative optimism dominate, while post-placement these have altered. Here the focused critique of participants is suggested by the hard-edged rectangle, within which I list the paradoxical diversity of latterly held perspectives. The oppressive objects of this theme, the standardised expectations of senior leaders and reproductive curricula orthodoxies, are depicted acting on participants during their school placement.

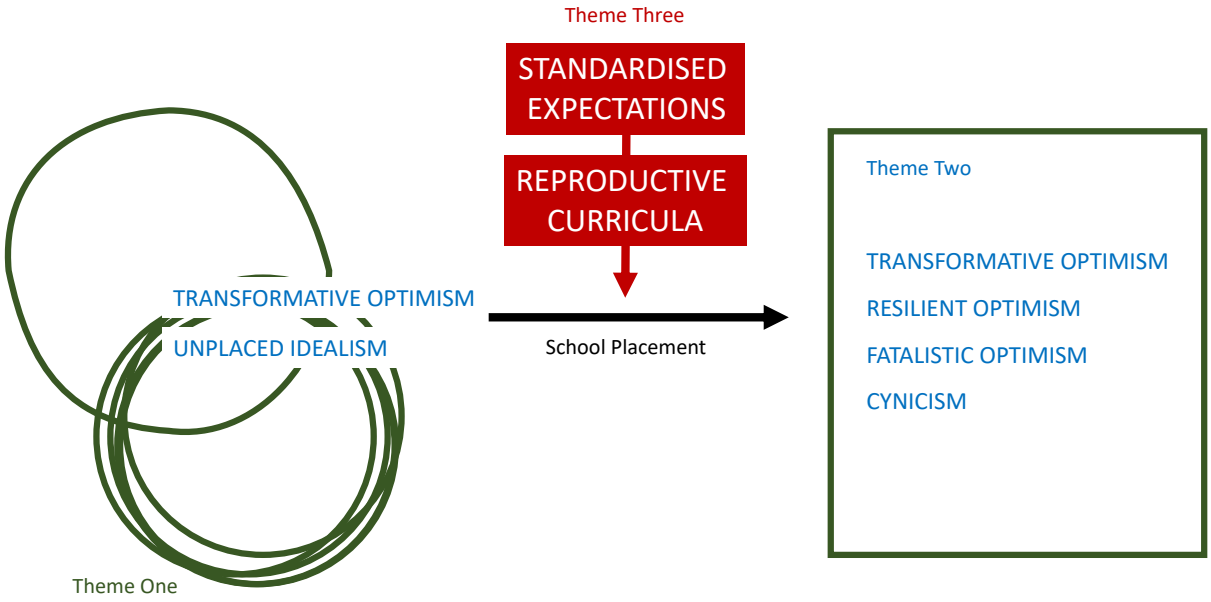


*Figure 47: The inter-relation of my first three themes*

Critical art pedagogy recognises much institutional educational practice as oppressive (Cary, 2011a), and In Freire's later work, this oppression was attributable to the abstract agenda of neoliberalism's marketised education (Atkinson, 2006b; Freire, 1998; Gadotti, 2017). The characteristics of this context are worth repeating, given the objects of this theme are positioned as resultant. The competition fundamental to a market inherently requires some schools be judged inferior against external metrics of success, militating the profession towards risk-aversion (Blackmore, 2004).

Therefore, a culture of predictable and conservative pedagogy and curriculum is seen to be upheld through strict accountability, surveillance, and audit tools that oppress teacher and pupils' capacity to exercise agentic or open-ended pedagogies (Ball, 2017; Cary, 2011a). In 3.2, I made the case that art education suffers excessive deformation because of this oppressive tendency, given the natural disposition of the contemporary subject discipline towards transgression, play, and independence – inherently unpredictable characteristics.

Many participant suggestions, inferences, and interpretations were coded against the criteria that Atkinson (2018) associates to a neoliberal dispositif: prescription, mechanisation, and homogenisation. For example, In Morgan's post-placement interview they touch on all three, conceptualising the placement experience as being, almost physically, 'funnelled through these systems' (PPI39). They later extend this metaphor to describe themselves as a:

> strange kind of metamorphosis blob that's kind of – you know – evolving and becoming a teacher…and I have this image of a…and it might sound kind of depressing (!) or negative but a sense of a kind of fence, or a metal grill – a kind of knitted network and I'm trying to get myself through one of these rigid squares and bits are falling off, and peeling off… (Morgan PPI48-53)

While Morgan remains optimistic at the conclusion of placement it is *despite* the experience they describe here –some idealistic hope 'peeling' away against standardising scholastic customs.

Comparing the aesthetic of Morgan's idealised art education to that of the metaphor applied above – it is visually striking to note the dissonance in form.

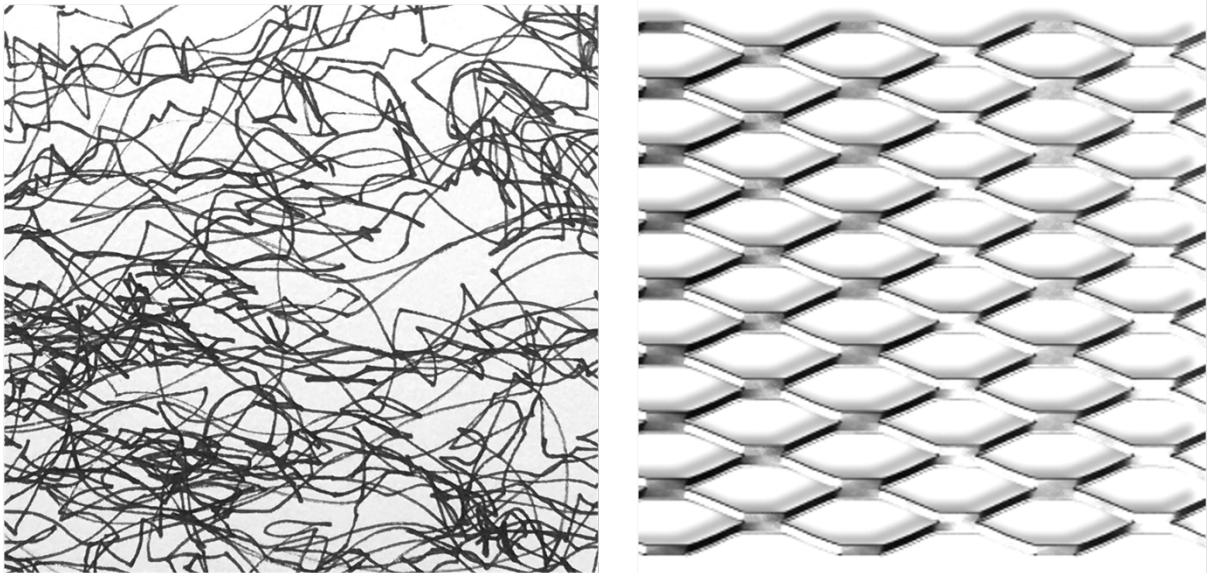

*Figure 48: Detail from Morgan's artwork juxtaposed against a stock image of a metal grill*

Typical of student art teachers, participants were largely drawn from authentic creative contexts; six upholding a fine art practice, Paris previously working in theatre design, Leslie in advertising. Ashley was a graduate art historian. Therefore, discomfort in the conditions of standardisation, accountability, and surveillance – in contrast to the autonomy of past creative endeavour – was not unexpected, but remained disagreeable, nonetheless. Indeed, Robin spoke of being required to apply uniform, punitive sanction – three hours in isolation – because a pupil has 'wanted to say something about someone's work and they just forgot to put their hand up…' an expectation 'that has been a massive, a massive thing um, and yeah, I do find that really difficult' (PPI202-5). For Robin, where 'in an ideal classroom you would all be able to talk and um – yeah talk about things quite freely' (PPI209) censorship for the sake of consistency was frustrating.

Paris reflected on the importance of failure as an integral aspect of the learning process in their post-placement interview, and how the iterative processes of the 'arts is kind of an ideal subject' (PPI381) to encourage pupils to be ambitious, risk failure, and identify learning in their errors. They expanded on this to suggest teachers drop standardised methods and model ambition in their own planning, innovating with engaging pedagogies. They quickly note however the two tyrannies that they feel prevent teachers from making this possible: external examination specifications and senior leadership. The first they maturely recognise is, 'actually in our heads' – when inspected, exam specifications (AQA, 2021; OCR, 2020) are almost infinitely flexible. Paris saw that it was teachers'

internalised anxiety about accountability that led them to conservative or reproductive practices and imagined overcoming this convention. Convincing senior leadership to embrace experimental, creative teaching practices Paris believed more challenging:

> You almost have to silence them with pure persuasion…but the problem is that because it is experimental…you don't even know whether…lessons are going to be an utter failure. (Paris PPI360-364)

Lacking the persuasive power to assure school leaders that artistic play, or liberty, might be desirable during classroom practice (despite/because of the risk of failure) it is likely that student teachers must bridge the disconnect between liberatory ideals and scholastic systems of standardised control through other means.

### 6.3.1 Senior Leadership and Misguided Standardisation

In post-placement interview a large minority of participants made specific reference to this disconnection between decision-makers in placement schools and the requirements of an ideal, or effective, art education. This supposed distance created suspicion among some participants, suggested in reference to senior leadership – for example, Evelyne and Nicky colloquially use the disparaging term 'higher-ups' when speaking about managerial faculty.

Asked about changes required to see reality shift towards their ideal, Evelyne remarked that they were yet to meet a senior leader with an arts specialism, and suggested that a misalignment between leadership priorities and that of art education has resulted in the subject's low status and underfunding:

> …there is kind of a lack of understanding…obviously we have really strong themes of being subject teachers, we have really strong ideas about what our subject means and you know, what the values are, but I think that is really a very different world to people that perhaps don't have any involvement in our subject. Evelyne PPI210-213

Nicky (PPI33/4) speaks of senior leaders telling them art might be celebrated for the support it provides learning in other areas (a myth explored in 3.1) – 'I think to an extent I was almost convinced'. Reassuringly, Nicky relayed this anecdote while confirming their now secure, idealistic

belief in the disciplines' intrinsic value – but as with Evelyne's experience, it suggests institutional disregard for art, of an 'unwelcoming place' (Dafiotis, 2012, p. 142) for aspirant teachers.

In another instance, Nicky (PPI158) described a talented pupil refusing to produce artwork to exam specifications and noted the dissonance between 'the artist's mind' and 'this kind of educationalism', which I believe to mean criterion-based assessment. Then asked how comfortable they felt as 'agent of the institution', Nicky (PPI168-176) mentioned the tension between their own conception of ideal teaching, valuing pupil's independent progression above academic grade; 'I'm not an enforcer, I'm a facilitator' while recognising 'I don't know if the higher-ups would be happy with that way of looking at it…I think that's something that I will probably end up experiencing more strife as I…continue on my journey'. If participants imagine senior leaders as antagonistic, with student teachers anticipating a career of 'strife', then that represents a disappointing climate in which to begin one's profession.

Perhaps more immediately oppressive than tacit confrontation with school leadership's values was the standardisation school policy expected of participants' developing practice. This included homogenised and unbending assessment regimes, lesson planning, and pedagogical priorities that restricted student teachers' agency to experientially practise, or experiment with diversified approaches. For example, post-placement in a school with particularly exacting expectations of institutional pedagogy, Sam (PPI10) critiques such formulaic, interventionalist requirement as 'like doing it [teaching] with your arms tied behind your back'. As a mature student running art workshops from their own studio for decades, Sam's (PPI11) observation that 'art has become more restrictive in schools, very, very restrictive…' 'linked to almost being English or Science' might be qualified by prior experience, echoing Ofsted's (2012) concern about subject-specificity (and authenticity). Evelyne too was keen to highlight that 'stricter guidelines from senior leadership' in terms of assessment and curriculum 'just doesn't really suit art' (PPI28-30) and hobbled their capacity to plan disciplinary learning.

Evelyne's 'different world' (PPI211) of unartistic school leaders is likely to have resulted in institutional expectations modelled on mismatched disciplinary practices. The pedagogies of 'core' subjects are likely to be favoured when whole-school policy is enacted, because these disciplines are valued highly by extrinsic measure, and they present methods where such measurement is readily

achievable (Adams, 2011). Leslie, among others, noted the primacy of assessment data as a priority among her placement colleagues:

> …sooo worried about assessment [that] there is definitely a very prescriptive way of delivering, or wanting, outcomes and delivering a, you know, scheme of work so that the outcome is a sort of shared or similar standard. (Leslie PPI207)

Assessment obsession among senior leadership, in Leslie's interpretation, resulted in a toxic disciplinary anxiety – the subject itself diminished to match methods of measurement. Eisner (2002b) spoke about teachers 'reminding ourselves of what we should not try to standardize', and memorably wrote that 'not everything that matters is measurable' (2006) – a sentiment seemingly shared by Leslie in their ideal of creative learning as 'a subjective thing', 'a unique way of thinking, a unique experience' (PPI124), expressed through their visual metaphor to the unpredictability of natural growth.

*Figure 49: Detail from Leslie's artwork – 'a spiral of growth'*

Leslie latterly attributes the prescription they encountered to an 'academy style' (PPI207), suggesting that they believe academies – which make up 80% of state secondary schools in England (Gov 2022) – are more likely to institute standardised pedagogies than other school types. This observation I thought interesting - the neoliberal academisation of English schools linked to an increase in top-down pedagogical policy (Shah, 2018). Proliferating multi-academy trusts push the

centre of decision-making power increasingly distant from classroom teachers, with 'curriculum managers' and policymakers potentially geographically distant. If these largely deregulated organisations look to competitively operate, then efficiently homogenised practices might proliferate too (Robson et al., 2022). There is something serendipitously apt in this nomenclature given art historically, 18/19th century 'academies' of art became associated with conservative aesthetics and reproductive traditions in opposition to the innovations of contemporary avant garde artists celebrated as pioneers today.

If top-down models of teaching practice forced some participants to confront the limits of art education in a neoliberal context, I thought it interesting that they most frequently suspect a meso level of senior school leaders as the oppressive force, rather than the latent agency of fellow art faculty or the macro context of national educational policy. Perhaps (although I hesitate to stereotype) being students, or creative, predisposed participants to suspicion of authority figures – or perhaps the failings of national policy are less pronounced on placement than the local expectations of institutional managers.

However, alongside critique of leaderships' regulations, participants did refer to what they considered inadequacies of disciplinary curriculum – and again, the rigidity of expectations with regards content and delivery in the classroom.

### 6.3.2 School Art Curriculum Orthodoxy

The existence of a shallow school art 'style' was well illustrated by Efland (1976) (as discussed in 3.2). Gude (2013) more recently argued, compellingly, that in western education a 'school art' convention may have become further entrenched by neoliberal policy. That art curricula and outcomes conform to a reproductive orthodoxy in concert with 'rule-governed' (Duncum, 2009, p. 235) suppressive schooling is something suggested by my participants, potentially presenting a fatalistically oppressive influence on their previously progressive hopes.

The specific nature or content of 'school art' in England is under-researched (Downing & Watson, 2004), but here I use participant contribution to generalise some characteristics. First, Elliot notes, it tends towards traditionalist and technical curriculum, something they believe unrelated to authentic

artistic practice and alienating for pupils – 'it's just art in school that puts you off, not art in real life' (PPI105). They also speak about how successful learners in this paradigm, accustomed to receiving praise, develop a brittle confidence – because learning esoteric skills such as 'having been the best at drawing I don't know a bottle' does not create the 'real confidence' (PPI161/2) required to manage the vulnerability of authentic practice.

Second, it is superficial; it symbolically shadows the involving activity of artmaking. Cary (2011a) and others (Atkinson, 2006b; Grant, 2020; Gude, 2013) write about the long, anachronistic, tail of Modernist practice still informing much school curriculum content. For example, the 'elements' of art (abstracted from Bauhaus formalism) are commonly presented in curricula without historical context, when 'to think of tone, colour and shape as separate elements is to impose a sophisticated convention…never acknowledged in the classroom' (Walton, 2022, np). Morgan notes this superficiality when speaking to a pupil about a photograph in their journal. For Morgan, this same photograph, Joel Meyerowitz's 1967 *Not one of them helps* (Fig.50), had been encountered in their home and discussed at length with a parent, resulting in a memorable moment of profundity on the power of photography to comment on the human condition. Morgan saw the image and enthusiastically asked the pupil what value they personally attributed to it, only to be told that 'she wasn't really sure, that the project was "people and place"' (PPI110) and that their teacher had provided it. Such an anecdote did not interest me because of the pupils' diffidence, but as illustration of a wider convention wherein hylomorphic pedagogies expect the learner to superficially accept knowledge rather than be an active agent in its creation.

*Figure 50: 'Not one of them helps' 1967 Joel Meyerowitz*

Perhaps the most pervasive characteristic of reproductive curricula – amplified by a neoliberal concern for comparable assessment – is the prescriptive, criteria-led model of artistic project, where an exemplar or teacher-led process is imitated. This doctrinaire approach to curriculum is pragmatic for control of a large class, but participants who had hoped to teach iterative design-thinking or introduce the materials-led ambiguity of fine art practice, found this model disappointing. Morgan (PPI162) describes this predictability as 'tricky', a challenge to their own concept of discipline. Nicky is expected in their department to share a 'WAGOLL', an artwork that illustrates *what a good one looks like* before pupils imitate, while Sam (PPI114) proclaims similar observed practices as 'morally and ethically wrong' in art education.

Evelyne (PPI48) describes encountering perhaps the zenith of prescriptive pedagogy, pre-printed 'booklets with lessons and tasks within them', and how resultantly there was no space for them to practise 'properly planning' teaching or deviating reflexively, in dialogue with learners, from this fixed resource. The booklet was employed so slavishly in this example that Evelyne (PPI102-111) describes having to argue, with 'really reluctant' colleagues, 'both really against it' in favour of pupils

learning drawing from direct observation (from objects proffered by Evelyne), rather than copying printed booklet images. Evelyne's mature analysis of this vignette was to suggest expectations of standardisation had diminished not only the teachers' curricular ambition, but their expectation of pupils' artistic capacity too.

Ashley also looks for explanation for why art teachers they otherwise admired might have adopted such prescriptive resources:

> They are very well intentioned, and they get good grades, and I think it's the tried and tested kind of thing, um "yeah we've kind of done this for a few years, we can continue" (Ashley PPI297)

For Ashley (PPI109), whose ideals centred on inclusive, relevant cultural curriculum this recycling of 'tried and tested' content, where 'all we have really done is use colouring pencils' was particularly frustrating. Unusually, Ashley was (unintentionally) placed in the school they had attended as a pupil, amplifying their recognition that unchanged curriculum was still reproduced years later; 'delivering the same kind of curriculum that I did myself that I didn't feel particularly in love with at all' (PPI265/6).

This sentiment, and that of other participants, recognised that stale school art curricula is not only at odds with ideals of teaching dynamic, or reflexive, content, but that this stasis is itself a paradigmatic challenge to idealism or transformative optimism. Evelyne (PPI191) concluded their post-placement interview praising their school, pupils, and faculty - but then juxtaposes this against critique of a curriculum of 'the sort of same churned stuff that's just really quite boring'. While Evelyne largely enjoyed their experience, I feel that a negative conception of reproductive curriculum orthodoxy is likely to have more impact on participants' sense of hope in their future practice - their ideal – than the contextual success of interpersonal placement relations. When entering a reproductive context, where respected colleagues have succumbed to the forces of standardisation and mechanised efficiency, how might anyone, let alone a novice, imagine the means to break such cyclical orthodoxy?

### 6.3.3 Theme Three Summary

This theme highlighted the two systems of control most commented upon by participants, and potentially most damaging to the preservation of ideals – systematic homogenisation dictated by school leaders, and reproductive disciplinary curriculum conventions. I believe that encountering these phenomena while journeying through school placement catalysed participants' typical shift from high levels of transformative optimism and diverse idealism through to a more complex blend of attitudes about their practice.

I would frame both as systematic failings. The first – dictatorial and standardising expectations of school leaders a likely result of risk-averse managerialism, resulting in turn from neoliberal measurements of success distorting and pressurising the priorities of senior educators. This distortion disadvantages the arts disproportionately, through diminishing status, resource provision, and mismatched classroom initiatives (Ofsted, 2023; Tambling & Bacon, 2023). The origins of the second – stale and static curricula content in art classrooms - is less easy to identify. Perhaps related to Atkinson's (2006b) art teacher melancholy for modernism, in combination with administrative workload amplified by increased audit and surveillance of educators (The National Society for Education in Art and Design, 2016), or the destabilising impact of teacher retention troubles (Long & Danechi, 2022; Scheib, 2006) – participants certainly saw disciplinary departments distracted from constructing a curriculum capable of capitalising on the subject's potential.

In 6.2 I described how I had expected participants' identification of systematic failings to have negative impact on their idealism, when the data conversely suggested it was participants (such as Ashley) who questioned their *own* capability, whose ideals were challenged. Indeed, critical identification of flaws in contemporary frameworks for secondary art education may inversely have strengthened, crystalised, the idealism of participants. However – strong ideals carried into an environment of distrust between art teacher and 'higher up' and in contrast to a rigid and irrelevant curriculum, does not suggest a sustainable or satisfying future for my student teachers. This leads me to wonder what more I might do to leverage *my* position to protect student teachers' ideals, but also contribute to the creation of future, progressive, educational spaces for these ideals to be translated into transformative experiences.

## 6.4 Bifurcating Curricula Conceptions

In section 6.3 I introduced, as one instrument of wider systems of standardisation described by participants, a school art curriculum orthodoxy. Participants typically referred to this 'regurgitated' (Evelyne PPI69) content as lionising prescriptive instruction, ignoring opportunity to promote critical thinking or learner agency in favour of parochial 'insular' matters (Atkinson, 2006b, p. 17). The fourth theme I recognised in participants' data describes the nature of their response to this curricula context.

### 6.4.1 Adopting an apprenticeship model of learning to use artistic 'tools'

Typically – although not on all occasions – as participants encountered hylomorphic practices they increasingly recognised the value of externalised learning frameworks, softening previously held ideals of freedom and autonomy in a secondary art education. Even more so, participants appeared attracted to curricula beginning with imitative tasks designed to teach a prescribed artistic language, with which pupils might latterly be given incremental space to exercise creativity. As Elliot (PPI32) said post-placement, their pupil's confidence was amazing, '*once you have given them the tools',* a caveat suggestive of permissive pedagogies potentially at odds with the emancipatory ideals many participants, including Elliot, arrived with.

Atkinson (2006b, p. 17) writes in some detail about the problematic tendency for secondary art curriculums to be built on a foundational premise that 'pupils are given the opportunity to acquire a variety of skills in order to be able to express themselves'. While rational, this focus on a discourse of 'tools' for self-expression is, Atkinson (2006b, p. 18) believes, the primary reason why secondary art education is disconnected from contemporary practice, where 'the notion of self-expression qua uniqueness…was relinquished long ago'. I don't think wholesale abandonment of traditional artistic pedagogies is necessary (or helpful), but conceptually situating these practices such that learners understand their 'ontological conditions' (Atkinson, 2006b, p. 18) could reveal the plurality of contemporary artistic activity. Given participants' frequent idealistic mention of contemporary artistic relevance, I found it interesting that many instead, pragmatically, adapted to embrace such formalism.

Further comparison of Elliot, and Evelyne's, pre-placement contributions to their latter interview transcripts illustrate this shift. Elliot's (AT27) abstract artwork was suggestive of an ideal art education as 'freedom for those who study it', a visual motif confirmed as intentional in later dialogue: 'I wanted to ummm…find ways of engaging students with abstraction – and the idea of freedom, a real sort of sense of creative freedom' (Elliot PPI22). They continue however, by moderating their position:

> …which I now think is quite naïve, in that, that is well and good but I don't think it's actually very fair to the students because if you are free, but you don't have the tools to do with what you want then it's useless. (Elliot PPI23)

This repositioning is repeated throughout Elliot's post-placement interview, suggesting strong belief, or the hope that repetition reinforces credibility. Elliot's (PPI65&41) amended ideal appears to position the learner as tabula rasa, as having 'no idea what to say', that the classroom 'can't be total liberty…they don't know what to do with that yet'; in stark comparison to their earlier ideal wherein learners' freedom might realise their innate potential.

Evelyne (PPI24) used similar language in their post-placement reflection on curricula freedom, describing their earlier Freirean ideals as 'a bit more naïve really', switching to instead promote establishment of skills through hylomorphic, transcendent instruction, prior to learner-led application:

> We kind of did a baseline with a couple of workshops on how to mix flesh tones/skin tones, how to perhaps create a portrait, things like that and then it sort of allowed them the foundations to sort of go on and explore their own artists and use those skills in whichever way that they want. (Evelyne PPI52-56)

This is not an unreasonable position, and Evelyne arrives here as a creative compromise in comparison to the strict, instrumental practices of their placement department where prioritisations frustrate them:

> what *could* have been a really interesting project… so much of it was kind of um, literacy heavy…they were literally being told information rather than actually acting on it or creating their own response which felt difficult. (PPI131-148)

I thought it interesting that both Elliot and Evelyne intuitively discuss technical artistic skill and conceptual or creative application as separate concerns, best learned in isolation or series. In comparison, Robin (PPI71) presents a more conflicted move towards post-placement pragmatism – maintaining an ideal centred on 'self-expression', but where now they 'just don't think that's really possible, from what I have seen in schools'. They go on:

> I don't know how much independence you can give to such a young student. I think you do need…to give them some structure because it can be overwhelming and then…yeah. So I'm questioning how much you give – kind of – Year 7's that sense of self-expression and 'do whatever you want' that doesn't work necessarily. (Robin PPI93)

Robin talks about protecting their ideal – 'to promote more independent learning and more scope for students to kind of express themselves' (PPI66), while paradoxically explaining that 'you have to really heavily kind of support and guide them' (PPI69) in learning new technical skills. Despite a worryingly doubtful tone, Robin's central premise here – that the independence to practice authentic self-expression requires a tapering scaffold of teacher support – is remarkably consistent with their pre-placement idealism. Robin's artwork (Fig.51) expressed this in abstract terms, the golden threads representative of increasingly common agentic learner revelations.

> It's got these kind of blended lines, and then you've got this kind of running piece which goes all the way through it…as the students are kind of progressing, umm, and then I picked a more blended kind of yarn, to go through, which changed over time a little bit… it was aimed towards the student maybe realising something, or achieving something…it started off at the bottom and then as you got nearer to the top they were more frequent and I did like a larger strip at the bottom of a certain colour, which I saw as maybe the teacher kind of supporting more of the students and then, as it went on, kind of spacing was wider because maybe the student was more independent. (Robin EI37-64)

*Figure 51: Robin's artwork – demonstrating an 'embodied quality of formal organisation'*

Post-placement Robin confirmed their prior understanding that young students will need significant teacher support but counterintuitively, encountering this reality seemed to create a sense of disappointment. This suggested to me several possibilities – most prominent the matter of the *means* of support given to learners. Where this was typically encountered by participants as provision of pre-defined outcomes, restrictive success criteria, and technocratic transcendent instruction – these strategies do little to inculcate characteristics for latter independence. What Robin was perhaps hoping to encounter was a curriculum designed such that teacher-led technical workshop, process modelling, and reflective discussion could equip learners to develop a self-

regulated artistic practice of self-expression. Such leading out of pupils' potential reads as progressive in contrast to autonomy defined as choice within strict measures. Indeed, Robin reflected on this after recognising what they thought an independent task as largely predetermined:

> I was talking to [peer] about this the other day actually, about how – in Year 7…they're being more independent in that they, they've got their A3 paper and they've drawn their skull out and they're putting mixed media on it so they kind of choose um, what it looks like and what materials they use – but then [peer] said 'well, you've provided the source and the kind of theme of the project, and you've also provided which materials they can use because you've said 'you can use watercolour, collage, blended pencils'- you know…you're telling them they can use whatever materials they want as long as it is one of these three things or all three…um and yeah that kind of made me think, maybe we're not actually giving them as much independence as I thought? (Robin PPI81-92)

The idea that a 'toolkit' of skills should be developed before an artist is afforded creative freedom is reminiscent of a traditionalist, pre-modern art education wherein the student would shadow a master, slowly inheriting rudimentary knowledge of canvas preparation and painting medium before being trusted to sketch background elements of a studio's final output. Sam, who brought a traditionalist, if liberatory, ideal of artistic development sustains this standard but qualifies it in opposition to endemic prescription observed during placement:

> In Year 7, 8, and 9 you should be getting them all their skills under their belt, so that in you know Year 10 and 11 and 12 and 13 you can really expand what you are doing, you can use all of those tools that you have in your belt to really show the world what you are like, and I don't see that, I see a lot of you can quite often see that the work coming out is the same. (Sam EI131)

For participants – certainly Sam, Robin, Elliot, and Evelyne – this dualistic curriculum model is favoured post-placement as a re/rationalisation of effective provision for idealistic ends. I would position these participants' interest in suppressing learners' creative freedom in early artistic provision as either (i) a pragmatic recognition of adolescents' developmental maturity, and an associated, protective moderation of autonomy with supportive structure, or (ii) adaptation to an orthodoxy of technocratic curricula that removes opportunity for critical reflection and expression. Robin, Elliot, and Evelyne seemingly erred towards a deficit model – pedagogical control conceptualised as a realistic requisite due to pupils' immature self-management, while Sam, who

held a skills-led ideal from the start of their ITE described such a priority as emancipatory, as Freire taught literacy.

### 6.4.2 Maintaining a Modernist model of ambiguity, or unlearning

In obverse to the post-placement moderation of those discussed above, some participants had their initial ideals of freedom confirmed or expended by their classroom encounters.

While Sam positioned artistic education as a liberatory cultivation – a conversion of uncontrollable artistic urge into expressive visual language through expert supervision – Morgan instead questions attempts to tame creative spontaneity: 'how can something so uncontainable be within a framework of any sort?' (Morgan PPI327). The logic they apply – the contemporary character of the discipline is subjective, contextual, and mercurial – and there is no resource to teach all artmaking to all pupils in the time afforded a secondary curriculum anyway, so why position the subject as instructional? Here 'it's about art offering kind of sparks of some sort and, and connections and ideas' (Morgan PPI327). Instead of prioritising technical instruction, Morgan promotes conceptual aptitude among learners. While the prescription of placement pedagogies – and lack of student voice and agency – made maintenance of such an ideal 'challenging' for Morgan (PPI36), it was confirmatory too, Morgan restating a commitment to the sentiment of their artwork: 'what art can be, which again is a sense of openness, a sense of unknown', early in our post-placement interview.

Paris was equally unwilling to compromise ideals to accommodate the apprenticeship curriculum encountered on their placement, described as banal for both learner and teacher:

> In [placement school] I am just teaching them skills…full stop. Not even the...(!)… faintest idea of self-expression, it is just: 'this is watercolour, this is a brush, this is how wet your brush has to be, and this is how you apply it, and this is the kind of paper you want to be using' and, and you know, and, and these are the kinds of things you can achieve. Completely detached from any meaning-making, um, any kind of transgression into – how you could use acrylic differently. (Paris PPI76)

Instead of facilitating pupils' innovation, Paris described this prescriptive pedagogy as 'loading them with the skills' (PPI116), resulting in superficial and homogenous, if well executed, outcomes. When

asked whether they felt these skills were not in some way integral to artistic progress, Paris was confident not only in dismissing technical instruction, but arguing it as overtly oppressive. To illustrate their claim, they refer to the works of Cornelia Parker, who adopted a sculptural practice with no formal training – as Paris (PPI92) described 'that kind of 'unlearn' practice is what has made her, you know really exciting'.

The value that Paris, and Morgan, are worried about 'teaching out' of pupils is the capacity to make authentic artistic experiment; with transcendent technical instruction not conceptualised as opening a door to personal expression, but instead as blinding one to previously underdeveloped possibilities by passing forward orthodox assumptions.

> 'I think also, once you know the skills, it's quite hard to unlearn them and be truly…risky, and truly experimental? Because the learning of those skills are already ingrained in your psyche…' (Paris PPI140-141)

I don't think Paris advocates for a teacherless classroom, but rather that educators encourage independent conceptual inquisition as their core concern, where material selection and expression follow as necessary.

Although less vocal on curriculum, I would align Nicky's perspective with Paris and Morgan – certainly pre-placement they believed in, and valued, art education as a practice of freedom. They imagined 'making amazing sculptures and drawings based on whatever we want to' (EI71) with school pupils and considered ITE as opportunity 'to explore things in different ways' (EI53). While as a ceramicist it might be assumed that Nicky associates artistic value with practical expertise (given the technical knowledge required to work with clay), they suggested instead an exploratory priority in step with Paris's 'risky' authenticity, as evidenced in discussion around the artwork made for this study:

> I guess art is very much…kind of, what – that's what I love about ceramics, its like the photography and print-making process, because to a certain extent you have no clue how something is going to come out (photography/film that is). So it was supposed to be pink but it's a dark blue. (Nicky EI362-365)

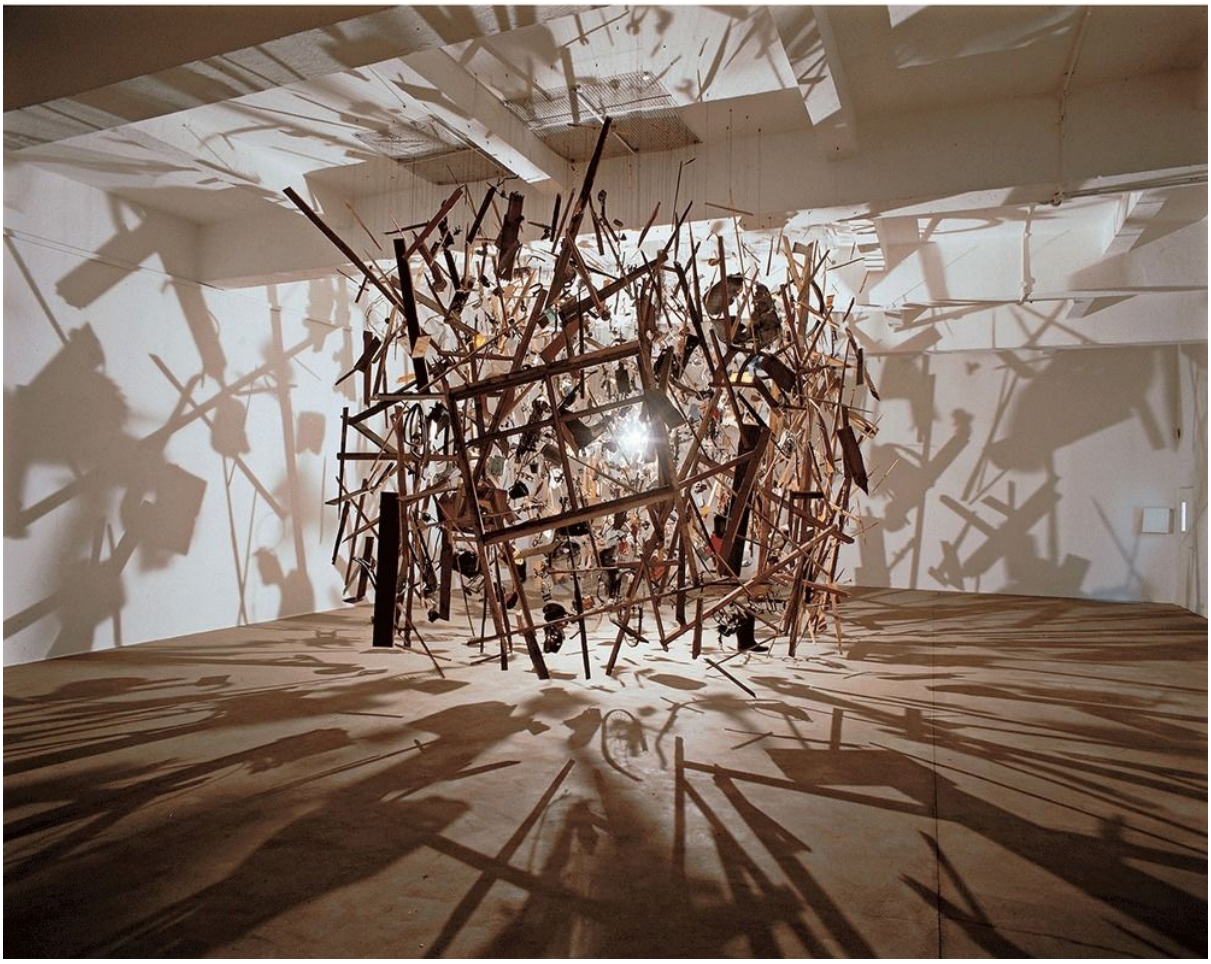

*Figure 52: 'Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View' 1991 Cornelia Parker*

In contrast to the changing attitudes of Elliot, Evelyne, and others, Paris and Morgan's quiet defiance and conceptual consistency enabled them to buttress their original ideals against the highly contrasting school practices they encountered (with Nicky's creative freedom on placement protecting their ideals). Interestingly, I might associate their idealistic positions, to some extent, with Modernist artistic practice. Here, creative process is valued over material outcome, the concept elevated in value beyond the practical skill of physical realisation, and art is oriented as a socially productive practice – a humanitarian good. The apotheosis of Modernist visual tradition was perhaps seen at the Bauhaus, and latterly Black Mountain College - pertinent here, as Paris collaged imagery of artistic practice at the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College onto their artwork, representing their idealised art education. Paris (EI129) explained pre-placement the attraction of this ideology as about 'togetherness' and 'awareness', and so it was unsurprising that they rejected the vertical dynamic ubiquitous in school education and inherent to transcendent pedagogies, i.e., subjection to another's instruction, rather than collective new knowledge creation.

*Figure 53: Paris' artwork (detail) 'a patchy, textured surface finish, with vignette edges and a scrap-book aesthetic'*

Neither Paris or Morgan had meaningful opportunity on placement to apply a student-centered, materials-led, Modernist curriculum, perhaps enabling uncompromised protection of their ideals; they had not been tested and remained potently quixotic. For both, however, I feel it is admirable that they maintained such faith in the pupils they did teach, that they might yet imagine an ideal practice wherein transformative curricula might be effective and possible in place of the 'shortcomings' (Paris PPI260) of popular school art practices.

### 6.4.3 A false curricular dichotomy

I thought it interesting that participants in this study all appeared to conceptualise art education as providing technical instruction, *or* conceptual freedom; rather than imagining a curriculum to functionally facilitate both, simultaneously. Those who gravitated pragmatically to promote foundational technical skills for latter experimental application formed this opinion after encountering prescriptive pedagogies, and dependent learners, on placement. Those who retreated further into their ideals of creative liberation rejected instructional pedagogies to the extent that these were viewed as harmful.

In hindsight, I feel this tacit misconception (that there must be a binary or sequential priority of concept *or* technique) forced them to amend their thinking in certain ways which might otherwise be avoided. If participants had considered how to engender creative autonomy while also providing rigorous technical support, perhaps their curricular encounters would have been less fractious. For example, Evelyne might imagine an oppressive literacy focus reoriented in application to political or local community issues important to learners, resulting in textual artworks. Paris might imagine a technical mark-making session that simultaneously resulted in a collaborative patchwork of local maps, or suggested experimentation with an ekphratic colour-mixing exercise reinterpreting poetry. Such compromises may not have been acceptable to Evelyne's art department, and perhaps Paris would view this as conceptual capitulation, but following un-negotiated expectations maintains reproductive orthodoxy and/or participants' sense of 'conflictual pedagogized' (Atkinson, 2006a, p. 193) identities. In these instances, teachers experience diminished agency and associated demotivation (Priestley et al., 2015), pupils encounter content of decreasing relevance to their lived experience, and society receives an educational system inclined to preservation of a status quo, including its inadequacies (Adams & Owens, 2016).

Expecting student teachers to push placement mentors to amend curriculum conventions in placement schools is difficult, given the power dynamic – but perhaps this is a space where I could exercise some of my diplomatic positioning. To what extent do I advocate currently for student teachers to amend curriculum they are tasked with delivering, and to what extent do I prepare student teachers to make amends? Addison and Burgess (Addison & Burgess, 2005) suggested nearly twenty years ago that, given teacher workload, ITE might be an effective space for meaningful curriculum discourse, and there are arguments for student teachers as curriculum designers beyond

their comparative capacity (their disciplinary exposure, academic criticality, and moral imperative as the next generation of art educators, for example). Reflecting on this theme has led me to consider how the false dichotomy of technical or conceptual learning in art education might be addressed through effectively chairing a negotiation between students' ideals and established conventions – a compromise potentially tempering both.

However, not mentioned above, Ashley alone took a post-modern approach to curriculum ideals – interested in an education rooted in substantive art historical knowledge, but also playful in coupling this to decontextualised bricolage and aesthetic novelty, following pupils' own prerogatives. Despite their simultaneous embrace of both technical or traditional knowledge, and contemporary conceptual concerns, Ashley *still* suffered in their exposure to classroom practice. Clearly, bringing the technocratic rigidity of some classroom curricula, and the liberal ideals of some student teachers, into productive concert is a challenging task. I would assess only one participant having experienced something approaching this effective relation (Nicky).

### 6.4.4 Theme Four Summary

This theme has centered on interpretation of the reaction participants describe when confronted by prescriptive art curricula. This content tended towards validation of technical instruction over creative freedoms, presumably because within a paradigm of homogenised content technical skills can more easily be codified and assessed as knowledge acquisition than the 'uncontainable' authenticity of novel, personal art objects.

On several occasions, the establishment of technical artistic capacity and confidence is described by participants as justified by departmental colleagues as means to more critical ends; older, or more mature pupils better equipped to express themselves effectively. Participants accept this rationale to varying degrees, some recognising the logic of this traditionalist sequencing, others rejecting it, and doubling down in their idealistic modernist paradigm.

I suggest that neither outcome is preferable, and that in future negotiation between these two stakeholders – student teachers and establishment curricula – as teacher educator I might play a

more active role in delivering productive compromise. While facilitating dialogue could perhaps be described as Freirean, Atkinson (2006b) would probably reject this reconciliatory suggestion, certain instead that the pain of complete paradigm shift in school art curriculum represents the necessary way to overcome stylistic and epistemological orthodoxies. His concern – that any foregrounding of art education in transmissive curriculum immediately makes such content irrelevant to contemporary artistic practices in our age of intransmissibility (2006b, p. 22). While I recognise the inadequacies inherent of compromise, I don't feel empowered to affect system change – while I might be positioned to mitigate some of the more immediate 'conflictual discourses' Atkinson (2006a, p. 191) recognises as the outcome of permissive ITE.

## 6.5 Reflection on Identity: The Artist/Teacher Duality and the Anti-autobiographic

In 6.4, I looked to understand how placement experience influenced participants' concepts of ideal curricula content and delivery. Next, I explore participants' conceptions of identity – the ideal characteristics of an art teacher delivering this curriculum, the origin of these models, and their development during school placement. There were two interconnected thematic threads that came to the fore on issues of teacher identity. First, participants consistent commentary on the relationship between their personal artistic and developing pedagogic identities, and second, participants' diminishing tendency to illustrate their idealism with reference to *pre*-ITE experiences.

### 6.5.1 The Artist/Teacher Duality

In my experience, despite the preoccupation of some with the 'artist/teacher' identity model (Freelands Foundation, 2023; Unwin, 2020; Ward, 2013; Wild, 2022) not all student teachers have, or are interested in maintaining, a personal artistic practice alongside their teaching career. Despite this, participants' responses suggested that the transitional flux of ITE did prompt renegotiation of the relationship between any sense of artistic belonging and developing teacher identities.

For example, Ashley had previously been employed ad hoc to produce editorial illustrations, but with their primary focus now on classroom practice they felt one benefit was release from the external artistic direction of commissioners:

> My [artistic] practice has definitely become a lot more selfish since I've…started the course…from doing little bits of illustration here and there and now I'm back in my sketchbook which is really nice… (Ashley EI308-310)

For those from the applied arts and previously beholden to patrons' briefs, such as Ashley, the anticipation of a paid teaching post might disinhibit their artistic identity. Despite latterly finding frustration with many pedagogical practices of their placement school, Ashley was simultaneously able to build a more authentic artistic identity *outside* of the classroom. In contrast, for most, the distractions of classroom practice disengaged participants from their prior confident artistic self. As two of the most committed artists among participants, Nicky and Elliot both spoke in some detail about the challenging interrelation of their own artmaking and their developing vocation.

Elliot (PPI211), post-placement, noted how their artistic practice 'has taken a huge backseat'; not surprising given the rigour of ITE study. More interesting is how they describe changes to their painting practice – changes seemingly informed by the values Elliot is expected to place on pupils in their classroom. Their work, previously abstract and process-led almost exclusively, instead becomes figurative – with a focus on careful observation and technical 'foundation'. Teaching, they suggest 'has maybe illustrated to me a little bit how important it is to practice the looking' (PPI217) – a conceptual backwash from classroom practice at odds with their previously expressed passion for the 'playful' potential of 'abstraction and multimedia' (Elliot PPI126). Rather than contemporary artistic practice contributing to a progressive pedagogy, here more traditionalist conceptions of artistic value have influenced an artistic identity.

*Figure 54: Elliot's artwork – 'muted organic tones – a palette stretching from rust through to a military green – are scrawled across a landscape page'*

If professional context was having influence on their personal practice, Elliot went on to explain why they might consciously avoid the opposite - their own artmaking informing their classroom. They explained they 'don't want to give too much of myself to the students, I want to have that separation' (PPI230/1), an attempt to define a sustainable teaching practice through compartmentalisation (a strategy the above revelation, perhaps, undermines). Nicky presents similar concern for separating their artistic and classroom activity, noting the potential for hypocrisy if one promotes agency among pupils, while drawing exclusively on one's singular practice while teaching:

> If I forced everyone to do something then everyone would end up doing ceramic, glazed, giant objects and then that kind of takes away the whole point of it, really doesn't it? You know they're kind of developing independence and their own originality, so yeah, I think and sometimes you have to take that on the chin (Nicky EI168-170)

Indeed, Nicky was not only concerned about asserting an oppressive structure in their classroom, but pre-placement, was also worried about how their artistic approach might hamper their teaching efficacy. As a ceramicist they felt niche and disadvantaged, while describing the characteristic 'hyper-

criticality' of an artist's identity as potentially damaging too: 'I'll criticise and criticise and criticise to the point where I do nothing' (EI178). Reassuringly neither Nicky's specialised skillset nor expectations hampered their placement practice. However, they did not mention their personal artistic enquiry post-placement, emerging with more banal, bureaucratic concerns - for 'the paperwork side of things' (PPI224).

Morgan didn't express pre-placement concern about awkward dynamics between artistic identity and their teaching practice, hoping instead for a 'really nice…development of my own identity' (EI151). However, in contrast to Nicky's integration with their placement school's practices, Morgan did encounter uncomfortable identity dissonance. Explaining that the prescriptive monotony of their placement school was at odds with their personal artistic practice – inquisitive and flexible in nature – they commented:

> …of course there's different ways of working but it's, it's how that feels in terms of my own way of being creative and how those things can…can work together and you know, I don't think they're not working together, it's just there's sometimes a feeling of kind of going against a kind of grain of some sort and um…that's maybe made me feel uncomfortable (Morgan PPI167-172)

The discomfort Morgan (PPI174) describes leads them, ultimately, to question whether their identity-bound ideals can be maintained – 'maybe I can't or shouldn't be an art teacher in a secondary school…'. Latterly Morgan reconfirms, optimistically, their ideal 'active' identity, that of an agentic, relevant educator who confronts orthodoxy: 'not only an artistic practitioner myself but connected to new theories, connected to research…', be it with some pragmatic anxiety '…and I wonder how…realistic are my hopes in that respect' (Morgan PPI 422-5).

It is interesting at this point to note that Elliot, Nicky, and Morgan's concept - of purposeful distinction betwixt personal and professional, whether for personal protection against loss of identity, concern for pedagogic objectivity, or to sustain institutional resistance, are not ubiquitous among peers. Indeed, Sam (EI27) argued quite the opposite; that the ideal identity for artist/teacher is a singular, authentic personhood – 'no real divide between your life and work'. After berating placement colleagues who held higher priorities outside of their professional duties – childcare or

hobbies – and interpreting this as apathy towards art education, Sam repeated their idealistic conception of the teachers' identity:

> I don't like this thing where you – it doesn't become your whole life, I don't see why, you know, why should art not become your whole life, and showing people how to do it? What's wrong with it being your whole life? (Sam PPI234-236)

It was also important to Sam (PPI25-27) that the artist teacher is viewed as distinct from other disciplines – 'I don't think art departments should be in the middle of a school, I think they should be in a shed outside'. Such a view, potentially eccentric, is an idealised solution to Sam's concerns; that the subject is not, in its current form, enjoyed by confident, creative learners released from the prescriptive standardisation of homogenising institutions.

In summary: Ashley's artistic practice was buoyed while their classroom teaching was suffocating, Elliot's was compromised, Nicky felt compelled to keep theirs distant and Morgan's felt inhibited. Sam wanted their artistic self to be authentic but could not conceptualise this as a central component of schooling, instead maintaining an outsider identity. Despite this diversity, participants all acknowledged friction between educational orthodoxy and their artistic identities and suggested alternate means to protect the latter. None found a pathway to marry artistic and pedagogic identities, despite several participants suggesting this would be an aspect of their ideal art education. That 'protection' is required makes apparent the little opportunity afforded for participants to 'translate' their artistic selves into classroom practices – the 'disjunction between disciplinary and pedagogic personas' that Addison and Burgess (2005, p. 128) consider 'more pronounced in art and design than in other school curriculum subjects'. While I remain sceptical of the artist/teacher identity as requisite for transformational classroom practice, for student teachers who *do* take this argument – it may be important to transparently explore this dynamic during their ITE, to avoid identity-oppressing scholastic structures remaining invisible (Dalton, 2001).

### 6.5.2 A Fading Autobiographic Insight

If participants did not express consistency in their ideal positioning of artistic and professional identities, they did demonstrate one commonality pre-placement: framing idealised pedagogic

identity through reference to personal experiences. Before placement, *all* participants drew on their autobiographies to illustrate and justify their ideals – some undergraduate experiences, others family influence, their own schooling or work in other sectors; in total 'Biographic Reflection' was coded against at least 38 pre-placement interview comments.

For example, Evelyne, Elliot, and Paris defined their ideal pedagogy as explicit recourse for their own schooling, described as 'unfair' (Evelyne EI141), 'unsatisfying' (Elliot EI79) and in particularly derogatory terms as:

> Very, very traditional pedagogies and teacher/student role interaction…yeah the worst you can imagine you know. We didn't even change rooms, we didn't navigate the school we just went to one room, sat down there and had the teachers come in umm…and it was, even now I can't think how I survived it, just being awake, in the chair. (Paris EI 54)

For Evelyne and Paris, they resultantly considered art school as a threshold moment in their sense of self, with Paris (EI189) describing a 'radical difference' and Elliot (EI182) explaining that 'when I got to my foundation course I felt so fulfilled'. For these participants, the independence of higher education was embraced after strict schooling – immediately evident in the values that underpin their ideals of 'freedom' (Paris EI124) and 'students going in their own independent paths' (Evelyne EI97). Here, participants are resistant to conformation with the classroom orthodoxies they themselves unsatisfyingly experienced; instead valuing identities forged later in their artistic education.

Also referencing experiences while school pupils, Elliot and Leslie shared similar pre-placement anecdotes. They both touched on the social convention of study in the arts as low value, and while Elliot (EI224) emphasised that their experience was not a 'sad story', it was clear that studying art was viewed as risky, or wasteful, by immediate family. They described an economic value system in which the arts are ranked poorly: 'it's…not like…you don't go to London and make loads of money doing it, unless you're really lucky…something that like as a society we instil' (Elliot EI 225-7). For Leslie, a similar familial lamentation of wasted potential is experienced:

> …my parents, who have always loved to put a little, kind of prod in and say "oh you could have been a lawyer", or "you should have done French" and these kind of reoccurring conversations I've had since I decided to go on to art school. (Lesley EI164-7)

I thought it interesting that while neither suggested significant adversity, they both continued into the arts without explicit familial encouragement. Mentioning this context during interview suggested it remained pertinent as they move into educational studies. Leslie (EI118) was particularly defiant that despite learning from teachers, parents, and peers you 'still kind of grow in your own way', a defence against critique of their career choices, and a sentiment echoed in the philosophy of their artwork and ideals.

Where Evelyne, Elliot and Paris appeared to idealistically identify as saviours; committed to atoning their own poorly reviewed school experiences, Elliot and Leslie's comments suggested an idealistic identity closer to martyrdom – knowingly suffering poor social recognition, status, and renumeration, for the sake of their subject passion. For all five, I saw potential links to the idea (Hetrick, 2010) that student art teachers employ 'fictions' to navigate the challenges of ITE. However, these participants' comments did not strike me as worrying or unsustainable, unlike Hetrick's (2017) students' reliance on fantasies to endure reality, instead suggestive of reasonable ethical impetus for idealising transformative practices. It would clearly be preferable if student teachers had themselves experienced exemplary, inspirational learning during their schooling, and if all student teachers felt the full support of wider society, but here these injustices arguably motivated a productive defiance and critique of inadequate orthodoxies.

Morgan and Nicky both spoke in detail about the inspiration of their familial contexts when considering educational ideals. Morgan's (EI122) parents, both educators, were role models in this regard – 'my whole life I've been kind of – in a very positive way – really saturated by, you know hearing stories…of work in art education' . They described this, and the advice of their university tutors, as an important 'backdrop' (EI96) to their own developing practice, but were also aware of starting out on their own voyage, later contextualising their walking artwork as conveying this liminal sense of connection to art education: 'you know in that world but not in that world at the same time…familiar but unfamiliar because it was my own journey' (Morgan EI145/6).

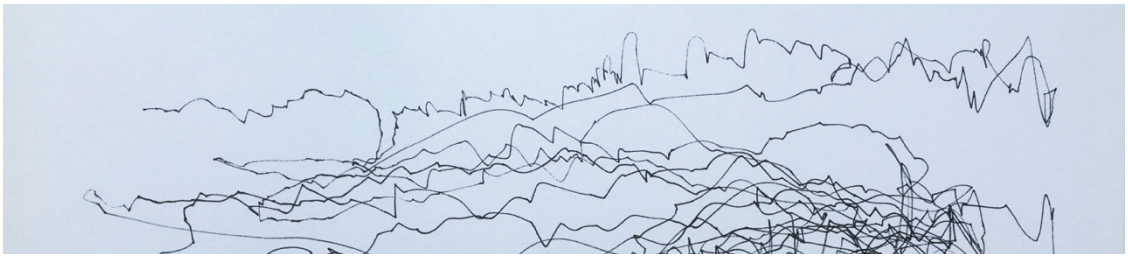

*Figure 55: Morgan's artwork (detail) 'the length and quality of the line suggests a not inconsiderable walk'*

Nicky mentioned the influence of their partner, a frustrated primary school teacher, in formalising their own ideals – alongside commentary on their own misbehaviour as a school pupil. Reflecting on their own art teachers, Nicky retrospectively commended their explorative guidance – recognising this quality having started their own ITE: 'they must have been pretty decent at what they did' (EI192), and 'I should have given them a little bit more credit uh a little less slack I think…' (EI320). More interesting perhaps than the influence of partner and past teachers in Nicky's ideal art education is the biographical inspiration they suggest connected to their mother's nationality.

> 'My mum is Hungarian, and she's from over that – yeah, and her family are all from that area, and she was telling me…so she's not very 'arty' at all, but, obviously, when Hungary was a communist country um art was almost kind of like – very isolated, what you could do – you couldn't create political art. What a lot of Hungarian artists starting doing was using clay, because ceramics was seen as a lesser form of art, so a lot of political Hungarian artists started producing artworks through clay and then it became this, you know, massive art form…' (Nicky EI281-290)

That Nicky associated their ceramic practice to their mother's description of a counter-cultural artistic resistance is important as they continued to link this personal context to their hopes for a particular art teacher identity – facilitator rather than instructor:

> I think that people will always find a way of projecting their voice through art, or a political voice – I just think that its up to us to, not necessarily tell them that 'this is wrong' but give them almost a breadth of option to give them, you know to explore these different ideas. (Nicky EI292-295)

Later in the pre-placement interview, Nicky also characterised the art teacher not only as facilitator of pupils' voices, but as a natural outsider, a 'weirdo' (EI332) or alternative figure in the institution of the school – another attribute linkable to their narrative of Hungarian anti-authoritarian artistic critique. As I thought about Nicky's positioning, I realised the serendipitous connection between their artwork for this study (Fig.57) – a smooth exterior and restless dynamic, and the work of prominent Hungarian ceramicist Fekete (Fig.56), which shares these formal elements. It left me thinking about whether aspirant art teachers' ideals for practice might be well communicated not only through their own artmaking, but by consideration of their artistic preferences – disciplinary appreciation perhaps connected, meaningfully, to their autobiography and emerging axiology. Indeed, both Paris and Ashley purposely employed imagery of others' work in their own response in ways that enlightened me to their idealistic pedagogic identities (for Ashley, postmodern and for Paris, liberal).

*Figure 56: 'Head' (nd) Laszlo Fekete: Fekete was a prominent Hungarian ceramicist whose work in the latter half of the 20th century intentionally eschewed the nationalist orthodoxy of glorifying communist ideals*

*Figure 57: Nicky's artwork: Nicky's artistic contribution serendipitously shares some formal relation to Fekete's Head, the smooth undulating surface suggestive of internal unrest*

In contrast to pre-placement conversation, post-placement biographical reflection was very rare, with less than half the participants making any reference to life experience, and with less emphasis. Paris (PPI108) briefly repeated reference to the inadequacy of their own schooling, and Sam – who believes the personal and professional should overlap – unsurprisingly made occasional reoccurring reference to their lived experiences, but otherwise the biographic plurality evident pre-placement disappeared.

It might be expected post-placement that contemporary classroom experiences were employed to illustrate reformed ideals and critique (in preference to faded memories of one's own schooling), but it was surprising how the immediacy of school placement overwrote, or augmented, previous idealised identities constituted through a lifetime of diverse experiences. I might have imagined that in the long preparation for ITE, consciously or otherwise, participants would have developed ideals robust enough to survive relatively brief exposure to current art classrooms. Instead, post-placement participants referred almost exclusively to this recent experience to describe and critique their ideals; any expression of changing opinion was made in the context of placement, and many

participants explicitly (Evelyne, Paris, Nicky, Elliot, Ashley) commented on the perceived naivety of their prior positioning.

This placement-induced recalibration suggests that the potency of placement experience had a marked impact on conceptions of identity, with participants having experienced a revelatory practical induction that renders past belief systems credulous in comparison to the reality of practice (Hetrick & Sutters, 2014). Consequently, If this were typically the case, then the ITE placement experience represents a vital crucible, where student teachers' identities and ideals are deconstructed and reconstructed – more so than during the theoretical reflections of pre-placement campus-based activity. In such conditions, an affirmatory placement might catalyse a teaching identity of transformative optimism, while a challenging placement might delay or even supress assumption of an identity that facilitates sustenance of previously held hopes.

### 6.5.3 Theme Five Summary

In pre-placement interview, many participants expressed idealised identities founded in autobiographic experiences, many naturally related to artistic practices or priorities. The confrontation between these ideals and reality when placement was undertaken in school might have been constructive, or destructive, depending on the dynamic between individual and institution. Either way, it appears consistently to have resulted in abandonment of biographic or artistic motivations, replaced with classroom-derived concerns. For example, Ashley's (PPI25) idealised identity as aspirational art historian for similarly socially deprived pupils is challenged by their school and pupils' inability to adapt to raised expectations of substantive content. It becomes 'a difficult space'; where behaviour control and inclusion take priority. In contrast Paris largely sustains their ideals throughout their experiences, but rather than their liberatory intent being informed by their own scholastic suppression, post-placement they find a contemporary foil in the technocratic banality of placement practices.

To illustrate the interconnection between this fifth theme and the first four, Fig.58 demonstrates the journey from pre-placement to post-placement.

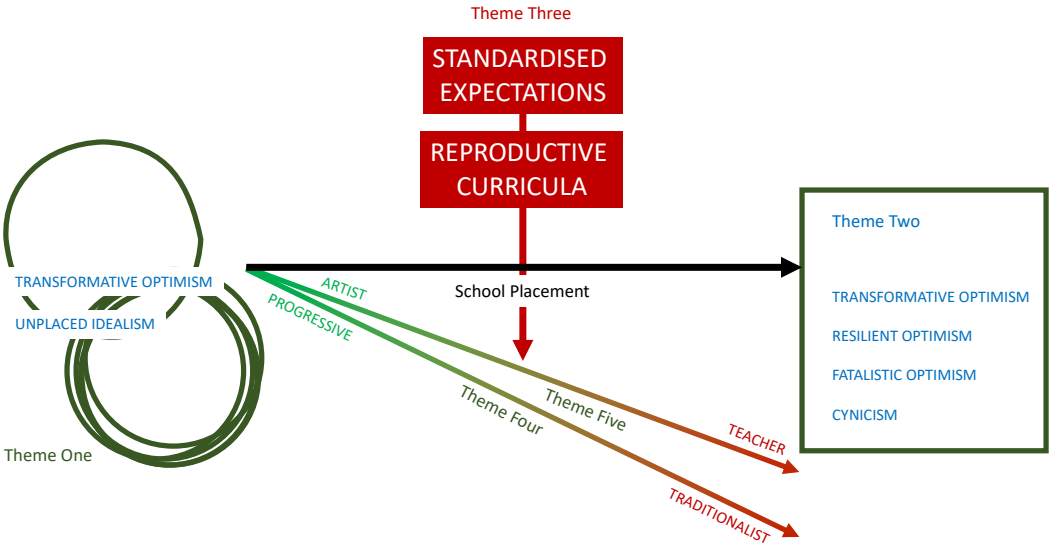


*Figure 58: The interconnections I suppose between the first five themes of my findings*

## 6.6 The Terms of Transgression

In 6.4 and 6.5 I highlighted how school placement interacted with participants' changing concepts of an idealised curriculum and professional identity. Conservative curriculum orthodoxies challenged some participants, who either adapted their ideals accordingly, or redoubled their opposition to mismatched pedagogic practices. Idealised teacher identities founded on autobiographical experience were often palimpsest by placement-based reflection, with some participants diluting personal artistic intent to focus on pragmatic teaching practices.

In this final theme, I augment this description of participants' response to school placement. Where standardised expectations and reproductive curricula weighed on participants, contesting idealised identities and priorities, how did they strategise for survival? While they may have been moved to accept or reject that which they observed; how did they reconcile this response with the pre-existing priorities of their previously communicated ideals?

This theme recognises the diverse suggestions made by participants for alternative, transgressive, and subversive pedagogies – both ideal and practical. While these primarily result from the existential frustrations of exposure to suppressive school practices relayed through post-placement interview, I frame them as an optimistic outcome of fractious experiences. That some participants

imply intent to practice with professional autonomy post-placement *despite* cultures of standardising expectation, suggests they are already, at this early point in their career, hopeful of delivering authentic artistic education, by any means necessary.

### 6.6.1 Alternative Priorities: A Collaborative, Risky, and Creative Art Education

Through data analysis, I observed general concord among participants: that the study of art in school should faithfully align with the nature of the subject discipline. Participants described an art education focused on authentic creative exploration (Elliot PPI133; Morgan EI45) practiced is a space safe (Robin EI181; Sam EI40) enough to engender both rigorously contextualised (Ashley EI372) and genuinely agentic (Evelyne EI23; Lesley EI126; Nicky PPI164; Paris EI242) experiential learning.

Whether participants observed such practice in their placement schools or not, nearly all reflected on the pedagogies they hoped might activate the above - the ideal pedagogies they hoped to agentically utilise in their future careers. I categorised these approaches into (i) collaborative, (ii) risky, and (iii) creative strategies.

- Collaboration

For Morgan, Paris, and Sam there was strong commitment to promote collaboration in the art classroom. Sam described peer dialogue as critical to the artistic process:

> They should…talk about all the things that bother them…and that sort of comes out in their art really. They should be absorbing that into it and responding to what other people are saying and that it's you know, working together. (Sam EI140-143)

This framing suggested that in Sam's ideal, pupils' artwork is completed individually, but within a closely connected community of critical friends. It also suggested that they conceptualise the authentic artistic process as cathartic, with the material outcome secondary to the value of sharing problems and enjoying support from a group of peers. In their initial interview, Paris described a similarly cohesive environment, informed specifically by Bauhaus principles; an interdisciplinary utopia with teachers, students, 'everyone kind of blending into one' (Paris EI201). Post-placement,

Paris reconfirmed the centrality of a dialogic classroom to their ideal; wherein pupils work together to build their understanding; 'not necessarily, you know, from a teacher but from their collective practice' (PPI41).

*Figure 59: Paris' Artwork (detail): discussion takes place among a group of smiling youths who lie next to one another on the ground*

Despite encountering an individualistic educational paradigm on placement, Paris describes this ideal as 'still there, very much so' (PPI143) in latter interview. In both Paris and Sam's descriptions of ideal pedagogies, I saw connection to the studio practices of art and design in higher education. Here, there is typically little transcendent pedagogy (Atkinson, 2018), with each developing art student feeding from a collective community of experimental progress, crosspollinating concepts, and critical peer dialogue. Indeed, Paris referred directly to their studio experience in art school to make this comparison:

> I think I learned more from my peer students than I have from any other teacher ever. I mean, just kind of looking at people's desks and…being nosy and asking, 'oh that looks really good, how did you achieve that?' you know and just…instead of one teacher essentially there are twenty teachers in the room, twenty students as teachers…and I don't see why that wouldn't be possible in secondary school? Paris EI208-12

There are precedents for practice of this nature in some contemporary contexts, for example the self-proclaimed 'radical' model of teacher Henry Ward (2013, p. 36), who purposefully embraced contemporary studio practice in a permissive school environment, modelling the potential of idealised artistic pedagogies:

> The staff and students operate as practicing artists. Within the context of the school environment, and in particular the art lesson, the distinction is important as it moves away from art being a subject in which the teacher has the knowledge and this is transferred to the students. (Ward, 2013, p. 36)

Unfortunately for those who hope for similar opportunity, ten years after Ward's experiences (and arguably at the time), I would suggest most secondary schools less progressive – hence participants' frequent concerns about encountering learners with restricted agency and pedagogies at odds with contemporary artistic convention.

Idealistically, Paris follows similar thinking to Ward, prioritising the unique value of knowledge constructed through collaborative method, and positing the art classroom as a space where social meaning-making can be made transparent – 'you may be able to untangle that, and do it in a more aware way? With more awareness?' (Paris EI129). Still convinced post-placement that collective activity is integral to an ideal art education, they connect the 'togetherness in the act of making art' and the potential for pupils not only to learn in new ways, but also to recognise their capacity to have 'impact on a societal level' (PPI213/4).

Curiously, Morgan alights on a similar term to describe their own idealist practices, after having observed mechanistic individualism in placement pedagogies. For Morgan an explorative, questioning art classroom has at its core an 'experimental togetherness' (PPI251), an ideal characteristic that they describe as 'driving me, that's what I feel excited by' – although, unlike Paris not without anxiety: 'there have been moments where I have thought or felt…maybe this just isn't going to work' (PPI252/3). Echoing Paris again, Morgan makes the same connection between the construction of new knowledge, the 'making of new meaning' (EI147) and peer collaboration – implicitly cynical of transmissive models of learning in art. For both Paris and Morgan there is an implication that collective action in an art classroom transcends critical dialogue alone, including acts

of creation, both artistic and epistemological, too. Both talk about failing to witness this in schools, observing a diminished discipline divorced from the collaborative practices of many creative vocations, and more closely allied to the Modernist myth of solo virtuosity (Atkinson, 2006; Cary, 2011).

- Risky Pedagogy

The first theme I described in 6.1 characterised participants' ideal art education as unpredictable, and organic – led by experimental development rather than conforming to the prescriptive standards many witnessed on placement. This approach is inherently risky, as authentic, ambiguous, exploration might reasonably be expected to end in frequent iterations of artistic failure.

Many participants position such risk as central to their pedagogic intent; keen that pupils recognise getting things wrong as desirable evidence of ambition or innovation, a conduit for new understanding, and rarely terminal. Elliot (EI269) describes their initial artwork's organic forms as metaphoric of loosening rules – 'taking the pressure off' pupils, so that the stakes of artistic risk is lowered. Paris contrasts the encouragement of low-stakes high-risk authentic artmaking with the rote learning of their placement classroom, where accurate mimicry is lionised. In their earlier, pre-placement interview, Paris had described 'taking risks' as a 'methodology, almost!' (EI242) within the discipline – the only subject wherein pupils might ask '"oh well that didn't work, but I tried it, and because I have tried it I know now that it doesn't work – so what now is the solution?"' (PPI380).

Asking why there is such an abundance of predetermined art pedagogy in schools, Paris directly references the work of Chris Francis (2023), who seemingly encourages authentic artistic risk among his pupils. Working from this example, Paris questions first 'how he circumnavigates the success criteria and exam specifications in the outcomes he produces with his students', and second 'why are we not being a bit risky…because what he is doing proves it is possible' (PPI338). This is a pertinent critical question to ask of the wider profession as a student teacher, although perhaps overestimating Francis' pupils' autonomy, and the restrictiveness of exam board assessment.

Just as Elliot suggested 'taking the pressure off' pupils to empower risk-taking, many other participants spoke about creating a 'safe space' (Morgan EI45; Robin EI181; Sam EI84) for the same purpose. For Morgan (EI230), this space allows pupils 'to grow, to express themselves', and Robin (EI181-3) employs almost identical language: 'where students can really feel comfortable in themselves or grow…which I know a lot of teenagers struggle with'. Robin describes an idealised safe space for risk, based on past educational experience:

> …these typical Year 9s, like super self-conscious, didn't want to make a mistake – and how the teacher was encouraging them – using things like monoprinting and more of a rough practice to sort of loosen them up…yeah and I hope that I can sort of encourage students to open up… Robin EI184-190

Sam qualifies the difference between an artistic risk, where a material experiment or conceptual complexity may malfunction and require iterative development, and undesirable personal risks: 'they shouldn't be put in situations that they can't be themselves in' (EI74). This is a valuable qualifier, as the hope of many participants is for pupils to become increasingly confident in uncertainty, rather that experiencing external pressure to change or expose personal characteristics. Indeed, for artistic experimentation to flourish, Sam suggests that engendering a tolerant, if venturesome, community is critical; 'you shouldn't be damned for the risks you are taking by the other people who are there' (EI85).

To encourage pupils to take risks, it is necessary for teachers to take risk too. Not only as means to model authentic experimentation for their pupils – but in creating the time and space for pupils to agentically explore their artmaking the teacher risks the appearance of unproductive lessons or under-developed plans, which in a culture of accountability and surveillance (Ball, 2017) may be challenged. Leslie spoke about this post-placement: 'when I try to deviate from some things, it's always kind of nicked back in somehow' (PPI210/11). They attribute this habitual conformity to teachers 'worried about grades and assessment' which has resulted in 'a very prescriptive way of delivering, or wanting, outcomes' to 'a sort of shared or similar standard' (PPI209) in their placement environment. This oppressive, anti-artistic low-risk culture, is evidenced in their following anecdote:

> …my probably most exciting lesson that I got to teach that I felt was just a little bit "wheey we're doing something totally different today guys!", um was a kind of group

> – I didn't know if it would work that well, but it was groups of students working together on tables, it felt really fun and I think the lesson went really well…but then…the teacher got a little bit scared and was like 'oh, that doesn't really look like it was looking before – we want them to sort of end up with…' (Leslie PPI213-216)

Such clear indication of hylomorphic practice – where what 'we want them' to produce is seen as of primary importance –illustrates mentor mentality encountered across much participant experience. Such teacher-regulated risk-free pedagogical practices are unlikely to result in an environment where pupils take ownership of their processes and direction, nor a space for student teachers to risk engaging their idealised formats through their developing practice. Such a space cannot be considered transformational for teacher or learner – fixed expectations more likely to create a sense of fatalism than agentic optimism.

Closely associated to participants' attraction to pedagogies that promote risky choices, was a common (unsurprising) interest in the enabling of creative, or playful activity.

- Creativity

For Morgan creativity is akin to criticality, and they idealised a pedagogy that asked pupils 'to question things pushing them to challenge…' in contrast to classrooms where pupils are 'pushed through a kind of industrial process' (EI236). Elliot speaks with similar purpose, berating the mimetic process of artistic pastiche:

> …things specifically like pastiches, um, I think are terrible ha ha! Um – because I think it's teaching the rules but it's not teaching creativity. So I think, um, looking at artists is a way of saying this is how you can use this medium, and from this artist we can learn how to layer in this style, BUT – look at how the artist has done it, take that away and do it in your way. (Elliot PPI133-36)

Here, contextual study is understood as means to further one's own practice, in comparison to 'teaching the rules' without personal, creative application. Paris spoke pre-placement about a mythologised artistic freedom having initially drawn them to study art and design, 'stories about artists in the 70s or 80s and everything seems a little bit more wild' (EI123), before translating this into an ongoing professional interest in 'the idea of playfulness' (IE232). They express frustration

that pupils struggle with assignment anxiety and homework requirements rather than experiencing playful, experimental pedagogies. Indeed, Paris justified her inclusion of Abramovic's *Rest Energy* in her collaged artwork as directly symbolic of this risky, playful potency.

*Figure 60: 'Rest Energy' (1980) Marina Abramovic and ULAY*

### 6.6.2 Attitudes to Transgression

Given the collaborative, risky creativity of participants' idealised pedagogies – in contrast to practices encountered on placement – it might be expected that student teachers either abandon ambition and adapt to their mentors' orthodoxies, or push back, risking professional critique and cynicism. I explored the prevalence of these alternatives in 6.1 and 6.2 – but a third, concurrent reaction was

displayed by many participants of this study too. Despite lack of persuasive power and agency, participants spoke of finding 'gaps', 'dropping' or 'shoving' aspects of their ideals in amongst the typical activities of placement schools. This transgressive attitude is bold – challenging the dynamic of supplicant student and institutional authority – but is an unsurprising biproduct where passionate artists meet homogenised standards perceived as oppressive.

Ashley twice talked about 'trying to try and drop in a little bit of art history' (EI372), personalising and pluralising packaged placement school pedagogies that had been designed 'ready to deliver like they don't want you to sort of prepare anything' (EI129). Morgan described similar strategies, feeling compelled to transgress the orthodoxy of placement to exercise autonomy: 'finding the gaps to – not imprint myself at all – but to carry out my kind of teaching practice in a way that is maybe more…me?' (PPI179/180). Morgan's personal pedagogy was displayed in the wandering line of their artwork, quite evidently in opposition to the linearity of a standardised classroom structure. Morgan contemplates such structures from the position of creative antagonist: 'how am I going to kind of navigate these frameworks and kind of…bend them I suppose' (PPI140/1), returning to again describe a rebellious intent to work between conformist expectations:

> It's about those young people, it's about the opportunities that I make happen for those conversations to, to excite and ignite things – it's finding the gaps and the spaces in-between the assessment objectives and the school day and all the kind of, the criterias and the frameworks and everything – it's, it's about finding space to make those things happen (Morgan PPI495-500)

Less surreptitious, Elliot (PPI150) spoke about 'trying to shove' some abstract and conceptual artmaking into the curriculum, in the face of a ubiquitous realism they consider misrepresentative of the discipline's breadth and Evelyne, as documented elsewhere, pushed their mentors explicitly to allow for personal innovation ('can I not just bring in a bag of objects?!' [PPI199]). Evelyne's negotiations might be described as admirable studentship - recognising one's developmental needs and brokering the conditions for advancement with one's mentor, but I interpreted their attitude as suggestive of transgressive, rather than compromising, tendencies. Where participants felt ideals contained by institutional expectations, they frequently asserted an independent right to transgress – practicing the risky, creative act of subtle, or occasionally confrontational, dissent against convention they simultaneously hope their pupils will embrace.

### 6.6.3 The Subversive Impulse of the Idealist

This tendency to circumnavigate oppressive expectations to integrate idealist practice (rather than adapting one's ideals) is explicitly discussed by some participants, particularly post-placement. Here, they hold a self-image of themselves as subversive agents, purposefully imagining their careers as requiring work against institutional orthodoxy to realise personal ideals.

- Critical reflections

For example, Nicky took an overtly political stance from the beginning of the ITE programme, and despite finding synergy between placement experience and personal priorities continued to conceptualise the art classroom as a space where pupils might critically reflect on societal institutions:

> I think if any place is going to be, any subject you know, is going to be a place to stir things up a bit I think art education probably is the best place to do it. (Nicky PPI85/6)

They are resigned to accept that, in practicing personal priorities or values, they 'will probably end up experiencing more strife…as I go, kind of continue on my journey' (Nicky PPI175/6). While such a stance suggests expectation of future friction, and therefore might be viewed as pessimistic – I would frame recognition of such a reality as commendable willingness to assert idealised priorities in the face of oppositional forces – a tenacious transformative optimism.

While Nicky expresses critical reflection as important to ideal pedagogy, Elliot, Robin, and Ashley demonstrate this criticality themselves when reflecting on school placements and their own learning. Elliot expresses frustration over the low, fixed expectations of colleagues regarding the potential of pupil development and is vocal about their hope to avoid such fatalism:

> The challenge is going to be *staying* so determinedly aspirational...I think that will be the bit that I hope I don't get bogged down in it, but…I'll see! I'm hoping that I can continue to be determinedly refusing of that. (Elliot PPI287-9)

As Nicky, I would frame Elliot's recognition of reproductive, or self-fulfilling attitudes among colleagues as productive, progressive subversion – a student refusing to conform to the deficient model of mentors. Robin too is happy to assert post-placement a rejection of observed practices – or at least a measured understanding that institutional and mentors' suggestions are subjective. They recognise that adaptation of one's own priorities would be defeatist, and instead learning from 'elements' of others' teaching might better 'secure your own ideas of how you want to teach' (PPI271).

Ashley describes compartmentalising the oppression of creative autonomy experienced in their placement school, 'boxing it' (PPI257), hoping that this is a contextual condition. In solace, they describe a teaching interview where they 'did a lesson that I would never be able to do in my current school, and did that successfully' (PPI256), and after critical reflection outline a future in teaching where they endeavour to 'fit into certain spaces' (PPI127) more closely aligned to their ideals.

For me, the confidence with which participants chose to observe practices and critically contextualise them, rather than normalise and adopt them, is evidence that either the recruitment process, or campus-based curriculum, of the ITE programme does, to some extent, ensure student teachers empowered in their idealism. I think the presentation of school placement – its purpose and value as subject of reflective critique rather than space for imitative acquisition – is important here. There are further questions than I need reflect on regarding this theme however – for example, where student teachers protect an abstract idealism; having not experienced it in action – how might I ensure it is observed, or tested, and therefore refined? Similarly, I think it probably important to explore the potential dangers of positioning art educators as antagonistic to convention, or intentionally subversive; what would that mean for individual teachers, learners, and the subject discipline's place in schools? Could it be a counterproductive stance to adopt?

- Measured revolution

While the participants above – Nicky, Elliot, Robin, and Ashley – subverted expectations through critical reflection on and ultimate rejection of the orthodoxy mentors encourage, Paris and Sam not

only refute observed conventions but describe tactical manoeuvres they intend to employ to promote their ideals in the face of opposing forces.

Paris suggested pre-placement that they might be 'quite content and revitalised' (EI386) if portions of their teaching practice are authentic – 'a few days, scattered about…that explores um you know the potential of art for its own sake' (EI378/9) even if technocratic priorities dominate, where 'I will have to put pressure on students and guide them through a successful mark' (EI377). Post placement, Paris returned to this theme, contemplating revolutionary ideals and enacting related pedagogies in current contexts. They described a 'dilute' radicalism, wherein a Platonic ideal is upheld such that it might be projected through a filter of palatable pragmatism:

> Those radicalisms, have to live in your mind in order for them – for you to then tune them down, dilute them a little bit – but they have to be exponentially the maximum they can be, intellectually, so then in reality they are something acceptable… (Paris PPI282-4)

They took a logical view on their capacity to resist convention, suggesting that an intelligent tactic when 'going against the norm' is to do so 'in small bits – it's not a radical thing. It is almost like being cheeky' (Paris PPI254-6). Such disobedient pedagogies, they suggested, cannot be sustained from a position of overt resistance. Instead, Paris advocated acceptance of the discipline's 'low status' in schools as means to achieve autonomy through reduced scrutiny, to own the stereotype of art teachers as 'mad' (PPI302) and leverage this role for subversive purpose.

Sam came to similar conclusions: that idealistic resistance is best achieved through pedagogic subterfuge. They described a placement scenario wherein, particularly as a mature student, they practiced ideal pedagogies opaquely, beyond the oversight of mentors – implying an interpretation of institutional expectation that student teachers are otherwise expected to be superfluous:

> I think, I think, I have to be careful…to, you know not, not say too much for quite a long time and uhh, and just do it quietly you know? I think if you do it quietly and slowly for individual people you can, students, you can make a difference on the placement, you know, but you almost have to do it without being seen to do it I think. (Sam EI162-6)

They too took a pragmatic approach to asserting professional autonomy, suggesting that 'on my placements I am going to have to keep my head down' (EI188). This was tempered by an optimism for post-ITE practice wherein 'I'd bring my head up and change it because I think morally and ethically it's right' – here commenting specifically on colleagues' fixed mindsets.
Post-placement Sam maintained this attitude, looking forward to 'subtle' (PPI285) approaches to opposing convention, such as building student-centered curricula and a welcoming safe space within the art department, because 'in a small way you can make it like that' (PPI168) – *that* being an alternative environment to the typical culture of schooling. In the extended portion of transcript below, Sam's distrusting relationship with authority can be seen, where 'they', mentors and managers, are oppressive and the delivery of personalised, artistic knowledge is conceptualised as inherently radical.

> I think you have to keep your mouth shut (!). I think you have to keep your mouth shut and just do it, do it very quietly, and so that they can see an improvement in what the kids are learning and then they ask why and also you can do it on a very small level by just giving that little bit of information – I think, I think you can do it very, very subtly…but there is a lot you can do just within your classroom there's a lot of the way that you can speak to people and the way you can just give them another bit of additional information, you know, there is things like, I can remember one of the things I showed them at [placement school] was how you make a tonal line by squeezing your pencil and relaxing your hand, and drawing a straight line, you know really simple things that take two or three seconds…bringing the practicing artistic world into the sort of classroom – this is how I do it…And I think that has a different, I think, I think to some extent with all the…to some extent that was missing in [placement school]. It was very much follow a…rota. (Sam PPI129-40)

Sam brought some significant institutional suspicion to the programme from earlier experiences, but I would also suggest their cautious disobedience a strategy directly resulting from placement conventions.

Paris's positioning of ideals as unobtainable paragon, a motivational luminary to pull practice in a progressive direction, suggested to me a mature model for conceptualising transformative optimism. Both idealism, and transformative optimism (Rossatto 2005), only exist in conditions inferior to their realised ambition; both a project of directed change without expectation of conclusion. That paradox – that one must strive for one's ideals in the knowledge that they are unobtainable – requires a

strong sense of purpose, where perhaps adopting an antagonistic stance such as Sam's is effective means of maintaining momentum. However, to do so alone places a physic burden on the practitioner (Atkinson, 2006a), particularly when a novice, that is rarely sustainable (see 3.3.5). As teacher educator this suggests to me the importance of building a supportive community of practice among those in equivalent circumstances; if student art teachers are likely to find the placement school 'an unwelcoming place' (Dafiotis, 2012, p. 142), then the ITE campus must compensate through being a very welcoming place. If participants organically moved towards transgressive, subversive, or revolutionary actions while student teachers, I feel it to some extent my duty as teacher educator to support them in doing so, and to facilitate sharing details of their actions. A more transparent *inter*-placement network of disciplinary transformative optimists could be a powerful platform for systematic scrutiny.

### 6.6.4 Theme Six Summary

In this theme I identified a common inclination to insubordination when confronted by expectations judged to contravene the authentic potential of artistic education. The challenge of encountering oppressive orthodoxies encouraged some participants to reconfirm their ideals as collaborative, risky and creative in nature.

Of interest to this study was the clandestine means with which many participants described, actively or imaginatively, transgressing institutional policy where this was interpreted as restrictive. Simultaneous to fulfilling the criteria of mentors and ITE curricula expectations, there was a 'bending' of rigid norms, where creative content was 'shoved' and 'dropped' into pupils' ownership. The dissemination of these subversive 'small bits' represents a rebellious transgression synonymous with aspects of the subject discipline; wherein artists and designers ask questions from the edge of mainstream societal custom, wary of any standardised status quo that would render their role, as creators, irrelevant.

Participants' acceptance and actioning of a covert resistance might be interpreted variously. The transgressive compulsion described by participants could be pessimistically read as evidence that school art education is so worryingly yoked to generic pedagogies and priorities, that student

teachers see no significant opportunity to test or realise their ideals. However, that participants felt empowered to speak in dissenting terms about practices they critically appraised as diminished, and began to actively oppose, transgress, or subvert these practices (despite lack of professional capital), could be read optimistically as indication of a new generation confidently committed to transformational agency.

My duty, as teacher educator, was identified as establishing a strong community of disciplinary deviants during campus-based activity, to provide fortitude to those naturally inclined to practice transgressively when latterly on placement in potentially oppressive context. Not to do so would be to knowingly place the burden of double deviancy (where student teachers transgress both the placement schools' policy or culture, and their perceived expectations of ITE studentship) on student teachers, simply because they hold transformative ideals for the future of school art education.

# 7 Conclusion

Following discussion of findings through Chapter Six, I will now directly address my research questions, including reflection on my own future practice.

## 7.1 Answering Research Question 1: What hopes and ideals do aspirant art teachers bring with them when they begin their initial teacher education?

All six themes discussed through Chapter Six delivered findings relevant to understanding aspirant art teachers' hopes and ideals. Participants expressed optimism about encouraging authentic artistic engagement in the classroom, providing safe space for creative disruption and liberal experimentation.

*Table 7: The key terms, and lucidity, which I attributed to each participants pre-placement idealism*

| Participant | Summary Term/s | Lucidity |
|---|---|---|
| Ashley | Representing Relevance | Strong Coherent |
| Elliot | Space Individual Growth | Medium Semi-coherent |
| Evelyne | Independence Freedom | Strong Coherent |
| Lesley | Cultural Confidence | Weak Developing |
| Morgan | Self-expression Growth | Strong Semi-coherent |
| Nicky | Breadth Reflection | Medium Developing |
| Paris | Togetherness | Strong Developing |
| Robin | Inclusive Growth | Weak Developing |
| Sam | Ownership Artistic Risk | Strong Semi-coherent |

Some participants, for example Ashley, held a strong manifesto of interests and intent while others, such as Lesley, proffered tacit ideals, still in development. Summary thematic terms and my interpretation of participants' idealistic 'lucidity' – i.e., the strength and coherence with which they presented art educational ideals – are tabulated in Tab.7.

- Liberal ideals as social ends

There was little explicit reference to societal transformation in participants' initial interviews (see Tab.8 for more detailed summary). Participants spoke predominantly about affect they hoped to

have on individual learners, engendering self-expression, while their artistic responses metaphorically echoed interest in an automorphic, immanent process – a dynamic, manifold art education centered on, and matched to, the growth of agentic individuals.

However, despite participants frequently describing their hypothetical learner in individualistic terms, almost all referenced progressive concepts of art education which can be promoted, ultimately, as means to transforming socially accepted customs and structures of inequity. For example, Ashley, Elliot, and Nicky spoke about democratising the discipline – challenging elitist notions of cultural practice and presenting more inclusive, diverse curricula. Others valued democratic acts of artistic creation, the epistemic value of collaborative artmaking both as authentic creative vocation, and as foil to standardising models of knowledge originating in other academic disciplines.

Evelyne and Morgan's stated interest in promoting criticality, Paris's advocacy of 'togetherness' (EI129) and Lesley's references to pupil agency were presented as self-worthy ends but can equally be conceptualised as purposeful for wider social change. All push against institutional subordination, and focus on the critical, relational, and agentic aspects of artmaking and appreciation directly confronting the values of neoliberal education. Productivity and its measurability, pursued through conformity and competition were widely rejected, with participants positioning pupils as active social subjects, not objects of external expectation.

I believe participants of this study did enter the teaching profession with belief that 'teachers as transformative intellectuals have the potential to facilitate sociocultural change toward realizing a better society' (Rossatto, 2005, p. 134), albeit largely yet to formally acknowledge this intent. I don't mean to patronise participants; I might suggest it likely their humility, limited exposure to practice, learner standpoint, and contextual uncertainty (Hetrick & Sutters, 2014), led them to limit their expressed pre-placement ambition to impact at modest, individual, scale.

- Individualised instructions

Alongside promotion of liberal rationales such as self-expression, idealistic conceptions of education often exhibited humanist orientation (Rogers, 2014); provision of a safe space and the tools for

learners to wanderingly explore, with learning conceptualised as embodied, emotional, and intuitive. Participant contributions through 6.1, 6.2, and 6.4 can been seen as especially concerned with ideals centring the student; the arts tasked with delivery of holistic outcomes of 'personal fulfilment' (Koopman, 2005, p. 96). While Kroflic (2012) argues that such hope is particularly pertinent in today's post-modern milieu, person-centered pedagogy exists in tension with prevailing notions of education as a disembodied process of cognitive science (Davis, 2018; Hordern & Brooks, 2023b), or neoliberal competition.

- The unconscious undergraduate idealist

Interest in humanist provision, where encountered, was often traceable to the influence of liberal undergraduate experiences. While Paris was explicit in their philosophical admiration of Black Mountain College and the freedom of Basic Design pedagogy – where an informal, radically democratic system of education predominated – the other participants spoke implicitly of such principles.

Given art and design ITE students are drawn from creative cultural contexts, it might be considered obvious that undergraduate experiences would influence educational ideals, especially for recent alumni. However, these graduates have self-selected a career in the secondary sector – where the idealised pedagogies of tertiary art school experiences have never been realised (at least in the mainstream). Therefore, while first surprised by idealised practices originating from undergraduate experience, I came to recognise the logic in this. If artistically inclined, then supressed or disengaged by your own secondary schooling before experiencing liberation in the contrasting conditions of art school, it would follow that you might reimagine your own schooling idealised as the latter. This suggests to me a subconscious 'fantasy' more nuanced than the 'saviour' identities delineated in Hetrick's (2010) work; here the 'fiction' (Addison & Burgess, 2003a) creation of an authentic art school within a school art department.

Potentially a foreboding realisation when one considers the 'sharp relief' of 'disjunction' between art school and school art (Addison & Burgess, 2005, p. 127), such idealism conversely makes conceivable progressive change in art educational practices. Indeed, I'm confident a conceptual line could be drawn between such liberal ideals and the wider rationales of Rossatto's transformative social

optimism. Essentially, when student art teachers begin ITE they typically do so with hope, I believe, that their experience might empower them as agents of change, confident in 'creative knowledge construction and critical thinking' in the face of 'hegemonic socioeconomic structures' (Rossatto, 2005, p. 81). They know themselves to be outsiders, emissaries of an artistic 'alternative to the logocentric curriculum' (Addison & Burgess, 2003, p. 159), they just don't yet know the challenges they will face in maintaining such a stance.

*Table 8: Summary of changing participant ideals (part one)*

| **Participant** | **Key Pre-placement Ideals** | **Dissonance between Participants' Ideals and Placement Reality** (based on my interpretation of participants' experiences) | **Participants' View on the Impact of Placement on Ideals** | **Post-placement Comment** | **Links to Rossatto's Typology of Optimism** (based on my interpretation of participants' commentary at post-placement interview) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ashley** | …re-presenting tradition. EI46<br><br>…use art to kind of observe moments in time as well as…just for it's own sake. EI77<br><br>…I can um make things relevant to each student and get to know each students' background and kind of thinking about things that I might introduce them to that might make the subject more personal. EI376 | Strong | Significantly challenged | my actual experience of being on placement hasn't been that great…and that's made me really question whether I want to do the job, to the point where I am coming home feeling very emotionally drained PPI96-102 | Pessimism |
| **Elliot** | …less pressure, more space for students and this idea of growth in terms of student-specific. EI84<br><br>…I would quite like to try and take those sort of built up sort of intimidating walls down a bit. EI137 | Weak | Challenged, pragmatically amended, but largely maintained | I think my ideals now would be: to teach students the rules, or not the rules but the techniques or like ways of doing things, giving them freedom and saying 'you might find another way of doing it. PPI26-7 | Resilient Optimism |
| **Evelyne** | …education's full of layers in terms of the teacher's ethos, their input, and I think in particular in the art classroom it needs to be able to facilitate students going in their own independent paths. EI95-7<br><br>…giving students the ability and capability to sort of analyse everything that they come into contact. EI301/2 | Medium | Challenged | W: …do you still feel optimistic about being able to make a change in young peoples' lives?<br><br>E: Yeah I think so – yeah, yeah I think so. Um, yeah…I have tried to make [lessons] more exciting …more engaging and perhaps personal to what's going on in Bristol, and their lives and things like that so I mean they consistently sit in the lessons now…which I think is a pretty positive, positive thing and um…yeah. PPI | Resilient/Transformative Optimism |
| **Lesley** | …the growth is part of just growing in confidence and in skillset so that you then have the tools to really like, do things that you want to and to engage with art, and culture, in a…at a higher level. EI370<br><br>…to show that there is this really interesting kind of rich cultural world going on. EI420 | Medium | Changed, less certain | W: do you still feel optimistic about being able to make a change I guess, in young people's lives?<br><br>L: Yes, yeah I do definitely. Um, yeah I do. I think it might not always be subject related, but I think that definitely yeah in some respects. I think even if it is just building confidence and, you know, making someone feel included in something then that's, that's a positive change. So yeah, definitely. PPI | Resilient Optimism/Unplaced Idealism |

*Table 9: Summary of changing participant ideals (part two)*

| Participant | Key Pre-placement Ideals | Dissonance between Participants' Ideals and Placement Reality | Participants' View on the Impact of Placement on Ideals | Post-placement Comment | Links to Rossatto's Typology of Optimism |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Morgan** | …a real emphasis on…on the self-expression and the identity and, and in helping every single student feel as though they have the space to take risks, to grow, to express themselves, to question their identity, to question the world around them umm… to be able to make links across yeah it's the…the make sure it is kind of THE most enriching hour or two hours of the day. EI230 | Strong | Challenged, but strengthened | I think they're, I think they're stronger – I think, yeah I feel, I feel more determined I feel activated now that I'm having a kind of first-hand experience I feel, I kind of feel rebelliously activated in some ways um and those ideals…they are guiding me. PPI240-2 | Transformative Optimism |
| **Nicky** | …its up to us to…give them almost a breadth of option to give them, you know to explore these different ideas. EI289-91<br><br>…I think an art teacher almost has the ability to just show them those different things and just give them the opportunity to reflect on that? EI317-19<br><br>…I'm optimistic, I'm really excited to go into schools EI394 | Weak | Increased clarity | W: …whether you are still optimistic about, ultimately about being able to make a change uh in the lives of the young people that you work with?<br><br>N: Yeah, no – 100%…yeah I already feel like I have made a bit of an impact at [placement school], and I think it will be nice to…make my own impact and start to, yeah, bringing my own change to a different school. PPI187-206 | Transformative Optimism |
| **Paris** | …the idea of togetherness. EI129<br><br>…playful, experimental, and willing to take risks. EI235<br><br>…explore loads of ideas about identity, the make up of our societies, the things that need improving, you know democratic values. EI279/80 | Strong | Challenged, but strengthened | I am totally optimistic…PGCE has changed my life already. Yes, I am optimistic about that – that's the main reason why I joined the profession, because I wanted to do something more rewarding, um yeah, I am optimistic…I think I can do it as a teacher…I want to empower people and make them feel valued. PPI400-408 | Transformative Optimism |
| **Robin** | …confidence, self-esteem, identity, inclusive, encouraged to be yourself, I'm guessing that would be how I hope to make an impact…looking at the student and encouraging them to grow. EI14-18 | Strong | Challenged, but strengthened | I think my ideals the same. I think that I…I think the aim is to promote more independent learning and more scope for students to kind of express themselves, as that's kind of what I am more focused on anyway, is self-expression. PPI67-71 | Resilient/ Transformative Optimism |
| **Sam** | …it needs to feel safer than anywhere else in the school and it also needs to feel as if it is owned by the people who use it. EI51/2<br><br>…it should be a place where you can take artistic risks and risks about what you are expressing. EI84/5 | Strong | Maintained, protected | It's hardened me, it makes me want to be, want to be um, head of a department so I can run it how I want. PPI53/4<br><br>You know they have much more experience…it doesn't mean that you have to adopt it/change your principles, to fit them into the classroom. PPI151/2 | Transformative Optimism |

## 7.2 Answering Research Question 2: How the hopes and ideals of aspirant art teachers interact with practical orthodoxies and institutional rationales encountered during their ITE school experiences?

My second research question looked to how participants' ideals were shaped by school placement. Many of the themes explored to this point have provided detailed characterisation of this 'shaping', summatively illustrated in Fig.61.

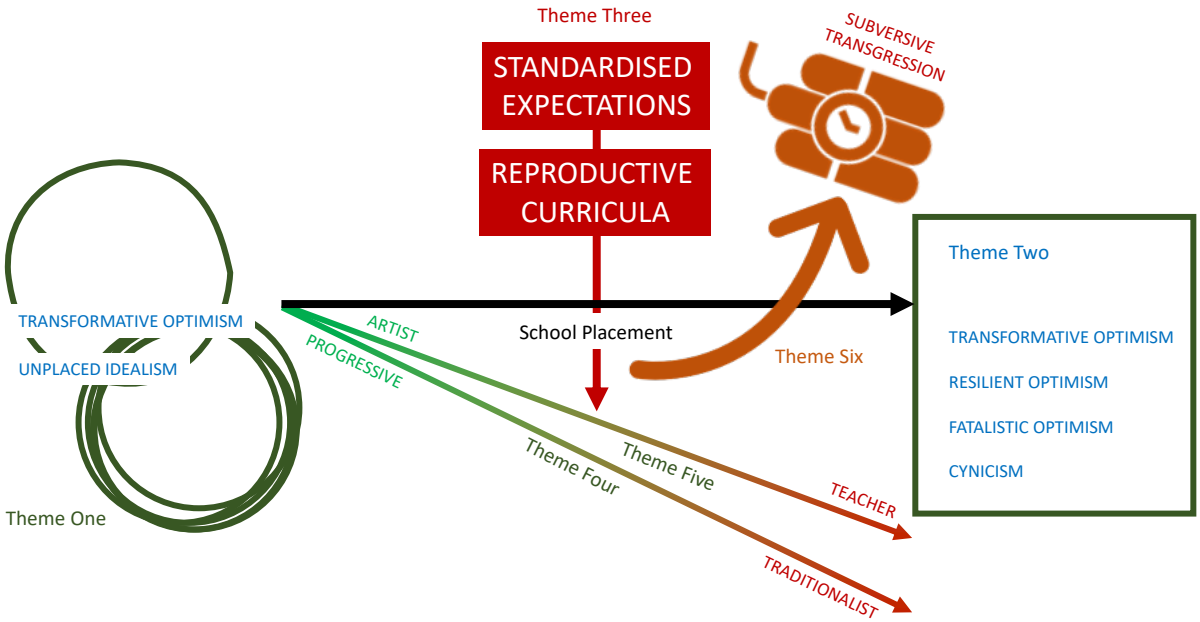


*Figure 61: A graphical, chronological representation of the themes identified in this study*

Participants frequently encountered mechanistic and hylomorphic art education. Many referenced genericism among senior leaders' expectations and reproductive curriculum content as primary suppressants of opportunity for idealised practices. Inert art education was noted not only as intrinsically problematic, but as a paradigmatic challenge to belief in teachers' professional agency, and in turn the very notion of idealism. Prescriptive pedagogies predominated, with doctrinaire models of progress encouraged through transcendent teaching strategies – imitation of exemplars, adherence to strict assessment criteria, and technocratic foci. Lesley attributed this culture to institutional structures of control, others similarly perceived managerial colleagues as important in maintaining institutional standards of practice.

Paris noted the hypocrisy of a profession that promotes creative agency while frequently suppressing the same among its classroom practitioners, and Evelyne recognised pervasive standardisation as diminishing art teachers' ambitions (personally, and among their pupils). I believe there is evidence here to support Atkinson's (2018, 15) claims of ontological marginalisation in art education, with creative 'disobedience' drowned out by the prescriptive drumbeats of a neoliberal educational dispositif: 'performance, assessment, progress and achievement'.

Given the noticeable contrast between participants' ideals (7.1) and descriptions of many placement contexts, tension was inevitable. However, as illustrated in Tab.8, the relationships between individuals' ideals and placement realities were characteristically inconsistent – sometimes affirmatory, sometimes disheartening. I here highlight two intra-thematic findings resultant from such inconsistency, both relevant to this research question. First, the importance of student teacher's pre-ITE experiences in navigating ideal/real tensions and second, the plurality of role reframing that occurs as practice redefines student teachers' notions of professionalism.

- Pre-placement ideals, placement reality, and biography

I thought the unpredictability of participants' post-placement idealism interesting. For example, Sam's ideals were sharply removed from their school reality, only strengthening their hopes for an idealised alternative while Ashley, also encountering strong dissonance, was significantly discouraged by these conditions. Nicky's strong ideals were well suited to their placement school, yet they still displayed critical doubt about systematic conventions, while Lesley entered with uncertain idealism and left in a similar state.

Differences in ideal/real interactions suggested to me a third significant factor as important in this relationship – the nature and origin of participants' belief systems. Ashley was a recent graduate and less confident in the value of their own positioning – open to self-doubt when confronted with dissonance – while Sam's years as an informal art educator allowed, perhaps even tested, them to assert the primacy of their views. Equally, those participants who expressed personal injustice as inspirational in forming their ideals (Paris' schooling, or Morgan's mother's mental health) appeared better prepared to sustain transformative optimism in challenging realities.

In 6.5.2 I examined the habit of participants to illustrate their pre-placement idealism with biographic reference, and how this significantly diminished post-placement. In my interpretation, the familial, or artistic, experiences that underwrote initial ideals, were overwritten by more immediate experience in an institutional educational environment. This palimpsestic process is clearly complex, as individual student teachers' pasts and priorities interact with the 'flux' (Chong & Low 2009; Hanley & Brown 2017; Thorpe & Kinsella 2021) of ITE. Diverse reactions to placement encounters are, in retrospect, inevitable when recognising student teacher diversity. Greater recognition of this biographic factor in ITE curriculum might be advantageous in preparing student teachers for placement – as discussed in 7.3.

- Reframing professional identities

Despite the unpredictability of individual's reactions to placement schools, there were some observable patterns of shared experiences between participants in this study – a prominent example being post-placement reframing of future practice considering encounters with reality. This is not to suggest such reframing a homogenous process. Instead, I would suggest at least three alternate 'characters' – identity components absent, or hidden, in participants' pre-placement ideals – which arose post-placement.

For many participants school placement involved a shift towards cynicism, and while I interpreted this as a not entirely unwelcome development, it did involve abandonment of some idealistic notions of practice – as documented in 6.2. One concurrent character development in some participants was that of reluctant pragmatism. Where ideals were erased or adapted to meet placement school orthodoxy an increasingly managerial mindset (Collanus et al. 2012b, 14) emerged. For example, some participants reassessed provision of standardising frameworks as appropriate, for pupils anxious about self-management. Also noticeable was a move from ideals valorising automorphic liberty towards belief in technical skill acquisition as a primary goal of secondary art education – for later creative application. Provision of technical, or practical, knowledge *can* be celebrated as liberatory of sorts – allowing 'pupils to make choices based on what they know about the limits and possibilities of materials and media' (Ofsted, 2023, p. 8). For critical pedagogues however, the potential problems with such logic are first, its reduction of art education to 'mindless' techne (Cary,

2011a, p. np) in contrast to transformative praxis and second, its wilful ignorance that such priorities have 'been transcended by artists and art practice in the wider world' (Atkinson, 2011, p. 55).

Reluctant pragmatism, helpful in moderating the immediate 'conflictual discourses' (Atkinson, 2004, p. 384) of ITE, often pulled participants away from their preferred artistic identities towards that of traditionalist classroom teacher. The associated emergence of fatalistic or resilient attitudes further suggested that reluctant pragmatists' adaptation to placement reality involved sacrificing preferred 'identity for success' (Rossatto, 2005, p. 70) in ITE.

Another common 'character' that emerged during placement was the pastoralist. Pre-placement, abstract, humanist ideals for art education were often transferred, post-placement to pastoral realities. Rather than hoping individual pupils might interact with an art education in self-expressive, personalised patterns – and for catharsis, confidence, or rhizomatic creative growth to be the outcomes – participants found themselves prioritising aid for individual pupils navigating difficult lived experiences.

While I would argue it problematic that student teachers begin their careers tasked with providing basic security to learners – advocacy, advice, and availability for those with personal issues – this pedagogic dynamic of care is clearly still contingent with the core tenets of Rossatto's transformative optimism. Indeed, if a transformative pedagogy of optimism is about creating 'spaces ready to receive the culture and knowledge of the local community' (Rossatto, 2005, p. 162), then building authentic relationships with that community is perhaps more urgent that creating spaces for authentic artistic activity. This is not to suggest that student teachers, in the time and capacity available, were equipped to deconstruct hegemonies on behalf of disenfranchised pupils, nor that artistic activity cannot be core to transformative provision. However, an increasing recognition of the need to undertake pastoral work (Sam), that it might be a fulfilling component of a teacher's responsibilities (Lesley), and frustration at colleagues' derisive treatment of learners (Robin) all suggest transference of artistic idealism into a transformative optimism of pastoral character.

In contrast to instances of idealistic adaptation or transference, some participants' hopes were amplified in divergence to the normative conditions of placement schools. Through recognition of the ideal and real disjunction, these participants assumed a 'character' of disciplinary resistance or

subversion – something like Adams' (2013a) artful dodger. In accord with Atkinson's contextualisation of 'contemporary forms of creative practice under siege from…the neoliberal revolution' (Adams, 2013a, p. 242), Adams writes on art educational practices that might 'dodge' associated conventions such as audit, segregation, and commodification. He suggests that in the face of disciplinary marginalisation or assimilation:

> Creative acts, especially those that are relational, collaborative, and, above all, critical and questioning, maintain a practice vital to the maintenance of a more just and democratic society' (Adams, 2013a, p. 253)

The qualities Adams here describes match many of the ideals described pre-placement by participants; those who spoke of transgressively finding 'gaps', 'dropping' or 'shoving' their ideals in amongst the activities of their placements – artfully dodging, or at least subverting, neoliberal expectation. For example, Morgan was 'rebelliously activated' through exposure to practices in opposition to their ideals. For these students – typically those who started with a strong idealistic lucidity – increased cynicism towards placement pedagogies did not discourage, but provoked oppositional attitudinal development. Indeed, post-placement some participants were explicit about this new self-characterisation as subversive agents, framing their art educational careers as working against institutional orthodox. If Adam's (2013a, p. 253) connection between this behaviour and 'maintenance of a more just and democratic society' is accepted, then I believe the artful dodger to be, inherently, a character of transformative optimism.

School placement is unavoidably a space where assumptions and ideals nurtured through artistic biographies are questioned, and identity transformations take place. The stakes are high; personal philosophies and biographies might be cast off (Hetrick & Sutters, 2014), ideals erased or repackaged beneath a façade of conformity (Grauer, 1998), or amplified either in accord, or more likely, defiance to the realities of our neoliberal dispositif (Addison & Burgess, 2003a). As a result of this study, I have a stronger sense of the way this experience transforms, and how student art teachers interpret, and emerge from this transformation. To take an optimistic view, I interpret six of nine participants returning from their school placements exhibiting some enhanced degree of *transformative* optimism. For Elliot and Lesley, I would suggest a primary disposition of *resilient* optimism the result of reluctant pragmatism – where some 'complicity and participation' (Rossatto, 2005, p. 69) in hegemonic conventions replaced aspects of their formative idealism. For Ashley, their ideals were

most damaged through exposure to the real – the result a largely pessimistic outlook, prompting them to 'really question' (PPI98) whether they would want to teach at all.

While I want, foremost, to prevent any idealistic student ending ITE as deflated as Ashley or having to adapt their hopes as Elliot and Lesley may have done, I would also like to reduce the conflictual experiences of those who exit as transformative optimists. In the next section I look at how I might apply my own transformative optimism as a teacher educator to affect this change.

## 7.3 Answering Research Question 3: How might my teaching practice better defend those students' ideals precluded by procedures encountered in practice, such that they retain the transformative optimism to realise a socially transformative pedagogy?

As a professional study with critical intent, it was important to me that I conclude this research with a 'committed' (Thacher 2006, 1637) roadmap for my own future activity. While I believe that there was likely some immediate benefit to participants' involvement – opportunity to dialogically deepen their own idealism – I want my analysis of their contributions to benefit many more, future students.

To answer my final research question, I first sought out and simplified findings against research questions one and two, reviewed them, and tabulated them (see Tab.9) to provide opportunity to attach actions to each in turn.

*Table 10: Formation of future actions against key case study findings*

| Key finding against Q1/2 | Potential response through my teaching practice |
|---|---|
| (1) Student teachers' ideals are malleable through pre-placement ITE experiences | Pre-placement opportunity to consolidate student idealisms and temper experience of 'disjunction' (Addison & Burgess, 2005, p. 128) between their hopes and reality. |
| (1) Much idealism students bring to ITE is developed biographically, especially during undergraduate experiences | Explore students' own artistic identities, to mitigate identity-oppressing school structures (Dalton, 2001).<br>Pre-programme opportunity to enact artistic identities and explore theories and models of professional practice that recognise personal experience, strengthening students' confidence in their ideals. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Programmatic design to encourage/demand direct application of artistic specialism during school placement, creating opportunity for students to demonstrate expertise and in turn capacity for professional agency. |
| (1) Students' ideals align more effectively to art school, not school art | Conceptually connect art school tendencies and school art orthodoxies, contextualising signature pedagogies of each, prior to school placement. |
| (1/2) Students' idealism is developing on arrival, with school experience converting this into various complex states of optimism, cynicism, and potentially pessimism | Consider with care how to encourage students' critical reflection on personal priorities prior to placement, such that solidification of purpose might be quickly catalysed.<br>Recognise that the outlook and ideals of students are likely to be as complicated, nuanced, at times paradoxical, and changeable as their educational context. |
| (1/2) Friction between students' idealism and school orthodoxies is almost inevitable | Take professional responsibility for exploration of this inevitability, prior to, and during, school placement.<br>Activate and position this friction as opportunity to harness 'the productivity arising from these tensions' (Addison & Burgess, 2003a, p. 160) |
| (2) Students might blame themselves for systematic failings on placement | Develop pre-placement curricula framing placement as opportunity for critical as well as vocational development; pre-emptive emphasis and contextualisation of *systematic* problems such that self-attribution is avoided.<br>Provide ongoing reminders that failure of reality to match students' hopes is not a personal deficit, but a systematic inadequacy of contemporary practice to realise the potential of art education. |
| (2) Placement experience does more to reframe students' concepts of identity than campus activities | Work with mentors to create a framework that provides optimistic perspectives for students – wherein systematic issues are explored collaboratively with school-based colleagues.<br>Explore and expose opportunities for student agency when entering a reproductive context, where respected disciplinary colleagues have succumbed to standardisation and mechanised efficiency.<br>Expand partnership activity to include consultation on curriculum design and/or subject leadership, such that the ITE programme has positive impact on placement contexts. |
| (2) As students enter school experience, my influence diminishes | Build a digital community of practice to maintain influence/better communication, and students have stronger peer interaction, during placement. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Look at mentor training to better align the priorities of the programme and the placement's influences. |
| (2) Student teachers lack authority to argue for change in placement schools | Programme design more explicit in expecting opportunity for students to model alternative approaches on placement.<br>Prepare students for this reality and contextualise as a temporary condition of studentship. |
| (2) Experiencing reproductive curricula diminishes student teachers' belief in their capacity to affect change | Work with partner school departments to offer critical friendship on curriculum design.<br>Advocate for curricular freedom for students when on placement. Advocate for students to amend curriculum and prepare students to make amends. |
| (2) Student teachers seem to develop belief in art education as either technical or liberal | Chair negotiation between students' ideals and established conventions.<br>Ask students to consider how to engender creative autonomy while *also* providing technical support. |
| (2) Student teachers are unlikely to be afforded opportunities to test their ideals on placement | Where students protect an abstract idealism; having not experienced it in action – consider how and where their approach can be observed or modelled.<br>Advocate for more placement agency for students. |
| (2) Some students adapt their ideals to succeed on school placement, but many others (also) subvert or transgress convention | Support students if they move towards transgressive, subversive, or revolutionary actions. Allow them to share their thoughts and actions with peers. A transparent *inter*-placement network of transformative optimists could be an effective platform for systematic scrutiny.<br>Provide advocacy for a plurality of personal, professional identities among students. |
| (2) Idealism is *inherently* removed from reality | Recognise this and help students to position and understand their idealism. |
| (2) Some students remain hopeful of autonomy post-placement, and retain idealistic intent | Look for means to maintain connection with alumni with transformative optimism and professional autonomy – seek to employ as role models and mentors for future students. |

Having collated key characteristics of student teachers' changing ideals, I categorised the actions required of me into three domains: (ii) actions to take prior to school placements, (ii) action to take during school placements and with partner schools, and (iii) further actions.

### 7.3.1 Actions I can take in pre-placement provision

These actions are largely related to curriculum design – preparing a syllabus of campus-based activities, pre-placement, to ensure student teachers understand the placement context they enter, and the validity and positioning of their ideals within this space. New or expanded activities will include dialogue, collaborative pedagogies, modelling transformation, and preparation for professional negotiation.

(i) Enhanced dialogue. An early activity might include enhanced debate on disciplinary rationales. While already a feature of the programme, I need to better introduce the philosophy or evidence base undergirding each rationale (see 3.1), inspect the challenges and strategies for achieving each, and expressly promote the agency of students to reject or advocate a plurality of rationales. Another pre-programme activity will facilitate students talking about and teaching one another elements of their artistic expertise. Recognising and embracing the 'multiple forms of knowledge' (Collanus et al., 2012b) art students bring to teacher education can legitimise alternatives to the standardising epistemologies of contemporary ITE policy (Department for Education, 2019b). While again, this already takes place, I can reform it to simultaneously explore how subject knowledge, as well as identity and artistic learning experiences, informs their concepts of an ideal art education. Through these actions, students might better understand the origins, personally and culturally, for their ideals, and begin to organise a defence.

(ii) Group activities that take place in school-settings. Including, for example, the whole cohort of student teachers attending a school to observe typical practice, assist in art classrooms, or run small workshops. Such collective, applied experience prior to extended school placement would provide pre-placement opportunity for informed reflection on the contemporary school environment (Ploof & Hochtritt, 2018b). I have found engendering this developmental debate pre-placement while relying on reified forms of knowing precludes informed discussion on the emotive or embodied aspects of practice critical to reflection on the viability of ideals. To complement review of secondary school conventions, the archetypal art school could also be explored, including identification of any problematic orthodoxies or pedagogies inappropriate for transfer to school environments. Through such activities I would not seek to diminish students' ideals drawn from experience but encourage

critical reflection on, and refinement of, transformative intent. Early exposure to prescriptive or mechanised conventions might generate the cynicism typical of my participants earlier in the programme – providing opportunity to culture it such that it feeds transformative intent to affect positive change (Kraehe & Brown, 2011), while averting situations where isolated student teachers' cynicism mistakenly attaches to a perception of personal deficiency.

Instead of adaption to placement orthodoxies, through interactive, critically reflective collaboration, individual students might strongly align to a community of ITE peers. ITE curricula would function as 'both a kind of action and a form of belonging' (Wenger, 1998, p. np). Given the time spent on placement is double that spent on campus and may be more intense and affecting for student teachers, expecting them to remain ideologically committed to a community identity established pre-placement will require a concerted shift in programmatic locus. As Davies (2000) found when interviewing student art teachers, many felt passionately about the value of campus-based activity, *until* they spent time on school placement – at which point their view on the importance of the two institutions reversed. The result in Davies' (2000, p. 338) findings included student teachers rating the 'intellectual qualities of teachers as less important' than vocational training, and 'an increasing reluctance to try out new ideas'. Davies' (2000, p. 342) suggested solution was more opportunity for students to retain links with their 'college, its resources and aspirations for the profession' during placement – something more achievable today through technological means, utilising online fora for collective reflection. While my participants didn't typically demonstrate the same changes in attitude, I want to guard against an anti-intellectual, imitative shift. A robust pre-placement, extra-school community of practice could buttress students' idealism through school placement and into subsequent careers (see below).

(iii) Modelling transformative pedagogies. The pedagogies I employ on campus, pre-placement, are the most immediate example I might provide of a practice built on transformative optimism – one that can celebrate, simultaneously, technical skill and creative iteration, explore the potential of collaborative knowledge creation, and deliver a dynamic curriculum centered in learners' lived experiences.

A transformative optimist enables their students to see themselves 'as a vital participating agent in the collective process of social change' (Rossatto, 2005, p. 86), and as such ITE campus-based activities should be student-centered, address issues of social inequity, and require collective action. For example, I can ask students to take inspiration from Elkins (2002), and collectively produce art historical resources that revise the canonical examples of classroom walls, sharing these with peers. I could pair students to teach technical artistic competencies, and then develop this activity such that they are asked to plan for teaching the same skill to a pupil with English as an additional language. I can ask student teachers to select a memorable lesson from their own education and repurpose it – improve upon it and deliver it for constructive critique.

The most important activity to model, promote, and celebrate in transformative ITE is critical reflection on contemporary practice (Grauer 1998; Hovanec 2011; Klein 2008). For example, while I am statutorily bound to introduce ITE students to documents such as the DfE's (2019b) Core Content Framework, a placement school's behaviour policy, or Ofsted's own curriculum research (2023) – there is no limit on simultaneously critiquing this established guidance and routine. As Rossatto (2005, p. 123) writes: 'without the ability to experience critical thinking themselves, teachers are disinclined to teach it to their students'.

Modelling such pedagogies is not for mimetic means; student teachers might choose very different approaches appropriate for their own idealistic purposes and pupils. It acts as exhibit of teacher agency.

ITE provision that critiques contemporary schooling or promote alternatives as possible or preferable may be dangerous – especially at the very start of a students' programme. First, for students who did not anticipate confronting conceptual tension between their idealistic art classroom and the neoliberal dispositif, such a forthright strategy may represent an intimidating foregrounding to placement – a prospect that already generates anxiety among many aspirant teachers. Conversely, for those who embrace opportunities to explore the ideal/real tension – but are yet to develop the professional competencies to do so diplomatically, there is a danger of naïve disruptors alienating school-based colleagues on placement. Despite these risks, I hope a well-managed programme

pitched between the two might hope to avoid amplification of individuals' anxiety or provocation of partner institutions.

(iv) Preparing student teachers as effective negotiators of pedagogic opportunity. Encouraging student teachers to be creative and agentic, and then knowingly sending them into contexts where teacher autonomy and artistic expression are oppressed puts pressure on the individual. To prevent catalysation of existent 'conflictual discourses' (Atkinson, 2006a, p. 191) between subject discipline and neoliberal schooling, a purposeful preparation for nuanced navigation of placement is required. This will involve repositioning the student teacher as scholastic traveller, or ethnographer, entering the school context for full immersion in the practices of the institution - to better understand it, rather than imitate it. This may involve undertaking activities that sit uncomfortably with personal ideals, with recognition of discomfort as opportunity for reflective growth (Addison & Burgess, 2003a).

While in some placement schools (as in Nicky's experience) student teachers' expertise is leveraged to refresh curriculum, in most students are expected (alongside teaching colleagues) to follow strict conventions of curricular and behavioural policy (see 6.3). However, as school placements develop, and student teachers build rapport, there may come occasion to negotiate experimentation – where agency and idealism could be activated. This is not easy, as Evelyne discovered. However, learning to identify such opportunities and negotiating them through tenacious, diplomatic dialogue might prevent students resorting to subversive or transgressive means for professional fulfilment. If negotiation was successful, the student teacher could transform from passive traveller to agent of change, and in so doing model the potential for mentors to make similarly risky, creative, or idealistic decisions. If such conditions do not materialise, a student teacher can still craft their future practice through comparison to deficit models observed on placement.

### 7.3.2 Actions I can take during/with placement provision and partner schools

(v) Mentor guidance and relations. Concurrent to preparing student teachers to cocreate their own placement experience, I need to prime mentors to anticipate such interactions, and accommodate student agency.

For this purpose, where mentor training materials are typically oriented to relaying bureaucratic requirements, or explaining generic processes, this might be reduced, supplemented, or replaced with more aspirational resources. Such a change would set an example – removing 'ideological initiation' from mentor provision and replacing it with space and support to practice 'a critical, autonomous, creative, meaning-making and intellectual' (Dalton, 2001, p. 127) mentorship. New resources might unpick instances where mentors have felt threatened by student teachers' fresh perspective on classroom practices or frustrated by the naivete of suggestions for alternate approaches, encouraging them too to view this disjuncture as learning opportunity.

Revised expectations of mentors should include mandated opportunity for student teachers to write and deliver their own curriculum and trial extra-institutional practices. This can be positioned as collegiate opportunity to test alternatives to convention. Only when the student has been 'shifted' into 'the role of the inventor of viable new teaching strategies' (Postman & Weingartner, 1971, p. 138) can they practice an agentic criticality – one potentially illuminating for mentors too. Other resources might suggest open questioning techniques that promote reflection among student teachers, advocate collaborative teaching activities, or prompt discussion on the rationale for school curriculum.

Beyond preparation of instructional resources, I will work on building and maintaining a dynamic community of mentors. Just as community might undergird student teachers' individual idealism, a stronger social grouping of subject mentors might unsilo individual experience, making alternative pedagogies and curricula visible to experienced colleagues. Dialogue in such a community could loosen the myopic constraints of mentors' individual institutions and inspire them to activate their own personal rationales. Any shift in such a direction could have positive consequences for the student teacher. Further, I could look to introduce a wider, ongoing, student/mentor/tutor community forum that recognised the unique contribution of diverse stakeholders to discourse on art education. Here, the combined value of knowledge from experienced specialists, academic sources, and the idealism of passionate aspirants may be greater than its parts, a Freirean productivity the result of teacher and learner in horizontal, communal dialogue (Freire, 2013).

(vi) Widening institutional partnership. Even if all mentors were convinced to accommodate more liberal methods, many work within conditions of accountability that bind them, as much as the student teacher, to strict practical structures. It is more likely 'the apparatus of scrutiny via high stakes systems' (Thorpe & Kinsella, 2021, p. 543) than obstinate mentors that refutes students' creative agency. Here therefore, it is beholden on me to engage with senior leaders who audit such systems, advocating for professional agency and disciplinary pedagogies for *all* educators, in place of homogenising policy. Appreciating the responsibility and risk-adversity felt by these colleagues, given the high stakes of classroom activity, I will need to make convincing arguments with academic and professional integrity. Hence, I might look to reassure senior leaders with evidence-based arguments, for example that national auditors increasingly valorise subject-specific signature pedagogies (Ofsted, 2012, 2021), and that creating communities of belonging through promotion of professional agency has been proven to improve teacher retention (Riley et al., 2020).

### 7.3.3 Further actions

Reviewing my campus-based practice and brokering new expectations of school placement will help defend students' ideals. There are some further actions I intend to undertake too, which I describe here.

First, while establishing a community of practice among ITE students may provide constituent members with a close collaborative network, it would be interesting to extend this community multi-dimensionally, particularly given the modest size of a single ITE intake. ITE programmes have not, in my experience, commonly worked collaboratively – perhaps the competition for applicants and school partnerships expected of a neoliberal educational context creates adversarial conventions. To challenge such notions, I will establish a collegiate association of art teacher educators and provide opportunity for students to learn from peers beyond their home institution. While our subject association (NSEAD) fulfils this function to some extent, through primarily didactic means, a dedicated forum for student art teachers could be a powerful space to incubate transformative optimism. Identification of shared, or diverse, intent could reinforce the legitimacy of individuals' ideals and mitigate the potentially homogenising expectations of placement schools and future employers.

Second, while I have already endeavoured to establish a more active network of programme alumni, this might be more effectively activated. Until now this has been an ethical and pragmatic effort aimed at provision of ongoing professional consultation, and potential expansion of partnership schools. Now I might conceptualise such a network as a further inter-generational community of practice – a professional society with shared experiences who value agency and creativity as core tenets of their own practice. Through connecting this larger community through events and introductions, each member might be encouraged to maintain and enact idealistic transformations. If members of this community can then be employed, as appropriate, to mentor new student art teachers, this might facilitate conditions for progressive placement experiences. Fig.62 demonstrates how a constellation of interconnected communities, once initiated, could support improved conditions for student teachers to construct, defend, and ultimately activate their idealised visions for art and design education.

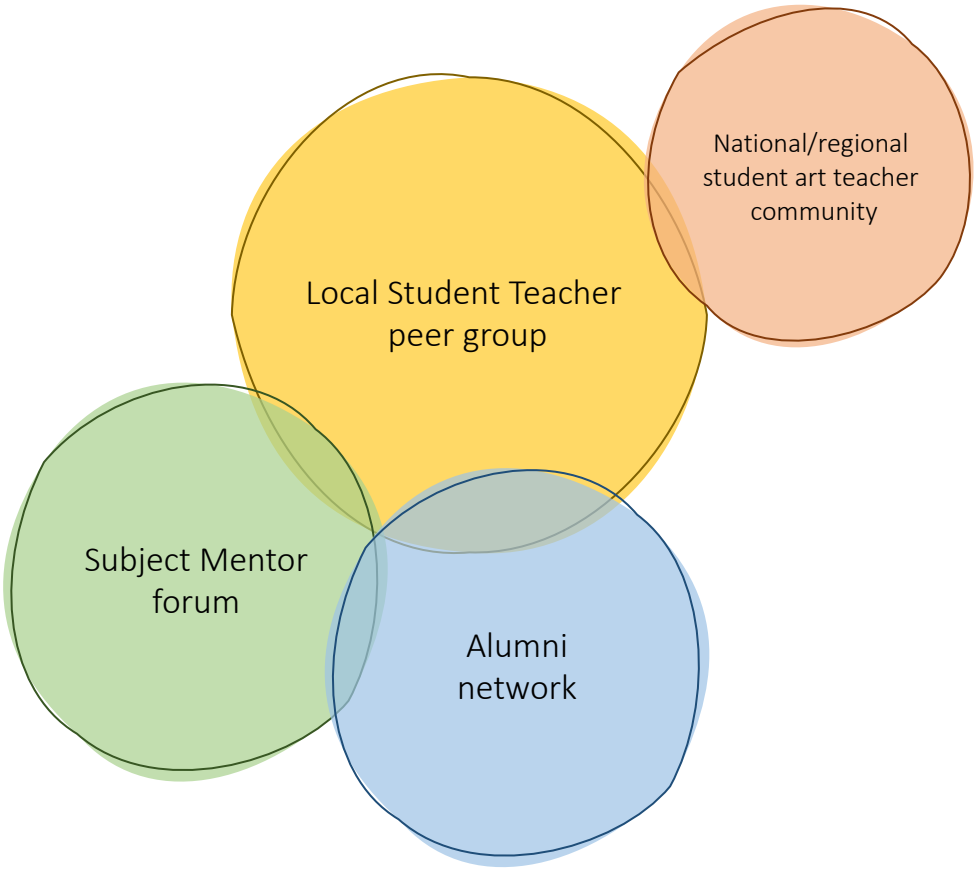


*Figure 62: Constructing supportive and progressive interconnected communities of practice around student art and design teachers*

## 7.4 Final Reflections

This study has helped me review my professional practice, better protect student teachers' ideals, and in turn realise a socially transformative pedagogy. I have marked out a handful of prospective pedagogic and professional activities to introduce over the next cycle of the ITE programme on which I teach. However, I note that I share with my students a context defined by external governance. In coming years my own agency will likely be challenged by additional accountabilities, such that as I move forward, I may need (following my students' example) to activate subversive tendencies. Here, I will not only look to 'interpret' (Duggan & la Velle, 2019, p. 10) ITE directive as necessary to defend an educational paradigm of transformative optimism, but openly critique deprofessionalising constraints of neoliberal expectations. As such, I recognise myself as activist teacher educator (Ploof & Hochtritt, 2018), a vocal advocate (Bae, 2014) for system reformation – both in ITE and wider art educational practices: 'though an educator I am also a political agent' (Freire 2005, 75).

Undertaking this study has challenged me to confront the layered paradox of my subject discipline, the teaching of it, and the teaching of the teaching of it. To paraphrase Hertmans (2012), success in each of these activities demands both discipline and a certain logic, but also complete freedom. Recognising paradox as opportunity, where the agentic professional carefully and creatively selects transgressive and conformative actions as appropriate to purpose, has only strengthened my belief in the potential of art education to contribute to societal transformation from within systems that seek to oppress it. Promoting an art teacher education which exposes and explores such opportunities, learning alongside students how best to nurture a new school art education, can fulfil my own transformative optimism.

While concluding this study I stumbled upon a small dogeared penguin paperback, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*. Reading this work, it struck me how little had changed in fifty years; the authors writing persuasively, against a background of increasing bureaucracy and oppressive directive, about a proto-critical pedagogy, where schools might function as 'anti-entropic feedback systems'

(Postman & Weingartner, 1971, p. 17), transformative spaces for critically questioning and renewing social, cultural and political norms. In recognising the lack of progress in the creation of such spaces since it would be easy to fall into pessimism.

However, the earnest idealism of my participants has instead inspired only optimism for my own transformative agency. Postman and Weingartner (1971, p. 138) point to 'the teachers of the future' to 'bring this revolution off', and I believe future generations of passionate art educator can yet promote learning in and through the arts as opportunity to reframe and remake the world anew – beyond homogenising pedagogical practices (Atkinson, 2018) and the normative colonisation of wider neoliberal crypto-ideologies (Gielen & De Bruyne, 2012b). In *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* Postman and Weingartner end by describe how a critical, creative teacher education transformed their own students:

> They have been freed from a dependence on arbitrary authority. They have greater respect for themselves as professional because they are no longer mere functionaries willing to accept palpably inefficient and irrelevant bureaucratic rituals. They are anti-entropic agents ready to question (and provide alternative answers to) the attitudes in the schools that produce institutional inertia. They are agents of self-renewal. (Postman & Weingartner, 1971, p. 143)

My role in bringing about this transformation starts with the actions laid out above, guiding student art teachers towards their own productive 'ontogenesis' (Atkinson, 2018, p. 158), a new way of thinking about art education that can disrupt or 'fracture the parameters' of reproductive orthodoxies. As Evelyne told me in our pre-placement interview, art education can ignite a young person's capacity to think in wider societal terms; it can and should be:

> 'a tool where you learn about so many, so many things and just really helps you…choose the glasses you see everything through…giving students the ability and capability to sort of analyse everything that they come into contact with…' (EI299)

# 8 Appendices

## Appendix 1: Sample Participant Consent Form


### Consent Form

Title of Project: **Protecting Transformative Optimism in the Art Classroom: Exploring Aspirant Art Teachers' Shifting Ideals**

Name of Researcher: **Will Grant**

I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

**YES/NO**

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

**YES/NO**

I acknowledge that copies of interview transcripts will be returned to participants for verification.

**YES/NO**

I acknowledge that artworks produced as part of the research process will be retained by the researcher until the conclusion of all data collection processes (no later than June 2021), at which point they will be returned to the participant with thanks.

**YES/NO**

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

**YES/NO**

I also acknowledge the following with regards data collected during this research:

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be de-identified.
- All material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- Interview transcripts and photographs of artistic responses will be destroyed once the project is complete or by 28/8/2022 whichever date is sooner.

- De-identified material may be used in future publications, both print and online.
- I agree to waive my copyright to any data collected as part of this project.

**YES/NO**

I **consent / do not consent** (delete as applicable) to interviews being audio-recorded.

I **agree / do not agree** (delete as applicable) to take part in the initial art-elicitation interview.

I **agree / do not agree** (delete as applicable) to take part in a second interview.

Name of Participant …… Signature ……..

Date ……

Name of Researcher: **Will Grant** Signature:

Date ……

Appendix 2: Participant Cover Letter

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Invitation to participate in small-scale research project: **Protecting Transformative Optimism in the Art Classroom: Exploring Aspirant Art Teachers' Shifting Ideals**

Dear PGCE Secondary Art and Design Students,

I am currently undertaking doctoral study at the University of Glasgow. As a part of the EdD Doctoral Dissertation I am conducting some research, into initial art teacher education. The research is explained in more detail in the Participant Information Sheet attached.

I am inviting you to participate because you are currently embarking on the process of becoming a qualified secondary school art and design teacher and as the researcher I am interested to hear about your perceptions of that process. I would appreciate it if you might read through the information provided and give consideration to whether or not you are willing to participate. Although I am presenting this information at the end of a UWE Bristol seminar, it is important to note that the project exists entirely outside of the PGCE programme – in no way will participation or non-participation have impact upon my relationship to you as academic tutor and lecturer: I am asking you to participate as an independent professional, if you so desire.

If you decide to participate please keep the Participant Information Sheet, and return the consent form attached to me, with your signature, within the next 7 days. If you decide not to participate you need do nothing, and I will take this as a signal that you would rather not participate and I will not contact you further about this.

If you would like to ask further questions before deciding on whether to take part or not please do contact me on w.grant.1@research.gla.ac.uk, by telephone at 07883508851, or in person. If you do participate interviews will be conducted at a location of your choosing.

Your sincerely,

Will Grant

Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

## Participant Information Sheet

Title of Project: **Protecting Transformative Optimism in the Art Classroom: Exploring Aspirant Art Teachers' Shifting Ideals**

Name of Researcher: **Will Grant**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, please do contact me at w.grant.1@research.gla.ac.uk. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

I am undertaking this research as part of my doctoral studies: specifically as part of the doctoral dissertation. However, the research will also allow me to better understand the journey of undergoing initial teacher education as an aspirant secondary art and design teacher. You have been asked to take part because you are currently a PGCE Secondary art and design student and I am interested in your individual interpretations of the experience: it is hoped that if you chose to participate you will find involvement an opportunity for meaningful reflection.

Taking part, or not taking part, is an entirely voluntary decision. Deciding to take part or not take part will not affect the professional relationship between you, as PGCE Secondary Art and Design student and me, as Senior Lecturer – nor will it have any affect on the assessments you undergo as part of your course of study.

If you do decide to take part you can withdraw at any stage without the need for justification up to the point at which the dissertation is submitted (Spring 2022). If you do choose to participate, it will entail the following:

- You will be asked to make an artistic response to a specific written stimuli (not unlike the 'starting point' given to GCSE or A-level students). Instructions, which have been specifically designed to ensure you are not over-burdened by participation in the research process, will be provided if you do decide to participate.
- Two weeks later we will meet at a time convenient to you, in a location of your choice, for an interview (of approximately 40 minutes duration) to discuss the artwork that you have made. I will be interested to learn about your thought process as you made your artwork as well as how you have chosen to represent your ideas and opinions about the starting point.

- Once you have undertaken your first school-based experience as part of the PGCE Secondary course, we will meet again to review the discussion we had in the early part of the course – there will be no expectation that you make a second artwork, this will be simply a reflection on your earlier commentary and a chance to explore any change in attitude or perspective that you might have in light of your experiences. The scheduling of this second interview will again be designed to avoid inconvenience for you.
- I will collect your artwork so that I have access to it during the analysis of the interview data. I agree to return it to you once the analysis is complete or by June 2021 - whichever date is sooner.
- I may use a photograph of your work as part of the write up of the dissertation and in any publications arising from the study (for example possible journal articles). I will ask for your consent to do so on the consent form to sign upon agreement to participate.

All personal details will be kept confidential throughout the research process and personal data will be destroyed no later than Spring 2022.

Confidentiality will be respected unless there are compelling and legitimate reasons for this to be breached. If this was the case I would inform you of any decisions that might limit your confidentiality.

Gender-neutral pseudonyms will be used in the write up of the findings. If participant or researcher considers that by its nature the artistic response may reveal their identity, this work will not be visually published in the dissertation or in any publication that may arise from the study.

Research data from this study– which includes photographs of your artistic response and a digitally recorded transcript of our interview – will be kept securely on password protected university cloud storage throughout the study. I will analyse this data using a method called thematic analysis and present the findings in the dissertation and possibly in an article for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, or a conference presentation.

This project has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow.

**Contact details for further information:** Will Grant, email: w.grant.1@research.gla.ac.uk
**To pursue any complaint regarding this plain language statement or invitation to participate in research:** Dr Muir Houston, email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Participant Artistic Response Instructions

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

## Artistic Response Instructions

The first part of this research project asks you to produce an artistic response to an initial starting point, in much the same way as GCSE or A-level students might. To ensure the production of this work is not burdensome to you, it is advised that you restrict yourself to the following:

- A response no bigger than A3 in scale.
- A response that takes no longer than half a day to produce.
- A response made using any artistic material with which you comfortable and that allows you to produce the artwork without an onerous workload.

It is important that you know that the artistic merit of the artwork is not being judged in any way: the artwork will be used as a focus for the interview discussion.

You might choose one of the three following 'starting points' to inform your response:

- The Utopian Art Education
- A Transformational Art Class
- How I hope to make an impact as an aspirant art teacher

As you have now consented to participate, we will next agree a timeline for the creation of the artwork, and schedule a date and time convenient for you for the follow-up interview to take place. I would like to schedule the interview about two weeks from your agreement to take part. This timeline is not designed to pressurise your construction of an artistic response, but to ensure that your involvement in the creation of the artwork does not become lengthy or burdensome.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact me on w.grant.1@research.gla.ac.uk or 07883508851.

Kind regards,

Will Grant

Appendix 5: College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Confirmed Approval

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

03/06/2020

Dear Will Grant

**College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee**

***Project Title:*** Protecting Transformative Optimism in the Art Classroom: Exploring Aspirant Art Teachers' Shifting Ideals

***Application No:*** 400190176

The College Research Ethics Committee has reviewed your application and has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. It is happy therefore to approve the project, subject to the following conditions:

- Start date of ethical approval: _____04/06/2020_____
- Project end date: _____28/08/2022_____
- Any outstanding permissions needed from third parties in order to recruit research participants or to access facilities or venues for research purposes must be obtained in writing and submitted to the CoSS Research Ethics Administrator before research commences. Permissions you must provide are shown in the *College Ethics Review Feedback* document that has been sent to you.
- The data should be held securely for a period of ten years after the completion of the research project, or for longer if specified by the research funder or sponsor, in accordance with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research: (https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_490311_en.pdf) (Unless there is an agreed exemption to this, noted here).
- The research should be carried out only on the sites, and/or with the groups and using the methods defined in the application.
- Any proposed changes in the protocol should be submitted for reassessment as an amendment to the original application. The *Request for Amendments to an Approved Application* form should be used:
  https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/staffandpostgraduateresearchstudents/

Yours sincerely,

Dr Muir Houston
College Ethics Officer

**Muir Houston, Senior Lecturer**
**College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer**
Social Justice, Place and Lifelong Education Research
University of Glasgow
School of Education, St Andrew's Building, 11 Eldon Street
Glasgow G3 6NH
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