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A Story of Headship.

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Abstract

This Doctorate of Education (EdD) Dissertation maps and considers my personal story of Headship. To tell that story, I use autoethnography to scaffold my research journey as a serving Headteacher undertaking an EdD. In this story of Headship, I share 'my way of being and knowing about the world' (Thomson, 2009, p. 1) in two Headships spanning a decade in Scotland and Hong Kong.

The key learning from my Dissertation is the importance of theory to practice and vice versa over time. The Dissertation aims to reflect the process of taking the time to understand myself as an individual keen to serve and to think freely. While this may sound straightforward, it is not. It is challenging to unpack the self, particularly when you wear many hats, in my case those of a mother, partner, Headteacher, colleague and friend. I explore feeling vulnerable, with a particular understanding of vulnerability following Nusbaum (2004) in all areas of my life, but mainly in the context of collaboration with other leaders. I reflect on feeling outside of the loop even when that position was central to my collaborative work and my leading from within the system.

There are uncomfortable and painful awakenings for me as I journey through my own embedded narratives and draw on theory and autoethnographic methods to create clarity. I reflexively unpack my identity and behaviours in the spaces in which I operate, using Nussbaum's (2011) Capabilities Approach to consider my experiences, including the possible impact of those on others. To structure my telling of this journey and recount my reflections, I use a framework of four Elements - Learning, Methodology, Theory, and Understandings - in each Chapter except in the initial and the final Chapters. This framework is constructed using the central ideas of the Capabilities Approach and is designed to help me answer the question: ‘What can I do and be?’ (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18) and explicitly to address my research question: ‘What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?’. Simultaneously, the framework is deployed to ensure the 'Combined Capabilities' (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 21), explained in the initial Chapter, are addressed for me as an individual aspiring to ‘educational growth’ following Dearden (1968, p. 25, 1972, pp. 65-84). The concept of educational growth, according to Dearden's perspective, emphasises the importance of personal development through education (Dearden, 1968, p. 25). Dearden views growth as a symbolic image that holds significant meaning and emotional appeal (Dearden, 1968, p. 25). Dearden’s

idea of growth is distinct from the idea of moulding, as it highlights the individual's ability to determine their own definition of growth and create their own unique synthesis (Dearden, 1968, p. 25). I relate growth to Nussbaum's concept of flourishing (Nussbaum, 2004, p. 19) and connect it to my own personal development. I see educational growth as the route towards the ultimate outcome of achieving my potential. Therefore both flourishing and growth are fundamental in addressing the question of 'What can I do and be?' (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18), through striving to understand my own educational growth and potential to flourish as a school leader using an autoethnographic methodology.

My educational growth and 'decisional capital' (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 5) as a serving Headteacher are open for observation as part of the critical reflexive process of unpacking my Headships. The Headship journey itself is constructed according to three stages of my personal development and is both chronological and iterative. For each stage of my development, I draw on a particular theoretical influence related to the EdD process and stages of learning. For Stage One, 2013-2016, I draw mainly on Stephen Brookfield's (2005) four lenses of critical reflection. For Stage Two, 2016-2019, I draw mainly on Martha Nussbaum's (2011) Capability Theory and her ten central Capabilities (pp. 32-34). Finally, for Stage Three, 2019-2023, I draw on Carolyn Ellis' (2004) autoethnographic research method. The Dissertation is woven together using theory and method to unpack and support me as I share and seek to make sense of my journey of Headship. I conclude my story by considering other Headteacher studies and comparing these with my own narrative and considering questions arising from Southworth (1995, p. 219) around Headteacher maturation and Brighthouse and Woods' (1999) three phases of Headship development. I ground my findings in the importance of context, agency and process, my Capabilities journey, and the critical influence of the EdD as a professional learning opportunity for Headteacher educational growth.

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The Cast of Characters

ANN: Primary Headteacher in Kelly and Saunders (2010) *New Heads on the Block: Three Case Studies of Transition to Primary School Headship*

ANNA: composite character, administrator and school office worker, mid-fifties.

ARCHIE THE DOG: The school therapy dog.

BEN: Primary Headteacher in Kelly and Saunders (2010) *New Heads on The Block: Three Case Studies of Transition to Primary School Headship.*

BRENDA: composite character, 'Business Manager' (BM), female, mid-forties, parent. Works closely and collaboratively with other schools on Human Resource matters and finance.

CHILDREN: Rehana's birth children.

COLLEAGUES: composite characters of any colleague in Education, Health or Rehana's employer supporting the school community.

COMMUNITY: anyone connected to the school.

ED BELL: Wolcott's (1973) Headteacher from *The Man in the Principal's Office.*

FRANCES HARDY: Primary Headteacher in Tomlinson et al's (2003) *Living Headship: Voices, Values and Vision*.

JOHN LOFTUS: Primary Headteacher in Tomlinson et al's (2003) *Living Headship: Voices, Values and Vision*.

LINDA: composite character, an 'Educational Assistant' (EA), a middle aged woman who lives in the community and has worked at the school for many years.

MAGGIE: Primary Headteacher in Kelly and Saunders (2010) *New Heads on the Block: Three Case Studies of Transition to Primary School Headship.*

MENTOR: composite character(s) from university and school.

MO WILLIAMS: Primary Headteacher in Tomlinson et al's (2003) *Living Headship: Voices, Values and Vision*.

PEER: composite characters of colleagues who share similar experiences with Rehana at university, conferences or in school leadership.

REHANA: the author of this Dissertation - a Primary School Headteacher who has met the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland) Standard for Headship1 (2021a, p. 4). She is a mother, partner, Headteacher, colleague and friend.

RON LACEY: Southworth's (1995) Headteacher from *Looking into Primary Headship*.

STUDENTS: composites of any child who could have been in the school, class or community in which I work or worked.

STAFF: composites of any staff who could have been in the school community where Rehana works or worked. This comprises all groups of staff including teachers, teaching assistants, support staff and anyone on the payroll under the management of the Principal.

TEACHERS: composites of any teachers who meet the General Teaching Council for Scotland Standard (GTC Scotland) Standard for Full Registration in Scotland2 (2021b, p. 3).

1 https://www.gtcs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/standard-for-Headship.pdf
2 https://www.gtcs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/standard-for-full-registration.pdf

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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: Rehana Louise Shanks

Signature:

Chapter 1 An Introduction to the Iterative Process of Headship

Introduction

This Dissertation is my personal story of Headship, in which I am both the case study and the subject of my own research. I use ‘Moderate Autoethnography’ (Wall, 2016) as a means to unpack and make sense of my iterative Headship journey, including my personal background and context as a serving Headteacher. In this first Chapter, I emphasise the iterative nature of my Headship journey, where my learning and understanding go back and forth, built upon as I become more aware of my own Capabilities and how to use them effectively in different environments. I explore my Capabilities, functions, vulnerabilities, and emotions, as conceptualised by Nussbaum (2004, 2011), and ponder whether I can choose to convert my Capabilities to functionings in school leadership.

While the events and characters in this story are inspired by my life, I have altered or fictionalised some details to protect the privacy of others. Further details about this are provided in the methodology Chapter of this Dissertation where I acknowledge the ethical issues of autoethnography and discuss the limits of what I can say while upholding ethical standards. For example, in my 'Cast of Characters', I purposefully use the term Mentor to describe my mentors from university and school settings, as explicitly naming them could potentially identify my colleagues and violate ethical principles. In Chapters 3, 4, and 5, I delve more deeply into my educational growth and my next stage of Headteacher development, as I strive towards flourishing (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18), both as a school leader and as a person. My own educational growth (Dearden, 1972, p. 65) is iterative, and I use my Element framework to build my understanding of my Capabilities, as outlined by Nussbaum (2011, pp. 33-34).

I share my Headship journey in three stages of Headteacher development, which I outline in this Chapter and expand on in greater detail in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, with each chapter dedicated to a specific stage. Both the Elements and the stages of Headteacher development build on my understanding of the work of Bhabha (1994) and Soja (1998), drawing on 'Third Space Theory' to recognise the third spaces we inhabit - a space between home (the first space) and work (the second space) - and how these spaces work together to generate this third space, a 'dynamic, in-between space where cultural translation takes place' (Bhabha,

1990). The 'third space' was created through my EdD journey, which I have been inhabiting (Lembeir, 2005) during my Headships as I worked through my understanding of Capabilities and autoethnography. In this and Chapter 6, I compare my case study to two well-established ethnographies of two pseudonymous male Headteachers, Ed Bells in Wolcott (1973, 2003) and Ron Lacey in Southworth (1995). I carefully consider the uncertainties raised by Southworth (1995, p. 219) on Headteacher maturation in my own journey, where I reflect on and share my own understandings of Headship.

My Journey to Headship – Context and Background

Initially I was not going to share the background and the context to my journey to Headship but this changed when I was working on my final Chapter of this Dissertation and I was reminded that, in both Wolcott's (1973, 2003) and Southworth's (1995) studies of their Headteachers, this was a very important part of setting the scene for the researchers to make sense and allow interpretation into who the Headteachers are with respect to their identity formation as School Leaders. I know myself and I know how I ended up being a Headteacher and while this is not something I had originally planned on sharing, I now think it is important to the context and background of this study based on the understandings gained from the work of Wolcott (1973, 2003), Southworth (1995), Brighthouse and Woods (1999), Woods (2002), Sergiovanni, (2007), Thomson (2009), and Hargreaves and Fullan (2012). I cannot assume readers know what I am thinking or who I am as an individual, so it is important to provide context and background to allow greater insight into me a Headteacher studying a Headteacher, not a researcher studying a Headteacher. This is an important distinction because, in Wolcott's study of Headteacher Ed and Ed's reflections on the study of him, there was a crucial insider view which simply could not be accessed by an ethnographer. When Ed was reflecting back to Wolcott, there were things he felt Wolcott had over focused on which made him feel vulnerable and, at times, Ed felt the researcher had presented his role as the Headteacher as rather inept (Wolcott, 1973, p. 318). Ed, like me, feels the pressure of how our profession is portrayed and how our capacity as individuals could be open to criticism depending on how we present ourselves. This links to Nussbaum's (2004) point that there is an inordinate emphasis on perfection which we can feel as humans and that need and vulnerability can be viewed as shameful for dominant social actors (Nussbaum, 2004, p. 172). Headteachers are social actors with prominent positions in their

communities and, without careful reflexivity on my part, there is a danger that the balance of how I present my community could be disturbed and that a sense of my vulnerability could give rise to negative emotions from the communities in which I am an insider.
Tripp's (1993) perception of teachers as the research subjects of educational researchers is relevant.

> Teachers' fears are not unfounded; so often in educational research, by investigating and thereby exposing the problems of schools, has been instrumental in giving them bad press they so often receive these days. And all too often researchers have used their perceptions of teachers' inadequacies to gain grants, publicity and further their careers.
> (Tripp, 1993, p.1)

Tripp's (1993) view links to Ed's feeling inept about how Headteachers were presented in Wolcott (1973, p. 318). Wolcott, revisiting his work in 2003, does acknowledge his own ambition at the time with his methodology, noting that his work was intended to speak to Headteachers and to paint a realistic picture of Headship based on the study of just one person, Ed (Wolcott, 2003, p viii). This meant that he compared some of his writing to Huck Finn's review of Mark Twain's efforts in 'The Adventures of Tom Sawyer', noting that 'There were things which he stretched but mainly he told the truth' (Wolcott, 2003, p. 317). Wolcott acknowledges he did stretch the truth and this did cause a mixed reaction from Ed. The reality of Wolcott's book, however, is that it has been used to model the ethnographic method in classes that teach educators about qualitative research (Wolcott, 2003, p. viii). In terms of his relationship with Ed, many years after the study and the further Ed gets away from the study and the classroom, the fonder his memories grow (Wolcott, 2003, p. ix). Ed did state that the narrative presented by Wolcott (1973) contributed to his personal growth by causing him to take a closer look at himself (Wolcott, 2003, p. vii), a look which is implied as a challenge for him to read in 1973 (Wolcott, 2003, p. 318). There is a clear acknowledgement by Wolcott that the role of the Headteacher is ultimately so vulnerable to the influences of power and status, both of the educational system and the communities served, that Wolcott has had to restrain himself from lamenting, from his own personal bias, that schools are bureaucracies (Wolcott, 2003, p. 319). Wolcott states that was not the aim of his study. He was aiming for a close exploration of the ways in which school operated, especially on a day-to-day basis (Wolcott, 2003, p. vii). Wolcott is an observer in Ed's Headship, so Ed had no idea what would be said until he read the whole study. By contrast, my study is an autoethnography and although some features of the Wolcott (1973, 2003)

study of Ed do pertain, I am at all times in my writing bound to my agreed ethical standards (see Appendix 1) and I discuss this further in the next Chapter.
Southworth (1995) states very clearly that:

> Heads are unable to be critical leaders because the process of self-examination is often thwarted by fatigue caused by the open-ended, unceasing demands of the job. Heads need both time out in order to learn with and from others and time off to temporarily suspend the heavy weight of their work and to reflect critically on their values and beliefs.
> (Southworth, 1995, p. 218)

I recognise the fatigue in my life but this comes not only from the unceasing demands of the job but from every part of my life in the roles I hold as a woman, a mother, a school leader, a student, and more. However, I believe the process of self-examination and criticality is an essential activity and so I am duty bound to refer to human vulnerability and flourishing following Nussbaum (2004, p. 19). Being critical is crucial to me as an individual in my pursuit of a worthwhile life. I further believe that, as a school leader, self-examination is important to support moral and ethical criticality and to recognise my impact on the lives of others, most notably the students I serve. Hence I support Nussbaum's view, in 'Cultivating Humanity' (1997, pp. 11-12) of an examined life as an ongoing process of self-reflection, during which I learn to articulate and evaluate my values and to make decisions based on my own critical thinking. According to Nussbaum (1997, p. 19), this type of self-examination is essential for living a meaningful life and sustaining a sense of ethical responsibility. Moreover, this supports the selection of an autoethnographic method in this Dissertation because of the reflexive lenses that offers. Nussbaum (1997, p. 37) suggests that an examined life involves both self-reflection and contemplation of the wider world and the people in it and this key role for interpretation lends itself to my selected autoethnographic method.

In my life, I find that the concept of the 'Third Space', following Bhabha (1994) is helpful in bringing together different aspects of my identity and experiences. This dynamic space allows me to be inclusive and responsive to what is happening around me, both in my personal and professional life. Essentially, the Third Space enables me to negotiate my cultural identities and create and acknowledge hybrid identities which incorporate different cultural elements and which, in turn, help me to better adapt to new situations and challenges both at school and home.

Southworth (1995) is a participant observer of Ron's Headship. I am an observer and a participant in my own Dissertation. I am a constant companion in my own story of Headteacher maturation using method and theory to develop educational growth and readiness to lead and so I turn now to ways in which this Dissertation is a case study of me.

The role of the Headteacher and values

The interplay between my role as a Headteacher and my values is a constant consideration for me. Reflecting on my own values and those of others I have encountered in my career has been a consistent process but this EdD journey has challenged and transformed my values, as well as my perceptions of my role as a Headteacher. Nussbaum's (1997) notion of an examined life as an ongoing process resonates with me and I have learned to articulate and evaluate my values through critical thinking. I now recognise that our values are influenced by our contexts and upbringing and this, of course, results in individuals valuing different things (Sergiovanni, 1987). As a Headteacher, I value the authenticity of my own values, rather than assuming, or wanting, them to align with others' values, wishes, and wants. Holding on to my own values allows me to live a life with dignity and respect for myself and others, making my existence as a human-being and a Headteacher worthwhile and open to a flourishing life.

As a Headteacher, my core role revolves around promoting and valuing individual and collective human well-being. I strive to stay connected to this role and so my leadership style is deeply rooted in my values. I am committed to aligning my role as a Headteacher with Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach (CA) which considers the question: 'What are people (and what is each person) actually able to do and be?' (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 14). I cannot detach myself from this approach as it embodies my personal beliefs and convictions that each person is worthy of dignity, respect, and opportunities (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 16), and deserves a life that reflects this worth (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 29). For children, this means that, as a Headteacher, I value high quality education and a curriculum with personalisation and choice which will allow for the development of the child's capabilities through education (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 30). In line with the CA, I also value each individual in the school community and the school environment itself, believing in treating everyone and the environment with respect and dignity. However, it is important to note that not all Capabilities within the community are equalised. As a Headteacher, I prioritise equity and

aim to address the unique needs of learners, families, and staff, recognising their diverse individual starting points and the distribution of resources within the environment. In line with Dearden's concept of educational growth and the inherent value of education for personal development (Dearden, 1968, p. 25), I believe that my role as a Headteacher is to facilitate the growth of individuals under my care rather than to mould them.

As a Headteacher, I strive to be a values-driven leader, continuously supporting the growth and development of my students, colleagues, and community. This involves promoting critical reflection, self-awareness, and values-driven leadership. In my role, I value and expect to navigate conflicting policies, ideologies and day to day administration in order to stay true to my values and beliefs. I see this as a critical part of my role in order to maintain integrity and ensure that my actions align with my espoused value of self-examination in order to create the readiness to learn, teach and lead for myself and others in my care.

I perceive my key role as a Headteacher and my fundamental values as a Headteacher to align closely: valuing learning and education that empowers individuals and allows them the freedom to think critically and independently. This, in turn, is driven by my aim to enable them to live a life of dignity and respect, forging a meaningful and fulfilling existence for themselves.

The Headteacher as a Person: the Case Study of Me.

I have taken a combination of Wolcott's (1973) and Southworth's (1995) case study titles to create my own space to discuss briefly who I am and what I have chosen to share here while maintaining necessary ethical boundaries for my loved ones and professional colleagues. Wolcott (1973, pp. 35-66) uses several characteristic titles which I have also used in order not to expose information, which I cannot share, ethically, with regard to others. Such sharing may be why Ed felt compromised in Wolcott's 1973 study. Although Ed was a pseudonym I do feel that some of the elements shared about Ed's life crossed an ethical boundary which could make Ed and his family identifiable. Ron, Southworth's (1995) pseudonym for his Headteacher, is referred to as a case study and his background and context is shared but there was a more open process to sharing the interpretation of Ron's work, although Southworth references Wise (1974) as a prompt to himself as the researcher.

> One must be ready to handle the criticism of those who actually live this life. The closer they think you come to describing it, the better you feel about your data gathering, your organization and your analysis. (Wise, 1974, cited in Southworth, 1995, p. 136)

Ron was a more active participant in Southworth's (1995) case study of him than was Ed in Wolcott's (1973) study and this links to the nature of the research methods used. Southworth was a participant observer and Wolcott was an observer. I am both a participant and an observer and, as a participant, I start to sketch below my autobiography.

My autobiography

I am a product of a mixed race family. My mother is English and Cornish and my father was Indian. They remained married until my father's death in 2019. I have two older sisters and I grew up in an industrial town in the West of Scotland, attended the local Primary and Secondary Schools, and then went to university in Glasgow to study English Literature. My childhood friends remain friends today, even though we all live in different parts of the world and I consider myself lucky to have friendships which have lasted a lifetime. I met my husband when I was in my third year of University and had just turned 19. I was married to him by the time I was 25 and we remain married today.

I left University in 1996 and attended Craigie College in Ayr to study Primary School Teaching. I qualified in 1997 and taught happily for two years in North Ayrshire in a Glasgow overspill, which was a large-scale housing development built around Glasgow in the mid-20th century to address the city's chronic housing shortage. The development aimed to provide affordable, modern housing for working-class families, but it faced social and economic challenges, including high levels of poverty and unemployment. The school I worked in had metal shutters on the windows which came down at night to prevent damage to the buildings and I remember feeling a fear of the community on my first teaching day because of the shutters. What sort of place had I come to work in when the shutters were raised after the students entered the building in the morning to keep the families out? Such fears soon passed but, in 1999, I left Ayrshire to work in Edinburgh, a tough move for me as I was very settled at home with my family and friends but I moved to be with my husband.

I taught in Edinburgh for 20 years. This period of my life is shared in Appendix 2. I use the Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1988) model to show my journey from a novice teacher to an expert teacher. However, I am very sure now, on reflection, I would never claim to be an expert in anything but, instead, someone with some ‘understandings’ (my Element 4 as outlined below) from the experience gained from an iterative process of development.

Headships

I attained my first Headship in February 2013, and I became a 'New Headteacher'. This is Stage One of my Headship development, which I explore in Chapter 3. In 2016, I considered myself an 'Evolving Headteacher' and was in Stage Two of my Headship development, which I discuss in Chapter 4. By 2019, I saw myself as an 'Experienced Headteacher' and moved to a new Headship in Hong Kong. This is Stage Three of my Headship development, explored in Chapter 5. I discuss each stage of my Headship journey in more detail after the Elements section of this Chapter and a diagram of the Stages of Headship is shared in Appendix 3.

A New Life

In 2019, at the age of 43 and with four young children and a husband, I moved to Hong Kong to take up my second substantive post as a Headteacher. This was a considerable life change for us as a family. We arrived in Hong Kong to social unrest, a new Headship, and subsequently a pandemic which would see us grounded with no return home to Scotland possible for three full years.

The family

I have four school age children. In Scotland all my children attended the school where I worked, and I lived and worked as the Headteacher in the same community as that school. In Hong Kong none of my children attend the school in which I am the Headteacher but they do attend the same cluster of Schools of which that school is a part. In Hong Kong, in 2021, we added Archie the dog to our family. Archie is my school’s therapy dog, bought with money my dad left me when he died in 2019. He has become a very important and stabilising part of my life during an extraordinary few years as a school leader. I stop sharing here by contrast

with Wolcott (1973) and Southworth (1995) who give far more detail about their Headteachers. I stop because I have sought to provide only the necessary personal context and background and do not wish to go outwith the ethical parameters of my Dissertation (Appendix 1) which I discuss further in Chapter 2. I move now to introduce my Headship journey.

The Headship Journey

As noted above, I have structured this Dissertation around four Elements and three Stages of Development, which are both iterative in nature and build upon each other. To guide my personal enquiry and create my Elements of iterative learning in my own educational growth, I borrowed Nussbaum's question from 'Creating Capabilities' (2011, p. 14): 'What are people (and what is each person) actually able to do and to be?'. I maintain that this question is inseparable from my experience as a teacher and I picture school leadership's educational growth as linked to developmental experience, learning, and critical reflection with respect to developmental gaps and practices, which then link to readiness to lead.

The four Elements closely relate to Nussbaum's 10 central Capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 33-34) which can be found in Appendix 4. I chose to use Elements as my scaffold to organise my developmental leadership milestones because I was strongly influenced by Nussbaum's statement that ‘the search be not rigid but open to new learning’ (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 15). ‘The search’ referred to in the quote by Nussbaum (2011, p. 15) is the search for knowledge, understanding, and personal growth. Nussbaum emphasises that such a search should not be rigid but open to new learning, meaning that individuals should be open-minded and willing to learn and grow throughout their lives. Nussbaum's approach highlights the importance of developing a broad range of human Capabilities, such as critical thinking, empathy, and creativity, to fully engage in the search for knowledge and personal growth. The Elements I use here are developed from my 'hunches' about growth, maturation, development, and readiness.

In ‘Creating Capabilities’ (2011, p. 15), Martha Nussbaum emphasises the importance of paying attention to our intuitive hunches and emotions as these can guide us towards important knowledge and understanding. She argues that while reason and analysis are crucial in our search for knowledge, they are not enough on their own. Nussbaum suggests

that our emotions and intuitive hunches can help us to see things that we might otherwise miss and that these insights can be invaluable in our search for understanding and personal growth. However, she also cautions that we should not rely solely on our emotions and hunches but should subject these to critical reflection and analysis. As a teacher I also linked Dearden's (1968, p. 25, 1972, pp. 65-84) understandings about growth, maturation, development, and readiness in education to my own growth as a school leader travelling through my own educational Headteacher journey. According to Dearden, growth refers to the physical changes that occur in a person's body, while maturation refers to the natural process of becoming more mature in one's thinking and behaviour. Development involves the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable individuals to function effectively in society. I relate this understanding to my own Headship stages of growth, including the behaviour and emotions that occurred for me in my first stage of Headship as shared in Chapter 3.

A further important link to my Element framework, influenced by Dearden, is the importance of readiness in education: individuals must be developmentally ready to learn new skills and knowledge. He believed that teachers should take into account the individual needs and abilities of their students and adjust their teaching methods accordingly. This approach, according to Dearden, would promote effective learning outcomes and help students to reach their full potential. For me this also applies to Headteachers: we need to be developmentally ready to learn new skills and understandings and our learning needs to be personalised to each individual to create Capabilities. This approach helps me in answering Nussbaum's question. The entire undertaking of this Dissertation is the search for new learning and understanding as I explore my own educational growth through inquiry to become a better school leader. I aim to make sense of my own world in all of the spaces in which I operate, including the spaces between home and school. Following Nussbaum (2011, p. 15) with respect to her Capabilities list, I recognise that my list of Elements is not final but open to change, maturation, and my own readiness. For example, Element 4 was initially fixed as 'knowledge', but I changed it to 'understandings' as I realised that knowledge could imply something fixed and limit my freedoms of choice and functionings.

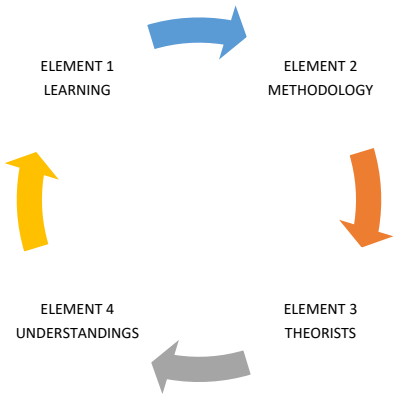
Throughout this Dissertation and my stages of Headship, I have used lenses to highlight and pay attention to what other experienced eyes may notice as significant in my life and the societies in which I live and work. I have tried to educate and refine my judgment by being open to others, by searching for new learning and understandings, and by continuing to do so.

My Element Framework (Figure 1) is designed to support my analysis of my journey through Headship and to answer the question - What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher? This is an important question to help me make sense of my lived experience and allow growth in personal maturation, personal development, and readiness to lead. In the next section, I outline the Elements and their relationship to my stages of Headship.

The Elements

Figure 1

The Element Framework



Element 1 – Learning

The first Element of my Dissertation focuses on my learning as a Primary School Headteacher in my own context, with a specific focus on what I have done and the meanings behind my actions. To ensure that my own biases are considered and that I acknowledge interpretative filters to prevent my personal limitations from stymying my learning, I use Brookfield's Four Lenses for Critical Reflection (Brookfield, 2017, p. 66-77). These lenses offer a prismed approach to my reflection of the context and background of each of the three stages of my development in Headship.

The four lenses of critical reflection were first introduced in Stephen Brookfield's 'Becoming A Critically Reflective Teacher' in 1995 and they have been widely used in the field of education since then. The four lenses are: students' eyes, colleagues' perceptions, theory, and personal experience (Brookfield, 2017, p. 66-77). I have chosen to use them in a different order as I wanted to use my personal experience as the context and background in each Chapter to set the scene, following Wolcott (1973) and Southworth's (1995) case studies. In

each Chapter, I therefore set the scene with personal experience, followed by students' eyes, colleagues' perceptions and, finally, theory.

To illustrate my journey of reflexivity as a Headteacher, I provide below an example from my own experience (Sticky note 1). As I considered Element 1 and my maturation of learning over time, I have been able to develop as a Headteacher and grow towards a new stage of readiness. Through reflecting on my experiences and the feedback I have received, I have gained a deeper understanding of my strengths and weaknesses as a leader. This has allowed me to identify areas for growth and development, and to work towards improving my skills and understanding. The presentation of the autoethnographic example below is followed throughout the Dissertation and so each example is inserted in a box with the use of a font different from the body of the text.

Sticky note 1

One significant moment for me was reading Chandra Talpade Mohanty's paper 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses' (1988). In her paper, Mohanty criticised Western feminism for its tendency to essentialise and homogenise the experiences of non-Western women. She argued that this approach perpetuates colonial discourses and reinforces the power dynamics between the West and the non-West. Mohanty's paper called for a more nuanced and culturally sensitive approach to understanding gendered experiences in different cultures, one that recognises the diversity of experiences and agency of non-Western women.

This paper made me realise my ignorance and guilt of appropriation and codification of scholarship and knowledge, fitting Mohanty's classification of a western feminist. I had the bias and was guilty of making the same assumptions Mohanty described, seeing others' experiences from my own Western feminist viewpoint and personal thoughts. However, my perspective was shaped by more than just being a Western feminist. My upbringing in a Western and Indian family exacerbated my assumptions. My parents had decided to raise my sisters and me in the local culture to help us fit in with our peers. As a result, I believed this was the way it should be for everyone. My dad's religion was like a secret, and I remember being shocked when I caught him praying one time because I had never seen him do this before. At that point, I had many questions but did not have the voice or words to ask them.

I only recently discovered why my heritage was excluded from conversation - it was because my dad had been involved in the partition in India and this had a strong effect on him. This experience was similar to Amartya Sen's childhood experience[3] in the garden with the dying Muslim. I questioned my father about this repeatedly, inspired by Mohanty's and Sen's narratives. My father shared his narrative with me in written form

[3] https://thewire.in/rights/amartya-sen-economics-of-disaster-class-covid-19

days before he died. I had told him that people thought I was ashamed of who I was because I did not know anything about my family and that they believed I was lying because I was embarrassed by being half-Indian. Growing up this was true to a degree, but mainly because it was not a conversation within the family and was not a regular point of conversation in the community with others. Additionally, this was not a conversation I could have had with my mum, who was very closed and had no interest in my dad's culture. She was closed to other cultures and became angry when I asked. Home language played a part too, as my mother was a stay-at-home mum who spoke only English and shared her Christian beliefs with us.

My mixed heritage was never shared with me, and I feel profoundly sad about that now. Equally, I am ashamed of myself for being complicit in the erasure of my own identity. Until I read Mohanty's narrative, I had never considered that there could be another possible truth. This uncomfortable realisation was a crucial moment of maturation for me, reminding me to be more aware of alternative interpretations in my account of how schools develop based on the norms and possible biases in their cultures. I had blindly argued from my own position and I now recognise that, although well-meaning, this was probably the wrong position. My perspective also aligned with others, as colleagues often described me as a 'coconut: white on the inside and brown on the outside'. I never took offence to this, but I realise now that it meant I had been assimilated into the group and recognised as similar in beliefs and values.

As a Headteacher, I had assumed cultural traditions were being forced onto women from other cultures by male influences, overlooking the agency and choices of non-Western women. Mohanty's critique made me recognise that my assumptions may have been oversimplified and that other factors beyond just male influences may have informed these choices. My own experiences as a mixed-race child growing up in Scotland have informed my worldview, and Mohanty's paper has reminded me of the need for cultural sensitivity and nuance in understanding gendered and racialised experiences in different cultures.

Sticky note 1 is revisited in the Methodology and First Stage of Headship Chapters where I expand on my reflection above in regard to trustworthiness and reliability and my relationships with peers.

As a school Head, I suggest that it is important to take the time to explore and learn from using the four critical lenses for reflection (Brookfield, 2017, p. 66-77) in a community. Undertaking this type of critical reflection also reminds me of the privilege of my opportunities for learning and opening up learning for others. It is essential to recognise that I have excellent access to learning, which is a privilege I have not always fully appreciated or recognised. Moreover, I considered access to learning opportunities the norm for all based on my sphere of experience in the Scottish education system.

Using the four lenses for critical reflection (Brookfield, 2017, p. 66-77), I consider each stage of my Headship development, with a keen eye, as noted, on my biases and limitations. Furthermore, this type of critical reflection allows me to recognise and address the possible biases held by others (Headteachers) in and affected by the same blind spots I had growing up, being educated and accepting in our societal norms in Scotland as the aspirational norms, and then expecting everyone to aspire to the same ideas. Undertaking this type of critical reflection has been invaluable in my personal and professional growth. As a Headteacher, I must continue to engage in this type of critical reflection for the care of my community, to find out what is present regarding cultural and social phenomena, and allow for my maturation, development, and readiness to continue to grow in my learning.

Element 2 – Methodology

In Element 2 of the Dissertation, I use the personal experiences and learning reflections from Element 1 to gain insight into the cultural and social phenomena present in my Headship. Influenced by Denzin (2014), I embrace the idea that something new is always coming into sight, displacing what was previously certain and seen. There is no truth in the painting of life, only multiple images and traces of what has been, what could have been, and what now is. The subject matter of interpretative autoethnography is the life experiences and performances of a person (Denzin, 2014, p. 14). As I move through my three developmental stages of Headship, I gain new understandings and skills in combining elements of autobiography and ethnography to create a narrative-based approach to understanding my own subjective experiences within the cultural context of school leadership. Using the research method of autoethnography, I explore my own experiences and perspectives while also aiming to contribute to broader social and cultural understandings presented by the multiple images and traces of what has been (Denzin, 2014, p. 14). I use the work of my key theorists, Brookfield (2005), Ellis (2004), and Nussbaum (2011), to support my learning and this critical reflection process. Their key texts help me unpack my own life experiences and my performances as a Headteacher in my stories shared across the stages of development.

By reflecting on my own experiences, I aim to provide a nuanced understanding of the complexities of Headship and social phenomena. Using an autoethnographic method allows me to follow the elements of my stories to give meaning and structure to this Dissertation as a

person and the arbitrator of my own presence in the world as the Headteacher. It gives meaning and shape to the life I lead. Through this process, I aim to join the dots between my life, my representation of that, my epiphanies, and my interpretations. By taking a personal and reflective approach, I hope to provide a deeper understanding of the cultural and social phenomena present in my Headship. This approach also allows me to incorporate my own experiences and perspectives, which may be overlooked in more traditional research methods. I believe that using autoethnography allows me to provide a more holistic and nuanced understanding of my Headship journey. By embracing the multiple images and traces of what has been, I can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of Headship and the cultural and social phenomena present in my context. I am further influenced by Wall (2016, p. 1) in working 'Toward a moderate autoethnography' which offers:

> a moderate and balanced treatment of autoethnography that allows for innovation, imagination, and the representation of a range of voices in qualitative inquiry while also sustaining confidence in the quality, rigor, and usefulness of academic research.

This Dissertation's methodology choice was influenced strongly by Nussbaum's use of narrative to show how Capabilities make a difference in others' lives (2011, p. xi). Nussbaum states:

> Human beings need to see themselves as bound to other human beings by ties of recognition and concern. They need the ability to think about what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the wishes and desires that someone so placed might have. (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 11)

I recognise that my interpretation of events in the stories in this Dissertation are, of course, only one way of understanding what could be going on, and others will bring their reflexivity and lived experiences to the narratives I present and reflect for themselves on, possibly, different interpretations.

> Autoethnographic work is interventionist and seeks to give notice to those who may otherwise not be allowed to tell their story or who are denied a voice to speak. (Denzin, 2014, p. 6)

There are conventions to autoethnographies which are narrative expressions of life experiences. These ethical conventions are explored more broadly in Chapter 2 and include

the problematic presuppositions which serve to define the autoethnographic method as a distinct approach to the study of human experience. Element 2 is fundamental to articulating my leadership journey and development, particularly with respect to 'Senses, Imagination and Thought', Nussbaum's Capability 4, and my capacity to use 'Practical Reason', Nussbaum's Capability 6 which, in turn, supported and was supported by 'Affiliation', Nussbaum's Capability 7 (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 33). Additionally, Element 2 and the autoethnographic approach used allowed me to prism my experiences of Headship to consider events and reactions from different angles in support of my aim to be reflexive and to consider a range of possibilities. This was, frequently, very uncomfortable. Looking into a prism can be challenging when we do not like what we see or are forced to consider a different view from the one originally held. I think of the Headteacher Ed Bells here and his reflection on Wolcott's (1973) study of him and how it forced him to 'take a closer look at himself' (Wolcott, 2003, p ix). I have, like Ed, had to take a closer look at myself using Element 2. This was challenging and emotional but I regard Element 2 as essential to my Headship Journey and my developmental stages. My journal entries are signposted in Chapter 2 and as part of my methodology and they hold the narratives of my personal challenges and emotions. These journal entries are shared throughout this Dissertation but most notably in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 where I explicitly focus on my development as a Headteacher.

In Chapter 2 of the Dissertation, I focus on the methodology of the study and my journey with the autoethnographic method over time. This methodology is relevant to each Chapter of the Dissertation because it plays a crucial role in telling my journey. As my understanding and use of the autoethnographic method evolved, so did the narrative of the Dissertation. It was a struggle to find my autoethnographic voice and this is likely to continue evolving with future writing.

To support my autoethnographic journey, I drew heavily on Caroline Ellis's (2004) 'The Ethnographic I, a Methodological Novel about Autoethnography'. Ellis's influence is particularly notable in Chapter 5, where I discuss the third stage of Headship Development and the gradual increase in my confidence to use autoethnography. The transformative influence and difference that Ellis's (2004) methodological novel made to my capacity to use and understand the autoethnographic method in context and in research is profound.
This transformation led to the creation of Element 3, which focuses on the importance of theory and allowed me to bring together all four elements of the study to provide a deeper

understanding of the leadership challenges and opportunities within my school community and to consider effective leadership practices to address them.

Element 3 – Theorists

This study has been strongly influenced by three theorists in particular, each of whom had a critical influence on each of the three stages of my development. These theorists drive the theoretical lenses in each stage: Brookfield (2005, 2017) in Stage One, Nussbaum (2000, 2011) in Stage Two, and Ellis in Stage Three (2004). Element 3 is the theoretical lens used over time to acknowledge the journey through my EdD and to analyse how the lenses have changed the understanding and original perceptions in my Headteacher journey. Element 3 has supported my reflection on professional practice issues by grounding the specific narratives in the work of, particularly but not exclusively, the three theorists noted above. I used the theory at each stage in my Headteacher Development to analyse critical, ethical, and moral challenges and so drew on these theories as ethical guides to problems I encountered in order to seek understanding. Accordingly, the theories were used to support an ethical consciousness during the iterative process and the challenges and pleasures encountered in my professional practice at each stage. The Capabilities Approach has enabled, indeed forced, me to use practical reasoning to find ways to work and this, in turn, allowed me to flourish even when challenged and at times unhappy in particular contexts. All three theorists combined have impacted my lived experience and have been fundamental to building my understanding of Capabilities thereby enabling the leadership journey recounted here to have different outcomes, with different understandings, from those initially experienced at the start of my Headships.

Martha Nussbaum (2004, 2011) and her Capabilities Approach (usually CA from this point forward) is this study's most dominant theorist and theory. Without her influence, I believe I would not have a focus on wellbeing and flourishing for all I do in school leadership. She has grounded my idea of the 'third space' for me with respect to helping to make sense of everything in my life. I always return to her central Capabilities and overall CA approach (2011, pp. 33-34) when thinking through school-based matters. While acknowledging Nussbaum's dominance in this study, all three theorists come together in each Chapter to help open up Element 4 which focusses on my understandings over time. Brookfield's lenses (2005, p. 29) and Ellis' (2004) methodology have become critical to supporting the analysis

of the ethical challenges emerging from my own assumptions. This is why Elements 1 and 2 of the framework are so essential to the whole framework. As noted, the Headship journey is an iterative process for me as a learner. Nussbaum implies that it takes time to tie all the elements of her CA theory together and to interconnect them, deriving illumination and clarity from each (2011, p. 29). This applies to this research and has influenced how the Element framework of this study was developed. It has also influenced how the three iterative stages of leadership development have grown through illumination and clarity from each other, especially in the recognition of the development with an understanding of the CA in context.

With respect to her approach, Nussbaum (2011, p 31) states the following.

> The Capabilities Approach, in my version, focuses on the protection of areas of freedom so central that their removal makes a life not worthy of human dignity.

The quote above suggests that protecting individual freedoms and Capabilities is fundamental to human well-being and dignity. It emphasises the need to ensure that certain areas of freedom are protected, so that their removal does not result in a life which is not worthy of human dignity.

> Therefore what does a life worthy of human dignity require?
>
> At a bare minimum, an ample threshold level of ten Central Capabilities is required. (Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 32-34, and see Appendix 4)

The second quote above suggests that a life worthy of human dignity requires at least an adequate threshold level of the ten Central Capabilities. These Capabilities include access to education, healthcare, and political and social participation. In the context of my study of Headship, these quotes for me suggest that Headteachers have an important role to play in supporting and enhancing the Capabilities and freedoms of their students, teachers, and staff. By focusing on the protection and expansion of individual Capabilities and freedoms, I explore the creation of an inclusive and equitable learning environment that promotes human dignity and well-being in my school.

The Capabilities Approach (CA) and list has become fundamental to me and to the application of, and reflection on, my Dissertation. This supports me in my work context. I find myself reading sections of this Dissertation in day-to-day activity in school and have shared some of the journal entries to support others to see things from a different angle. The Capabilities list is not an adjunct to the Dissertation and neither is the Dissertation an adjunct to my work. Rather the CA is important in helping me consider my day-to-day work as a Headteacher and so is detailed in this first Chapter.

The Capabilities Approach.

Martha Nussbaum (2011, p. xii) argues that the CA is a counter to the dominant economic and political theories that prioritise economic growth, efficiency, and individual freedom above social justice and human well-being. According to Nussbaum, these theories have contributed to urgent human problems and unjustifiable human inequalities, such as poverty, discrimination, and environmental degradation (Nussbaum, 2011, p. xii). Nussbaum contends that the CA represents a new way of thinking about social and economic development that prioritises human well-being and social justice. The CA emphasises the importance of promoting individual Capabilities as a means of promoting human well-being and social justice, and it recognises that individuals have different needs and aspirations that cannot be reduced to economic or political factors alone. Furthermore, the CA recognises that social and economic development must be sustainable and environmentally responsible, and it calls for a holistic and integrated approach to development that takes into account the complex interconnections between social, economic, and environmental factors.

Nussbaum (2011, p. xii) argues that the CA provides a comprehensive and ethical framework for addressing urgent human problems and unjustifiable human inequalities and, as noted above, she asks the questions, 'What are people actually able to do and to be? What real opportunities are available to them?' (2011, p. x). This question, though apparently simple, is also complex Nussbaum explains, since the quality of human life involves multiple elements whose relationship to one another needs close study (Nussbaum, 2011, p. x). Nussbaum states that all nations are developing nations and each nation contains problems of human development and struggles for an adequate quality of life with dignity and opportunities for all. Nussbaum suggests the CA allows insight into these struggles (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 16). She uses the plural term 'Capabilities' in order to emphasise that

the most important elements of people's quality of life are plural and qualitatively distinct (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18). This idea, the notion that these are plural and cannot be reduced to a single metric, has implications for my own Element framework. I sought to ensure the Elements were iterative to enable me as an individual to consider myself as an end, looking not just at my wellbeing but also at the opportunities available to me and, of course, to others.

The notions of freedoms and the idea of opportunities and choices in which I may or not be able to act in school leadership became important for me to consider in my role and capacity for self-definition. I consider the narratives here of Ron in Southworth's (1995) ethnography and Ed in Wolcott's (1973) study and the Capabilities and achievements which they held as important to them. These are different from my own, which is almost inevitable as individuals cannot be reduced to wanting the same things, while we can have an understanding of what is important to each of us and look at the similarities we share as individuals and school leaders. Each of us as school leaders has been and is confronted with and concerned with social justice in our communities and our responsibilities to improve our communities for all. We, as public actors, are defined by our own Capabilities in our school and by the opportunities our schools provide to enable others to flourish. All school leaders share the pressures of dealing with ascribed public policy and all have our own ways of managing these and our own personal pressures.

Nussbaum (2011, p. 21) describes our own capacities as a combination of personal abilities and the political, social, and economic environment in which we make choices using our own freedoms and opportunities, outlining why it is important to distinguish internal Capabilities from combined Capabilities in the light of our own capacities as individuals. In the CA, internal Capabilities are a person's innate abilities, such as reasoning and emotions. Combined Capabilities, on the other hand, are a person's capacity to function effectively in the world by combining their internal Capabilities with external resources and opportunities, such as education and social support. Essentially, internal Capabilities are a person's potential, while combined Capabilities are what enable them to realise that potential and lead a fulfilled life.

> The distinction corresponds to two overlapping but distinct tasks of the decent society. A society might do quite well at producing internal capabilities but might cut off the avenues through which people actually have the opportunity to function in accordance with those capabilities. Many societies educate people so that they are capable of free speech on political matters – internally - but then deny them free expression in practice through repression of speech. (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 22)

As a Headteacher and because combined Capabilities are defined as internal Capabilities plus the social/political/economic conditions in which functioning can actually be chosen, it is not possible for me to think of a school without considering how to ensure combined Capabilities which allow the realisation of internal Capabilities for staff and students. I could, however, imagine a school as described by Southworth (1995) in which Headteachers do not have time to critically self-examine. That school might do well in creating contexts for choice in many areas but would not educate its students or nourish the development of their powers of mind by giving them agency or freedoms. This would make sense to me if the Headteacher does not have the freedom for self-examination and criticality.

This leads me to consider the role of functioning. Martha Nussbaum's CA emphasises the importance of promoting individual functioning as a means of promoting human well-being and social justice. According to Nussbaum, functioning refers to the actualisation or realisation of an individual's Capabilities in a particular context or circumstance. In her view, Capabilities are the necessary conditions for individuals to achieve well-being, but functioning is what actually determines whether individuals are able to achieve well-being in practice. For example, an individual may have the capability to express themselves freely, but if they are in a context where free expression is not valued or encouraged, that functioning may be limited, and they may not be able to achieve well-being in practice. Nussbaum argues that promoting individuals' functioning requires creating social and political conditions that enable individuals to exercise their Capabilities and achieve well-being. This may involve removing or mitigating social, economic, or political constraints that limit individuals' choices and opportunities and social justice and equality.

One of Nussbaum's most often cited quotes that illustrates the importance of functioning is:

> What is important is not just that people have the capability to do valuable things, but that they actually do them, that they function in valuable ways. (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 26)

Overall, Nussbaum's CA emphasises the importance of both Capabilities and functioning in promoting human well-being and social justice. By promoting individuals' Capabilities and creating social and political conditions that enable individuals to exercise their Capabilities and achieve well-being, societies can promote greater equality, freedom, and dignity for all individuals.

In Nussbaum's CA (2000, 2011), the notion of freedom to choose is built into the concept of Capabilities. Capabilities represent the essential freedoms and opportunities that individuals need to achieve well-being and exercise their agency. These Capabilities are valuable because they enable individuals to have the opportunity to select and make choices about their lives. Nussbaum emphasises that the CA should not prescribe a particular way of life or a specific set of choices for individuals. Instead, the focus should be on promoting individuals' Capabilities, and then allowing individuals to make their own choices and pursue their own goals and aspirations. This means that individuals should be free to determine their own course of life after their Capabilities have been promoted and supported. However, Nussbaum also recognises that individuals may face various constraints and limitations that prevent them from exercising their Capabilities and achieving well-being. These constraints may be imposed by society, in the form of social, economic, or political limitations, and they may limit individuals' choices and opportunities. Therefore, Nussbaum (2000, 2011) argues that it is the responsibility of society to remove or mitigate these constraints and promote social justice and equality.

In the context of school leadership, Headteachers' essential freedoms might, I suggest, include the following.

1. Freedom to express oneself: School leaders should be able to express their thoughts, opinions, and ideas without fear of reprisal or retaliation.
2. Freedom to learn and grow: School leaders should have access to professional development opportunities that enable them to develop their knowledge, skills, and competencies.
3. Freedom to form meaningful relationships: School leaders should be able to form supportive and collaborative relationships with teachers, staff, students, and parents.

4. Freedom to participate in decision-making processes: School leaders should be able to participate in decision-making processes that affect their work and the school community.
5. Freedom to access resources: School leaders should have access to the resources and support they need to effectively carry out their responsibilities, such as budgetary resources, administrative support, and technological resources.

By recognising and supporting Headteachers' essential freedoms, schools can create a culture of support and collaboration that promotes the well-being of all individuals. Additionally, by promoting the Capabilities of Headteachers, schools can enhance their effectiveness and promote educational equity and social justice. Related to such ideas, Element 3 also enabled me to incorporate key educational organisational theorists such as Fullan (2014), Hargreaves (2012), Kemmis (2008, 2023) and Sergiovanni (2007), and to ground my educational leadership reflections and insights within a broader theoretical framework in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 and I turn now to the fourth final Element.

Element 4 – Understandings

I understand learning ‘as an education fitted for the freedom of your mind to explore wherever you want to go’. This definition is constructed from my own understandings from different EdD courses and from the assignments I wrote during the taught stages of my Doctorate. It is also influenced by my Trial study in year three of the EdD, in which I considered Headteacher autonomy, influenced by Dearden (1972) and also Nussbaum (1997). An education ‘fitted for human freedom’ can only be achieved, Nussbaum argues, if it produces citizens ‘who are not free because of wealth or birth, but because they can call their minds their own’ (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 293). Nussbaum judges the equal right to educational benefits as ‘inherent in the equal dignity of persons’, believing education to have a pivotal role in securing human development and opportunity with learning focused on a person’s capability ‘to do the things that they have reason to value’ (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 154). In turn, teaching provides the chance to intervene positively and respectfully in other people’s lives (Freire, 1968, p. 65), and to promote the life-changing possibilities of education for young people, regardless of socio-economic status.

Element 4 for me allows all of the four Elements to come together to produce understandings as a Headteacher and so Element 4 is, in that respect, an interim conclusion always leading back into Element 1 and the next steps in my agency and process as a developing Headteacher in my context. My Element framework, shared in figure 1, is now a key part of my reflexive thinking. It is designed to enable my Headship to support learning fit for the freedom of my mind to explore wherever I want to go and to dream of new dimensions in my 'third space' in which I seek to make sense of things. However, at the same time, the framework grounds me, theoretically and methodologically, in the realities of the contexts of my lived experience, allowing me to flourish and to make choices in my role as a Headteacher.

The Element framework serves as my practice tool, enabling me to be a persistently reflexive school leader who grounds the ethical and moral dimensions of my work and research. Through this framework, I am able to establish boundaries for myself and remain focused on promoting social justice in my school. At the heart of my leadership values are practices that promote human well-being, and the Element framework supports my educational growth by providing scaffolding to make sense of my Headships and leadership growth over time. As I reflect on my Headship story in this Dissertation, I have organised it into three main stages, which are outlined below. The Element framework plays a crucial role in each stage, helping me to navigate the challenges and opportunities that arise along the way. By using the Element framework as my guide, I seek to remain grounded in my values and principles, and to continually reflect on my practice as a school leader.

The Stages

Stage One is focused on the start of my Headteacher journey when I was newly appointed in 2013. This stage sets the scene for my growth as a Headteacher as a process connected with learning. In Chapter 3, I describe feeling caught inside a closed loop, which I explain there. At this point, I was following policies and directions from those in positions of power and responsibility without questioning them. I refer to myself as a conventional Headteacher during this stage and I begin my EdD journey in Stage One.

The transition to Stage Two came when I started to feel vulnerable as a school leader and felt frustrated at my inability to articulate this within my professional context. Using 'The

Four Critical Lenses' (Brookfield, 2017, pp. 61-77), I began to see things differently and started to understand why I felt out of the loop. Stage Two is the focus of Chapter 4, where I describe my journey as an evolving Headteacher from 2016, based on liberal approaches to education and influenced by early readings of Nussbaum's (2011) 'Creating Capabilities' and my EdD learning.

Stage Three focuses on my journey as an experienced Headteacher from 2019, taking on a new Headship and a change of country. During this stage, I encountered social unrest, a global pandemic, and bereavement. I gained understandings and felt a sense of maturation in my journey as a Headteacher, supported by the Elements and the Capabilities framework that had been scaffolded through my EdD and working with different theorists over time. As noted above, Caroline Ellis' (2004) 'The Ethnographic I' was particularly helpful, and I used her appended activities to unpack phenomena in both my Headteacher work and writing. Stage Three is the focus of Chapter 5.

In summary, the four Elements of the framework are iterative and scaffold the Dissertation in each Chapter. The three stages of development are also iterative and related to each other, with each stage having its own Chapter. Together, the Stages and Elements represent my ongoing growth and development as a Headteacher.

Overview of the Dissertation

The purpose of this Dissertation is to tell the story of my journey in Headship, and each Chapter is scaffolded by four Elements used as a framework to support my engagement with the CA as articulated by Nussbaum (2011). In sum, in Element 1, I use Brookfield's (2017, pp. 61-77) Critical Lenses for Reflection, while in Element 2, I focus on the autoethnographic method to challenge my own assumptions and bring into focus any blind spots. In Element 3, I focus on theory and the key influences on my educational growth in each stage of Headship, while, in Element 4, I examine the understandings gained by using the Element framework as an iterative approach to build my Capabilities and move into my next stage of development and Headteacher growth. Chapter 2 examines my journey in learning and using the method of autoethnography, including key methodological challenges such as ethical and stylistic writing considerations. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 provide an in-depth consideration of the three

stages of my Headteacher development: the new Headteacher, the evolving Headteacher, and the experienced Headteacher. In Chapter 6, I compare my understanding of Headship with the experiences of others and address the uncertainties on maturation raised by Southworth (1995, p. 219) as follows.

1. What does it mean to be a mature Headteacher?
2. How can Headteachers develop their maturity?
3. What are the risks and benefits of Headteachers engaging in critical self-reflection?
4. How can Headteachers negotiate the tensions between their own values and the expectations of others?
5. How can Headteachers balance the need for autonomy with the need for collaboration and accountability? (Southworth, 1995, p. 219)

These questions are important to consider as I reflect on my own development and growth, and as I navigate the complex and often challenging landscape of Headship. By engaging with these questions and reflecting on my own practice, I am seeking a deeper understanding of myself and my role in order to work towards becoming a more effective and mature leader. I also in Chapter 6 outline tentative recommendations for practice, having noted the limitations of my study.

Finally, I provide an analysis of my understanding of this Dissertation and reflexively consider the next stage in my Headteacher journey and my ongoing elemental development in regard to my educational growth and readiness to lead. As I conclude this Dissertation, I recognise the importance of continuing to reflect on my practice, to challenge my assumptions, and to engage critically as a Headteacher in articulating my own insider voice. While the journey has not always been easy, as shared in stages of development Chapters 3, 4, and 5, I have grown and developed as a Headteacher, and I am grateful for the opportunity to share my story hoping it might be of some use to fellow and aspiring Headteachers and to the field of school leadership.

Chapter 2 Methodology

> As an autoethnographer, I am both the author and focus of the story, the one who tells and the one who experiences, the observer and the observed … . I am the person at the intersection of the personal and the cultural, thinking and observing as an ethnographer and writing and describing as a story teller. (Ellis, 2009, p. 13)

This Dissertation employs autoethnography, a qualitative research approach that blends personal narrative with cultural analysis, to explore the researcher's lived experiences and the cultural meanings and practices that shape them (Denzin, 2014; Ellis and Bochner, 2000). This Chapter provides a detailed account of the research design, data collection process, and data analysis process that were employed in this study, with a focus on the principles and practices of autoethnography (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). The Chapter also explores the ethical considerations that were taken into account during the research process and reflects on the limitations of the approach following Denzin (2014). Examples are provided to illustrate how autoethnography was used as a research method and to demonstrate the connections between my experiences and broader cultural or social phenomena (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). The Chapter concludes by discussing the implications of the research and the significance of autoethnography as a valuable and insightful research method (Denzin, 2014; Ellis and Bochner, 2000). With regard to the type of autoethnography adopted for this Dissertation, I draw from Wall (2016, p. 1) and use a moderate and balanced treatment of autoethnography that allows for innovation, imagination, and the representation of a range of voices in qualitative inquiry while also sustaining confidence in the quality, rigor, and usefulness of academic research.

Introduction

The research design has taken many forms as I have taken my time to understand my method and methodology. It has been challenging to situate myself and others in the social context of a self-narrative and to critique my positionality. There are different forms of autoethnography but all are a form of self-narrative (Reed-Danahay, 1997; Spry, 2001, p. 710). In 'Interpretive Autoethnography', Denzin (2014, p. 19) summarises the key features of autoethnography as a research approach. He draws from the ideas of prominent theorists including Reed-Danahay (1997), Spry (2001), Ellis (2009), Neumann (1996), Anderson

(2006), Holman-Jones (2005), and Holman-Jones, Adams, and Ellis (2013), to identify the following key features of autoethnography.

- It is a form of self-narrative that combines personal experience with cultural analysis (Reed-Danahay, 1997; Spry, 2001).
- It is reflexive and critically examines the researcher's relationship to the culture being studied (Ellis, 2009).
- It is performative and engages the reader in an emotional and intellectual experience (Anderson, 2006).
- It is transformative and seeks to make a contribution to the field of research and to the lives of those involved in the research (Holman-Jones, 2005; Holman-Jones, Adams, & Ellis, 2013).
- It is ethical and respects the rights and dignity of all participants involved in the research process. (Neumann, 1996, in Denzin, 2014, p. 19).

Throughout this Dissertation, as outlined in the last Chapter, I consistently use the Element framework to scaffold and articulate my development as a Headteacher via autoethnography. Working toward a moderate autoethnography (Wall, 2016) I aim to show my educational growth and my developed understandings by using this interpretative qualitative methodology focused on the realities as I understood them in the schools in which I worked; representing a range of voices and allowing for imagination and innovation.

Initially, it was challenging to fully understand autoethnography given the various forms it can take and the extent of ethical quandaries which could be present for me and others. Because my selected theory of Capabilities has its grounding philosophy ‘of each person as an end’ (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 35), it was important to make a considered effort to understand my own experiences from the perspective of others in order to be a ‘socially just’ Headteacher. This meant that it was important to articulate a research philosophy of ‘a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge’ (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 124). I aimed to take this system of beliefs about knowledge and use it as an ideal to complement my Element framework with my understandings to be applied to any learning I have gained and linked to my sense, imagination and thought in my ‘Third Space’. This third space is my safe space in which to be creative and experiment (Whitchurch, 2010), unbound by the ‘rules and resources’ (Giddens, 1991) inherited from one or another space. While drawing mainly on theorists, Nussbaum included, who work mainly in the liberal education tradition, this Dissertation also draws on a postmodern lens, particularly in regard

to the spaces where I work, where people come together and the maturation of the self over time, taken from my understandings of Sheehy (1974), Giddens (1991), Soja (1996) and Kemmis (2008).

My research is grounded in my values and my desire to align with Nussbaum's Capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 33-34), which means that I cannot separate myself from that research. I approach my community's needs from the perspective of the CA list and work my way out to broader contexts. Because of this, my research could be considered subjective and interpretive and so it is important to be reflexive. I aim to contribute to the body of knowledge on school Headship from an insider's perspective, as both observer and participant. This further reinforces the idea that the research and researcher cannot be separated, and I acknowledge the role of tacit knowledge, that is implicit rather than explicit knowledge, in my study. As Polanyi (1966, p. 4) notes, tacit knowledge plays a crucial role in understanding hidden processes and components within organisations including, here, the schools in which I have worked. I am mindful of my biases in writing, as was Wolcott (1973, p. 319) who highlighted his struggle to manage his own biases. Accordingly, I do not take my tacit knowledge as a 'ring true' (Garman, 1994) account but rather use the idea that 'we can know more than we can tell' (Polanyi, 1966, p. 4) to tell my own lived experience and reflect and set this alongside relevant theory, the Elements, and my own Stages of educational growth in my school Headship journey.

I now use autoethnography as methodology and interpretative as the paradigm or underpinning approach. I take comfort reading both Southworth's (1995) and Wolcott's (2003, 1973) ethnographies of individual Headteachers with respect to the challenges they both faced when working ethically with this type of method but also the challenges they face by not being the actual Headteacher. I refer directly to Wolcott's Headteacher Ed Bell's reflection on the totality of Wolcott's study (1973) and Wolcott's (2003) reflection on Ed Bell's reflection. Ed was concerned that learnings from the study were at cross-purposes with regard to being a Headteacher and the problems which Headteachers face as conveyed in the writing. Headteachers have the commitment to resolve and eliminate problems and in juxtaposition, Wolcott (2003, p, 317) was keen to find problems and explore how Headteachers go about solving them. This raises wellbeing issues for the Headteacher when you feel personal vulnerability within your profession and within your peer group. I was glad to read Ed Bells' view (Wolcott, 2003, p. 318) of the ethical dilemma he faced. As an insider

he expressed his hope and confidence that others would find the completed text useful although he did admit a degree of distress because he felt the narrative of his Headship left him feeling that he was portrayed as weak (Wolcott, 2003, p. 318). I share this vulnerability, the vulnerability as a Headteacher, and frequently I have questioned how comfortable I am in sharing my thoughts, perspectives and emotions, especially as they pertain to me as a Headteacher and my interactions with others and how these may be interpreted by the reader. I do not want to put people off a job I love and neither did Ed in Wolcott's study. I am thankful that he did allow Wolcott to share the limitations of our job as this allows us to access the potential limitations of the position in terms of 'individual personalities, capabilities and aspirations' (Wolcott, 2003, p. 318). This also meant I felt narrative empathy for Ed and affiliation with his story and so I turn now to the first Element, Learning, as it applies to my method.

Element 1 – Learning

Personal experience

The data collection process and writing autoethnography have, as I have already noted, been more challenging than I anticipated. As a school teacher who enjoys telling stories, I assumed that the process would be unproblematic, but I was wrong. My personal experience with autoethnographic research and my choice to write as an interpretive researcher has been challenging. This is partly due to the volume of processing required and the layering of techniques necessary in autoethnography, but it is also due to the difficulty of knowing where and how to begin. I have made several attempts at the method and have read extensively about the different types of autoethnography that can be used and the ethical issues that can arise from using such a method. Despite this, I still struggled with how to deal with my own lived experiences in a meaningful way. Denzin (2014) notes that autoethnography requires a reflexive awareness of the researcher's positionality and subjectivity and that this can be both challenging and transformative. Bochner and Ellis (2014) note that autoethnography often involves a struggle to balance the personal and the cultural and to negotiate the boundaries between the two. Similarly, Holman Jones (2005) suggest that autoethnography often involves a complex interplay between personal experience, cultural analysis, and reflexivity, making it a challenging but rewarding research approach.

Bochner and Ellis state:

> Autoethnography brought heightened attention to human suffering, injustice, trauma, subjectivity, feelings, and loss; encouraged the development of reflexive and creative methodologies through which to navigate the landscape of lived experience; and legitimated unconventional forms of documenting and expressing personal experience in literary, lyrical, poetic, and performative ways. (Bochner and Ellis, 2016, p. 45)

Bochner and Ellis's quote resonated with me as I found myself writing about my own trauma related experiences and reading of others' experiences of suffering. This raised emotions and passions in me which had to be worked through and this took time. I had to write through many lived experiences and try and make sense of these outflowing expressions of myself. I stored these narratives electronically and in a personal notebook which I have not used in this Dissertation although some themes do pertain. I had to remain true to the Dissertation focus of a scholarly journey of personal Headship growth and not write a reflection on a therapy process to resolve personal trauma.

Finding the appropriate flow with the autoethnographic method has taken many attempts and drafts of this Dissertation. I found myself, as mentioned above, initially writing about sadness and not connecting to the positive parts of my life where things made more sense and where I had a sense of purpose. Writing clearly with this method was complex because it is a 'form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context. It is both a method and a text' (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 7). This links back to considering what I want readers to know and how I share it. I am always mindful of how things can be represented or interpreted which is explored throughout this Dissertation in Chapters 3 , 4 and 5 using my data analysis method. Autoethnography requires a great deal of layering of techniques, with many levels of representation in the research process, from reading, analysing, interpreting, telling, and then reflexive attending (Holman Jones, 2005, p. 765). This took me time, and time with all the elements of my life is really difficult to find. I take heart from reading auto/ethnographic researchers such as Wood (2002), Brighthouse and Woods (1999), and Southworth (1995, p. 217), who note that it takes time and space away from our jobs for Headteachers to be critical leaders and to undertake the process of self-examination.

Reflexive attending requires a step back from the writing process to analyse the narratives again to find any new meaning; this demands prolonged and sustained engagement over time (Riessman, 1993, p. 10). For me, this also requires rest and sleep. Often, my senses, imagination, and thoughts come into my mind about my writing in the space between sleep and waking and also when I am driving to work, in empty spaces when I am not focusing but processing. This Chapter tells the story of my personal journey with the autoethnographic method, the repeated unpacking of ethical considerations over time, and the text changing and crafting as required (Adams et al., 2015, p. 10). I also hold tightly to Nussbaum's view of using narrative to show how Capabilities make a difference in what is noticed in others' lives (2011, p. xi). Using theory as a lens for interpretation moves away from the 'ring true' aspects of Headship to a more ethical way of considering others' lives, which I believe is crucial. Autoethnographic researchers such as Holman Jones (2005) and Ellis (2004) stress the importance of reflexivity and self-examination in the autoethnographic process, which aligns with Nussbaum's emphasis on narrative and the ethical considerations of others' lives as an academic researcher, I have come to appreciate the contributions of Martha Nussbaum's work on Capabilities (2000, 2011) and functions to the field of qualitative research. Nussbaum's framework for understanding human well-being through the lens of Capabilities emphasises the importance of individual agency and the need for social conditions that enable people to exercise their Capabilities. This perspective is particularly relevant to autoethnography, which can be seen as a tool for exploring and documenting the ways in which individuals experience and exercise their Capabilities.

Nussbaum's work on Capabilities and functions also highlights the importance of recognising and addressing human vulnerability in political and social discourse. As an early career researcher and Headteacher, I am aware of the potential of my research to shed light on the impact of social policies and institutions on Headteachers and their school communities and to advocate for policies that promote social justice and equality. I am also mindful of Wolcott's (1973, p. 319) reminder about the researcher's personal bias and his own struggle to mitigate his bias around bureaucracy in schools. By using personal experiences as data, autoethnography allows me to gain a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities that shape individual agency and well-being and it can contribute to the development of ethical and moral frameworks for qualitative research. Nussbaum's emphasis on empathy and narrative in ethical decision-making is also relevant to autoethnography. In this Dissertation, I aim to use my personal experiences to cultivate empathy and understanding, and to develop

a more compassionate approach to research and to my role as a Headteacher. Nussbaum's work emphasises the importance of recognising the diversity of human experience and the ways in which vulnerability is shaped by social and cultural factors, which is particularly relevant to autoethnography as a tool for exploring and documenting the ways in which individuals experience and exercise their Capabilities.

Stories are a universal form of communication that can be understood by people from all ages and cultures. As Pinto et al. (2015 p. 553) note, 'regardless of age or culture, we all retell stories we have heard or read that follow a specific pattern'. For me, as an individual who likes to use my senses, imagination, and thought to make sense of the world, the storied way of writing was very appealing. It allowed me, to an extent, to detach and be a character in my own world, which was especially useful when being reflexive. Autoethnography, as a research method, allowed me to see beyond my own lived experiences and to consider the experiences of others who were with me. As Adams et al. (2015, p. 1) note, those in positions of leadership such as Headteachers are responsible for dealing with others' physical experiences, emotions, and ethical concerns. Without the use of autoethnography, I may not have thought as deeply about others in the stories I tell, including how they may have been feeling in relation to some of the things which had actually happened to me and I may not have so carefully reflected on my possible impact on them.

My first attempts with the methods data analysis process were poor, the collections were merely anecdotal and impressionistic. Engaging with autoethnography involved working through the core ideas of the method mostly taken from Ellis (2004) and then working out how to use the method while trying to figure out my Elements and Stages of Development in this Dissertation. As advised by Adams (2015, p. 70), I had to just start the writing process and then try and write a way to completion of a doctoral study.

The collation of my writing and the data collection for this Dissertation started with stories in handwritten journals, bits of paper, narratives in my computer, poetry, blogs, and other forms of personal writing, which I expand on my data collection methods used in Element 2 of this Chapter. I also recorded myself journaling at the end of the day onto my voice to text software of my work computer and this was mostly due to tiredness but also to remove the barriers to getting words down. I was consciously writing about key moments at work and work notes on scraps of paper, memories I had from the past until the everydayness of

writing eventually became a habit. I have work journals and diaries from 2013 to 2023 of my Headships but also from my Depute Headship from 2003 to 2013 stored in my work office. These journals do not have the names of others but do contain summaries of key thoughts, points of interest, interactions, or to do lists. For this Dissertation I have three separate journals explicitly used from 2018 until now to record my work. These doctoral journals were deliberately used in an ethical way to make sure that no one was identifiable: they contain my problems, my working with theory, and my supervision notes. When reading the writing in my first Journal in 2018, the early struggles with the method are clear, not an uncommon dilemma in the writing process when using autoethnography. Holeman- Jones (2015, p. 69) helped me rationalise my own difficulties when she was writing about the challenges of getting started in autoethnographic writing, she referenced Carolyn Ellis (2004) and a particular narrative in 'The Ethnographic I' about getting started. Her account offered me reassurance that feeling challenged in the writing process was necessary and indeed ordinary when working with an autoethnographic method.

I have spent a considerable and ongoing time aiming to unpack the writing challenges using autoethnography. I have displayed many methodological flaws in the work in my journals and earlier Dissertation drafts, the most notable in the organisation of my writing, trying to force words onto paper, and being ethically unaware of personal boundaries (Sparkes, 2000) and the extent that these needed to be in place to ensure I was not causing harm to myself or others through sharing my experiences. The work initially was essentially autobiographical due to inexperience with autoethnographic approaches. Autoethnography and autobiography are both forms of self-narrative, but they differ in their purpose, scope, and method. I have come to understand that autoethnography is a research method that combines personal experience and cultural analysis to explore and understand social phenomena. By contrast, autobiography is primarily a personal narrative that focuses on one's life story. Autoethnography uses personal experience as a lens through which to examine broader cultural and social issues. In autoethnography, I am not simply telling my life story but, rather, I am attempting to use my experiences to explore cultural and social patterns and to analyse the ways in which they have shaped my identity and worldview as a Headteacher. This involves reflecting on my experiences, emotions, and interactions with others and using them to generate insights and knowledge about the world around me. Another key difference between autoethnography and autobiography is the role of the researcher. In autoethnography, I am not just the subject of the research but also the researcher, actively

engaged in the process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This means that my personal experiences are not just the object of study but also the means by which I generate understanding.

While writing daily as an EdD student is expected, it is an enormous challenge for a Headteacher and working mother. However, understanding came from the daily writing about work in the personal journals, alongside academic reading to support this study and this was developmental in approach, much like my Elements and Stages of Educational Growth. Autoethnography, while very challenging, has developed my confidence in writing as noted by O'Shea (2019).

I share an early journal entry I wrote in 2019 while sitting at the window in my bedroom and not knowing where to start. It was an emotive moment for me: I did not think I would ever be able to put words to paper or onto a screen.

Journal 1

Narrative:-

It's warm at the window. My desk is just beside it. I have been sitting on my chair for the last few hours trying to write. My chair is uncomfortable and my face is itchy. I am not making much progress and this is bothering me.

It's a beautiful day outside and I can hear the voices of children playing, some of them are my children. They are happy.

I am distracted by the building works being undertaken close by. There is drilling and chains are clashing together and this is constant so it is making it difficult to concentrate.

I can hear the television in the living room with children's programmes playing. The music is bumbling. I can hear my youngest child asking questions and I know it's only a matter of time before they appear and want my attention.

I try to distract myself back to writing. My phone is now vibrating and I resist the temptation to pick it up. I fail. I read the messages and put it back down wishing I had left it.

I start considering again the best way to start writing.

I turn back from the window and look at my computer screen.

I hold my fingers above the keyboard on my computer in anticipation of something coming to mind. I am surrounded by bits of paper, by books, and my head is filled with so much I want to say. I am feeling frustrated because I don't know how to begin. I don't know what is reasonable to write and what is not.

I get up to make yet another coffee.

Reflection:-

I am inspired by the work of scholars such as Denzin, Ellis, and Bochner, who have contributed significantly to the development of this research method. Denzin and Lincoln's Handbook of Qualitative Research (2018) has been particularly influential in shaping my understanding of autoethnography as a means of exploring my own experiences as a school leader. Ellis and Bochner's work on autoethnography, personal narrative, and reflexivity (2002) have also been instrumental in guiding my writing process. Their emphasis on the researcher as a subject has encouraged me to embrace my own vulnerabilities and to write in a way that is personal and engaging.

Forber-Pratt's work on using grounded theory analytic strategies in autoethnography has also been influential in my approach to writing (2015) although I will not use grounded theory. Writing about our experiences can be a 'new way' or a 'confirmation' of how we are seen by others, which can be uncomfortable or even embarrassing at times. However, I believe that it is an important part of the process of self-reflection and growth.

Of course, the process of writing autoethnography can be challenging. As Ellis and Bochner note, the process involves a back-and-forth movement between experience and examining a vulnerable self and then revealing a broader context of that experience. This can be difficult at times, and I often find myself struggling to find the right words to express what I'm feeling. But the rewards of this kind of writing are significant. By sharing my own experiences and vulnerabilities, I can perhaps help others to better understand the complexities of school leadership and the challenges of navigating the education system. I am grateful for the opportunity to write in a way that feels true to my own experiences and to contribute to the ongoing development of autoethnography as a research methodology.

As an autoethnographer, I am keenly aware of the vulnerability that comes with choosing this approach to researching myself, my role, and my life as a Headteacher. However, I firmly believe that it is precisely this vulnerability that needs to be publicly shared and cultivated to contribute to the body of work on school Headship. I understand that my own vulnerability is deeply connected to my position as an insider in the field of education. Writing from a Headteacher position can leave one vulnerable to being silenced or excluded from the Headteacher group, and I have personally felt the fear of affiliation or lack thereof, which can be overwhelming. Nevertheless, it is necessary for me to select the most impactful stories to develop a greater understanding of the elements and insights gained through this Dissertation.

As an insider in the field of education, I know that these narratives and characteristics of school Headship are not often made public and, if they are, they are often from observer standpoints. I believe insider research is crucial in the field of Headship. Undertaking an EdD in Headship, I appreciate the importance of recognising and addressing my positionality as an insider researcher. The nature of my research requires me to work within my own community, raising questions about objectivity and subjectivity. Third space theory, proposed by Bhabha (1994) and Soja (1996), provides a helpful framework for understanding the complexities of insider research and suggests that the space between the insider and outsider perspective can be a productive and creative place for knowledge production.

In the initial Chapter of my Dissertation, I highlighted the significance of using my own insider voice as a Headteacher to engage in critical analysis. I also discussed how the insider voice of Ed Bell (Wolcott, 2003, p. 318) had been overlooked in the case study of him but that he had engaged reflexively, expressing hope that the completed case study would be useful to other Headteachers. In the final Chapter, I use the insider voice as both observer and participant, offering reflexivity on the realities of being an insider, including considerations of Headteacher maturity.

Being an insider researcher can shape the researcher's work and influence their position in the field, as noted by Green (2014). It is vital to maintain a professional distance and not overstep the boundaries between Headteacher and researcher. Acknowledging my position as an insider and outsider and occupying the third space allows me to bring a unique perspective to the research and explore new possibilities for knowledge production / understanding. By discussing positionality explicitly in qualitative research accounts, the participant's voice is

heard in the narratives shared, providing a fuller, richer understanding of the research methods employed.

Showing vulnerability as a Headteacher can be unforgiving, but I have made a conscious and ethical decision to take this risk by telling specific stories and investing personally in the understanding of the learning I have gained from the role of a researcher using method and theory. By acknowledging potential biases and determining which biases are important enough to the research process to be revealed explicitly, researchers can conduct autoethnographic method and ethically sound research while still maintaining their position as insiders in the community. Accordingly, addressing positionality is essential for researchers as insider researchers.

Third space theory, along with Green's (2014) insights on insider research, offers me a framework for understanding the complexities of insider research. By embracing the productive potential of the third space, researchers, as participants, can work reflexively to create knowledge that is both ethical and true to the method, exploring the experiences of the participant without bias. Through autoethnography, I can explore the complexities of my own experiences as a Headteacher and share these experiences with others in a personal and authentic way.

In his article ‘Criteria Against Ourselves,’ Bochner (2000) explores the ethical and methodological challenges of autoethnography as a research method. One of the challenges he identifies is the question of how others will receive and interpret our narratives. The autoethnographer is not only the researcher, but also the researched, and the narratives produced are not only data, but also life stories. This means that in sharing autoethnographic narratives with others, we are not just presenting data, but also offering insights into our own experiences and identities. Bochner notes that this can be a vulnerable position to be in, as we are opening ourselves up to the scrutiny and judgement of others. However, Bochner also argues that this vulnerability is a necessary part of the process of autoethnography. The autoethnographer must be willing to expose themselves to the scrutiny of others, to risk being misinterpreted, and to accept that their narrative may be read in ways they did not intend.

Despite the risks involved, Bochner argues that sharing our autoethnographic narratives with others is an important part of the research process. In my own autoethnographic research, I

am aware of the potential risks involved in sharing my narratives with others. However, I also recognise the importance of engaging in dialogue with others about my experiences and perspectives. By doing so, I hope to gain new insights and perspectives on my own experiences, and to contribute to a greater understanding of the complexities of Headship. With these considerations in mind I now turn to Brookfield's (2017) next two lenses, Students' Eyes and Colleagues' Perceptions with regard to my narratives and use of autoethnography.

Students' Eyes

I reflect on my influence on staff but also students in the Journal entry below.

Journal 2

At staff training for the organisation I work for a colleague said:

'There is always someone watching what you are doing and influenced by you. They are looking at you to learn how to be'.

I am mindful of this. I have always understood that our behaviour as teachers and Headteachers impacts others, and what we do in schools and classrooms should be intentional. I know that in school Headship, I have others looking to me to make progress and they watch what I do in the context. Some will mirror me, and others will question my practice and motives. This is as it should be, and I have learned this is a healthy culture to create in which critical debates and even disagreements are necessary to meet the organisation's needs.

This also relates to children, in schools and in classrooms, students like to align themselves with the leader, normally their class teacher to please them. Many mimic the teachers' behaviours likes and dislikes. They will repeat what you have said back to them and use it in context. This can be notable if a teacher has expressed a way to do something. You can hear children say – 'Mrs Shanks said you have to do it this way'.

Children pick up on sensitivities in the classroom and nuances and will lean into those. If frustrations are expressed, the students will lean into those too and replicate them in their behaviours. It is important to behave well in a classroom as an adult setting to the best of your ability the best version of yourself each day.

I have said to teachers – 'We are not paid to shout at children we are paid to educate them'.

As the participant and the observer in my own research it is important to note that I am a woman, a mother, and a Headteacher and I have other roles besides these. It is important to

acknowledge the impact that these roles may have on 'the self' and others. This includes being mindful of any unintentional behaviours and considering the broader context in which these roles are situated.

Nussbaum (2004) offers valuable insights into the experiences of mothers, particularly in regards to the shame and disgust that can be associated with the lived experience of being a working mother. In 'Hiding from Humanity' (2004) she shares various narratives around motherhood that touch a nerve in me as an autoethnographer. One specific story that stands out is Nussbaum's discussion of being a primary caregiver and being present from the point of view of Freud with regard to the mother's breast and breast milk (Nussbaum, 2004, p. 181). This narrative resonates with me and I reflect on this discussion in Journal 3 as a nursing mother and fulltime Headteacher.

Journal 3

I unashamedly loved the bond of being able to feed my children my milk. I also admit to allowing myself to work for extended hours as a Headteacher because when I saw my children, they recognised me immediately from an early age probably because of the milk connection. It removed some of my vulnerability of not being present and caring for my children at in the infant stage because I was working fulltime. I removed some of the guilt I felt in the complex relationship between mother and child (Nussbaum, 2004, p. 181). I was lucky as my childcare was beside the school which meant I did not have to pump milk but could take breaks to feed my babies directly. It did not stop the vulnerability in the relationship with others and further created a vulnerability for other caregivers in the relationship with me and my children. However, it selfishly made me secure that I was my children's principal caregiver, and they instinctively knew this by nature and nurture.

As a fulltime working Headteacher this bond was very important to me as it was something which allowed me to feel like I was caring and loving my children given the long hours and commitment I had to my community. I know at the time it was felt by some that leaving campus to feed was not focusing on my job and I received direct comments about this. As a serving Headteacher I would have had to have pumped the milk anyway, to feed my children directly was a quicker process. Others said how lucky I was that I had managed to get my childcare and nursing arrangements coordinated so well. It did force me to take breaks in my school day, something as a Headteacher I do not tend to do and that may have been a positive rather than a negative behaviour.

The relationship between being a Headteacher and a mother is complex, particularly in terms of the shared vulnerability that comes with both roles. As Nussbaum (2004) notes, the

experience of being a mother can be both joyful and deeply challenging, and it can be difficult to navigate the complexities of this role while also fulfilling the responsibilities of being a Headteacher. In this Element (1), the lens is focused on seeing myself through the eyes of students, but it is also about seeing the roles played through the eyes of my children. For many years, my children have been my closest witnesses and observers, attending school meetings and other events with me from a young age. This has given me a unique perspective on the challenges faced by Headteachers who are also mothers, and has highlighted the importance of being mindful of the impact that our roles may have on our own children and on the broader school community.

I have found that witnessing my own birth children's narratives has had a significant impact on my Dissertation. Their stories provide a different perspective on my Headships from the accounts of school students. While other students may have seen security and reassurance in my leadership actions, my children articulate vulnerability and exposure. This highlights the importance of considering multiple perspectives and being mindful of the impact that our actions may have on different individuals. The experience of motherhood is complex and can have a significant impact on our roles as Headteachers. This can make it difficult to navigate the complexities of a role as Headteacher and to balance the needs of families with the responsibilities of that position. In the sticky note below the impact of my role as Headteacher and mother clash. This is the only sticky note from someone else, my daughter, in the Dissertation and its significance is to reflect that sometimes as a Headteacher, I have taken action without realising its impact on others.

Sticky note 2

It was horrible - you just took my doll even though it was my favourite. First, I knew you had the doll was in the assembly. You used it for an ice bucket challenge. I was crying and you did not care. You did it anyway. Everyone else thought it was terrific, but I was hurt, as you used something precious to me without asking.

Looking back on the incident involving my child's prized doll, I realise that I acted without considering her needs, feelings, or wants. At the time, I was likely focused on the busy day ahead. It is clear to me that I failed to prioritise her well-being in that moment.
That situation was further complicated by an anonymous complaint from the community about my leadership practice. This complaint was filled with what I perceived as hatred and

centred around my decision to participate in the community's popular Ice Bucket Challenge[4] charitable event. In that assembly, where the doll was used as part of the challenge, I was trying to please the community without offending or angering anyone. However, I now realise that I failed to consider the ethics of the situation and the potential impact on my child. The complaint was that, as the Headteacher, I was making myself the centre of attention and the focus of the school. It was an anonymous complaint which meant it could have come from anyone in the community. It had been submitted through the Community Library, which was part of my nursery building and next to the community playgroup, using a proforma. At the time I just saw the complaint, the negativity in the complaint, and wanted to not draw attention to myself but to serve the community. I had focused on affiliation and acceptance in the group. However, as Nussbaum states:

> Knowledge of love is not a state or function of the solitary person at all,
> but a complex way of being, feeling, and interacting with another person.
> (Nussbaum, 1992, p. 274)

I wanted to love my community and to be respected in return. Looking back on this journal entry, I realise that my beliefs and opinions have developed since the time of the incident with my child's doll. If faced with a similar situation now, I would approach it differently, with more love and specific intent. I would be able to practically reason about the complaint and recognise that it was as much about the complainant as a reflection on my leadership or my child's well-being. Although the Headteacher is central to what goes on in the school, I now realise that it is important to prioritise my child's needs and feelings when I am able to do so. I also know that it had been the students at the school who had challenged me to do the Ice Bucket Challenge and I should have done it for them.

This incident did impact on me in my second Headship, and I made the decision for none of my children to attend my school. While it may have been easier practically for them to attend my school, I recognised that it was best for them to live their own lives. This decision does not mean I do not value the schools in which I work but that I have chosen to separate my roles as a mother and a Headteacher.

[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ice_Bucket_Challenge

In regards to my method and my students, they did know I was undertaking an EdD and that I was trying to be a better learner. The whole community knew this was something I was trying to achieve with the ambition of learning by example and learning for life. I made it clear to the students and my own children I wanted to learn to be a better human to serve them better so they could be as proud of me as I am of them. I told my students about all of my learning adventures and failures at assemblies: I made my EdD a regular story. I also published to the school website my policy assignment on Early Years Strategy which I had been working on with my community.

Colleagues' Perceptions

Brookfield states that:

> Our colleagues serve as critical mirrors reflecting back to us images of our actions that often take us by surprise … as they describe their own experiences dealing with the same crisis and dilemmas we face, we are able to check, reframe and broaden our own theories of practice. (Brookfield, 2005, p. 3)

In the complex world of Headship, it can be challenging to check and reflect on our own readings of problems, responses, and assumptions. Relying solely on colleagues' views may no longer be enough, as our starting points and assumptions can be vastly different, leading to ethical considerations. Despite working together and experiencing the same things, the reality of being a Headteacher can be one of isolation and feeling disconnected from the school leadership group. To navigate these challenges, I suggest that practical reasoning becomes necessary for our development as Headteachers. As Nussbaum (2011, p.3) notes, being able to form a concept of the good and engage in critical reflection of one's life is essential. I have sought, here and in everyday practice, to take a broad view and reason with myself about what is happening in school. This requires a deep understanding of 'the self' and the study of our being and how we exist on the most fundamental level. As Headteachers, I suggest that it is essential to acknowledge and address any feelings of disaffiliation we may have. While it may not be an easy thing to do, we must make an effort to connect and engage with our colleagues. This will require us to challenge our assumptions, be open to different perspectives, and to engage in honest and respectful dialogue, following Nussbaum's account of affiliation which she describes as:

> … to live with and towards others, to recognise and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another. (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 34)

As a Headteacher, I understand the importance of being socially just and enabling all members of the school community to create Capabilities. However, when conflict arises or negativity permeates the context of leadership, it can be challenging to maintain this focus. In these situations, it is essential to make a deliberate effort to stay grounded in the principles of social justice and capability creation. Through the method and theory of my Dissertation, I have been able to develop a more structured approach to addressing such complex situations which are, I suggest, more common than reported in the literature on Headship. As a Headteacher, I am responsible for my particular school community within the broader context of schools. It is my duty to take ownership of the pastoral care and well-being of all stakeholders within this specific school. However, the broader application of ethical duty in Headship rests with the political control over one's environment and our ability to navigate complex and often challenging situations following Nussbaum's account of political control over one's environment and her call for all to be able to:

> Participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association. (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 3)

As an experienced Headteacher, I understand the importance of 'Combined Capabilities' (Nussbaum, 2011) which, here, would mean being able to speak up in the interests of everyone, including those who are not in our immediate school sphere. However, there can be limitations to this, both within our community and beyond. Personally, I have experienced this limitation as an incomer on a working visa in Hong Kong, where I do not have the right to vote in the democratic election of the country where I live and serve as a Headteacher. While this is a limitation, it is a choice that I made knowingly when I moved to Hong Kong. At that time, I considered the benefits to me and my family to outweigh my freedoms to have a say in an election. This is a personal choice that I made, but it highlights the complexities of balancing personal freedoms and responsibilities as a person and as a Headteacher.

I believe it is essential to be mindful of the impact of my voice as a Headteacher on the resilience and mental health of our communities, particularly in the context of ongoing crisis management caused by events such as Covid-19. While it may be tempting to speak up,

during the pandemic I also had to consider the potential implications of my actions and the potential damage they might cause to the community. An example of this would be forcing my staff to comply with the Hong Kong mandate to be vaccinated for Covid-19 in order to work as a teacher in a school. I knew this was something individuals would have to make their own decisions on, even if this ultimately could mean they would lose their right to work in the school. I spent time listening to my colleagues and supporting them in their personal choices. I also did this for my parent community in regard to child vaccinations and I made necessary adaptations to support choices as far as I was able to do so. Although internal Capabilities can develop through functioning in Headship, not everyone has the capacity, desire or the functionings required to be part of a leadership group. Headship is not for everyone and it is, of course, possible to have a rewarding career in schools without the ultimate move to Head (Richmond and Greenfield, 2015, p. 109).

In my experience, I have perceived an affiliation barrier that has prevented me from participating in the sense of 'combined capability'. This barrier has been present in the countries I which I have lived and occasioned by my employers, and the other colleagues in my Headship circle. This became clear in the community access to school agenda which took services from our schools and aligned them to the central service in my First Stage of Headship. This reduced our service in the rural community in which I worked. I used the Government policy in the Christie Commission on the future delivery of public services (Scottish Government, 2011) to argue some of these points and found myself in conflict with my employer about who I was working for and who I was serving. I found myself being discredited for good service to the community by individuals in the local authority. Some even questioned my motivations and implied my behaviour was a form of stress or not coping with losing my argument. I perceived this as abhorrent practice and a direct conflict with my essential and political freedoms as a Headteacher. A narrative around someone is easily created in minutes if it suits the needs or the affiliation to the group but it can take years to rectify. I was often referred to as ‘Bonkers’ to my face and surreptitiously for different reasons - one because I would take risks and two to discredit my success as a school leader.

I have noticed that school leaders often have fear and anxiety around showing vulnerability or emotions to others. However, as Nussbaum notes, supporting emotions as a capability could be crucial in developing forms of human association (2011, pp. 33-34). I contend that it is crucial that school leaders are supported in understanding their emotions in their

leadership. To stunt this development would be shameful and adverse to human dignity and the flourishing of the self and the others with whom we work. If we do not fully understand our vulnerabilities, it becomes challenging to lead and be empathetic to others. This includes supporting school leaders in understanding and managing their emotions, as well as fostering an environment that encourages vulnerability, growth, and development.

I did share with my colleagues and peers that I was undertaking an EdD. Many colleagues were supportive but many more saw it as an unnecessary 'add-on' and a distraction from my paid employment as a Headteacher. Indeed it was only latterly in my Third Stage of Headship that it has leveraged any recognition for the understandings I may have gained during the process helping me develop my school as a Headteacher. Even with these understandings I am still occasionally referred to as 'Bonkers' and accused of taking unnecessary risks and focusing beyond what is deemed to be a Headteacher's core functioning which seems to be conventional and not to challenge, or seek to make changes to historical legacies. Richmond and Greenfield (2015, p. 111) discuss these types of experiences which normally come at the settling in period for all Headteachers in their roles and I return to this in Chapter 3 in my First Stage of Headship and again in my Third Stage of Headship in Chapter 5. To be able to rationalise and challenge for change for development in my school I very often use the autoethnographic method to allow me to story out the narrative and look at it from all angles to make the choice which best fits the majority and, most importantly, the students and the families I serve.

Theory

My theoretical choices for this EdD are inevitably influenced by my professional reading and study. The literature I have read for this study aligns with the texts and papers shared through our EdD Programme Units of Study and has been expanded on based on my areas of personal work interest. The core themes of Critical Reflection, Education Policy, Educational Futures, and Life Long Learning are evident throughout the readings and writing in this EdD. Additionally, theoretical and philosophical influences from my personal interest areas have also played a role in shaping my understanding of the topic. As I have noted earlier, there are three critical and theoretical main influencers in this study, and each of them has helped to question the qualitative research method in line with developing the epistemology of this Dissertation. The major critical influencer in this study remains Nussbaum, whose work on

creating Capabilities has been instrumental in shaping my understanding of the importance of promoting empathy, understanding, and social justice in school leadership (2011). Her emphasis on critical reflection and developing a concept of the good that guides our actions (Nussbaum, 2011) has been particularly influential in shaping my approach to this Dissertation.

Nussbaum's (2000, 2011) CA is the leading theory here because that approach is situated in the narrative context of human life, which enables policy-makers to construct meaningful interventions that show respect for and empower real people. As Nussbaum notes, this approach is essential in promoting social justice and enabling individuals to live a life they have reason to value (Nussbaum, 2011, p. xi). In this study, the CA aligns well with the ontology of the research, which seeks to understand the existence, becoming, and exploration of reality, particularly in relation to school leadership.

In social science, ontological assumptions relate to the nature and characteristics of reality (Creswell, 2014). The characteristics of reality as I see it are well-suited to the method of autoethnography and the methodological approaches of fiction and social science, as explored in Element 2 of this Chapter. Saunders et al. describe ontology as:

> A branch of philosophy concerned with assumptions about the nature of reality or being. (Saunders et al. 2016, p. 722)

Brookfield's four lenses challenge assumptions and use self-reflection to:

> … become aware of paradigmatic assumptions and instinctive reasonings that frame how we work. (Brookfield, 2005, p. 30)

This brings me to the positioning of the self within the research. As the researcher and as a Headteacher, my perspective and values inevitably influenced my interactions with the school communities. I decided, therefore, that I could not conduct objective, value-free research while also being an active participant in the research context. This highlights the importance of reflexivity and acknowledging the researcher's subjectivity in qualitative research.

> Who am I in relation to the research? Then becomes the central tenet in disclosing the positioning of the researcher. I contend that what we know (ontology), and how we know it (epistemology), are a result of our philosophical beliefs developed through our lifelong learning and not a precursor to them. (Pitard, 2017, p. 1)

Pitard's quote resonates with respect to my own identity in this Dissertation and in my role as a Headteacher, mother and community member. The Elements help me develop what I know and how I know it through using autoethnography and growing through the Stages of my Headship development. My beliefs developed and become more explicit with the understandings I gained through the process of my Element Cycle: Learning, Method, Theory and Understandings. All of these continue to be iterative as I continue to travel through my lived experiences as a Headteacher working with theory to increase my own educational growth as I undertake this EdD and continue learning beyond this.

To determine the ontology of any research, it is crucial to consider the nature of the phenomenon, entity, or social reality being studied (Mason, 2002). Qualitative researchers have essentially two ontological positions to choose from: realism and idealism according to Ritchie et al. (2013). Realism asserts that reality in the social world is independent of the actors involved and is recognised through the senses (Matthews & Ross, 2010). In contrast, idealism confirms that reality, in principle, is 'mind-dependent' and recognised through social constructions and human reasoning (Ritchie et al., 2013, p. 5). Postmodernists believe that ontology is symbolic and that there are multiple realities or interpretations for a specific phenomenon (Kroeze, 2012).

In the context of this study, the use of Nussbaum's (2011) Capability Approach (CA) and autoethnography as the method allows for an axiological exploration of the use of the CA to unpack the lived experience of my Headship. This approach considers the goodness and worth of my leadership, thinking critically outside the Headship loop and school community while also being mindful of the architectonic roles of affiliation and practical reasoning (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 39). Nussbaum's emphasis on learning through storytelling and images highlights the importance of constructing meaningful insights into how issues and perceptions can shape our behaviours, positions, and policies in our environments (Nussbaum, 1992, p. 160). The theory of knowledge and its epistemological considerations,

such as methods, validity, scope, and the distinction between justified belief and opinion, are essential in leadership research. The role of tacit knowledge, particularly its cognitive perspective, is also a crucial topic in leadership research (Nonaka & Konno, 1998; Lubit, 2001) and links to the hunches experienced which, I contend, need to be synthesised with theory to create educational growth and understandings for me as a Headteacher.

Element 2 – Methodology

In considering the method appropriate to address the question, 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?', I have paid attention to Morrow's (2005) paper on the 'Recommendations for Conducting and Writing Qualitative Research'. Morrow (2005, p. 259) has created a very helpful appendix at the end of her paper which offers 'guidelines for enhancing trustworthiness or quality in qualitative research'. Morrow organises the guidelines under the following headings which I use below.

1. Philosophical assumptions or paradigm(s) underpinning the research
2. Research design
3. Researcher-as-instrument statement
4. Participants
5. Sources of data
    a. Field notes taken from observation in the field are essential to exploring and expressing the context of the study. They should include all the stuff of the senses (sight, sound, etc.) and should be included as a data source
    b. Explain in detail how each type of data was collected, using subheadings
6. Data analysis
7. Address standards of trustworthiness or rigor.

Morrow (2005, p. 259)

Philosophical assumptions or paradigm(s) underpinning the research

The purpose of this autoethnography study was to explore the question, 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?' To collect data for this study, I utilised journals, sticky notes, and personal narratives to reflect on my experiences in two different Headships, one in Scotland and one in Hong Kong. As a serving Headteacher, I used Nussbaum's (2011) CA as a lens to understand my experiences and create an understanding of what I was able to do and be in each setting. I reflected on the context of school leadership and the essential freedoms that

are present for school leaders, including the freedom to express oneself, the freedom to learn and grow, the freedom to form meaningful relationships, the freedom to participate in decision-making processes, and the freedom to access resources.

Research Design

This research design is in line with Ellis' (2004) suggestion that autoethnography can provide a powerful way to explore and understand the experiences of individuals in different cultural contexts. Furthermore, Brookfield (1995) has emphasised the importance of reflexivity in research, recognising that personal experiences and cultural background shape interpretations and conclusions. Using autoethnography allowed me to focus on a unique and personal perspective on my Capabilities as a Headteacher in two different cultural contexts and so aligns with Morrow's (2005, p. 259) idea of researcher-as-instrument.

Researcher-as-instrument statement

By using Nussbaum's CA, I was able to gain insights into what it means to live a flourishing life as a Headteacher. Reflecting on my own experience as the key participant in and of the research in each of my Headships, using journals, sticky notes, and narratives, allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of my own Capabilities and the barriers I faced in each setting.

Participants

It is important to highlight here that the characteristics of this type of qualitative research differ from quantitative approaches and that the participant group is limited to just me as the subject of my own research. I am mindful of and reminded by Morrow (2005, p. 253) at all times of the context, culture, and rapport of the spaces in which I operate as an individual. Contextual grounding is essential for understanding the meanings that I make of my experiences as is using theory to understand the cultures of schools beyond my own experiences to consider other possibilities. Finally, it is important to consider the relationships I have with others. It is my hope that this study can provide insights for other educational leaders and Headteachers, supporting future research and further

qualitative research investigations of the essential freedoms that may be necessary to thrive in Headteacher roles and offering some findings in regard to the stages of Headteacher maturity which may provide future more generalisable results.

The Data Collection Process: (Sources of Data)

The data collection process for this autoethnography study involved utilising personal experiences, observations, and reflections to capture my experiences as a Headteacher in two different cultural contexts, one in Scotland and one in Hong Kong, as noted above. I collected data through journals and sticky notes to document my thoughts and feelings in response to different situations. These data collection tools allowed me to capture my experiences in real time, providing a rich and detailed account of my experiences as a Headteacher. Personal experiences were a key component of the data collection process, as I reflected on my experiences in each Headship, noting down my thoughts and feelings in journals and epiphanies on sticky notes. Observations as sticky notes, were also included in the data collection process, as I observed the cultural contexts in which I was working and reflected on the impact of these contexts on my Capabilities as a Headteacher. Finally, reflections were a critical component of the data collection process, as I reflected on my experiences and what they meant for my Capabilities as a Headteacher. The data collection process was ongoing throughout the study, with new data collected as new experiences arose. The use of multiple data collection methods enabled me to capture my experiences from different angles, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of my experiences as a Headteacher. This approach aligns with the goals and principles of autoethnographic research, which seeks to combine personal experience with cultural analysis in a reflexive manner.

Journals

Keeping a journal was an essential part of my research process. According to Kemmis, et al (2014, p 177) journals are essential artifacts for critical participatory action researchers. To keep data in my autoethnographic journal, I created the steps below of Immersion, Crystallisation, Categorisation and Theorisation, influenced by Denzin's (2006) framework and Denzin's (2014, p. 50) 'Selves, stories and experiences' taken from 'Interoperative Autoethnography' which is shared in more detail in the data analysis section below.

Collecting Data: Immersion

I collected data by writing daily and weekly entries in my journal. The entries included personal experiences, thoughts, and emotions related to my research topic of Headteacher maturity, development and the CA. Ellis and Denzin (2014, p. 8) suggest that autoethnographic journals should be 'rich in detail and description', so I included as much detail as possible in my entries.

Analysing Data: **Crystallisation**

After collecting data, I analysed it by engaging in reflexive analysis using Denzin's (2006) framework. This involved critically examining my personal experiences and emotions and then considering how they relate to and impact my research. I have had to ask myself questions such as: What do my experiences tell me about being a Headteacher, Headteacher maturity, development and CA? How do my personal experiences relate to the experiences of others and other Headteachers? By engaging in this reflexive analysis, I noted and identified patterns and themes in my data which were relevant to my study.

Organising Data: **Categorisation**

Once I analysed my data, I organised it in a way that was meaningful and relevant to my research and the Stages of Headteacher Development. I colour coded and used symbols (figure 4 in Chapter 5) to identify the patterns and themes in my entries in regard to both CA and my Three Stages of Development. I also grouped similar entries together in regard to Brookfield's (2005) Lenses and my Element framework to create my categories and possible themes.

Interpreting Data: **Theorisation**

Finally, I interpreted my data by considering how it relates to my research question 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?' I used my reflexive analysis and organised data to first identify key themes or insights that could be relevant to this Dissertation or future qualitative work. By interpreting my data, I hope to develop a deeper understanding of Headship, Headteacher maturity, development and the CA.

Sticky notes

Sticky notes are a flexible and portable way to record thoughts and experiences as they happen. According to Carolyn Ellis (2004, p. 78), sticky notes are a useful tool for autoethnographic researchers because they allow for 'spontaneous and reflective writing' and this approach can help uncover 'hidden meanings and contradictory feelings that are often unarticulated and unconscious'. By using sticky notes to capture my personal experiences and emotions related to Headteacher maturity and development, I gained insights into the phenomenon under investigation I used the following steps.

Collecting Data: **Immersion**

Whenever I had a thought or experience related to my Dissertation or my theory or method, I wrote it down on a sticky note. This allowed me to record my thoughts and experiences as they happen, without worrying about organisation or structure. It also allowed me a quick way not to forget about the thought and allowed me to return and expand on later in a journal.

Analysing Data: **Crystallisation**

After collecting the data, I reviewed my sticky notes and engaged in reflexive analysis. I critically examined my personal experiences and emotions and consider how they relate to my research work and where in my journals the sticky note should be placed or where in the Dissertation. I used Denzin's (2006) framework for data analysis which is shared below in the data analysis section.

Organising Data: **Categorisation**

Once I have analysed the data, I organised it by grouping similar sticky notes together to create categories or themes. I used coloured dots to correspond to CA or my Headteacher Stages of development. This aligns with Crystallisation.

Interpreting Data: Theorisation

I interpreted my data by considering how it related to my research question, 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?' I used reflexive analysis and Brookfield's

(2005) lenses to organised my data as well as CA and Ellis's (2011) methodological advice.

Data Analysis:

During the early stages of this autoethnography study, I used Pitard's (2017) framework for data analysis, which emphasised the use of anecdotes to understand personal experiences. A sample of the Pitard framework journals are attached as Appendix 5 in this Dissertation. However, as I progressed with the study, I found that Pitard's framework was too anecdotal and did not provide the depth of analysis that I was seeking. Therefore, I shifted influenced by Denzin's (2006) framework to the steps below of Immersion, Crystallisation, Categorisation and Theorisation, for data analysis, which emphasised the importance of reflexivity and critical analysis in autoethnography research. Thus emerging the qualitative research iterative cycle which involves repeated rounds of data collection, data analysis and data representation with interpretation emerging from and influencing the Element framework.

To analyse the data collected as noted above through journals, sticky notes, and narratives, I followed Denzin's (2006 and 2014, p.50) selves, stories and experiences for data analysis. I used three main steps of immersion, interpretation, and critical analysis. From this point forward, I used a four-step process of immersion, crystallisation, categorisation, and theorisation as outlined below.

The first step – Immersion – Collecting Data

Involved reading and re-reading the data collected to immerse myself in the experiences and gain a deeper understanding of the context.

The second step - Crystallisation – Analysing Data

Involved identifying key themes and patterns in the data, allowing me to gain a deeper understanding of my experiences as a Headteacher in two different cultural contexts.

The third step - Categorisation – Organising Data:

Involved sorting the data into categories based on the identified themes and patterns, allowing me to organise the data into a more coherent and manageable format.

The final step - Theorisation – Interpreting Data

Involved drawing connections between my personal experiences and broader cultural or social contexts, using Nussbaum's CA, Brookfield's lenses and Ellis' method as theoretical lenses to understand my experiences.

Quality and Trustworthiness:

Throughout the data analysis process, I utilised reflexivity and critical analysis to analyse my personal experiences and draw connections between my experiences and broader cultural or social contexts (Anderson, 2006). This involved reflecting on my personal biases, assumptions, and cultural background, and how they influenced my interpretations and conclusions. Additionally, I used member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as a validation process to ensure the accuracy and reliability of my analysis. This involved sharing my findings with other individuals such as peers, colleagues and the school Vice Principals over time who were familiar with the cultural contexts being studied and seeking their feedback and validation. Further, to ensure the quality and trustworthiness of my autoethnographic study, I stayed true to the research design and data analysis outlined above following the Denzin's (2006) framework for data analysis, which involved a hermeneutic approach to interpretation and critical analysis (Denzin, 2006, p. 77).

The hermeneutic approach to interpretation and critical analysis emphasises the importance of understanding how I interpret and make meaning of the world around me, and how these interpretations are shaped by social and cultural contexts. The hermeneutic approach involves a recursive process of interpretation and re-interpretation, in which I engage in an ongoing dialogue with my text or data I am analysing. This approach recognises that interpretations are always situated within particular social and cultural contexts and that the meaning of a text or data is not fixed but rather subject to multiple interpretations. This approach involved a close reading of the text or data, paying attention to both its explicit and implicit meanings. Using this approach I sought to understand the underlying assumptions and values that shape my text or data, as well as the broader social and cultural contexts that inform these

meanings. I engaged in reflexivity throughout the research process, acknowledging my own positionality and biases, and how they might have influenced my interpretations. This allowed me to critically examine my own assumptions and ensure that my interpretations were not influenced by my own preconceptions (Ellis, 2004, p. 137). As I noted in sticky note 1, I had to confront my own bias and assumptions based on my preconceptions of being a mixed-race child with a worldview shaped by that perspective. This was not the first time I had been called out on my preconceptions, but it was perhaps the first time I had to acknowledge them while reading someone else's narrative, rather than having someone directly tell me what to think or how to question my assumptions. In the past, there had been conversations with peers, colleagues, and mentors who had raised this topic with me, but I had dismissed them as being prejudiced and imposing their views and assumptions on me, rather than the other way around. These conversations always bothered me because I respected those who questioned me and, often, I recognised that they had a greater theoretical and research-based understanding than I did. I just was not prepared to open up my own blind spots, possibly due to the challenge of speaking to my own late father about his choices and experiences and the implications of those.

I also addressed potential biases and limitations by acknowledging them in the research process and taking steps to mitigate their impact on the study. For example, I acknowledged that the study was conducted with just me as the subject and, of course, this limits the generalisability of my findings. However, I emphasise that the focus of the study was on personal experiences and not generalisability. Additionally, and as noted above I engaged in member checking to ensure the accuracy of the analysis and validate the findings (Brookfield, 2017, p. 34). I did this to feel more confident and, due to my own lived experiences in Headship, I tend to seek affirmation from peers. Moreover, I am concerned about the impact my narratives may have on others and so I engaged in this type of reflexivity. Furthermore, I conducted member checking based on the third lens of Element 1 of my Colleagues' Perspectives to ensure consistency with the ethics of this Dissertation and my Cast of Characters. I did this to ensure that my interpretations were not unduly influenced by my own preconceptions and assumptions, as noted above.

To ensure transparency, I provide a detailed description of the research methodology, including the data collection and analysis procedures above influenced by Denzin (2014) following (Denzin, 2006, p.78). This could allow other researchers to replicate the study. I

also provide details about the participant (me), the context of the research (my Headships), and the data collection procedures (journals, sticky notes and narratives) to ensure transparency in the research process.

Finally, I used Nussbaum's CA as the key theoretical lens to understand my experiences and draw connections between my personal experiences and broader cultural or social contexts. This allowed me to analyse my experiences in a more nuanced and holistic way, and draw connections between my experiences and broader social and cultural issues. By utilising Nussbaum's CA, I was able to generate new insights and knowledge, and so I aim to contribute to the field of leadership research (Holman-Jones et al., 2013, p. 26).
By incorporating the insights of all my theorists of Ellis (2004), Brookfield (2005), and Nussbaum (2011), I have sought to conduct a rigorous and insightful study that sheds light on personal experiences and broader social and cultural issues in Headship.

Ethical Considerations

I am very conscious of the importance of being ethically aware, especially with regard to my obligations to others in this Dissertation. It was important to remind myself that this EdD Dissertation is not just a story of Headship but an autoethnographic theoretically informed study which steers well clear of any potentially identifying examples/incidents. Hence there is sometimes the need to construct autobiographical extracts which are partly fictional (Appendix 5). I note that all my autobiographical Headship extracts are without any danger of identification or even reflections on or about others who will not have a voice herein and may have interpreted events differently.

During my research process, I took several ethical considerations into account to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, as well as to protect anyone affected by my study. I followed the ethical guidelines outlined by Ellis (2004), Brookfield (2017), and Denzin (2006) to the best of my ability. According to Nussbaum (2011), ethical considerations involve treating individuals with respect, protecting their dignity, and ensuring that the research is conducted in a way that respects their autonomy and agency. To achieve these goals, Nussbaum recommends that researchers prioritise the voices and perspectives of the participants, be transparent in their methods and procedures, and ensure that the research is conducted in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 22). To adhere to these

ethical guidelines, I engaged, as noted above, in reflexivity throughout the research process to acknowledge my own biases and positionality that could influence my interpretation of the data (Ellis, 2004, p. 137).

I did not need informed consent from myself as the story teller, but I did have to consider the nature of the research, its purpose, and potential implications for others in the stories with me (Ellis, 2004). To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, I used pseudonyms for all those named here, removed any identifying information from the data, and stored the data securely and password-protected or locked in my office. I used a Cast of Characters: to further protect confidentiality and anonymity. This allowed me to write about personal experiences and perspectives while ensuring that the participants were not identifiable.

In common with all EdDs, I followed, under supervision, the University guidance on Research Ethics and Research Integrity (https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/ris/researchpolicies/researchintegrity/about/) as well as the BERA Guidelines at https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018-online
Further sources informing the ethical conduct and integrity of this study included:

- the ERSC's 'Internet-mediated research' from https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/
- Hewson C et al. (2013) Ethics Guidelines for internet-mediated research, London: British Psychological Society at https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/ and ethics-guidelines-internet-mediated-research-2017
- Townsend L and Wallace C (2016) Social Media Research: A Guide to Ethics, Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen and Economic and Social Research Council, https://ahrecs.com/resources/social-media-research-a-guide-to-ethics-by-townsend-and-wallace-guidance-dr-leanne-townsend-prof-claire-wallace-2016/

With respect to the use of others 'stories', I am well aware of the complex distinction between public and private with respect to social media/internet sources and so, for example, I used nothing from any password-protected and thereby 'private' online groups. Hence there was no compromise of anonymity and the line between public and private was also drawn as private, and not used.

I took further steps to protect the Cast of Characters' welfare by ensuring that the study did not cause any harm, physical, emotional, or psychological. I used fiction in my writing where necessary and I faced a dilemma when it came to incorporating fiction into my research. I wanted to use fictional elements to protect the identities of the individuals involved in my study and ensure they were not recognisable. At the same time, I was concerned about the impact of using fiction on the trustworthiness of my research. I found support for my approach in the work of Ellis and Bochner (2000), who argue that autoethnography can include fictional elements as long as the researcher is transparent about their use and the ways in which they differ from the actual events. This approach, known as 'fictionalising ethically', allows researchers to protect the identities of the participants while still maintaining the integrity of the research (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). I include a disclaimer at the beginning of my work, explaining that while the events and characters in the story were based on my life, some details have been altered or fictionalised to protect others, I also have provided a detailed explanation of the research process, including my methods and the Cast of Characters. Moreover, I have conducted member checks with others to ensure that my experiences were accurately represented in the narrative but not identifiable to others. I also engaged in reflexive writing, reflecting on my own experiences and biases and how they influenced my interpretation of the data. Lastly, I sought feedback from my peers and colleagues to ensure that my research was rigorous and met the standards of academic inquiry.

While some may argue that fictionalising elements of autoethnographic research compromises it, I found that the use of fiction allowed me to protect the identities of others and to provide a compelling narrative. By following the guidelines of 'fictionalising ethically' (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739) and taking steps to ensure the trustworthiness of my research, I believe that my work provides valuable insights into the experiences of individuals in a way that respects their privacy and dignity.

Finally, I was mindful of cultural sensitivity and ensured that the research was conducted in a respectful and responsible manner, taking into account the participants' cultural backgrounds and values. Through these different formats, I have attempted to provide a rich and nuanced understanding of my personal experiences and their connections to broader social issues. By engaging in personal reflection and using personal narrative, autoethnography has allowed

me to explore the intersectionality of my identity and experiences, while also highlighting the broader cultural and social phenomena that shape them.

Element 3 – Theory

In 'Cultivating Humanity' (1997), Nussbaum highlights the importance of good human functioning as a guide for how we should live. This idea is deeply rooted in the origins of social science, which emerged from moral philosophy in the eighteenth century and focused on what should be the case rather than what is the case. This focus on moral and ethical issues is shared by the three theorists I have selected, Brookfield (1995, 2017), Nussbaum (2011), and Ellis (2004), who all use qualitative research methods to explore and understand the world around us.

Through exploring the work of these theorists, I have been able to challenge my assumptions and develop a deeper understanding of my own personal and professional development as a Headteacher. By using autoethnography to pose questions to my chosen theorists and reflexively build possible responses based on their theories, I have been able to stretch my understandings and develop strategies for addressing the complex issues that arise in my work. These theorists have become personal allies for me, providing a source of guidance and support in my role as a Headteacher, mother, and student. Overall, the work of these theorists has been essential in my development as a Headteacher. Their focus on moral and ethical issues, combined with their use of qualitative research methods, has allowed me to reflect my experiences in a way that has expanded my understandings and allowed me to develop strategies for addressing complex challenges. Their theories have provided me with a framework for understanding the social phenomena that I encounter in my work, and their insights have helped me to develop my own Capabilities and fully engage with practical reasoning. Through the use of autoethnography, I have been able to draw on the expertise of these theorists and apply their insights to my own ongoing personal and professional development and educational growth as a Headteacher.

Element 4 – Understandings

The Element framework has been used in this Chapter to help broaden my own perspective on how to use autoethnography as methodology and interpretative as the paradigm. I used

each of the Elements in this chapter to considering social science philosophical lenses that complement the CA theory and the autoethnographic method. Through using the Element framework, I am building my own understandings of qualitative social science philosophy, to help support me to clarify the axiology, my values, and support me to undertake the writing in the other Chapters of this Dissertation. Further the Element framework helped me explore the worthwhileness of my study and the role of the insider researcher. It has allowed me to organise the method as well as the design for each the coming Stages of Headship chapters. This is to provide a clear understanding for me as the researching Headteacher to help considering a more nuanced perspective of my world and my own positioning within my Dissertation. Explicitly, I need to be clear of my own bias in the next three Chapters and to address and name any bias and make sure my reflexivity is ethically and theoretically informed. It was important to follow these noted understandings to keep this work as an autoethnographic study and not just a story of my Headship.

Finally, using Wall's (2016) understanding of moderate autoethnography means that I can tap into the unique value of personal experience I offer as a Headteacher, while maintaining the scholarly potential of autoethnography. This is summarised in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 – Moderate Autoethnography.

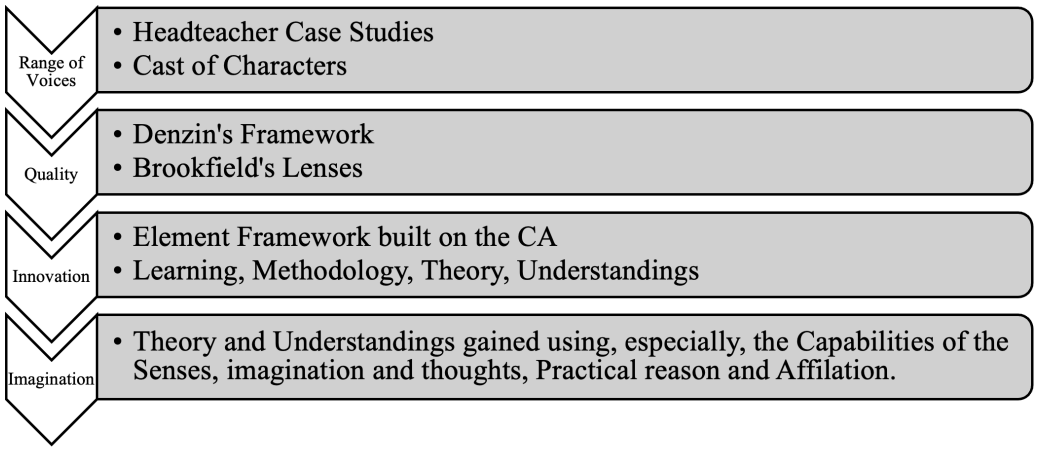


Figure 2

Moderate autoethnography, following Wall (2016), strikes a balance between valuing personal experiences and maintaining scholarly rigour. It moves beyond simple storytelling by emphasising the need for detailed description, analysis, and theoretical exploration. Wall emphasises the importance of an ethical, self-focused, and analytical approach to

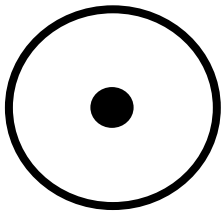
autoethnography. By embracing a middle ground, that is a ground between innovation, imagination and representation of a range of voices in qualitative inquiry, Wall's moderate autoethnography enables a confidence in its quality, rigour and usefulness as academic research. In following this approach autoethnographers can integrate the evocative and the analytic, working towards a comprehensive understanding of life's meanings and events while advancing collective thinking.

The integration of personal perspectives with rigorous analysis and theoretical frameworks allows for a deeper sociological understanding that goes beyond the limitations of solely personal narratives or detached analysis. By adopting a moderate autoethnographic approach, Wall (2016, p. 8) suggests that researchers can make substantial contributions to the field while upholding ethical standards in their work. Figure 2 above highlights my explicit emphasis in this Dissertation to be ethical, self-focused and analytical in my approach and to allow for detailed description, analysis and robust theoretical exploration.

Chapter 3 Stage One: 2013 -2016

The new Headteacher caught inside the closed loop

Introduction



What is the meaning of caught inside the closed loop?

This Stage focuses on my personal and professional growth as a newly appointed Headteacher through critical reflection and questioning. Brookfield (2017, p. 59) emphasises the elusive nature of hegemonic assumptions, which can be difficult to recognise due to their deeply ingrained nature. He suggests that critical reflection with colleagues can be a powerful tool for unravelling these assumptions and gaining a fresh perspective. While I found this process to be both rewarding and challenging, its success ultimately depended on the nature of the collaboration and the essential freedoms enabled for school leaders, which I discussed in the first Chapter of my Dissertation.

Initially, the title of this Chapter was meant to reflect the overarching theme of my Dissertation, 'Running in Circles: Caught Inside a Closed Loop.' However, as I grew educationally using my Elemental Framework, I felt that the title needed to remain in this iterative stage of development. It reflects my own positionality as a 'New Headteacher' who was prompted to engage in critical reflection through questioning from a university mentor, rather than from collaborative school-based peers (sticky note 1). This external questioning was crucial to my personal and professional development, as it helped me to recognise and challenge the assumptions that had become entrenched in my thinking.

Dewey's philosophy, as outlined in 'How We Think' (1933), emphasises the importance of reflective thinking in developing more effective ways of thinking. He believed that by turning a subject over in our minds and giving it serious and consecutive consideration, we can

change the ways we think and ultimately become more effective in what we do. This type of thinking is a key component of the critical reflection process that I have engaged in throughout my EdD Dissertation. As Martha Nussbaum emphasises in 'Cultivating Humanity' (1997), critical reflection is essential for developing the well-rounded and morally responsible citizens necessary for a just and democratic society.

In this Stage I have been strongly influenced by the work of Brookfield (1995) on critical reflection as a means of challenging assumptions and promoting personal and professional growth (Brookfield, 1995, 2017) and it is noteworthy that Brookfield was a core text on many of the Headship development courses at this time. Additionally, the ideas of Schön (1983) on reflection-in-action, and Moon's (1999) cyclical model of reflective practice, have informed my understanding of the reflective process as a tool for learning and improvement in my role as a Headteacher. Furthermore, the works of Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) have highlighted the importance of collaboration and collective learning in the context of educational change and reform (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). As a newly appointed Headteacher, Fullan and Hargreaves were highlighted as the dominant and 'go-to' school leadership theorists for school improvement. I was excited to learn from these prominent thinkers, and my school leadership group and I attended their face-to-face workshops for professional development organised by our employer. Fullan and Hargreaves were like rock stars and I would suggest it is possible that, certainly at this time, their names would have been recognisable to all Scottish Headteachers during their first (and likely later) stage of Headship Development.

Through critical reflection and collaboration with a wide range of colleagues, I have been able to challenge my assumptions and embrace new perspectives, ultimately leading to personal and professional educational growth. The ideas of Brookfield (2017), Dewey (1933), and Nussbaum (1997) have helped me, I believe, become a more effective and reflective Headteacher. In this Chapter, I outline the power of questioning in breaking free from the closed loop of hegemonic assumptions that often exist within collaborative circles in schools and which are often organised for us by our employers. This questioning has allowed me to recognise the value of external perspectives and embrace the collaborative process of critical reflection with a wider range of colleagues, promoted by undertaking an EdD.

Stages of development and growth

In this Chapter, I reflect on the start of my Headteacher journey as a newly appointed Headteacher in 2013. Brighthouse and Woods (1999, pp. 67-76) describe Headteacher maturation and growth as a process connected with learning. Dearden (1972, p. 65) discusses education as a process of growth which is typically considered 'child-centred' because there is usually some 'internal moving principle' which is responsible for any process of growth. As such, the growth is non-transferable, and becoming educated is a process of self-education (Dearden, 1972, p. 66). If I take the notion of my developmental iterative Stages as a process of growth, then I must accept that my understanding and my needs as the learner in the Developmental stages must be self-education, and that includes using my EdD study to support my development. The adaptation to this way of thinking was challenging, and I had to resubmit assignments and strengthen the level of my work. The University did make accommodations to support my learning due to my unprecedented lived experiences during the journey such as ill health, bereavement and maternity but these lived experiences have been highly relevant to my growth as a Headteacher.

In my search for literature that could offer insight into others' first stage and beyond in Headteacher development, I found three studies particularly helpful. These were: 'New Heads on the Block: Three Case Studies of Transition to Primary School Headship' (Kelly and Saunders, 2010), 'Your First Headship' (Richmond and Greenfield, 2015), and 'Living Headship: Voices, Values, and Vision' (Tomlinson et al., 2003). These studies shed light on the common experiences and challenges faced by Headteachers in their first stage of Headship, and provided valuable insights for me on how to recognise, navigate and highlight these shared experiences or challenges with regard to my own first stage narrative.

'New Heads on the Block,' (Kelly and Saunders, 2010, p 129), offered a three-phase transition model to analyse the experiences of three newly appointed primary school Heads in their first year in post. The authors suggested that this model was a useful tool for understanding the challenges and opportunities that come with assuming the role of the Headteacher and they are outlined below.

- **The first phase:** preparation for Headship, involved formal and informal learning through courses, training, and experience, and included themes of personal motivation, the nature of primary schooling and Headship, and the development of aspiring Heads.

- **The second phase:** entry, orientation, and immersion, involved professional and organisational socialisation, school effectiveness and improvement, and the building of professional alliances.

- **The third phase**: control and action, was characterised by the reconfiguration and reshaping of the school, working with others, and the intensification of organisational socialisation.

(Kelly and Saunders, 2010, p. 129)

Kelly and Saunders (2010) detail the various motivations and focuses of the three Headteachers in their case studies, emphasising the influence of individual characteristics of the Headteacher and the school on their experiences. Similarly, in 'Your First Headship', (Richmond and Greenfield, 2015, pp. 109-119) there is an emphasis on the importance of the careful consideration of the position's responsibilities and the need for thoughtful leadership during the transition period. They provide practical advice for new Headteachers, including developing their leadership style, building a culture of trust, making a positive impact, exhibiting professionalism, and looking after their own well-being. With regard to exhibiting professionalism they note its characteristics as follows.

- appearance and dress
- voice and use of language
- attitude towards discipline and the way you deal with it
- manner when put under pressure
- way of dealing with tricky parents
- reliability and time-keeping
- philosophy of teaching and learning.

(Richmond and Greenfield, 2015, p. 116)

Professionalism was a key focus of Element 1, in this first stage of my Headship Journey as outlined later in this chapter.

Finally, 'Living Headship' (Tomlinson et al., 2003, p. xi) offers a broader perspective by foregrounding the perceived realities and professional practices of experienced Headteachers through their own observations of their professional contexts. Tomlinson et al. (2003) present the stories and struggles of Headteachers as a legitimate methodology and an alternative to

the traditional notion of an all-powerful visionary leader. They emphasise the importance of understanding the voices and values of Headteachers in their professional practice. Their study, like my own, was influenced by Southworth (1995) and by Southworth and Hall's (1997, p. 16) review of the literature on Headship:

> ... the central importance of the Headteacher is a longstanding theme. It appears in a number of guises, but most compellingly in the school effectiveness research which claims to show that Heads make a difference to the schools they lead. The idea that powerful and visionary Heads enhance the school's effectiveness is thus a continuing belief in the research and the teacher profession generally. Yet beyond this assertion surprisingly little else is known. School effectiveness studies and more recently school improvement commentaries have offered some broad ideas about the nature of effective leadership, but these are relatively generalised and superficial. Longitudinal and observational studies of Heads increasing the effectiveness of schools they lead are presently lacking. (Southworth and Halls, 1997, p. 16)

Unlike my study the six Primary Head stories in Tomlinson et al. (2003) are not autoethnographic. Four of the six Heads are supported by other academics and the narrative of the Heads were crafted together with their corresponding academic participant:

> Primary
> 1. Strategic management in an infant school
>   Angela Bird and Les Bell
> 2. Building the vision: a TQM approach
>   Gwenn Brockley and Ray Moorcroft
> 3. The culture of counselling as an engine for change
>   Carolyn Clarke and Terry Marti
> 4. Leading a primary school to enhance its distinctively Catholic identity
>   Frances Hardy
> 5. Coming to grips with the realities of marketing
>   John Loftus and Nick Selley
> 6. Developing and sustaining school effectiveness
>   Mo Williams.
>
> (Tomlinson et al., 2003, p. v)

Only three out of the six Primary Headteachers use an autobiographical voice. It is these three Headteachers whose studies I will concern myself with alongside my own experiences in this first and following stages. These Headteachers do not have pseudonyms and they are identifiable in the real world as they published their 'Living Headship' stories from their real lived experiences. Their names are Frances Hardy, John Loftus and Mo Williams and they are included in my Cast of Characters.

All three studies offered me valuable insights into Headteachers experiences and Headteacher voice to consider against my own. By considering other Headteachers and research insights from these studies, I aim to note similarities, differences and highlight my own blind spots.

My Stage One : 2013 -2016

My development in Stage One grew from beginning to have an understanding of the importance that theory played in cultivating opportunities to flourish with a good quality of life. As noted above, this understanding corresponded with my EdD process and had not occurred in previous post-graduate study or professional development I had undertaken. My understanding grew and aligned with Dearden's (1972, p. 65) notion of ‘educational growth’ and Rousseau's 'developmental stages' (Dearden, 1972, p. 66), which require educational objectives and teaching methods to be closely adapted to the learner's needs and present stage. This made me think of the Elements and Stages of Development in this EdD, and my educational objectives and understandings which have adapted alongside my university supervision over time for me as a learner, researcher, and Headteacher. It was important for the distance of time between EdD courses and supervisions to allow the growth to happen in the contexts and the spaces where everything occurs. I needed time to process my ‘Third Space’ and to give my Headship journey serious consideration using theory and method. This relates back to Dewey’s notion of how we can change our ways to become better at what we do (1933, p. 4).

As I work through the first stage of my Headteacher development from 2013-2016, the Dissertation’s Element Framework is used to reflect on my learning needs during this First Iterative Stage of Development and I use capability theory to attend to my personalised educational objectives, opting toward self-directed learning. In this first stage, I focus on the study's value and worth, which aligns with Dearden's notion of 'education as a growth process' (1968, p. 25, 1972, pp. 65-84) for an individual to grow. The process of method, theory, and reflection made these moments different from the tacit knowledge gained through living experience in personal and professional life.

As a new Headteacher in Scotland, my professional development was guided by the Professional Standards established by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)

in 2013, and recently refreshed and restructured (GTCS, 2021b, p. 3). These Standards serve as a benchmark for my narratives and provide a framework for the types of educational growth expected of me, as well as the types of learning I choose to engage in as a Headteacher. While the Standards (GTCS, 2021b) offer control over the conduct of teachers in Scotland, they cannot modify our inner nature, which is guided by our individual ethical standards. It is interesting to note that Scotland has developed a set of 'national values' as promoted in Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Gillies, 2006, p. 32), which could imply a will to dictate values to us as individuals. However, I now believe that personal values should always start with the individual and be built through understanding rather than imposed by external forces.

In considering Kelly and Saunders' (2010, p. 129) three-phase new Head transition model, I found their first phase to be particularly relevant to my own experience. During this phase, I had prepared for Headship using a combination of formal and informal learning, training, and experiences. However, my motivation during this phase was driven by my aspiration to become a Headteacher, as outlined in the explicit Standards for Headship (GTCS, 2012, 2021a). By being appointed to my role after many years of working within the organisation and demonstrating my effectiveness as a Depute Headteacher in school improvement and building professional alliances, I had gained entry into the second phase. Thus, in my Stage One of Headship development, Kelly and Saunders' third phase became the focus, which included considerations such as control and action, working with others, reconfiguration and reshaping of the school, and the intensification of organisational socialisation with the school community. These aspects are also relevant to the proceeding two Stages of my Headship development.

At the start of my Stage One of Headship development, I did not have a clear understanding of neoliberalism, but I have come to acknowledge that the expectations placed on teachers in Scotland are performative and neoliberal. Nevertheless, I have no opposition to the GTCS Standards suite, as they do align with my own ethical standards. In considering my growth as a Headteacher and my performativity in Stage One, I found myself firmly caught in the loop of social, political, and economic conditions that shape my functioning and choices. As a Headteacher, noted above, I was keen to please those in power and fulfil all the expectations and accreditations required to operate as an effective school leader. Additionally, I accepted

the notion that students and the community are the consumers of the school, and as such, they deserve and are entitled to a certain level of education provision.

At this first stage, I aligned with Ball's (2003, p. 215) description of a new performative worker, who must organise themselves in response to targets, indicators, and evaluations, setting aside personal beliefs and commitments to live an existence of calculation. The new performative worker is an enterprising self, with a passion for excellence and a promiscuous attitude towards work. The phrase ‘an enterprising self, with a passion for excellence and a promiscuous attitude towards work’ refers to the characteristics of a new type of worker described by Ball twenty years ago (2003). This neoliberal type of worker is driven by a desire for success and achievement and is willing to take on new challenges and responsibilities to achieve their goals. They are described as promiscuous in their attitude towards work, meaning that they are willing to work across different areas or industries to gain new experiences and skills. When I embraced this mindset, I found myself working in the community and supporting both secondary and tertiary education. Through this experience, I became fully qualified as a secondary teacher and worked in our associated high school. Additionally, I supported work experience for students in the medical profession, collaborating closely with colleagues from both secondary and medical sectors.

In this context, I was not yet aware of the Capabilities or how to use my combined Capabilities in school leadership to encourage the development of internal Capabilities for myself or others. Neoliberalism, as defined by Nussbaum (2009, p. 14), Hargreaves (2012, p. 3), and Fullan (2016, p. 2), is a political and economic ideology that emphasises individualism, competition, and market-driven policies in education. As a Headteacher, I was caught within this neoliberal loop, where my performativity was governed by external targets and evaluations.

However, as I progressed through the Stages of my Headteacher journey, I began to understand the importance of internal Capabilities for both myself and my students. The CA, as outlined by Nussbaum (2011, p. 49), emphasises the development of internal Capabilities such as critical thinking, empathy, and creativity, which are essential for cultivating a flourishing life. Relatedly, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012, p. 1) advocate for a new paradigm of educational change that prioritises collaborative professionalism and the development of internal Capabilities in students and teachers. As I moved forward in my Stages of

Development, I began to aim for balance of the external demands of performativity with a focus on the development of internal Capabilities within myself and my school community which are explored further in Stages 2 and 3.

Considering the context of the closed loop

I am haunted as I reflect on my past alignment with policy and practice, and what I thought of as my 'can do attitude' as a Headteacher. As Ball (2003, p.217) states, individuals in this position are 'enterprising subjects' who live their lives as 'an enterprise of the self' in a neoliberal context. According to Bernstein (1996, p.169), this results in 'contract replacing covenant' and value replacing values, with commitment and service being of dubious worth in that policy regime.

Sticky note 3

> Reading this now, I feel a sense of shame. I am embarrassed to admit how easily I was aligned with the system and how proud I was of my achievements at the time. We even joked about our 'medals' but, looking back, it was all too real.
> Back then, I thought I was morally just and ethically responsible. I used all the right vocabulary markers, had a big heart, and was committed to serving and pleasing others. But now I realise just how naive I was.
>
> As Ball (2003, p.217) notes, 'value replaces values' in the neoliberal education system. I was part of a conventional Headship that prioritised external targets and evaluations over internal values and commitments. Looking back, I wonder about my values and how easily I was swayed by the system.

Torrance et al. (2014) state:

> Limited attention has been paid to the barriers and challenges facing leaders committed to locating social justice leadership values in school practices, such as the competing performativity agenda. (Torrance et al., 2014, p. 2)

This quote articulates well the space and context within which I was working during my first stage of development as a Headteacher. I thought I was morally just and ethically responsible. As noted above (sticky note 3) I used all the right vocabulary markers, had a big heart, and was committed to serving and pleasing others. But now I realise just how naive I was. As Ball (2003, p. 217) notes, 'value replaces values' in the neoliberal education system. I was part of a conventional Headship that prioritised external targets and evaluations over

internal values and commitments. I am very uncomfortable acknowledging just how cog-like I was in the system around me: I allowed myself to be moulded and not to grow.

Element 1 – Learning

Personal experience

The following is a journal entry from the day I was appointed (the original journal entry can be found at Appendix 5).

Journal 4

Immersion:
I had put in a lot of effort to prepare for this job interview, and I felt fortunate to have made it to the shortlist based on my first-panel feedback. After receiving feedback to improve my appearance, I enlisted the help of a friend to get ready. They did my hair, makeup, and even bought me a shirt to wear with my suit as I could not afford to buy it myself. I felt confident and powerful as people on the street smiled at me. I had prepared fully with the support of mentors, I had hundreds of cards of preparation down to bullet points in a small leather notebook and I'd had mock interviews with mentors between the two interviews.

Crystallisation:
As I sat in the interview room, I couldn't help but notice how grand and historic it was. I realised this was a significant moment in my life which could change my future. I felt elevated by the grandeur of the surroundings.
The interview panel was sitting on wooden thrones on the other side of an elegant wooden table adorned with portraits of prominent figures from history. There were five people in total, including an elected Councillor, two paid employees and two community members. I looked and felt corporate, which gave me confidence. I knew I had to give it my very best and I was ready to do so.

Categorisation:
I answered each question thoroughly and confidently. I had prepared for this moment, and I felt empowered as I presented my answers calmly and deliberately. I acknowledged the feedback I had received and worked with what I had, even if it had been difficult to hear. I focused on removing any barriers to my candidacy, such as speaking too fast or not looking corporate enough, and made sure to put everything I had on display during the interview.

Lessons Learned and Future Growth:
I got the job, which was a surprise and I was delighted. I remained resilient in my pursuit and learned important lessons from the experience. I realised the importance of paying attention to politics, staying true to my values and self-worth, and being intentional in my practice. This experience helped me categorise my strengths and weaknesses, and I had been able to work on them to improve my chances of getting the job. I also learned never

to take anything for granted and always to be organised. Despite the challenges that lay ahead, I was ready to face them head-on and continue growing as a leader.
Themes emerging at this point for me are linked to the characteristics of First Headship as expresses by Richmond & Greenfield, (2015, p116), explicitly;

- appearance and dress
- voice and use of language
- manner when put under pressure

These characteristics link again to vulnerability, personal self-worth and affiliation to the group norms. At the time I would not be able to articulate or explore these feelings and I did not have the reflexivity to do so.

Theorisation: -
To support me in theorising my interview process I use 'Your First Headship', (Richmond & Greenfield, 2015, p116), and their professionalism characteristics (noted above). I had been challenged in almost every area of professionalism listed. My appearance and dress had been challenged. My voice and use of language had been fed back to me as too fast and too academic after my first interview. I had been asked questions about discipline and support needs and how I would deal with these. I had been observed for my manner when put under pressure via multiple interviews and public presentations. I had been asked about dealing with tricky parents and staff. I had been asked about my philosophy of teaching and learning. The only thing which had not been questioned during the process was my reliability and time-keeping. I can assume this was because as I was already the Depute in the School and had worked for the same employer for many years and they had a positive answer to this already.

I wish I had known what Richmond and Greenfield had written at this time but their work was published two years after my appointment to this Headship. Had I have read it I would have been more prepared for being questioned and for the feedback received on the first two characteristics of professionalism - my appearance and my voice. If this had happened, maybe I may not have taken it so personally and related it to my overall self-worth.

The analysis of my experience during the job interview, using qualitative research interactive cycle framework for autoethnography influenced by Denzin (2006), highlights several key aspects. Firstly, my emotions are evident throughout the narrative, and I experience a range of emotions, including anxiety, excitement, anger, upset, vulnerability, and determination. Secondly, I establish my credibility by describing the extensive preparation I put into the interview process, seeking advice from a senior mentor, and practising answering questions. Thirdly, I reflect on my experience and the impact of my appearance on the interview process, acknowledging my emotional state and how it influenced my behaviour during the

interview. Fourthly, my narrative is coherent and follows a clear structure, providing a detailed description of my preparation for the interview, my appearance on the day, the interview process, and my emotions and reflections afterward. Fifthly, the narrative highlights the impact of the interview process on my self-worth, confidence, and career aspirations, as well as the importance of addressing limitations to promote social justice and enable individuals to fully exercise their Capabilities. Finally, my narrative is ethical, as I do not disclose confidential information and do not harm anyone in my account, demonstrating respect for the interview process and the individuals involved.

Using Nussbaum's (2011) Capabilities Framework, my experience during the job interview highlights several areas in which I now believe I was denied opportunities to exercise my Capabilities. The focus on my appearance during the interview process and the feedback I received about being 'corporate' limited my ability to express myself authentically, thus denying me the capability of self-expression. Additionally, financial constraints limited my options to present myself in the way desired, thus denying me the capability of material well-being. The interview process also highlighted the importance of social and emotional Capabilities, such as self-confidence, self-worth, and determination, which I had to work hard to maintain despite the challenges I faced in regard to my voice and use of language and appearance and presentation (Richmond & Greenfield, 2015, p116). I believe now that I had not realised these were standard expectations for professionalism for Headship candidates and reflection and the use of theory over time has helped me work through this. There are aspects of the expected characteristics of appearance and voice which I now regard as questionable with respect to how judgements were made about my appearance, dress and presentation. I will focus on appearance and dress at this time because it had the larger impact on my personal wellbeing and Headship development. Primary Schools are places of learning and modest attire is appropriate but there is a question here for me about professionalism and dress code.

> Clothing as a form of material culture is especially suitable for studying the relationship between personal values and values attributed to material goods because of its close association with perceptions of the self. Clothes both affect and express our perceptions of ourselves. (Crane and Bovone, 2006, p. 321)

It should be noted I had on a Hobbs[5] suit dress for my first interview but did not have on a suit jacket and my hair was not tied back and it is possible I did not wear makeup. The first interview had been held in my own school and I was working in classrooms. I did step out of the classroom and into the interview but I felt I had made a considered effort with my appearance and presentation. My hair had been cut and I had on new high heels which matched my new red, blue and white patterned dress bought for the occasion from a Highstreet clothes store for woman, specialising in work wear. I am still concerned about what image I presented. Like a child on the first day of school term in all their new attire (McDaniel, 1995, p. 7) I thought I had been smart, clean and presentable.

> Clothing has a special character as a material object because of its location on our bodies, thereby ‘‘acting as a filter between the person and the surrounding social world.’’ Values have also been interpreted as being ‘‘intimately tied to the self’’ and as forming ‘‘the core of one’s personal identity.’’
> (Hitlin and Piliavin, 2004, in Crane and Bovone, 2006, p.321)

I wonder now how it would have been received if I had worn more traditional dress with a suit jacket, (Rew, 2021) given that perceptions had been made about me and my impending professionalism as Headteacher because of how I looked. I wonder too if this raises larger ethical questions which could be explored in a later study around bias in Headship recruitment specifically related to ethnic minorities and gender in Scotland. Christine Richmond (2021, p. 1) wrote a poem on becoming a ‘Head at Last’ where she discusses her experience in the Headship recruitment process. A particular stanza in her poem which stands out to me is the following.

> The other candidates looks smart and seemed to know a lot.
> Some things I remembered but most things I forgot.
> C, Richmond (2021, p. 1)

The narrative above highlights the impact of my appearance and social-cultural considerations on my personal and professional identity. The description encompasses my personal perspective and the feeling of vulnerability that arose due to the focus on my physical appearance during the recruitment process. This experience unfortunately shaped my new professional identity as a Headteacher in the context of the educational system in

[5] https://www.hobbs.com/

Scotland at that time. This narrative demonstrates the personal and ethical considerations that are often overlooked when examining institutional environments, and unwritten professional expectations placed on individuals which may not emphasise the importance of considering individual dignity, respect and worth. Moreover the personal questioning for me was not always done in a healthy way or balanced way. This is another reason why developing critical reflection as a Headteacher was important as well as using theory to support working beyond what I had heard or perceived. The focus of a Headteacher in their new role should surely be aspirational for their community of learners and not focussed on their own bodily integrity and physical appearance to feel good enough to be the Headteacher.

As noted by Forde (2006, pp. 140-156), and other school leadership researchers such as Hargreaves (2007), Fullan (2014), Sergiovanni (2020), and Brookfield (2005, 2017), personal reflection is essential for effective change and growth as a Headteacher. My Element Framework provided a useful tool for exploring my journey towards becoming an 'Engaged Headteacher-Educator' (Forde, 2006, p. 140) which emphasises preparing learners for a complex world and leading schools and learning in more effective ways. To ensure the trustworthiness of my reflections on my first stage of development as a Headteacher, I use the Element Framework and take the time to work through each of the specific Elements in turn: learning, methodology, theorisation, and understandings. The framework has been instrumental in helping me make sense of how I perceived my experiences and where necessary, challenge any blind spots, feelings, emotions, insecurities or biases I may have held.

Brookfield's lenses, in particular, were crucial in Element 1, as they allowed me to challenge my own biases and identify any blind spots before moving on to deeper levels of criticality in Elements 2 and 3. Finally, in Element 4, I share my understandings gained, which supports a broader iterative understanding of my experiences and how they relate to my educational growth as a Headteacher.

The Standard for Headship (GTCS, 2021a) emphasises the importance of professional values, such as social justice, trust, respect, and integrity, which aligns with the broader literature on effective school leadership (Hargreaves, 2020, pp. 21-23; Leithwood, 2004, p. 4). However, as noted by Nussbaum (2011), achieving equal social justice is impossible, and the CA

suggests striving for equity instead, which I further explore in Element 3. Throughout my Stage One of Headship, I remained committed to promoting social justice and aligning my practice with the Professional Standards (GTCS, 2021b) and the Standard for Headship (GTCS, 2021a) as well as the Columban values which are discussed in the next section. This commitment was further supported by my involvement in mandatory professional development opportunities as noted below in Columba 1400 and also, various Edinburgh University Into Headship programmes, which allowed me to contribute to practitioner enquiry and teacher leadership, as advocated by Fullan (2016, p. 16) and Sergiovanni (2020).

Student Experiences

As a Stage One Headteacher, I attended The Columba 1400 Head Teachers' Leadership Academy[6] which offered a leadership programme where Headteachers use the Columban core values of **Awareness, Focus, Creativity, Integrity, Perseverance** and **Service** to connect to their values to their school community. My concerns developed at Columba 1400 about how the continuity of learning aligns with those of Bell and Gilbert (1996, p. 1) who emphasised the need for systematic coordination of professionals and a coherent curriculum across systems to support students' progress. This of course is a considerable challenge, as it requires a shared commitment to different priorities in each sector and shared values around students' long-term outcomes. It is also a challenge in each school due to each staff member's different starting point regarding their mindset of supporting learners needs.

I wrote the following journal entry in response to the call for participants to attend the Columba 1400 Leadership Academy.

[6] https://columba1400.com/what-we-do/head-teachers-leadership-academies/

Immersion

At 36 I felt all my dreams had come true. I had been appointed Headteacher of the school I loved, in the community I lived in. As a newly appointed Headteacher, I had the opportunity to attend the Columba 1400 Leadership Academy which was described by my employer as follows.

> 'Columba 1400 is an award-winning charitable social enterprise based in Scotland. They have two inspirational purpose-built leadership centres in Staff on the Isle of Skye and at Ardoch on the banks of Loch Lomond. The organisation runs leadership programmes using the core values of Awareness, Focus, Creativity, Integrity, Perseverance and Service which provide a framework for educational leaders to embark on a journey of personal transformation and leadership development. Participation and completion of the Head Teacher Leadership Academy will be an opportunity for attendees to exhibit and enhance their skills of Headship.' (work email, May 2013)

My nomination form is below with the exact words I wrote five months into my first Headship.

> *As the lead learner in my organisation, I believe it is important to lead by example. Transactional leadership and transformational leadership offer opportunities to influence others' development. I always question the value base behind such transactions and the motivations for transactions which Keith Grint refers to as 'wicked leadership' (2010).*
>
> *I am keen to look at a values-driven approach to enhance my development in its early phase as a reflective Headteacher and career-long learner. I feel that Columba 1400 could help shape my journey. I already have an understanding that schools cannot compensate for society, but they can help create positive societal values which are key to the development of community, children and collective responsibility.*

I was selected to go which was very exciting. It was the first time I had been away from any of my three children at this point. I arrived at the venue in Ardoch and it was breath taking. I was allocated one of the suites, it was luxurious as was having dinners made for me by someone else each day. I had been transported to a different world. I had a balcony with this view.

At the Columba 1400 Leadership Academy, I collaborated with other Headteachers. We collaborated to imagine new ways to serve our schools from our values and our intrinsic motivation. We had high aspirations and aimed to create positive change through the Columban values towards continuity of learning for students across our schools and the sharing of services given the tightening of our per capita budgets for students and with our general budgets being centrally controlled and re-streamed for centralised procurement and community services. This was a regular topic at Headteachers meetings, budgets and council budgets.

However, the collaboration experience was also uncomfortable as we were encouraged to talk with people we hardly knew about personal polarities and problems in our workspaces and lives. Activities to do this included selecting pictures and talking about why they were relevant to your values and sense of self. Further we were coached in trios of three often with our cluster colleagues. Cluster colleagues being the colleagues in the same associated high school groupings for the primary schools. This created a false sense of closeness and community which lead, arguably, to oversharing. This created a vulnerability, particularly in Headship where we normally keep personal things close to our chests and are competitive with each other.

The stories I told were to do with personal miscarriages, relationships with my parents, and my ambition to undertake a doctorate. I talked about insecurities and my vulnerabilities, as well as my strengths. I talked about things I had never shared even with my closest friends and family. I did this because I fully embraced the context I was in and because I answered honestly the leading questions I was asked in both the trios and also the coaching sections. Working with cluster colleagues meant we shared similar experiences in our communities, so we recognised each other's narratives which brought us closer. At the end of the process we had to graduate and say words about a single colleague. This was an emotive

experience and for me created an artificial alliance and an almost binding contract to serve alongside my peers with our newly crystalised Columba values.

Crystallisation:

The venue offered a well needed rest for me. I had three very young children at this point and the luxury of sleeping for full nights, no additional work, and someone else cooking my meals was golden. I felt very refreshed and alive. It was also exciting as a new Headteacher to have a close-knit group of experienced Headteacher colleagues to network with. However, after Columba 1400, I found myself unwittingly in conflict with senior colleagues trying to live out the Columba values. In my need for affiliation, I aligned myself even more tightly with my community and cluster colleagues. This affected my quality of life and my work relationships. I had not experienced this level of isolation before as I had always aligned myself with my employer unquestioningly. Championing my values which were encouraged at the Columba Leadership Academy definitely conflicted with my employer's view of what substantial freedoms we should have. It was a very authoritarian time which I had not realised before this and my freedoms and creativity in practice were not welcomed and something deemed to be shut down. I was told I was operating well beyond my paygrade. I felt isolated and uncomfortable and, at this point, I surrendered some of my good norms to preclude some of my choices.

Categorisation:

Looking back, I realise that I was very new to Headship. I was not critically reflective enough and should have used theory to considered more appropriate ways to challenge and change practice without forcing relationships that made me vulnerable. To achieve this, I should have paid more attention to what was going on and been more critically reflective using tools like Pitard's (2017) critical incident analysis and Brookfield's reflective practice lenses. This would have helped me identify my values, beliefs, and assumptions, and how they were impacting my decision-making and relationships with colleagues.

Additionally, I should have explored alternative ways to navigate conflicting policies and ideologies without compromising my values, beliefs and myself. This could have involved seeking support from other like-minded leaders or engaging in advocacy efforts to influence policy change at the national or local level. Ultimately, my experience at the Columba 1400 Leadership Academy taught me the importance of being critically reflective and more aware of how my values and beliefs influence my leadership and that of others. It also highlighted the need to be open to different perspectives and to find ways to navigate conflicting ideologies and policies without compromising my values and beliefs. As a result, I am now

more intentional about my leadership style, continuously striving to be a values-driven leader who supports the growth and development of my students, colleagues, and community and I explore this in Stage Three of my leadership development.

Themes emerging here for me personally are - vulnerability, relationships, values and voice. In terms of Richmond & Greenfield's (2015, p116) professional characteristics of New Heads I would suggest the following characteristics might now being explored:

- attitude towards discipline and the way you deal with it
- manner when put under pressure
- way of dealing with tricky parents

Children and parents gave me consistency in this Stage of my Headship as I had well-established positive relationships with them after being the Depute Headteacher for 10 Years in the school prior to my appointment to Head.

Theorisation

While drawn to consider Kelly and Saunders' (2010, p 129) their third phase of transitional development as a new Headteacher in taking control and action, I reflect on my own narrative against Headteacher John Loftus as he discusses his new Headship (Loftus and Selley, 1999). I have taken to heart his comment below.

> As an action researcher I have striven to live my values in my practice. This has not been easy. No sooner do I feel that I am accomplishing the above when suddenly reflection brings forth more uncertainties, and further questions. (Loftus and Selley, 1999. p. 56)

John lists his 8 values as:

- Quality of education for all
- Publishing achievement
- Whole-staff commitment to any change
- Broad curriculum; staff-parents partnership
- No compromise on the children's education
- Not to criticise other schools
- Claimed success must be genuine
- Pupils not be regarded as income. (p. 56)

As a Headteacher, I believe my role is to create an enabling environment in which students and colleagues can develop the Capabilities they need to live fulfilling lives and contribute to society. This means promoting critical reflection, self-awareness, and values-driven leadership, and finding ways to navigate conflicting policies and ideologies without compromising our values and beliefs. Like John I was an action researcher at this point but not an autoethnographic researcher.

John's experiences are similar to mine in that he also has personal conflicts but was able to recognise them sooner than I managed to do so.

> I was most certainly aware that I had been forced into a situation that I did not wish to be part of. Yet in spite of this, I was most definitely an active participant in carrying out the government's philosophy. In short, I was a living contradiction. (Loftus and Selley, 1999. p. 55)

I am not sure all John's value statements are values but they are positions he maintains to guide his Headship. I consider values to be more personal ethics and personality goals similar to the Columban ones above. However, what he has shared as values as a Stage One Headteacher I can mostly align with my own positions as in my first stage of Headship but there are some differences. While I try to please and appease colleagues, I would not wait for full buy-in before making changes. I did not need to market my school to attract customers so I did not need to consider regarding my students as income generators I did not need to publicly criticise other schools.

As I reflect on my experience as this Stage of Headship, Nussbaum's CA is relevant as individuals have a set of fundamental Capabilities that enable them to live a fulfilling life and exercise their agency if they can be realised. These Capabilities include not only basic needs like food and shelter but also more complex needs such as the ability to participate in society, engage in meaningful work, and pursue personal goals. I realise now but could not have articulated this in Stage One of Headship that I was driven by the CA values in school leadership, including trying to enable access to all ten Capabilities.

During the leadership programme, I collaborated with other Headteachers to benefit our students and communities, aiming to create positive societal values and working towards the continuity of learning for students across schools. However, I found myself in conflict with

senior colleagues, and I aligned myself even more tightly with my community and cluster colleagues. This affected my quality of life and work, ultimately limiting my ability to exercise my agency and pursue my goals.

My thinking on this topic is also now influenced by the CA (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 4) with respect to asking us to consider what children are able to do and be, and to take responsibility for their ongoing educational journeys. This, of course, parallels my own research question for myself in this EdD as I take responsibility for my ongoing education and my values.

At this point in Stage One I was starting to take action as a new Headteacher in the way Kelly and Saunders, (2010, p 129) described in their third phase of transitional development - 'in taking control and action'. This section follows my first attempts as a new Headteacher with respect to control and action in the reconfiguring and reshaping of the school, as I worked with others and intensified cluster collaboration in raising the school's profile in the broader community.

The Christie Commission (2011a) and Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) (2010 marked a significant shift in approaches to curriculum, learning, teaching, and assessment across all sectors of Scottish education (Scottish Government, 2011a; Education Scotland, 2010; Scottish Government, 2010; Scottish Government, 2011b). These developments coincided with the 'In on Act' initiative (Scottish Government, 2014) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Gillies, 2006, p. 32), prompting me as a new Headteacher to have to consider my school's philosophy and the curriculum rationale. This was also an Education Scotland[7] expectation of all Scottish schools at this time and as a performative worker I wanted to have the best curriculum rationale. Looking back, I am embarrassed to admit that I pursued my work in a performative way, heavily linking into the community not purely for altruistic reasons, but also driven by my desire for success, competition, affiliation and, I admit with some shame, for affirmation. As mentioned earlier, I was a neoliberal worker operating within a neoliberal policy environment texts and yet I was simultaneously driven by values that I would later learn, in Stage Two of my Headship, to be liberal values and aspirations, Hence I sought to

[7] https://education.gov.scot/media/bxnbph0a/dyw35-curriculum-rationale.pdf

make policy child-oriented, personalised and individually relevant. I wanted quality education for all, whether that was achievable or not. I had not considered this from a CA equity position at this point – that would come in Stage Two of my Headship.

As Hedge and MacKenzie (2016, pp. 1-2) note, a curriculum rationale that embodies classical liberal assumptions about the aims and purposes of education, with particular respect to autonomy, is needed for the continuity of learning. MacKenzie & Stoljar (2000, p. 21) note, autonomy is a multidimensional, context-sensitive approach that is relational, emotional, embodied, desiring, creative, and feeling.

Although I was aware in Stage Two of this approach, I did not have a true understanding of the liberal assumptions needed to support this rationale at this time in Stage One. I did have Education Scotland[8] (2017) and the GTCS[9] (2012, 2021b) to guide me on what a Curriculum Rationale[10] should be and the values I should embody as a professional from the Professional Standards but my actions were not, at that stage, adequately underpinned by theory.

Retrospectively, however, I can discern that I moved my thinking into my creative 'Third Space' for my students' learning journey, drawing on the perspectives of Brookfield (2017, p. 7), who advocates for critically reflective teaching, and Sergiovanni (2020, pp. 17-33), who emphasises the importance of creating a sense of community and personal meaning in schools. I leaned into the key policy texts of 'How Good is Our School?'[11] and the 'Professional Standards'. Combining Brookfield's lenses and the policy texts allowed me to start to reconfigure the school and create professional learning opportunities for the students that made the realities of cross-working contexts between the primary school and the secondary school a reality for our students, aligning with the broader literature on effective school leadership and learning (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 4). This was based on my own wish to be affiliated post Columba 1400 with our community in praxis but also with respect to the type of leadership style I had started to develop. By this I mean I was keen to serve everyone in a performative way and was

[8] https://education.gov.scot/media/2swjmnbs/frwk2_hgios4.pdf
[9] https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/key-cross-cutting-themes/professional-values/
[10] https://education.gov.scot/resources/primary-curriculum-improvement-toolkit/#:~:text=Curriculum%20rationale,-It%20is%20important&text=When%20a%20school%20has%20a,'
[11] https://education.gov.scot/media/2swjmnbs/frwk2_hgios4.pdf

keen to promote all perceived achievements as if marketing those, the school, and my leadership.

As the narrative above unfolded, my own children were watching alongside me. As the Headteacher, I opened up many opportunities for the school students across the cluster, including a cross-cluster performance of Les Misérables in 2015[12]. My own children saw less of me as I attended more meetings and became more community-focused. I noticed that my physical appearance also became more fixed, making sure that I was corporate and physically presentable at all times. My children were affected by this change as they were now active participants in all that I did. My work life became their life, and they became an adjunct to my life within the community.

It was clear that my children were impacted by the changes in my work life, but they also saw the positive impact that I was having on the community. As a family, we were all in this together, and my children at that time were proud to be a part of it. While my work life may have become all-encompassing, it was a journey that we were all taking together but I would not make the same choices now.

Colleagues' Perceptions

As a member of the school community, I saw first-hand how my focus on community and continuity of learning affected my colleagues. The implementation of the Big Ideas curriculum[13], based on the New Basics programme developed in Queensland, Australia, created a lot of work for teachers, but also led to many positive engagements with the community[14]. The curriculum became transdisciplinary, with multiple community groups engaged in working with the school. This led to an ambitious project for two schools to enhance the transition and ensure continuity of learning. Additionally, other community collaborations, such as the 2G Pitch Fever[15] Community Project, were thought of during this time. The energy for change was vast, and people were motivated by it. I knew this by the number of contacts that were made with me at this time and the number of projects which

[12] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/pupils/gallery/les-miserables-2/
[13] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/position-papers/the-big-ideas/
[14] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/community-2/
[15] https://www.balerno2gbooking.space/balerno-2g-pitchfever/

then happened to the benefit of the school. Again, at this point this was about service and belonging in my community for me as a Headteacher and it fulfilled my need for affiliation.

The Big Ideas curriculum led to multiple teacher practitioner enquiries, which were scaffolded by the work of the school and the community. These enquiries drove forward positive change in the school, and through the Professional Review and Development Process, colleagues had the opportunity to discuss their motivations and interests. It was straightforward to link colleagues with their passions with groups who shared similar passions in the community for Sustainability, Fair Trade, Film, and creativity, connecting everything to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Global Sustainable Goals. Many of the staff received funding from government streams, particularly to undertake an enquiry into Sustainability with Edinburgh University and 'The Learning for Sustainability Post Graduate Course'. This funding was a starting point for the development of 'Teachers' Knowledge' through regular collaborative effort with strategic frameworks of thought and rationale informing it, and developing practice more suitable for critical reflection and lead to the production of the student planned experiences and outcomes tracked journey through their years at the school in the school.

The focus on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Global Sustainable Goals helped to build a sense of global citizenship among the students[16] and the community. I knew this because the Rights Respecting School Gold Award[17] cannot be given without real authentic embedding of these values and the broader school community playing an active part in the process. It involved developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable individuals to engage with and contribute to the world in meaningful ways (Thomas, 2013). The practitioner enquiries[18] that I noted are similar to action research: reflecting on and improving one's own practice. By engaging in practitioner enquiries, teachers were able to develop their own knowledge and skills, which is in line with Kemmis and McTaggart's (2014) ideas of critical reflection and action research. The funding received for the Sustainability enquiry with Edinburgh University and 'The Learning for Sustainability Post Graduate

[16] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/position-papers/rights-respecting-school-award/ https://deanparkschool.org.uk/blog/2013/10/09/rainbow-day-october-25th/ https://deanparkschool.org.uk/flushed-with-success-2/
[17] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/about/promoting-positive-behaviour/#:~:text=Dean%20Park%20was%20the%20first,of%20the%20Child%20(UNCRC).
[18] https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Practitioner+Enquiry+at+Dean+Park+Primary+School/0_dwtnywmf

Course' can also be seen as an example of collaborative inquiry (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999), in which teachers work together to investigate and improve their practice.

The extract below however shows that not all in the community were happy with the direction the school was headed and that I did have opposition to the changes that I was making.

Sticky note 4

I recall a comment from a member of our school community regarding the cluster-enhanced transition[19] work and the pace at which it was progressing.

The comment was about 'not eating elephants whole', and upon reflection, I believe it was a fair comment. My enthusiasm and drive for change, while a strength, also presented a weakness as others did not have the time to assimilate what I had clearly in my own head. When considering the Headship standards, it would be fair to say that not everyone was on-board with the change, although most were.

Despite this, the community groups around the school were all very enabled and engaged, using the school as a central focal point. Many were excited and motivated, and it was a really special and magical time when things happened for the good of the community[20].

The copy of the flyer below for the Farmers Market is an example of community collaboration at the time. The Market were keen to support the schools charitable and transdisciplinary efforts at the time as it meant the footfall at the market for the other traders and community groups was vastly increased . All traders paid for a stall at each market day but the school was given a spot at each market. We also performed musically at each market with our choir or instruments. Again bringing in children and families who may not normally attend.

[19] http://deanparkschool.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Enhanced-Transition-Paper.pdf
[20] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/blog/2016/06/02/community-clean-up/

This experience highlights the importance of educational leadership and the need to balance vision and enthusiasm with the ability to bring others along on the journey. As an educational leader, it is essential to have a clear vision and the ability to inspire others to work towards that vision but to do so with a patient, negotiated and clear articulation of that vision if it is to be shared. This is not an easy task, not for me.

Theory

The concept of 'Teachers' Knowledge' has become an important starting point for my theoretical journey in the EdD programme. This was a significant turning point for me, as my previous learning had focused on Professional Learning and Continuing Professional Development. While there had been policy shifts in considering key documents such as 'Teaching Scotland Future' (Scottish Government, 2010) and 'Advancing Professionalism on Teaching' (Scottish Government, 2011b), this did not necessarily translate into a change in context. I realised it was necessary to distinguish between being critical and being reflective, and it can be challenging to unpack this without prior experience.

The Professional Standards (GTCS, 2012, 2021b) serve to outline what professionalism should look like and what forms that a professional identity could take. Forde (2006, p. 3) discusses 'reclaiming teacher identity' and suggests that this can be achieved

‘through professional development, reflection, and enquiry’. A crucial part of this is the agency of the individual teacher, which then brings consideration to 'educational growth' and how that can be constructed in the school setting where teachers find themselves. This is vital when considering the impact of my leadership on teachers when I was a new Headteacher. I had a culture in my school were everyone was expected to learn and to carry on learning. For some teachers this was unwelcoming. They articulated to me at performance review that they felt if they were not undertaking professional learning at a higher level they felt less valuable to other colleagues in how I may perceive them. I reassured my colleagues that I did value them and we set positive and relevant targets for them according to the Professional Standards which I was able to work alongside them with in collaborative ways to allow them to feel affiliated and growing.

Beynon et al. (1995) suggest that professional identity is constructed by the individual who carries out the role and is based on that person's values, beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and understandings. This leads me to consider what forms of teacher professional learning promote reflection and enquiry. One core text from the EdD programme became the central focus for me at this point in my Headship, as it provided a starting point for considering how theory and practice can meet. As mentioned before, this was Stephen Brookfield's 'Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher' (2005, 2017). Brookfield's step-by-step narrative explains what it means to be a critically reflective teacher and create a culture of reflection in a school. This text also highlights the work of David Tripp's 'Critical Incidents in Teaching: Developing Professional Judgement' (1993) and Beverly Bell and John Gilbert's 'Teacher Development' (1996). While these books may seem old, the theories within resonated with me as I became qualified as a teacher in 1997 and had not been exposed to this type of thinking in my teacher education or post-graduate development. These texts are powerful and have shaped my strategic working when it comes to collaborative working in schools. They highlighted the importance of promoting reflection and enquiry among teachers, which can lead to individual and collective growth. These ideas for me align with the work of Martha Nussbaum, who emphasises the importance of cultivating critical thinking skills and moral reasoning in education (Nussbaum, 2011). By aiming to incorporating these ideas into my leadership approach, I started to create a culture of reflection and enquiry with ambition to promote individual and collective growth and development among teachers.

Element 2 – Methodology

Brookfield's (2005, 2017) lenses have been recognised as important tools for Headteachers to promote professional learning and quality improvement in their schools (Chang, 2008; Lingard & Gale, 2007). Brookfield's lenses, provide a framework for critical reflection and include self-reflection, conversations, colleagues, and books (Brookfield, 2005, 2017).

As a Stage One Headteacher, I found that incorporating Brookfield's lenses into my leadership style led to a more positive and supportive learning environment for teachers and students. I know this as I created forums for each of these groups to be able to participate in our Senior Team weekly meeting and feedback about their challenges, successes and share general information around how each group were progressing and what supports they needed. These groups also had their own meetings weekly which were chaired and minuted by individuals belonging to the group. The minutes were anonymous but the groups told me they were representative. These groups listened to other groups' minutes and feedback and we were able to challenge blind spots and bias. By reflecting on my own experiences and using narrative in a meaningful way, I was able to promote critical thinking and reflection among my teachers and students, leading to individual and collective growth and development (Denzin, 2003). Examples of this were the numerous student voice groups in the school, the volume of practitioner enquiries and the number of staff keen to take on developmental roles and responsibilities in the school without being paid an additional salary allowance for the remit.

Much research in educational leadership has emphasised the importance of critical reflection and self-awareness in promoting professional learning and quality improvement in schools. An example of this is shared in Tomlinson et al., (2003, p. xxv) who discuss Headteachers using 'theory for understanding' and 'theory for action' (Hoyle, 1986) and the relevance of postgraduate work in the rhetoric of strategic vision of the school and what that looked like in day to day business (Tomlinson et al., (2003 p. xxvi). The Headteachers chosen for 'Living Headship' (Tomlinson et al., 2003) were all selected by university colleagues because they had recently undertaken post-graduate study. Reflective practice has been recognised as a key component of effective leadership and has been linked to improved teacher and student outcomes (Day et al., 2001; Hargreaves & Fink, 2007). Moreover, narrative approaches have been found to be particularly effective in promoting critical thinking and reflection among

educators (Zembylas, 2003). Incorporating Brookfield's lenses into educational leadership can also help to create a more reflexive and inclusive school culture. By encouraging teachers and students to share their own experiences and perspectives, educational leaders can challenge dominant narratives and promote a more diverse and inclusive learning environment. An example of this from Stage One was working with Childminders[21] in my community on 'Building the Ambition – National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare' (Scottish Government, 2014). This was a direct outcome of my own learning from the EdD Educational Policy[22] coursework. Teachers shared with local childminders and nurseries our work on a number of areas of early play, literacy and numeracy. This did lead to greater engagement and motivation among teachers and students who participated in the sharing, as well what I perceived as improved relationships and collaboration among all members of the school community. It was a wonderful time for me as a New Headteacher. I felt very aligned with the local community.

Element 3 – Theory

Starting a practice-focused professional Doctorate (EdD) during my first Stage of Headship was a major benefit for me in terms of connecting theoretical concepts to my practice over time. However, it has also been challenging, as these concepts can often be overwhelming and they did not, especially at the start of the EdD, always seem relevant to my specific context.

As a Headteacher, I have found that espoused values and expectations can be particularly overwhelming and can weigh heavily on my day-to-day thinking, making school leadership all the more challenging. However, using Sergiovanni's (2007) Moral Leadership theory to focus on the moral purpose of leadership and the importance of building relationships of trust and respect has given me stability in considering what I think my values actually are. Many Headteachers have diverse teaching and learning experiences, making it difficult for them to recognise each other as fellow citizens in a community of practice. I felt this and this was partly my own doing because of my competitive nature and my marketisation of my school and work. It was especially challenging when discussing research in schools with some peers as this is often categorised as an 'add-on' rather than a

[21] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/blog/2017/12/08/fao-childminders-and-early-years-workers/
[22] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/blog/2015/12/17/building-the-ambition/

means to develop reason to meet learners' needs. Southworth (1995, p. 319) argues that the fatigue of day-to-day tasks can prevent educators from reaching criticality in their roles. For me I found it helped me to adopt a Capabilities-based approach for myself that focused on the development of community values. In reflection on my first stage using 'New Heads on the Block: Three Case Studies of Transition to Primary School Headship' (Kelly and Saunders, 2010), 'Your First Headship' (Richmond and Greenfield, 2015), and 'Living Headship: Voices, Values, and Vision' (Tomlinson et al., 2003), has been profoundly helpful in having other Headteacher voices to compare my own voice with and a theoretical community of First Stage Headteacher from which to learn.

Some of my colleagues felt undervalued by me and that they had enough to concentrate on with the technical affairs of teaching. This was problematic for me because of the number of forums I ran for voice in my democratic school management structure. This created space for peers to question inquiry based approaches when technical approaches had been successful in raising attainment in the school. However, this questioning of the intellectual, especially the philosophy behind the methods, is important but left some staff questioning my motives and did at the time lead to a degree of suspicion. Using Brookfield's Critical Reflective Practice helped me to critically reflect on my practice and to identify areas for improvement, while also engaging in ongoing dialogue with colleagues and stakeholders (2005, p. 29). Through this dialogue and collaboration we were eventually able to further strengthen relationships and foster a culture of continuous improvement (2005, p. 27). Truly embracing our teaching by acknowledging and owning what we do not know did free me to search for what I wanted to know but I was still just in the first stage of Headship and had much to learn.

Element 4 –Understandings

I have gained the understanding from my first stage of Headship that much of what I thought was unique to me as a new Headteacher was far more widespread. Had I known this I might not have felt so alone and isolated. I reflect now on some other voices that might have supported me in my Stage One journey.

Christine -	The other candidates looks smart and seemed to know a lot. Some things I remembered but most things I forgot. C. Richmond (2021, p. 1)
John -	I was most certainly aware that I had been forced into a situation that I did not wish to be part of. Yet in spite of this, I was most definitely an active participant in carrying out the government's philosophy. In short, I was a living contradiction. (Loftus and Selley, 1999. p. 55)

These voices are linked by the professionalism characteristics outlined by Richmond & Greenfield, (2015, p116) and listed earlier in this chapter. Using Brookfield now allows me to unpack these other voices but also to explore matters that were arising for me in my new role. It is clear I was experiencing challenges and starting to question expected positions but also that I was having difficulty with my own values, alignments and vulnerability.

Values are complex: as individuals we value different things. Considering John's values above and my own shows that we are all different but aligned in wanting what is best for our students. I expect that values will continue to be an ongoing theme of my Headship Journey over time. Alignments were easy to make with those who knew me in my school but relationships did change with some, as shared in the narrative from the teacher around feeling valued above. I was surprised the teacher had felt this way as I valued them highly. Similarly, with my community member, the concern was not necessarily the change itself but its pace. I have great empathy for this position but also recognise the project was bought into by most levels of the community based on all the data between the schools. It actually was and remains a very exciting project which did not come to fruition due to change of central staff who were supporting it. Most of the affiliations here which I have shared were the more problematic ones. There were many very positive relationships ones which I will return to in Stages 2 and Stages 3 here.

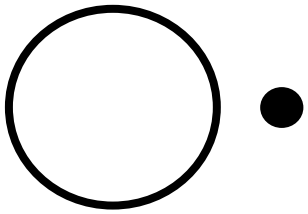
I find some of my vulnerabilities point to reflections now which uphold my judgments then. For example, to focus on my physical appearance on the day of my first interview remains, in my view, unjust. Similarly, criticising my pace of talking is also unjust as this is a cultural aspect of being brought up in the West of Scotland, it is part of who I am. However, I continue to work on this as I am aware others do find my talking too fast and, ultimately, I

want to be understood. I now turn, in Chapter 4, to Stage Two and my next period of Headship to unpack more understandings around the iterative journey of Headship.

Chapter 4 Stage Two: 2016 – 2019

The Evolving Headteacher is caught outside the closed loop

Introduction



What is the meaning of caught outside the closed loop?

In this Second Stage, I focus on my own identity formation as an Evolving Headteacher in post for three years. Identify formation is a dynamic process that plays a crucial role in defining one's fit inside or outside the loop, as I explain below. Denzin (2009) notes that identity is not a fixed state of being, but a continual process of becoming. While being outside of a loop can be a choice, it can also result in isolation, vulnerability, and exclusion. Nussbaum (2011) emphasises the importance of empowering individuals to address their vulnerabilities and achieve a sense of well-being, recognising that vulnerability is a fundamental aspect of the human condition. Similarly, Ellis (2004) highlights the importance of embracing vulnerability as a means of connecting with others and promoting empathy and understanding.

As a learner, I felt and was encouraged by my EdD studies to try and understand how my own personal identity as a Headteacher influenced my leadership style and my decision-making in my schools context. I consider identity now with a focus on my research question: 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?'. Nussbaum's CA (2011) recognises that personal identity, experiences, and values shape individuals' Capabilities. Therefore, in this Second Stage I aim to take time to critically reflect on my personal experiences and to ask how they have influenced my identity formation as an Evolving Headteacher.

In sticky 5 note below I share how vulnerable I felt in Stage Two of my Headship in regard to using my own voice.

Sticky note 5

It has taken me a long time to muster the courage to speak up in collaborative work environments, and I recognise that this may be age-related or newness to Headship, but it could also be related to power dynamics and the authority to speak.

How I perceive myself may also play a part. I knew I was different from the others in the groups I was in. It was my normal experience in the contexts of schools in which I worked to be the only mixed race person on the teaching teams, everyone else was white. I used to wonder how I would be received when I went for interviews for Class Teacher jobs and if I would be perceived as 'white enough' for the school. I always felt I should be grateful to be in the room. I felt my difference. I perceived that I had to show respect and affiliation even when I did not necessarily feel it or feel included in the context. I had to honour my admission to the group by the leader who had picked me.

As Ball (in Jones, 2004, p. 10) notes, 'discourses are about what can be said and thought about but also who can speak, when, where and with what authority'.

In some circles, it can be intimidating to speak up, particularly if one's voice is not perceived as having the necessary authority. However, Nussbaum's Capability Approach (2011) emphasises the importance of promoting the Capabilities of all individuals, regardless of their age or social standing, to ensure that they have the freedom to pursue their goals and participate fully in society. Specifically, her Capability of 'Senses, Imagination, and Thought' includes 'being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech …'. Her Affiliation capability includes '… to engage in various forms of social interaction' and 'Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin and species' (Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 33-34).

I have insecurities and vulnerabilities. I sense when people do not like me or do not want me to speak. It is obvious by how they speak to me and treat me, it is in their body language and mannerisms or simply the way the energy feels in the room. Often it's a hand gesture to shut me down, or cutting across what I am saying. I mostly accept it but sometimes I choose not to and take a new direction to carry on my point. It depends how valuable I believe the point is that needs to be made and who it could or would affect if I did not speak. There are particular peers who do this to me repeatedly. I am not sure they are aware how much their dislike / rudeness is obvious to me. I believe that in some cases they think that their bullish behaviour is taken as reasonable. I have grown to have a better conceit of myself but I still know the power dynamics and others' perceptions of themselves against me determine how this plays out. I know that their view is reinforced and incremental and, at times, a narrative is created by them which I am not party to but hear about from others at a later point. The narrative always sounds feasible which reinforces their view and the version of reality experienced by me. I feel vulnerable but not a victim - I know what to expect in interactions with these peers.

Nussbaum (2011, p. 72) argues that 'vulnerability is a fundamental aspect of the human condition', and that individuals must be empowered to address their vulnerabilities and achieve a sense of well-being. The authority to speak and be heard is not always equal in all environments. I have often wanted to speak but ended up saying nothing for fear of reprisal or just not wanting to feel the vulnerability of my voice not being welcomed. Sometimes the effort is too much. It is at these times that others' vulnerabilities can come into play because I did not say anything. The other then presumes that I have a problem with them - which I do not. It just felt pointless adding an opposing view to the conversation and creating the expected or anticipated conflict. The irony is that the conflict existed anyway and I will never be in the same loop as these particular peers because, arguably their own vulnerabilities will not allow it.

Stages of development and growth

In Stage Two, influenced by Linde (1993, p. 3), I share my Headteacher stories to express a sense of who I am, and how I became this way. I love telling a story. Storytelling is a powerful tool that enables me to communicate and negotiate who I am (the self) with others, to claim or negotiate group membership, and to demonstrate that I am a worthy member of the group by understanding the expected standards and the social construction around this affiliation. The sticky note above shares some of my understanding, experiences and vulnerability in regard to the complexities of negotiating group membership as an Headteacher during Stage Two of my Headship journey.

I use Nussbaum's Capabilities Theory (2011) to provide theoretical support in my Second Stage, guiding me through my Element Framework by utilising her suggested Capabilities, especially those necessary for social construction, affiliation, and practical reasoning. These are areas where I have experienced vulnerability as a Headteacher due to my personal feelings, emotions, and perceptions. I use Brookfield's lenses (2005, 2017) in Element 1 to ensure that my own perceptions are challenged for bias and blind spots (Brookfield, 2017, p. 9). While practical reason and affiliation are central to an effective Headship Journey, I reflect on all ten Capabilities to support me and those with whom I work in creating the required combined and internal Capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 20). As Ellis (2004, p. 3) notes, embracing vulnerability is essential for connecting with others and promoting empathy and understanding. I engage in this process to challenge my own personal identity and to unpack the values held by me and others with me in this Second Stage.

Educational leadership research also emphasises the importance of understanding personal identity and promoting a supportive learning environment. Hargreaves and Fink (2007, p. 518) argue that effective leaders create a culture of trust, collaboration, and shared responsibility to promote student and staff well-being. Similarly, Day and Leithwood et al. (2007, p. 4) emphasise the importance of building relationships and community within schools.

Furthermore, Nussbaum (2011, p. 79) argues that education should promote critical thinking, empathy, and imagination to help individuals develop the Capabilities needed to lead a flourishing life. Nussbaum draws together several views about identity when considering moral philosophy, which influences the creation of the CA (2011). She also reminds us of the importance of the arts and humanities in teaching critical thinking, which is necessary for independent action and intelligent resistance to hegemony. By teaching critical thinking, we open opportunities to learn and imagine the situations of others and cultivate our 'inner eyes'. Nussbaum argues that learning to play well with others and think for ourselves is also crucial, and we must value learning for thinking and individualisation, not just financial literacy and employment (Nussbaum, 2011).

In specific regard to my Stage Two of Headship development, I use Peter Earley's (2006, p. 3) Stages 4 and 5 of his career stages of Headship.

Earley's framework of Heads' career stages:

> Stage 0 – Prior to Headship
> Stage 1 – Entry and encountering (first months)
> Stage 2 – Taking hold (3 to 12 months)
> Stage 3 – Reshaping (second year)
> Stage 4 – Refinement (years 3 to 4)
> Stage 5 – Consolidation (years 5 to 7)
> Stage 6 – Plateau (years 8 and onwards) (Earley, 2006, p. 3)

Stages 4 and 5 of his career stages of Headship are as follows.

> Stage 4 – Refinement (years 3 to 4)
>
> After two years many of the structural changes were in place. But during this stage further curriculum changes were introduced and a number of refinements made. Previous innovations were fine-tuned and Heads felt they were 'hitting their stride'. (Earley, 2006, p. 5)

> Stage 5 – Consolidation (years 5 to 7)
>
> After about five years a period of consolidation seems to occur when the Heads have introduced most of their planned changes. However, this can be affected by the introduction of unplanned plethora of legislative and external changes. These unanticipated changes, as Gabarro (1987) similarly found, required attention as their impact affects the school during any of the stages.
> (Earley, 2006, p. 5)

I use Earley's Stage 4 and 5 career stages above in this Stage of my Development as these are the most relevant to my Stage Two process and personal agency. In considering Earley's career stages I explore the changing nature of my role as a Headteacher in this Stage and account for it in my narratives shared below in this Second Stage of Development.

What is Headteacher identity, and why is it important?

I believe strong links can be forged between my professional identity, leadership identity and my personal identity as a mother, as they all involve nurturing and supporting others. As mentioned above, Headteacher identity is a crucial aspect of educational leadership, which involves understanding who we are as leaders and the values, beliefs, and experiences that shape our professional identity. As Cruz-González et al. (2019, p. 320) note, professional identity is what represents and gives meaning to teachers, and this is particularly relevant for Headteachers who play a central role in leading schools and shaping educational outcomes. Forde (2006, p. 11) argues that personal identity is a highly personalised construct, which partly rests on the feelings and attitudes about the job we do. Hence understanding my own Headteacher identity is important if I hope to be an effective leader. Headteacher identity for me is not static but an iterative process which is reconstructed and transitory based on my educational growth and lived experiences.

As a Headteacher in this Stage, I consider my 'Combined Capabilities,' which Nussbaum (2011, p. 20) states are developed both via the internal experiences encountered and the surrounding context in which we operate. This means for me that my Headteacher identity is shaped by my experiences of professional development including this EdD process, study tours, as well as running the school and its day to day business. The EdD, while it is an individual process for me, it ultimately affected the school team because of my own

development and thinking in the school context. Accordingly, the school's leadership becomes a collective contribution with a process of discourse and analysis for quality assurance purposes of our planned improvements. The collective contribution, however, does not take away from me as the Headteacher and so the central actor responsible for improving educational outcomes[23] (OECD, 2015).

In addition to professional development, other factors can also affect my Headteacher identity. For example, personal identities, such as being a mother, shapes my leadership style and approach as noted above. Day and Leithwood (2007, p. 3) claim that effective school leaders have a strong sense of personal and professional identity, and this identity is shaped by their experiences, beliefs, and values. Therefore, understanding my personal identity is equally as important as unpacking my Headteacher identity as both are implicated in my seeking to be an effective Headteacher.

My Stage Two: 2016 -2019

My Stage Two as an Evolving Headteacher began with a pregnancy. Various characters in my Cast of Characters asked me directly if this pregnancy had been planned. It was a planned pregnancy, and I had my last and fourth baby at the age of thirty-nine. Initially, I had planned to work until my due date, but I had to stop two days before as the baby arrived early. I had thought that the pains in my hip were due to being pregnant at my age, but it turned out to be labour. On the night of the second joint school production[24] between the school and our related secondary school, I had been working late, and all three of my children were with me, I went home and had my baby. I was back in work the next day[25] before I commenced my planned maternity leave. I took 13 weeks of statutory maternity leave and returned to work in May 2016 in time to complete and submit my Standards and Quality Report and Annual Improvement Plan[26].

In the First Stage of my Headship, the joint cluster schools work promoted by Columba 1400 led me to become a fully qualified and GTCS-recognised secondary teacher in Drama. This was crucial in supporting collaboration between schools and relationships among staff,

[23] https://www.oecd.org/education/school/Improving-Schools-in-Scotland-An-OECD-Perspective.pdf
[24] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/blog/2016/03/07/the-power-trip-3/
[25] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/blog/2016/02/11/baby-announcement/
[26] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/school-position-papers-2016-2017/

particularly in the Arts faculties in Stage One, where I had been a probationary teacher in the Drama department. However, in Stage Two, the focus of curriculum development shifted towards numeracy and mathematics and health and wellbeing, while collaborations with the Arts continued as noted through the second joint production as shared above. The change was influenced by the teachers' Masters programme enquiries in the school focusing on numeracy and mathematics or health and wellbeing and led to a specialist colleague from the secondary school working with us one day a week in a context focusing on mathematics improvement, funded by our Pupil Equity Funding[27] (PEF) allocation from the Scottish Government in 2017.

Additionally, a member of our primary teaching team working one day a week at the secondary school on Health and wellbeing as part of a cluster improvement priority to support learners needs. This was very important to me personally given the volume of students with support needs I had worked with as the Support Depute Headteacher prior to my Headship, many of whom had found the transition from primary to secondary school challenging. This cumulated in the school receiving its Silver and then Gold Sport Scotland Award[28] during this Second Stage of my Headship journey and the School also gained a third 'Gold Rights Respecting Schools Award'[29] towards the end of that Stage.

I finished the Second Stage of my Headship by completing a full stakeholder catchment review[30] , organising the school for decanting and refurbishment, a classroom extension project[31], the completion of the Pitchfever Project (started in Stage One) and the creation of the community charity Balerno 2G[32]. The impact on my identity as a Headteacher was profound as a key member of the community beyond the school. I was central to not only the work of my school but that of the community in all its representations; community council, hydro scheme, community cinema, the community music festival and farmers market to name the regular collaborations. Personally, I felt like the community owned me. It was very

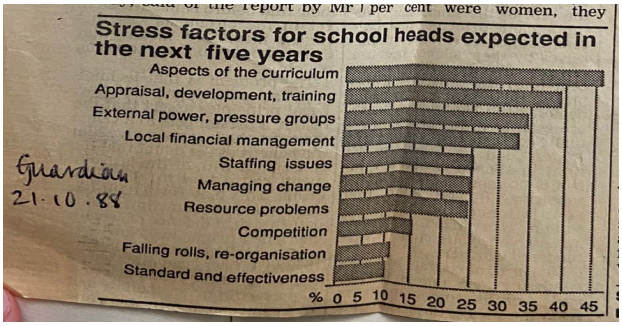
[27] https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2023/06/pupil-equity-funding-national-operational-guidance-2023/documents/pupil-equity-funding-national-operational-guidance-2023/pupil-equity-funding-national-operational-guidance-2023/govscot%3Adocument/pupil-equity-funding-national-operational-guidance-2023.pdf
[28] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/blog/2017/08/29/silver-sporting-status-for-dean-park/ & https://deanparkschool.org.uk/blog/2018/10/28/its-a-gold-for-dean-park/
[29] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/blog/2019/05/31/rrsa-gold-we-did-it/
[30] https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/22485/dean-park-primary-workshop-29-january-2018
[31] https://futureschoolsedinburgh.com/dean-park-primary-school/
[32] https://www.balerno2gbooking.space/balerno-2g-pitchfever/

important to me to serve them. It was paramount to my sense of self as a person beyond my Headteacher role. The Headteacher role enabled my access to affiliation and belonging in the community I worked and lived.

Considering the context outside of the loop.

Thomson's (2009, p. 1) and Earley's (2006, p. 16) assertion that most teachers become Headteachers for idealistic reasons resonates with me. As a Headteacher, I entered the profession with a desire to make a difference in the lives of children and young people. However, serving as a Headteacher has become increasingly challenging, and I can understand why many colleagues talk openly about stress and leaving the job. This is not a new notion and repeated trends of the factors that affect Headteacher retention arguably remain the same. I say this because when reading 'The Primary Head' (Whitaker, 1983) I found within the pages some newspaper clippings. While all the cuttings were interesting it is a specific cutting from the Guardian in 1988, where they projected future stress factors for school Heads:

Figure 3



I posted the cuttings while writing this Chapter to one of my personal, locked-down, password-protected social media accounts because I thought others might like to read them. The volume of comments I received from my peers gave me the impression that these factors are still relevant today, but perhaps not in the same order. This insight might be worth exploring further in a later study around Headteacher retention or Headteacher burnout. Such a study would fall into the sphere of Brighthouse and Woods' (1999) phases of Headship, shared in the final chapter of this EdD, notably their third phase where they discuss the demise of serving Headteachers (1999, pp. 75-76). The purpose of sharing the clipping is to suggest that the factors affecting Heads are similar to the tensions at this Stage of development and indicative of the challenges experienced in

context. The context outside the loop created tensions and challenges for me as a Headteacher. These tensions arise from differing interpretations of what is happening in each school community, as well as the changing needs of that community and the challenges created to address those needs. This lack of agency can leave the school with fundamental needs to be addressed, which is disheartening and frustrating.

Unfortunately, in my Second Stage of Headship, I perceived that my agency and ownership over my professionalism and practice were curtailed by performativity and managerialism. This resulted from my behaviour and emotions in my First Stage, as well as policies that were placed upon me as a Headteacher. Earley refers to these policies in his Stage 5 as 'a plethora of legislative and external changes' (2006, p. 5). I had reached the point John had in his account shared in Stage One where he states:

> 'I was most definitely an active participant in carrying out the government's philosophy. In short, I was a living contradiction.' (Loftus and Selley, 1999. p. 55)

The Government policies at this time had a strong direction with accountability to the National Improvement Framework (NIF from this point forward) all-encompassing (Scottish Government, 2016). As a Headteacher, I felt that the NIF was curbing the value given to the specifics of learning and was prohibitive in allowing curriculum control, professional autonomy, and ownership for school staff. The tight control around closing the attainment gap was deemed necessary, but it felt like a cultural clearance of a broad and positive challenged-based curriculum through 'the big ideas' to a top-to-meet-the-bottom approach through an attainment driven 'empty egg shell curriculum'[33]. This approach removed personalisation and choice and achievement and critical thinking for the students and teachers, with the narrative becoming an accountability agenda for the NIF (Scottish Government, 2016, 2019). As a result, the NIF became a performativity agenda related to teacher professionalism that focused on best practices for specific 'Closing the Attainment Gap' measures. This created a culture of shallow trust and unhappiness for me as a Headteacher, and I felt firmly outside of the loop and not motivated by the national policy discourse. I felt the students were being robbed of an ambitious curriculum by a curriculum

[33] https://reformscotland.com/2021/08/critique-of-the-oecd-report-into-scotlands-school-curriculum-lindsay-paterson/

in which the top achievers were to meet the expectations of closing the attainment gap. This meant high achievers were not challenged beyond their level and the curriculum was sterile and not aspirational for all learners. Professor Lindsay Paterson (2021) later reviewed the OECD report[34] (2021) on reviewing the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence which had been commissioned by the Scottish government in the autumn of 2019. His (2021) review of the OECD report for Reform Scotland was titled – 'Partial, Sycophantic, and Superficial: The OECD Review Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence'[35]. When Paterson's review of the OECD report was published I felt less alone in my experiences and perceptions I had felt as a Headteacher in my Second Stage especially with regard to supporting learners needs and paying attention to what research suggests it the best way to move forward children's learning. The data in the OECD report Paterson (2021, p. 11) says is 'spurious' and this unfortunately comes as no surprise to me given that report:

> …completely ignores relevant recent research in cognitive science and neuro-science on the importance of knowledge in how people learn. (Patterson, 2021, p. 17)

This is what I felt as a serving Headteacher in regard to school services around me in support of learners' needs and enhancing pedagogical practice. It was common practice to re-state the problems to you as a Headteacher, as your problems, without the means to offer any informed solutions to move forward to meet the specific needs of your students, staff or community.

Element 1 – Learning

Personal Experience

As an Evolving Headteacher, I felt I faced numerous challenges in my learning journey while trying to validate research and scholarship as a valuable endeavour in my school and beyond through practitioner enquiry[36]. It was also a constant struggle to balance my professional development with the day-to-day demands of being a Headteacher. However, moving from an Evolving to an Engaged Headteacher Educator (Forde, 2006, p. 140) felt like a positive step forward allowing me to rationalise my learning and be more engaged in my daily

[34] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/bf624417-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/bf624417-en
[35] https://reformscotland.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Partial-Sycophantic-and-superficial.pdf
[36] https://www.tes.com/magazine/archived/it-about-pursuit-worthwhile-life

business as a Headteacher. The narrative below is in response to a school-based Validated Self Evaluation[37] (VSE) process. VSE is a form of quality assurance that helps to rigorously quality assure the school's work with multiple partners. It was a common endeavour for me to annually to share the schools work and our next steps in development in pedagogy and practice for our annual improvement agenda. At the time of this specific VSE, Education Scotland had not published its 2017 VSE Guidelines[38]. However, the aims and objectives (Education Scotland, 2017, p. 4) were essentially the same as the school VSEs we had undertaken. Being an Engaged Headteacher Educator allowed me to engage more deeply with the VSE process and to use it as an opportunity for professional development. It helped me to recognise the value of practitioner enquiry and how it could benefit both myself and my school community. By engaging with the VSE process, I was able to reflect on my practice and identify areas for development and improvement. This allowed me to focus on my pedagogical practice, which I believe is essential for improving educational outcomes for our students. Moreover, the VSE process helped me to develop a better understanding of the importance of quality assurance in supporting school improvement and recognising blind spots. It allowed me to work collaboratively with multiple stakeholders, including parents, students, and staff, to identify areas of strength and weakness in our school, including my blind spots. This collaborative approach helped to build trust and transparency within the school community, which is essential for creating a culture of continuous improvement fitting with Earley's Stage 4 of Refinement and Stage 5 of Consolidation (Earley, 2006, p. 5).

Journal 6

Immersion:

As an Engaged Headteacher Educator, I have been immersed in the process of Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) for the third time in my school. An earlier evaluation had happened in the February as part of our planned cycle of improvement. This VSE was because we had been offered learning visits from my local authority. I wanted to carry on the school's self-evaluation process and take forward not only the stipulated question of:

> Q.I. 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment: Learning and engagement Quality of teaching from HGIOS[39].

but also the two questions pertaining from the last VSE held in February:

[37] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/blog/2017/05/28/11054/
[38] https://education.gov.scot/Documents/CLDVSEGuidanceSept17.pdf
[39] https://education.gov.scot/media/2swjmnbs/frwk2_hgios4.pdf

- What does it feel like to be a learner at X X Primary school?
- What does it feel like to be a learner in class at X X Primary School?

The VSE process is a form of quality assurance that helps to assure the quality of our school's work with multiple partners, including parents, staff, and community peers. This process was open to parents and shared on the school website[40].

However, during this particular VSE, one of my invited colleagues stopped my Headteacher presentation and stated in front of the group:

> 'That is just Fluff! HMIe will not be interested in your research. They are only interested in what goes on in classrooms'.

This was a challenging moment for me as I was aware I had a broad audience in the room with me. I expressed my belief that criticality of this nature is required in our practice as teachers to move forward what goes on in the classrooms.

The group moved on to visits to classrooms, and I was left to my thoughts while tidying up the morning tea cups.

Crystallisation:

I realise I am more affected than I should be. I should be able to rationalise the comment but I have taken it as being directed at me personally. The whole experience was uncomfortable in the room at that point. I feel like I have been publicly called out for something shameful and I now feel lacking in dignity.

I know that translating research and scholarship into practice is always challenging, and it requires experience and consideration. I needed to be able to allow myself to consider others' starting points but I felt that everyone's effort in the school was dismissed. I am emotional, vulnerable and feeling unaffiliated from the group norms. I am also concerned how the teachers will feel given their practitioner and Masters levels enquiries into pedagogical improvements have just been called fluff.

I am further concerned that HMIe might not value research informed teaching practices based on what my colleague has said and I worry that I have taken the school in the wrong direction. It was not that long ago that I had taken my own education for granted.

Categorisation:

I know already know that operational trust and the challenge of thinking differently or philosophically in schools are often regarded suspiciously, as not necessary, and values-driven for specific personal gain rather than to benefit the organisation. I learned this in Stage One. When individuals step into a research-informed world, they often experience isolation and an immediate lack of knowing, leading to imposter syndrome and alienation

[40] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/blog/2017/05/28/11054/

from their peers. It can be a very lonely place. However, being research-informed can help unpack and answer questions around identity as a teacher, human, and educator and to question what is truly worthwhile in the quest to educate and learn in schools both collaboratively and individually. To move research into enacted practice in schools takes consideration and intentional interaction between school leaders and teachers. Often in schools, research is 'pre-interpreted' and already delivered with the opportunities and affordances defined as 'why' and 'what works' in the environment. This presumes a pre-existence of inference of mind and that of the minds of others concerning the enactment of familiar scenarios for learning. I know you cannot assume to know what other people know, or are thinking, which is why I need to work on being more reflexive and less angry about others' behaviours.

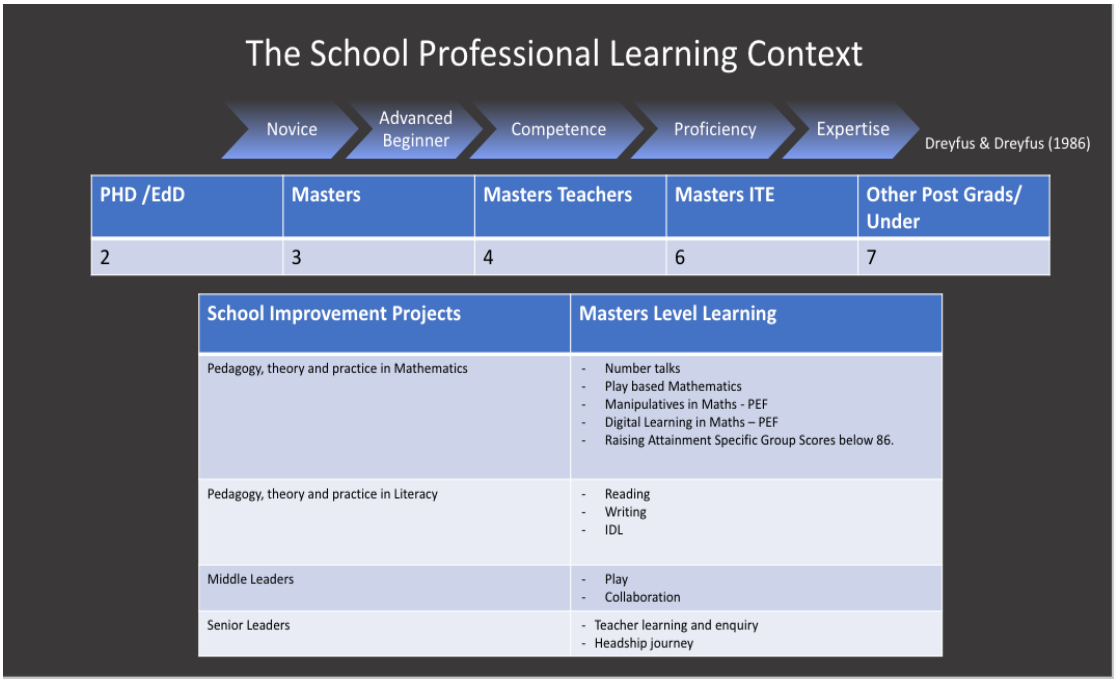
Theorisation:

Stage 4 – Refinement (years 3 to 4) (Earley, 2006, p. 5)

After three years as Headteacher many of the structural changes were in place for quality assurance and also for leadership and management. We had an our organisational structure well communicated and known to all via our staff handbooks, school newsletters and website.

Curriculum changes were introduced in an ongoing and improvement orientated fashion with regard to numeracy and literacy and a number of refinements made were in Pastoral Care and Support for Learning. Previous innovations in the 'Big Ideas' were fine-tuned and up until the VSE I had started to feel like I was 'hitting my stride' (Earley, 2006, p. 5).

Professional learning in the school at the time looked like this:



The School Improvement Projects above were all supported by teachers undertaking Masters level learning. Class teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders all shared in the various enquiries in and across the school.

My experience with the VSE process and the challenge to move research into practice has led me to reflect on the importance of developing a coherent strategy to build the pedagogical capacity of learning in the school.

Additionally, my experience has made me question the type of education system I work in. If HMIe truly do not value research-informed pedagogy and practice then perhaps I do not belong in this system.

Further in recent weeks I have discovered that the funding for Masters level learning for teachers has been withdrawn[41] with exception of Headship pathways. This for me is devasting. As a Head it was much easier to support and encourage teaching staff at their annual performance review and development to this type of learning when I could direct them to specific relevant fully funded Masters courses which they could find out more about and apply for.

The Journal I wrote above, with recent additions, draws on several key themes and ideas from educational leadership research, including the importance of developing a coherent strategy for change, the challenges of moving research into practice, and the value of collaboration and trust in creating a culture of continuous improvement. One key concept that emerges from the passage for me is the idea of professional learning communities (PLCs), which are groups of educators who collaborate to improve teaching and learning outcomes in their schools (DuFour, 2004, p. 6). As an educational leader, I recognise the importance of intentional interaction between school leaders and teachers, which is critical for moving research into enacted practice in schools and is consistent with the collaborative approach that is central to PLCs. I had not realised it at the time but the school had created its own PLC in collaboration in the school and across the cluster schools. We were fairly unique at the time as a school due to the volume of colleagues who were involved in university level learning or where on the former Scottish College for Educational Leaderships pathways for practitioner enquiry.

Emotions did come to the surface again for me as I re-read and added to the narrative above and so another important theme is the role of emotions and emotional intelligence in educational leadership. As the author of the journal, I note that being research-informed at

[41] https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/23574780.scottish-government-announces-withdrawal-vital-funding-teachers/

this stage could lead to feelings of isolation and imposter syndrome. These are emotional vulnerabilities that I know can hinder my ability to engage fully with learning and growth. This is consistent with the work of educational leadership researchers such as Goleman (1995) and Hargreaves and Fink (2007), who have highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence in effective leadership.

It was necessary for me in my Stage Two to also emphasise the importance of developing a coherent strategy to build the pedagogical capacity of learning in the school, and this was consistent with the work of Fullan (2007, p. 15) and others who have emphasised the importance of having a clear vision and strategy for change. I believed I had done this using the VSE along with our Self Evaluation document and Improvement Plan to support the school improvement projects which were founded in the teacher learning and the work of the PLCs. As an educational leader, I believe that having a coherent strategy is coherent, and was, at Stage Two, essential for effectively implementing change and aiming for improving the outcomes for students which the whole community could support. Additionally, as the Headteacher I highlighted above the importance for me in of valuing Nussbaum's work on critical thinking, collaboration, and increased student agency as part of curriculum change. Applying the Capabilities in this way was also consistent with the work of educational theorists such as Dewey (1938, p. 25) and Vygotsky (1978, p. 86), who have emphasised the importance of developing students' higher-order thinking skills and promoting collaborative learning environments.

Because I personalised the criticism during the my experience with the VSE process, I allowed myself to be vulnerable. I did not use my practical reason and felt my personhood, separate from my professional and leadership identity, was being called into question. I again began to question my values, and approaches to life, and how I perceived my relationship to the world around me and my impact on it. This caused me to reflect on my identity, professional capital, and individual worth. I was insecure and again started to seeking affirmation from others to help me work through my challenges of insecurity. My Headteacher mentors were very useful here although they did reaffirm that others had problems with the way I thought about curriculum, pedagogy and practice and suggested I should be mindful of this. As Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) define it, professional capital is made up of three components: human, social, and decisional capital. While I recognise I had high social capital from working with others in my school community who brought out the

best in me and inspired me, it was my own 'decisional capital' that was coming into question. I began to feel inept and vulnerable, much like Ed Bell in Wolcott's study (1973, p. 318) and, as Nussbaum (2004, p. 172) puts it, I felt my Capabilities were being called into question.

I believed strongly that working with others around me was, and still is, the key to building high social and human capital which, through affiliation and affirmation, could help to address the challenges of my leadership. By collaborating with others and building trust and transparency within the school community, I felt I could leverage the strengths of others and build a culture of continuous improvement. My experience with the VSE process did make me question this as well as my identity, professional capital, and individual worth. It was a low point in how I was feeling. However, I still believed that by working with others and building high social and human capital, I could overcome these challenges and improve as a leader. At this Stage Two, I started to recognise, as an educational leader, that we are all constantly learning and growing, and that vulnerability and self-reflection are inescapable components of effective leadership. This was all part of the process of becoming an effective Headteacher.

What do I mean by decisional capital?

As a Headteacher, I feel I exhibited strong decisional capital by being transparent with my VSE process and exercising what I believed to be sound judgement created through with collective responsibility, openness to feedback, and willing transparency. I understood that mistakes were inevitable, but I took pride in my work and always strived to learn and improve (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 5). However, I did struggle with doubts about whether I was respected by my peers and the public. I tended to overly self-examine my behaviour based on my own self-reflection rather than focus on others, and this was becoming a weakness for me. This and autoethnography become important theoretically to my development in Stage Three of my Headship. This experience was also closely tied to my developing understanding of Nussbaum's CA (2011) and my own vulnerability and I explore this further in Elements 2 and 3 of this Chapter.

As Fullan and Hargreaves (2012, p. 5) note, Headteachers are always striving to outdo themselves and to make ever greater individual and collective contributions. The moral purpose I had as a Headteacher was demanding and led to a relentless pursuit of serving my students and community, always trying to learn and do better. This pursuit aligns with

Nussbaum's (2000) moral virtues assigned to women, such as altruistic concern, responsiveness to the needs of others, and the ability to reason resourcefully about how those needs can be met. However, this relentless pursuit was leading me towards personal burnout, which is comparable to Brighthouse and Woods' (1999) third stage of their maturation process explored further in the final Chapter of this Dissertation and discussed in Chapter 6.

I now believe that such Headteacher and human needs should be recognised as more universal and have a place in leadership theory alongside the CA. There are also other considerations to be made regarding how teachers locate and use theory and research in their own worlds. As Dearden (1984) highlights in 'Theory and Practice in Education', teachers commonly regard theory with varying mixtures of respect and suspicion:

> They respect it because it is thought to be difficult, but they are suspicious of its bearings on the detailed decision of what to do next Monday morning. (Dearden, 1984, p. 4).

This position can easily be related to any teacher's point of view, but the difference lies in where each starting point is regarding 'educational growth' and the individual teacher's value of it: this can vary across schools and individuals. As a Headteacher, I feel I exhibited strong decisional capital, but I also struggled with doubts about my own worth and abilities.

Students' Eyes

As the Headteacher, I was excited about the new opportunities and challenges that were in place for our students. Together with the school community, we had made a considered and significant effort to build a curriculum that focused on 'Big ideas.' This curriculum allowed our students to have a great deal of autonomy and engagement running of the school. We placed the student's voice at the centre of everything, including being involved in the school's quality assurance processes. By giving our students a greater role in the school's decision-making processes, we were able to create a culture of continuous improvement that was focused on their needs and aspirations. By promoting student agency and creating collaborative learning environments, we were starting to provide our students with the experiences and tools I believed they needed to begin to understand themselves as learners through exploring and developing their Combined Capabilities and to succeed both academically and personally.

Sticky note 6

Today, a teacher told with me that they felt like the students had more of a voice and were listened to more than the teachers were.

I could understand this from their point of view. As a Headteacher, I had created systems within the school that allowed for both students and staff to have a voice. However, I had noticed that the students and that some other adults in the school seemed to be more proficient in seizing the opportunities available to them and more able to acknowledge themselves as collaborators in the process.

This aligns with Nussbaum's (1997) CA, which emphasises the importance of promoting agency and collaboration in creating a democratic society. By creating opportunities for students and adults to have a voice in the school's decision-making processes, I was aiming to promote their agency and to foster a culture of collaboration and mutual respect. I believe this approach not only benefits my students, but also my teachers and other adults in the school community.

I appreciate it is understandable that some teachers may have felt like they had less of a voice than their students but I believed that creating systems that promote agency and collaboration for both students and adults was crucial to create a democratic and inclusive school community.

This brings to my mind considerations about power and control and who has it, or who feels they have lost it. This is problematic and I do need to think about this more. I remember thinking this at the time but also thinking, 'you snooze, you lose', which was not that mature of me. I felt the teacher was a late adopter who complained when everyone else was onboard and they felt the seats which they wanted to sit on had been occupied by others including students, parents and less experienced in staff. I did my best to reinforce the idea everyone's voice is valued and I pointed to the various forums and ways to have each person's voice heard.

As a Headteacher, I saw my school community as a family, and I believed that no preference should be given to any voice with each and every person encouraged to speak. This aligns with Nussbaum's (2000) CA, which emphasises the importance of looking at each person's Capabilities when considering the needs of a family or community. This meant that, if a community member feels that something needs to be added to the threshold of the basic entitlements open to them, then as the Headteacher I needed to acknowledge their concerns and consider if there needs to be an amendment to practice and in the resources and opportunities distributed within the school. For the example above, this involved reflecting on the agency and worth of each teacher in their

own right and considering them not simply as an adjunct to the ends of others, who, here, would be the students.

In creating and refining the organisational structures within the school, I recognised that many inter-relation factors are personal, familial, and structural. However, structures tend to be fixed, and as the Headteacher, I had to ensure that they worked well for everyone within the school community. This involved creating enough diversity of structure to reflect the diversity of each individual in the school and required a great deal of awareness and challenging of my own thinking. However, it led to autonomy as an ideal within the school for 'each person as an end' and offered personalisation and choice for staff and students to the limits of my capacity.

The notion of personalisation and choice for the students in Stage One and at the start of Stage Two was becoming a reality in the school context, which was very motivating for me. Reading Nussbaum's (2011) 'Creating Capabilities' as part of my EdD assignment for its Educational Futures course was transformative. It helped me understand the meaning of liberal education and the importance of promoting agency and collaboration in creating a democratic society. Before reading 'Creating Capabilities', I used liberal education related words but did not fully understand them and I may have actually used them in a neoliberal way in Stage One of my Headship, which I now began to feel uncomfortable with in Stage Two.

This realisation aligns with Dearden's (1984, p. 4) idea that 'educational theory' was a practical endeavour and not, as expressed by my colleague in the narrative about the VSE, that research is 'fluff'. If I take Dearden's (1984, p. 4) idea that practical hands can replace theory as the lived experience of others, then the colleague who shared their view was expressing her lived experience and belief. This opens up a consideration for me that my practice as a Headteacher needs to be more accommodating of the practical hands – on the improvement agenda in order to be more inclusive of each person's beliefs and needs. Post-pandemic, I have found this to be increasingly important and I will discuss this further in Chapter 6 but turn now to more colleagues' perceptions.

Colleagues' Perceptions

As a Headteacher in my Second Stage of Headship, I feel fortunate to be have been given the opportunity to participate in a collaborative professional development programme, similar to the one I experienced during my First Stage of Development (Columba 1400). On this occasion, I was invited by my local authority to join 24 other Educational Leaders from across Scotland on a Study Tour to Japan. For me, this was an unthinkable opportunity, and it turned out to be a life-changing moment. I wondered if the authority had made a mistake in including me, as I felt I was least likely to be selected for something like this given how I perceived our relationship during Stage One.

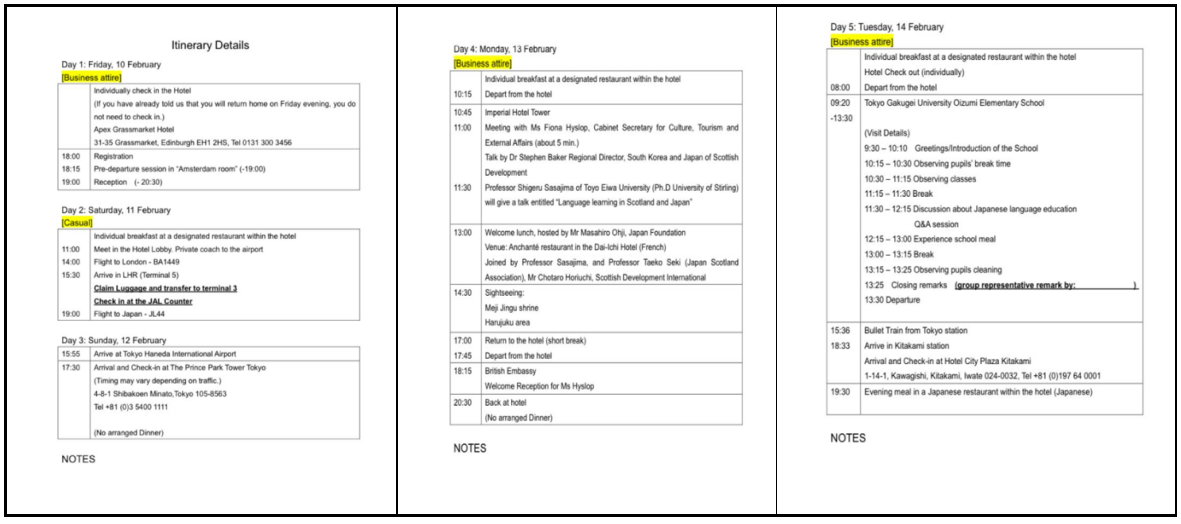
The following is a journal entry based on a newsletter[42] which I had originally shared as the Headteacher with the school community. (see appendix 5)

Journal 7

Immersion:

My colleagues and I in the cluster schools received an email asking us if we would be prepared to go on a study tour to Japan. I had to reread the email because I was sure there had to be some catch somewhere.

The itinerary shared was unbelievable for a full sized version please see appendix 6:



Itinerary Details

Day 1: Friday, 10 February
[Business attire]

	Individually check in the Hotel (If you have already told us that you will return home on Friday evening, you do not need to check in.) Apex Grassmarket Hotel 31-35 Grassmarket, Edinburgh EH1 2HS, Tel 0131 300 3456
18:00	Registration
18:15	Pre-departure session in "Amsterdam room" (-19:00)
19:00	Reception (- 20:30)

Day 2: Saturday, 11 February
[Casual]

	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel
11:00	Meet in the Hotel Lobby. Private coach to the airport
14:00	Flight to London - BA1449
15:30	Arrive in LHR (Terminal 5) **Claim Luggage and transfer to terminal 3** **Check in at the JAL Counter**
19:00	Flight to Japan - JL44

Day 3: Sunday, 12 February

15:55	Arrive at Tokyo Haneda International Airport
17:30	Arrival and Check-in at The Prince Park Tower Tokyo (Timing may vary depending on traffic.) 4-8-1 Shibakoen Minato,Tokyo 105-8563 Tel +81 (0)3 5400 1111 (No arranged Dinner)

NOTES

Day 4: Monday, 13 February
[Business attire]

	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel
10:15	Depart from the hotel
10:45	Imperial Hotel Tower
11:00	Meeting with Ms Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (about 5 min.) Talk by Dr Stephen Baker Regional Director, South Korea and Japan of Scottish Development
11:30	Professor Shigeru Sasajima of Toyo Eiwa University (Ph.D University of Stirling) will give a talk entitled "Language learning in Scotland and Japan"
13:00	Welcome lunch, hosted by Mr Masahiro Ohji, Japan Foundation Venue: Anchanté restaurant in the Dai-Ichi Hotel (French) Joined by Professor Sasajima, and Professor Taeko Seki (Japan Scotland Association), Mr Chotaro Horiuchi, Scottish Development International
14:30	Sightseeing: Meji Jingu shrine Harajuku area
17:00	Return to the hotel (short break)
17:45	Depart from the hotel
18:15	British Embassy Welcome Reception for Ms Hyslop
20:30	Back at hotel (No arranged Dinner)

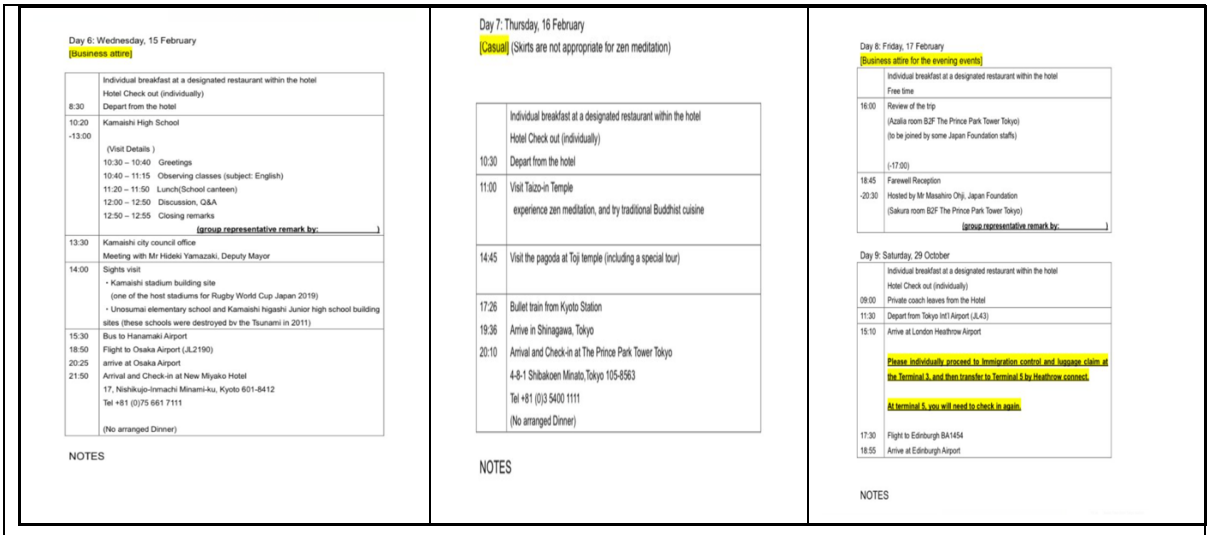
NOTES

Day 5: Tuesday, 14 February
[Business attire]

	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel Hotel Check out (individually)
08:00	Depart from the hotel
09:20 -13:30	Tokyo Gakugei University Oizumi Elementary School (Visit Details) 9:30 – 10:10 Greetings/Introduction of the School 10:15 – 10:30 Observing pupils' break time 10:30 – 11:15 Observing classes 11:15 – 11:30 Break 11:30 – 12:15 Discussion about Japanese language education Q&A session 12:15 – 13:00 Experience school meal 13:00 – 13:15 Break 13:15 – 13:25 Observing pupils cleaning 13:25 Closing remarks **(group representative remark by:)** 13:30 Departure
15:36	Bullet Train from Tokyo station
18:33	Arrive in Kitakami station Arrival and Check-in at Hotel City Plaza Kitakami 1-14-1, Kawagishi, Kitakami, Iwate 024-0032, Tel +81 (0)197 64 0001
19:30	Evening meal in a Japanese restaurant within the hotel (Japanese)

NOTES

[42] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/blog/2017/02/20/mrs-shanks-japan-study-tour-report/



Day 6: Wednesday, 15 February
[Business attire]

	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel
	Hotel Check out (individually)
8:30	Depart from the hotel
10:20 -13:00	Kamaishi High School (Visit Details) 10:30 – 10:40 Greetings 10:40 – 11:15 Observing classes (subject: English) 11:20 – 11:50 Lunch(School canteen) 12:00 – 12:50 Discussion, Q&A 12:50 – 12:55 Closing remarks (group representative remark by:)
13:30	Kamaishi city council office Meeting with Mr Hideki Yamazaki, Deputy Mayor
14:00	Sights visit ・Kamaishi stadium building site (one of the host stadiums for Rugby World Cup Japan 2019) ・Unosumai elementary school and Kamaishi higashi Junior high school building sites (these schools were destroyed by the Tsunami in 2011)
15:30	Bus to Hanamaki Airport
18:50	Flight to Osaka Airport (JL2190)
20:25	arrive at Osaka Airport
21:50	Arrival and Check-in at New Miyako Hotel 17, Nishikujo-Inmachi Minami-ku, Kyoto 601-8412 Tel +81 (0)75 661 7111 (No arranged Dinner)

NOTES

Day 7: Thursday, 16 February
[Casual] (Skirts are not appropriate for zen meditation)

	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel
	Hotel Check out (individually)
10:30	Depart from the hotel
11:00	Visit Taizo-in Temple experience zen meditation, and try traditional Buddhist cuisine
14:45	Visit the pagoda at Toji temple (including a special tour)
17:26	Bullet train from Kyoto Station
19:36	Arrive in Shinagawa, Tokyo
20:10	Arrival and Check-in at The Prince Park Tower Tokyo 4-8-1 Shibakoen Minato,Tokyo 105-8563 Tel +81 (0)3 5400 1111 (No arranged Dinner)

NOTES

Day 8: Friday, 17 February
[Business attire for the evening events]

	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel
	Free time
16:00	Review of the trip (Azalia room B2F The Prince Park Tower Tokyo) (to be joined by some Japan Foundation staffs) (-17:00)
18:45 -20:30	Farewell Reception Hosted by Mr Masahiro Ohji, Japan Foundation (Sakura room B2F The Prince Park Tower Tokyo) (group representative remark by:)

Day 9: Saturday, 29 October

	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel
	Hotel Check out (individually)
09:00	Private coach leaves from the Hotel
11:30	Depart from Tokyo Int'l Airport (JL43)
15:10	Arrive at London Heathrow Airport Please individually proceed to immigration control and luggage claim at the Terminal 3, and then transfer to Terminal 5 by Heathrow connect. At terminal 5, you will need to check in again.
17:30	Flight to Edinburgh BA1454
18:55	Arrive at Edinburgh Airport

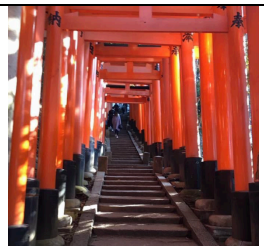
NOTES

This came out of the blue.

My youngest child was due to turn one year old the day we were due to leave, so I had decided it was not possible for me to go. My husband, however encouraged me to go as he could see this was an amazing opportunity. I did not even have a current passport and I was terrified about what Japan might be like. It felt foreign to me and I had all sorts of ideas in my head about what the schooling system would be like. I also had the concern around business attire on the itinerary and made the early decision to take coordinating suits.

The schooling system was inspiring. When I read the itinerary and saw we would be observing students at break times and observing students cleaning classrooms, I had initially thought this was odd. However once in the schools I understood. It was about the students' autonomy and agency. The students had lots of fun but also knew they were responsible and played their part in running the schools. They had being given trust and respected to get on with their roles. They did this like children and there was much laughter. There was little to no adult supervision during these times. I was inspired.

We met Fiona Hyslop a Scottish MSP at the time for a press conference and were invited to the British Embassy at night for a reception for her. I had never been anywhere like the Embassy before or experienced networking like it. I made my best effort as a Headteacher.


During this trip, I discovered I had failed my EdD Futures assignment while eating breakfast with my colleagues on Day 6 of the Tour. This brought me out from the world of wonder and back to reality. I was emotional which was not fair on my immediate peers in a Ski resort in Japan. I had to pull myself together and put my best foot forward, we were visiting schools, observing teaching and meeting interesting and inspiring people. I was very lucky.

At the Embassy I had been given a gift by some business men who were in attendance. I had been told to accept any gifts offered and say thank you. If I had a gift to exchange I was to give it. I had my school badges to exchange. I did not open the gift at the time. I did not wish to be embarrassed or to embarrass the business men. I had been feeling very nervous and was trying my best to network confidently, mindful of representing my school and employer. I waited until I was back at the hotel. Inside was a beautiful Japanese dish.

The significance of the dragonflies on the dish for me at this time was huge. I had recently lost a close friend to cancer who had said whenever you see a dragonfly think of me and know I am with you. I cried. It felt spiritual. I felt protected, brave and affiliated.

Crystallisation:

I know I didn't need to go on the trip, nor did I need to be studying and paying for an EdD. Both of these things were arguably selfish pursuits for me as an individual. When my colleagues supported me in my disappointment over my failed assignment, I was aware that it really just my problem. I also realised that I had colleagues who cared about my emotions and vulnerabilities and were able to point out some very clear strengths I had as well as things in my life to be very proud of. They were kind, caring , and like all good Headteachers direct. I decided to box my failure away and deal with it when I got home. Now was the time to make the most of the once in a lifetime trip, which I was very privileged to be on.
I also know the dragonflies on the dish was just a coincidence but it made me feel connected to someone who I knew loved me.

Categorisation:

The purpose of the trip was to share Japanese culture, compare education systems, educational and leadership, build business links and encourage the use of the Japanese language in Scottish Schools with the ultimate aim of the Scottish Qualifications Agency accrediting the subject with awards. The Japanese were keen to highlight that Japanese

businesses already invested heavily in the Scottish economy, and they wished to encourage this further. They advocated for their culture and language and raised awareness about how it was already embedded in our homes via Pokémon and Super Mario.

The Japanese language is visual and phonetic and apparently much easier to learn than traditional, modern languages. We were offered on-going training in the language which we all took up along with some of the class teachers at school.

The culture in schools which we experienced took me by surprise – it was calm, very calm, and everyone seemed engaged and happy in their learning. Nurture was the central theme in each of the schools we visited and in the culture itself. Most notable in schools was the pupils' freedom to undertake tasks independently of adults and in mixed-aged groups. The pupils did several manual tasks to take care of their environment. These were not supervised, but there was an expectation that they would be done and done well. I realised I could raise the expectation on my own students to do this too although I would have to undertake a through risk assessment first!

Once you see something, you cannot unsee it. In Japan, schools run from Kindergarten to University with an apparent expectation of moral goodness and hard work. The ethics felt universally positive. I loved it. There was, however, an expectation from the Japanese that we would embrace their language and culture and instil it in our children in Scotland as a capable workforce. This was the purpose of the all-expenses trip.

Theorisation:

Stage 4 – Refinement (years 3 to 4) (Earley, 2006, p. 5)

The visit opened up my eyes to a number of things but most notably to further curriculum changes I could make to promote challenge and agency. This would involve buy in and trust in letting the students have the freedoms in the school to undertake activities both with vertical groupings and also unsupervised. I recognised that we could make a number of refinements in my school context to enhance the pupil experiences and that the previous curriculum innovations could be easily adapted to accommodate these changes. I felt motivated and refreshed by my visit and as a Headteacher I felt I was starting to 'hit my stride'. (Earley, 2006, p. 5).

I realised that I had affiliation to the group of Headteachers from my local authority. We all appeared to have similar basic values. They were not the Columban values but just normal everyday values such as respect and empathy. These colleagues were my supporters and I supported them. We were friends. It was good to feel part of something with positive intent which we had been asked to do by our employer and we now had a good narrative to share collaboratively about our leadership learning experience in Japan.

During the Japan study tour with my Headteacher colleagues from across Scotland, we each had our own unique takeaways and perspectives from the trip. Some questioned the purpose and potential impact of the trip, while for me, it was a transformative experience. Prior to the trip, I had only a narrow Scottish view of education, but after visiting Japanese schools, my eyes were opened to a different way of doing things.

Although there were similarities to Scottish schools, there was a vast difference in the level of trust, expectation, and ambition for learners. Students were following both the International Baccalaureate Curriculum and the Japanese Government Curriculum, which focussed on encouraging them to be internationally minded and broadened their perspectives. The Japanese also had specialist schools working with industry and had a general curriculum with a specialist focus on a specific science or technology. Students were encouraged to follow their passions and be enquiring from an early age. The education system seemed to adapt to meet the students' needs, and they had choices. It was also expected that the lowest achieving cohort would meet the highest expectations to close the attainment gap. As a result, students were aspirational because they were given permission to be, and they seemed to share the mentality that no student or peer would be left behind.

Professional learning for staff was also at a high level, with university staff working alongside teachers in context. Universities and schools shared campuses, and it was possible to go from kindergarten to university on the same campus. A real ambition for me was to one day work in a system like that, in which all teachers were highly respected and there was a complete education pathway on one campus. The Japan study tour provided me with a new perspective on education and challenged my previous beliefs. Seeing the level of trust, expectation, and ambition for learners in Japanese schools was inspiring and I believed then and now that we can learn from their approach. The trip has had a lasting impact on me and left me questioning the Scottish education system value. The Japanese Consulate[43] remained committed to the School after the trip and supported language and cultural learning for staff. I had the further opportunity to collaborate with Orkney and Japanese colleagues and a further study tour within Scotland to support this work. I was changing in who I saw as my collaborative colleagues and was becoming far more broad in my work based collaborations beyond both my cluster and authority.

[43] https://deanparkschool.org.uk/japanese-consulate-visit/?wpcal-page=5

Theory

At the start of my Second Stage time, I felt a hollowness within me. I knew I was supposed to do something regarding theory, but I wasn't sure what or how to do it. The more I delved into it, the more questions arose about my identity and personhood. The EdD programme's focus on understanding myself conflicted with my experiences as a Headteacher and external expectations.

Nussbaum's (2011) ‘Creating Capabilities’ and Nussbaum's (1997) ‘Cultivating Humanity’ were highly influential to me, particularly the emphasis on the importance of 'The Narrative Imagine' and 'Narrative and the Iconicity of the self'. Before my alignment with Nussbaum's Capabilities theory, I read Giddens's (1991) ‘Modernity and Self-identity’, Sheehy's (1974) ‘Passages’, and Soja's (1989) ‘Postmodern Geographies’ to make sense of myself.

Giddens's (1991) book helped me consider the nature of reality in social life and how institutions intersect with an individual's life and, therefore, self-identity. Sheehy's (1974, p. 4) ‘Passages’ resonated with me, particularly the idea of 'staying afloat' and functioning in difficult times with Sheehy's focus on self-examination using narrative to show a person's development over time also relevant.

Soja's (1989) ‘Postmodern Geographies’ introduced the idea of the ‘Third Space,’ a critical space where everything comes together and makes sense for an individual. This concept, like the EdD programme, promotes an iterative approach to social life and language. Soja's perspective on space is created by human action and not just a reflection of society and it had a profound impact on the way I viewed myself as a school leader. It led me to consider myself in all the spaces in which I operate and to question my personhood within those spaces.

Hedge and MacKenzie's (2016) notion of personhood as self-deciding, self-governing, self-authoring, and self-determining further reinforced the importance of autonomy in developing oneself and moving away from individualised neoliberal imperatives. Dearden's (1972) idea of an individual having self-direction, self-activity, independence, and being a chooser also aligned with this notion of autonomy.

All these theories have helped me understand myself better and navigate the complexities of being a Headteacher. They have also allowed me to question external expectations and perceptions of myself and my role. Although it was a challenging for me to do this as I had to accept my own limitations and selfishness in my pursuits and need for affirmation. I had to question if I was a fit in the system and the school or if I had a 'shelf-life' as Earley (2006, p. 7) describes it.

Element 2 – Methodology

Ellis (2004) emphasises the importance of understanding the self as a complex and multifaceted construct that is shaped by individual experiences and social interactions. The study of the self involves exploring the ways in which individuals construct their identities through narratives, cultural contexts, and social interactions, as well as the subjective meanings and interpretations they attach to these experiences. In considering psychological theories of the self, Linde (1993, p. 98) draws on Stern's (2019, pp. 7-8) view of the development of the sense of self in the infant, highlighting the need for a sense of agency, physical cohesion, continuity, affectivity, subjective self, creating and organising, and transmitting meaning. This list is not dissimilar to the Capabilities list (Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 33-34), which emphasises the importance of identifying and understanding the psychological needs and Capabilities that contribute to a robust dignified sense of self. I was using the methodology to consider my belonging and affiliation in this second stage as Headteacher.

However, the ways in which the self is perceived can vary across different cultures, highlighting the need for cultural sensitivity and reflexivity (Linde, 1993, p. 99). I found this to be true based on my own experiences at Columba 1400 in my first stage and Japan in my second stage of Headship. Both of these experiences required me to present myself as a Headteacher and represent my school. I know I was perceived differently in each of these experiences based on the balance and quality of the collaborations afterwards. My post Columba relationships were not good for my wellbeing, my post Japan relationships were rewarding and gave me affirmation around my professionalism and capital.

However, I am aware that the use of autobiography or autoethnography as tools for understanding the self can also be problematic if not approached ethically and reflexively. There is a potential to reinforce individualistic neoliberal imperatives (Hedge & MacKenzie, 2016, p. 2) in my stories of Headship. The cultivation of a sympathetic imagination through

narrative art plays a critical role in understanding the motives and choices of people different from ourselves, as differences in religion, gender, race, class, and national origin shape not only the practical choices people face but also their desires, thoughts, and ways of looking at the world (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 85). As a Headteacher, I recognise the importance of studying the self in the context of leadership development and also in studying the others in the stories with me. Self-reflection as mentioned before is a crucial aspect of leadership development, enabling leaders to develop a deeper understanding of themselves, their values, and their beliefs (Day & Leithwood, 2007). Gronn (2003) emphasises the importance of leaders' self-awareness in building trust and developing relationships with others, particularly in educational settings where trust and collaboration are essential for positive outcomes for students. Sergiovanni (1992) argues that effective educational leaders are those who have a clear sense of their own values and beliefs and who are able to communicate these effectively to others, inspiring and motivating them to work towards a common goal. Hence the study of the self is not only important for personal growth but is also for promoting empathy and understanding of others. Ellis (2004) emphasises the importance of empathy as a critical aspect of understanding the self and others.

I recognise in the second stage of Headship I was not considering enough of others' motivations and focused mainly on just my reactions to them and sympathy towards their needs. This is the key difference between Stages 2 and 3 of my Headship Story and I develop this in the next Chapter. By cultivating empathy, educational leaders can develop a deeper understanding of the needs and perspectives of their students and colleagues, which can ultimately lead to positive outcomes for all. During this second stage, and looking back on it now, I came to appreciate that through careful consideration of narrative and the cultivation of sympathetic imagination, I can continue to develop a sense of self that draws on psychological needs and Capabilities while remaining ethically mindful of not being too individualised to my own needs. By engaging in self-reflection and developing a deeper understanding of myself, my values, and my beliefs, I can build trust, develop relationships, and inspire others to work towards a common goal as an educational leader. Additionally, by practising empathy and seeking to understand others' perspectives, I can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that meets the needs of all students and staff.

The study of the self is an essential aspect of educational leadership development, enabling leaders to better understand themselves and others, and ultimately leading to positive

outcomes for students. By incorporating Ellis's (2004) emphasis on empathy and understanding, educational leaders can create a compassionate and inclusive learning environment that fosters growth and development for all.

Element 3– Theory

At a crossroads in my life, I felt lost and in need of something to ground myself and develop as a human being. My next journal is a reflection of my personal struggles in my Second Stage of Headship, but it also offers a way for me to think for myself and question appropriately in the spaces where I work and live. It is a moment of self-examination and self-criticality, where I make an effort to be more aware of my personal actions and beliefs. This journal is my response to what I call the bridle of policy, which made me feel confined and limited my actions in ways similar to the earlier noted Earley's Stage 5 of career stages of Headship and dealing with the 'plethora of legislative and external changes' (2006, p. 5). I was 'stung to rethink' my own values and ethics related to the NIF (Scottish Government, 2019) and Professional Standards (GTC, 2021b). This response comes from the anxiety and resentment I felt at the time, but it was where I also look for a way to take ownership of my own 'self'. Through this process of self-reflection and critical thinking, I was able to develop a stronger sense of self that is grounded in my own beliefs and values. I was able to question and challenge policies and standards that did not align with my own values, and I became more aware of my own biases and limitations. Hence, this journal entry marks a crucial turning point for me in Stage Two after which I believe I was able to make better decisions more aligned with my own values and ethics as a serving Headteacher.

Journal 8

Immersion:
I have just returned from maternity leave and have been undertaking my EdD for the last six months. I am meeting face-to-face with University colleagues to discuss my assignments and failures. I am asked how I am doing, and I break down in tears. I am shocked by my own emotional response but ultimately, I realise that I am struggling to articulate my feelings and thoughts.

Crystallisation:
During the conversation, I am asked about my goals and what I wanted to achieve from undertaking an EdD. I express my desire to be a better teacher and Headteacher, to work towards social justice values, and to produce and protect the values of a 'broad, beautiful curriculum'. However, I find myself struggling with the realisation that my previous successes were set against neoliberal benchmarks, and I question whether I had any choice

in the matter. I feel trapped in a marketised system, where I am performative and ambitious, perhaps causing injustices for others by doing my job 'by the book'. I feel vulnerable and manipulated, wondering how I can operate in a system where the values are not ones to which I can aspire.

Categorisation:
My colleagues suggest that I take my values and live with them in the policy I have to work with. I am reminded that I don't have to change my values, but rather become my values in the system. I am then asked to write a paragraph about what the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) should look like to me. This exercise allowed me to categorise my thoughts and values, giving me a sense of direction and clarity for my academic work.

Theorisation:
Through this process of sharing my vulnerability and receiving academic support and guidance, I was able to theorise about my place within the educational system. I realised that I could use my values to play an ethical part within the system, even with the bridles of policy. I came to understand that school leadership often places an unhealthy premium on mental robustness and being stoic, and that there is a need to recognise and honour vulnerability and emotions in the educational setting.
This experience allowed me to immerse myself in my emotions and thoughts, to crystallise my goals and values, to categorise my ideas, and to theorise about my place within the educational system. By owning my vulnerability and seeking support, I was able to find a sense of purpose and worthwhileness in places where, previously, I did not see hope or joy. I learned that it is okay to ask for help and expose my vulnerability.

In the above narrative, I experienced a moment of vulnerability. I and was supported to reflect on this vulnerability through a coaching conversation encouraged self-reflection and helping me to navigate my EdD studies and the values and ethics of the educational system. I can apply Nussbaum's (2011) ten Capabilities to this experience in the following ways:

1. Life: I recognised the value of my own life and the lives of others, particularly the students I teach. I wanted to be a better teacher and Headteacher and to produce and protect the values of a broad, beautiful curriculum that would benefit their lives.
2. Bodily Health: While bodily health was not a central concern in this narrative, I did recognise the need to take care of my own mental health and emotional well-being, particularly by seeking support and guidance from my colleagues.
3. Bodily Integrity: I was able to express my emotions and vulnerability in a safe and supportive environment, allowing me to maintain my bodily integrity and honour the importance of emotional expression.
4. Senses, Imagination, and Thought: Through self-reflection and critical thinking, I was able to clarify my own values and goals, categorise my ideas, and theorise about my

place within the educational system. This was a supported conversation with a mentor.

5. Emotions: I recognised the importance of emotional expression and vulnerability in the educational setting, challenging the notion that mental robustness and stoicism are the only acceptable ways of being. I felt better for sharing my feelings and vulnerabilities head on - this allowed me to work through them.
6. Practical Reason: I was encouraged and became able to use practical reason to apply my values and ethics to the policies and standards of the educational system, finding a way to play an ethical part within the system while staying true to my own values. Again this was a supported conversation which lead me to this conclusion. I would not have been able to have reasoned this myself at this point / Stage of Headship without support.
7. Affiliation: I recognised the importance of affiliation and connection with my colleagues and the educational community, seeking their support and guidance during a moment of vulnerability. This is starting to become an important reality for me - I do have supportive networks.
8. Other Species: While other species were not a central concern in this narrative, I recognise that the values of social justice and a broad, beautiful curriculum could also benefit non-human animals and the natural environment.
9. Play: While play was not a central concern in this narrative, I recognise the importance of play and creativity in the educational setting, particularly in developing a broad, beautiful curriculum that engages and excites students but also taking time for leisure as a Headteacher.
10. Control Over One's Environment: Through self-reflection and critical thinking, I gained a greater sense of control over my own environment, recognising the areas where I could play an ethical part within the system and the areas where I could push for change and progress. I also recognised that difference does not need to be threatening and can lead to positive change. I understand this because of my rapid change of view of Japan after I had visited it. It is the second time I have recognised how narrow my thinking around education and the world had been.

My experience also in this narrative highlights the importance of Nussbaum's ten Capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 33-34) in supporting me to work through my thoughts as a Headteacher in an educational setting.

As a Headteacher in my Second Stage of iterative development, I find it helpful to consider my own personal life more broadly through the lens of Nussbaum's ten central Capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 33-34).

- First, I recognise the value of life and am in good physical health, while also having lived through personal challenges that have not diminished the quality of my life.
- Second, bodily health is important to me and I have successfully birthed four children while maintaining good health. I also have a family home for shelter, which is warm and weather-tight.
- Third, bodily integrity is important to me, and while I am able to move freely, I must often do so while caring for my four children, which can be limiting. As a Headteacher, I am not always secure from violent assault, which has happened in the workplace, but I have full choice in matters of reproduction and sexual satisfaction.
- Fourth, I am able to use my senses, imagination, and thought, particularly through my EdD process, which has opened up new ways of critical reflection and planning for my life. While expressing emotions in my professional capacity can be damaging, I am able to experience a range of emotions, including grief, longing, gratitude, and justified anger.
- Fifth, practical reason is an area of growth development for me, particularly as I engage in critical reflection about the planning of my life. I recognise this is something I am not good at when it comes to myself and my perceptions of others' views of me.
- Sixth, affiliation is important and, while social interaction has been limited due to Covid-19, I am able to engage with others in various forms of social interaction and imagine the situation of another. I also have self-respect and understand the social bases of how this is created, though I have felt humiliated and discriminated against in my role as a school Headteacher based on age, sex, ethnicity, caste, and national origin, I have been fortunate that this has not diminished my opportunities, other than my own confidence at times.
- Seventh, I am able to live and work with concern for and relation to animals, plants, and the world around them.

- Eighth, while my professional and personal development priorities can limit my ability to engage in recreational activities, I am able to laugh, play, and enjoy such activities when I choose to do so.
- Ninth, I have political rights in Scotland but not in Hong Kong where I am currently located. Materially, I own property on an equal basis to others in Scotland, have the right to seek employment on an equal basis to others.
- Finally, as a Headteacher, I am able to work as a human being, exercise practical reason, and enter into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers, though this can be challenging in specific situations I work in based on my own and others' perceptions of our relationships.

For me, Nussbaum's ten central Capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 33-34) provide a useful framework for considering my life as a Headteacher at my Second Stage of iterative development. While some of these Capabilities, such as bodily integrity and affiliation, have limitations depending on the context and situation, I am privileged to have access to all of them. By focusing on developing my Capabilities within practical reasoning, senses, imagination, thought, and affiliations, I can see a way to become more effective at my job. I understand that this can be personally uncomfortable for me but that is part of the vulnerability of being human and of course my responsibility as a Headteacher to do this.

Element 4 – Understandings

Second Stage growth is, of course different from First Stage growth. In the first Stage, most things are new and demanding. As Earley (2006, p. 3) describes it, the first career stage is about entry, taking hold, and reshaping. This was my experience of my First Stage, coupled with Kelly and Saunders' (2010, p. 129) third phase of control and action, where working with (and through) others became central to the change process. My experience of the Second Stage, Earley (2006, p. 5) refers to as Stage 4 - 'Refinement' (years 3 to 4). Kelly and Saunders' (2010, p. 130) third theme of their third stage is relevant and notable in this Second Stage for me, in what they call – The emotional dimension of Headship.

The Headteachers Kelly and Saunders (2010) used for their case studies all reported that the emotional dimension was complex during this specific third phase:

> **Ben**
>
> '..just hell really you get the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. There is no doubt, [contextualising and] tackling critical problems [in real-time] is very hard work.' (Kelly and Saunders, 2010, p. 136)
>
> **Ann**
> 'She's the person closest to me. I am anxious about who we will get in.' (Kelly and Saunders, 2010, p. 136)
>
> **Maggie**
> 'Someone had really to take it by the scruff of the neck and say this is where we are going.' (Kelly and Saunders, 2010, p. 136)

Out of the three case studies, my emotions were most similar to Ben's. There were days when the job felt like hell with the highest of highs and lowest of lows. I also had an experienced Depute leave me at this stage, and like Ann, I was initially saddened by the resignation. However, it gave me the opportunity to appoint my own Depute, which was very beneficial to me and the school in terms of Stage 4 – 'Refinement' (years 3 to 4) (Earley, 2006, p. 5). Maggie's approach above would not have worked since my colleagues were used to having their voices heard, and her approach would have been very problematic.

As noted, and as with each of the three case study Headteachers; Ben, Ann, and Maggie, during this third phase of transition, the emotional dimension of Headship emerged as a key theme for me.

> Self-confidence and self-awareness became stronger, learning moved from 'theoretical preparation' to 'practical application', and acquired expertise was accelerated and enhanced as professional and organisational socialisation enabled the new incumbents to achieve occupational identity. All three Heads identified the significance of their 'guiding values' in identifying 'the big picture' in complex situations. They saw leadership of change as inevitably involving a range of emotional responses, like fear and anxiety, which reflected Fullan's (2001, 342) view that leadership at the level of the individual school requires Heads to be 'attuned to the big picture'. In all three cases, their learning was supported by a largely responsive (but unstructured) mentoring system through which timely interventions from colleagues, Ofsted, parents, governors and pupils supported everyone's growing self-awareness. (Kelly and Saunders' 2010, p. 137)

Once again, I have, since Stage Two, discovered that my feelings and emotions were are on a par with other Headteachers in the same phase of development as I was then. They share the same fears and anxieties that I had and are also reflecting on their own confidence and awareness, as well as their personal identities. They were also moving through Earley's (2006, p. 5) Stage 4 of Refinement, where they began 'hitting their stride'. I now feel I was more similar to Ben than both Ann and Maggie, who report to be 'more in their stride'. Ben faced similar challenges to me, and he admits that with some staff resignations, his job became easier (Kelly and Saunders, 2010, p. 136).

The three Heads also saw it as important to establish and display transparency, integrity, and trustworthiness in their day-to-day work. Like me, it was important for these Heads to establish an 'open culture' and engage staff more extensively in a variety of whole-school strategic issues and decision-making, which were illustrations of this approach (Kelly and Saunders, 2010, p. 137). Ann and Ben use strategic planning policy to guide them similar to me in my Stage One, and Maggie uses what she calls creative thinking which is more similar to me in this Second Stage when I started advocating for Critical Reflection and the use of CA. None of Kelly and Saunders' three Headteachers saw formal education, in my case the EdD, as important to their development but each did see the importance of mentoring, support and coaching from more experienced colleagues (Kelly and Saunders, 2010, p. 139).

For all of us, there was a period of making sense in context and exploring possibilities of the Headship in this Stage of Headship. I did not really find myself consolidating my Headship as in Earley's stage 5 (2006, p. 5) but I did recognise the plethora of legislative and external changes and the impact they were having on my Headship.

In this Stage, I started to question my fit in my educational context and whether I had a shelf life in regard to my post as Head of my first school (Earley, 2006, p. 7). This came from the questions I had around the plethora of changes that impacted my role as Headteacher in creating the best possible learning experiences for the school. I had issues with the curriculum changes, which I describe as cultural clearance and an 'empty eggshell' following Paterson[44] (2021). Additionally, I have had opportunities to see how another system worked, and I found aligned with that system's values.

[44] https://reformscotland.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Partial-Sycophantic-and-superficial.pdf

At this Stage, I found my EdD and associated learning very helpful in helping me both articulate and maintain my values while still functioning within the policy regime, but adding value and values to the curriculum where I could do so in accordance with the CA approach. Thinking now on Maggie stating, ‘Someone had really to take it by the scruff of the neck and say this is where we are going,' (Kelly and Saunders, 2010, p. 136), this does not mirror my views at this Stage or since. This type of leadership does not work for me, and I do not feel affiliated with it. However, it was does reflect how I thought Scottish policy was operating in my Second Stage of Headship, and I did not like it.

Chapter 5 Stage Three: 2019 – 2023

The Experienced Headteacher addresses decisional access to the loop

Introduction

What is the meaning of decisional access to the loop?

As noted previously I am working with the notion of decisional capital as defined by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012, p. 5). Decisional capital is the third essential element of professional capital, which Hargreaves and Fullan describe as the product of human, social, and decisional capital (2012, p. 2).

Human capital

In my First Stage of Headteacher Development, I was a product of a human capital focused regime in Scotland. I was and am privileged in my entitlements and also in my freedoms. I did not question the system. However, through my EdD, I started to notice how conformity to expected standards and benchmarks was rewarded and how neoliberal imperatives drove my careerism (Brookfield, 2017, p. 6). As a result, I began to feel vulnerable yet more self-aware.

Social capital

In my Second Stage of Headteacher Development, to counteract my closed loop systems practice in my First Stage, I actively sought out collaboration and feedback to support my self-examination processes of both my own Headship and the School's Self-evaluation through the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) and Professional Learning Communities (PLC). This involved building my social capital with my community and my peers as shared in Journals 6 and 7 . The decisional access to the loop comes from critical thoughts and choices around my own thoughts and values. At this point, as with the case study Headteachers John (discussed in Stage One) and Ben (Stage Two), I was challenged by being an active

participant in carrying out the government's policies, and I was frustrated that my own values for my community were being narrowed. Through mentoring from the university and study on the EdD, I realised that my combined Capabilities could be used in the system as suggested in Journal 8, but I had to be critically aware of what I was doing, and that required agency and process using theory to guard against my bias and blind spots, and more pressingly, my vulnerabilities and insecurities. As Nussbaum (2011, p. 23) notes, Capabilities are the outgrowths of our beings and doings, and the ability to function with flourishing requires ongoing educational growth and reflexivity. I am very aware of my need for growth in my ability to nurture my Capabilities to function effectively in school leadership, particularly in my senses, imagination, thought, practical reasoning, and affiliation (Nussbaum, 2011). While my professional accreditations and registrations provided and continue to provide a foundation for my decision-making, it was my ongoing commitment to reflexivity and self-examination that enabled me to make informed and effective decisions in difficult and complex situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Decisional capital

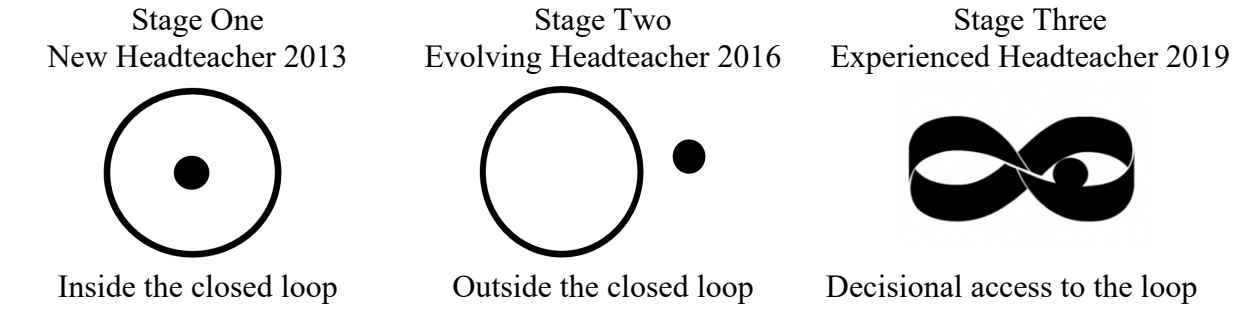
In my Third Stage of Headship, I start by reminding myself of the importance of critical reflection. Brookfield (2017) noted that reflective practice is essential for developing the critical thinking skills necessary for effective decision-making. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2018) emphasised the importance of reflexivity in qualitative research, noting that it allows researchers to critically examine their own beliefs and assumptions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018, p. 9). Also Ellis (2004) emphasised the importance of reflexivity in ethnographic research, noting that it allows researchers to recognise their biases and assumptions and to engage in ongoing dialogue with their research subjects and, in this autoethnographic study, that meant I needed to engage in a dialogue with myself.

Bringing together my understandings from my earlier stages of Headteacher growth into my Third Stage of Headship enabled me to take action to address the insecurities and vulnerabilities I had felt in a decisive way. This meant that I could take my understandings and build on them from the past two stages, understanding my senses, imagination and thoughts, the affiliations I may or may not have, and the capacity to bring theory-based practical reasoning to my new experiences as an Experienced Headteacher. In this Stage I could start to ‘own’ my full professional capital.

Stages of development and growth

The iterative process of Headship

Figure 4



I have journeyed through Stage One and Stage Two of my Headship and gained some insights along the way. These insights have helped me to feel less isolated than I did in my First Stage when working with others and to feel less vulnerable than I did in my Second Stage. The use of Headteacher case studies from Wolcott (1973), Southworth (1995), Tomlinson et al. (2003), and Kelly and Saunders (2010), as well as Headship career stages research from Richmond and Greenfield (2015) and Earley (2006), provided me with support. These sources described experiences and frustrations of Headteachers at my stage and the case study Headteachers had similar thoughts and experiences to my own. When considering the case studies, I felt most aligned with Ed Bells, John Loftus, and Ben. They articulated their feelings, frustrations, and their ineptness in a similar way to how I thought about my vulnerabilities and insecurities. As I read their narratives, I felt a strong sense of alignment and empathy with what they had shared, recognising my own stories in their accounts.

In this Chapter, I focus on Stage Three of my Headship journey, from August 2019 to the present day and consider challenges encountered in this stage.

As Ben said:

> ‘The loss of staff helped, without a doubt. If they hadn’t left, I would still be struggling now.’ (Kelly and Saunders, 2010, p. 136)

And

> ‘Even the most insignificant changes were challenged.’ (Kelly and Saunders, 2010, p. 138)

I can recognise these challenges, as part of my Third Stage narrative, discussed below.

My Stage Three : 2019 -2023

In 2019 1 was ready for a new Headship. I had served in my school for 16 years as a Depute Headteacher and then Head. I loved the school but my shelf-life (Earley, 2006, p. 7) there had been reached. I knew I could have stayed in my post for the remainder of my career. My contract allowed me to do so. The question I was starting to asking myself was around my credible length of tenure and my maintaining my level of performance with all of the changes coming from the NIF. I knew I was frustrated by the lack of criticality in schools, the policy overhaul of the Curriculum for Excellence and, with the NIF, I was having to account for standardised national priorities which I felt did not address the needs of my community, I could feel the praxis with my community slipping from between my fingers. I knew I loved my job. I knew I was still motivated and following Earley (2006, p. 5) I desperately wanted a Headship where I could 'hit my stride' and I was very keen to move firmly into Stage 5 (Earley, 2006, p. 5) and consolidate what I had understood and learned so far from my Headship Journey.

The reasons offered above for wanting a second Headship align with the findings of Fidler et al. (2009) who investigated the reasons for moving schools, the choice of a second school, and who compared the experiences of Heads of two schools. I delve into this further in Element 4 of this Stage. During Stage Two, I had realised how small the world was and that my values were aligned with building a transdisciplinary curriculum, similar to that I had seen in Japan. Such a curriculum was being phased out in my current school. This realisation led me to apply for a Headteacher position in an international context, specifically in Hong Kong. My goal, though not articulated in this way at that time, was to explore my research question of 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?' I was determined to build a flourishing school curriculum and eager to unlock the potential of my students, teachers, and myself as a Headteacher, using both theory and practice. Rather than being moulded, I wanted to grow and develop creatively in my job. Ultimately, I aimed to create a flourishing research-informed school and so I turn now to flourishing.

Flourishing

Flourishing is a concept that holds great significance for me. Influenced by Dearden (1968), I believe that it goes beyond being just a word - it represents an emotional place and a destination that I strive to create for my schools and their learners. As Dearden (1968) aptly commented:

> Flourishing is a state that lives within my head when I think about my vision for my schools. (Dearden, 1968 p. 51)

In this view, flourishing is not something that can be moulded or forced into existence. Rather, it is a state that arises when the conditions are right for it to happen.
To this end, I draw on Nussbaum's (2011, p. 7) CA, which emphasises the importance of fostering the development of human Capabilities as a means of promoting flourishing. Similarly, Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) concept of professional capital highlights the importance of creating the best conditions for ongoing learning and development, which is essential for supporting both individual and collective flourishing in any educational setting (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012. p. 5).

Sticky note 7

When I took up my first post as a Headteacher, I was drawn to the school emblem, a tree. As I began to develop the curriculum rationale in my first stage I knew that I wanted it to align with this emblem in some way.

In my exploration of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), I noted a direct reference to the importance of supporting children to develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes they need to adapt, think critically, and **flourish** in today's world (Education Scotland, 2019).

The word 'flourish' resonated with me, as it seemed to embody what a tree would do if it were nurtured properly. While this fits with the notion of CA, I did not align the two in my First Stage. It was only after reading Nussbaum's (2011) work and Hedge and Mackenzie's (2016) exploration of flourishing that I realised the true depth and significance of this concept. I came to understand that flourishing was a liberal ideal that required robust philosophical ideas to underpin teaching and learning (Hedge & Mackenzie, 2016, p. 13). Despite my initial lack of understanding, I felt fortunate that I had chosen the word 'flourishing' for my learning community, as it was a good starting point from which to build.

Nussbaum's metaphor of the plant versus the jewel helped me to understand that vulnerability is connected to flourishing. We are more 'plant-like' than 'jewel-like,' and it is precisely because a plant is soft, living tissue that it can flourish, while jewels cannot (Nussbaum, 2011) [45].

Realising the significance of flourishing, I became even more committed to creating the right conditions for it in my school. Although the connections between theory and practice seemed obvious, they were not clear to me until my EdD programme provided me with a theoretical framework to guide my reading. Previously, my practice had been shadowing the theory by coincidence, lacking a robust philosophical underpinning. With this realisation, and in the Third Stage of my Headship journey, I became more committed to creating the conditions for flourishing in my school, drawing on a range of educational theories and frameworks to inform my practice. By nurturing our learners (and staff, too) and providing them with the knowledge, skills, and attributes they need to adapt, think critically, and flourish, I felt confident that we can support them to achieve their full potential and hopefully contribute positively to society.

Nussbaum on flourishing (2011, pp 125-131).

Nussbaum's (2011, pp. 125-131) concept of flourishing has been core in supporting me as a Headteacher to remain grounded in understanding what humans require to live a fulfilling life. This became apparent during the Covid-19 pandemic, discussed later in this section. Nussbaum's idea of flourishing is based on Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia, which involves fulfilling one's potential as a human being. The Capability Approach (CA) is also integral to flourishing and vice versa, as it provides the freedoms necessary for individuals to flourish in diverse ways. Nussbaum suggests that political planners must understand what humans require for a flourishing life, and education is crucial to achieving this (Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 125-126).

Based on Nussbaum's (2011) concept of flourishing, I formulated my research question, 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?' Now, in my Third Stage of Headship, I am beginning to consolidate and gain insights from the previous iterative stages to answer this question. My Elemental framework has been instrumental in processing my experiences and is currently providing me with the agency to make informed decisions related to my Third Stage of Headship and my decisional access to the loop. The definition of human flourishing provided by the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable

[45] https://gohighbrow.com/vulnerability-and-flourishing-martha-nussbaum/

Development (MGIEP, 2021, p. 2) emphasises the optimal continuing development of human potentials and living well as a human being. This definition requires an enabling environment and is conditional on individuals' contributions.

The concept of a social contract for education, which emphasises inclusion, equity, cooperation, and solidarity, as well as collective responsibility and interconnectedness, is also critical to understanding what humans require for a fulfilling life (UNESCO, 2021a). The CA is pluralistic and focuses on what each person can do and be, what opportunities are available, and what choices and freedoms people have. These features are essential for ethical decision-making and guiding one's life. Personally, the CA has been crucial in my development as a school leader, providing a conceptual framework to assess my life's different stages and guide my ethical decision-making.

My focus on agency involves understanding what I can do as a Headteacher and how I can control my life's social and ethical goals to contribute to my community and society. The CA has allowed me to understand the freedoms necessary for individuals to flourish in diverse ways and has guided my decision-making to ensure that I am fostering an environment that enables this. My focus on process involves understanding how to achieve the necessary goals required of me as a school leader in a way that respects my agency and the agency of others to achieve the required outcomes. This was a process for me as I strive to be ethical to get to the endpoints required in regards to capability and capacity as well as the outcomes desired or required operationally by the service in which I am employed in and the institutions I serve. The process is focused on my own individual agency and how that agency is respected and actioned by me to achieve the performative and necessary goals required of me as a serving Headteacher. The CA's pluralistic nature has allowed me to consider multiple perspectives and make decisions that align with the values of our community and society.

My Headteacher identity is revisited here by considering where I am in this Third Stage of my Headteacher Development and by looking back at where I have been in my earlier stages of Development. Here I ask what I now know about myself as a Headteacher due to the maturation process and my working through the Elements of learning about myself and my Capabilities. As a Headteacher, I find myself in situations that require care and consideration and, sometimes, I have to deal with or step into conflict. Although I can risk assess and be aware of our practices, I cannot completely mitigate risks for myself or others, as schools are ultimately social spaces. My maturation process set within the Capabilities is important.

1. Life: I have been fortunate to have a good bodily health and a comfortable life, which has not been adverse to my worthwhile existence.
2. Bodily Health: My good bodily health has been a significant advantage in my role as a Headteacher, as it allows me to manage the physical demands of my job and be present for my school community.
3. Bodily integrity. I have been able to move freely to Hong Kong from Scotland to work as a Headteacher. I remain free of domestic violence and do have choices in regard to my sexual satisfaction.
4. Senses, Imagination, and Thought: I have always been imaginative and have been able to use my 'Third Space' to my advantage. As a Headteacher in Hong Kong, I have wider scope (compared with previous Headships) in meeting learners' needs and can use all my senses, imagination, and thought to the benefit of my community.
5. Emotions: As an emotional person, I care deeply about others, and I have a significant amount of empathy. Unfortunately, this has sometimes been used against me as a weakness instead of a strength. My behaviours are transparent, and I reflect on them, and try to be empathetic to others.
6. Practical Reason: Through my doctoral journey, I have become reflexively critical, which has allowed me to become increasingly aware of my own decisional capital. However, I am not always able to practically reason to combine all my Capabilities to make sense of a situation or voice my views effectively. This is an area I continue to work on.
7. Affiliation: I have become more aware of the factors that have affected my affiliations, including my personality, ability to use practical reasoning, and my own identity. I believe that understanding these factors has helped me become a more effective Headteacher.
8. Other Species: The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of sustainability and well-being, and I have taken steps to promote these within my school community.
9. Play: The covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of play and well-being, which has led me to establish various initiatives that promote fun and concern for the world around us within my school community. Playing and having fun are essential to everyone's well-being, including staff.
10. Control over one's Environment –

a. Political - As a Headteacher in Hong Kong, my political engagement is not as free as it is in Scotland, as I am not a permanent resident and do not have the right to vote.
b. Material - I use my voice to promote the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, which offers significant freedoms for choice and is not an empty shell curriculum as I feel Curriculum for Excellence has become with the influence of the National Improvement Framework. Reasoning: I believe that education is crucial in developing reasoning, and an 'empty shell' curriculum will not allow growth in this area. The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme offers significant freedoms for choice, which is why I find it beautiful, broad, and inspiring when actioned effectively.

With these Capabilities in place, this period marked a significant change in the loop for me as a Headteacher.

Considering the context of the loop.

My family and I moved to Hong Kong, where I took up my new Headship in August 2019 amidst social unrest. Soon after arrival, the Covid-19 pandemic hit, affecting Hong Kong from January 2020 until May 2023. The pandemic had a prohibitive and performative impact, with many restrictions and performance measures in place for the school and the wider community. As a result of mandatory operational health policies from the Government's Educational Bureau, I had high accountability and heightened responsibilities to ensure the school's physical operations adhered to the policies. The school was also accountable to the English Schools Foundation (ESF) for the quality of learning provision provided to its children and families, while simultaneously supporting staff and students in online and various models of back-to-campus schooling that took place. The restrictions, pandemic, and protests also impacted staff recruitment and retention during this period. All new teaching staff appointed to the school between 2019-2022 have now left Hong Kong, except for me as the Headteacher. During this period, the loop changed for me.

During this period, I gradually gained an understanding of the cultural influence of English hegemony and some parents' expectations for a continuation of the dominant white hegemony. Through Alexander McTaggart's (2019, p. 6) work, I learned that IB schools in

non-western countries often frame the experience of internationalism in an English way, providing stakeholders access to the value preferences of the dominant white, English hegemony. Initially, I was taken aback when some stakeholders questioned my recruitment procedures for being too diverse. I was unsure of what they meant and sought clarification. When they explained their concerns, it sounded like racism. I took time to understand the context and recognised that both the community and I held blind spots and biases. I was ignorant of the cultural context, and they were biased with a strong preference to maintaining the status quo. Through this experience, I gained a better social-cultural understanding to help make my work more ethical. I reinforced to those members of staff wanting the status quo to remain that I would appoint the best candidates for the jobs and I carried this out accordingly.

I am excited that in November 2023, the school will undergo its International Baccalaureate (IB) Evaluation. As the Headteacher, I welcome this opportunity. The school's quality assurance narrative is called 'The Story of Improvement'[46]. It tracks my work since taking up the post in August 2019 and accounts for this third iterative stage of development, as well as the consolidation of ten years of experience in Headship.

The Elements

The Elements in this Chapter allow me to question myself as an Engaged Headteacher Educator able to put my 'knowledge into telling' (White, 1988. p. 1). I relate this to my 'educational growth' to reflect on my ongoing pluralistic Capabilities, agency and the processes I use in school leadership for critical self-examination and reflexivity.

Element 1 - Learning

Personal experience

As noted earlier, as an Experienced Headteacher, I was seeking a new role challenge. I was eager to see if my skills and new understandings gained in Stages One and Two were transferable and could be applied to a new Headship. I was excited to put theory and knowledge into practice and to see if my beliefs and opinions about my job continue to be

[46] https://drive.google.com/drive/search?q=ib

justified. I was keen to understand if my experience had influenced my views and attitudes towards school leadership and if I could continue to grow and develop in this field.

Journal 9

Immersion:
I am in the midst of the final board interview for a new Headship position. The view from the skyscraper is breath-taking, and I am surrounded by familiar faces from the previous three days of the interview process. I am dressed corporately but have added a pop of colour to try to show my personality. The questions asked during the interview process are personalised and allow me to reflect on who I am as a person and on my professional identity.

Crystallisation:
Three questions stand out in my mind, and I am able to recall them in detail. The questions asked during the interview process were designed to elicit a deep understanding of my beliefs, values and opinions regarding school leadership. I draw upon my EdD journey and Headteacher educational growth to answer the questions confidently, providing, I hope, robust explanations. I am mindful of each of the words I select but the questions allow me to reflect on who I am as a person and on my professional identity, and I aimed to be reflexive under pressure.

Categorisation:
The questions asked during the interview process are grouped into three categories: my colleagues' perceptions of me, my personal background, and areas for improvement in my Headship. I am able to categorise my answers according to these themes, drawing upon my theory of knowledge, particularly in relation to Brookfield's (2005) lenses, to justify my beliefs and opinions backed up using examples from personal experiences.

Theorisation:
I reflect on the interview process now and how it aligns with the Denzin's (2006) headings of immersion, crystallisation, and categorisation. The questions asked during the interview process were personalised and allowed me to immerse myself in the moment, drawing upon my personal and professional experiences to answer them.
The questions crystallised my thoughts and beliefs, enabling me to categorise my answers according to specific themes. I used my theory of knowledge and its influence to justify my beliefs and opinions, trying to demonstrate my ability to be reflexive under pressure.

I also draw upon Nussbaum's ideas of being a living body capable of intelligence and intentionality during the interview process. I am aware of the politics of the situation and the reasons why I am being asked to explain who I am as a person. This understanding enables me to share my values and self-worth while still showing how I can be intentional in my practice. Overall, the interview process was enlightening and felt like a productive Professional Review and Development Process (PRD). It allowed me to reflect on who I am, where I am in my journey, and what I need to maintain and change moving into a new Headship. The questions asked allowed me to better understand my professional identity and my feelings and beliefs towards that, ultimately enabling me to deal with the outcome of the process with grace, regardless of the result.

The start of the new Headship and ongoing EdD Journey

As the new Headteacher, I started off on a positive note. Moving to a new country, curriculum, and culture brought about a mix of excitement and calmness. The whole adventure felt open to possibilities and differences, and it felt cosmopolitan in the way Nussbaum (2019) describes in the sense that I was leaving home to become a 'citizen of the world' (Nussbaum, 2019, p. 1). I was drawn to what Diogenes suggests, namely the possibility of politics or an ethical approach to politics that focuses on the humanity we share rather than the marks of local origin, status, class, and gender that divide us (Nussbaum, 2019, p. 2). The school I am going to work in is an international school that follows the IB world curriculum[47], with a mission:

> To develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. (IB, 2022)

> These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right. (IB, 2022)

The idea of a world curriculum offering inquiry-based learning had been major motivation for me. The opportunity to work with a broad general curriculum that is personalised for learner needs with the aim to create globally-minded citizens was exciting. These were critical motivations for my decision to seek a change, particularly with Brexit looming. I wanted my own children to be internationally-minded, and I believed that the IB curriculum was one way to support this. After my trip to Japan, I valued the opportunity to learn from other educational systems and enjoyed the idea of the ‘world being interconnected’ as influenced by Nussbaum (2019). I remained committed to staying informed and engaged in the ongoing professional development of my EdD to continue growing and learning as a Headteacher using my Elemental Framework. In terms of theoretical strategies, I believed in the importance of incorporating moral goodness into my leadership approach. As an Engaged Headteacher Educator, I was and am dedicated to staying informed and engaged in ongoing professional development opportunities and learning in order to continually grow as a leader as recommended by Gardner-McTaggart (2021).

[47] https://www.ibo.org/programmes/

Students' Experiences

Moving to Hong Kong had an unconsidered benefit for my children and me. It helped us unpack our family's historical identity, which had been kept quiet due to white privilege in my maternal family home and my upbringing in a West of Scotland industrial town. The move allowed us to explore and embrace our family's heritage and culture in a way that we had not been able to before and this is relevant to my experiences in school as outlined below in sticky notes 8 and 9.

Sticky note 8

> 'I know you are Scottish, but where are you actually from?'
>
> If I had a penny for every time this has been asked, I would be a millionaire.

As a Scottish person, I have been asked countless times where I am actually from. This question is often asked by people who are trying to understand my cultural heritage or background. While I appreciate the curiosity, it can be frustrating to constantly field this question. However, I understand that people are often trying to make a connection or find common ground, and I try to respond with patience and understanding. Ultimately, I am proud of my Scottish heritage and the unique perspective it has given me on the world but I also understand and am proud that I am mixed race.

It comes as no surprise that the Western intellectual tradition has persistently marginalised outsiders, as Nussbaum (1997, p. 19) describes this in Cultivating Humanity. She argues that the very pretence of engaging in disinterested pursuits of truth can be a handy screen for prejudice. Thus, every time I am asked where I am from, I recognise it as a diversity, equality, and inclusion question. It is a question that leads straight back to my sense of belonging and affiliation to a particular group. While the question may seem harmless, it can be loaded with judgment, revealing more about the person asking it than about me, with respect to where they see themselves in cultural hierarchies in comparison to me.

As Gardner-McTaggart (2021) states:

> International schools play an increasing role in the process of globalizing, white, cultural replication. (Gardner- McTaggart, 2021, p. 2)

When I came to work in an international school community, I encountered a cultural hierarchy different from my experiences growing up in the West of Scotland, where religious differences were more prominent that racial or ethnic differences. This was a culture shock, as there were clear colonial lenses in place with expectations around whiteness as a privilege with entitlement in the school community.

> Essentially, an international school teacher is far more of a market-oriented soliciting professional than their national namesake, for better and for worse. (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018,p. 2)

I witnessed significant individualistic neoliberal imperatives, which brought into question what some saw as the potential dangers of too much autonomy and agency in school staff recruitment. This agency could have lead me as a Headteacher to support globalising, white, cultural replication in my school, which was not representative of my community of learners. However, as noted above many of the adults supporting the community had a strong preference for a non-diverse status quo and culture. As the new Headteacher, I recognised that this culture was not necessarily relevant to the students in the school.

In Year Six, the final year of the Primary Years Programme[48] in the Primary School, students participate in an Exhibition[49] that is the culmination of their primary school journey designed to show self-discovery as learners, as well as of their learner profiles. I speak to every student as their Headteacher during the process of preparing for their Exhibition and then again post-Exhibition about knowing themselves well and what their Exhibition has told them about themselves as learners. I do this to ensure the students have a sense of belonging and feel accepted and valued for who they are, rather than being pressured to conform to cultural expectations that do not reflect their own experiences and identities.

[48] https://www.ibo.org/programmes/primary-years-programme/
[49] https://www.ibo.org/programmes/primary-years-programme/pyp-exhibition/

Sticky note 9

I asked a student if she was excited about her future. She said she was concerned about how she would be received. I asked her what she meant. She said, 'I am not white enough'. She was 11. She had produced the most amazing research project on the war zones in Syria and knew far more about the conflict there than I did.

Today, my heart is heavy with grief and pain because I feel like I have failed (her) and maybe my students. It hurts me deeply to see these bright individuals doubting their own cultural identity and their place in the world. It pains me to know that when they look at themselves in the mirror, they see themselves as not culturally white enough for a so called globalised world.

I never expected any of the students, who are so internationally-minded, to feel such a deep sense of cultural inadequacy. But some clearly do, and it was my naivety that blindsided me to this reality. This experience takes me back to my own childhood in Scotland, where I too looked in the mirror and wished to be white for an easier life.

I also asked some students why their parents had not come to their presentations in the school and they told me they were embarrassed by their parents because they only spoke Cantonese. I could not believe what I was hearing, but then I thought about it. I had been conscious as a child their age walking down the street with my dad in my home town because he was brown and everyone else was white. We stood out.

I understand the pain my students feel, and it is heart-breaking to see them go through it. As an educator, it is my responsibility to create a safe and inclusive environment for all of my students, where they can feel valued and celebrated for who they are. I am committed to doing better and learning from my mistakes to ensure that my students never feel this way again.

As a Headteacher, I came to realise that my students needed to work through their identities and Capabilities in the same way that I had done in my iterative Headship journey. It was important to provide them with the opportunity to match their educational growth with their own unique journeys. To make this happen, the students must have an authentic voice in their learning and ownership over it through a robust curriculum journey that is personalised to their individual needs. This means that the journey has to be original to the children and not defined by 'monotone staff' and 'white thinking' (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018).

Working within the IB curriculum principles[50] such an aim is achievable, but asking staff to consider differences provoked a challenge. Much like Headteacher Ben's experience in Stage Two, about necessary staff needing to leave and also staff reluctance to accept any change, many of the team were unaware of the dominant discourse in the school or the IB because they have never had cause to think about it. This is not a criticism of anyone: it is simply a reflection of the world in which we, the privileged live. The rationale for the upcoming IB evaluation[51] is currently being shared with the community, and the process spans a full twelve months which started for our school in August 2022. I admit as Headteacher that there are neoliberal enhancements in place for those who engage in the educational growth process to make this happen for the students. There were and will continue to be supported opportunities for professional growth and reward, namely professional learning opportunities and conference attendance. However, the most significant agenda item for me as a Headteacher will be creating the conditions in the school to allow for the autonomy and personhood required for the students to be regarded and to regard themselves as end in themselves. At the same time, I must be mindful of the teacher's agency and worth in their own right: they are not simply adjuncts to the ends of the students or to my will to ensure a more diverse school. I have been in that situation before as shared in sticky note 6 in Chapter 4.

My ultimate goal is to provide a tailored and personalised educational experience for students in the school, similar to what Hedge and Mackenzie (2016) discussed as empowering them and enabling them to explore their unique identities and Capabilities. It is crucial for them to have a voice in their learning and be given ownership over their educational journey. This requires an authentic and original curriculum journey that is not defined by cultural biases or dominant discourses. Through the IB evaluation process and ongoing professional development opportunities, I am committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment that celebrates differences and values the autonomy and personhood of both my students and staff. This aligns with my own Element Framework, which allows me to grow as a Headteacher.

[50] https://www.ibo.org/benefits/learner-profile/
[51] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1meArrrnMZUJGho1u_MZmCVLnYUokuTlB/view?usp=sharing

Sticky note 10

I have a deep desire to see my students flourish in terms of CA. I believe that they have the power to make the social change required in this world and, as their Headteacher, I feel duty bound to play my part to enable and get out of their way. My role is to provide them with the tools, resources, and support they need to thrive and reach their full potential.

These students are the first students I have worked with who truly seem to value education. They come to school ready and prepared and enjoy their time in school. I believe that my students have the capacity to make a difference in the world, and that it is my responsibility as a Headteacher Educator to enable them and empower them to do so. This means creating an environment that is safe, inclusive, and encourages them to take risks and explore their passions.

I want my students to feel confident and capable of making a positive impact in the world, and I am committed to doing everything in my power to make that happen. As an educator, I recognise that my students are the future, and it is my duty to help them realise their potential. I am dedicated to providing them with a personalised educational experience that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and a sense of purpose. I want my students to leave my classrooms feeling empowered, inspired, and ready to make a difference in the world.

As a Headteacher, I am more than happy to be an adjunct in supporting both my students and teachers to flourish. This includes supporting my teachers in their professional growth and development, as well as ensuring that they have the resources and support they need to deliver high-quality education. I believe that as an educator, my role is to enable and facilitate the growth of my students and teachers. This means being open to their needs and concerns, and providing them with the support and resources they require to reach their full potential. I recognise that I am just one part of a larger educational ecosystem, and it is my duty to work collaboratively with my students and teachers to create a culture of learning and growth in which all are respected and treated with dignity. A student feeling ‘not white enough’ meant I was failing to achieve these aims.

Colleagues’ Perceptions

As an Experienced Headteacher, I recognise that the teachers in the school are vital to the success of the school and that their professional growth and development are essential to the growth and development of our students. This involves managing change and relationships. Ben, the Primary Headteacher in Kelly and Saunders’ (2010) study, had some similar

experiences to me and I use elements of his narrative in order to be ethical and not refer to identifiable colleagues in regard to my current Headship.

> - Ben's appointment followed that of a long established and well-regarded Headteacher who was perceived to be leading a high attaining school.
> - Ben gave priority to establishing his personal presence in order to gain acceptance and 'to understand the school's culture at a deeper level'.
> - Ben found himself entering a hostile environment because of the particular circumstances of his appointment, with important consequences for organisational socialisation.
> - Ben reflected on the implications of this in terms of his own incumbency: Some [staff were] a bit more 'standoffish' than others. It was a threatening time for them really. They had the same Head for fourteen years, the same deputy for twelve. It was bound to be worrying. I think they wanted to keep the status quo. They weren't opposed to me as a person, but they were opposed to the appointment not being internal.
> (Kelly and Saunders, 2010, pp. 130-132)

I had similar experiences in this Stage and feel fortunate that this was not my first Headship.

Journal 10

Immersion:
In my new role as Headteacher, I received open letters from the school staff outlining the challenges, strengths and passions of the school. Passion had turned into frustration due to resource reallocations and changing priorities, stalling progress. The most common issue was due to the changeover of teaching staff, followed by the inability of teams to build on the capacity for change. This was based on core improvement agendas not matching completely with the triangulation of quality assurance, which meant the focus was easy to move without reflecting on the data collected or the next steps in improvement.

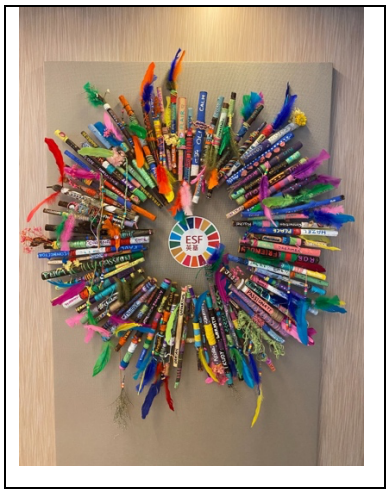
Crystallisation:
To address this, we created essential points for developing the collaborative framework at the school using Bell & Gilbert's (1996) three aspects of professional learning. I encouraged the use of these steps as they had been successful in my previous Headship (see Chapter 3) and they were designed to help us become more critically aware and to consider what is going on. This enabled the whole school community to start working through our identities as a school, as a community and as educators. We came to a common set of principles to help us take forward the work of the school under four project lenses: Professional Learning and Leadership, Shared Learning Spaces, Sustainability, and Inclusive pedagogy and learning communities[52]. This shortly afterwards became the Connected Learning Ecologies.[53]

[52] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wCMCmpp4KQW4gkYaWfGax7Dn53jW0rXp/view?usp=drive_link
[53] https://drive.google.com/file/d/14sud2HXzPFljBwij6sSZdEVRnZQjZ_P4/view?usp=drive_link

Categorisation:
Using the project lenses, we worked collaboratively with our wider school community and allocated resources to support the ongoing learning ecologies in the school. We created adult versions of ‘thinking talking floor books' and staff were then able to problematise across the four projects. This allowed us to create the coherence we required across the school and to open up shared accountability and agency. These are still used today. We created several opportunities for staff to explore the shared teaching spaces across the school buildings and externally within the community, allowing them to think differently about their pedagogy and practice previously directed by Curriculum Coordinators. We called this ‘The Circle of Collaboration’.

Staff Floor Books

Theorisation:
The physical circle of collaboration the staff made was a promise to themselves of their professionalism in teaching and learning and to highlight their value within the group. This was an effective exercise. We decided that this was important for many relationship - related reasons and also to enable us to manage the volume of pressures on the school. The first pressure point was the contemporary socio-political context in Hong Kong, characterised by civil unrest. This was challenging for many reasons. ‘The Circle of Collaboration' grounded us and brought us together, allowing us to be who we are with equal value. This led to us creating a model for our school collaboration, leadership, and development, which has proven incredibly valuable in making sense of where we find ourselves as a school.



Identity Sticks

Every staff member in the community made one. We brought them together in the circle to show we all have our place in a diverse community. Each staff member chose a word to represent them.

The second pressure point came later in January 2020, in the form of the major health emergency from Covid-19. These identified pressures had significant implications for our school, our school leaders, our community, and the broader field of education across the region. As a school, we were fortunate to have started our school improvement cycle before the pressures landed at our door. What was notable was the fact that 'the self' was the crucial operator within all our collaborative spaces. Usually, for teachers, the space where practice tends to come together is in the school. However, all of this changed due to Covid-19. Our staff spheres of practice and influence changed overnight to the Community and the Home, which automatically became the key focus areas for delivering and supporting our teaching and learning – a whole new set of spaces for us to navigate, acknowledge, negotiate and utilise. This was very challenging for staff, both personally and professionally.

We used 'thinking keys' to help us organise our thoughts and articulate them as a group for development. We participated in opening up our learning ecologies to look more broadly at the school and to work in praxis with our surroundings. This allowed us to enjoy several teamwork opportunities and also encouraged critical reflection on our pedagogies and allowing for growth in our aspirations and motivations. The school had to focus on 'the self' and the wellbeing of staff and pupils. Everything else was, from my point of view, unnecessary. This anchored me back to Scotland and the phrase 'Maslow before Blooms', which I often heard in wellbeing meetings for Getting it Right for Every Child[54].

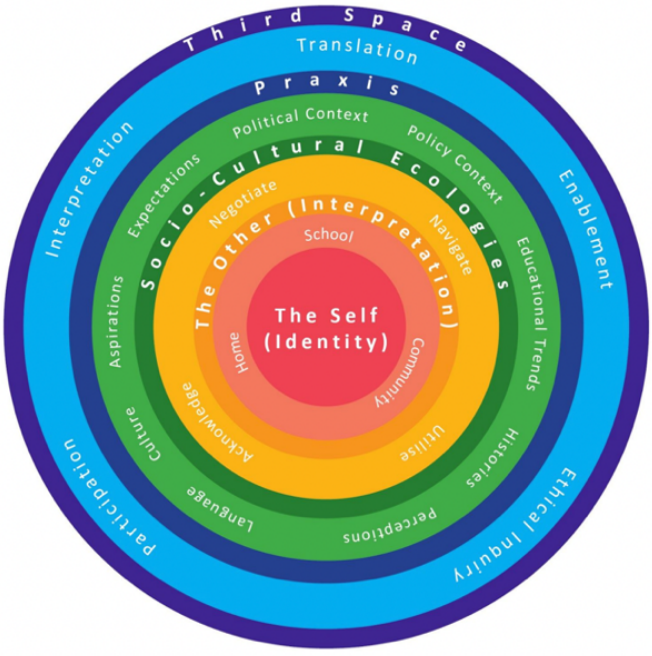
As a Headteacher, I faced tough decisions and pressures during this time. I was strongly challenged by my learning community's professional members including the Senior Team who were keen to stick with just moving the current programmes online. However, I anchored myself hard into the Capabilities and realised that everything was upside down, and no one's Capabilities were being met. I knew that prioritising wellbeing was non-negotiable, and it was the bravest thing I did as a the new Headteacher was to say, 'No, wellbeing first'.

[54] https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/

I knew my decisional capital was in place with my professional learning and professionalism. This was immensely scary and, looking back now, it still scares me more. I knew I was making my first real call which was against the expected grain and I was definite that it was non-negotiable. Despite losing a small number of colleagues who were not flexible, the school community came together and did very well in dire circumstances.

It was also a very complicated time for me personally as I was separated from my children, who were in Scotland, due to the death of a grandparent and unable to return to Hong Kong for five months. All my focus was drilled into the school and my survival. The isolation from my family at this time did have significant impact on my wellbeing and stalled my EdD Dissertation progress.

Owning one's knowledge, experience, and influence when it matters and fighting for what matters most for the school community is crucial. The emphasis on humanistic values and the need for educational provision to support learning in times of challenge brings wellbeing, connection, and empathy to the fore. The right to learn is important, but the duty to learn is less relevant than wellbeing in times of crisis. Keeping students engaged, motivated, and connected is vital. Overall, our collaborative framework allowed us to navigate and adapt to challenges while prioritising the wellbeing of our staff and students. As a school we created the model below to support us in reflecting against all the factors affecting us as individuals. We started with our physical identity Sticks made from wood above and grew the model from there considering our self, others, our relationships, our social cultural environment, the factors of that environment, the reflexivity of that environment and then ultimately the creativity of the third space where everything comes together to make sense.



The Circle of Collaboration model

Figure 5

As a Headteacher, this is the most significant critical incident I have ever faced. The sudden government-mandated closure of our school occurred overnight due to the Covid-19 pandemic. With no time to plan, we had to quickly pivot to offering a complete online timetable[55] for our students. However, my central concern was the health and wellbeing of our staff and students. I reminded everyone of the importance of Capabilities theory and the need to prioritise health and wellbeing over academic expectations during a health emergency. Of course learning and teaching was still a priority but it was not the top priority.

We established a robust online learning platform using our established virtual platforms available to us such as google classroom, Velocity and seesaw which the majority of students were familiar with. We created a virtual school day which involved innovative approaches to interweaving online learning and teaching with virtual opportunities for professional collaboration and regular wellbeing surveys. We also embarked on a UNICEF Rights Respecting School Journey to ensure a robust focus on student engagement. We resourced students who did not have access to digital tools and focused on whole community themes such as the Global Sustainable Development Goals, a Mother Tongue Language Day, and a Book Week. Professional collaboration was central to our work during this period. We continued the professional learning and development of all staff via daily virtual meetings, year group meetings, and online courses. We also created an online sharing platform for staff to post, share, and discuss innovative approaches, tools, and methods to support online learning. Our efforts were successful, as evidenced by the positive external response to our narratives on social networks and invitations for our staff to participate in global webinars[56].

The experience was tough for everyone, but it reinforced the importance of prioritising health and wellbeing, adapting to changing circumstances, and collaborating effectively as a learning community. As a Headteacher, I believe of our school's response to the crisis and the impact it had on our staff, students, and the broader education community was as positive as it could be in the circumstances[57].

[55] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YjbQSqr-5LCqkYVTIuvDhjlWXgKzKOTJHLUAf40Olwc/edit
[56]https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tbv7HaXngi22EAraF_k3vdnTsc5PCExt2YRZXeCaMSE/edit?usp=sharing
[57] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lGxOcEsdeZShtwD2I9ajpRFdaOTjE-30/view?usp=sharing

Ways in which Nussbaum's ten Capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011) played out and were evident in my choices made at this time are summarised below.

1. Life: The focus on health and wellbeing first, before academic expectations, demonstrates a commitment to the capability of life.

2. Bodily Health: The emphasis on health and wellbeing as a priority during the pandemic also reflects a concern for bodily health with daily check-ins with students and teachers to make sure they were well in their home environments.

3. Bodily Integrity: The duty of care to ourselves and our students to maximise our wellbeing, physical and psychological, shows a commitment to bodily integrity.

4. Senses, Imagination, and Thought: The innovative approaches to interweaving online learning and teaching with virtual opportunities for professional collaboration and regular wellbeing surveys reflect a concern for the Capabilities of senses, imagination, and thought.

5. Emotions: The focus on mental health and wellbeing, as well as the emphasis on the importance of educators' influence on students' future optimism and resilience, demonstrates a concern for emotions.

6. Practical Reason: The focus on whole community themes such as the Global Sustainable Development Goals, a Mother Tongue Language Day, and a Book Week reflects a concern for practical reason.

7. Affiliation: The emphasis on ensuring every child felt connected and was nurtured, and the establishment of virtual opportunities for professional collaboration, regular wellbeing surveys, and sustained self-evaluation including collating data from across the entire community, demonstrates a concern for affiliation.

8. Other Species: Although not explicitly mentioned in the narrative, the focus on the Global Sustainable Development Goals suggests a concern for the capability of other species, as one of the goals is to protect the planet's biodiversity and ecosystems. We also introduced Archie the school dog at this time.

9. Play: The celebration of learning and connectedness through weekly virtual assemblies and house group competitions, as well as the continued meeting and work of the student committees, suggests a concern for play.

10. Control Over One's Environment: The establishment of a full-time online learning approach for students, resourcing of those who did not have access to digital tools, and the creation of an online sharing platform for staff to post, share, and discuss innovative approaches, tools, and methods that support online learning, reflects a concern for control over one's environment.

Theory

One of the coping mechanisms I used during this time was encouraging both staff and students to share their stories. As Nussbaum (2001, p. 236) explains, emotions are often tied to a narrative structure, and understanding the history behind each individual's emotions can provide insight into their present responses. By sharing our stories, we were able to gain a better understanding of each other's experiences during the pandemic and to support each other through the challenges we faced. This approach allowed us to build empathy and connection within the learning community, which was essential for maintaining a sense of normality and well-being during the unprecedented circumstances.

Sticky note 11

During this challenging time, I recognised the power of storytelling in helping us navigate the unknown. As we shared our experiences with each other, we gained a better understanding of the challenges we faced and found ways to support each other through them.

This approach is consistent with narrative therapy, which posits that telling one's story can help reframe one's experiences and promote healing (White & Epston, 1990). By sharing our stories, we were able to help others who might have been facing similar challenges by sharing possible ways through challenges.

While initially I felt slightly uncomfortable about pushing staff to share their stories, it ultimately proved to be a collaborative endeavour that helped keep me and them grounded and balanced. Despite missing my children and students, I found solace in the school community and the support of my staff. Our daily check-ins provided a privileged space to focus on solving problems and help individuals, and I often joked with my Senior

Team about working in 'Mission Control.' The power of storytelling became a key methodology for us as we worked through our lives and supported each other during this challenging and often frightening time.

Our experience highlights the importance of storytelling in promoting healing and connection within a community, as well as the value of collaborative approaches to problem-solving and support.

Finding a method of working with narrative empathy and reflexivity in considering others and the cultures present was very important to me. At this point, I also began to work more closely with Ellis's Autoethnography (2004) as outlined below.

Element 2 – Methodology

Autoethnography methodology for me allowed me to focus, using narrative empathy and reflexivity, in considering others and the cultures present in my new world and school. The use of autoethnography allowed me to approach our challenges with a more nuanced and empathetic lens, promoting connection and shared understanding within our learning community.

Journal 11

Immersion:
My journey with Autoethnography began with my need to find a methodology that emphasised narrative empathy and reflexivity. I have always been drawn to the work of Carolyn Ellis, and her autoethnographic approach resonated with me. I found myself immersed in her work, reading about her journey and realising how closely it aligned with my own experiences.

Crystallisation:
Ellis's (2004) book, 'The Ethnographic I,' played a significant role in my journey with autoethnography. Holman Jones's (2015, p.69) referenced that book in her co-authored book on Autoethnography with Ellis, which inspired me to read it. I realised that I had purchased the book a couple of years earlier but I had struggled to get started with it. However, once I began reading, I found myself crystallising my understanding of the method and its potential in my research.

Categorisation:
Autoethnography is a method that emphasises the researcher's personal experiences and reflections to gain insight into larger cultural phenomena. Categorising my experiences and reflections allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges we faced during the pandemic and reflect on my

own role in the school leadership community. I was rigidly dogmatic in focusing on wellbeing for all. I held this very tightly as I was so concerned about the longer term trauma the pandemic could have on individuals and communities. I used the circle of collaboration in figure 4 with my staff. We reminded ourselves of our identity sticks and then the places we were currently operating with our students, families and ourselves at the centre. The model at this point remained focused on ' the self', school, home and community. This was to make sure each of us focused on our own wellbeing in each of these spaces and thought about it for the others connected to us too. It was important we had the capacity to do this, keeping tied to our own identities as we had chosen on our identity sticks. Continually reflecting on the relationships in each of these area and the spaces where things were supposed to make sense for us.

Theorisation:

Autoethnography is a method that has been influenced by researchers who use narrative and storied approaches in their research. Theorising my experiences through this method allowed me to draw on my own learning experiences to extend my understanding of societal issues and the broader cultural phenomena that shaped them during the pandemic. Autoethnography allowed me to illuminate feelings, emotions, experiences, and identities in school leadership that would otherwise have been even more challenging, if not impossible, to capture from a Headteacher's perspective during this difficult time.

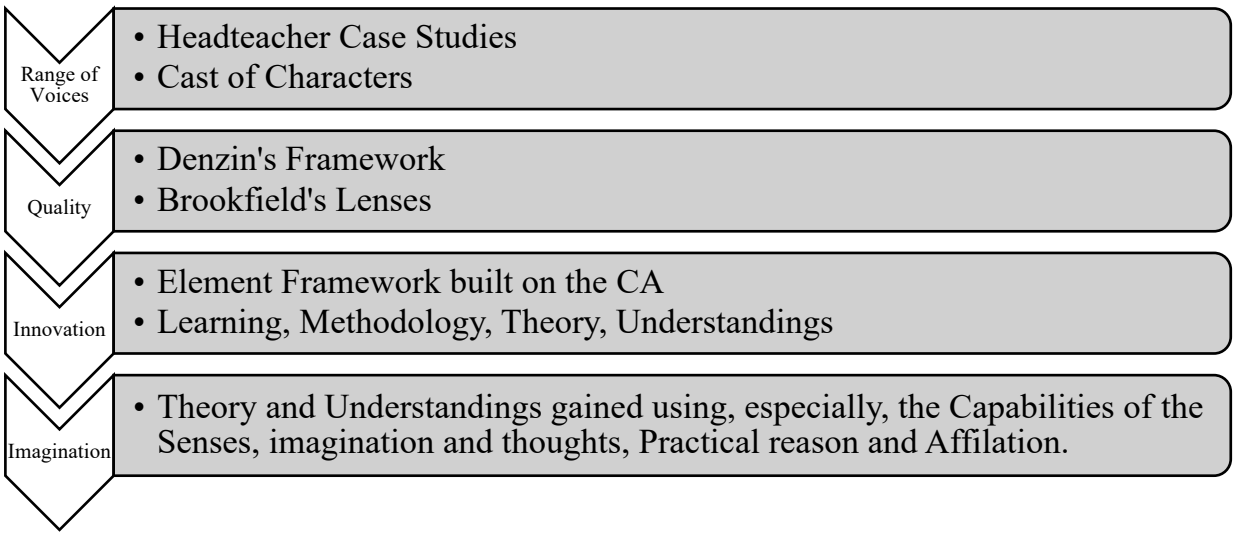
Through this method, I have learned to write by drawing on my own experiences to engage with myself, others, culture, politics, and social research. It has influenced my whole Stage Three Headship and myself evaluation narratives are always collated using a storied and visual approach. Autoethnography has allowed me to think about and learn different ways of knowing and has heightened my concern for research practices, ethics, and the politics of research methods and representation. It is interpretative and constructivist, depending on which methods are being used and for what purpose. Autoethnography has been a challenging but rewarding method for me to use in my research journey.

Writing this Doctorate has been a crucial step in opening up my Capabilities and understanding how I behave and operate in the spaces where I have influence. Through the autoethnographic method, I have been able to consider my practical reasoning and affiliations in a reflexive and transparent way. Martha Nussbaum's CA provided the key framework for my supporting understandings of how individuals can reach their full potential and achieve a life that they value. The combination of Nussbaum's CA and the autoethnographic method has allowed me to expand my understanding of the factors that influence human flourishing and has enabled me to apply these insights to my own life and work. By emphasising the importance of human agency, social context, and cultural values, this approach is helping me to make change even when conditions are difficult and challenging with the potential to plan and implement further real change in support of positive educational outcomes for students.

Element 3 – Theory

The moderate autoethnographic method (Wall, 2016), combined with the CA (Nussbaum, 2011), Brookfield's (2005) lenses, Ellis's (2004) conventions of storytelling, and Denzin's (2006) qualitative framework has enabled me to select the stories from my Headship to be told in each of my Stages as part of the Elemental and iterative growth process for me. I chose stories that I felt other Headteachers beyond my case study peers might recognise in their own Headships; such as being interviewed for posts, dealing with change, managing the Covid-19 Pandemic and relationships.

Figure 2 – Moderate Autoethnography.



As Ellis (2004) describes it, autoethnography is a form of ethnography that intersects art and science: it is part 'auto' self and part 'ethno' culture. But it is also something different from both of them, greater than its parts. Selecting the stories to be told was part of the process for me and I followed conventions in storytelling, such as depicting people as characters, using an epiphany or crisis to provide dramatic tension, a temporal ordering of events, and a point or moral to the story that provides an explanation and gives meaning and value to the crisis. This was relevant to ensuring a range of voices were pinpointed using the Case studies to acknowledge where knowledge is rooted. Therefore, using moderate autoethnographic method has tremendous potential for building sociological knowledge by tapping into unique personal experiences to illuminate those small spaces where understanding has not yet reached (Wall, 2016, p. 7).

The autoethnographic process I underwent used the Element Framework to scaffold the Capabilities and my development of practical reasoning, demonstrating how my agency has developed through my iterative stages of Headteacher maturation. The Element Framework was used to ensure quality and rigour in the autoethnographic process and allow for innovation. In this third stage, decisional capital played an important role as I revisited some former challenges and encountered new ones based on culture, legacy, and others' expectations.

This stage required educational growth to allow my imagination to unpack, reveal and deal with my understandings. I worked towards understanding how to flourish, reflecting on my research question of ‘What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?’, particularly with the help of my Capabilities of ‘senses, imagination, and thought', 'practical reasoning', and 'affiliation'. Using the autoethnographic method, I unpacked these Capabilities to understand where I was in my iterative journey as a Headteacher. I examined my values and lifestyle choices as a Headteacher against Nussbaum's pluralistic ten Central Capabilities. Brookfield's lenses (2005, p. 29) were used to explore agency in each iterative Developmental Headteacher Stage. The four Element stages were used to analyse my fundamental Capabilities and examine how I, as a Headteacher, have had control over my own life and what and how I have chosen to contribute to the community and society through my own narrative reasoning. Decisional Capital played its part in the process of this Chapter. I was aware as a Headteacher that I had educational growth to make. I needed to understand how to flourish with my 'senses, imagination, and thought', 'practical reasoning', and 'affiliation'

while having dignity and feeling ethically just. Autoethnography was the missing link in unpacking these Capabilities and using practical reasoning to be culturally affiliated.

At first, I used the framework designed by Jayne Pitard (2017) in 'A Journey to the Centre of Self: Positioning the Researcher in Autoethnography' to address my Capabilities and develop strategies to understand myself as an autoethnographic Headteacher. While this framework proved to be usefully anecdotal, combining it with the conventions of storytelling offered by Ellis (2004, p. 32) allowed me to begin to understand how an individual member of a community can be culturally aware beyond themselves. Later, I utilised the Denzin's influenced framework of immersion, crystallisation, categorisation, and theorisation to overlay and scaffold my original narratives (Appendix 5) and guide my autoethnographic research journey. This qualitative framework allowed me to engage in a more comprehensive and nuanced analysis of my experiences and develop a deeper understanding of my Capabilities as a Headteacher. Morrow's (2005) strategies for sorting my data sources of journals and sticky notes were crucial in organising my understandings and challenges for me as a learner in my iterative stages using the Element Framework as influenced by Wall's (2016) moderate autoethnography.

I remain aware that sharing this iterative narrative of Headship opens me up to criticism about my stories and how I have lived and managed my schools. However, I am thankful for my lived experiences, as they have shaped me into who I am today as a Headteacher and a person. Through this moderate autoethnographic process influenced by Wall (2016), I have gained a deeper understanding of my Capabilities and how they are influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which I operate. I understand better who I am, what my vulnerabilities are and why I have them. I still have bias to unpack which I am not adequately yet aware of, but using the Element Framework and Nussbaum's CA will continue to support me to be critical, reflexive and tap into the unique value of my personal experience, while maintaining the scholarly potential of autoethnography.

Element 4 – Understandings

Through the use of the moderate autoethnographic method (Wall, 2016), I have felt strengthened and empowered in acknowledging my educational growth needs regarding my

Headteacher's identity and owning my professional capital. By positioning myself as the researcher in my own story, I have been both positively and critically affected by my own work. This has allowed me to gain educational growth and develop greater reasoning skills and practices in the work I do in schools. A crucial part of this process has been finding affiliation through the case study Headteachers' stories and experiencing narrative empathy. Covid-19 has been the key focus of my Stage Three of Headship, and I focused on what I believed was important, which was wellbeing and the spaces we shared as a community. Given that students were in and out of school for three years solid, tracking and personalising their learning was crucial, and I have learned many transferable skills on how to raise attainment, motivation, and ambition in learners.

Having a singular question for myself and my students, 'What can I do and be?' (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18), and explicitly addressing my research question, 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?' has been crucial. Having a CA focus drive in each stage of my Headship motivated me as a Headteacher and has helped me address my vulnerabilities. I believe that education is core to creating a better world for everyone, which is why I am still in the job. For the same reason many Headteachers became teachers - to make a difference to children, have influence, and implement their own vision (Earley, 2006, p. 16).

I have not been able to use additional case studies of primary Heads in second Headships as I suspect they are on the shelves of university libraries and, as Tomlinson et al. (2003, p. xxvi) suggest, much of this work remains invisible. However, I did find Fidler et al.'s (2009) 'Extending the Career of the English Primary School Headteacher: A second Headship'. Which I now use to compare with my experiences shared earlier in this stage. Fidler et al. (2009) note the following.

> Little is known about those who leave their first Headship and obtain a Headship in a second school. Indeed, until recently there was no information about how many Heads might move on. (Fidler et al., 2009, p. 435)

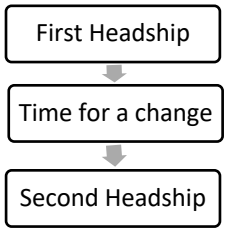
Their study, as noted previously investigated the reasons for moving schools, their choices of second school and a comparison of their experiences as Headteachers of the two schools. Taking the three investigated points from Fidler et al., in turn I now consider their findings against what I have shared around my own reasons for my second Headship provided at the start of this Stage.

Fidler at al's (2009) findings:

> The reasons that Heads gave for taking a second Headship fell into three groups personal, school and external. The over-riding reasons were to provide a fresh challenge and prevent feelings of stagnation. Movement between schools was complex and the clearest overall trend was a move to larger schools. Heads generally considered themselves more effective in their second school than their first and there were many accounts of the re-energising effect of taking on a new post. (Fidler et al, 2009, p. 435)

None of these findings are alien to my own wish to for a Second Headship and Fidler et al. (2009, p. 437) provide a representation of the Career Stages of Headship which I have adapted and simplified in figure 6 below.

Figure 6



Their major career stages of Headteachers are almost identical to mine. I had my first Headship and then decided it was a time for change and I have come to realise there is far more commonality across Headships than I had previously realised.

Fidler et al, (2009, p. 442) made a small number of telephone calls to Headteachers who had moved to their second Headship and asked for more detail with examples of responses below.

> I wasn't excited and the new school has made me feel excited again (F124).
>
> **I was really looking forward to taking on a challenge such as the school I took on. I wanted that in the second Headship (M122).**
>
> Having spent six-and-a-half years in a small village primary school, I was really getting to the point where my vision for that school was getting somewhat blurred if you like, I couldn't see clearly where I could take that particular school any further (M066).
>
> I just felt as that I'd had two OfSTEDs [inspections] there [first school] and I'd done as much as I could really (F067).

I think partly one gets to the point when one feels you're either going to stay in the same job pretty much for the rest of your career or if you're going to move perhaps you ought to think about moving soon (M018).

I had reached the stage where if I'd stayed at my last school I could have cruised quite easily. And I thought go to another school and start a new challenge and it will revitalise me as well as the school hopefully (F067).

I wouldn't have gone for a second Headship that was as challenging as my first one because I didn't want to meet the same issues again and I used to work over 90 hours a week, seven days a week for about three years. I couldn't do that again (F016).

When you're a teaching Head you're flying by the seat of your pants so to speak and trying to teach and deliver as well as managing all the other things that come through your desk. Quite often the same amount of paperwork as you do get in a bigger school (F052).

I recognise each of these narratives shared although those highlighted in bold correspond most closely to my own motivations for this Stage Three. What is interesting is only two are similar to me in wanting a new school because of for their desire to make change and embrace the challenge of leading change. None of them mention their desire to move theory into practice, for me, was a major motivating factor.

I turn now to the final Chapter and consider where the journey might go next while synthesising key points, including limitations, from the Dissertation.

Chapter 6 Where Might the Story Go Next?

Introduction

In this Chapter, after a summary concluding reflection, I outline and answer the research question ‘What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?’. Within this question, I address Southworth's (1995, p. 219) observation of Headteacher maturation and Brighthouse and Woods' (1999) three phases of Headship Development. I then examine the notion of ‘Ring True’ narratives, comparing them to the realities of being an insider researcher and the insights I have gained about my own way of being and knowing following Thomson (2009). According to Thomson (2009, p.1), the Headteacher's leadership and management encompasses more than just a set of actions or methods. It extends to become a way of existing in and comprehending the world. The Headteacher's role involves not only performing tasks but also shaping their identity and understanding through their leadership and management practices. In this sense, being a Headteacher is not solely about carrying out specific actions but involves a broader perspective that influences their relationship with the world around them. Transitioning from this, I acknowledge the summary of findings derived from my understandings gained in Element 4 of Chapters Two to Five, reflecting on my personal growth as Headteacher striving to serve and think freely, using critical reflection and theory to help me to make informed decisions. Next, I consider the issues that have arisen from the study, followed by an exploration of its limitations. Finally, I discuss the implications of the study and conclude the Dissertation by answering the research question, ‘What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?’.

This Dissertation has focused on my Headteacher development through three iterative stages over ten years and two Headships. I conclude that working with theory and practice had a significant impact on my Headteacher identity and behaviours, allowing me to develop a better understanding of my values, aspirations and approach to school leadership. Specifically, the Capabilities Approach, when used in conjunction with critical reflection, had a positive effect on my growth and maturation. I suggest that critically reflexive processing of this nature is essential to Headteacher maturation, as it is central to growth and the readiness to lead. The consistent implementation of the Element Framework in each of the data chapters suggests that such an approach could be effective in school settings to support

Headteachers, especially those who feel isolated or vulnerable, as well as those who feel that their voice and values are compromised by the system in which they work.

Research Question and Aims

This research sought to investigate 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?'. As stated in Chapter One, I chose the subject area as I am practising Headteacher who often felt vulnerable, isolated or unsure in my role. To answer this question, this autoethnographic study provided the opportunity to investigate in detail my experiences in relation to my development of understandings as a Headteacher. Gaining some understandings in answering this question was intended to allow me to be a more effective Headteacher.

Within this research question I aimed to provide a comprehensive theoretical and lived response to the Headteacher maturation observation set out by Southworth (1995, p. 219) and Brighthouse and Woods' (1999) in their three phases of Headship development. I grounded my study in the importance of context, agency and process, my Capabilities journey, and the critical influence of the EdD as a professional learning opportunity for Headteacher educational growth. Southworth's (1995, p. 219) observation provided a rationale for this work.

> The idea of Headteacher maturation warrants close examination. At present the idea of phases in Headship is notional. It is unclear whether a Headteacher development occurs as a result of time in post, experience of different schools and /or life circumstances. Nor is it known how professional development opportunities influence Headteacher development. There is much to investigate here.

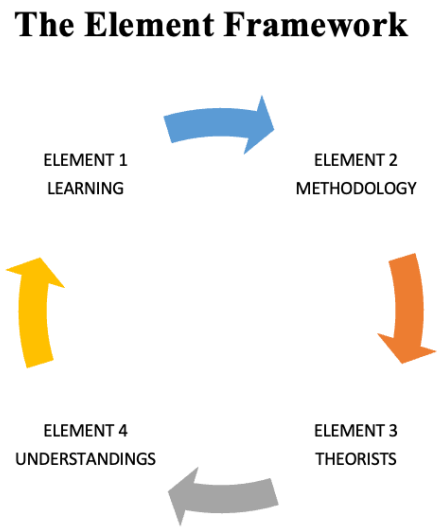
I was particularly interested in Southworth's (1995) idea of Headteacher maturation and his question 'How does Headteacher's maturation occur? (p. 219) and I outline my own response below. I do not suggest this applies to any and all Headteachers but it may well apply, in part, to others. Below I explicitly address some of the additional questions that arise during my Headship journey and which relate to my broader research question: 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?'

1. What does it mean to be a mature Headteacher?

Through this Dissertation, I have outlined my Three Stages of Headteacher Development and the educational growth I have experienced over the last ten years. I acknowledge that the critical influence of the EdD as a professional learning opportunity has been significant in my own educational growth, that my Three Stages have been iterative, and that I have worked to develop my Capabilities and those of others through each stage. I have had to understand the practices I was engaged in and the practices and policies I was immersed in for each of my iterative stages in order to transition and transform to my next stage by learning. My practice as an individual and my behaviour in the systems in which I worked were essential in my growth and shaped my theoretical discourses, my attitudes and behaviours as a Headteacher and, ultimately school structures and practices. In each iterative stage, I used the concepts of the Capabilities Approach and worked through my Element Framework. My understanding of the Capabilities has developed and allowed me to both enact and better understand my human agency and social action. I have gained critical understandings of the combinations of theory and method required for me in practice to understand the social political arrangements of schools and address the dominant neoliberalism in education with my own interpretative narrative to give voice to my values. At the end of this Dissertation my contention is that continual reflexivity and learning are vital characteristics of a mature Headteacher.

2. How can Headteachers develop their maturity?

The Element Framework has been a fundamental tool throughout my developmental journey. This framework has helped me to critically analyse my experiences and perspectives as a Headteacher and to identify areas for growth and development. By breaking down my experiences into elements, I have been able to gain a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics and relationships that exist within a school community. Using this framework, reproduced again below, has also enabled me to reflect on my experiences and understand the connections between theory and practice, which was necessary in helping me to answer the research question. I am not suggesting this framework is universally useful for any Headteacher but it may provide a useful starting point for the journey to maturation.



3. What are the risks and benefits of Headteachers engaging in critical self-reflection?

In voicing my values I had to be critically aware and address my Capabilities and vulnerabilities, which were sometimes overflowing, and to process these through my Elemental cycle to become a self-examining mature Headteacher.

Figure 7

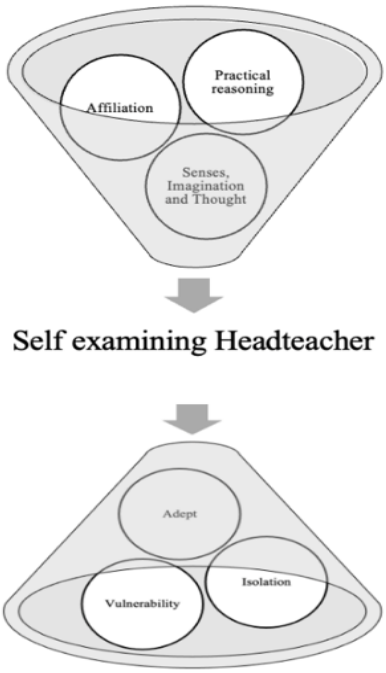


Figure 7 depicts the risks and benefits associated with Headteachers engaging in critical self-reflection. The risks involved include the discomfort and unease that arise from challenging established beliefs. In my First Stage, in Chapter 3, I firmly believed I was isolated, which required me to question my long-held assumptions and biases. This process can lead to difficult changes in my practices or the acceptance that my own vulnerability contributed to the isolation. Engaging in self-reflection can evoke strong emotions not only within myself but also in others. Feelings of self-doubt, vulnerability, and guilt may surface as we examine our strengths and weaknesses. Managing these emotions and maintaining our well-being and confidence becomes a risk if we lack the necessary Capabilities, theory, and method to scaffold our criticality.

Resistance from staff, colleagues, or stakeholders presents another risk when implementing changes based on self-reflection. Challenging established routines and practices can be met with opposition, as illustrated in Chapter 4 by the case study of Headteacher Ben. Time and energy demands are significant considerations as well. As Headteachers, our roles are already demanding, making it challenging to allocate sufficient time for deep reflection amidst our other responsibilities. Engaging in critical self-reflection may also impact our professional reputations. Publicly acknowledging areas for improvement or mistakes can be perceived as a sign of weakness by some, potentially affecting our standing among peers, staff, or the school community. Furthermore, implementing the necessary changes identified through self-reflection presents practical challenges such as resource allocation, support, and collaboration from various stakeholders. By acknowledging and addressing these risks through self-examination and utilising Capabilities, we can begin to recognise the harmonious balance between theory and practice, as discussed further in Figure 8 below.

The benefits of critical self-evaluation for me by far outweigh the risks shared above. Without it I would not have been able to voice my values and become a self-examining Headteacher. The concept of iterative Headteacher Development has grown in meaning for me as I continue to gain a fundamental understanding of who I am and to reflect and work on my own educational growth process. Learning can always be built upon and, in turn, so can my capacity to be a better Headteacher.

Decisional access to the 'Loop', which I used with reference to Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) idea of professional capital, has evolved into a more malleable, dialectically adapting,

and evolving space. From Kemmis' (2023) model for practice and practice architectures in 'Education for Living Well in a World Worth Living,' I have learned that this model, like my decisional loop, is not rigidly fixed and final but needs adaptation as conditions change. From Kemmis' model I was able to gain critical understandings of the combinations of theory and method required for me to understand the social political arrangements of schools and to address neoliberal approaches and policies with my own interpretative narrative in my own school context. This, of course, makes it necessary to understand the location of oneself within the context and the research. The diagram in figure 8 which follows locates me within the research using the representation of me as the black dot. It allows me to represent what has happened during my iterative stages of leadership development and it tries to denote how important it was to contextualise the spaces where everything came together or, at least, required consideration.

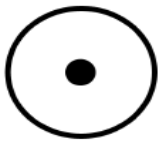
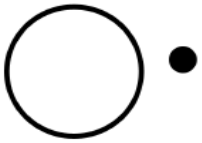
1. The black dot, which represents the self, is where my identity is formed in all the spaces that are important to me and where I make meaning for myself. I often find myself spending time in each space, thinking about the other spaces and other people, especially during transitions or quiet moments. I use this model to think of my third space, where everything comes together, and I make sense of things. The EdD programme has been my third space, where I have been able to integrate my experiences and knowledge from different spaces to develop a deeper understanding of my role as a Headteacher.
2. The maturation stages of Headteacher development and the location of the self are the core elements of my iterative development and the focus of Stages One, Two, and Three. I drew these models to clarify my senses, imagination, and thoughts in each stage, as well as my practical reasoning regarding my affiliation, isolation and vulnerability.
3. The affiliation of the CA, the self and others is the result of the power of theory meeting practice and my process of becoming critically aware. Through this process, I have had the opportunity to realise that I am part of a group, and while I have differences from others, I also have similarities that intersect. I came to this realisation by using my method and the Element Framework, which allowed me to critically analyse my experiences and perspectives as a Headteacher with those of others (the Cast of Characters).

Figure 8

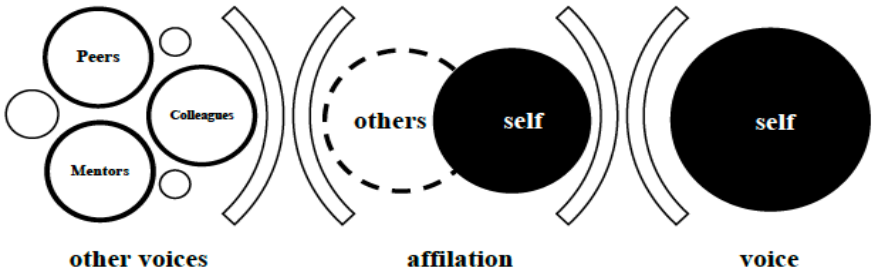
Locating myself within the research question of, 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?'

1. The black dot = the self

2. The maturation stages of Headteacher development and the location of the self

Stage One New Headteacher 2013	Stage Two Evolving Headteacher 2016	Stage Three Experienced Headteacher 2019
		
Inside the closed loop	Outside the closed loop	Decisional access to the loop

3. The affiliation of the CA self and others.



The key risk as a Headteacher engaging in critical self-reflection, is the isolation it can cause and the effort it takes to continue through the process. You can get lost, disaffected and unable to put the time into working through the full cycle it requires to reach a balance for yourself and your school. I know that my own life would have been far simpler if I had not been critical and those around me perhaps would also have been happier. However, I would not have made it as effectively through my iterative Stages if I had not have undertaken critical self-reflection and this would have had an impact on my school, especially perhaps in Stage Three when managing the Covid-19 pandemic as I would not have had the voice and values to say – 'No, wellbeing first'.

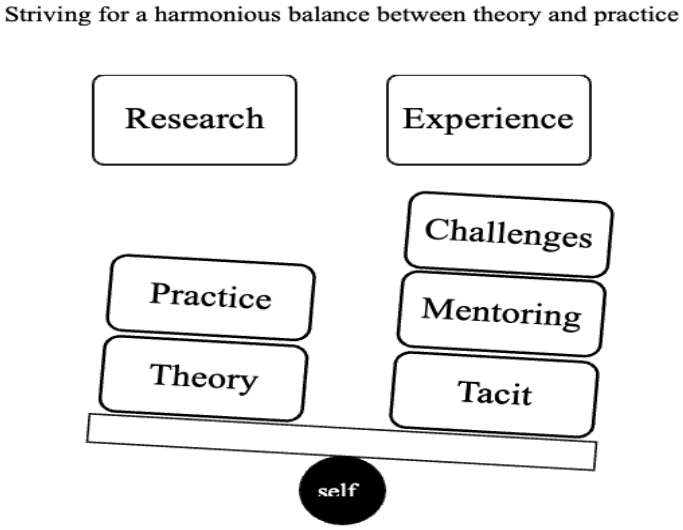
In relation to the risks as a Headteacher being critical, finding other studies of similar longitude has been challenging, particularly as my voice is that of a female Primary Headteacher using an autoethnographic method. I suspect the two things are related, explicitly with respect to the time and impact on the others in your life if you are a Headteacher, a woman and a mother. Southwood (1995) suggest that the research base for understanding Primary Headship is neither abundant nor adequate.

> Qualitatively and quantitatively, the research-base for understanding Primary Headship is neither abundant nor ample. In particular, the empirical foundations of our knowledge of Headship are incomplete. Until the generalised picture of Headship is tested by greater knowledge of more Heads and/or fuller descriptions of Heads' work, developed over long periods of observation, then our conception of Headship must be regarded, at best, as partial. (Southwood, 1995, p. 25)

The use of language for time / duration and consideration of time also impacts the context of leadership for Brighthouse and Woods (1999, p. 67). Whilst they do not name an explicit focus, such as maturation of the Heads by Southwood (1995), they do name specific phases of development which take time and which Headteachers transcend at differing rates. Brighthouse and Woods (1999) state that the developmental phase, their second phase, tends to be at a five years and can be renewed, but this can also be adversely affected by government and environmental factors (Brighthouse and Woods, 1999, p. 73) and this view is reinforced by Earley (2006, p. 6). Comparing their three phases of development, shared in

appendix 7 with my own Three Stages of Headteacher Development, I can see similarities and differences.

Figure 9



The diagram above (Figure 9) illustrates my attempt to work in a research-informed manner in my school while acknowledging the necessity of tacit experience, mentoring, and addressing day-to-day challenges. I strive to strike a harmonious balance between theory and practice, ensuring that I remain accountable and grounded. This accountability aligns with my Stage Two self in Chapter 4, where I recognise the need for my role as a Headteacher to be more accommodating of practical, hands-on improvement strategies in order to foster inclusivity based on individual beliefs and needs. My stages of growth were not fixed intervals but rather dependent on my iterative learning and personal development. As depicted in the diagram, this necessitated a careful balancing act between my responsibilities as a Headteacher and my role as an EdD student.

The diagram also references my accountabilities to both my paid practice as a Headteacher and my theoretical practice, which supports constructive changes in school improvements. This took time and a commitment to processing both theory and practice. It could not be rushed and, when it was, it then needed to be processed repeatedly for new adequately deep understandings. I learned this in this process of EdD writing. Repetition was needed to reveal my understandings gained from my blind spots and also for reading, researching, applying and reapplying in context. Sorting and recognising emerging themes was also an important process. I had categorised experiences inadequately due to blind spots and it was through

others' stories in my Cast of Characters that I started to recognise similar experiences and was able to gain understandings of when my own vulnerability or bias was overtaking the realities that exist for me but also perhaps for Headteachers in general. Learning from others that my experiences and reactions to them were not unique to me was profoundly useful.

4. **How can Headteachers negotiate the tensions between their own values and the expectations of others?**

The EdD programme has played a significant role in supporting my growth and development as a Headteacher, and I have been able to use the CA to frame my analysis and focus on the Capabilities I have sought to develop to help me realise my values and become a self-examining Headteacher. The representation of figure 7, above, of the self-examining Headteacher shows the funnel of the process. The vulnerabilities weighed heavily on me but were then processed through the funnel to emerge eventually as understandings gained. Of course they did not just fall out the funnel and appear magically at the other end as understandings. Rather, they had to be worked through the Element Framework by collecting understandings all along the iterative journey.

This is a key difference between my work here and the case studies. I have worked through some of my challenges with the use of theory to generate my own understandings and including a consideration of how my own values have developed. This has supported me to address the needs and expectations of others in school while still holding onto my own voice. While the Headteachers have voices, values and vision in the case studies I drew on here, these emerge in response to the researchers' observations and questions: the researcher is uncovering these alongside the Headteacher. The challenge for me was to negotiate for myself as the insider in the narrative, selecting my own examples and theories using the autoethnographic method to unpack my learning around the specifics of Headteacher maturation and voice, values and vision.

In the case studies cited, it was the researchers in the funnel, processing what it is the Headteachers are experiencing and doing in their practice and then negotiating what their values and vision are. Conceivably, the outcomes of this process might never be owned by the case study participants and might not help them to move forward in their own Headships. These studies resemble a snap shot in time taken by another, rather than the whole picture

album displaying the Headteacher journey selected, laid out and scrapbooked by the Headteachers themselves. The pieces before and after the snapshot are unknown and rarely followed up, except by Wolcott (2003) thirty years after the research and, even then, that was a brief reflection rather than a detailed account of what happened next.

Woods (2002) in 'Enchanted Headteachers : Sustainability in Primary School Headship' responds to Brighthouse and Woods' (1999) work in regard to their three stages of Headship suggesting these are assertions that may 'ring true' (Woods, 2002, p. 3) but are not based on any adequate research findings. While I agree with Woods that their interpretations are subjective, I have found it useful to consider the elements of their work that do 'ring true' in order to reflect on my own study of Headship. I found there are three similar 'ring true' alignments with my stages, as follows.

1. That their Headship phases are built upon each other and are chronological.
2. They suggest that there are Three Developmental Phases in Headship.
3. Headteachers transition stages at differing rates.

Whilst we both offer three developmental phases, I also suggest there is a lack of unpacking of the Capabilities of those Brighthouse and Woods' (1999, p. 75) describe as ineffectual Headteachers in their research. They suggest there is a group of Heads who never make it beyond the first stage and into any meaningful stage. I suggest this could relate to Headteachers' capacity to negotiate the tensions of the role and subsequently be a wellbeing issue for both the ineffectual Heads and the communities they serve. If this is the case there should surely have been systems in place to support and address these Head's needs, including a robust performance review process and supported learning opportunities. I agree with Woods (2002) that some of Brighthouse and Woods' (1999) work is assertion, particularly in Stage Three where they suggest that Headteachers cease to care. This is not something I support or have witnessed. I do not know any Headteacher who does not care. Drawing on my experience of over twenty years in Senior Leadership, the Third Stage may be more about the Headteacher reaching a level of professional maturity and confidence, where they can delegate tasks and responsibilities to their team members, enabling them to grow into leadership roles themselves. Inevitably perhaps, I have witnessed more collaborative and empowering leadership style from experienced Headteachers, in which the Headteacher plays a supportive role in the school's development. I do note that Fidler et al. (2009, p. 437) in their stages of Career Stage of Headship suggest these stages can go one of three ways after a first

Headship: enhanced, not enchanted, or a change of job. What they do not discuss is the career Stages as broken down passages or iterative development and they imply these stages follow a neat linear pathway.

Another challenge I now offer to Brighthouse and Woods (1999) is their claim that there are three stages to a single Headship. As I reflect on my own Headship journey, I suggest that you move through stages of readiness regardless of how many Headships you have if you are constantly learning and as you build on that learning. I would now argue that how these stages are defined is essentially for the Headteacher to decide because it is their journey, their development and their context which matter. Brighthouse and Woods (1999) do acknowledge this by suggesting that Headteachers transition at different rates but there is no robust explanation about how this happens other than Headteachers know when they have transitioned to a new phase, reinforcing Woods (2002) point around assertions. I would also add that knowing a transition has occurred will be dependent on a high degree of self-awareness and reflexivity. It is true I was aware that I was unsettled or had outgrown my Headship but I was not aware of such transitioning until I reflected explicitly on my Stages of Headship in this autoethnography.

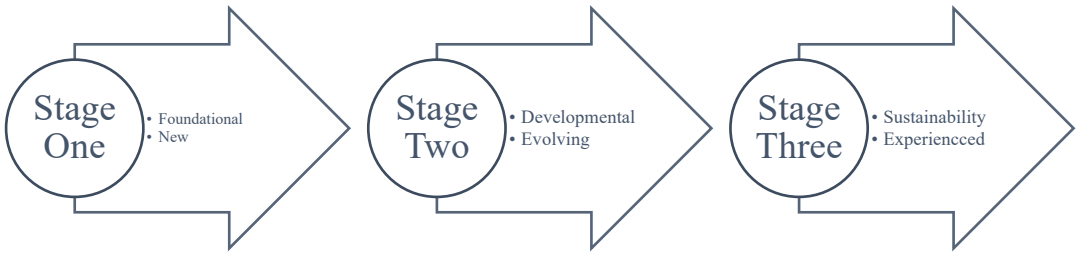
5. **How can Headteachers balance the need for autonomy with the need for collaboration and accountability**?

This was a key challenge for me. In figures 6 through to 8 in this Chapter I am trying to process and balance my need for autonomy with my need for collaboration and accountability. Again this was an iterative process. In Stage One I thought I was autonomous, collaborative and accountable. I realised I was neoliberal and accountable to benchmarks and serving my community rather than collaborating with them. In Stage Two I recognise my need for autonomy, whilst still being accountable, my collaborations become much more balanced and robust. In Stage Three, I used my autonomy to support my collaborations and accountabilities in dealing with Covid-19 and social unrest. The balance was arrived at through transitioning my own three stages of Headship using theory and practice to develop my understanding of my need for autonomy, collaboration and accountability and build my Capabilities through agency and process in my role as Headteacher supported by my EdD learning.

In my own three stages of Headship, I see the first stage as the 'Foundational Stage'. This is where the new Headteacher establishes a clear vision and mission for the school, builds a positive school culture, and establishes effective systems and processes. The second stage is the 'Developmental Stage,' where the evolving Headteacher focuses on developing the school's capacity to achieve its vision and mission. This includes developing and empowering the leadership team, building staff capacity, and ensuring that the school's systems and processes are continually improving. The third stage is the 'Sustainability Stage' where the Experienced Headteacher ensures that the school's vision and mission are sustained and continually evolving. This involves building a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, developing partnerships with the wider community, and ensuring that the school remains relevant and responsive to the changing needs of its stakeholders. This is very similar to Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012, p. 2) description of Professional Capital as shared in Chapter 5.

It is fair that Brighthouse and Woods' (1999) Phases of Headship does have some elements that 'ring true,' in regard to my own stages but I believe that Headship is a complex and dynamic role that requires a more nuanced and contextualised understanding. As a Headteacher, I have found that my own three stages of Foundational (New), Developmental (Evolving), and Sustainability (Experienced) have provided a more useful framework for understanding my own development as a leader and the needs of my school community because I was able to personalise it to my own experiences, learning and context and so allowing for autonomy for me and collaboration and accountability with others.

Figure 10 Stages of Headteacher Development



It is essential to recognise that each Headteacher's journey is unique, and different schools and communities require different approaches to leadership. Ultimately, I believe the most effective Headteachers are those who are adaptable, reflective, and committed to ongoing learning and development. I recognise both Fidler et al's (2009, p. 437) and Earley's (2006,

p. 5) Career Stages of Headship to be more accurate and comparable to my own stages than the work of Brighthouse and Woods (1999). However I do not think a timeframe can be placed on becoming critical. This is something which has to be grown and nurtured and does not just happen. It is also important for the necessary freedoms for a Headteacher to be in place, or for the Headteacher, through their own reflexivity, to be able to locate themselves as 'the black dot' within the freedoms which I proposed might include the following.

1. Freedom to express oneself: School leaders should be able to express their thoughts, opinions, and ideas without fear of reprisal or retaliation provided these align with Nussbaum's CA in which all are entitled to respect and a life of dignity.
2. Freedom to learn and grow: School leaders should have access to professional development opportunities that enable them to develop their knowledge, skills, competencies, and Capabilities.
3. Freedom to form meaningful relationships: School leaders should be able to form supportive and collaborative relationships with teachers, staff, students, and parents in accord with Nussbaum's Capability of affiliation.
4. Freedom to participate in decision-making processes: School leaders should be able to participate in decision-making processes that affect their work and the school community in accord with Nussbaum's Capability of control over one's environment.
5. Freedom to access resources: School leaders should have access to the resources and support they need to effectively carry out their responsibilities, such as budgetary resources, administrative support, and technological resources.

'Ring True' Narratives

Thomson (2009) explores the concept of 'ring true' ideas in 'School Leadership: Heads on the Block?', both as a way of doing things and as a way of being in the world. Drawing on her own experience as a Headteacher and researcher, Thomson uses embedded stories to produce voiced narratives that aim to resonate with serving Headteachers. She also links to psychologist Howard Gardner's (1993) view that leadership is a process of telling stories that influences others through their ideas. While Gardner's idea of using internal narrative capacities and external cultural opportunities for storytelling could sit with the idea of Combined Capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011), Thomson's approach is different. She chooses to

tell her story to consider, in my view, Headship characteristics rather than for personal persuasive reasons as advocated by Gardner.

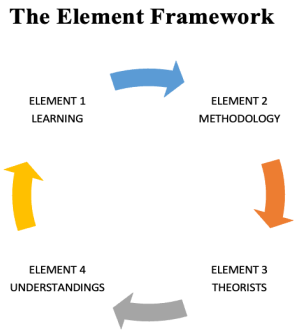
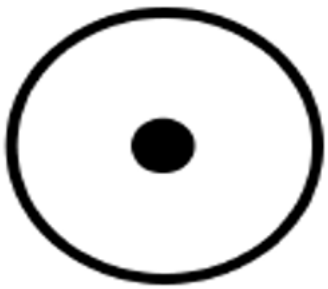
Thomson's study of Headship is autobiographical in some senses, seeking to bring to the fore aspects of Headship that she knows to be important. However, her focus moves beyond her own experiences as a former Head and she considers research into the work of Headteachers in England and Australia. She draws on a corpus of interview data and text analysis accumulated over a decade to make the 'things she knows' robust by using the narratives of others. While there are many 'ring true' alignments to be made (Appendix 8), the core was too individualistic and not focused on each Headteacher as an end who deserves to flourish for me to use it extensively here. While Thomson aims to report on the day-to-day life of a school leader, the joy of the job is not shared, nor is the affiliation and criticality of any of the Heads. The issues raised in the embedded narratives give insight into the types of 'ring true' stories one can expect to hear in Headship, but much needs to be added to the realities of being an insider. This includes learning to deal with everyday matters with decisional capital and through the CA rather than just relying on characteristics we hold as serving Headteachers. Thomson's focus is on the challenges of Headship's problems and not on the educational growth of school leaders and there is no focus on each Headteacher as an end who deserves to flourish. As a Headteacher I enjoyed reading the stories but did not gain new insight into my role or how to improve myself. I would, however, add this text to a useful reading list for new and developing Headteachers.

Summary of Findings from the Study

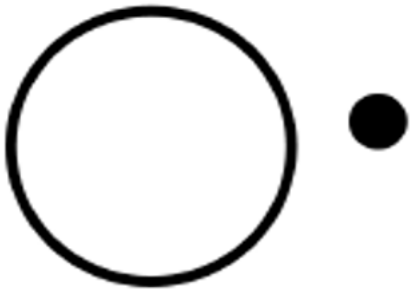
The over-arching purpose of this study was to investigate 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?'. The primary aim of the ethnographic method used research was to tell a story scaffolded to share 'my way of being and knowing about the world' (Thomson, 2009, p. 1) in two Headships spanning a decade in Scotland and Hong Kong. The study aimed to reflect the process of taking the time to understand myself as an individual keen to serve and to think freely and in a theory and practice informed way. It also aimed to explore feeling vulnerable, with a particular understanding of vulnerability following Nusbaum (2004) in all areas of my life, but mainly in the context of collaboration with other leaders. The study illustrated my iterative stages of Development using my Element Framework to support the reflexive process.

A number of emerging themes were presented at the end of Chapters 2 to 5, other than the first and this final Chapter. The following diagram (figure 11) shares my understandings gained in my Headship journey using the Element Framework. These understandings are presented below to highlight the key understandings gained as Headteacher during this Dissertation.

Figure 11

Stage	Element 4 - Understandings
Methodology 	- bias as the researcher - my reflexivity is ethically and theoretically informed. - autoethnographic study and not just a story of my Headship - Use the Element Framework to support trustworthiness
One 	- much of what I thought was unique to me as a new Headteacher was far more widespread - experiencing challenges and starting to question expected positions - difficulty with my own values, alignments and vulnerability - values are complex - affiliations can be problematic - some vulnerabilities remain.

Two



- the emotional dimension of Headship.
- feelings and emotions are on par with other Headteachers
- same fears and anxieties, reflecting on their own confidence and awareness, as well as their personal identities
- establish an ‘open culture’ and engage staff more extensively in a variety of whole-school strategic issues and decision-making
- Refinement
- I am advocating for Critical Reflection and the use of CA
- none of the case study Heads see value in theory into practice
- all see the importance of mentoring, support and coaching from more experienced colleagues
- plethora of legislative and external changes and the impact
- Scottish education system becomes vulnerable
- fit in the educational context and shelf life
- curriculum changes
- another system
- value and values holding tight to CA approaches
- not all vulnerabilities that I feel are my own, but sometimes they are others' vulnerabilities that they impose on me

Three

- Through the use of autoethnographic method, I have felt strengthened and empowered in acknowledging my educational growth needs regarding my Headteacher's identity and owning my professional capital
- Finding affiliation through the case study Headteachers' stories and experiencing narrative empathy
- Conventions of storytelling have enabled me to strengthen my connection to my own experiences by using first-person narration
- Through this process, I have gained a deeper understanding of myself, my Capabilities, and my development needs, which has allowed me to feel more confident in my decisional capital
- Having a singular question for myself and my students, ‘What can I do and be?’ (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18), and explicitly addressing my research question, ‘What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?’ has been crucial
- Having a CA focus drive in each stage of my Headship is my motivation as a Headteacher and helps me address my vulnerabilities
- The major career stages of Headteachers are almost identical to mine
- None of them mention their desire to move theory into practice

The study aimed to reflect the process of taking the time to understand myself as an individual keen to serve and to think freely. Using the Element Framework and working through the three iterative stages of Headship did enable me to think freely. I note that in the findings of Stage Three I am aligned to my Headteacher colleagues as our 'career stages' are almost identical but what is becoming increasingly different is my alignment to theory and CA approaches. I also note in Stage Three I explicitly feel that having one central driving question for my practice has been transformative for me in keeping my value and my values. Equally in Stage Two, I start to realise that some of my vulnerabilities in all my stages of development were not necessarily my vulnerabilities but the biases held by others relating to theory and practice or to me.

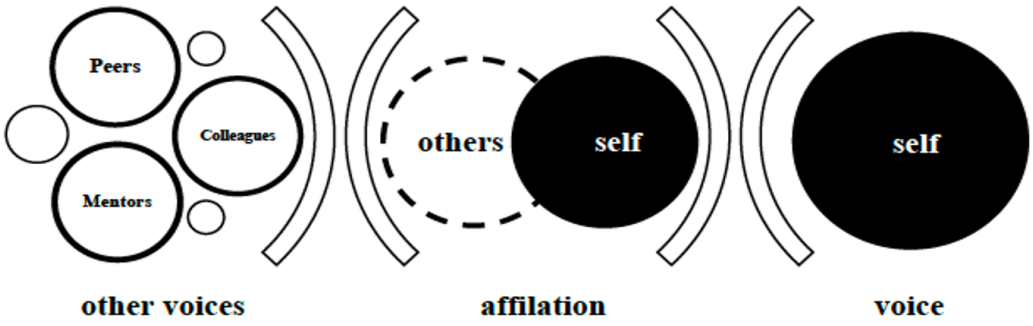
The most important finding from this study was I found myself. In trying to answer the question of 'What am I able to do be in Headship?', I discovered a person trying to make sense of the world using CA theory and trying do a good job as a Headteacher with dignity and respect for herself and others. I started to feel less vulnerable about who I am and recognise that through critical examination and using the conventions of storytelling I could make sense of myself and feel strength in owning my professional capital.

The Study aimed to explore me feeling vulnerable, with a particular understanding of vulnerability following Nusbaum (2004) in all areas of my life, but mainly in the context of collaboration with other leaders. My understandings presented in each Element 4 is the area where I have been most surprised by the findings. Using the Element Framework along with the autoethnographic extracts in sticky notes and journals, I discovered I did have affiliation to a broader Headteacher group through the case studies and the Japan study tour. I was not alone in my vulnerabilities. All of us had felt challenged in Stage One when we took up our new roles. What surprised me more was that it was the Second Stage of our Headships where we all felt most vulnerable and not, as Earley (2006, p. 5) put it, 'hitting our stride'. This may be the most challenging emotional period of Headship. Fears and anxieties and reflecting on my own levels of confidence and awareness set in during the Second Stage. Perhaps this was because the settling period of the First Stage was over and it is in the Second Stage when we start to take more control and move forward our schools.

I discovered that my some feelings of vulnerability were occasioned by others in my First and Second Stages from colleagues under the guise of professionalism. I felt vulnerable because of issues around perceptions of professional appearance and expectations that I should

conform to a specific position and, as Earley (2006, p. 5) states, because of the plethora of externally imposed policy changes. Additionally, I realise now that I felt vulnerable because I was seen as 'different' because I am mixed-race, because I advocate for the use of theory to inform practice and because I talk open and explicitly about values and the CA. The CA approach helped me to recognise my vulnerabilities were actually awareness gained through theory and practice.

The study aimed to reflect on my iterative stages of Development supporting me to reflect on CA and my affiliation, practical reason and sense imagination and thoughts using my Element Framework to support the reflexive process. There is no doubt in my mind that the Element Framework, along with the key theorist in each Stage, enabled me to claim my affiliations, bring practical reason to my experiences and have a better understanding of my senses, imaginations and thoughts. This ultimately lead to my creation of the 'CA self and affiliation with others', figure shared again below.



Using Denzin's (2006) qualitative framework, coupled with Ellis's (2004) guidance for autoethnography, combined with the Element Framework designed to make me consider my Capabilities in each stage provided a structured way for me to be reflexive.

Issues arising from the Study

There are a number of other understandings gained from this study which I was not expecting. I was not expecting to 'unpack' myself as much as I did. I have felt different in the Scottish Education system since I was very young. I have been aware of my ethnic difference but never felt that was something that needed discussing or even owning. However, it was a clear elephant in the room for me and was commented on almost daily by others. It was only

through the unpacking required in this Doctorate and dealing with my experiences as a Headteacher that I realised this was a running theme and in each iterative Stage it had a presence but was not the focus. I have more work to do in this respect and I am now ready to attend to postcolonial research and literature. So, too, I am now ready to consider more deeply, using feminist research and theory, the role tensions I alluded to with regard to being a Headteacher and mother.

A second major issue, as noted above, was feedback I received on my appearance. I contend that my appearance and dress were not relevant to my capacity to perform the role of Headteacher, and it was unfair to judge me on these criteria. The feedback caused me to question my self-worth and confidence, and it contributed to my developing health issues, which were related to anxiety. Both issues highlight the need for greater awareness and training around issues of discrimination and bias in the workplace. As educators, we have a responsibility to create a safe and inclusive environment for all of our colleagues and students, regardless of their appearance or background. This study has reinforced the view that we must be aware of our own biases and work to overcome them and to challenge discriminatory practices whenever we see them.

A third issue arises, as alluded to above, from being both a full-time working Headteacher and mother. The pursuit of this EdD has taken a toll on me, both in terms of the time away from my family and the emotional labour required to undertake this type of learning in addition to its financial burden. I have often felt guilty for pursuing this path: it is a selfish pursuit. However, I also recognise that it is a privilege to be able to undertake this level of professional learning and it was a choice I made which was very important to me in becoming a better learner. I am very saddened by the decision to cut funding for Master's level learning for teachers in Scotland and see it as deeply concerning. While I have not directly benefited from government funding for my studies, I have seen the benefits of collaboration with colleagues who have received such funding. The Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) noted in Chapter 4 have been a valuable resource for my school, and I believe that the opportunity to undertake postgraduate study should be available to all teachers, regardless of their financial situation. This limitation is significant, as it highlights the systemic barriers that exist for creating reflexive practice in schools and limit possibilities to bring theory to practice and action, ultimately affecting the students we teach.

A fourth issue is the paucity of the research and the representation of Headteachers' voices, vision and values. While Southworth, Tomlinson and others acknowledge this gap, I do not believe we have made much progress in this regard. I wonder if, with the increase of artificial intelligence, there will be opportunities to feed studies such as my own into a data source/bot which could support Headteachers and researchers working collaboratively in an ongoing collaborative manner.

Limitations of the Study

I am aware of the limitations of my research. While autoethnography allows for a deep exploration of personal experience, it may also be subject to biases and limitations that can affect its trustworthiness. One potential limitation of autoethnography is the subjectivity of my experience. My personal experiences will have influenced my selection and interpretation of data, potentially leading to biases and a lack of objectivity in the research process. However, I make no claims to objectivity and would support, instead, the use of more subjective accounts which could be shared with Headteachers so they do not, as I did, feel the almost inevitable challenges they will encounter were unique to them. As Nussbaum (2011) emphasises, it is crucial for me to engage in reflexivity and acknowledge my own biases and positionality throughout the research process. This can help ensure that the research is conducted in an ethical and responsible manner that respects the participants' dignity, autonomy, and agency (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 22).

Another limitation of autoethnography is, of course, the potential for me to overlook important aspects of the research and the events and situations I have chosen to share here. My sole perspective can result in a narrow focus on certain aspects of the research while overlooking others. It is important for me to engage in triangulation by using multiple sources of data to validate my findings and ensure that my research is comprehensive and accurate. Furthermore, the autoethnographic approach may also be criticised for its lack of generalisability. Since autoethnography is based on personal experience, it may not be applicable to other contexts or populations and, again, I do not suggest this study is applicable in other contexts or to other Headteachers. However, as Brookfield (2017) argues, autoethnography can still provide valuable insights into personal experiences and

perspectives that can contribute to a deeper understanding of broader social issues (Brookfield, 2017, p. 1).

To counter these limitations, I took several steps to ensure the trustworthiness of my research. I engaged in reflexivity throughout the research process, acknowledging my own biases and positionality and how they might influence the interpretation of the data (Ellis, 2004, p. 137; Nussbaum, 2011, p. 22). I also used multiple sources of data, including journals, personal observations, and documentary evidence, to triangulate my findings and ensure that my research was comprehensive and accurate (Denzin, 2006, p 657). I further used the case studies of other Headteachers to compare my own experiences of Headship in each of my Developmental Stages where there was research I could source for comparison.

While I acknowledge that the autoethnographic approach has limitations that can affect the trustworthiness of its findings, without it I would not have found my voice and been able to work my way to understandings of broader theory into practice and would not have been so able to 'unpack', to analyse, my own experiences. The method has, I hope, given an insight into a longitudinal study of one Headteacher developing over ten years and it may, as suggested, be useful for others.

As a Headteacher in a school setting, I now believe that the use of autoethnography as a tool for reflection can be highly beneficial. It can help me gain a deeper understanding of experiences and afford the considered development of strategies for responding to unexpected situations, such as Covid-19. Additionally, autoethnography can provide a platform to explore and make sense of complex situations as I have sought to do using my Element Framework. I am also aware that autoethnography can be a challenging process, as it requires confronting and managing emotions in order to remain professional. It has taught me that it is important for me as a Headteacher to practise self-care and emotional labour in order to maintain my composure and ensure that I am able to effectively lead. Without autoethnography I would not have uncovered the issues shared above as I would not have been able or motivated to articulate them.

Implications from the Findings

There are implications from this study which has allowed me to consider my own story of Headship. However, I am aware that this is just one story and there should be many others. As suggested above, without stories like this I wonder how many other Headteachers felt like I did – alone, isolated, vulnerable and challenged. I wonder how many other Headteachers feel the pain of the 'plethora of legislative changes'. How many other Primary Heads felt the crushing of the NIF on their broad liberal curriculums in their schools and regretted the perceived devaluing of their hard work to meet learner needs when they were compelled to go in other directions to meet benchmarks. I also wonder how many other Headteachers feel a lack of affiliation and are questioning their fit in the system and if they have reached their shelf life with education Policy, as I did. I also wonder how many school staff feel vulnerable as professionals in our schools by way of how they look, sound or behave. How diverse are our schools and our Headteachers? All of these questions could, I suggest, usefully be researched.

I further wonder why is it that education and theory is not more central to our working. It is difficult but education is difficult. I know that without theory I would not have been able to be so robust in saying 'no' during the pandemic and in all Stages of Headship without the theoretical support of the CA I would not have been confident to make theoretically informed value driven choices and would then have lived with the consequences for the school and my own personal health and wellbeing.

Including those alluded to above, there are a number of areas for research which I suggest could be undertaken:

- Diversity in Headship in Scotland and in International Schools – in-depth and comparative studies.
- An investigation of the value of the Element Framework in creating Capabilities and supporting Headteacher Reflexivity
- Iterative approaches to Headship beyond the New Headteacher
- A collection of ongoing stories of Headship
- Personalising learning using the CA to design a relevant and meaningful curriculum for students in today's world

- Bringing together stories of Headship and using AI to generate narratives

What is the Contribution of Knowledge to the Field?

The contribution of knowledge shared in this Dissertation is focused mainly on sharing the lived reality of being a practising Headteacher is significant. Headship development is explored in a longitudinal study through my experience as a Headteacher using theory and practice. Characteristics of autoethnography are linked to examples of both evocative and analytic autoethnographies from my Cast of Characters, Case Studies from the literature Wolcott (1973), Southworth (1995), Tomlinson et al. (2003), Thomson (2009) Kelly and Saunders (2010), and my own experience in order to illuminate the process and agency inherent in Headship stages of development. I tapped into the unique value of personal experience using autoethnography, while seeking to maintain the scholarly potential of autoethnography through using my Element Framework and theory. I am aware that this Story of Headship is a unique contribution and that uniqueness is both a strength and a potential weakness of this study. However, the extent to which the experiences outlined here are entirely unique is problematised below with regard to my perceptions, to changing my perceptions, and to the contribution of this study.

This Dissertation unpacks the emotions that emerged for me as a Headteacher in my iterative stages of development. I contend that the significance of these emotions is relevant to the development of Headteachers and the contribution this Dissertation makes to the field of educational leadership. This is because, initially, I thought these emotions and indeed the experiences which occasioned them, were unique to me. However, through the use of a moderate and balanced treatment of autoethnography with my Element Framework, it became clear that others in comparable contexts had and would feel similar reactions and emotions. Through the use of my data, imagination in my 'third space,' and the representation of a range of voices using the case studies of Wolcott (1973), Southworth (1995), Tomlinson et al (2003), Thomson (2009), Kelly and Saunders (2010), supported by key theorists including Nussbaum (2011), Brookfield (2005, 2017), and Ellis (2004), I was able to feel more confident about the quality, rigor, and usefulness of my research. A key contribution of this Dissertation, I believe, is to provide fellow Headteachers, perhaps especially new Headteachers, with an honest story of Headship which might help them to realise their

emotional reactions to the inevitable challenges of Headship, are unlikely to be unique to them. This, in turn, might enable more open discussion of both challenges and how these challenges might make Headteachers feel, might reduce feelings of isolation and allow increased support.

Nussbaum's Capability Approach (CA) supported me in reasoning with my senses, imagination, and thought, as well as encouraging me to analyse my affiliations and practical reasoning. This gave me the ability to effectively process my experiences with my cast of characters. Like me, they felt adept, vulnerable, and under pressure to deal with policies and experiences with which they were not aligned. One Headteacher during this study, Maggie from Kelly and Saunders' (2010, p.136) study, reported being self-assured. However, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 4, Maggie's leadership style was not similar in philosophy to mine. She had a more 'what works' approach and agenda for her school. While there may be other Headteachers like Maggie who do not see a comparison with my development, I now believe that there will be more Heads who might make such connections and so be in a position to reflect on their own experiences and emotions. Hence, I would hope other Headteachers, those considering Headship, and those educationalists working with Headteachers or aspiring Headteachers, might read this study. In sum, I believe that the major contribution this research offers is an honest 'Story of Headship' which highlights vulnerability and the realisation that I was not alone in my experiences.

I also realised that, from reading the case studies used here and from my own experience of leadership development, the application of theory to lived experience is often a missing link for Headteachers. For me, the use of theory and method has been fundamental in moving the school forward when things go wrong, as they do each day, and in dealing with dilemmas such as recruitment and making difficult decisions during Covid-19. Having a theory such as the Capabilities Approach supports Headteachers in making and taking hard decisions, but also in making ethical decisions. When emotions run high in schools, it is easy to falter and then feel inept. Using theory has allowed me to articulate my values and remain true to ethical practice aligned to those values. Of course, this is not always well-received by specific hierarchies or individuals. However, I suggest that, when it comes to doing a Headteacher job well, it is crucial to be able to live with your choices.

Conclusion

At the start of this research, I set out to answer the question: 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher?'. The truth be told is that this is an ongoing question without definitive answers. However, as a result of this study I feel I am able to be myself, to articulate and maintain my own values and, importantly, to collaborate well with others. I have discovered that I am able to operate as a Headteacher feeling confident in my affiliations, voice and values. I would not have been able to say or write that at the start of this story of Headship. The process of working through my experiences was challenging and revealed surprises along the way that changed me. It is important therefore for me to add to the initial question with 'what am I able to do and be and how?' given learning remains iterative.

The first answer to this question is I am able to be myself, I am able to use theory in my school to enhance practice and school improvement, I am able to use decisional capital and I am able to use my voice and hold onto and gain new affiliations to and for the benefit of myself and school. I am better able to talk about and relate theory to practice and discuss its importance to Headship development and advocate for other Headteachers to value research in schools as much as I do. It was unfortunate to see, during this study, the volume of Headteachers, in the case studies used, who saw their Headship qualifications as a means to an end to get a post but did not see its relevance to practice. This is something I would be keen to find more about: how much of and what of the theory shared in Headship development is followed up in schools in meaningful ways over time? I know that my journey with CA is lifelong but in a positive and not a performative way, even though I feel fully accountable to upholding the Capabilities and the Approach for my school communities.

I am also able to forgive myself and not, for example, to take responsibility for others who might impose their own vulnerabilities on me. I am able to reflect that vulnerability back and coach the other to a new way of considering the vulnerability and possible ways to address it using my method, my theory and my skill as a Headteacher. At the same time, I believe that vulnerability, following Nussbaum (2011, p.135), has reaffirmed for me that Headship resembles the condition of being plant like.

> Human dignity is not something rock hard. It is rather, a 'tender plant' that will wither if it encounters a cold soil and a severe climate.
> (Smith, 1776. cited in Nussbaum, 2011, p.135)

Nussbaum's metaphor of the plant versus the jewel (or being rock hard) has helped me to understand that vulnerability is connected to flourishing. It is precisely because a plant is soft, living tissue that it can flourish, while jewels cannot[58]. We do not need medals of achievement to progress or high performativity scores, we need nurture, support and cultivation as shared by many of the case study Headteachers talking of how they valued the support of a mentor or from coaching. This is about affiliation, about listening to each other's stories and about providing the conditions and support for growth. When we cannot find adequate support from peers and colleagues we can, and surely should, turn to theory and research and this study might provide one such narrative to help others.

So what am I able to do and how?

I am able to tell a story of Headship through this Dissertation, which encompasses vulnerabilities, emotions, lack of affiliation, lack of motivation, love, and growth in utilising theory and practice. I own this story and share it with my peers without fear of reprisal and exclusion from the group. I feel like an experienced Headteacher with strengths as well as ongoing development needs. I still have a long way to go in Headship before I retire, and there is still much for me to learn: this excites me and this study has given me tools to enable learning with critical reflexivity.

One thing I firmly assert is that adopting a guiding philosophy is the most compassionate supportive thing Headteachers can do for themselves. Throughout this Dissertation, the EdD has been entwined with my Headships: both journeys are woven together. Undertaking an EdD is challenging, but it has helped me feel both more and less vulnerable. I now realise that the feelings and vulnerabilities I experienced, while painful, are also normal and part of the journey.

In conclusion, it will always be important for me to consider, 'What am I able to do and be as a Headteacher, and how?'. In doing so, I will contemplate what I need to do to support others with regard to, 'What are people (and what is each person) actually able to of do and be?'. I maintain that this question is inseparable from my experience as a Headteacher, and I

[58] https://gohighbrow.com/vulnerability-and-flourishing-martha-nussbaum/

envision school leadership's educational growth as inextricable from developmental experiences, learning, and critical reflection regarding developmental gaps and practices, all of which contribute to readiness to lead.

A new expansive, iterative model of leadership as a Headteacher

This Dissertation makes a significant contribution to knowledge through its introduction of a new expansive, iterative model of leadership for Headteacher development. It highlights the paramount importance for Headteachers to conduct research, engage in critical analysis, and generate new insights to support their own values and enhance their leadership. Headteachers could achieve similar development as that I describe here by examining their experiences and reflecting on challenges faced in their roles using this Dissertation's Element Framework of learning, method, theory and understandings in an iterative and ongoing reflexive way as they mature in their roles and in their schools. The utilisation of the Element Framework could be particularly beneficial for isolated or marginalised Headteachers, enabling them to examine and to reflect on the impact of previous norms in a non-biased and theoretical manner. This approach encourages the acquisition of new and potentially uncomfortable understandings, both for and of themselves and others.

The new iterative model of leadership I propose encourages Headteachers to move beyond superficial traditional approaches to deep reflection and the embracing of a broader perspective. Reflexive practice, supported by preferred methods and theoretical lenses, facilitates the development of balanced contextual understanding. It emphasises continuous learning, adaptability, and collaboration as crucial expectations and ways of being for school leaders in their daily roles. By challenging traditional norms, Headteachers have the potential to foster inclusivity and equity in the education system, especially for those who have historically faced shame and ridicule. This model also raises awareness of existing challenges and calls for addressing systemic biases, promoting diversity and inclusion, and providing support and professional development opportunities that enable all leaders to thrive with respect and dignity.

In sum, the new iterative model of leadership, using the Element Framework, provides self-examining structures, including method and theory, for self-mentorship and personalised growth opportunities. It supports all Headteachers to make sense of their surroundings.

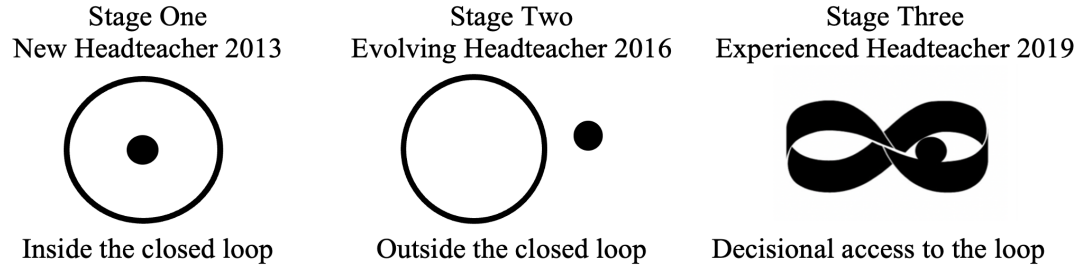
Sharing themes explored in the Element Framework could foster networks and professional communities in which Headteachers exchange experiences, learn from each other, and access support systems.

Fostering a culture of reflexivity is, I have argued, essential for building inclusivity and recognition within the education system. In particular, it can support isolated or marginalised Headteachers and ensure they experience dignity and respect in their daily roles. Moreover, this model of leadership, supported by the Element Framework, serves as a reflexive tool to draw on and gather insights and evidence from research studies, case studies, and personal narratives and it could enable and sustain the benefits and impacts of an expansive iterative approach to Headteacher leadership over time. Sharing stories, practices, and engaging in advocacy efforts can promote awareness and understanding of the importance of complex issues of school leadership across stakeholders in the education community. By challenging traditional norms and adding their unique understandings, Headteachers who feel shamed, ridiculed or intimidated can contribute to the field. Exploring the experiences and challenges they face, as well as examining the impact of previous norms, will shed light on the need for change. Headteachers can lead this necessary reflexive change from within and reclaim ownership of education for its valued purpose of educational growth and, for Headteachers, enable the readiness to lead.

In considering figure 4 below, 'The iterative process of Headship' and my three stages of development and growth.

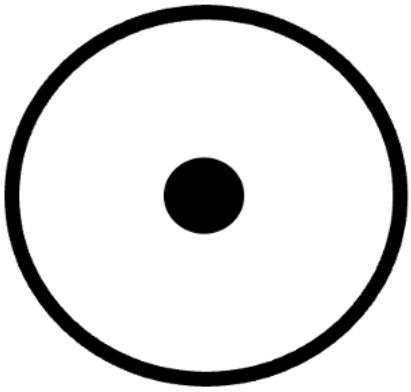
The iterative process of Headship

Figure 4



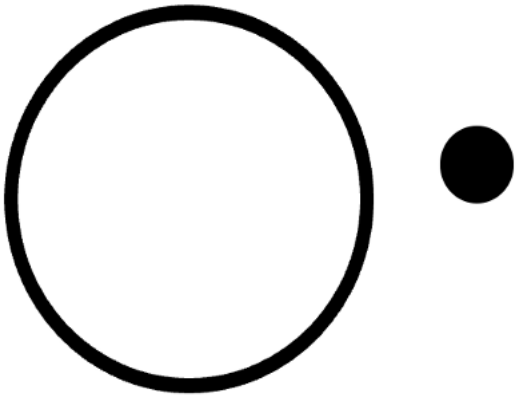
I revisit this process again in relation to my Understandings gained on completing my EdD.

'Inside the closed loop' I now compare to the Hegemony of Normalcy as adapted from Capper (2019, p.177) in the diagram below.



Hegemony of normalcy

This is based on the standardised norm, a concept which has been used in oppressive ways to segregate, marginalise, devalue and abnormalize others. The hegemony of normalcy is pervasive in schools and contributes to the pathology of difference, illustrated below.



The pathology of difference

When a Headteacher exhibits different learning habits or critical thinking, they can be marginalised under the guise of assistance, which I refer to as being 'Outside the loop.' They may receive supposedly 'appropriate' professional feedback that ultimately excludes them or emphasises their differences, exacerbating, reinforcing, or justifying the labelling or stigmatisation. Normalcy is the notion that specific characteristics, such as being white, male, upper class, English-speaking, heterosexual, able-bodied, and cisgender, are deemed the

norm and esteemed in society. Those who don't fit these identities are often viewed (pathologized) as different or deficient. This aligns with the concept of whiteness as property in Critical Race Theory, where normalcy is seen as valuable property granting privileges, including access to the best education and curriculum in schools.
The diagram below illustrates the concept of 'Decisional access to loop' and highlights the significance of critical reflection in making informed decisions.

Addressing our responsibility as Headteachers

By incorporating 'Decisional access' within the context of both the dominance of normalcy and recognising the impact of difference, we as Headteachers can fulfil our critical responsibilities. The diagram highlights the importance of continuously evaluating our own beliefs, assumptions, and biases, while actively engaging in ongoing dialogues to ensure inclusive decision-making for all members of our communities. Through consistent questioning and taking direct action, we can challenge fixed mindsets and neoliberal agendas within schools. This process of questioning biases enables us to address our own and others' abilities and transform our vulnerabilities, whether real or perceived, into sources of strength.

Future lines of inquiry

Reflecting on the Dissertation as a whole and the process of learning in this EdD, I now recognise the significance of feminist and post/decolonial methods, theories and lenses in any future lines of inquiry. If I were to start the Dissertation again tomorrow, I would certainly delve more deeply into these perspectives. Examining each narrative used in the body of the Dissertation, it has become evident that many of them can be re-evaluated through a feminist lens to gain new insights. Similarly, the theories employed could be critically analysed using a postcolonial and/or a decolonial lens in relation to my narratives.

Hence in terms of organisation, I now propose the following adjustments for Element 1, which utilises Brookfield's Lenses (2017).

Element 1 – Learning

1. Personal Experience: This would remain the same.
2. Students' Eyes: This would remain the same.
3. Colleagues' Perceptions: This toolkit comprises six questions derived from Phipps (2020, pp. 168-169), which draw inspiration from Sara Ahmed's 'Killjoy Survival Kit' in her book 'Living a Feminist Life' (2017). These questions serve as a guide for individuals to reflect on their biases and examine their 'Decisional access'. It is recommended that everyone utilise this toolkit to evaluate whether they are engaging in direct action, legal advocacy, policy development, peer support, or other forms of everyday politics or disruption. This toolkit encourages self-reflection and prompts individuals to assess their own actions and contributions in various spheres of influence.
   Toolkit questions:

   i. What do I know?
   ii. Who am I speaking for?
   iii. Who benefits?
   iv. What are my motivations?
   v. Who am I with?
   vi. Where are we going?

4. Theory: would be influenced this time by, as starting points, Nussbaum's 'Sex and Social Justice' (1999), 'Frontiers of Justice' (2006) and 'Woman and Human Development' (2000). I have chosen Nussbaum's 'Sex and Social Justice' because here she defends a liberal approach to feminism thereby paving the way for the CA. I have chosen 'Frontiers of Justice' (2006) because of care ethics and 'Woman and Human Development' (2000) because of the focus on the lives of women and the CA and Nussbaum's statement: 'In this book, I aim to present a clear line of feminist argument, accessible to a wide variety of readers' (p. xiv).

Element 2 – Methodology

This would continue to employ moderate autoethnography, utilising the understandings gained in Element 1 and processing them through the lenses of a range of voices, quality, innovation, and imagination, as depicted in Figure 2.

Element 3 – Theory

Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach would be used to examine the outcomes of Element 1 and 2 supplemented by her 'The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal' (2019), especially Chapter Six 'Todays five problems' which I would consider and then compare with 'Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts' (Ashcroft et al., 2008). In the reflexive cycle, and as a starting point, I would identify the most appropriate of the case studies from Ashcroft et al. to reflect against my own experiences and gain new understandings.

Element 4 – Understandings

This element would retain its iterative nature within the self-examining framework, allowing new understandings to be shared and integrated into subsequent Elements.

At the end of this study, I now appreciate much more than I did at its start that it is crucial for me to broaden my approach and acknowledge my own influence as a self-examining Headteacher, mother, and a mixed-race woman. I have a moral obligation to shed light on the previously accepted norms in the education system that have been imposed upon me and others and which perpetuate privilege and hierarchical power structures within the current Westernised system, which normalises exclusion to protect the status quo.

The use of the language of shame

Reflecting on the use of language surrounding shame, vulnerability, shock, breastfeeding, having children, and embarrassment within the context of my Dissertation, it becomes evident that these themes are deeply intertwined with the norms of socialisation. I now appreciate that society often imposes rigid expectations and standards upon individuals, particularly women, which engender feelings of shame and vulnerability when these expectations are deviated from or not met. Throughout my research, I have delved into and shared personal experiences that touch upon sensitive subjects, with the aim of challenging prevailing norms and shedding light on the emotional impact they can have. By openly discussing topics such as breastfeeding, having children, and the associated feelings of embarrassment, I sought to dismantle societal taboos and create a safe space for dialogue and understanding without barriers.

In examining these themes, it becomes apparent that the sentiments of shame cannot be solely attributed to the individuals experiencing them. The lack of ethical care shown by others and the judgment and stigma imposed by society play significant roles in perpetuating these negative emotions. Hence it now feels crucial to situate these sentiments and emotions within the broader context of socialisation and to recognise the systemic influences that contribute to them. I am reminded of instances where comments about my appearance, questions about my ability to balance work and motherhood, or objectifying remarks, highlighted the pervasive and potentially limiting impact of societal norms on women's lives.

To counter the detrimental effects of shame, vulnerability, and embarrassment, I turned to Nussbaum's (2011) Capabilities Approach to reclaim agency and challenge oppressive norms. By focusing on the capabilities that enable individuals to flourish and live a dignified life, Nussbaum's approach provides a pathway to mitigate the negative impacts of societal expectations. Her CA emphasises the importance of nurturing and respecting individuals' inherent dignity and worth. It recognises that individuals have the right to make choices and pursue their own well-being, free from judgment and shame. By promoting capacities and capabilities such as autonomy, self-expression, and the ability to form meaningful relationships, this approach can empower individuals to resist, but also to call-out, the damaging limiting effects of social norms as obstacles to flourishing.

In my Dissertation, the exploration of shame and vulnerability, coupled with the utilisation of Nussbaum's CA, serves as a call to action. I urge educational institutions, those responsible for school leader development and, indeed, society, to re-evaluate the norms and expectations placed upon individuals, particularly women and women of colour. We must surely strive to cultivate a more compassionate and inclusive culture, challenging the blame placed on individuals for experiencing shame and for that shaming itself. We should aim to foster ethical care and understanding, creating a society that values and supports the diverse experiences and choices of all its members.

Policy recommendations for Scotland

1. **Inquiry and challenge are needed**

I contend that it is not acceptable for any Headteacher to disregard the value of education and learning. When we become cogs in a system, a significant problem arises. Unfortunately, the importance of education for critical thinking is often overshadowed by a focus on knowledge acquisition and accountability. I suggest we need to foster more inquiry and challenge, not just for learners but for all and so, without doubt, including our school leaders. It is disheartening that funding has been withdrawn from supporting teachers' ongoing postgraduate education in Scotland[59]. How can we develop if we do not critically examine our own practices in context? Here I am thinking well beyond meeting benchmarks or targets: I mean engaging in critical reflection to navigate complex matters and effectively deal with trauma, change, and global crises, utilising a theoretically informed perspective in which bias and unjust norms are confronted directly.

2. **Care ethics in leadership needs to be promoted**

In leadership positions, care ethics emphasises the ethical duty of care. Leaders are urged to consider the well-being of others and avoid causing harm by thoroughly reflecting on the implications of their actions, particularly in critical or complex situations. Empathetic understanding and the avoidance of arrogance and ignorance are essential for upholding the ethical responsibility of care. This approach ensures that individuals are acknowledged for

[59] https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/23574780.scottish-government-announces-withdrawal-vital-funding-teachers/

their unique experiences and values, rather than being discredited or judged solely based on their deviation from preconceived normalcy.

Care ethics emphasises valuing and respecting individuals' diverse perspectives and values. It promotes a culture where differences are acknowledged and respected, rejecting the devaluation of self-examination and inquiry, especially when stemming from one's vulnerabilities. The inherent worth of each individual is recognised in care ethics.

The ethics of care[60] is a moral theory that highlights the significance of relationships, dependencies, and the well-being of caregivers and those who depend on their care within social networks. It values emotions, motivations, and the body when making moral decisions. The theory emerged in the 1980s through the works of Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings, who criticised traditional moral approaches and advocated for a caring perspective. Care ethics has connections with African and Confucian ethics, among others, and has influenced feminist ethics, motherhood, international relations, and political theory.

3. The maturation of Headteachers should be supported

I suggest that, in order to afford maturation over time, it is crucial that Headteachers are given sufficient time and opportunities for self-examination and critical reflection, independent of overwhelming job demands. Support for this should be of high quality and guided by educational institutions dedicated to teacher education, pedagogy, and practice. It should be an entitlement that accompanies the mandatory General Teaching Council for Scotland professional update every five years. Learning at all levels should be supported, including, for instance, at least part funding of EdD or Master level learning, and in opportunities for study days during school time to undertake work associated with learning and reflexivity.

[60] https://iep.utm.edu/care-ethics/

4. Closed-loop practices should be discouraged

The removal of funding from the Regional Collaboratives in Scotland[61] is likely to have a detrimental effect on the sort of leadership learning I am advocating and so I would recommend it is reinstated. In my experience, Headteachers frequently emphasise the value of peer collaboration, conversation, mentoring, and coaching, both in formal and informal settings. Developmental experiences and networking opportunities should not be curtailed and limited to the closed loop of a local authority. Local authorities vary in size and power, and their activity can result in closed-loop behaviours and the replication of hierarchical control, with individuals keen on maintaining their power, and the subordination of others, unwilling to allow deviation from their own favoured centralised approach.

5. Allow for Flourishing

I suggest that our education systems lack room for creativity, not least because I believe we have flattened the challenges and restricted aspirations for everyone. This is highly concerning for Scotland. We must surely empower our workforce and children to lead fulfilling and ambitious lives, to be capable of adapting to an ever-changing world and understanding diverse perspectives. We must cease the damage inflicted upon the well-being of our children, teachers, communities, and country. We are not empty vessels to be filled but are like plants. We are ready to grow and to thrive, but we require nurturing, not moulding by the neoliberal machine that has encroached upon, certainly in Scotland, our proud tradition of a liberal approach to education in which all can flourish.

My call to policymakers is to appreciate education for its intrinsic value and allow Scotland's Education system, and all in that system, to flourish.

[61] https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/regional-improvement-collaboratives-scotland-funding-diverted-support-teachers

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Appendices
Appendix 1

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences

11/03/2019

Dear Rehana Shanks

College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Project Title: The Headship Journey: Bonkers and Beautiful? One Headteacher's Autoethnographic Journey.

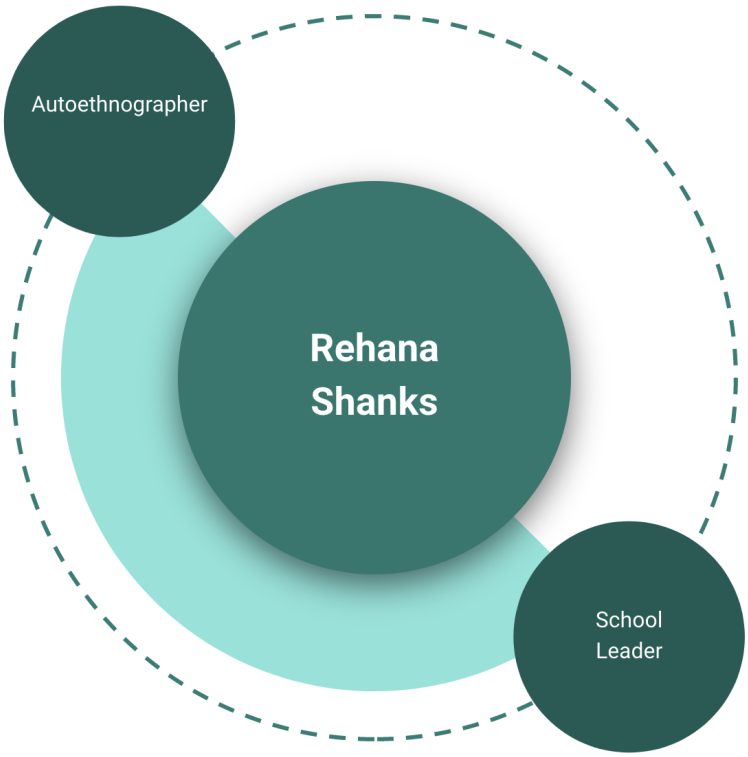
In the light of the information provided by Rehana Shanks and her supervisory team in relation to the above-named project it is the view of the Committee that based on information provided this research does not require ethical approval. The sources cited in the proposal are clearly in the public domain and as such require no ethical approval to access them although they should be appropriately acknowledged.

Yours sincerely,

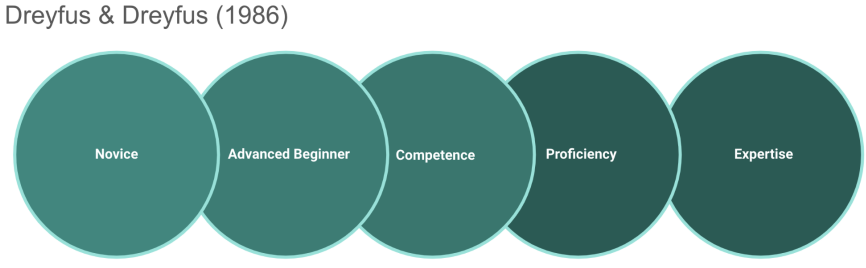
Dr Muir Houston
College Ethics Officer

Appendix 2

My Narrative as an Engagement Practitioner 1997- 2021



My Professional Learning Journey can be articulated using the Dreyfus and Dreyfus model.



Novice

1997 - 2003

- [redacted] - Literacy development collaboration with the Library Service and [redacted]) story sacks.
- East Ayrshire Council - Department of community services - Community Play Team in areas of multiple deprivation - Teacher
- 1999 [redacted] Literacy Development Project - Teacher participant (Early Years).
- [redacted] PGCE - Early Years Education and Practice.
- 2001-2003 Seconded Science Development officer [redacted], working in 27 Primary Schools, 4 secondary, 4 Nursery improving science teaching and learning.
  - Coaching, mentoring T&L science
  - Modelling Science best practice
  - Improving Science Education working with LTS
  - Work published for LTS in the ISE
  - Wrote the enhanced science curriculum for special education 3-18. This was sold to other authorities
  - Delivered and created CPD and resources
  - Worked with SEES and trained the trainers. Coached and mentored these teachers in context.
- Completed MA Early Years
- Supported the headteacher in residence at an underperforming school as part of the QS team.

Advanced Beginner

2003 - 2007

- Depute [redacted] Primary School Working with NHS [redacted] University. Produced the circle collaboration tool.
- HMIE 2007 work was recognised as outstanding in Inclusive education and pastoral care. Lead three workshops at Scotlands Good Practice conferences for HMIe
- Worked with Moray House on Coaching and coaching models for the GTCS.
- Started Masters in Educational Leadership.
- BELMAS Research Interest Groups
  - Governance
  - Educational Leadership
  - Inclusive Education.

2007-2013

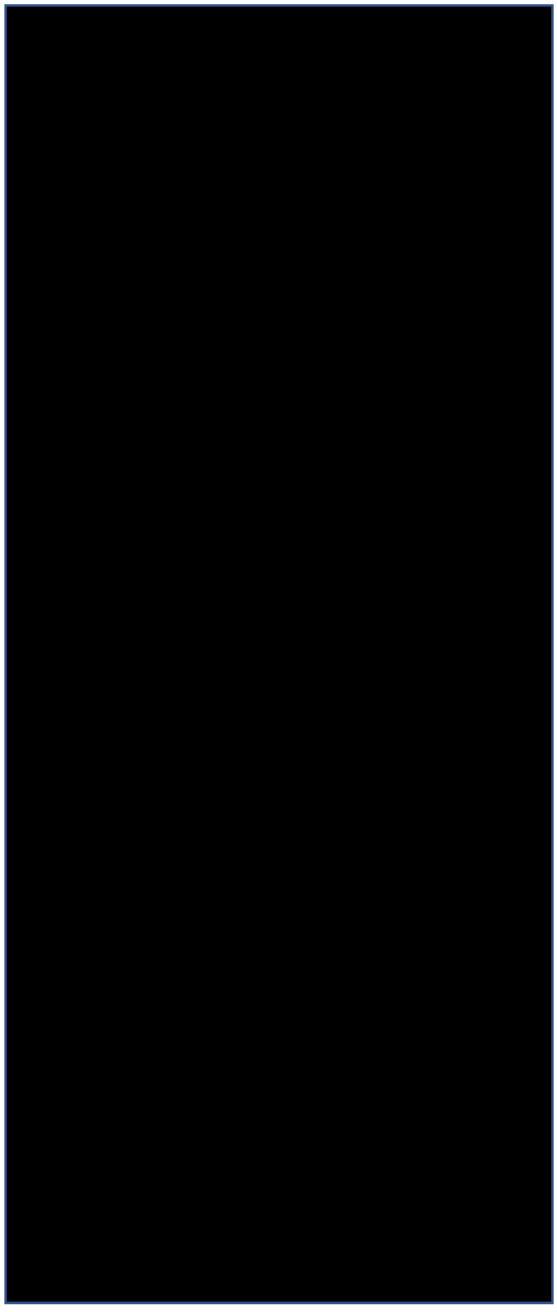
- SELMAS committee member
- IPDA member
- BELMAS council
- Complete Masters in Educational Leadership with Distinction.
- Awarded The BELMAS Practise Award for my Master Thesis - Digital Transferable tools for reflection and Quality assurance.
- Admitted to the EdD programme at UoG
- Head Teacher at [redacted] School
- Worked on the GTCS values as a teacher member of the group.

2013-2019

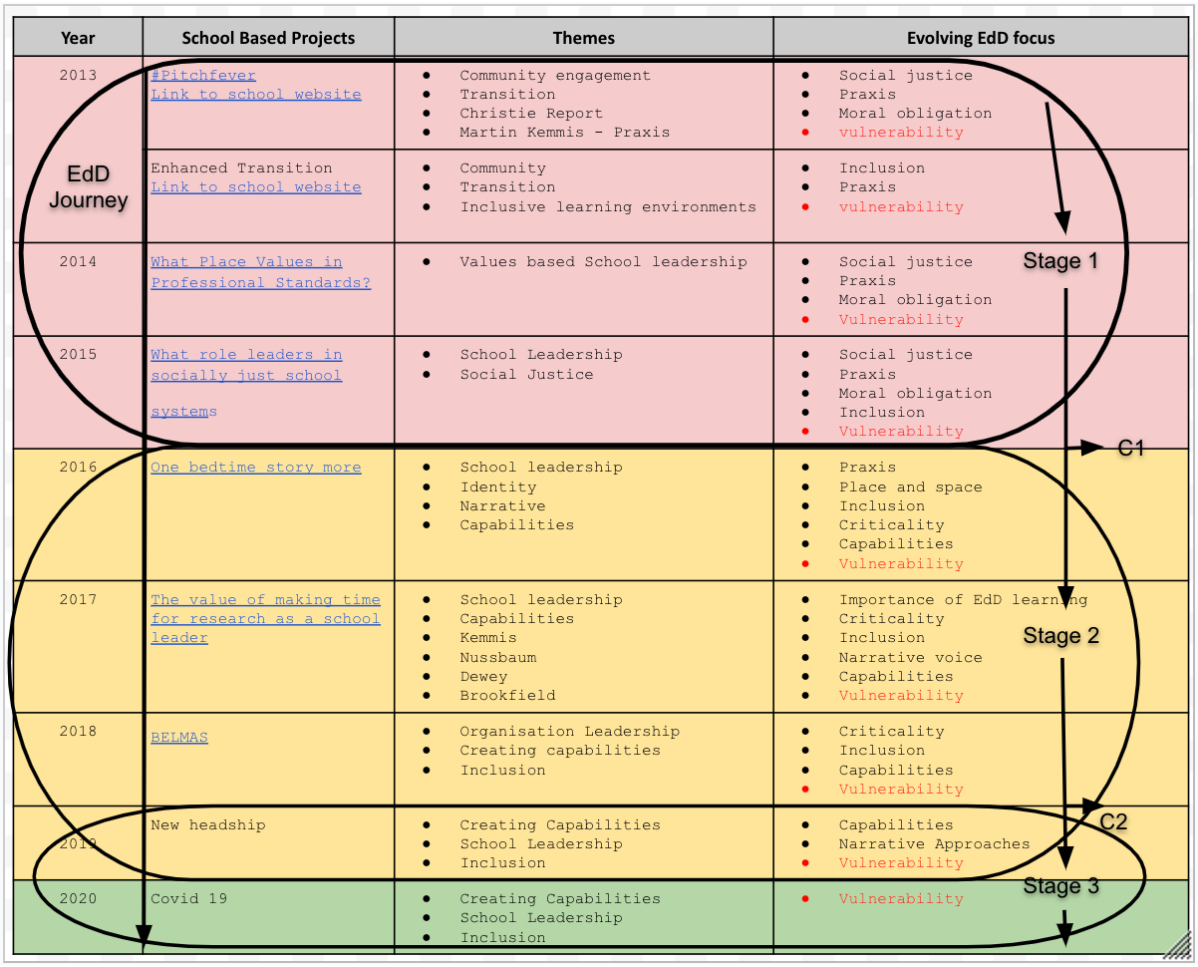
- Awarded research bursary for EdD thesis.
- Published - SAGE MiE
- [redacted] Published [redacted]
- Supporting Teacher Learning in and through Practice - Teacher research collaborator with Moray House.
- Supporting Into Headship for Moray House.
- Developed the SCEL teacher leadership pathway as the Headteacher Researcher with University colleagues and SCEL Colleges
- Delivered the workshops for train the trainers for Teacher Leadership for SCEL at Stirling University [redacted]
- Mentored In headship colleagues
- Mentored into headship colleagues
- [redacted] was used for leading learning with research videos for Moray House and workshops.
- Became Chair of BELMAS and all associated duties
- [redacted].
- Had STiLP practitioners in my school working with Moray House as a research school hub.
- Japanese Scottish School Leaders Educational Tour
- Presented for Jamcian Education Bureau theory and practice in schools

2019 -2021

- Developing Connected Learning Ecologies at - 03.09.19



Appendix 3



Year	School Based Projects	Themes	Evolving EdD focus
2013	#Pitchfever Link to school website	• Community engagement • Transition • Christie Report • Martin Kemmis - Praxis	• Social justice • Praxis • Moral obligation • vulnerability
	Enhanced Transition Link to school website	• Community • Transition • Inclusive learning environments	• Inclusion • Praxis • vulnerability
2014	What Place Values in Professional Standards?	• Values based School leadership	• Social justice • Praxis • Moral obligation • Vulnerability
2015	What role leaders in socially just school systems	• School Leadership • Social Justice	• Social justice • Praxis • Moral obligation • Inclusion • Vulnerability
2016	One bedtime story more	• School leadership • Identity • Narrative • Capabilities	• Praxis • Place and space • Inclusion • Criticality • Capabilities • Vulnerability
2017	The value of making time for research as a school leader	• School leadership • Capabilities • Kemmis • Nussbaum • Dewey • Brookfield	• Importance of EdD learning • Criticality • Inclusion • Narrative voice • Capabilities • Vulnerability
2018	BELMAS	• Organisation Leadership • Creating capabilities • Inclusion	• Criticality • Inclusion • Capabilities • Vulnerability
2019	New headship	• Creating Capabilities • School Leadership • Inclusion	• Capabilities • Narrative Approaches • Vulnerability
2020	Covid 19	• Creating Capabilities • School Leadership • Inclusion	• Vulnerability

Year	Project
2013	#Pitchfever Link to school website
	Enhanced Transition Link to school website
2014	What Place Values in Professional Standards?
2015	What role leaders in socially just school systems
2016	One bedtime story more
2017	The value of making time for research as a school leader
2018	BELMAS

Appendix 4

Nussbaum's Ten Central Capabilities:

1. Life: being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living.
2. Bodily Health: being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.
3. Bodily Integrity: being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.
4. Senses, Imagination and Thought: being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and Reason – and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid nonbeneficial pain.
5. Emotions: being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety (Supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be shown to be crucial in their development.)
6. Practical Reason: being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life (This entails protection for the liberty of conscience and religious observance.)
7. Affiliation:
    a. being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another (Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish

such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and freedom of speech.)

   b. having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others This entails provisions of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin.

8. Other Species: being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.
9. Play: being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.
10. Control Over One's Environment:
    a. Political – being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.
    b. Material – being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical Reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers. (Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 32-34)

Appendix 5

Three original Journal entry samples, using the Pitard (2017) Framework. A fictional sample, Journal 4 (the Headship interview) and Journal 7 (The Japan Study Tour).

> In order to emphasise my reflexive process, I developed a structured vignette analysis framework (PITARD, 2016) with six stages of analysis. I used a personal narrative discourse to create the context, then, to record as closely as possible the critical enquiry of the pre-reflective moment, I used anecdotes to capture the phenomena of emotions and sensations experienced as my own life experience, and unconscious assumptions, collided with a moment of cultural confrontation. I followed each of these anecdotes with an analytical exploration of my emotional response and reflexivity. The strategies developed as a result, and concluding comments highlight our group progression. (Pitard, 2017, p 3)

Journal – Fictional account
Context An Educational Assistant came and got me from the front office, where I was waiting with students to greet a significant visitor. They explain that one of the teachers is upset, and they do not know why. I had not anticipated the colleague's reaction. There was a massive outburst of emotion, which seemed to come from nowhere, when they saw me. Their words were loud, and they were being aggressive, but at the same time, it was clear they were stressed. They had no awareness of their surroundings or who was present. I am concerned that other Staff and students can see and hear the colleague. I am also aware I have a meeting starting at this moment with a significant visitor to the school. A visitor of such importance who cannot be left waiting. I am also tired, worn down and have a level of disbelief that they had picked this moment for an outburst when they know we have a significant visitor in the school. My mind is alert to how I get this to stop quickly and quietly. How do I support my colleague to be heard and for both of us to hold some dignity? Furthermore, not have the significant visitor aware of this incident. Anecdote As I speak, I am acutely aware I have an audience of both students and Staff. I notice my colleague's physicality soften with my words. I feel able to put my hand on their shoulder even though I know they are in a heightened state; this feels safe.

I use the words, I will get someone to take your class. I pause and look around to see who is there, and I ask another colleague to fetch a VP. I ask an Educational Assistant who was near by the stay with the class until the VP arrived.

I speak softly with my colleague and walk them out of the area to the nearby empty VP room. I tell them to take all the time they need and to take a break. Fortunately, The Business Manager who is close to this colleague arrived. They had come to find me to meet with the significant visitor. They take over and tell me I need to go to the front office to greet the visitor.

I said to my colleague who is now calmer lets meet later to catch up. They say they would like that and I leave.

The Business Manager has put the kettle on as I walk out of the room.

Emotional response

I feel frustrated and drained. I also feel grateful that I had so many supportive colleagues around to support the situation.

I am coming out of an incident and have to be ready to meet with a significant visitor and be emotionally ready for that, although I have just been in the middle of a rather traumatic event.

I bury the emotions, go to the bathroom, apply water to my wrists and put on lipstick.

While overwhelmed, the weight has lifted momentarily from my shoulders as everything is calm by the time I meet the significant visitor. The students had already greeted them and engaged them fully. I was comforted by this.

Reflexivity

The weight of responsibility for being the Headteacher is enormous. The duty of care to colleagues is enormous.

My practice of listening for answers within my own consciousness supports me on this day. I had no plan for dealing with this issue, but I knew I had to establish safety once I was in it.
I feel alert.

I still do not fully understand the issue but know I have to investigate it fully. I cannot have Staff that upset on campus. I am concerned for their mental health and what may have triggered such an episode.

I need to take the opportunity to address any issues and prevent misinformation and misinterpretation. This has to be done promptly. I am aware of the leap of faith I had to take with my other colleagues in leaving the upset colleague both

elates me for its boldness and scares me for the possibility of not serving any of the colleagues well.

I had to trust their expertise; their desire to get it right for the school and my colleague. This might not extend to every staff member, but I am confident that the Staff I choose to assist will manage this and support the investigation later.

Strategies developed

I met with the colleague later a time suitable to both. I make sure that the Business Manager is there to support the colleague and present for observation.

I check the health and wellbeing of my colleague and discover that their own understanding of their wellness is not where it should be. Together out of the duty of care, we take some actions to ensure the colleague's wellbeing.

This involves extremal help from medical professionals, the teachers union and our employer. Together these groups work with me to ensure the wellbeing of my colleague and fit to work protocols are in place.

Journal 4 – Original Interview experience.

Context

I had prepared hard. I was lucky, by all accounts, to make the shortlist. I was told after my longlist interview to up my game. Be more corporate in appearance and less of a classroom practitioner.

My friend helped me with my hair, make-up and outfit for the day. They had bought me a shirt to go with a suit I already had; I couldn't afford anything new. They had taken time off work to drive me to my interview. We had arrived early at the venue, so we went to a coffee shop and drank peppermint tea as my stomach was churning.

They reached into their bag, sprayed me with perfume, and then helped me put my lipstick on perfectly. They then kissed me on my head and said do yourself proud.

I walked across the road and into the most beautiful of buildings. I had on the highest of heels, my hair was tied back and hair sprayed within an inch of its life, and I had on a navy suit. I noticed people looking at me and smiling on the street. I felt seen and powerful.

I sat in a room by myself for 15 minutes to prepare. The staff from the building recognised me and smiled, knowing why I was there.

I took out my notebook, which I had bought specifically for this interview and presentation. It was a small black leather notebook which was around A6 in size. In it were the notes I had made from narrowing down hundreds of cards on the key priorities and the expectations from the organisation and the school. I had

also created my presentation down to some minimal bullet points, which I could talk about at length and confidently rehearse. I had two of these notebooks, just in case one got damaged or lost.

Between the interviews, I sought help from a senior mentor. They talked me through my stuff and asked me questions. They said my knowledge was secure and I had no gaps. They did suggest making sure my answers were narrowed to three points and an example. If they want to know more, they will ask you.

Sometimes, I looked out the window, watching the world go by. It is a beautiful sunny day, but it is February, so it is cold. I have my mother's long corduroy trench coat looped over the handles of my borrowed leather cooperate work bag, which matches the borrowed designer high heels.

My fifteen minutes are up.

We walk up a grand staircase to a room full of prominence and history—a great place of status. The interview panel are there to greet me and is sitting on what looks like wooden thrones studded with green leather seats at the other side of an elegant wooden table, which has seen more history than I can imagine. I can only describe the room as a grand chamber with portraits of prominent white men of history. I am seated at the other side of the table. The window behind my interview convenor is arched and made of stone. They look anointed by the sun shining on their head. On either side of the convenor, who is an elected official are colleagues from my employer and community members. There are five people in total.

I know I have surprised those that know me with my appearance. It makes me feel enabled.

The interview process happens….

I leave and head back to school.

I arrived at school and sat in my colleague's office to tell them about the experience when the phone rang. Anna put the call through. I looked at my colleague who was in the office with me. They answered the phone first and then said it was for you.

I felt overwhelmingly sick, anxious and excited all at once.

Brenda was standing at the door looking at my other colleague and me. She had both her hands up, fingers crossed.

I took the call.

It was a Senior Colleague who had been part of my interview panel.

They asked how you think you have done.

I responded with the best I could.

Anecdote

I have prepared. I have practised. I have made myself as corporate looking as possible considering budget, borrowing and kindness of peers.

I notice the reaction I have had to my appearance from both people I know and those that I do not. I am also aware of my appearance on the panel. I am aware of the status I have generated at this moment and its impact. This gives me confidence.

I can see the panel have been impacted by this.

The presentation of my answers is empowered. I am calm and slow, and I add all the additionality that is necessary as I have nothing to lose. I use my energy positively and enable myself, question by question. I feel strong in the moment.

The convenor goes off tangent and asks me philosophical questions about education and the world. I go deep and quickly into clear responses based on my knowledge of my academic connections and my influence as a member of a research association. I can transfer my skills and knowledge into impact in response and bring it back to the current context as the Headteacher of the specific community. I know that this is being received well, and I am conceited. This enables me to defend each question.

I leave the interview and thank them for the opportunity, time and process.

Emotional Response

I am fully aware I am not the preferred candidate, and I am upset and angry by that. I decided that I was not going down without a fight.

I took everything I had in my toolbox and put it all on display.

I am annoyed that my physical appearance was a key area of focus and not my ability. So I knew I had to remove that barrier. I also made sure I looked like I could run the organisation rather than just serve within it.

I am also aware that I have received feedback about talking too fast, so I removed that through a vast amount of preparation.

I went into the interview resigned. I knew the job was not mine. However, I was in an emotional state of determination because I was angry but had enough self-worth to ensure I laid it all out on the table regarding my ability, skills and worthwhileness to serve this specific community.

Reflexivity

I needed to take all the feedback and cues and work with what I had, even if it was hurtful to hear.

I had a clear plan for dealing with the issues but was resigned that this job was not mine.

I found it hard to accept that my appearance was my weakest Element. I consider how this could be the critical focus of downgrading me against the other candidates. I had made an effort; I had bought a beautiful dress suitable for everyday smart wear in school, a dress I could ill afford. I was upset that they deemed it inappropriate.

I did not understand how my experience and my expertise were not considered as important as my appearance in my readiness for Headship. I felt super vulnerable. Therefore I had to take the opportunity to address my vulnerability and what it was that caused the specific vulnerability.

I also know I am not the preferred candidate by my employer, and this has been made clear to me. That this school was not mine, but I would get a school.

I wanted this school. The truth is I probably would not have applied anywhere else at that time. I had always been told only apply for jobs I wanted. Also, I would have been disaffected based on the experiences in the run-up to the appointment.

Strategies developed

Always pay attention to what is going on for other people.
Always consider affiliation to the group and the importance of the situation's politics.
Always make sure you are intentional in your practice.
Always be organised.
Never take anything for granted.
Always stay true to your values and self-worth.

Journal 7 – Japan Study Tour

Context

The Japan Study Tour for Scotland Educational Leaders 10th February to 18th February 2017. Three of my colleagues and I were fortunate to be asked to attend the Headteachers Japan study tour with other authorities from Scotland. The reason we were asked was because of the historical connections between our

schools and Japan. This came out of the blue. My youngest child turned one year old the day we were due to leave. My husband encouraged me to go. I did not even have a current passport.

Headteacher's Japan Study Tour Report 20th February 2017

Kon'nichiwa,

I hope this newsletter finds you in good health. I have just returned from a week's trip to Japan with colleagues from all over Scotland.

The purpose of the trip was to compare education systems and leadership, build business links and encourage the use of the Japanese language in Scottish Schools with the ultimate aim of the Scottish Qualifications Agency accrediting the subject with awards.

Why Japanese?

Japanese businesses already invest heavily in the Scottish economy, and they wish to encourage this further. The culture and language are already embedded in our homes via Pokémon and Super Mario; the language is visual and phonetic and much easier to learn than traditional, modern languages. However, the real reason is there are jobs available to our workforce both here and in Japan and the ability to speak even a little Japanese will go a long way to secure the industries we already have invested in our country. Japan is also one of our biggest exporters.

Why Japanese for schools?

The culture in schools which we experienced took me by surprise – it was calm, very calm, and everyone was engaged and happy in their learning. Nurture was the central theme in each of the schools we visited and in the culture itself. I have noted a number of teaching methods which I wish to explore here in our school.
The culture was such that you could leave your mobile phone and handbag on a coffee shop table in central Tokyo and not return for 15 minutes with the knowledge that it would remain untouched. The environments were clean, and everyone is expected to clean up after themselves and consider others' needs.
People think about their actions' implications on others before taking action for themselves. I do not know if this stems from their historic Buddhist culture. It is also okay to take time at the end of each school day to sit and think for 15 minutes so you do not carry your worries home.

As a group of teachers, we were taken to lectures, Embassies, Schools, Council Offices, Temples, Kamaishi, and Iwate Prefectures (where the Tsunami hit) and treated as very valuable. Our opinions as educators and leaders were respected and valued. We had the privilege of talking with our Japanese teaching colleagues who experience similar challenges and, like us use education and research to overcome these.
Most notable in schools was pupils' freedom to do tasks independently of adults and in mixed-aged groups. The pupils did several manual tasks to take care of their environment, which was not supervised, but there was an expectation that they would be done and done well.

I have not had time to reflect thoroughly, but I can already see several themes that can only add value to our school and community.

I look forward to working with you all as we move forward!

Arigatōgozaimashita,

Rehana

Headteacher

During this trip, I discovered I had failed my EdD assignment while eating breakfast with my colleagues in a Ski resort in Japan. It was my Education Futures assignment.

Anecdote

I know I didn't need to go on the trip, nor did I need to be studying and paying for an EdD. Both of these things were selfish pursuits for me as an individual.

When my colleagues supported me in my disappointment in my failure, I was aware that it really was a self-absorbed problem. I sent an email to the University, and they said they would discuss it with me during the next study weekend. I decided to internalise it for the time being and make the most of the trip, which I was very privileged to be on.

If anything, I turned my professionalism and networking up a notch to make myself feel like I was doing something well. This was received well by the hosts and they subsequently invited me on a trip to Orkney with the Japanese Embassy in Scotland.

Emotional Response

The failure was fitting. It was sobering and all-absorbing.

I had left my baby on their first birthday to go on a trip to Japan during the February Break school holiday. Which meant my other three children would also not have me either. It was a selfish thing to do.

I was to be with colleagues who cheered my soul. One also gave me a great perspective on how lucky I was in life and it was just an academic failure. A so what? I still had a beautiful and healthy family. They were right. It was true. I, however, felt shame, fear and failure. Something in the past I was good at seemed to be gone and I wondered what was happening to me. Why was I not as capable as I once was?

I was reasonably flat, but at the same time, I was surrounded by new people, new experiences and new hope.

I was angry at myself for being so incapable and inept.

Reflexivity

There were so many thoughts.

However, aside from the failures in my EdD assignment, new connections were being made in my observations of where I was on my trip in Japan.

I was observing a very different education system and culture. What was interesting is I was feeling more aligned with the system I was visiting than I was prepared for or expected. The world for me was becoming a much smaller place, and while my thinking was broadening, the education system I worked in was narrowing. This was a complex juxtaposition for me.

I felt fortunate that, by a chance opportunity, I had been asked and able to go on this adventure. I am sure many, many other Headteachers would have loved and have been more deserving to have gone in my place. It changed me and my school practice.

Once you see something, you cannot unsee it. In Japan, schools run from Kindergarten to University. There is also just expectation for moral goodness and hard work. The ethics felt universal. I loved it. There was, however, an expectation from the Japanese that we would embrace their language and culture and instil it in our children in Scotland as a capable workforce. This was the purpose of the all-expenses-paid trip.

Japan were annoyed that our National Qualifications in Scotland focused on China and Mandarin rather than Japanese. Japan felt that given the investment they had made in the industry in the central belt in Scotland that this was not a fair position. Orkney were pioneering in the Japanese language and culture agenda

but sat outside most localised positions due to how the Island is governed as an Independent. Hence my trip to Orkney.

Strategies developed

To continue to believe in moral goodness
That we can learn from other Education Systems
That the world is small
That there is always some trade or compromise expected for praxis to happen
I was able to accept failure and had no strategies to overcome it
I was an Engaged Headteacher-Educator.

Appendix 6

Itinerary Details

Day 1: Friday, 10 February

[Business attire]

	Individually check in the Hotel (If you have already told us that you will return home on Friday evening, you do not need to check in.) Apex Grassmarket Hotel 31-35 Grassmarket, Edinburgh EH1 2HS, Tel 0131 300 3456
18:00	Registration
18:15	Pre-departure session in "Amsterdam room" (-19:00)
19:00	Reception (- 20:30)

Day 2: Saturday, 11 February

[Casual]

	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel
11:00	Meet in the Hotel Lobby. Private coach to the airport
14:00	Flight to London - BA1449
15:30	Arrive in LHR (Terminal 5)
	Claim Luggage and transfer to terminal 3
	Check in at the JAL Counter
19:00	Flight to Japan - JL44

Day 3: Sunday, 12 February

15:55	Arrive at Tokyo Haneda International Airport
17:30	Arrival and Check-in at The Prince Park Tower Tokyo (Timing may vary depending on traffic.) 4-8-1 Shibakoen Minato,Tokyo 105-8563 Tel +81 (0)3 5400 1111 (No arranged Dinner)

NOTES

Day 4: Monday, 13 February

[Business attire]

	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel
10:15	Depart from the hotel
10:45	Imperial Hotel Tower
11:00	Meeting with Ms Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (about 5 min.) Talk by Dr Stephen Baker Regional Director, South Korea and Japan of Scottish Development
11:30	Professor Shigeru Sasajima of Toyo Eiwa University (Ph.D University of Stirling) will give a talk entitled "Language learning in Scotland and Japan"
13:00	Welcome lunch, hosted by Mr Masahiro Ohji, Japan Foundation Venue: Anchanté restaurant in the Dai-Ichi Hotel (French) Joined by Professor Sasajima, and Professor Taeko Seki (Japan Scotland Association), Mr Chotaro Horiuchi, Scottish Development International
14:30	Sightseeing: Meji Jingu shrine Harujuku area
17:00	Return to the hotel (short break)
17:45	Depart from the hotel
18:15	British Embassy Welcome Reception for Ms Hyslop
20:30	Back at hotel (No arranged Dinner)

NOTES

Day 5: Tuesday, 14 February

[Business attire]

	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel Hotel Check out (individually)
08:00	Depart from the hotel
09:20 -13:30	Tokyo Gakugei University Oizumi Elementary School (Visit Details) 9:30 – 10:10 Greetings/Introduction of the School 10:15 – 10:30 Observing pupils' break time 10:30 – 11:15 Observing classes 11:15 – 11:30 Break 11:30 – 12:15 Discussion about Japanese language education Q&A session 12:15 – 13:00 Experience school meal 13:00 – 13:15 Break 13:15 – 13:25 Observing pupils cleaning 13:25 Closing remarks **(group representative remark by:)** 13:30 Departure
15:36 18:33	Bullet Train from Tokyo station Arrive in Kitakami station Arrival and Check-in at Hotel City Plaza Kitakami 1-14-1, Kawagishi, Kitakami, Iwate 024-0032, Tel +81 (0)197 64 0001
19:30	Evening meal in a Japanese restaurant within the hotel (Japanese)

NOTES

Day 6: Wednesday, 15 February
[Business attire]

8:30	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel Hotel Check out (individually) Depart from the hotel
10:20 -13:00	Kamaishi High School (Visit Details) 10:30 – 10:40 Greetings 10:40 – 11:15 Observing classes (subject: English) 11:20 – 11:50 Lunch(School canteen) 12:00 – 12:50 Discussion, Q&A 12:50 – 12:55 Closing remarks **(group representative remark by:)**
13:30	Kamaishi city council office Meeting with Mr Hideki Yamazaki, Deputy Mayor
14:00	Sights visit ・Kamaishi stadium building site (one of the host stadiums for Rugby World Cup Japan 2019) ・Unosumai elementary school and Kamaishi higashi Junior high school building sites (these schools were destroyed bv the Tsunami in 2011)
15:30 18:50 20:25 21:50	Bus to Hanamaki Airport Flight to Osaka Airport (JL2190) arrive at Osaka Airport Arrival and Check-in at New Miyako Hotel 17, Nishikujo-Inmachi Minami-ku, Kyoto 601-8412 Tel +81 (0)75 661 7111 (No arranged Dinner)

NOTES

Day 7: Thursday, 16 February
[Casual] (Skirts are not appropriate for zen meditation)

	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel Hotel Check out (individually)
10:30	Depart from the hotel
11:00	Visit Taizo-in Temple experience zen meditation, and try traditional Buddhist cuisine
14:45	Visit the pagoda at Toji temple (including a special tour)
17:26	Bullet train from Kyoto Station
19:36	Arrive in Shinagawa, Tokyo
20:10	Arrival and Check-in at The Prince Park Tower Tokyo 4-8-1 Shibakoen Minato,Tokyo 105-8563 Tel +81 (0)3 5400 1111 (No arranged Dinner)

NOTES

Day 8: Friday, 17 February

[Business attire for the evening events]

	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel Free time
16:00	Review of the trip (Azalia room B2F The Prince Park Tower Tokyo) (to be joined by some Japan Foundation staffs) (-17:00)
18:45 -20:30	Farewell Reception Hosted by Mr Masahiro Ohji, Japan Foundation (Sakura room B2F The Prince Park Tower Tokyo) **(group representative remark by: _____)**

Day 9: Saturday, 29 October

	Individual breakfast at a designated restaurant within the hotel Hotel Check out (individually)
09:00	Private coach leaves from the Hotel
11:30	Depart from Tokyo Int'l Airport (JL43)
15:10	Arrive at London Heathrow Airport **Please individually proceed to Immigration control and luggage claim at the Terminal 3, and then transfer to Terminal 5 by Heathrow connect.** **At terminal 5, you will need to check in again.**
17:30	Flight to Edinburgh BA1454
18:55	Arrive at Edinburgh Airport

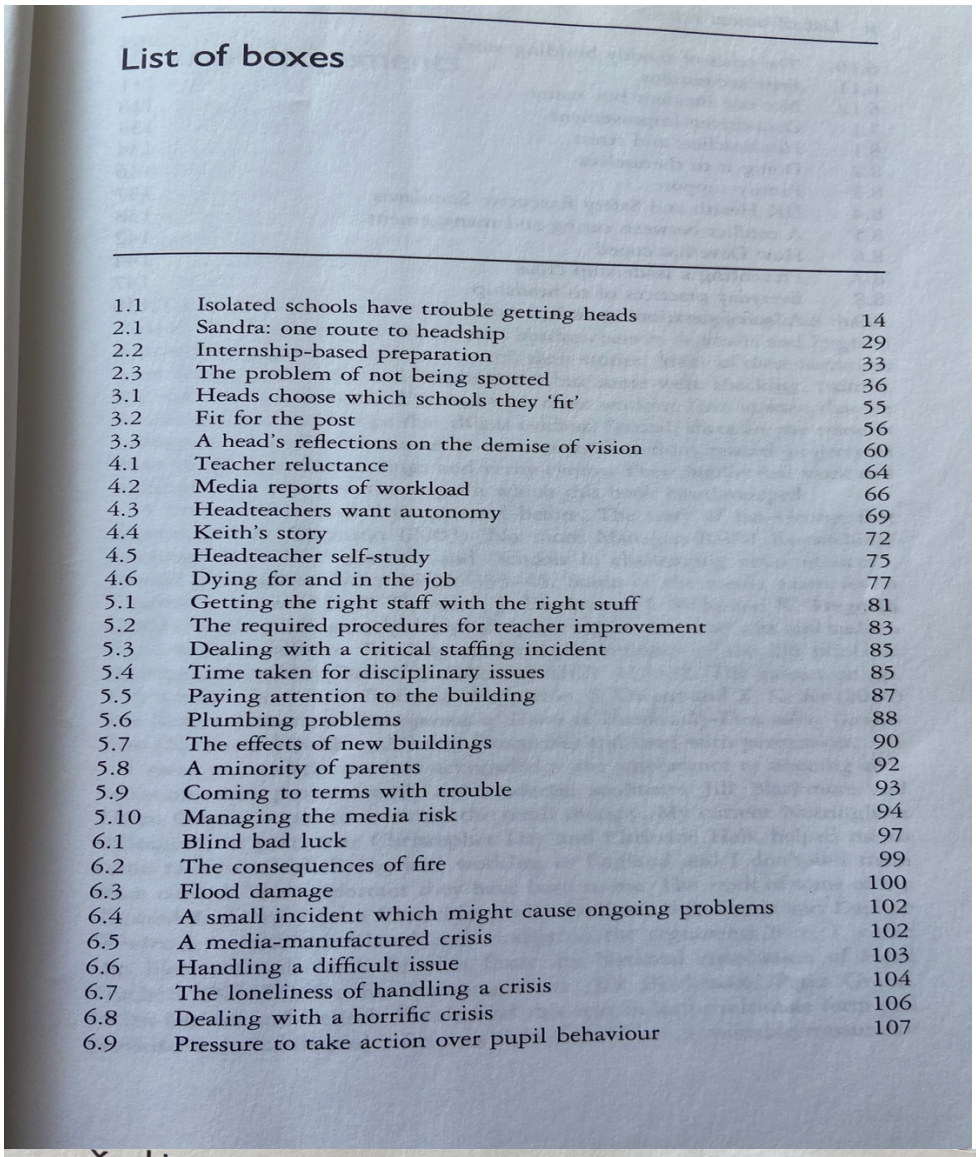
NOTES

Appendix 7

Brighthouse and Woods (1999) - three phases (Developmental Stage)			
Developmental Stage	Timeframe	Professional Identity	Themes
The First phase of Headship: initiation (Brighthouse & Woods, 1999, pp. 67-70).	"Small period of time", but no time frame offered, but do say that internal candidates promoted can miss this stage but have to change their emphasis (Brighthouse & Woods, 1999, p.68).	New Head	• Wrestling with the unfamiliar (Woods, 2002b, p.3).
The Second phase of Headship: the development stage (Brighthouse & Woods, 1999, pp. 70-75).	"The likelihood of it lasting depends upon renewal" (Brighthouse & Woods, 1999, p.72). "Three to four years into this stage, big decisions not grasped in the first stage can be tackled" (Brighthouse & Woods, 1999, p.72). "Capable of being lengthened by successive waves of renewal" (Brighthouse & Woods, 1999, p.72).	Established Head	• Has built strong relationships and can drive new initiatives for school improvement (Woods, 2002b, p.3).
The Third phase of Headship: decline and withdrawal (Brighthouse & Woods, 1999, pp. 75-76).	"Some leaders never make their mark, whose second phase is, in reality, the third phase of leadership – the painful decline and withdrawal (Brighthouse & Woods, 1999, p.75).	Decline and Withdrawal	• 'a brief evening when they lose their power and cease to plan for tomorrow' (Brighthouse and Woods, 1999, p.74)

Appendix 8

Pat Thomson – List of Boxes



List of boxes