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Kaleidoscope: An exploratory study to support children's progression in and through the Capabilities during primary school education.

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Education (EdD)

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Abstract

[1]

The image above, encountered in my history textbook when I was 15 years old, has remained etched in my memory. Although the context escapes me, I remember writing the words 'Born free, in chains to be', and wondering if any of us are ever free. I never imagined that, almost four decades later, I would find myself actively working to broaden an individual's opportunity to be free by exploring ways of enhancing their choices and opportunities through a consideration of personal potential and capacities.

The inspiration for this Dissertation stems from an integration of personal and professional experiences. As shared above, my 15 year old self wondered about freedom, and this thought, together with feelings of not really belonging to this world, periodically revisit me like old and unwelcome acquaintances. During my EdD studies, I questioned the reliance on standardised tests in literacy and numeracy to gauge a child's educational progress. I was reminded of the quote from the TV show The Prisoner, 'I am not a number, I am a free man', and the responding derisory laugh from the interrogator. This concern was heightened by an interaction with a seven year old student that I share in Chapter One. It is my belief that an educator's view of a child should mirror a kaleidoscope, a dynamic whole that changes with every interaction. The purpose of education is to nurture children's development so that their personal kaleidoscope evolves in a manner that maximises their potential for a flourishing life in a flourishing world. This belief influenced my time as a special education teacher when I developed skills based individualised programmes for children with complex needs, programmes unavailable through Irish education policy. I was privileged to receive encouragement from our school inspector who engaged in discussions about this approach and advised me to broaden its reach, prompting my EdD journey.

[1] Image sourced from The New York Public Library, at https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-7583-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99. Image is in the public domain and free to use without restriction.

Introduced to the Capabilities Approach (CA) by EdD tutors, Nicki Hedge and Penny Enslin, I found an approach that resonated with my view of a just world and a flourishing life. However, despite extensive reading on the CA, I was unable to find a detailed specification of the internal capabilities which Martha C. Nussbaum argues are essential to a flourishing life. Determining these internal capabilities for children in Irish primary schools necessitates, I argue, understanding local conceptions of a flourishing life and a world that is worth living in. For this reason, I used focus groups of students, parents, and teachers to understand their perspectives, an interpretation of which I present in Chapter Four. My approach, influenced by Sabrina Alkire's advocacy for multidisciplinary collaboration, is a modest attempt at such an endeavour. While not collaborating directly with professionals from other fields, I engaged with a broad spectrum of literature including education, developmental and social psychology, neuropsychology, psychotherapy, and medicine. These texts, along with focus group insights, form the basis for my analysis and interpretation. Employing a dialectical hermeneutic approach, and influenced perhaps by a form of logic instilled during my B.Sc. in Computer Applications, I outline a specification of internal capabilities and relevant skills in Chapter Five. This contribution aims to support fellow educators in recognising children's educational needs beyond literacy and numeracy alone. It provides a taxonomy framework for use at individual, school, or national levels to broaden children's opportunities to live flourishing lives in an imperfect world. Addressing Elaine Unterhalter's challenge of measuring the immeasurable, I offer a response in Chapter Six, which involves reconceptualising measurement as evaluation.

As I write this abstract, I smile at my naivety at the beginning of this Dissertation process. I did not recognise the challenge and complexity involved in identifying internal capabilities to support personal and societal flourishing. The intricate web of relationships among internal capabilities, skills, individual and societal flourishing, arising from their interdependence was equally unforeseen. An unwritten Dissertation remains, concerning the emotional journey of angst, despair, and elation I experienced while building my understanding to support others.

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Dedication

To Mom and Dad

With infinite love and endless gratitude

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful for the support and guidance provided by my supervisor, Professor Nicki Hedge, throughout my Dissertation journey. Her extensive knowledge, thought-provoking challenges, and supporting care over the years served as navigational aids during this journey, without which I may never have reached my destination.

My heartfelt thanks also go to the parents, teachers, and students who contributed their time and insights as study participants. Their intense interest in the topic and conviction of its significance for Irish primary education rekindled my passion when my energy was waning.

The encouragement from my family, friends, and colleagues, both past and present, has been invaluable, with many unknowingly ensuring I remained on board the Dissertation ship through turbulent waters.

A special thanks to my Mom who always wished that my EdD studies came before her needs. As she embarked on her final journey from this world while I was writing a paragraph in Chapter Five, the final paragraph written in this Dissertation, I believe she was with me, guiding my thoughts and words.

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: Siobhán Whelan

Signature:

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Chapter introduction

In this introductory Chapter, I outline my motivations for choosing this research topic which stem from professional and personal experiences, and the contribution I hope my exploratory study can make to the education system. I next introduce the theories of human development and the Capabilities Approach, with specific emphasis on the version of Martha C. Nussbaum, as theoretical frameworks supporting this research. Then I present my research questions and introduce my research methodology. I next note limits to the scope of my study before introducing the remaining Chapters of my Dissertation.

1.2 Motivation and purpose of the study

During my EdD programme at the University of Glasgow, I was appointed as Principal Teacher in the school where I had served for over two decades. However, when embarking on the EdD programme my role was as a special education teacher, focussing on individualised instruction for children with complex needs including autism, specific speech and language difficulties, and significant behavioural and emotional difficulties. This provision was termed Low Incidence Teaching Hours, requiring a psychological report to qualify a child for support, and I spent six years in this role. Those reports provided valuable information but were of limited use for setting individual educational development targets within a mainstream school setting. My approach involved spending the first month understanding a child's strengths, preferences, and needs as they presented in school, followed by discussions with parents to identify and prioritise the child's educational goals. Next, I would develop a series of steps to achieve these priority targets, many of which were outside literacy and numeracy targets and not explicit in the Irish primary school curriculum that guided our teaching. Without an existing framework, I relied on various sources to guide the creation of these individualised programmes, but I did not document these sources at the time. I observed that children were generally engaged and motivated when they were aware of their targets and the steps towards achieving them.

Equally, there was no suitable framework to gauge children's educational progress. Standardised tests in literacy and numeracy, which provided a STen[2] score, overlooked the significant progress some children achieved towards their individualised education targets,

[2] A STen (Standard Ten) score is a standardised score ranging from one to ten, indicating an individual's performance on a specific test relative to a specific population, aligned with a normal distribution.

for example an improvement in being able to follow instructions of increasing complexity. I believed my work and understanding were crucial, yet I struggled with feeling voiceless, questioning my authority to speak up and the likelihood of being heard. This experience prompted my doctoral journey, and in retrospect, planted the seeds for this Dissertation. I nurtured these seeds during the Policy Analysis course of my EdD in which I focused my assignment on considering the question posed by Theodore Roszak 'Whose interest, then, is Johnny's education serving?' (Roszak, 1978:197). My critical analysis of the Action Plan for Education (Department of Education and Skills, 2016, 2020) led me to conclude that this plan, underpinned by the discourse of a knowledge economy and human capital theory, promotes the interests of individual and collective economic development through education. However, I maintain that education's purpose should embrace a wider spectrum of human development beyond economic growth.

Another experience during my EdD raised further concerns regarding the reliance on STen scores to determine educational success in Ireland, which I next relate with details changed to protect identity. As the weekend approached, seven year old Charlie greeted me as he often did during yard[3] supervision. Charlie had struggled with his emotions but had significantly improved over the year. When I asked how he was, he answered that he was useless at maths. This response stemmed from the report given by his teacher to his parents indicating a low average STen score in mathematics. Despite his teacher also stating that Charlie was coping well with the maths curriculum and noting his lack of confidence and tendency to focus on negatives, Charlie was fixated on his STen score. His strengths as stated by his teacher, such as the positive contribution he made to the class, his caring attitude, and his above-average literacy score, were overlooked. This reaction exemplifies concerns noted by Ball (2018) regarding the impact of testing on self-perception, when individuals see themselves through the medium of numbers and become reduced as a person to what that number tells us. It is also interesting that Charlie did not acknowledge his above average STen score in literacy. Instead of celebrating achievement, scores were used to identify perceived failures. Personal experiences also help me look beyond STen scores. The number of people I know personally, or within my community, who have taken their own lives is too high to count with fingers alone. I believe there are, at times, aspects of life more important to flourishing than literacy and numeracy.

[3] In the UK, the yard (schoolyard) is sometimes referred to as a playground. Yard supervision refers to the supervision of children on the schoolyard during their break-times.

Driven by these experiences, this study's purpose is to identify personal characteristics and capacities that contribute to a flourishing life, and to offer a framework to assist teachers identify educational targets to broaden the opportunities for children to have a flourishing life. During my time as Principal teacher, I have realised that I am working in an education system over which I have no control. My hope is that the internal capabilities outlined in this Dissertation could empower educators by offering them a framework to use that benefits both children and teachers, that could be implemented on a large scale, by individual schools, or by individual teachers. While altering the educational landscape is beyond my reach, I hope to make a difference by sowing seeds of change. I next briefly introduce the overarching discourse and theories of human development as embodied in the Human Development Reports (HDRs), and the theoretical framework of the Capabilities Approach (CA), both of which are considered in greater detail in Chapter Two. The discourse of human development is pertinent because I believe education's purpose is human development. This discourse offers a perspective on human development that values other aspects of life in addition to economic growth. The theoretical framework of the CA offers a way to conceptualise a flourishing life based on a holistic and personalised understanding of an individual. Together, the human development discourse and the CA framework present an alternative to the human capital and knowledge economy theories that have shaped Irish education policy since the 1965 OECD Investment in Education report[4].

1.3 Theoretical frameworks supporting this exploratory study

Human development

Throughout my EdD journey, I pondered the purpose of education. It was a challenging question, but I ultimately decided education was to foster human development. Initially, I struggled to articulate my understanding of human development and gained clarity through the Human Development Reports (HDRs). Human development prioritises the individual, extending concerns beyond mere economic growth to encompass well-being, equality, and opportunities. It is a theory concerned with expanding the opportunities for people to develop to their full potential. The world view presented in this theory of human development helped me to understand the tacit purpose of education I had embraced when developing individual education programmes for children with complex needs. This perspective greatly influences my interpretation of education's purpose as presented

[4] I have been unable to source the text of this document. However, the document is discussed in detail by Hyland & Milne (1992), who also include extracts from the speech delivered by the then Minister of Education to the steering committee of the Investment In Education Report.

through this research. I contend that the purpose of teaching is to enhance a child's opportunity to live a flourishing life and, to borrow a phrase from Nussbaum, 'make a world that is worth living in[5]' (Nussbaum, 2010b:143). Consider Charlie, who initially struggled with his emotions but showed potential for growth. Charlie's emotional development allowed him to present[6] as more content and able to enjoy school compared to earlier in the year. Without progress in emotional development in line with his potential, his opportunity to live a flourishing life would have been diminished. Charlie's emotional development was fostered according to his potential, not against a standardised metric. Although the Human Development Reports inform the view of human development underlying this research, the CA offers a normative and generative framework for understanding personal traits and capacities that enhance an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life.

The Capabilities Approach (CA)

During my EdD journey, I found myself drawn to the CA, particularly Martha C. Nussbaum's version of this. The CA's focus on human dignity, respect, and the individual, along with its acknowledgment of the individual's societal context, resonated with me. Developed by Amartya Sen and then Martha C. Nussbaum for differing purposes, both versions feature human well-being and flourishing as central concerns. As these concerns also underlie this research, I decided the CA would be an apt theoretical framework for my study. The CA has seen diverse applications across fields, drawing on its potential as a normative, evaluative, and generative framework to address issues of human development, individual well-being, and broader social policy (Robeyns, 2006b). For example, Wolff & de-Shalit (2007) used the CA to consider the nature of disadvantage and possible policy responses. Lorgelly et al. (2015) considered the operationalisation of the CA in the field of public health to measure well-being and capability. Haisma et al. (2018) applied the CA to broaden the understanding of child growth beyond mere physical aspects of development. Walker & Unterhalter (2007a), Hart & Brando (2018), and Kellock (2020) amongst numerous others have applied the CA to consider issues of social justice and well-being in education. A common concern among these varied applications is the focus on individual well-being and human flourishing.

[5] Nussbaum (2010b) uses this phrase to indicate the importance of the arts and humanities in education. While some might criticise my grammatical construction for ending in a preposition, I consistently use Nussbaum's phrase throughout this Dissertation.

[6] I cannot definitively assert Charlie's contentment. However, my professional evaluation based on observations was that Charlie consistently appeared more content and happier at school than previously.

The CA typically emphasises the substantive freedoms (Sen, 1999) or the combined capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011) available to individuals. My research concentrates on Nussbaum's concept of internal capabilities. Nussbaum (1987, 2011) describes these as an individual's personality traits, intellectual and physical capacities, and personal states, that can be trained or developed and given suitable conditions allow a person to 'be in a position to choose well and act well' (Nussbaum, 1987:20). Education, in Nussbaum's view, should foster these internal capabilities, and a just society should enable people to exercise these internal capabilities when they so choose. My focus on internal capabilities stems from two considerations. Firstly, Nussbaum (2011) lists 10 central Capabilities[7] that constitute a minimally just life, yet a clear specification of the corresponding internal capabilities appears elusive. My research proposes a framework that I contend provides one specification of these internal capabilities, supporting educators and encouraging further exploration and discussion. Secondly, I refuse to accept powerlessness in a society that has yet to meet a minimal level of justice. Hence I contend that developing internal capabilities is a proactive measure while aspiring to the emergence of such a world. The focus group discussions serving as a source of data in this research revealed that such development could promote the creation of a just society, as individuals play a pivotal role in shaping and maintaining a world that is worth living in. The CA not only provides a theoretical framework for this study, but also shaped the dual objectives of this research. The first objective is to present an understanding of a flourishing life and a world that is worth living in, specific to the context of Irish primary school education. The second objective is to produce a framework of internal capabilities that might be nurtured within each individual according to their potential. This framework will serve as a resource for educators to create learning objectives that enhance the opportunity for children to lead flourishing lives. To this end, I formulated three research questions.

1.4 Research questions

I designed my research questions to guide my research process and achieve the aims of this research presented above.

1. What is a good life in a world that is worth living in?
2. What capacities do each of us need to have this good life and to help create a world that is worth living in?

[7] In this Dissertation, I adopt the convention of capitalising all references to Nussbaum's (2011) list of 10 Capabilities and the individual Capabilities therein.

3. What are the skills that support an individual's opportunity to help create this life for ourselves and others?

These questions evolved during my research process and were finalised prior to the focus group discussions, with a revised version presented in Chapter Three. It is important to note that these questions were intended for exploration and to formulate an initial response, rather than provide an absolute answer. My reason not to claim a definitive response is tied to my philosophical stance, which is detailed in Chapter Three.

1.5 Introducing the research methodology

I will briefly introduce the research paradigm and methods used in my study and detail these further in Chapter Three. I designed this study as an exploratory qualitative interpretive study, drawing on a dialectical hermeneutic approach. This approach meant continuously building and refining my understanding as I engaged with the data, and this refined understanding in turn prompted further data collection. My data was collected from two sources, existing literature[8] and three focus groups of parents, students, and teachers. The literature data provided an initial framework of internal capabilities to support a flourishing life, which I divided into two categories. The first category was higher level internal capabilities, representing valued personal beings and doings[9], which I initially termed capacities. The second category listed numerous skills that could be developed by an individual. These categories were then explored with the focus groups after their discussions on recognising a good life and a world that is worth living in. I analysed and interpreted data as I was collecting it with further analysis and interpretation following the final focus group session, a session that signalled the end of my data collection. My primary methods of data analysis are drawn from Hsieh & Shannon's (2005) presentation of conventional and directed content analysis, and I discuss this further in Chapter Three.

1.6 Limits to the study – what it is not doing

Before setting out the organisation of this Dissertation, I will point out some limits of my research. This research does not address combined capabilities or external conversion factors, both of which I explain in Chapter Two. That is, I do not consider the wider social, political, or environmental factors external to a person that may influence their actual lived life. I have two reasons for this. Firstly, as mentioned above, I found it

[8] I explain my use of literature as data in Chapter Three.
[9] Valued beings and doings refer to states of the person and activities respectively, for example a state of 'being well nourished' (Sen, 1985:197) and an activity such as reading.

difficult to source information on the internal capabilities that are relevant for a flourishing life and so I hope that my research on internal capabilities helps to fill a gap. Secondly, as a teacher, presently I can support a child to develop their internal capabilities while waiting for a world that grants equal positive freedom for a person to exercise these capabilities. Furthermore, I do not consider issues related to distributive justice in this research. For example, I do not raise the issue of deciding which children receive additional educational support based on their developing internal capabilities. Such considerations move beyond the limited scope of determining the internal capabilities that can enhance an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life. Finally, although a difficult decision, I concluded that I did not have the time to address literacy or numeracy skills here. Although I included literacy and numeracy as skills for focus group discussion, the groups spent significantly more time discussing other internal capabilities. This indicated to me that while literacy and numeracy are important skills, the groups were, in common with me, more interested in exploring unfamiliar and undefined capabilities and skills.

1.7 Dissertation Chapter organisation

I have organised this Dissertation into six Chapters. This first Chapter introduces my topic of research and articulates the contribution I am trying to make to the lives of others through the research questions that I explore. I briefly introduce the theoretical frameworks that support my study and the methodologies I employ. I also draw a boundary beyond which my study tries not to stray.

In Chapter Two, I explain the history and concept of human development presented in the Human Development Reports and underlying this research. Following this I provide a more detailed introduction to the CA than is provided in this First Chapter, and I explore some key principles and challenges associated with the CA. Next, I situate my research in the policy landscape of Irish education and consider education's contribution to human development with specific reference to three key policy texts. I end this Chapter by discussing my understanding of the concepts of flourishing, internal capabilities, skills, and ability.

Chapter Three details my overall philosophical stance and its relationship to the design and execution of this research. I explain my rationale for choosing a qualitative and interpretive design and I discuss the dialectical hermeneutic methodology that infuses this research endeavour, culminating in the presentation of this Dissertation. As an application of the CA carries its own ethical and methodological requirements these are also discussed

in a sub-section of this Chapter. The methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation are presented along with some examples from my research, and I discuss some of the challenges I faced. In this Chapter I also present the ethical implications I considered and the measures of goodness I sought to attain.

Chapter Four is the first Chapter presenting my interpreted analysis of the literature and empirical data I collected. This Chapter presents a picture of a flourishing life in a world that is worth living in that can be supported through education, and I discuss some elements that appear under emphasised through Nussbaum's (2011) list of 10 Capabilities to support a 'dignified and minimally flourishing life' (Nussbaum, 2011:33). It is the opportunity to be able to live in such a world and pursue this life that the internal capabilities I present in Chapter Five hope to support.

In Chapter Five, I present and discuss the internal capabilities and skill domains interpreted, again, from literature and empirical data that contribute to an individual's opportunity for a flourishing life and their ability to foster and maintain a world worth living in. This understanding, I suggest, can be used to identify priority targets beyond literacy and numeracy for individualised education programmes. However, each of these domains could individually feature as the topic for this Dissertation. My purpose in this Chapter is to present an overview of, and rationale for, their importance, and perhaps plant seeds that may be nurtured by others.

In the final Chapter, Chapter Six, I provide an example of operationalising the framework of internal capabilities and skills with a specific focus on evaluating skill development. This discussion offers an alternative to using STen scores as measures of educational progress. I contend this method serves to resist reducing an individual's educational progression to a single number, a practice Ball (2018) criticises as diminishing children to one dimensional beings. It also links to Unterhalter's (2017) reflections on the challenges of measuring the unmeasurable aspects of education. I then consider some wider implications and contributions to educational policy that my Dissertation may make. Following this, I return to the limitations of my research and identify future research that might address these limitations. Finally, I reflect on the influences that undertaking this research has had on my perspectives and practices, both professionally and personally.

Chapter 2: Contextualising my research

2.1 Chapter introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is to situate my research in the context of human development and the Capabilities Approach (CA) in Irish primary school education. To achieve this, I consider (i) human development (ii) the theoretical and conceptual framework of the CA (iii) education's contribution to advancing sustainable human development, and (iv) local education policy. I also contextualise my research by providing my understanding of flourishing, internal capabilities, skills, and ability that both informs and is informed by this study.

2.2 Introducing Human Development

The theory of human development underlying this research is attributed to the Indian economist Mahbub ul Haq (Baru, 1998; United Nations Development Programme, 2020). This emerged as a response to the limitations of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measure of a nation's quality of life (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). One recognised limitation of using GDP as a measure of a nation's quality of life is the masking of inequalities in various domains such as income, gender, and decision making participation across and within nations (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). Furthermore, despite economic growth, nations may not see corresponding improvements in areas such as education, health, and political liberty (Nussbaum, 2010b, 2011). The Human Development Reports (HDR), published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) are recognised by Alkire and Deneulin (2009) as a key communicator of the concept of human development.

Human development is always evolving, that is, at any given moment, individuals and collectives are at a certain point of development and this state is dynamic and never static. Central to the UNDP and HDR visions of human development, is a focus on creating an environment that enlarges the choices and freedoms available to people. These choices and freedoms include living a healthy and lengthy life, securing the resources necessary for a decent standard of living, accessing education, along with 'political freedom, guaranteed human rights and personal self-respect' (United Nations Development Programme, 1990:1). The HDRs view freedom as the opportunities people have to live lives they value (United Nations Development Programme, 2020, 2024a) in an environment that enables people 'to develop their full potential' (United Nations Development Programme, 1990:1). Similarly, this research focuses on choice, freedom, and potential. By supporting children

to develop their internal capabilities in line with their potential, educators aim to broaden the range of choices and opportunities available to a child beyond what would be possible without such development.

In sum, the theory of human development is concerned with creating the conditions to enable individuals to lead flourishing lives, and it supports people to form and exercise human capabilities in line with the choices they make (United Nations Development Programme, 2023). The CA may be viewed as an approach to operationalise the principles of this theory and, as stated in Chapter One, is a suitable framework for this study due to its emphasis on respect, dignity, and flourishing.

2.3 The theoretical and conceptual framework of the Capabilities Approach

In this subsection I first introduce the CA and then examine the key concepts of functionings and capabilities, choice and freedom, and, conversion factors and adaptive preferences. I next discuss the concept of personhood that is valued in the CA, and follow this by considering an understanding of flourishing in and through the CA. I then consider the case of children in terms of the CA and end this section by addressing key criticisms levelled at the CA that are particularly pertinent to my research with respect to universalism, the list debate, and a focus on the individual.

Introduction to the CA

The Capabilities Approach (CA) may be viewed as an approach to human development (Martins, 2020) and can be considered synonymous with the term Human Development Approach (Nussbaum, 2011). Two versions of the CA are generally recognised, as introduced in Chapter One, and these have been interpreted and applied by many others. Economist Amartya Sen originally formulated the CA to evaluate human development beyond mere economic concepts and metrics to consider people's well-being and agency freedoms and achievements. Sen introduced the concept of capabilities in his Tanner lectures on equality (Sen, 1987) and his book, *Development as Freedom* (Sen, 1999), is considered a key text on his theory of the CA (Wells, 2022). Philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum,[10] developed the CA as a partial theory of justice based on the concept of dignity. Nussbaum (1996, 2011) argues for 10 Capabilities that must be guaranteed to each individual at a threshold level for a society to reach a minimal standard of justice. My early exploration of the CA included both Sen and Nussbaum's versions. As I will discuss in Chapter 3, my epistemological view is that my knowledge is shaped by my interactions

[10] All references to Nussbaum refer to the works of Martha C. Nussbaum unless otherwise stated.

with people, situations, and the environment. Consequently, my understanding of the CA has been influenced by both Sen and Nussbaum, and so I include Sen's version of the CA in the early paragraphs of this section before drawing predominantly on Nussbaum's version thereafter.

Both authors emphasise human well-being and flourishing within the CA framework. For Sen, well-being[11] encompasses the valued beings and doings that a person can actually achieve, which he terms substantial freedoms. Nussbaum relates this idea to her concept of 'combined capabilities' (Nussbaum, 2011:21), referring to the opportunities a person has through the interplay of personal capacities and their socio-economic and political context. That is, a person may possess the developed capacity for a desired functioning[12] but external factors may restrict the exercising of this capacity. For example, a woman may wish to vote and possess the cognitive ability and knowledge required to make informed choices in political elections, but the national law in her country does not provide her with a vote. In the CA, her well-being is compromised as her freedom to make that choice is denied. This freedom of choice raises questions in relation to children and education and is further discussed in later paragraphs. Two additional types of capabilities are defined by Nussbaum (1987, 1996, 2011). Basic capabilities are described as innate to an individual and form the foundations for internal capabilities. Internal capabilities are basic capabilities that have matured through education or development. This study explores internal capabilities and I revisit this concept later in the Chapter. First, however, I will introduce some key concepts in the CA, beginning with the distinction between functionings and capabilities.

Key concepts in the CA

This sub-section begins with a discussion of the central concepts of capabilities and functionings in the CA, with reference to the distinct interpretations by Sen and Nussbaum. I then discuss the importance of choice and freedom in both accounts and explain the kind of freedom embraced by the CA as being that of positive freedom. I next introduce the concepts of conversion factors and adaptive preferences as mediating influences on individuals' abilities to achieve valued beings and doings. I discuss the reasons to

[11] The terms well-being and (human) flourishing are used interchangeably in much literature. I include both terms in this study. Well-being is a key term in Irish education policy, for example, the Wellbeing Policy (Department of Education and Skills, 2018). Flourishing is a key term in Nussbaum's Capability Approach.

[12] A functioning can be understood as the exercising of a chosen action and/or way of being. I return to this concept in the sub-section titled Key concepts in the CA.

prioritise capabilities over functionings, despite the practical necessity of using functionings as an observable proxy when considering unobservable capability development. I end this sub-section by introducing my rationale for focussing on internal capabilities in this study.

The concepts of capabilities and functionings feature in both Sen's and Nussbaum's versions of the CA, albeit with distinct interpretations. Sen (1999) defines an individual's capability set as a collection of achievable functionings from which one may choose. Nussbaum (2000) views functionings as exercised chosen capabilities. Following Sen, it is by considering the functionings available to a person that we can determine their capability set. Following Nussbaum, it is by considering the capabilities a person can actually exercise that we can understand the functionings available to them. In this study I adopt Nussbaum's understanding, viewing capabilities as potential functionings that depend on a person's capacity and supportive external conditions for realisation. For example, Nussbaum's Capability of Play, defined as being 'able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities' (Nussbaum, 2011:34) has potential functionings that may be realised by going for a walk or taking part in sports. Despite their differing presentations of these concepts, both approaches are concerned with the functionings open to a person should they choose to exercise them. This notion of choice is integral to both approaches and is reflected in their concerns with freedom and opportunities.

Sen (1999) argues that well-being assessments should focus on the freedom and opportunities people have to achieve valued beings and doings, meaning states of being and activities. Dominguez-Serrano et al. (2019) note that applying the CA to well-being issues enhances what an individual can be and do, and informs policies that improve the opportunities of achieving these valued states and activities. Robeyns (2003a) provides an example of applying the CA in policy design to remove the obstacles limiting a person's freedom to live a life they value. However, this does not indicate the notion of positive freedom which Pelenc (2017) identifies as integral to the CA. Positive freedom focuses on an individual's autonomy to act rather than focusing solely on external constraints to action (Courtland et al., 2022; Carter, 2022). For example, I may be considered free to voice concerns as nobody is preventing me from doing so (negative freedom). This suggests I have the opportunity to voice my concerns. However, this opportunity alone is not enough if I lack the confidence to express my views and this means that I do not possess the positive freedom to do so. Thus, while the opportunity to speak may be present the actual

freedom to do so is lacking. Similarly, the absence of obstacles to living a valued life does not equate to positive freedom if one cannot conceive or plan for such a life. Empowerment arises from developing the capabilities that broaden the available choices for individuals and groups and by protecting the opportunities to exercise these choices (Biggeri & Santi, 2012). This understanding of potential and broadening opportunities serves as a central goal for this study. Teachers should not seek to develop a child's internal capabilities to a nominated threshold but instead seek to develop an individual's internal capabilities in line with his/her potential and relative to their current ability. This increase in line with personal potential seeks to promote the individual's level of independence and broaden future potentials for the child. In this understanding of positive freedom, internal capabilities also serve as conversion factors.

Oosterlaken (2021), Ibrahim (2021), and Walker (2021), view conversion factors as mediating influences between the resources available to a person and their freedom to achieve and exercise valued beings and doings. Robeyns (2005) classifies these conversion factors into social, environmental and personal factors, and I propose that a classification of political factors relating to governments and states[13] may also be useful. For example, Wilder (2021) draws attention to legislation, introduced in multiple states prior to the United States 2020 Presidential election, designed to make it difficult for certain demographics to cast their vote, representing a restrictive political conversion factor. Even if protective political factors were put in place to enable every eligible person to cast their vote, social factors identified by Wilder (2021) such as voter intimidation by private individuals and groups, including the threat of violence, can still deter an individual from voting. Hence while political and social conversion factors can influence each other, both can also operate independently. Similarly, each type of conversion factor can interact with and influence the others. For example, political factors can shape social norms, and social factors can influence personal beliefs and preferences. However, political, social, and environmental conversion factors remain outside the scope of this study that is concerned with internal capabilities. Personal conversion factors, as described by Robeyns (2005), include internal capabilities such as reading skills amongst other features such as sex and physical condition. A person may have a wealth of information available to support them in making an informed and reasoned judgement when voting, but making this judgement is supported by a developed capacity of critical and reflective thinking in line

[13] The Oxford English Dictionary defines political as 'Of, belonging to, or concerned with the form, organization, and administration of a state, and with the regulation of its relations with other states' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023a).

with personal potential. Another form of personal conversion factor in the context of the CA is adaptive preferences.

Nussbaum (2000) explains adaptive preferences as individuals being satisfied with their lives, conditions, and what they can do, because they are unaware of alternatives, or hold no hope or aspiration for change, accepting a restricted set of functionings compared to their capabilities. Writers such as Elster (1982) and Sen (1985), referenced by Nussbaum (2000), understand adaptive preferences as individuals' preferences responding to conditions, as opposed to being hard-wired into people. Nussbaum (2011) suggests that people learn to avoid desiring things they perceive as unattainable. Differences in the options available to us influence our thoughts, which in turn influence the options we believe are available to us. Nussbaum (2000) provides two illustrative examples of adaptive preferences acting as personal conversion factors. She presents the case of Jayamma, a woman who accepted a lower wage and lack of promotion prospects compared to her male counterparts. We are told Vasanti's story, who was trapped in an abusive marriage as she saw no viable alternative. Both Jayamma and Vasanti saw no possibility for change and chose from a restricted set of functionings in order to make the best of their lot. Such adaptive preferences reflect an individual's belief about their own capabilities and the options available to them in life. In these examples provided by Nussbaum (2000), the women's capacity to aspire and hope for a future that differed from their present, were constrained or perhaps silenced.

Adaptive preferences such as limited aspirations, silenced hopes and internalised societal norms can be challenged by developing internal capabilities in line with potential. For example, the vulnerable students who took part in the study by Pelenc (2017) were empowered by their participation in the study and started to conceive of different futures than they had previously imagined. By developing internal capabilities such as those I present in Chapter Five, individuals can expand their opportunities and challenge the limitations imposed by adaptive preferences. For example, perhaps being able to safely express their preferences would have helped Jayamma and Vasanti to visualise and achieve valued capabilities and functionings. This requires the external conditions of safety, and the internal capability of being able to express oneself. As I will explain in Chapter Five, being able to express oneself is an important internal capability. As the women in the above examples had adapted to their situations, the choices they believed available to them were restricted in comparison to their capabilities and the lives that were potentially

available to them. This importance of choice and broadening the choices available to people is Nussbaum's (2000) reasoning for focusing on capabilities rather than functionings. Conversely, Sen prioritises functionings and views choice as an element of individual functionings. Crocker (1995) provides the example of choosing to eat as a functioning related to food. As noted by Crocker (1995), in Sen's version of the CA functionings have to take precedence as capabilities are derived from functionings and only exist through the presence of functionings. Aligning with Nussbaum's version of the CA for political purposes, in relation to this study, while recognising the interrelationship that Nussbaum (1997) emphasises between capabilities and functionings, I suggest an ultimate focus on capabilities. This is because, firstly, functionings depend on the presence of underlying capabilities and, secondly, this study seeks to broaden an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life in a world that is worth living in. Furthermore, I suggest that a focus on capabilities rather than functionings is important because focusing on functionings may mask differences in underlying capabilities, as I explain below. However, as I will then discuss, particularly in relation to children, it is sometimes necessary to require a functioning to be exercised to support the development of, and to determine the presence of, a related capability.

My suggestion to focus on capabilities, introduced above, builds on the insights of Biggeri et al. (2006) and Di Tommaso (2007) who recognise that a single capability can facilitate the realisation of other capabilities. Similarly, an observed functioning can reflect the actualisation of multiple capabilities. For example, Toni and Ash both regularly visit the gym. Toni aims to improve health and fitness, while Ash seeks social connection. Through regular gym visits, Toni exercises the Capability of Play[14] as a functioning and is also developing the Capability of Bodily Health[15]. Ash is equally exercising the Capability of Play but is also exercising and developing the Capability of Affiliation[16]. Therefore a functioning, observed as the exercising of a capability, can serve more than one capability simultaneously. Similarly in education, focusing on a STen literacy score as the current functioning can mask differences in individual capability. Consider eight year old Danny and Ellis, who both achieved a STen score of 5 in their standardised literacy test, considered an average score. Danny receives significant support and encouragement at home and this score is reflective of Danny's potential. Ellis on the other hand, faces a

[14] The Capability of Play is defined as 'being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities' (Nussbaum, 2011:34).
[15] The Capability of Bodily health includes 'being able to have good health' (Nussbaum, 2011:33).
[16] The Capability of Affiliation includes 'being able to … engage in various forms of social interaction' (Nussbaum, 2011:34).

challenging home environment with significant caregiving responsibilities, and has the potential for much higher achievement. Their identical current functioning masks significant differences in capability. This does not imply that functionings are unimportant.

Nussbaum (2000) emphasises the importance placed on government responsibility to keep functioning in view. Furthermore, in relation to supporting children to develop internal capabilities it is necessary to ensure children can exercise a capability as a functioning. This is an example of the necessity of requiring an individual to exercise a functioning in order to ascertain their possession of the requisite capability. This is often the case with capability assessments that are not based on subjective assessment, for example in the studies conducted by Van Ootegem & Verhofstadt (2015) and Di Tommaso (2007). In developing a structural equation model for children's capabilities in India, Di Tommaso notes that child well-being is an unobservable variable that is linked to observable functionings. The Capability of Bodily Health is inferred by Di Tommaso (2007) through the observable achieved functionings of height and weight for age. Van Ootegem & Verhofstadt (2015) reference several empirical studies premised on the CA that use the measurement of functionings as information on capabilities. In such cases, the exhibition of a given functioning is understood as a proxy for the existence of the underlying capability. I advocate a similar use of exhibited functioning for the skills presented in Chapter Five. By observing a child performing a skill, it is possible to make an informed professional judgement as to the development progress of the related internal capability. These observations may be made at different points in time allowing a picture of capability development to emerge by comparing the current functioning with the previous. Such a practice is in keeping with Nussbaum's view that 'we infer the presence of the capability from the actual functioning: it seems hard to do otherwise empirically' (Nussbaum, 2011:22).

It is the view of Walker & Unterhalter (2007b) that Nussbaum (2003) also recognises that it may be necessary to require the exercising of a functioning that nourishes a capability in order to be able to promote that capability. This point has particular relevance in relation to skill development. To develop a skill we need to practise it, and practising a skill requires exercising the developing internal capability as a functioning. In a discussion of intellectual and perceptual-motor skills, Rosenbaum et al. (2001) recognise that a skill aids goal achievement 'with increasing likelihood as a result of practice' (Rosenbaum et al.,

2001:454). However, people should not usually be pushed into certain functionings, 'once the stage is fully set, the choice is up to them' (Nussbaum, 2000:88). In embracing the centrality of choice I agree with Nussbaum's focus on capabilities rather than functionings. However, I leave concerns of setting the stage to others and consider the actors' readiness for this stage by focussing on internal capabilities alone. I view staging concerns as relating to the political and social supports rightly emphasised by both Nussbaum and Sen as necessary to realising valued capabilities and functionings. However these necessary supports will be of no benefit if the person has not developed the internal capabilities required to exercise a particular functioning. Having the supporting internal capabilities determines whether or not the actor is ready. In this study I am particularly interested in the actor's readiness for a flourishing life and in helping to create and maintain a world that is worth living in. This is a foundation stone for this research with its focus on increasing an individual's opportunity for a flourishing life (the actor) in an imperfect world (the stage), and Chapter Five develops a view of the internal capabilities and supporting skills that may support an individual's readiness.

A concept of personhood

Nussbaum's perspective on flourishing through the CA is based on a concept of personhood that values individuality, dignity, respect, and self-determination. Furthermore, individuals should not be subordinated to the needs of others, the collective, or the economy. Both Sen and Nussbaum[17] draw on Kant's moral principle 'Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end' (Kant, 1785/1948:91). Sen (2003) interprets this to mean that the freedom of individuals to pursue valued lives should be central to development assessment, even if economic development may enhance these freedoms and achievements. Recognising each person as an end in themselves, rather than merely as a means to economic progress, allows for the identification of those who remain disadvantaged despite economic growth (Nussbaum, 2000). With regard to education, this element of personhood demands that the purpose of education cannot be reduced to promoting economic development.

Nussbaum (2000) acknowledges the contribution of individuals in shaping a world that is worth living in. However, this must also involve 'fostering of the good of persons taken

[17] Nussbaum departs from the Kantian account of human dignity in some respects in her later writings, for example in Frontiers of Justice (Nussbaum, 2006b), the dignity of humans and non-human animals is grounded on the concept of animality.

one by one' (Nussbaum, 2000:74). By prioritising the individual over the collective, Nussbaum (2000) argues for an individual concept of personhood which is independent of societal values, cognition, perception, or chance (White, 2013). This perspective necessitates that society values 'the dignity and worth of the individual above the collective power of the society' (White, 2013:83). Despite criticism of this focus on the individual, which I explore in the section below titled Challenges to the CA, Nussbaum (2000) maintains that every person should be treated as an end in themselves, deserving of equal respect. Nussbaum (2006b) notes that equal respect is what allows us to say that person A is just as much an individual as person B. We recognise the other, seek to preserve in them what is valuable to being human, protect the possibility of their realisation, and also their ability for self-realisation (Green, 2010). Respect is also a relational concept, culturally and socially construed by how we show (dis)respect for others (Green, 2010). This is referenced by Nussbaum in the definition of her Capability of Affiliation that includes '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' (Nussbaum, 2011:34). By treating one person as equal to another, the CA 'commits itself to respect for people's powers of self-definition' (Nussbaum, 2011:18).

The notion of self-determination in the concept of personhood embodied by the CA[18] is variously addressed under terms including self-realisation (Giovanola, 2005; Nussbaum, 2006b, 2011), autonomy (Sen, 1985; Nussbaum, 2006b; Hedge & MacKenzie, 2016), and agency (Sen, 1985, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000, 2011; Bessant, 2014). Nussbaum (2000) recognises the dignified free being as one who shapes their own life in relation to others, and who is a 'source of agency and worth in her own right' (Nussbaum, 2000:69). Self-determination involves not alone freedom of choice, but 'the capacity for reflective self-evaluation' (Frankfurt, 1971:7) that motivates a person to action. It is this capacity that differentiates people from other higher order animals[19]; that allows a person to want to be different from their current state and situation, and to take action to design, plan, and direct their own lives in accordance with their own values and goals. Furthermore, our self-determination and realisation is an ongoing process, a process of becoming that is both influenced by and influences, the society in which we live (Giovanola, 2005).

[18] All references to the Capability Approach hereafter pertain to Nussbaum's interpretation unless specified otherwise.

[19] Although not referenced by Frankfurt (1971), this understanding of an ability to choose is also shared by Aristotle, in The Nicomachean Ethics (Aristotle, 350 B.C.E./2009), as a distinguishing feature of being human.

Nussbaum (2000) links the concepts of self-determination and dignity, arguing that dignity is fulfilled in individuals who can shape their own life rather than being formed by the winds of chance, and they do this in 'cooperation and reciprocity with others' (Nussbaum, 2000:72). Through this belief, Nussbaum brings the concept of dignity from a Kantian to an Aristotelian framing, moving from viewing rationality as the key concept in human dignity, to including sociability and an awareness of the temporal and dependent nature of human functionings as part of human dignity. This concept of dignity provides the foundation for viewing Capabilities as intrinsically important and not merely as instrumental means to a life of dignity (Nussbaum, 2006b). Nussbaum (2006b) further argues that a person's dignity is violated if that person does not secure a threshold level of any of the 10 Capabilities she presents as necessary for a society to be considered minimally just. I suggest that a person's dignity is also violated if they are denied the opportunity to achieve an independent level of functioning commensurate with their potential. This requires supporting students to develop their internal capabilities and skills in line with their potential. As I elaborate in the following paragraphs, building on Nussbaum (2006b), this enhances their level of independence and maximising independence commensurate with potential is essential for upholding an individual's dignity and self-respect.

Nussbaum (2006b) argues that the provision of wheelchair access for all public facilities is a public task, as a person should not have to rely on others in order to access public spaces. This independence is 'essential to the dignity and self-respect of people with impairments' (Nussbaum, 2006b:167). However, I do not wish to imply that a person who cannot function independently in some way due to the nature of their disability cannot achieve a life worthy of human dignity or, worse, might be viewed as an undignified person. To counter this implication I introduce the qualifier of functioning according to individual potential. Consider three different children: Adam, Bonita, and Frankie. Adam, now aged four, requires significant support to communicate his needs. Adam spent his early years in a challenging household environment that negatively affected his verbal and gestural capacities. Bonita is also aged four and requires similar support with communication. Bonita spent her early years in a supportive household and has a profound general learning disability. Frankie, also aged four, is able to communicate with others as expected for the developmental level of a child of their age. At this point in time, Frankie's dignity is realised, *inter alia*, by being able to communicate independently in line with the potential

for his/her chronological age. The dignity of Adam and Bonita is being realised through the support they receive in order to communicate with others.

There is a difference, however, between Adam and Bonita as time progresses in terms of the potential development of their independent communicative ability. Adam, with support and training, can learn to communicate independently to a level that matches Frankie. Bonita, due to her particular profound general learning disability, is unable to develop her communicative ability beyond that which she now possesses at age four. To respect Adam's dignity, it is essential that he is supported in developing his communicative powers in line with his potential. To leave Adam requiring support when he could have assuaged the winds of chance neglects his dignity. Bonita, to assuage the winds of chance, requires support to communicate and respecting her dignity necessitates that this support be provided. This view of respecting an individual's dignity aligns with Nussbaum's (2006b) discussion on disability. In that discussion Nussbaum observes that if a person can achieve independent functioning then they should be supported to do so. If a person requires care and assistance, then it should be provided.

Flourishing in and through the CA

To flourish in and through the CA means having the opportunity and capacity to live a chosen and valued life, in an environment that recognises and affirms the elements of personhood discussed above. Human flourishing is a multi-dimensional concept encompassing political, social/civil, material, and cultural dimensions (Crocker & Robeyns, 2009; Spence, 2009). This concept includes equity, empowerment, sustainability and efficiency (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009; Deneulin, 2009). It is also associated with well-being, stability, public engagement, distributional equity, meaningful employment, and fulfilling relationships (Spence, 2009). Given its multi-dimensional nature, flourishing is not a single state as a person may secure certain elements of flourishing or well-being in one dimension, while not securing elements in another dimension (Wilson-Strydom & Walker, 2015). Policy formulations and assessments of human flourishing and well-being draw on diverse theories including: a Platonist account of the good (Demos, 1937; Giovanola & Fermani, 2012); fundamental human needs (Max-Neef et al., 1991; Pelenc, 2017); basic human needs (Maslow, 1943); a social provisioning approach (Domínguez-Serrano et al., 2019) and, as a historical antecedent to Nussbaum's CA, an Aristotelian concept of eudaimonia and flourishing (Nussbaum, 2000; Aristotle, 350 B.C.E./2009).

This study draws indirectly on many of these theories through the literature data[20] but I align primarily with the terminology of flourishing and Nussbaum's Aristotelian derived conceptualisation.

Flourishing requires recognising and affirming the elements of personhood presented above. Although personal and external conversion factors both influence flourishing, this study focuses on how personal conversion factors, as internal capabilities, contribute to the opportunity of being able to flourish. Flourishing includes being able to strive to realise one's potential, and involves 'a deliberate reflexive practice toward self-realization and fulfilment' (Sharma-Brymer & Brymer, 2020:5). In determining if people are in a position to flourish, the focus is on what people are able to do and to be, both now and in the future (Sen, 1999; Alkire & Deneulin, 2009). Drawing from the work of Sen (1997), Unterhalter (2009) equates human flourishing with the opportunity each person has to live a life they have both chosen and value. This recognises Nussbaum's (2000) linkage of human choice and desire on one hand, and human flourishing on the other. To flourish requires positive freedom to live a life one views as worthwhile and the expansion of people's positive freedom is key to being able to flourish (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009; Johnson, 2009).

Equally fundamental to flourishing is the freedom and opportunity to conceptualise a life one views as worthwhile. This perspective acknowledges that particular specifications of flourishing can differ according to culture, class setting, population, and age (Robeyns, 2017; Sharma-Brymer & Brymer, 2020). As demonstrated by Wilson-Strydom & Walker (2015), being able to flourish as an individual also involves social and relational dimensions. To be able to flourish in society requires the ability to live in society, to cooperate, and to dream of a better world (Comim, 2011), while also working collectively to create the circumstances through which individuals and collectives can flourish (Nussbaum, 2000; Deneulin, 2009). The social and relational nature of individual flourishing is also supported by Wolff & de-Shalit (2007). In a study conducted to analyse the concept of disadvantage with British and Israeli participants, Wolff & de-Shalit (2007) concluded that although independence is an important part of being able to flourish, so too is being able to have feelings for others, to express these appropriately, and to be able to care for others. Furthermore, flourishing as explained by Nussbaum (2006b) is not only inter-personal but also inter-generational and inter-species. The ability to flourish both now and in the future is enhanced through relationships with each other, those who come

[20] In this study, one source of data is existing literature. I term this literature data and I explain this in Chapter 3.

after us, other sentient species, and the world of nature. A sustainable human and nature connection is essential not alone for the health of the planet but also for human flourishing (Sharma-Brymer & Brymer, 2020).

Flourishing in and through the CA in this study is focused on supporting children to develop internal capabilities that promote an individuals' opportunity to flourish, and I view opportunity as a key element of being able to flourish. Although a picture of human flourishing and what it means to flourish emerges through this research, the focus is always on opportunity and potential. The focus is not on 'a homogenous notion of flourishing' (Kellock & Lawthom, 2011:158) but, instead, on broadening the range of choices and possibilities available to people in line with their potential. To flourish is to be able to conceptualise, plan and action one's own good life, to contribute to a sustainable and just world, to broaden one's opportunities, and to strive to keep moving towards realising one's potentials. However, a challenge within the CA is accommodating primary school children in a concept of personhood that includes self-determination, that is, being able to conceptualise, plan and action one's own good life, as children are not considered capable of full independence and authority in their own lives, as I now discuss.

Children and the CA

The issue of accommodating children in Nussbaum's concept of personhood raises two contested foundational concerns: first, whether children possess the developmental capacity to make and exercise responsible choices and, second, whether children are individuals in their own right or merely adults in training. Bessant (2014) raises these issues in the context of applying the CA principle of freedom to children in education[21]. Arguments on these issues often rest on the conceptual framework that shapes the understanding of a child's personhood. Developmental psychology suggests personhood is linked to the capacity to make informed and motivating choices (Peleg, 2013). Through this lens, it seems unlikely for children to possess the same personhood as an adult as they 'often do not grasp the ramifications, for them or for others, of the choice they make' (Brighouse, 2002:38). However, I do not endorse the view that children 'have different capabilities from adults' (Peleg, 2013:541). It is my view that children have the same capabilities as adults, but these capabilities are as yet not fully matured or perhaps are in a latent state. For example, I view self-determination as a capacity that is not bestowed on reaching a certain age, but rather as intrinsic to our personhood and evolving from

[21] Bessant (2014) uses the term children to mean students between the ages of three and twelve years old.

childhood into adulthood. Furthermore, children may exercise their capabilities as functionings differently from adults but the underlying capability remains the same. This view aligns with the claims of Biggeri et al. (2006), di Tommaso (2007), Andresen & Fegter (2011), and Dominguez-Serrano et al. (2019) who situate capabilities in the context of children's lives.

However, while agreeing that children are developing their capabilities, I do not view children as merely future adults. Ignoring children as an entity in their own right, and viewing them as 'human becomings' (Peleg, 2013:527), is parallel to ignoring a minority population of society, and as Nussbaum (2006b) contends, is disrespectful to human dignity, a key element of personhood. Viewing a child as a means to a future adult, as a 'passive subject[s], whose sole purpose in life is to sit still and grow up' (Peleg, 2013:541), denies them the right to participate in society. Furthermore, we are denying their personhood as an end in its own right. This view of the personhood of children does not mean that attention to their future well-being as adults is ignored. I contend that children should be viewed as though wearing dual lens spectacles with one lens supporting their developing capabilities, the other lens with an eye on their future capabilities. I suggest this view is supported by Nussbaum's (2006b) discussion on guardianship, which advocates for guardianship that supports maximum independence and the realisation of full potential, while recognising that needs may be dynamic. Adopting a critical stance also requires examining three key challenges that are levelled against the CA and have relevance to my study. These challenges are identified and discussed in the following section.

Challenges to the CA

I identify three key challenges in the form of criticisms levelled against the CA: individualism, universalism, and the list debate. Sen and Nussbaum have differing views on the appropriateness of producing a specific list of capabilities relevant to a flourishing life. However, regardless of one's view on the appropriateness of such an activity, one's view on the existence of universal values also dictates whether or not a list is possible. Before discussing these challenges, I will address the emphasis placed by the CA on the individual as the main unit of concern.

The issue of individualism and viewing the individual as the main unit of concern is a topic of much debate in the CA (Stewart & Deneulin, 2002; Robeyns, 2005; Ibrahim, 2021). Importantly, the CA does not adopt a view of atomic individualisation in which an

individual exists independently of the social structures surrounding them. Human relationships are central to the theory of human development and the CA. This centrality, as Nussbaum (2006b) observes, can be traced back to Aristotle's conception of human flourishing. Stewart (2013) explains that individuals exist within groups and, as these groups provide the conditions experienced by an individual, then the nature of groups is of importance to human development. This thought is addressed by Nussbaum (2006b) in her construction of a political conception of the person and personhood. In support of the idea that 'living with and toward others' (Nussbaum, 2006b:158) is a part of human flourishing, Nussbaum draws on the words of Aristotle[22] describing the nature of people as innately social. While recognising this relationship between the individual and their social structures, many authors, including Nussbaum (2000, 2011) and Robeyns (2005, 2017) emphasise that the unit of moral concern remains the individual and stress that well-being evaluations should focus on the individual. Other commentators such as Stewart & Deneulin (2002) and Ibrahim (2021) question this focus. The argument is not that the focus is misplaced, but that the CA could be enhanced by also focussing on collectives as a unit of moral concern. As phrased by Ibrahim (2021:222), 'this refinement still views the individual as a main unit of moral concern within the CA – but *not* the only one'. However, even if the individual secures an equal focus as the collective, it must be ensured that individuals are not merely being used as a means to the ends of the collective, as Nussbaum (2000) notes this as a form of exploitation.

I suggest a bi-directional relationship between personal and societal flourishing. Individually, we live in societies, and the ability to relate to and with others is connected to our own ability to develop to our full potential. Furthermore, personal flourishing is influenced by social structures and relationships within society, and internal capabilities contribute to building these social structures by enabling an individual to contribute to the development and improvement of society as a whole. That is, there is a relationship between personal and societal flourishing and this is explored further later. However, I also acknowledge that the relationship between personal and societal flourishing is complex and deserves a more detailed analysis than is possible in this Dissertation. As this study focuses on internal capabilities that contribute to an individual's opportunity to (a) live a good life; and, (b) contribute to building a world that is worth living in, the unit of concern in this study is the individual. Furthermore, in adopting a child-centred approach

[22] "And it is rather peculiar to think of the happy person as a solitary person: for the human being is a social creature and naturally disposed to live with others" [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics IX.9* as cited in the epigraph used by Nussbaum (2006b)]

to education, and seeking to facilitate the education and development of each child in the class, a teacher must surely focus on the individual. This aligns with ethical individualism as explained by Robeyns (2005, 2017). Each child as an individual is 'the unit[s] of moral concern' (Robeyns, 2005:107) and the focus of 'our evaluative exercises and decisions' (Robeyns, 2017:184). This has an implication when evaluating skill development. We seek to enhance each child's development in relation to their current state, not to evaluate how one child is doing compared to another.

Another challenge posed to the CA is identified by Nussbaum (2000) as a challenge to the universal nature of its underlying values. Nussbaum (2000) identifies issues of Westernisation, cultural and moral relativity, and paternalism as three key criticisms levelled against the CA relating to universal values. Westernisation is construed as occurring when Western values and worldviews are forcefully imposed on non-Western cultures (Walker, 2004). My study is a local study situated in a Western context but it does not claim generalisability to non-Western cultures. The literature data has a range of geographical origins including Spain, the United States, Scotland, Tanzania, France, China, India, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Belgium, and Uganda, while all focus group participants presented as having been born and raised in Ireland. Through viewing Westernisation as occurring by forcing Western values on other cultures, I am confident that this criticism cannot be applied to this study as it is particular to the context of Irish primary school education. However, I remain hopeful that the internal capabilities identified in Chapter Five with the goal of broadening a person's opportunity to have a good life, in a world that is worth living in, will resonate with other countries worldwide. As noted by Sen (1999), cultures borrow from each other and can learn from one another 'without being overwhelmed by that experience' (Sen, 1999:243).

The criticism of relativity argues that a concept of a flourishing life is relative to the particular cultural value systems in question (Nussbaum, 2000). A key answer to the charge of cultural and moral relativity provided by Nussbaum (2000) rests on the notion of capabilities as opportunities for functioning, allowing people the freedom to choose to exercise the functions that they themselves value. People are free to choose to follow any cultural norm so long as they are free to also choose otherwise and this choice does not cause harm to others. Similarly, while a particular moral norm may be advocated, once the principles of personhood discussed above are respected, then people can choose their actions relative to their own moral norms. Indeed, people frequently must choose to action

a moral imperative relative to the context and situation in question (Nussbaum, 1990; Hole, 2021). Drawing on Nussbaum's (2000) arguments in relation to cultural and moral relativity, this study seeks to construct a picture of a flourishing life that is relevant to the world we live in today, and not that of our ancestors. I also adopt the same standpoint as advocated by Nussbaum (2000) and aim to expand capabilities rather than forcing functionings.

However, children need to develop their internal capabilities in line with their potential, because, for example, if an individual has not developed the internal capability to communicate, then the choice to (not) communicate is not available to them. Furthermore, if a person does not have the opportunity to develop internal capabilities in line with their potential, the choices open to them for a good life are restricted in comparison to those available otherwise. This can also be viewed as an adaptive preference arising from personal conversion factors consistent with my description of this concept in Section 2.3. An individual's choice of functionings may be restricted due to underdeveloped internal capabilities compared to a broader set of choices that might be available if these capabilities were fully developed to match potential. Nussbaum (2000) further advises that an application of the CA may resist these criticisms by searching for evidence that the concepts of interest are already present in the culture in question. It is to this challenge that Sen's (2004) belief in public and democratic deliberation of capabilities can be fruitfully applied. Addressing this challenge, a method of data collection in this study was the use of focus groups who explored and discussed their vision of a flourishing life, and a world that is worth living in, prior to being introduced to Nussbaum's (2011) list of Capabilities.

The final challenge to universalism in the CA that I discuss here is the charge of paternalism. Nussbaum (2000) explains this as arising from the view that, by providing people with a set of universal norms to follow, we are limiting people's freedom to make their own judgements as to what constitutes a good life. Furthermore, in preventing people from 'acting on their own choices, we treat them like children' (Nussbaum, 2000:51). She points out the irony with this charge, drawing attention to the fact that the valuing of people's freedom to conceptualise and choose their own version of a good life, is in itself a universal value. Nussbaum provides a balanced and nuanced discussion on the charge of paternalism. Arguably her defence against the charge of paternalism rests on the principles of choice and non-maleficence. In order to protect the opportunity for people to choose and make choices regarding their good life, the universal value of respecting people's

choices is endorsed. In order to protect the spaces for people to make these choices it is necessary to be paternalistic towards safeguarding freedoms in various forms. People are supported towards choosing their own version of a good life, 'so long as they do no harm to others' (Nussbaum, 2000:59). Ultimately, her arguments rest on an element of the concept of personhood previously addressed, that of treating each person as an end, and respecting the dignity of 'persons as choosers' (Nussbaum, 2000:59-60). I believe my study simultaneously demonstrates and resists paternalism.

Firstly, it is unavoidably paternalistic in the sense that it seeks to support children developing internal capabilities even if they may not want to do so. I have already discussed the reasons for requiring capabilities to be exercised as functionings in education and I will not reproduce these here. However, it is important to keep in mind the proverb attributed to John Heywood, 'A man may well bring a horse to the water, But he cannot make him drinke without he will' (Sharman, 1874:58). A teacher can facilitate a child's learning and development more easily if the child is motivated to do so, than if the child is not. As I discuss in Chapter Five, motivation is also an internal capability that supports an individual's opportunity for a flourishing life.

Secondly, this study resists paternalism as defined by Nussbaum (2000) and presented above. The internal capabilities identified through this study can broaden individuals' freedom to make judgements and choices regarding their own lives. Rendering explicit the internal capabilities and supporting skill domains in one framework, along with indicative behaviours for each skill domain and sub-domain, supports primary school teachers to help each child develop in line with their potential. Rather than 'prevent[ing] people from acting on their own choices' (Nussbaum, 2000:51), this study seeks to empower people and broaden the choices available to them. In summary, a framework of internal capabilities and skills for primary education in Ireland is developed and presented through this study. Other geographic locations and cultural traditions may examine and refine the specific content of this framework as befitting their own contexts. This study supports the diversity of potential in our schools by seeking to enhance individual skill development in line with personal potential. The overarching purpose of this research, and the skills framework presented in Chapter Five, is to enhance each person's ability to conceptualise, choose, and action, a good life in a world that is worth living in. However, the creation of a specified list of internal capabilities and supporting skills raises another key challenge and an area of dissention between capability scholars. There are differing opinions and a

lack of consensus on the issue of creating lists of capabilities, and it is this Achilles Heel of the CA (Claassen, 2021) that I next consider.

The creation of a single list of universally important central capabilities is one area of the CA where Sen and Nussbaum are noted to diverge (Claassen, 2021). In addition to the issues relating to universalism introduced above, a crux of 'the list debate' identified by Claassen (2021) rests on the question of how a list is conceptualised. Sen is disinclined to advocate a single list of overarching capabilities (Sen, 2004). He sets forth the argument that lists are context specific and should be conceptualised in a given context by a process of public deliberation, noting that public discussion helps to build an understanding of individual capabilities in terms of their purpose and significance (Sen, 2004). Nussbaum, on the other hand, in defining and defending a partial theory of justice and political entitlements, presents a single list of central Capabilities based on empirical observations and supported by theoretical consideration (Nussbaum, 2000, 2006b, 2011). She describes her list as abstract in nature, advises that it is open to revision, and advocates that it should be made more concrete in specific applications (Nussbaum, 2006b). Although I address the methodological issues of creating a list in Chapter Three, there are three further overarching criteria that I have interpreted from Sen and Nussbaum in relation to how a list is created. Both Sen and Nussbaum advocate that any list of capabilities should be specific to its purpose, focus on valued beings and doings, and each item should be valuable and beneficial to each and every person. In the following paragraphs I will present these criteria and indicate how my list of internal capabilities and supporting skills discussed in Chapter Five meets each criterion.

Firstly, the capabilities identified in a given list should be based on the purpose of the list (Sen, 2004; Nussbaum, 2011). My purpose in producing a list of internal capabilities and supporting skills is to aid teacher understanding and planning to broaden students' opportunities to live a flourishing life in line with their potential. It is necessary to conceptualise a list and a framework to assist teachers, because if we are to develop important internal capabilities in and through education, then teachers need to have some idea of what those are. This view parallels Nussbaum's observation that political actors need to conceptualise the requirements of a flourishing life, as 'If they are to deliver it, they need to know what it is' (Nussbaum, 2011:73). Sen (1999) notes that a list of instrumental freedoms can help to identify and direct focus to areas of policy that are

particularly urgent in a given context. Similarly, having a list of internal capabilities and relevant skills can help teachers identify areas for development for each child.

Secondly, the central question to ask in an exercise identifying relevant capabilities is, what are people 'actually able to do and to be' (Nussbaum, 2000:12; 2011:x). Sen defines capabilities in general as 'what we are free to do and free to be' (Sen, 2004:78). The capabilities on a list are concerned with the ability of people to function in some way or another (Claassen, 2021). When considering the development and justice of a society, the CA is concerned with the opportunities that each person has in terms of choices and activities available to them (Nussbaum, 2011). The internal capabilities identified through this study, contribute to personal beings and doings that enhance an individual's choices and opportunity of living a flourishing life in a world that is worth living in. They are the individual capacities and traits that not only contribute to a 'real opportunity to pursue her objectives' (Sen, 1999:74), but also to be able to create objectives and plan towards achieving those objectives.

Thirdly, the items on the list must be considered important capabilities to develop that are beneficial to the person (Sen, 2004; Claassen, 2021). Both Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011) identify important capabilities as those that enhance valued and intrinsically good beings and doings. In Chapter Five, I will demonstrate, through a process of analysis and interpretation, that each of the internal capabilities and supporting skills identified through this research potentially benefits the individual as a socially located being. Each is important because without developing a particular internal capability in line with potential, the choice set of available options towards living a good life, in a world that is worth living in, is restricted. The Human Development Report of 2020 strongly emphasises 'the intertwined fate of people and planet' (United Nations Development Programme, 2020:iii). The opportunity to live a flourishing life is endangered in the era of the Anthropocene, the era 'in which the dominant risk to our survival is ourselves' (United Nations Development Programme, 2020:iii). It is to this concern that I next turn my attention, elucidating the contribution of education to Sustainable Human Development and locating this concern in Irish education policy.

2.4 Education and human development

In this section, I further consider the interrelationship between personal and societal flourishing and the contribution of education and sustainable development in promoting both aspects. I consider first, the concept of sustainable human development, followed by

the contribution of education to sustainable human development. Then I locate these concepts in Irish education policy with specific reference to the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, 2014; Government of Ireland, 2022b), the Primary Curriculum Framework (Department of Education, 2023a), and the education sector's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (Department of Education and Skills, 2018).

The theories of sustainable development and the CA both place a primary focus on human flourishing and well-being. They emphasise the centrality of the individual, promoting freedom, opportunities, and equality, while challenging the pursuit of economic development at the expense of individual, social and environmental degradation. Sustainable development has been a key concept in human development theory since the early 21st century, (United Nations Development Programme, 2011, 2024b), gaining increased attention in the era of the Anthropocene (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). The United Nations Development Programme's (2022) special report on human security reiterates the importance of interpersonal and person-planet relationships, which are key to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, (United Nations, 2015). This agenda outlines 17 sustainable development goals (SDG) adopted by 193 members of the United Nations, addressing social, environmental, and economic needs, including peace, sustainable production and consumption, climate change, gender equality, health and well-being, and education. SDG4 sets out education and lifelong learning targets for achievement by 2030, including that 'all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development' (United Nations, 2015:19)[23]. It is through education for sustainable development that this target hopes to develop a positive relationship between personal and societal flourishing.

Such an education is supported in Ireland through the policy 'ESD to 2030: Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development' (Government of Ireland, 2022b)[24] and its accompanying action plan 'ESD to 2030: Implementation Plan 2022–2026' (Government of Ireland, 2022a), which succeeded the 'National Strategy on

[23] The 'Incheon Declaration for Education 2030' (UNESCO, 2015) further details the targets and framework to support achieving Goal Four of the Agenda.

[24] The formulation of the Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development was based on the UNESCO Roadmap on Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2020).

Education for Sustainable Development' (Department of Education and Skills, 2014)[25]. These policies are hereafter referred to collectively as 'the Strategy'. The Strategy defines sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Department of Education and Skills, 2014:6; Government of Ireland, 2022b:5). It aims to empower people to create a sustainable future at a time when 'human action is causing dangerous and widespread disruption in nature and affecting the lives and wellbeing of billions of people …' (Government of Ireland, 2022b:5). The Strategy promotes an education that enhances the cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and social domains of learning, equipping learners[26] with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for making informed decisions and taking responsible actions to support sustainable development (Government of Ireland, 2022b). Furthermore, the Strategy emphasises the interdependencies between individuals, society, and the environment and sees a focus on values and the promotion of an active and democratic citizenship as both an aim and a means to ESD. To help achieve this aim the Strategy seeks to develop 'key dispositions and skills' (Government of Ireland, 2022b:7), however, there is no concrete specification of the relevant skills and dispositions for sustainable development in the Strategy that could support individual and societal flourishing.

I contend that the framework of internal capabilities I present in Chapter Five serves this purpose, a support that is absent in both versions of the Strategy. This specification of skills and dispositions is also not located in the Primary Curriculum Framework[27] (Department of Education, 2023a), identified in the Strategy as an important vehicle to enhance ESD. The Curriculum however does provide better indications as to the form and context of ESD, and it is the second local policy document I introduce to contextualise ESD in Irish primary school education.

The Curriculum (Department of Education, 2023a) replaces the 1999 Primary Curriculum (Department of Education and Skills, 1999), responding to societal changes and reflecting the educational priorities valued by society (Department of Education, 2023a). It shares common ground with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and the CA, aiming

[25] The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development 2014-2020 is 'primarily influenced by the national strategy on sustainable development, *Our Sustainable Future – A Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland'* (Department of Education and Skills, 2014:3)

[26] The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (Government of Ireland, 2022b) uses the terms 'learners' and 'students' interchangeably. In this Dissertation, I use the term 'students'.

[27] Hereafter termed 'the Curriculum'.

to foster a '… democratic, equitable, and just …' (Department of Education, 2023a:3) society. It views individuals as socially embedded and maintains a dual lens on children as they are now and the adults they will become. It aims for an educational experience that provides the foundations for each child to flourish and realise their full potential, both as individuals and members of wider groups. To help achieve this aim, the concept of competencies is introduced into the Irish curriculum, aligning with international trends towards competency based education as seen in Scotland (Education Scotland, n.d.), New Zealand, (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2020), Australia (Australian Government Department of Education, 2022), British Columbia (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2023), and Singapore (Ministry of Education [Singapore], 2023). The Curriculum's key competencies aim to empower children to navigate their social world from childhood into adulthood, to engage and interact with the natural world, and to recognise their responsibility as custodians of this world (Department of Education, 2023a). The subject area of Social and Environmental Education, and the competency of being an active citizen, emphasise the value of sustainable development. This competency seeks to foster the values, attitudes, dispositions, skills, and knowledge, necessary to participate, contribute, and create, a just and sustainable world through democratic practices. However, the Curriculum lacks a detailed list of the values, attitudes and skills that schools should nurture in children to support their opportunity to flourish, realise their potential, and contribute to societal well-being. Although the Curriculum specification for the new subject of well-being has not yet been released, the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (Department of Education and Skills, 2018) is a key resource for schools, guiding actions to promote well-being. It is to this final policy document that I next look to contextualise my study.

The Wellbeing Policy (Department of Education and Skills, 2018) links directly to the 17th ESD goal of promoting health and well-being for all. It underscores the connection between well-being, an individual's ability to achieve their potential, and social progress. It emphasises self-determination, resilience, physical well-being, and identity as central to an individual's well-being, requiring 'knowledge, skills and competencies' (Department of Education and Skills, 2018:1) to enhance well-being and manage challenges met in life. The Wellbeing policy ('the Policy') advocates for a holistic, child-centred approach to education, supporting children's development physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually and academically. Furthermore, children's access to well-being opportunities should be 'equitable, fair and inclusive' (Department of Education and Skills, 2018:9), and

well-being is viewed as a lifelong and fluctuating journey. Reflecting Nussbaum's (2006b) perspective on life's inherent vulnerabilities and dependencies, the Policy acknowledges 'that everyone experiences vulnerability and a need for care at some stages in their journey through life' (Department of Education and Skills, 2018:10). Informed by the World Health Report's (World Health Organization, 2001) multidimensional concept of well-being, the Policy offers the following definition of well-being:

> Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life. (Department of Education and Skills, 2018:10).

The Policy identifies culture, curriculum, relationships, and policy and planning as four key areas to foster well-being in education. While acknowledging education's vital role in equipping individuals with the 'knowledge, skills and competencies to enhance their well-being and deal with life's challenges' (Department of Education and Skills, 2018:34), the Policy falls short on detailing these. The Statements of Effective Practice, aiming to guide schools towards the Policy's broad goals, focus on the school as an enabling and protective environment, addressing various crucial external factors that influence personal well-being. Despite the absence of an explicit list of skills and competencies for personal and societal well-being, a critical reading of the Policy suggests the importance of: (i) skills, such as understanding, communication (including listening skills), collaborative problem solving, social and emotional skills (ii) values, including responsibility, respect, participation and voice (iii) personal traits, including self-esteem, self-efficacy, openness, and (iv) capabilities such as physical health and healthy eating. The Policy's lack of specificity may stem from its focus on outcomes, measuring success through metrics such as attendance rates and school completion data, and a reluctance to measure individual well-being.

The Policy advises caution when assessing individual well-being for two key reasons. First, well-being is considered 'a process of well-becoming' (Department of Education and Skills, 2018:22), without a definitive endpoint. Second, personal well-being 'is not something that can be definitively achieved and tested' (Department of Education and Skills, 2018:22). Although I thoroughly support the concept of well-becoming, I also believe in the importance of understanding each individual's progress on this journey. If teachers are to support a child's well-becoming, it is necessary to have a means to understand their current levels of development. To this end, a clear definition of the

internal capabilities that promote personal and societal well-being is necessary to help teacher's understand a child's progress on this journey. However, there are three arguments against including such a specification in the Policy. First, the Policy recognises that personal well-being is influenced by numerous systemic factors. Based on Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model of human development, the Policy depicts the individual as socially embedded, with various interrelated contexts and factors influencing well-being. The Policy's alignment with the New Public Management ideology of accountability[28], and the myriad of factors beyond a school's control which affect well-being, means schools cannot be held responsible for an individual's well-being. While schools significantly contribute to developing capabilities that broaden opportunities to have a good life and support well-being, they are not the only influence.

The second reason not to include a detailed specification of skills and dispositions in the Policy also relates to the outcome oriented nature of the Policy and its measurement methods. The Policy's success metrics are action oriented and specified in a binary manner of being achieved or not achieved. This study does not advocate such a binary view, as I will explain in section 2.5, nor do I endorse setting a minimum level at which an internal capability may be considered developed. Including a list of skills, values and competencies to promote personal and societal well-being in this policy document could create a tension between these values, and the Policy's methods of measurement. The third reason against defining specific individual capacities, skills and values in this policy document acknowledges a strength of the Policy. The statements of practice are not formulated as personal interventions, but frame individual well-being challenges as societal concerns and not solely a personal responsibility. They do not absolve the state of its responsibility for the well-being of its citizens. However, if education aims to develop skills, attitudes, competencies and values for sustainable human development (Department of Education and Skills, 2014; Government of Ireland, 2022b, 2022a), it is useful to have some idea as to what these might be. Equally, to achieve the curricular vision of providing '… a strong foundation for every child to thrive and flourish' (Department of Education, 2023a:5), it is useful to have some idea as to what it means to flourish. Chapters Four and Five contribute to these objectives.

[28] Performance and accountability are technologies of New Public Management that can be indicative of increased state and supranational control (Ball, 2013; Hill, 2013). In education, the effect of these technologies can be to reposition teachers as technicians rather than as professionals (Ball & Maguire, 1994; Ball, 2013).

2.5 Internal capabilities, skills, and ability

Nussbaum's early work on capability levels, as seen in her exploration of an Aristotelian perspective of the foundations and aims of political distribution (Nussbaum, 1987), introduces three types of capabilities. B[asic]-capabilities[29] are properties of the individual, present yet untrained capabilities, which can develop into full capabilities for certain functionings with appropriate training, time, and conditions. These capabilities are the foundational capacity for functionings and include both physiological and neurological elements. Cowden (2016) clarifies the concept of capacity by comparing the capacities of humans and turtles to speak Russian. The turtle does not have the capacity to speak Russian as it does not have the necessary neurological and physiological equipment to do so; the student, in having the required equipment, has the capacity to speak Russian. I[nternal]-capabilities are internal to the person and include developed intellectual, character, and physical traits that, in supportive circumstances, enable a person to enact a chosen functioning in a self-selected manner. These capabilities are what education should aim to develop in youth by facilitating the progression of a B[asic]-capability to an I[nternal]-capability and are the focus of this study. Nussbaum (1987) describes a person as being E[xternally]-capable[30] if able to perform a chosen function when I-capable and are unimpeded by external factors. Although E[xternal]-capabilities are interrelated with B[asic]- and I[nternal]- capabilities, and can influence their development, they remain outside the scope of this study. I compare the set of internal capabilities derived from literature and empirical data with Nussbaum's list of Capabilities, also known as combined capabilities or E-Capabilities, in Chapter Five. Skills can be viewed as a specific type and subset of the broader understanding of internal capabilities.

Articulating a definition of a skill proved challenging during the early stages of my research. My journey from a tacit to an explicit understanding of the concept of skill began with the Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023b), which provided six definitions. The first definition, aligning with my general understanding, described the noun as:

> Capability of accomplishing something with precision and certainty; practical knowledge in combination with ability; cleverness, expertness. Also an ability to perform a function, acquired or learnt with practice (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023b)

[29] B-, I-, and E-capabilities in Nussbaum (1987) are known as Basic, Internal, and Combined capabilities in later works, for example Nussbaum (2000; 2011).
[30] E-capabilities are referred to as combined capabilities in Nussbaum (2000; 2011).

Similarly, the Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines skill (noun) as the effective use of knowledge in action and, 'a learned power of doing something competently; a developed aptitude or ability' (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

These definitions suggest two perspectives on skills: first, as competence[31], being able to do something well and expertly and, second, as an observable and trainable behaviour that develops from a latent state to a state of usefulness through practice. This latter perspective on skill, correlates with Nussbaum's view of internal capabilities as 'developed states of the person herself that are, so far as the person herself is concerned, sufficient conditions for the exercise of the requisite functions' (Nussbaum, 2000:84). Following the approach adopted by Nussbaum (1996) to define and identify relevant capabilities, I refined my understanding of skill by seeking features shared by, and essential to, all skills. I identified the criteria of a skill to include: (i) is personally held (ii) can be trained or developed (iii) can be ability or an attitude, and (iv), is used in the service of a goal. These criteria align with the concept of a skill as 'an ability that allows a goal to be achieved within some domain with increasing likelihood as a result of practice' (Rosenbaum et al., 2001:454), and Brando (2020) further refines the notion of ability.

Brando (2020) advocates shifting the perception of ability from a static can or cannot do, to an evolving and dynamic process of capability formation, which I have adapted and extended in a concept map with an accompanying explanation in Appendix 1. Viewing ability as a developmental process allows for the recognition of internal capabilities as a continuum, ranging from potentials in a basic capability to sufficiently developed internal capabilities, enabling further development to higher levels of internal capability. This perspective is consistent with the notion of evolving capabilities, contending that capabilities are not static but develop throughout one's life, with capabilities at any given time influencing future capabilities (Ballet et al., 2011; Biggeri & Santi, 2012). A child's current capabilities and functionings impact on the potential to develop their capabilities further. Although internal capabilities and related skills develop through this capability formation process, the concept of competence remains relevant. Competence is a significant destination on the skill development journey, marking the transition from a B[asic] capability to an I[nternal] capability. In Nussbaum's (2000) understanding of an internal capability, competence is not about meeting an external standard, but is determined by the individual viewing their capability as sufficiently developed to allow

[31] The concept of competence is refined below.

them action their desired functioning, all else being equal. This view aligns with Cowden's (2016) understanding of competence, namely the possession of developed abilities that enable a person S, to perform a specific intentional action A, so that '…if, optimizing resources and opportunity, S would likely A if S tried to A' (Cowden, 2016:43). Competence, therefore, is not an endpoint but a significant marker in the on-going development of capabilities.

Finally, in this study, the concept of skill is predicated on two additional criteria. Firstly, a skill must be transferable, meaning it can aid in achieving various valued functionings for an individual. While a specific use of a skill will be in the service of a particular goal, the skill in question can serve many goals. This contrasts with associate skills which are linked to specific activities or fields of work, also known as technical skills, such as the mechanical skill of forklift operation or the nursing skill of medication administration (Nasir et al., 2011). Non-technical skills, as defined by Nasir et al. (2011), are applicable across employment activities and fields and are synonymous with transferable skills, described by Raybould & Sheedy (2005:259) as 'certain personal abilities of an individual, which can be taken from one job role to another, used within any profession and at any stage of their career'. However, I extend the understanding of transferrable skills to mean skills that transfer to various situations and may be used in daily life outside the field of employment alone. Secondly, provided an individual possesses the necessary latent capacity or basic capability, then the skill in question can enhance a person's opportunity to conceptualise and pursue a flourishing life, or contribute to shaping a world that is worth living in. This includes skills that enable a person 'to deal with the routine of daily life without frustration' (Wolff & de-Shalit, 2007:50). Furthermore, while the skill may not be required in every situation an individual encounters, it will be useful in a possible situation encountered by most people, thus holding almost universal value.

2.6 Chapter summary

In this Chapter I have provided an understanding of the theoretical frameworks and the educational context in which this study is located. I first presented my understanding of Human Development theory, followed by an introduction to the Capabilities Approach (CA) with particular emphasis on the version by Martha C. Nussbaum. I identified and explained four core concepts in the CA and discussed the reasons why it is sometimes necessary to require a person to exercise a particular functioning. Following this, I addressed three key challenges to the CA that are relevant to this study. Next I

contextualised this study to primary school education in Ireland, considering the contribution of education to sustainable human development with reference to certain key local policy texts. Finally, I defined my understanding of the concepts of internal capabilities, skills, and ability, as they are used in this study. In the next Chapter I will share the methodology through which this research was conducted, allowing me to: (a) create a vision of a flourishing life, and a world that is worth living in, specific to the views of focus groups representing parents, students, and teachers, and is discussed in Chapter Four and, (b) create a list of internal capabilities and skills to enhance an individual's opportunity for a flourishing life as I present and discuss in Chapter Five.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Chapter introduction

This Chapter presents the research paradigm, methodology, and methods I used in conducting this study. I begin by discussing my philosophical stance and its influence on my choice of research paradigm. Next I discuss the methods of data collection employed, followed by the ethical issues pertaining to this research. I then consider the methodological implications of using the CA as a conceptual framework, followed by an explanation of the methods of data analysis and interpretation used in my study. In the penultimate subsection, I present my understanding of the measures of goodness or rigor that guided my study, and conclude the body of this section by detailing my methods of information organisation during this research endeavour.

3.2 Philosophical stance

The initial paragraphs in this section detail my ontological and epistemological perspectives that influenced the design and execution of this research. Following this, I explain my rationale for designing my research as a qualitative, interpretive, and exploratory study. I conclude Section 3.2 with an explanation of a dialectical hermeneutic methodology as it applies to this research. Collectively these elements, in addition to axiology/ethical considerations discussed in Section 3.4, intersect to form the paradigm (Lincoln et al., 2018) through which I conducted my research. This overall paradigm provided a 'way of working' (Cohen et al., 2018:8) during this research endeavour, and also includes measures of goodness, often termed rigour, that I address in Section 3.7.

Ontologically, my stance aligns more with relativism than realism, as I believe our personal experiences and personalities shape our understanding of the world which, in turn, defines our perceived reality. Relativism posits that there is no absolute truth to discover, a concept contrasting with realism's assertion of an independent reality existing beyond human perception (Cohen et al., 2018; Lincoln et al., 2018). My stance acknowledges the existence of objective realities which individuals may interpret differently. Thus, it is possible for different individuals to hold distinct truths about a shared reality, each perceiving a unique reality at any given moment, influenced by time, space, and experience. This perspective informs my belief that the internal capabilities and supporting skills I present in Chapter Five are not the only possible interpretation and this understanding is not fixed over time. Both this Dissertation and the skills framework are influenced by my experiences and those of the research participants. Accepting this

ontological position invites a consideration of how we each ascertain our own truth or reality, and the means by which we acquire our understanding and knowledge of the world. These are issues linked to epistemology, as discussed by Cohen et al. (2018), which I now consider.

My life experiences and observations have led me to an epistemological stance that aligns with the transactional/subjectivist stance described by Lincoln et al. (2018). This stance holds that understanding is constructed through interactions with people, situations, and environments, leading to a co-construction of knowledge through 'lived experiences and through our interactions with other members of society' (Lincoln et al., 2018:115). Poucher et al. (2020) explain this stance as one in which knowledge generation is intertwined with an individual's prior experiences and information. From a research design viewpoint, this stance acknowledges the researcher's influence on the study with knowledge being co-created through the interaction of the researcher and the research participants, each influenced by their individual backgrounds and experiences. Through the journey of this research I have found this to be a transformative stance, affecting the research and myself as researcher. This research journey has informed and influenced my thoughts, decisions, and actions, extending into my everday life. Inadvertently, I became a research participant, albeit possessing more power and control than the other research participants, a topic I return to in Section 3.4. A transactional/subjectivist epistemological stance contrasts with a positivist stance, which, as discussed by Lincoln et al. (2018), Cohen et al. (2018), and Creswell and Creswell (2018), advocates for a researcher's detachment and objectivity, viewing the knowledge that is acquired from data as independent of the researcher. Furthermore, from a positivist stance, a primary means of gaining knowledge of the world is through quantitative research, often concerned with an attempt to arrive at a single truth. My ontological and epistemological views are, as indicated above, in tension with this positivist epistemology and I position my research in a qualitative interpretive design.

A qualitative research design acknowledges the positional subjectivity and influence of the researcher on the data collected and inferences made (Hammersley, 2013). Furthermore, 'there is little pressure to engage in formal counting, ranking, or measurement' (Hammersley, 2013:12). It was my view that my research questions would be served better by the more narrative data Hammersley (2013) associates with qualitative research than with the statistical analysis of quantitative research. Morse (2018) views this

narrative data as soft data that not only describes the issue at hand, but may extend and/or refine the issue, and she associates this soft data with interpretive analysis. Having considered the varying research designs presented by Lincoln et al. (2018), I selected an interpretive study design as that seemed appropriate for the aim of this study which is to build understanding that can improve practice. This design also aligns with my ontological and epistemological stances, holding that knowledge is co-constructed and carries the ethical requirement to '… participate in the research process with our subjects to ensure we are producing knowledge that is reflective of their reality' (Lincoln et al., 2018:115). This ethical consideration is discussed further in Section 3.4. I further framed this research as an exploratory study, recognised by Swedberg (2020) as a useful methodology for the purpose of learning more about a topic that is little known. To my knowledge there is little, if any, research to date on developing internal capabilities through primary education, nor, whether or not developing these internal capabilities might broaden children's opportunities to live a good life in a world that is worth living in, both in their childhood years or in the future when they become adults. The exploratory study is not undertaken with the goal of proving an idea or hypothesis, instead it seeks a plausible answer, where plausibility is understood by Groarke (2024) as being useful in real-life situations that require pragmatic decisions to be made, and I discuss this further as a measure of goodness in Section 3.7.

My data collection, analysis, and interpretation, is supported by drawing on a dialectical hermeneutic methodology. An aim of my research as outlined in Chapter One can be summarised as broadening individuals' opportunities to live a good life in a world that is worth living in. This goal echoes the calling of a hermeneutic researcher, '… to make a difference to human lives and living' (Moules et al., 2015:8). A hermeneutic approach seeks to build understanding through misunderstanding and interpretation, and the concepts of dialectics and the hermeneutic circle serve to support the emergence of understanding. The concept of dialectics can be understood as conversations that occur simultaneously between the researcher and the topic, the researcher and the participants, the researcher and herself, and the researcher and the world. These are conversations driven by questions and answers and the 'interplay of question and answer' (Moules et al., 2015:68) occurring in relationships that are mutually influential. Through these conversations, I seek an understanding of the topic, myself, and the world, and these understandings are interpreted from and through language. Moules et al. (2015) interpret dialectics as a form of mutual understanding, a way to work through misunderstanding by

'the back and forth motion of interpretation' (Moules et al., 2015:64). This back and forth of interpretation, the 'circularity of understanding' (Theodore, 2021:1.3 The Hermeneutical Circle) is conceptually represented by the hermeneutic circle and can be viewed as a key part of the methodical aspect of dialectical hermeneutics.

The hermeneutic circle is a concept that describes the circular nature of interpretation, involving a back and forth movement between the whole and its parts, and the parts and the whole. The understanding of the whole informs the interpretation of the parts, and the interpretation of the parts informs the understanding of the whole. This is an iterative and dynamic process, recognising that interpretation is not a linear process, but involves continuous dialogue and refinement between the parts and the whole. It is a process that is manifest in the relationship between data collection, data analysis, and interpretation. In conducting this research, I have found that using literature as a data source does not entail a linear sequential progression of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This use of literature as a data source may seem unconventional. Marche (2012) argues that literature[32] is distinct from data due to its inherent incompleteness, the polysemy of words, and its resistance to quantitative analysis. However, qualitative research embraces data beyond numbers, including observations, interviews, visual data and existing texts that are collected and analysed (Hammersley, 2013; Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2018). Koro-Ljungberg et al. (2018) note a lack of discussion on the concept of data in qualitative research texts, advocating for a broader acceptance of what constitutes data. Incorporating existing texts as data facilitates the exploration of multiple perspectives and interpretations and deepens understanding of the research topic (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2018). Viewing literature as data treats a text as 'an object in its own right …as a "docile" container of knowledge' (Rapley & Rees, 2018:378) that can be analysed and interpreted to build understanding.

As I detail in Section 3.3, I initially sourced several articles before beginning data analysis of the literature to mitigate the overwhelming nature of the vast literature available. However, this initial literature was only a fraction of the literature I collected and analysed. My predominant experience is that analysis and interpretation influence data collection, and data collection influences analysis and interpretation. This is because my literature data analysis altered my understanding and in turn this modified understanding caused a

[32] Marche (2012) centres his argument on a definition of literature that includes written works with artistic or intellectual value, such as novels, poems, and plays. However, his rationale for distinguishing this literature from data is equally applicable to academic texts.

change to the question being asked of the literature at that point. Consequently, this refined question indicated a diversion on the path of exploration, prompting a return to the literature search process. For example, initially, my research question posed to the literature data aimed to identify personal beings and doings that contribute to an individual's opportunity to lead a flourishing life. In pursuing this question, I analysed the concept of 'locus of control' as presented in Dejaeghere et al. (2016) and Biggeri et al. (2011). Their contrasting perspectives prompted me to seek further literature to deepen my understanding. This literature data[33] included related concepts which I analysed including self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-regulation, and motivation. Following this diversion, I returned to my original question and my next code for interpretive analysis, which was 'informal reasoning skills' (Biggeri & Santi, 2012:386). Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006) adopt a similar methodological position, suggesting that data collection and analysis are undertaken concurrently. However, Busetto et al. (2020) describe a cyclical process of data collection, interpretation, and analysis, rather than a concurrent process. This cyclical process, including both empirical and literature data, collected from sources such as focus groups and existing documents, aligns more closely with my observed experience described above. I present this relationship in Figure 1 below, which is an adaptation of the iterative search process by Busetto et al. (2020) as I experienced through this exploratory study.

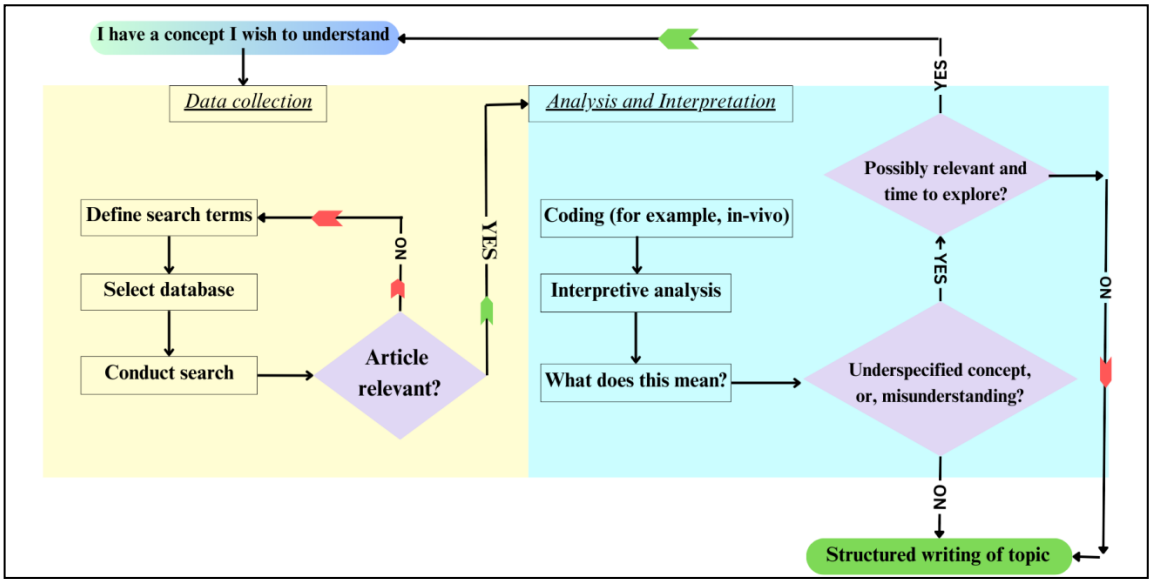


Figure 1: Iterative data collection, analysis, interpretation process [adapted from Busetto et al. (2020:2)]

[33] Literature data used to inform my understanding of a locus of control and its relationship to various other concepts included Strudler Wallston & Wallston (1978), Westwood (1993), Steese et al. (2006), Çelik et al. (2015), Galvin et al. (2018), and Flores et al. (2020).

In the paragraphs above I have discussed my philosophical stance that guided my decision to design this study of internal capabilities as qualitative, interpretive, and exploratory. Additionally, I have described the dialectical hermeneutic methodology employed in this research, noting my use of focus groups and literature as data sources. I next expand further on these methods of data collection.

3.3 Methods of data collection

In this Dissertation, I draw on two data sets, one is from the literature and I term this data as literature data. The second is empirical data that I have gathered through the use of focus groups, and I term this focus group data. I discuss each method in a dedicated sub-section below. My research comprised three distinct phases, each starting with data collection. Stage one focused on collecting and analysing literature data to understand valued personal beings and doings that might broaden the opportunity to lead a flourishing life in a world worth living in. The second stage involved empirical research, in which I conducted focus groups to explore the concept of a good life and a desirable world, specific to stakeholders in Irish primary education. In the third and final phase, I introduced Nussbaum's 10 Capabilities to the focus groups and facilitated discussions around internal capabilities and supporting skills, which were inferred from an interpretive analysis of the literature data in the first phase.

Literature data

The initial step in collecting literature data required identifying relevant literature, for which I established two criteria. Firstly, the content of the literature must be concerned with capabilities, skills, abilities, competencies or capacities of individuals that can be developed. Secondly, these capabilities must be related to the understanding of individual or collective flourishing as discussed in Chapter Two. Having determined these criteria, the next challenge was to determine the method for selecting specific literature for data collection. Having considered various theories of literature reviews that detail methods for literature search, including systematic (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006), rapid (Armitage & Keeble-Ramsay, 2009), and hermeneutic reviews (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010), I chose the hermeneutic approach as the most appropriate for my literature search. Petticrew and Roberts (2006) advise that systematic reviews are most suited to addressing specific questions and hypothesis testing, rather than broad questions and explorations. My research questions were broad and I anticipated that these questions would develop and become more focused as my reading and understanding progressed. An alternative

hermeneutic circle method of literature selection is presented by Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2010). This method, central to the understanding of dialectical hermeneutics underlying this research, as discussed in Section 3.2, involves an iterative process of data collection and analysis, in contrast to a linear progression from collection to analysis to reporting. Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2010) offer a three-fold purpose of a hermeneutic circle approach to literature selection that align with my research topic, methodology, and aim to select specific literature as a source of data: (a) to allow the researcher to identify relevant literature as a data source, while also facilitating a deepening of the researcher's understanding of the topic in question (b) to embrace the interdependency between data collection and data analysis, and (c) to enhance the transparency of the search process. Figure 2 below presents an adapted version of the seven step hermeneutic circle employed in literature selection as illustrated by Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2010).

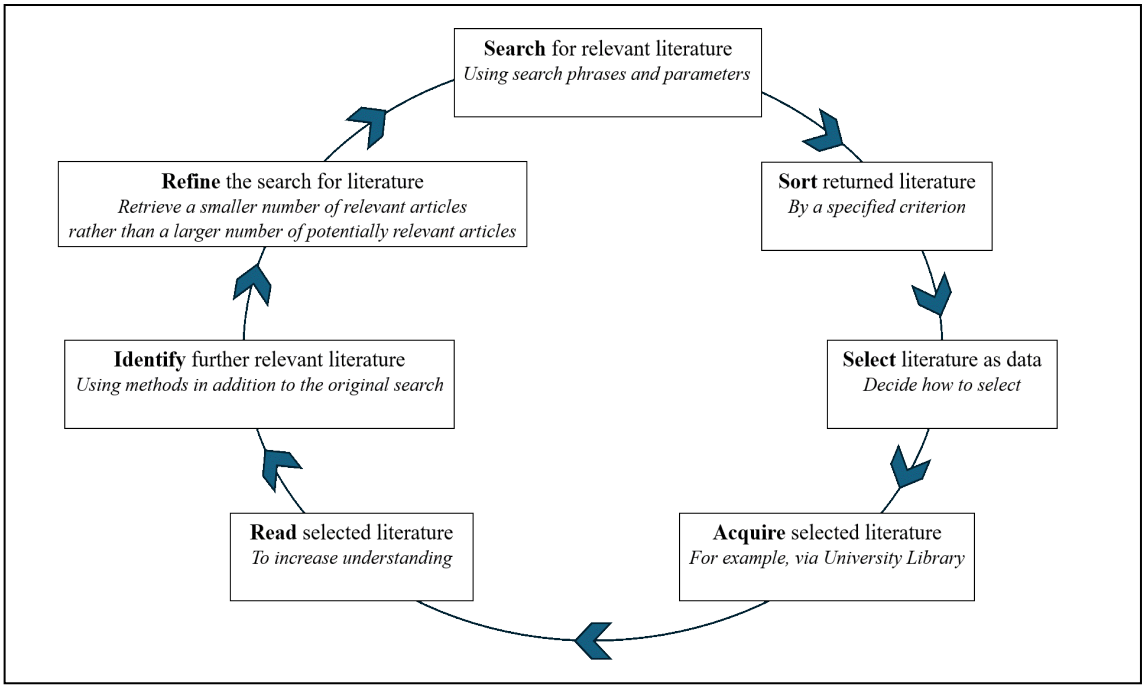


Figure 2: The hermeneutic circle of literature review, adapted from Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic (2010:134)

I felt insecure about conducting a literature search for data despite Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic's (2010) clear description. I had no definitive picture of the concepts and data that might be held in the abundance of literature available, making it difficult to know where and how to start collecting literature data. Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic (2010) suggest two entry points into this hermeneutic circle of literature selection and review: beginning with an article known to be relevant, or conducting a search of existing literature. To avoid being influenced by a chosen article and inadvertently narrowing my

attention to a restricted sub-set of data, I opted for the latter. To help overcome my insecurity regarding my literature search, I developed a six step structured search process based on the methods discussed by Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic (2010), Finfgeld-Connett & Johnson (2013), and Bramer et al. (2018). I present the steps of this process in Table 1 below, followed by a description of each step.

Table 1: Six elements of a structured database search

Step	Element
1	Consider the purpose of the literature search
2	Determine the search concepts to use
3	Decide which database(s) to use
4	Conduct the search
5	Check if the literature returned from the search is valid, that is, (a) are the search criteria operating as intended? (b) does the literature returned meet the criteria specified for relevant literature?
6	Sort the returned search items in order of relevance

Firstly, I considered the purpose of this literature search. I sought data to help me understand the internal capabilities and skills that support an individual to live a flourishing life in a world that is worth living in. Secondly, I identified key terms related to this purpose and considered terminology variations for these terms. It was necessary to consider terminology variations to overcome the challenges of different terms being used to describe the same content and differing indexing algorithms[34] being used by varying databases (Bramer et al., 2018). However, this proved a challenge as there were many terminology variations. My solution was to perform experimental searches to seek alternate terms relating to the purpose of my search. My search phrase passed through several iterations and explorations and Table 2 on the next page illustrates three of these iterations. Following these experimental searches I determined initial key terms, that I later refined, to be capabilities, skills, abilities, development, flourishing, good life, well-being, Eudaimonia and Eudaimonism. Although other terms may be possible, I felt that introducing more terms would render the search unnecessarily complicated and that the terms stated would return sufficient results. For example, I did not include the term functionings due to the relationship between capabilities as potential functionings, and functionings as exercised capabilities.

[34] Indexing algorithms are used by search engines to locate information relevant to the user's search terms.

Table 2: Examples of search phrases for database search, performed 02/11/2019.

Iteration	Search phrase	Decision
1	"capabilities AND (flourishing OR well-being OR wellbeing)"	25,803 records returned: unviable, narrower search phrase needed.
2	"Nussbaum AND education AND internal AND capabilities"	2 records returned: not adequately expansive return
Final	["capability approach" AND (skills OR abilities OR capacities OR competencies OR competences) AND (flourishing OR thriving OR well-being OR wellbeing OR "good life" OR "human development" OR eudaimonia OR eudaimonism)"]	Scopus: 594 records returned; Web of Science: 261 records returned; EBSCOhost: 198 records returned; acceptable.

Thirdly, I evaluated three databases, Web of Science, Scopus, and EBSCOhost as sources of literature data. I decided to perform my initial data collection searches on all three due to the unique advantages and limitations of each. For example, EBSCOhost offers a feature to save, retrieve, and re-run searches, however exporting search results to MS Excel was notably more challenging from EBSCOhost compared to Scopus, and I used MS Excel to manage my preliminary literature search findings. The fourth element of my database search process was to **c**onduct my search, and my background in computer programming supported my understanding of setting parameters and designing Boolean search strings[35]. The parameters I specified were to search for English language documents published from 2000 onwards. This year was selected to narrow down the initial search, being close to, yet preceding, Alkire's (2002) comprehensive survey of the dimensions of human development across multiple sources. I anticipated that Alkire's (2002) survey would have included important literature before 2000, allowing my search to commence from this point. I exported the records returned from each database into separate Microsoft Excel worksheets.

The fifth step in my search process, which I have called random validation, assessed the functionality of the Boolean search phrase to ensure the records returned met my established criteria for relevant literature. I refer to this as random validation because I randomly selected articles to validate, rather than reviewing 1,053 articles returned through my final search string as shown in Table 2 above. This may be a unique process as I have

[35] Boolean search strings use text, parenthesis, quotation marks, and words such as AND and OR to limit or broaden the search results.

not encountered this process in the literature that informed my method of collecting literature data. As stated, I exported all database returns to MS Excel, with each record appearing in a separate row. I decided to select a random 20% sample of records as this size was manageable yet substantial enough to determine if the returned literature met my relevance criteria and to verify the functionality of my search string. I used a random sequence generator to shuffle all row numbers, and the first 20% of this shuffled list for each database were assessed. The Web of Science database had the lowest validation score at 94%, indicating that nearly all selected records met the criteria, leading me to conclude that the search string was operating as I intended and that the articles returned were likely to be relevant literature. The score for each database individually is provided in Appendix 2.

The final step in my search process involved evaluating the relevance of the returned literature and sorting the list in an order for reading and analysing. I combined the three lists returned from the individual databases into a single list, removed duplicates, and used the highest citation counts to determine which record to keep. Having removed duplicates, 781 unique records remained as potentially relevant literature. Although Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic (2010) suggest the use of citation counts as a means to sort search results, I did not use citation counts as a means to evaluate the relevance of returned literature, due to challenges such as citation counts favouring older publications. Furthermore, through my experience of database searching, I noted that different databases associated differing citation counts with the same article, and I observed that an article with a higher citation count may be less useful as literature data than an article with a lower citation count[36]. Instead, building on Brocke et al.'s approach (2009), I subjectively scored article titles and abstracts and combined these scores[37] to assign a relevance rating to each article. The list was then sorted according to these scores and articles with a combined score below five were excluded, leaving 141 articles for possible inclusion as literature data.

However, Brocke et al. (2009) acknowledge two challenges with subjective scoring methods: they rely on the researcher's ability to score articles accurately and are influenced by the author's choices in crafting their title and abstract. This can lead to omitting

[36] For example, Pelenc (2017) received a high evaluation score based on its title and abstract. It had a citation count of one in Web of Science, two in Scopus, and was not returned from EBSCOhost. This article was the first I analysed and I found it a valuable starting point in determining the relevant internal capabilities and skills that children could develop to live a good life in a world that is worth living in.

[37] A title or abstract I interpreted as being highly relevant was given a score of five, possibly relevant a score of three, and theoretically relevant but not addressing my research questions was scored one.

relevant articles and including less relevant ones. To counteract these challenges, I read the first ten articles from the sorted list to evaluate the effectiveness of my subjective ratings. Additionally, I used the reference list in each article to identify other relevant articles missing from this initial list. I also conducted a supplementary search using the Google Scholar database. Appendix 3 holds examples of the process and outcome of this evaluation check, and shows the high subjective relevance rating I attributed to Pelenc (2017), a study I frequently reference from my literature data. This study was an action research project conducted in France involving 18 vulnerable students aged 15 to 16 who faced significant enduring learning difficulties and social exclusion, alongside 16 students aged 15 to 17 without these challenges. The study aimed to integrate the CA with Max-Neef et al.'s (1991) fundamental human needs approach to develop a dynamic and multidimensional model of well-being.

The structured database search process I have described gave me confidence in my search for relevant literature and facilitated overcoming my uncertainty regarding entering the hermeneutic circle of literature selection. However, when I needed further literature data in the later stages of my research, for example due to underspecified concepts I did not yet understand, I determined this structured database search methodology as unviable due to the significant amount of time it took. Instead I drew on Google Scholar, the University of Glasgow library, and 'reference tracking'[38] (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010:138) to source material through which I developed my understanding of the particular concept in question at a given time. Having collected, analysed and interpreted an initial understanding of internal capabilities from literature data, I began my second method of data collection, the collection of empirical data through the use of focus groups.

Focus groups

In this section I first present my rationale for choosing focus groups as a method of data collection. This is followed by a discussion of the focus group constitution and the selection process employed in recruiting participants. Following this I describe how the sessions were conducted. Finally, I reflect and comment on the challenges I experienced while using focus groups as a data collection method.

When designing my data collection methods, I was conscious of honouring the CA's emphasis on respect by involving the primary stakeholders who may be affected by this

[38] Reference tracking involves examining the reference list provided in a text to find additional relevant texts that the researcher may not have been aware of (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010).

research. These are the children, parents, and teachers involved in primary school education. These groups could participate through the use of surveys and questionnaires, facilitating data collection from a large number of participants and providing data that is potentially more representative of a population than small focus groups (Gallagher, 2013). However, using focus groups in my trial study evidenced the following advantages of focus groups, as noted in literature, over these methods or individual interviews. Focus groups facilitate individuals to share thoughts and opinions (Krueger & Casey, 2015) and have the potential to generate more ideas than surveys (Gallagher, 2013). Furthermore, a focus group setting can create a safe environment facilitating child participation and assist towards alleviating power imbalances between the researcher and participants (Adler et al., 2019). For example, during our focus group sessions, the children participated in shared decision making, determining how they would contribute during a session, whether by writing, drawing, or talking. Having selected focus groups as a data collection method, I next considered the homogeneity of group composition and the number of participants needed.

Krueger & Casey (2015) describe homogeneity in terms of the shared characteristics of participants that are relevant to the study's topic and purpose. Homogeneous focus groups can support participants to contribute through a shared social understanding (Kitzinger, 1995), informing my decision to organise three focus groups with the shared characteristic of the role participants played in the day-to-day experience of a school. These were a parent, student, and teacher focus group. The dialogue exchanges I observed between participants in each group evidenced a benefit of homogenous focus groups noted by Krueger & Casey (2015), arising from group interaction (Kitzinger, 1995). That is, homogeneity is an enabling factor supporting individuals to share in a group situation while also allowing sufficient variation and contrast of opinions. The following excerpt from the parent focus group discussion on the topic of time-management skills illustrates a willingness to share contrasting opinions.

> *P1: I don't know, for numeracy skills we have time management and designing … I think …*
>
> *P4: Yeah, well that'd be self-management skills as well.*
>
> *P1: But not for numeracy skills.*
>
> *P2: Time is measured in numbers, whether you consider it an hour, a minute, a day, a month, you have a certain period, if you understand that, time management, you know?*

P1: I just don't think -[39]

P2: - time is still time.

P1: I disagree, I don't think time management should be in numeracy skills.

P3: Yeah, I'd put it more with like planning and self-management than numeracy[40].

Having determined the homogeneity of group composition, I next considered the optimal number of participants per group in the context of my EdD, and how to select these participants. Given a limited time for transcription, analysis and interpretation, I decided a smaller group size would be more practical. Kreuger & Casey (2000) note that a smaller number of participants may offer less collective experience, but allows for deeper insights as everyone is able to share. As a consequence, I opted for four participants in a group. Group homogeneity served as the first selection criterion, and Table 3 on the following page details the specific observable and demographic criteria for each focus group, referred to as screens by Krueger & Casey (2015).

[39] The dashes in the transcript signify moments where participants interrupted each other, transitioning into and out of each other's dialogue.

[40] Throughout this text, I use an italicised font to denote empirical data collected from the focus groups and excerpts from my research diary.

Table 3: Criteria for focus group participant selection

Focus Group	Criteria

Parent	• Predetermined screens to include parents of:
	  ○ children in different stages of primary school education
	  ○ children currently in primary and secondary education
	  ○ children of both genders
	• The children of each parent must be enrolled, or were enrolled, in one of two particular primary schools
	• Two participants must be male and two must be female[41]

Child	• Must be ages between 10-12 years old.
	• Must be enrolled in the same named primary school.
	• Gatekeeper in named primary school identified children who in their professional opinion:
	  ○ have good receptive language skills suggesting appropriate capacity to understand the content and discussions of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Forms
	  ○ who would be expected to have the capacity and tendency to make independent decisions
	  ○ who would hold a view and be able to share their views on what can and cannot be disclosed
	  ○ who can understand the consequences of their decisions to take part in the research
	  ○ who can make choices in their own interest
	• Parent(s)/carer(s) gave permission for their child to be invited
	• Two male and two female participants

Teacher	• Primary school teacher in the same geographical area • Two male and two female participants During the design phase I specified two further criteria, a range of school ethos and a range of teaching experience. However, I dropped these criteria prior to recruitment to make recruitment easier, and, I knew I would not be referencing these criteria in analysis. Perhaps these could serve as items for future research and comparison.

I decided to have an equal number of male and female participants so that I could hear views from both sexes, and neither sex was outnumbered, although I did not take these participants to be representative. This ensured that no participant was the only member of their sex present in the focus group. Contrary to Krueger & Casey's (2015) suggestion for multiple nomination sources when identifying participants, I chose to use a single source of nomination for the children's focus group, namely a gate-keeper in a named primary school with which we have established relationships. This approach supported my ethical considerations in relation to working with children as the children were familiar with me

[41] To reduce complexity of focus group selection participants were understood as being male or female according to a traditional understanding of sex rather than gender.

and each other. The gate-keeper selected four children who met the required criteria and secured permission for me to contact their parents. Rather than randomly selecting from a list of possible child participants, suggested by Krueger & Casey (2015) to counteract bias, I deferred to the knowledge of the gate-keeper. The lack of a list of potential participants became a drawback when two children declined to participate, necessitating a return to the gatekeeper for alternatives. For the adult focus groups I used a variation of a nomination strategy known as 'a snowball sample' (Krueger & Casey, 2015:84). For each group, I selected one male and one female participant who met the screening criteria and were acquaintances with whom I had only limited contact. I provided these participants the selection criteria and requested that they nominate another person who also met the screens and might be willing to participate. This approach ensured that each participant knew one other person in the group and this aimed to foster a sense of comfort. Every nominated person agreed to join the study and I sent Plain Language Statements and Consent Forms to each. I had originally planned three sessions with each group, but through discussion both adult groups elected for two sessions and the child group elected to have three sessions. In summary, three focus groups were constituted with participants meeting the criteria listed in Table 3 on the previous page: one comprised of four parents, one comprised of four primary school children aged 11-12, and one comprised of four teachers. There was no relationship between the participants in the parents' group and the participants in the children's group. The children were nominated by the gatekeeper of a primary school, selected based on their cognitive ability to understand the nature of focus groups, the implications of participation, and their capacity to make reasoned choices. Although the children had previously attended the school where I work, we had not had contact in over two years. These children presented as above average in academic attainment. The gatekeeper secured consent from their parents for me to contact them regarding this research. After providing the parents with parental and child plain language statements and consent forms, I met with each student and their parent(s) to address any questions and ensure they fully understood the nature and implications of their involvement. For each adult group, I initially selected two participants known to me and provided each with a plain language statement and consent form. Upon receiving their agreement to participate, each person then chose another potential participant they knew and obtained permission for me to contact these individuals. The teacher focus group participants had a range of teaching experience, each with a minimum of 10 years. The parent focus group included parents who worked in the home, in an office/organisation, and outdoors.

Each session was organised into four sections titled introduction, working together, discussion topics, and review. During the introduction, participants were welcomed and invited to ask questions about the Plain Language Statement or Consent Forms and were advised that they could withdraw from the research at any time. We discussed the importance of confidentiality and participants were advised that the research was not intended to address any sensitive topics. However, if something was personally sensitive they were free to change the topic or withdraw if feeling uncomfortable. I reviewed the procedures for audio recording (all groups) and video recording (adult groups only) and introduced the guidelines for the session. These guidelines informed participants that all opinions were equally valid, each participant is the expert in their own life, and each individual's perception of the world they would like to live in is equally valid. Additionally, one person would speak at a time, and everyone should respect the opinions and ideas of others. The second section entitled 'working together' featured one to three activities designed as ice-breakers and to ensure everybody participated. These ice-breaker activities were unrelated to the study topic and were designed to help participants become accustomed to speaking in the group and become comfortable working and speaking together. The activities progressed from requiring individual responses to collaborative answers, and from straightforward factual questions to more imaginative questions. For example, an easy factual question was 'Tell us your name and something memorable about a holiday you have been on'. Participants then responded to 'Would you rather have skin that changes colour based on your emotions, or tattoos appearing all over your body depicting what you did yesterday'. I provided the first response to such questions. A sample collaborative activity required the group to identify five things they had in common, excluding physical appearance, employment, or the focus group. The final collaborative ice-breaker was an adapted version of 'Lost at Sea'. The group members individually ranked items according to their importance if lost at sea. They then worked on a group response. After the group discussion, individuals were allowed to keep their intial individual response if they chose to do so. This approach was designed to help participants feel comfortable speaking in the group and with one another. On reflection, this approach was successful as participants contibuted to the session and topic discussion without prompting, and conversation flowed freely. Furthermore, the first activity in this section required participants to state their name before answering the prompt, aiding in the identification of voices during later transcription. However, having completed the first transcription of the children's group I realised I needed to use the participant's names more

frequently during the sessions to make it easier to identify voices. The third section of the focus groups involved discussion on the following topics.

1. What is a good life in a world that is worth living in?
    a. As a society and place to live, how do you describe a world that is worth living in?
    b. How would you recognise another person as having a good life?
    c. How does this world compare to Schleicher's understanding of a good world as being one that is 'just, peaceful, inclusive and environmentally sustainable' (OECD, 2018:11)?
2. What capacities and skills do each of us need to have this good life, and, to help create a world that is worth living in? By capacities I mean things we 'are' and 'can do'.
3. Introduce and review the current framework of skills being developed through analysis and interpretation:
    a. Provide the top level domain cover terms and ask the group to assign the skills to appropriate cover terms.
    b. What relationships can be seen between the capacities and skills we determined as relevant to a good life in a good world and this framework of skills?
    c. Is there anything in this framework that should not be, or, anything that should be in the framework but is missing?
4. How does our understanding of capacities and skills relate to Nussbaum's 10 Capabilities?

Although the topics were designed to follow the order above, in practice I changed the sequence when a focus group discussion naturally introduced a different topic. Sentence completion activities were used at the start of the first focus group session as a means to gently familiarise the participants with the focus group experience and participation. This familiarisation is possible as sentence completion activities 'demand less from respondents as the stimulus material has more structure' (Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000:247). An example from a focus group discussion topic is the activity requiring participants to complete the sentence: 'I would recognise another person as having a good life if…'. This example also includes a projection technique, allowing participants to project their thoughts onto others (Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000), and lessening the degree of focus on each speaker as they are not required to attribute their response to their own life. The enabling techniques I drew upon included responses to a given stimulus text and a thought experiment including a modified 'veil of ignorance' (Rawls, 1999:118-130). A Rawlsian veil of ignorance can facilitate making non-egotistical judgements as our own position, and the position of those we care for, are unknown (Harsanyi, 1953). The text used for this enabling technique is provided in Appendix 4. Each focus group session ended by summarising the discussion to allow participants to check my initial understanding of their contributions. I transcribed the focus group material in the days following a session and provided participants with a

summary and an initial interpretation before the following session. I recognise that I am not an 'objective transcriber' (Tilley, 2003:753) and that the act of transcription serves as an interpretive act in itself (Tilley, 2003; Bailey, 2008; Mayring, 2014). For these reasons I next present my transcription decisions and process.

I followed a 'pure verbatim protocol' (Mayring, 2014:45) involving word for word transcription as during the transcription of my trial study I learned that this allowed me to hear the participant voices when reading the transcript. I decided not to include speech before the presentation of the first slide or after discussion related to presentation of the last slide. Bailey (2008:128) terms this speech 'social talk' and as I considered these private comments I felt it disrespectful and unethical to include them. Due to time constraints, I decided to omit non-verbal data in the transcript except for noticeable silences. Transcriptions that include non-verbal data, including emphasis, speed or tone, require significantly more time that a transcription without non-verbal data (Bailey, 2008). My use of punctuation aligns with the views shared by Tilley (2003) and Krueger & Casey (2015), I tried to faithfully represent the sense of the thought being shared by the participant, using punctuation that followed the flow of speech as I understood it. During transcription I found it helpful to slow the audio to 70% especially when a participant has a fast speech rate. For instances of overlapping speech, I focused on the first voice and then the next voice and so on, doing my best to faithfully transcribe participant words and ideas. Having completed a first transcript the audio was returned to 100% and I listened again in order to detect and correct any errors I had made during the first transcription pass.

In this concluding paragraph on the use of focus groups for data collection, I comment on two challenges I encountered. The first relates to the difficulty of scheduling sessions at times that suited all four participants. Although overrecruitment, as considered by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009) and Krueger & Casey (2015) could mitigate participant unavailability, I decided not to over-recruit, as I believed it disrespecful to secure agreement to take part and subsequently exclude the individual. The second challenge, an ethical dilemma also related to time, was manifest in the decisions I faced when participants were slow to respond to invitations and scheduling emails. I found this to be 'the "ghost" of undecidability [that] hovers over the decision' (Caputo, 1993:104), cited in Moules et al. (2015:178). Faced with the choice of recruiting another participant or proceeding with the session without a participant, I decided to wait for a response or availability if possible. Despite feeling time-pressured, I maintained that while participants

have the right to decline or withdraw from participation, it would be unethical for me to disregard them.

3.4 Ethical issues

In Section 3.1 I postponed discussing my axiological stance until addressing the ethical concerns and strategies of my research. Lincoln et al. (2018) associate axiology with the ethical concerns of research, emphasising that such considerations concern all stages of a research project. This view is echoed by Cohen et al. (2018) describing research ethics as the rights and wrongs of researcher conduct. Flick (2023) references how ethical codes and institutional ethics committees influence decisions made regarding these rights and wrongs. I obtained ethical approval from the University of Glasgow ethics committee before beginning data collection, and a principal value guiding my research design and actions is non-maleficence.

Non-maleficence is a cornerstone principle of the medical Hippocratic Oath (Bufacchi, 2020) and a recurring theme in qualitative research ethics literature, for example in works by Moules et al. (2015), Denzin & Lincoln (2018), Cohen et al. (2018), and Flick (2023). This principle is also central to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2024) ethical guidelines, requiring minimising the possibility of harm to participants. A key consideration in minimisation of harm to participants is that of informed consent (Flick, 2023). Cognisant of the young age of some focus group participants, I produced a plain language statement and consent form in child friendly language, and participation required consent from both children and their parents. Children had time to consider their decisions and parents were encouraged to discuss the research with their child. Furthermore, I met with each child and their parent(s) to address any queries before obtaining consent. During these meetings I also discussed the nature of focus group research and how findings would be represented. The primary school's gatekeeper only contacted parents of children who were considered competent to give informed voluntary consent. Following the understanding of competence used by Alderson & Morrow (2011), these children are capable of understanding the information provided to them, the consequences of their decisions, and can make choices in their own interest. My experience of conducting the children's focus groups supports the gate-keeper's judgement, as the children demonstrated a surprising level of understanding of the topics discussed. I also used pseudonymisation to protect participant confidentiality, and at the start of each focus group session, participants were reminded that: they could withdraw at

any time without prejudice; of the need for confidentiality and its potential compromise in a group setting; of the recording of sessions, and, that they could change the topic or withdraw from the session temporarily or permanently should any personally sensitive topics arise.

In mitigating harm to participants, researchers are required to ensure that participant views are represented fairly and accurately (Moules et al., 2015; Lincoln et al., 2018). Following each focus group session, I performed a brief analysis and discussed this analysis and a summary of views at the start of the next session. In all cases the participants agreed that their views and opinions were represented fairly and accurately. This requirement also serves as a measure of goodness in this research, with further detail and participant quotes provided in Section 3.7. In relation to literature data, I endeavoured to honour the author's apparent intent and context, yet remained open to new interpretations. This approach allows for interpretation to extend beyond the confines of the text alone (Webb & Pollard, 2006). As well as interpreting the text, the text conditioned my understanding, teaching me 'to see differently' (Moules et al., 2015:64). A final ethical issue to address is the possible power imbalances between myself and the participants, explained by BERA (2024) as power dynamics arising when the researcher has a dual role, such as mine as researcher and adult/Principal teacher.

A first step in mitigating these imbalances is present at the stage of participant selection. A power imbalance arising due to my role as Principal Teacher was mitigated as I had no direct relationship with 11 of the 12 focus group participants. The children were not current students, the teachers were not colleagues, and only one parent has children at my school. Furthermore, participants were actively involved in decisions regarding the running of the groups. For example, both adult focus groups decided to have two sessions rather than three due to scheduling difficulties. The children made decisions on their methods of expressing views, for example choosing whether to discuss or draw their responses. Although Gibson (2007) cautions that the familiarity of a school setting may encourage habitual behaviours such as seeking permission to speak, this was not my experience. The children were comfortable to move around the room and take snacks, and they freely expressed their opinions on the session topics and organisation. All groups were willing to question, challenge, and disagree with me at times. These observed behaviours strengthen my belief that I effectively mitigated power imbalances. Nevertheless, I question whether it is truly possible to divest oneself of power, to not be

seen as the expert, to avoid participants trying to give the 'right' answers? It is my belief that a balance and shifting of power back and forth between researcher and participants occurs. Ultimately, with the above strategies in place, it is the participant who grants or denies power to the researcher, and an example of this power is provided in Section 3.5, where I note the participants' power in determining whether or not they derived benefit from their participation.

The ethical issues and strategies discussed in the above paragraphs are underpinned by a central theme of the CA that is also a guiding value in my professional and personal life. This is, to treat people, situations, and the world in which we live with dignity and respect. The ethical considerations outlined above in conjunction with this guiding value are factors contributing to the integrity of this work. However, using the CA as a theoretical framework in a study that uses focus groups as a method of data collection carries a further ethical implication. Furthermore, in this study that seeks to identify internal capabilities and develop a taxonomy of supporting skills for primary education, the CA provides additional methodological guidance, as I next discuss.

3.5 The Capabilities Approach as a theoretical framework

In Chapter Two, I introduced the theory of the CA and its relevance to this research. This section describes an extra ethical requirement and the methodological implications arising from adopting the CA as a guiding theoretical framework.

As discussed in Chapter Two, respecting personhood in the CA requires treating individuals as ends in themselves, not just as means to another's goals (Nussbaum, 2006b, 2011). I view this principle as placing an ethical demand on my study, arising from my use of focus groups as a means of data collection. It is undeniable that the focus group participants served as a means to my end of data collection. The principle of personhood demands that participants also benefit from their participation. To this end, I carefully designed focus group topics, materials, and organisation to allow participants to gain understanding and to benefit from their participation. However, the extent to which the participants benefitted from the focus groups was determined by the participants alone. This represents a shift of power to the participants rather than the researcher, a topic I introduced above in Section 3.4 in relation to the ethical challenge of power imbalances. The feedback from participants quoted below, confirms that while participants served as a source of data, they also found the sessions enjoyable and beneficial. In the following

quotes, participants are denoted by their educational role, with the prefixes P, T, and S signifying a parent, teacher, and student participant respectively, and I am denoted as SW.

> *P4: It's a good concept, it's very good … it's shown us that we're all in the same kind of, no matter what we're going through, we all basically want the same things.*
>
> *T3: This is excellent, I think this is all very timely Siobhan, just as an observation, given what's going on around the world, it's actually very beneficial, it's really brilliant, you'll have to set up a philosophy group or something for us all Siobhan.*
>
> *S3: I learned a lot more about like thinking about what I'm going to do, like in advance, to reason more and all.*

Robeyns (2003b, 2003a, 2005) provides criteria that serve as methodological guidance[42] for selecting capabilities and functionings relevant to a specific purpose. These criteria of explicit formulation, methodological justification, sensitivity to context, levels of generality, and exhaustion and non-reduction have been applied by Biggeri et al. (2006) in their work with children to conceptualise relevant capabilities. Similarly, as my study sought to select internal capabilities and supporting skills that are relevant in my taxonomy of skills to support teachers, these are criteria I followed in this research. I next summarise these criteria and note my application of each.

Firstly, the list of capabilities, in this case internal capabilities and relevant skills, should be 'explicit, discussed, and defended' (Robeyns, 2003b:70). Similarly, Nussbaum (2011) provides arguments supporting the importance of her selected Capabilities. I provide this explicit formulation in Chapter Five by presenting and discussing my interpretation of the internal capabilities and relevant skills that broaden an individual's opportunity to have a good life, and to help create a world that is worth living in. I support the presence of each internal capability and skill domain by relating them to Nussbaum's (2011) formulation of a flourishing life as specified through her list of 10 Capabilities. Secondly, a determination of relevant capabilities should include methodological justification. Robeyns (2003b) elaborates this point by advising that the method used to determine the list should be clarified and justified. This Chapter, including detailing a dialectical hermeneutic methodology and my methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation, provides the thoughts and text to clarify and justify the methods I used to identify the internal capabilities and supporting skills that I will present in Chapter Five. The third

[42] Robeyns (2003b) considers five criteria for selecting capabilities, and in other works (Robeyns, 2003a, 2005) these steps are reduced to four.

consideration offered by Robeyns (2003b), and omitted as an explicit criterion in later works, refers to 'sensitivity to context' (Robeyns, 2003b:70). By this Robeyns is referring to the point that the list produced should be appropriate to its purpose. This is also emphasised by Nussbaum (2011) whose first point regarding the selection of capabilities is to consider the purpose and use to which the selected capabilities will be put. This requirement overlaps with a measure of goodness I detail in Section 3.7 and I will postpone evidencing the appropriateness of my framework to its context until that section.

Robeyns' (2003b) fourth criterion in capability selection discusses two levels of generality. The first level is described as an ideal list, and the second level is a more constrained pragmatic list. However, the internal capabilities and supporting skills presented through this study span both levels of generality. My research presents an ideal list as it does not consider constraints such as the detailed evaluation of a child's development of internal capabilities and skills. This level is suitable for an exploratory study, however, I provide some thoughts on evaluating individual skill development in Chapter Six. It is also a pragmatic list, serving as a supportive and practical list for teachers, and is an extensive rather than an exhaustive list due to time constraints. The final criterion offered by Robeyns is that of 'exhaustion and non reduction' (Robeyns, 2003b:71). This criterion requires the inclusion of all important elements in a capabilities list, and although there may be some overlap between capabilities, there should be no duplication. Biggeri & Mehrotra (2011) further clarify that no domain should be reducible to others on the list. I contend the list of internal capabilities and supporting skills presented in Chapter Five meets the requirement of non-reduction, however, I acknowledge that all important elements are not included, for example specific literacy or numeracy skills, and the potential existence of unidentified sub-skills. Given the time limitations of the EdD programme, it was not possible to develop an exhaustive framework including every possible skill contributing to an individual's opportunity of living a good life, a sentiment echoed by the parent focus group.

> *P1: You could drill down for years and never be finished, so it's getting it to a place to where it's useful.*
>
> *P2: Yeah, you could go in so deep, never stop …*

However, the exchange between the participants in the teacher's focus group provided in Section 3.7 below, offered as evidence of the framework's plausibility and validity, leads

me to believe that the framework is extensive enough to be suitable and useful for its intended purpose.

In this section, I have focused on relating Robeyns' (2003b, 2003a, 2005) methodological guidance to this study. This guidance provides overarching requirements of creating a list of internal capabilities and a supporting taxonomy of skills. However, it does not address the methods of data analysis and interpretation used in determining these capabilities and skills, and it is these methods I next discuss.

3.6 Methods of data analysis and interpretation

I chose a hermeneutic method of analysis and interpretation over statistical data analysis techniques. Although statistical methods of analysis have proven useful in capability research, as demonstrated by Anand et al. (2009) and Simon et al. (2013), my research goal differed from both Anand et al. (2009) and Simon et al. (2013). These researchers aimed to measure capabilities and their impact on dependent variables such as life satisfaction or well-being. In contrast, in this study my goal was to develop an understanding of internal capabilities and skills, and to present this understanding in an accessible format for teachers. My philosophical stance aligns with a dialectical hermeneutic philosophy, as previously addressed, and as discussed by Webb & Pollard (2006), the hermeneutic circle serves as a methodology of analysis and interpretation. This approach, termed interpretive analysis by Moules et al. (2015), involves the analysis and interpretation of both literature and focus group data to derive meaning and understanding. Such an approach seeks an understanding of how the chosen topic is lived in the world of practice (Moules et al., 2015). Moules et al. (2015) view the fusion of analysis and interpretation in a hermeneutic approach as arising from a focus on associations to deepen topic understanding, asserting that 'for hermeneutics… analysis *is* interpretation' (Moules et al., 2015:117). Interpretive analysis involves changing perspective in response to the data, refining these interpretations, and articulating these perspectives in a final report. In the context of this Dissertation, this report is primarily conveyed in Chapters Four and Five. This hermeneutic and interpretive approach emphasises the subjective understanding of the researcher, and as discussed in Section 3.7, there are measures of goodness I draw upon to support the integrity of my subjective interpretive analysis. Furthermore, critical reflexivity is an important element of this approach and involves constantly questioning and reflecting on one's interpretations and biases (Webb & Pollard, 2006).

In applying this hermeneutic method, I drew upon content and thematic analysis as an approach to theme development. A benefit of such an approach is presented by Vaismoradi et al. (2016) as supporting the interpretation, description, and understanding of complex phenomena. Specifically, I drew on a conventional content analysis approach to develop and understand themes in literature data. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) argue that identifying themes can support the development of categories in data, a process I found advantageous for exploring the internal capabilities and skills to support a flourishing life. This approach enabled me to create a framework of supporting skills, or taxonomy, to assist teachers in understanding and planning the skill development of children so as to enhance an individual's opportunity to lead a flourishing life. I also used this conventional content analysis approach to identify themes in the focus group discussions on a good life, and a world that is worth living in. Additionally, I used directed content analysis as described by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) on focus group data as a means to extend and validate the categories of internal capabilities and skills I identified from literature data. In the context of this research, this involved searching the focus group data for the key concepts identified through analysis of literature data. However, as Hsieh and Shannon (2005) describe, initially, all text of relevance and interest is highlighted in the focus group data without direct reference to the predetermined categories. This enables the researcher to elicit previously unidentified categories. In was through this method that I identified the unanticipated themes discussed in Chapter Four. To support theme identification, I employed various techniques, including 'Key-words-in-context (KWIC)' (Ryan & Bernard, 2003:3) and in-vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016).

In-vivo coding, as Saldaña (2016) describes it, involves coding verbatim 'When something in the data appears to stand out' (Saldaña, 2016:107-108). In the context of my interpretive analysis process, this involved coding all keywords or phrases related to personal beings or doings that could support an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life, while noting their contextual use. I also coded any phrases that jarred me into momentary stillness. For example, phrases like '*everybody has their void'* (P4) made me pause and I found myself without immediate thoughts, experiencing a visceral reaction. This is, in itself, an interpretive act, as the researcher determines what is considered noteworthy or significant. In this way, as Krippendorff (2018) suggests, the meaning of a text is shaped by the interpreter's choices. Being aware of the context of use is important because 'people use the same words differently, necessitating the examination of how words are used in context' (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009:6). This awareness frequently led to my questioning

and re-evaluation of previously established themes. For example, the following entry from my research diary evidences the decisions and revisions of my category development.

> *'Be able to dissent', 'can disobey'. These are interesting codes. What are they? Context: Dissent – Pelenc (2017) a key doing in freedom; Biggeri & Santi (2012) – being able to articulate disagreement needed to make collective decisions… Part of communication, you are communicating 'dissatisfaction', 'disagreement'? Important for a just and inclusive world - need to be able to challenge injustice. So part of 'living in the world with others', so this has two elements 'working with others' (team work, cooperation', 'living with others(?) - caring, kind, generous', 'communicating with others' (because if I am and always have been the only human being in the world, then I have no need for communication'). Thought - there is a higher category here - personal well-being, societal well-being* (Research diary, analysis entry, 3/1/2023)

I later reflected that many of the skills I was encountering through my literature data served both personal and societal well-being equally, thus determining that this was not a useful categorisation. Instead, by grouping related codes together the categories were determined by using the in-vivo code of the highest level in the group. This process allowed me to reduce 753 codes to the six internal capabilities, six skill domains, and 27 sub-domains that I discuss in Chapter Five. However, Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009) caution against the exclusive focus on thematic identification, as neglecting to analyse the levels of consent and dissent within focus group discussion data may risk marginalising certain voices. To mitigate this, they emphasise the importance of exploring 'argumentative interactions' (Kitzinger, 1994:113-115) between participants. In this research, I extend these argumentative interactions to include inter group interactions. For example by paraphrasing the parent focus group view of personal responsibility in environmental sustainability to the student group, the student group argued against the parent group view, and I present these views in Chapter Five.

However, the previous paragraph describing the analytic tools I employed belies the complexity of the approach as I experienced it. As noted by Webb & Pollard (2006), interpretive analysis can be a recursive process, requiring the researcher to revisit and reinterpret data to gain a deeper understanding (Webb & Pollard, 2006). The limited scope of this Dissertation precludes a detailed discussion of the numerous analytical and interpretive choices I made, which were frequently revised upon reflection or the emergence of new information. These choices often led to despair and confusion, particularly when there was significant overlap in categorising skills into domains and sub-domains. It was reassuring to find that the focus groups experienced similar difficulties in

determining the most appropriate sub-domain for an item. For example, the teacher focus group spoke of:

> *T1: Oh God, this is hard, are we overthinking it?*
>
> *T4: And obviously some of these [skills] could go into multiple categories.*

The solution adopted by the student group was to physically place some skill cards between two categories as they felt a particular skill equally belonged to both domains. For example, the students placed reflective thinking between the domains of self-management skills and reasoning skills.

> *S3: So reflective thinking, it's self-management as well, but it's also like thinking, your reasoning skills.*

The teacher focus group similarly opted to place certain skills between two categories due to overlaps. For example, following group discussion, teacher participant T1 decided to place paralinguistic skills between the categories of self-management skills and communication skills, stating that paralinguistic skills serve '*both at the same time I would think*'. Ultimately, in the words of teacher participant T3, categorisation involves being able to '*stand over where we made those choices*'.

However, Robeyn's (2003b, 2005) methodological requirement of non-reduction, as discussed above in Section 3.5, required that skills could not sit between categories, nor be duplicated in different categories. To help determine where a skill fitted best I drew on a taxonomic coding method attributed to Spradley (1979), presented by Saldaña (2016) as a consideration of semantic relationships. This method supports the construction of detailed lists and categories from collected data by examining the semantic relationship within the domain. The two relationships that proved most beneficial to my analysis were strict inclusion, and spatial. A strict inclusion relationship exists if 'X is a kind of Y' (Saldaña, 2016:181), and a spatial relationship exists if 'X is a part of Y' (Saldaña, 2016:181). In the example above of reflective thinking sitting between the domains of self-management skills and reasoning skills, I considered these semantic relationships as follows.

> *Is reflective thinking a kind of self-management skill, or a kind of reasoning skill? I interpret it as the latter; it is a kind of reasoning skill that is used in a goal of self-management.*
>
> *Is reflective thinking a part of self-management, or is reflective thinking a part of reasoning? I interpret it as a part of reasoning as reflective thinking can be*

> *used in situations that are not connected to self-management.* (Research Diary, analysis, 24/1/2024).

Furthermore, another entry from my research diary evidences that in making interpretive choices due to skill domain overlaps, I returned to considering the purpose of my research.

> *Skill domain overlaps: 'Feel playing a useful part' = Living in the world with others, or, Emotional skill? Can leave for the moment. Remember purpose - skill framework for primary school teachers. It is okay if something is in many categories - but no need to relist it. Yes - things will be related, we are multidimensional human beings - we cannot be split into neatly determined 'elements'. The purpose is to help teachers - does this framework do this? Is this framework representative of the 'skills we need for personal and societal well-being in a just, inclusive, and sustainable world'??* (Research diary, analysis, 5/6/2023).

I contend that the interpretive analysis choices I have made with regard to these overlaps can be defended, as the grouping of skills presented in Chapter Five represents a measure of goodness, described in section 3.7 below, as being adequate. That is, there is a consistency between the organisation presented and common-sense experience.

A further challenge that presented during interpretive analysis was the decision of when to stop analysing. The chosen stopping strategy I applied during my trial study was based on the concept of theoretical saturation, defined by Booth (2010) as a decision making strategy in data collection, occurring when data yields no further supplementary, challenging, or contradictory information. Similarly, Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic (2010) advise to stop analysing at the point of saturation, defined as the point when further analysis makes only a marginal contribution to understanding. This was the strategy I used during my initial interpretive analysis of literature data sourced through my structured data collection approach. I considered theoretical saturation to have been achieved when three consecutive articles yielded no additional supplementary, challenging, or contradictory information. I recorded the development of the categories in an Excel Worksheet, colour coding so as to identify categories that were refined, removed, challenged, or added and I provide a screenshot of a part of this worksheet in Appendix 5. However, this proved an unviable method when building my understanding of the skills to support a flourishing life during interpretive analysis, as I was falling foul of continuing 'to pursue literature of relevance … without ever reaching a final point' (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010:141). At this point, my decision to stop analysing was determined by considering the time available to me in the context of this Dissertation while also seeking to present a framework that was extensive enough to be of use to teachers.

In the above paragraphs, I have explained my process of interpretive analysis and the challenges I faced during this process. However, while interpretive analysis acknowledges the subjectivity of the researcher, it is equally important to ensure the integrity of the work. To this end, I have employed various measures of goodness throughout my research process, which I will next discuss.

3.7 Measures of goodness

The literature offers various conceptions of measures of goodness, each with intersecting concepts and theories. A recurring theme is aligning strategies of 'accountability' (Poucher et al., 2020:181) with the researcher's philosophical position and chosen methodology. However, Morrow (2005) advises that these strategies are not confined to a specific methodology and can be applied across research designs. Building on Morrow's (2005) criteria of trustworthiness that spans research designs, I will outline the four measures of goodness that guided my research process and the writing of this Dissertation. These measures are identified as subjectivity and reflexivity; representation, plausibility, and validity; adequacy, and the qualitative audit trail.

Subjectivity should be addressed by making the researcher's bias, perspective, and interpretations explicit (Morrow, 2005). I have previously discussed the subjective nature of this research endeavour, emphasising that the interpretation of internal capabilities and related skills I present in Chapter Five, is influenced by my personal experiences and my personality. Reflexivity, a process of self-awareness, considers one's influence on the research, supporting a researcher to manage their subjectivity and minimise bias, helping to ground interpretation in the collected data (Morrow, 2005). To achieve this reflexivity, I used the concepts of fairness (Morrow, 2005) and reflective action (Webb & Pollard, 2006). When sourcing data from literature, I tried to allow the literature to guide the initial data collection and I discussed this in Section 3.3 above. In conducting focus groups, I tried to minimise my influence throughout the sessions and remain conscious of 'whose perceptions are really being described in the findings' (Morrow, 2005:254). To avoid influencing participants with my perspective or Nussbaum's concept of a flourishing life, I decided to withhold introducing Nussbaum's Capabilities and my interpreted framework of skills until the final focus group session, which succeeded the discussions on a flourishing life. In relation to faithfully representing participant perceptions during data interpretation and in writing this Dissertation, I used strategies of representation as I next describe.

Representation in qualitative research is a measure of goodness requiring the accurate and fair representation of participant perspectives (Morrow, 2005). This concept is closely linked to the concepts of plausibility and validity (Moules et al., 2015), because an accurate and fair representation supports the plausibility of interpretations, and a community's acceptance of these interpretations determines their validity. Central to these concepts is the issue of 'legitimization of knowledge claims' (Moules et al., 2015:172). As a measure of goodness, this requires that my interpretations and the understanding I present should be based on faithful representations recognisable to the participants. Additionally, the internal capabilities and related skills are plausible if they are 'deemed to be valid' (Moules et al., 2015:172) and acceptable by a community of others. To support the representational requirement of this measure of goodness, I followed Madison's (1988) insights, as cited by Moules et al. (2015), and sought participant feedback on the acceptability of my preliminary interpretations of their contributions. Between each session, participants were provided with a document summarising their key thoughts and providing an initial interpretation of the previous session's contributions. The next focus group session began with this summary and preliminary analysis to ensure that I had accurately and faithfully represented intended meanings. Participants were invited to amend as appropriate using the following prompt questions.

> *Is this a fair and acceptable summary? Is anything missing? What changes, additions, subtractions would make this more representative of your thoughts and opinions from the last sessions?* (SW)

Each group confirmed that my summaries and brief analyses were accurate and representative. Below, I provide sample participant comments that support my meeting this measure of goodness.

Parent focus group:

> *P2: Yeah, that was it really.*
>
> *P1: Spot on.*

Children focus group:

> *S1: Yeah that's good, I can't believe we said all that.*
>
> *S2: Yeah, no, it's good, that's it.*

Teacher focus group:

> *T4: Well I just thought it was very well laid out from your presentation that you sent us.*

T3: I think it's a very good synopsis.

Additionally, I sought clarification from participants during focus group sessions where appropriate and used questioning to assist participants to deepen and share their intended meanings.

Furthermore, the elements of plausibility and validity associated with this measure of goodness were incorporated into my planning of topics for focus group discussion, and I explicitly sought participant feedback on the proposed internal capabilities and skills framework during each final focus group session. This process also served as a 'participant check' (Morrow, 2005:254), facilitating feedback, amendments, and opinions on my emerging interpretive analysis. This allowed me to ascertain whether my list of internal capabilities and supporting skills framework were recognisable and acceptable to this small number of others. As evidence of meeting this measure of goodness[43], I provide the following supportive exchange from the teacher focus group participants, who agreed that the skills framework I present in Appendix 6 and discuss in Chapter Five, is useful as an aid to considering learning objectives for primary school children. This exchange also evidences the methodological criterion of 'sensitivity to context' (Robeyns, 2003b:70) discussed in Section 3.5.

T4: It's big, isn't it, and there's nothing here that we don't in some ways do, even if not consciously.

T3: And you wouldn't be able to define it … and if you had time, or this list, you would get better. That's really interesting, that framework is really interesting. It would be brilliant for staff to help their understanding. I think policy makers should be looking at all of this -

T2: - and patron bodies.

T4: Certain teams within your staff, it would be very interesting.

T1: This is all really helpful, we can see that literacy and numeracy hasn't come out strong in the choices that we have made. I know someone who doesn't really have those skills at age 37, but if they had these skills we have here then maybe the literacy/numeracy may have come about, so they have a role but they are not the be all and end all, because we have children in our education system who won't achieve those, but these, these skills, can maybe be developed in them.

[43] Acknowledging the small number of participants offers future research opportunities as I will discuss in Chapter Six.

Additionally, having asked the parent and student focus groups about the usefulness of my framework beyond teachers, the following feedback provides further evidence of my fulfilling of the plausibility and validity demands of this measure of goodness.

> *P1: Totally. Anybody who has got employees working for them, or is working as part of a team, or in a relationship maybe, a lot of those skills, even your own personal relationships.*
>
> *P3: Yeah definitely, … and your own children, definitely helpful there.*
>
> *S2: It should be useful for everyone really.*
>
> *S3: Yeah, useful for everyone. It can be used if a friend is like, feeling down, or maybe a stranger and you see that something is wrong with them, you can understand better, can help them.*
>
> *S4: Yeah like now I have ideas to be able to help other people, … be more aware of the challenges they might have.*

However, Morrow (2005) voices a further concern affecting the quality and trustworthiness of qualitative research, recommending gathering data 'to the point of *redundancy*' (Morrow, 2005:255) to ensure the data is adequate. This was an approach I took when collecting and analysing initial literature to serve as a source of data, as described in the penultimate paragraph of Section 3.6 and in Section 3.3 above. However, as I will discuss below, it was not a viable approach as my research continued as this would have caused my exploration of internal capabilities and skills to continue well beyond my Dissertation submission date. As I referenced in relation to my framework being extensive rather than exhaustive, parent participant P1 noted, '*You could drill down for years and never be finished'*. Instead, I strived to meet the criteria of adequacy, defined by Schutz (1973) and phrased by Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006) as 'consistency between the researcher's constructs … and those found in common-sense experience' (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006:81). The feedback from the focus group participants, and their eagerness to engage in discussion, support this understanding of adequacy as being met. Furthermore, teacher participant feedback indicates that the framework of skills presented in this Dissertation offers a sufficiently expansive framework of skills for teachers to draw upon. However, ultimate adequacy of this work can only be measured by future research that considers the use of this framework in practice and the effect it has on subju, and I return to this point in Chapter 6. A final measure of goodness that I used to support the integrity of my research is a qualitative audit trail.

Morrow (2005) presents this audit trail as a detailed record of the data collection, analysis and interpretation, rendering the research process explicit that potentially can be repeated by others. I have kept an extensive research diary in an MS Excel spreadsheet in which entries are labelled as methodological, analytical or personal responses according to the headings suggested by Rodgers & Cowles (1993). Furthermore, I have hundreds of handwritten pages of analytic and interpretive notes covering concepts I encountered when analysing literature and focus group transcripts for relevant skills, and I draw extensively on these notes in Chapter Five. To assist in organisation of these pages I kept a further MS Excel worksheet that detailed the skill and the pages on which I had relevant written notes. The final element of my audit trail is a further MS Excel worksheet that detailed my code development during the initial analysis of literature data. However, I question how useful this audit trail is to any person other than myself. Although this audit trail guided and informed my writing of this Dissertation, it is perhaps too voluminous for others to draw upon. Through my experience of writing this Dissertation, a key function of the audit trail is to support building understanding, thus serving as an essential item in a dialectical hermeneutic inquiry.

In the above paragraphs, I have detailed the measures of goodness that guided my research and provided examples of how I applied these in my data collection and interpretive analysis processes. These measures included a reflexive process through which I sought to accurately represent participant views, and seeking participant feedback on the acceptableness and usefulness of my emerging list of internal capabilities and supporting framework of skills. I closed this section by discussing the audit trail I kept, noting my use of MS Excel to manage this trail. I next discuss additional methods of information organisation and related software used during this study.

3.8 Information organisation and software used

As discussed in Section 3.7 above concerning measures of goodness, I used MS Excel to organise my audit trail. I also used MS Excel to manage the extensive data, analysis, and interpretation I produced. I wrote over two hundred pages of notes related to my analysis and interpretation, preferring handwriting as I find I learn best through writing. When analysing and coding these notes, I wrote the code in the margin of the page. In MS Excel, I created a worksheet entitled Skills and References. The first column listed the code, and the second, a numerical reference to the corresponding note page. This facilitated easy location of all notes pertaining to a specific code. Later, during my interpretive analysis, I

added three columns that I programmed as dependent drop down lists and labelled these as domain, sub-domain, and skill. This means that the contents of the sub-domain column depends on the chosen term in the domain column, and the contents of the skill column depends on the chosen sub-domain. This feature allowed me to check the consistency of my interpretations with the labels I had assigned in NVivo, and to filter the 142 code rows to show only those relevant to the skill domain I was analysing and interpreting at the time. It is not possible to illustrate this feature as it requires interacting with MS Excel, however Figure 3 below presents a screen shot of the worksheet filtered by the skill domain of self-concept and emotional skills.

	A	B	D	E	F	#
1	Label	skills page	Domain	Sub-Domain	Skill	
8	Anxiety management skill	86a	Self concept and Emotional skills			
14	Character strengths	18a, 20a, 61a, 69a, 96a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Character strengths		
15	Character traits	6a, 17a, 17b, 33b, 102b	Self concept and Emotional skills			
16	Character V Personality Traits	18a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Character strengths		
27	Courage V Audacious V Brave	0a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Character strengths		
42	Dispositions	6a-6b, 17b, 21a, 88b, 90a	Self concept and Emotional skills			
44	Emotional development	11a, 100b, 108a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Emotional literacy		
45	Emotional intelligence	27a, 30b, 61a, 61b, 62a, 62a, 62b, 63b, 76a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Emotional literacy		
61	Hard working	59a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Character strengths	Will (determination, commitment	
62	High expectations	58a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Character strengths		
79	Locus of control	49a-53a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Self perception	Internal locus of control	
85	Motivation	42a, 42b, 43a, 49a, 51a, 88b, 89b, 90a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Character strengths	Self-motivated and enthusiastic	
90	Open mindedness	24a, 40b, 41a, 101b	Self concept and Emotional skills	Character strengths	Openness/open-mindedness	
91	Openness to alternatives V Be o	0b	Self concept and Emotional skills	Character strengths	Openness/open-mindedness	
96	Personal attributes	5b, 33b, 34a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Character strengths		
97	Personal attributes V Personal sk	0b	Self concept and Emotional skills	Character strengths		
99	Personality traits	5a, 33a	Self concept and Emotional skills			
117	Self- positive view of self	30a, 63a, 104b, 105b, 108a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Self perception		
118	Self-confidence	18b, 60a, 63a, 63b	Self concept and Emotional skills	Self perception	Self-confidence	
119	Self-efficacy	25a, 42a, 43a, 49b, 50a, 52a, 60a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Self perception	Positive self-efficacy	
120	Self-esteem	14b, 15a, 15b, 18b, 49b, 50a, 51a, 52a, 62b, 63a, 63b	Self concept and Emotional skills	Self perception	Self-esteem	
123	Self-perspective	12b, 13a, 13b, 14, 18b	Self concept and Emotional skills	Self perception		
125	Self-reliance	12a, 18a, 18b, 87a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Character strengths	Self-reliance	
142	Take responsibility	8a	Self concept and Emotional skills	Character strengths	Takes responsibility (& self-reliand	

Figure 3: Screenshot of MS Excel as data organisation tool

Finally, this sheet also contained numerous columns of literature data references for each code, facilitating source identification and review when necessary. A second tool I used for data organisation is the software package NVivo released by QSR International. Although NVivo is recognised as qualitative data analysis software (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013) that can aid the analysis process, despite concerns about potentially distancing researchers from their data, I chose to use NVivo primarily as an organisational tool. Using the related online help, YouTube videos, and a text by Bazeley & Jackson (2013), I taught myself how to use this tool. I imported all 19 initial sources of literature data and the focus group transcripts, assigning codes to particular sections of text using the related NVivo feature. This proved to be an easier way to move and group codes than using MS Excel, which I used in my trial study. Additionally, I experimented with features including coding matrices, displaying the distribution of codes across internal capabilities by different focus groups. However, this was an experimental process and did not influence my analysis or interpretation. The exploratory nature of this study does not extend to

examining, for example, why more references to the internal capability of good health were attributed to the student focus group compared to adult groups. Such explorations may serve as a basis for future research as I discuss in Chapter Six.

3.9 Chapter summary

In this Chapter, I have provided a detailed account of the methodology I employed in this research endeavour. I explained my philosophical stance, the study design, methods of data collection, organisation, analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, I identified the ethical issues and measures of goodness pertaining to this study and how I addressed them, both of which are influenced by using the CA as a theoretical framework. Throughout the Chapter, I discuss various challenges I faced during the research and how I overcame them. Following this Chapter, Chapters Four and Five signal the bringing 'to an end the play of interpretation' (Moules et al., 2015:50), in which I capture a vision of a flourishing life, a world that is worth living in, and the internal capabilities and related skills that support an individual's opportunity to live such a life in this world. These Chapters represent the 'transformation into structure' (Moules et al., 2015:50) of the interpretive analysis of the data, reconstituting the topic in a manner that opens new possibilities for practice. However, these Chapters do not signal an end point, but another starting point, from which my presented understanding 'becomes available in itself for questioning, re-appraisal, deconstruction, and interpretation' (Moules et al., 2015:51).

Chapter 4: A world that is worth living in, and, a flourishing life

4.1 Chapter introduction

In this Chapter I present a vision of a flourishing life and a world that is worth living in derived from my interpretive analysis of the literature and focus group data, with an emphasis on the latter for its local insight. Understanding this localised conception was important as this study explores the internal capabilities which, I contend, can be fostered in children by Irish primary schools, enhancing their opportunity to live a flourishing life, in a world that is worth living in. Internal capabilities, as explained in Chapter Two, are personal capabilities that can be trained or developed to support choice and opportunities, potentials, and contribute to creating 'a more just, peaceful, inclusive and environmentally sustainable world' (OECD, 2018:11).

As outlined in Chapter Three, my research progressed through three distinct stages. The first stage of my research focused on literature data and sought an initial understanding of the relevant valued personal qualities and activities that could be developed, such as 'expressing one's own mind' (Biggeri & Santi, 2012:380). During this first stage, I had not considered any concrete vision of a good life, or of a world that is worth living in, which are the focus of this Chapter and the second stage of my research. Focus groups were employed for this second stage because although Nussbaum's account of 10 central Capabilities outlines a political account of human flourishing (Nussbaum, 2000), my aim was to contextualise these Capabilities to Irish primary education, offering a local interpretation of a flourishing life in a world that is worth living in. As described in Chapter Three, I used focus groups of parents, students, and teachers, to explore their interpretations of a good life and world. These discussions, which had not yet introduced Nussbaum's (2011) Capabilities, provided the data for the thematic vision of a world that is worth living in and that I discuss below. Following this, I present a thematic vision of a good life as seen through the focus groups' lens. These perspectives provide insights into the values of these stakeholders in the Irish primary school education system, values that are helpful in the 'explicit formulation' (Robeyns, 2006a:356) of capability domains. In the third stage of my exploration, I introduced the focus groups to Nussbaum's 10 Capabilities and to the internal capabilities and supporting skills I had interpreted from literature data, and I discuss this further in Chapter Five.

4.2 A world that is worth living in

As noted in Chapter Three, each focus group was asked to complete the sentence, 'As a society, and a place to live, a world that is worth living in can be described as …'. This topic was further explored through a thought experiment in which participants envisioned relocating to a new world, bringing along everything and everyone that was loved and cared for by them. Participants were challenged to define the necessary beings and doings of people for this world to be good and nice, terms left intentionally undefined. Each group's views were individually analysed using a process of hermeneutic interpretive analysis that drew upon conventional and directed content analysis as described in Section 3.6 of Chapter Three. Each individual analysis was brought to the next session to ensure that my analysis was accurate and representative of their thoughts[44]. I have included pictorial representations of these analyses in Appendix 7. I then considered these analyses collectively, leading to my interpretation of three main themes: Affirming the CA view of economic concerns, A description of the world consistent with the CA and, A flourishing world is created by the people who live in it. These themes were influenced by my reflections that the focus groups' endorsement of the CA perspective on economic concerns is important due to the continuing influence of a knowledge economy and economic development on education policy. Additionally, there is significant similarity between the focus groups' perspectives on a world that is worth living in, and the vision embodied in the theory of the CA. Finally, the focus groups' conceptualisation of a world that is worth living in emphasised the significance of an individual's contribution to shaping this world. I next discuss each of these themes in their respective sub-sections.

Affirming the CA view of economic concerns

Although all three focus groups recognised the role money and the economy play in a life and a world that is worth living in, the adult groups strongly felt that this world should not be primarily guided by money and economic concerns. Parent participant P1 envisioned a world where '*money doesn't make the world go round'*, and parent participant P3 identified money as one of the big things in the world, in a world '*Where the big things don't matter'* (P3). P3 further expanded:

> *I think everyone kinda … goes on about the big things whereas we should just be concentrating on the littler things.* (P3)

[44] Samples of participant feedback on the accuracy and representativeness of my analysis and interpretation are included in Chapter Three – Methodology.

The parent group believed that the economy should be managed in a manner that avoids causing hardship and ensures the fair distribution of wealth. In the teacher focus group, participant T1 argued for '*less greed'* to reduce conflict and added:

> *There's just a huge drive for economics and money and making money, and I know you need that in order to run a world, you need that, but it's at what cost?* (T1)

This reflects concerns in the theories of sustainable development and the CA that I previously discussed in Chapter Two regarding economic growth potentially leading to individual, societal, or environmental harm. Equally however, both student and teacher focus groups suggested that in a world that is worth living in, people should be able to experience nurture and secure the basic necessities of life, acknowledging the role of personal finances to this end. Students drew a world with houses for shelter and advocated for a natural environment that provided clean water and food for people. Teacher participant T1 echoed this sentiment, emphasising the need for *'your home, your heat, your food, your whatever.*' The parent group also spoke of the importance of these basic necessities in relation to a good life, and I explore the relationship between a good life and a world that is worth living in as a theme in Section 4.3 below. However, securing these basic necessities may come at the cost of health and education if family finances demand a choice be made, as Wolff & de-Shalit (2007) noted. The student focus group extended the scope of the basic necessities of life, advocating for spaces to relax, play sports, to learn, pray, to bring people together, and places for children to express themselves. Yet, the focus group data indicates that a world valuing human development beyond economic concerns alone, and providing these basic necessities of life, is still an insufficient description of a world that is worth living in. Such a world requires further features that are consistent with the CA, as I discuss in the next theme.

A description of the world consistent with the CA

Each of the focus groups envisioned a world that is peaceful, harmonious, respectful, accepting of every person and, law-abiding. While hoping that most people will contribute to a peaceful and harmonious world, each group was also aware that '*the world mightn't have a good day'* (T2), recognising that the world is not perfect. The concept of a law-abiding world may not be immediately apparent in the CA, however, Wolff & de-Shalit (2007) identify this feature as an important capability in relation to disadvantage. During our activity describing a world that is worth living in, the students drew a police station, and I asked:

SW: So if you have the police station are you assuming that some people are not going to actually follow the laws?

S2: Yeah - - there's going to be a few people, who won't

S3: - there might be a few people -

The teacher focus group also felt that a world that is worth living in requires a justice system.

T1: Well we still need a justice system because we all need boundaries and rules -

T3: - mmm hmm, absolutely.

From this perspective, the justice system is viewed as a support to people and this is an interesting counter view to a justice system that punishes people who are in effect forced to 'break the law in order to lead a materially decent life' (Wolff & de-Shalit, 2007:47). While some may violate laws due to systemic issues, there may be others who find that the boundaries provided by a justice system help them to refrain from disturbing the peace and harmony of the world. In this way, a fair justice system can be seen as an enabler to a peaceful and harmonious world. Additionally, a world that is worth living in would also address an unjust system in which an individual could not legally secure the basic necessities of life. The focus groups described a world that is worth living in as a fair world, in which every person is equal, has equal rights, and is valued equally, reflecting the dignity and equal respect inherent in the CA concept of personhood. The student focus group explained fairness as meaning that those with power do not abuse it.

S3: Like if he makes certain rules for people with a certain religion or something like that.

S2: Or with a disability, you can't discriminate.

This concept of fairness endorses Nussbaum's (2006b) view of social justice, premised on the bases of social cooperation, rather than a Rawlsian (1999) view of fairness based on mutual advantage. Rawls' holds that disability requires special considerations in a theory of justice, whereas Nussbaum advocates for a theory of justice that includes those with disabilities in its design, extending equal rights to all. As parent participant P1 explained:

Yeah, … they need to be able to look at people and see that everybody has different capabilities, you might have someone with intellectual disability, you might have someone who's highly intelligent, but they all have to be treated the exact same way, coz if you don't then you're starting to segregate. (P1)

Furthermore, in such a world, people should be listened to, be supported, have the freedom to travel without fear of harm, and feel safe and secure. The following quote from parent participant P2 and excerpt from the teacher focus group provide examples.

> *Say the world in natural harmony or without borders … there's no borders at all, you can go anywhere in the world, so you can walk through, you know Kazakhstan, you can go into Afghanistan, or … without getting your head shot off or something … yeah no defined borders.* (P2)

> *T1: …people experience being valued and having self-worth … no matter … who they are.*
>
> *SW: So then if that is what you wish people to do, to value others, what do they need and what does a government have to do to make that come true?*
>
> *T3: Listen, [T1: yeah] feel listened to.*
>
> *T1: Yeah … [11 seconds silence].*
>
> *T3: A sense of belonging? [5 seconds silence].*

Teacher participants T3's brief statement on a sense of belonging belies the importance of connectedness and belonging, recognised by Maslow (1943) and Max-Neef et al. (1991) as basic and fundamental human needs. Nussbaum also recognises this significance, suggesting that the Capability of Affiliation plays a 'distinctive architectonic role' (Nussbaum, 2011:39) as it intertwines with all other realised Capabilities and is necessary for a life of human dignity. This Capability includes connection and belonging as it involves recognising and showing concern for others (Nussbaum, 2011), having compassion for the situation of others, and being able to form friendships (Nussbaum, 1996). It necessitates that each individual is recognised and valued as equal to others. Drawing on both Nussbaum and Maslow, Wolff & de-Shalit (2007) expand on the importance of being valued and a sense of belonging in a flourishing life. In their work on disadvantage, Wolff & de-Shalit (2007) identify being valued as a common denominator to people's understanding of belonging, and being valued incorporates 'both the idea of 'belonging and being understood to be making a contribution' (Wolff & de-Shalit, 2007:54). This idea of being able to make a contribution was also raised by each focus group.

> *P2*[45]*: You need to be able to function in society and be a help to society.*

[45] The prefixes P, T, and S, indicate parent, teacher, and student participants respectively.

P1: You need to be able to, I suppose give back to society, so you need to be able to, whether its work or, in the community, you need some quality that you're able to give something back.

T3: … a place where everyone gets the opportunities to be happy, reach their potential both individually, and as a contributor to society at large.

S4: … responsible, responsible for the world, and like, you need to be responsible.

However, the parent comments should not be interpreted as an endorsement of a Rawlsian justice theory based on mutual advantage, since the group later qualified this as '*those who are able to help society, somehow do'* (P1), and I discuss this further in Section 4.3 in the theme of personhood in a flourishing life. Furthermore, the view that capable individuals should contribute to society extends the perspective of Wolff & de-Shalit (2007). In their conceptualisation of disadvantage, Wolff & de-Shalit (2007) argue that a sense of belonging and contribution supports an individual's flourishing, while the focus groups view it as also supporting a flourishing world. However, the parent group strongly believed that societal contribution should not be at the expense of individual flourishing, reflecting the focus on the individual that is central to a CA concept of personhood. As I discuss in the later theme of personhood in a good life (Section 4.3), people cannot be merely seen as a means to the ends of a flourishing world. This extension to the view of Wolff & de-Shalit (2007) introduces the final theme I present concerning a world that is worth living in, namely that such a world is created by the people who live in it.

A flourishing world is created by the people who live in it

All three focus groups emphasised that a world that is worth living in relies on individuals actively participating in creating and maintaining such a world. This was evidenced by asking the groups what abilities and qualities people would need to realise this world. This theme relates to Nussbaum's (2006a, 2010a) arguments on the importance of education for a healthy democracy, especially when economic concerns are influencing education curricula. Nussbaum (2010a) discusses the importance of critical thinking, the capacity to see oneself as being connected to others, and the 'narrative imagination'[46] (Nussbaum, 2006a:390) for good citizenship and a healthy democracy. However, the focus group discussions emphasised that it is individuals who shape the world. Furthermore, the world

[46] Nussbaum (2006a:390-391) defines the narrative imagination as 'the ability to think 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 emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have'.

in which we live begins, using the words of parent participant P3, with the world of *'your bubble, your family, your very close friends'*.

A respectful and accepting world requires people to be respectful to each other and to the planet, and to recognise the diversity of individuals and cultures, understanding that not all will share the same views. The focus groups also maintained that a world that is worth living in requires people to be non-judgemental and to show tolerance, kindness, care, empathy and altruism, reflecting many of the qualities Nussbaum (2006b) raises in her discussion on the bases of social cooperation. The teacher focus group noted a relationship between an inclusive world and a world where people show tolerance. I questioned the group about how inclusion works on the yard for a child deemed annoying by others, and the following dialogue ensued.

> *T3: We need to be more tolerant, because somebody who is annoying, and they're everywhere let's be honest, I think we need to get to the root of why, what's happened in the past that makes them that annoying?*
>
> *T1: But you mentioned the word tolerance.*
>
> *T3: Yeah, I think we probably need more tolerance, that, okay I don't choose to play with Joe Bloggs because he just drives me around the twist, or she drives me around the twist, but look I need to be kind … and not be afraid to speak up, and not be afraid to be kind, I think kindness helps inclusivity and also helps people to be more tolerant.*

My initial interpretation and suggestions on inclusion, supported by the group in the following session, were that inclusion requires tolerance and understanding of others, which in turn requires recognition and familiarity. Recognition and familiarity are supported by de-othering, explained by Chimakonam (2019) as a process that challenges perceived differences between groups by promoting empathy and understanding based on the recognition of a shared humanity and the intrinsic worth of all individuals. Furthermore, a particular understanding of acceptance, rather than tolerance as suggested by teacher participant T3, may be necessary for achieving inclusion. Tolerance may permit difference while maintaining a negative perception of it, but acceptance based on respect involves genuinely embracing others as fellow humans. This form of acceptance is, I suggest, crucial for fostering equal respect which, as discussed in relation to the concept of personhood in Chapter Two, involves recognising the other, preserving in them what is valuable, and protecting the possibility for their (self)realisation. This distinction between tolerance and a form of acceptance based on respect, may reflect the attitude change that Nussbaum (2006b) considers necessary for an inclusive education system and

society at large. The adult groups recognised that such a society also requires people being able to work together for the common good and to progress society. However, in the quote below, teacher participant T2 wondered about situations in which people have differing views regarding the common good.

> *…all you have to do is like look at the Dáil*[47]*, everyone in there is contributing, maybe most of them have empathy, and they're trying to get to a common goal, but they can't get there, so because of that you could end up with a strike, or a protest, which leads to an argument, which leads to a fight, which … something goes wrong.* (T2)

Addressing this challenge requires being able to bridge varying viewpoints towards a common goal and being able to follow positive actions to achieve these goals. Teacher participant T4 emphasised the need for effective communication to resolve conflicts and disagreements without resorting to violence or falling out with others.

> *But are we saying there that disagreement will happen but it's not going to be tried to be solved by violence, and that brings us back to communication, listening skills, that brings us back to those skills.* (T4)

Participant T4 was referring back to the description of a world that is worth living in as expressed by teacher participant T1.

> *…good communication, or communication, I put in good afterwards, regarded as important especially at high level, like at government level, and obviously I'm thinking of peace and bigger … that every time something, you know Ukraine or Russia, whatever, I'm going why aren't those people talking?* (T1)

The teacher focus group saw a relationship between a peaceful world, and a world where people can engage in dialogue. They wondered if removing the possibility of physical violence helps to open up channels for dialogue, as thought processes might be different were that possibility removed. Perhaps our drive to violence is steered by fear of harm, which the teacher focus group linked to the evolutionary understanding of 'fight or flight'. I wonder if, in extending this concept to 'fight, flight, or freeze', and using those frozen moments to remove the immediate threat of harm, would dialogue be easier to initiate? Such moments could be used in any conflict situation, providing a space to transcend evolutionary responses, to engage in thought, and seek common ground. These spaces may support people in being able to change, re-think, and reason, qualities the teacher focus group deemed essential for environmental sustainability. This process would involve

[47] The Dáil, or Dáil Éireann, is the lower house of the Irish parliament.

learning from past actions and employing critical and reflective thinking rather than relying solely on habitual responses.

4.3 A good life

Participants were asked to complete the prompt phrase 'I would recognise another person as having a good life if', employing a distancing technique that Catterall & Ibbotson (2000) advise can depersonalise the activity. This approach can support participants to speak more freely in a group as they are not speaking about themselves. Furthermore, the completion technique of finishing a prompt phrase is less demanding on participants than an open question as they are provided with a structure for their thoughts (Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000). Although Catterall & Ibbotson (2000) note a disadvantage of this technique is that it is not expected to elicit elaborate and complex data, I found the prompt phrase effectively elicited the participants' thoughts and rich discussions. In addition to the anticipated data on features considered common to a vision of a good life, I was struck by three additional unexpected themes, which I next discuss. First, I will discuss the theme that recognises the CA concept of personhood as integral to an understanding of a good life. Following this, I will explore the theme of a good life being influenced by the world in which each person lives. The penultimate theme I present is that a good life has both ups and downs and, finally, I present the features of a good life that the focus groups expected to be relevant to all.

Personhood in a flourishing life

In Chapter Two, I outlined personhood as a concept that, following Nussbaum, emphasises the individual, self-determination, dignity, and respect, and views each person as an end in themselves. The adult focus groups believed individuals may have differing conceptions of a good life due to differing beliefs on what is important in life. The following dialogue from the teacher focus group, questioning their authority to define a good life for another person, reflects the principles of individuality and self-determination that are central to personhood in the CA.

> *T1: … and who measures then what a good life is?*
>
> *T3: And maybe it's a personal thing, what's a good life, there is that element to it, who says that what we're saying here is the right way?*
>
> *T2: So I would recognise another person as having a good life, if I'd spent enough time with them and understood their own situation enough to realise they consider themselves to be enjoying life.*

In the above statement, teacher participant T2 recognises that the only authority on an individual's good life is that individual. Furthermore, in order to understand that person's view of life, it is necessary to understand the person's situation and life experiences. In this statement it is possible to see a narrative imagination in action. However, the teacher focus group were also aware of a possible weakness associated with this view.

T1: But are they really having a good life like, do you know?

T3: And how do they know when they haven't experienced other than that?

This weakness reflects Nussbaum's (2000) concept of adaptive preferences that I presented in Chapter Two. A person's preferences may be limited by their life experiences and perceived opportunities. One way to resist this weakness is for a person to ask questions about their life, and to make a reasoned choice regarding their good life. For teacher participant T3, choice is essential to a flourishing life, reflecting the self-determination aspect of personhood. This participant compared the trajectories of her career and that of a good friend since her teacher training days. Participant T3 revelled in the challenges her additional career posts of responsibility brought to her, while her friend never wanted any additional posts outside her role as a classroom teacher.

T1: But you both have a good life

T3: Brilliant, of our own choosing … I would have died of boredom if I didn't do what I did, she would have died of fright if she did what I did, and we've often discussed it.

T4: Because if she did what you did and vice versa -

T3: - neither of us would be having a good life

Teacher participant T2 shared the belief that in making these choices, people must ask questions: '*If we're not questioning everything we're doing, are we going to make the right decisions*' (T2). Participant T2 reiterated this point later in the discussion when they stated '*I think, to have a good life there has to be lots of questions, now it's what you do with the answers…*' (T2). These statements emphasise the importance of the capacity for reflective self-evaluation that I discussed in Chapter Two in relation to self-determination. I return to this when discussing internal capabilities in Chapter Five. A further implication of the individual conception of a good life arises from the temporal and situational nature of that life. The teacher focus group indicated that an individual's idea of a good life can vary from decade to decade and sometimes day to day.

T1: If that question was asked of me three years ago, or 20 years ago, you know, it'd be different.

T3: Mmm hmm, each decade I'd probably want it differently, or in another year.

T1: Sometimes it might depend on the day.

Furthermore, it was the view of parent participant P1, that a person's view of a good life can be influenced by one's current resources. For example, if a person has sufficient money and has never known financial strain, then money might not feature in their picture of a good life.

I was thinking afterwards, about the new world, and how we were saying that money is important for a good life. Well if you have money then you mightn't think it important. (P1)

However if the person's life circumstances change and they do experience financial strain, then money can become more important in relation to their living a good life. In the conclusion of the first parent focus group session, participant P4 recognised that circumstances in general, can influence a picture of a good life.

That's it, you wonder, our background, if you get other people who are not as fortunate as us and they have a different background, would they think different in life? (P4)

The teacher focus group also acknowledged that individuals construct their own vision of a good life and discussed the fairness of universal inclusion policies in schools. They expressed concerns that such policies can expect individuals to 'fit in', wondering whose good life was being served by this. They recounted a case where a school underwent significant structural modifications to facilitate a 13 year old child facing social and emotional challenges. These modifications allowed the student to reach their desk without encountering others, aligning with the child's need to avoid social interactions at both school and home. Teacher participant T1 wondered if the demand for this child to attend a school was aiding or challenging his[48] '*living his best life, his good life*?' (T1). The following related discussion ensued.

T1: Well I'm going back to inclusion there then, are we trying to get him to fit in, that's not inclusion.

T2: <u>We're</u> trying to get him to fit in.

[48] The gender of the child was not revealed during the discussion, teacher participant T1 used the possessive pronoun 'his'.

T3: That's my point, are we doing the right thing by him?

T1: By surrounding him with peers, with other people, but if we interpret that he's living his good life, why try to force him to do that?

T2: I suppose what's he trying to tell us? He's telling us that I don't want to speak to anybody, you can open my lunch but I'm going to eat it alone, and when I'm finished here, I'm away.

T3: Now, who's benefitting from that scenario?

The group emphasised the importance of individualised inclusion strategies and the need for further dialogue to better understand inclusion in educational settings. In the wider sense, an inclusive world that recognises each person's unique vision of a good life must also respect the choice of those who opt out of social interaction. Parent participant P3 provided an example of a person who performs well at work but prefers not to socialise with others at work and, similar to the child in the above example, wishes no other interaction with people. Denying or deriding such a choice means denying the individual's personhood as the inherent principles of self-determination and respect would be negated. The dignity and respect that are central to the CA concept of personhood were also identified by teacher participant T1 as part of a flourishing life.

But it comes back to, for me, that if I'm looking at a person that has a good life, that they feel valued and it is not dependent on their economic status, to me that's just … that's a big thing for me. (T1)

This view was shared by parent participant P2 who spoke of the contribution feeling valued makes to a good life.

To feel valued sometimes, it doesn't have to be work, it could be something you've done in the garden or the house, you need someone to say, look fair play to you for doing that. (P2)

In the above statements describing a good life, both participants placed importance on an individual feeling valued. Furthermore, the groups recognised that feeling valued relates to being accepted, respected, listened to, supported, and an understanding that '*everyone can't contribute in the same way, I suppose everyone could do it differently*' (T2). However, a world that is worth living in also considers the individual's good life along with their being able to contribute to this world. The parent group raised awareness of the need for the focus to be on the individual and not on their contribution, thereby reflecting the idea that individuals should not be subordinated to the ends of others, the collective, or the economy. When interpreting the quote from Theodore Roszak (1978), reproduced in

Appendix 8, parent participant P2 said that schools should not educate children as a means to the ends of society.

> *It's saying that we don't care about Johnny, just where we can put him in society, like where he can … contribute, so it's nothing to do with how he feels or how it makes his life better, it's just about how we can actually get something from Johnny.* (P2)

The groups expressed the opinion that schools can support Johnny's flourishing by nurturing his internal capabilities of health and play, as outlined in Chapter Five. However, Johnny's opportunity for a flourishing life is shaped not only by school curricula but also by the broader environment in which he resides.

A good life is influenced by the world we live in

In discussing how they would recognise another person as having a good life, the adult focus groups emphasised the influence of the world we live in on an individual's life, ranging from a wide lens encompassing the natural world to a narrower lens involving the people we connect with in our daily lives. For example, teacher participant T1 spoke of the environment and the natural world as being essential for a good life, and parent participant P4 narrowed the lens of influence to those we love. This participant described a good life as a happy life, where happiness is defined as:

> *Just getting by in life, making sure everyone is provided for, you know kids are okay, relations are okay, that's my idea of happiness*. (P4)

All focus groups, especially the adult groups, acknowledged that certain factors influencing a person's life are beyond their control. While the focus groups agreed with schools supporting the development of the internal capabilities identified through this study, it is also recognised that this is only one support in relation to the opportunity to live a good life. The teacher focus group acknowledged that schools cannot compensate for some influences on a person's opportunity to have a good life.

> *T1: We can't fix society -*
>
> *T3: - no, we can't, that's not our role as teachers anyway, we can help -*
>
> *T1: - if you even look, take a child, you try to put all the supports in, but who mam and dad are … now not always, but there is a massive pull -*
>
> *T2: - yeah, it can be water up a hill can't it -*

T1: *- yeah, and it doesn't mean that we don't try -*

T3:
- no, because -

T1 *- because we keep doing it.*

In the above exchange, the teacher group acknowledged the familial influence on a person's opportunity to live a good life. Teacher participant T1 succinctly phrased this influence as: '*... the people you love mightn't be leading to your good life'.* Similarly, parent participant P1 recognised the influence of others on an individual's life, stating '*... it's how people live their life and if they have an effect on your life, that's what makes, what decides whether you're happy or sad'.* This statement opens another window on the discussion on a capability to live in a law-abiding manner presented by Wolff & de-Shalit (2007). While acknowledging the importance of this capability, it is also important to consider the impact of illegal acts on another person's opportunity for a flourishing life. For example, it seems easy to empathise with the individual Wolff & de-Shalit (2007) describe as wishing to live within the law but cannot due to severe deprivation of basic necessities. This person's flourishing life is further diminished when they resort to illegal acts due to associated negative self-perception and social ostracism. It is not too challenging to maintain this empathy when reading of a person who to 'perhaps secure proper nutrition … may feel forced to break an apparently unrelated law, such as not paying car tax' (Wolff & de-Shalit, 2007:48). However, it becomes more challenging to maintain empathy and support this capability if the action taken to secure proper nutrition adversely affects another's flourishing life. Consider if, to secure proper nutrition, the person burgles a home to take whatever they can. What impact has this on the homeowner's happiness, flourishing, and sense of security? And what if the home-owner suffers bodily harm or harm to life itself? These scenarios raise complex questions beyond the scope of this study regarding the balance between a capability to live in a law-abiding manner, and the respect due to every person, disadvantaged or otherwise.

However, while others may have an effect on our lives, child participant S2 shared the importance of self-belief and not defining one's life by what other people think of you. This relates to the significance of self-determination and personal mind-set in shaping and pursuing one's own vision of a flourishing life. This participant recognised another as having a good life *'if they don't feel down all the time, are in a happy mood, and don't*

care what other people think' (S2). Student S2 also reiterated the need for self-belief during the summation of session one.

> *S2: To believe, you don't have to believe in everything, but if you want to make something, it's like a New Year's resolution, if you're setting a goal for yourself, you're going to have to believe in yourself.*
>
> *S3: Believe in yourself, and others as well.*

Interestingly, parent participant P4 recognised the other side of this coin, that a person cannot pursue their vision of a good life without thinking about how this vision affects others.

> *You have to kinda treat other people … it's not all about you either, you have to be open-minded, if someone is sharing your life with you then you have to give back to them.* (P4)

The teacher focus group recognised that there are influences other than people that can impact a person's opportunity to have a good life. The group discussed the bifurcation of nature and nurture on a person's opportunity to have a good life. They concluded that both nature and nurture play a role in shaping society and an individual's own life, and agreed that '*there is a degree where nurture can override nature'* (T3). The group further added the element of trauma to the nature/nurture divide.

> *T3: A trauma can take a child a different way completely, like who could have been very settled, very able, very capable, and a trauma then changes that child's entire way of thinking about themselves, about others.*
>
> *T1: And that's not nurture, but it's environmental, the environment stops them and can prevent them from -*
>
> *T3: - thriving really -*
>
> *T1: - having their good life'.*
>
> *T4: And that's outside the control of the child, or an adult even.*

Although the events constituting a trauma may be outside the control of an individual, teacher participant T3 recognised the difference between the issues in a person's life, and how the person deals with those issues. This participant recognised another as having a good life if they are '*capable of dealing with everyday issues, and bigger issues, in a measured way, in other words, keeping a perspective on things'* (T3). This thought introduces the next theme I interpreted from the focus group discussions on a good life; a good life is not a life without problems.

A good life is not a life without problems

When the parent participants were sharing their individual thoughts on how they recognise another person as having a good life, participant P4 stated:

> *Really there's nothing, like I mean they have the same problems we have, everybody has their void.* (P4)

When I was transcribing the session, this statement resonated deeply with me, although I could not say why. I find it a powerful statement that describes the reality of a lived life. In the words of teacher participant T2, '*life is also full of highs and lows'.* Participant T2 recognised a good life as having more positive than negative moments, and stressed that these do not need to be '*over-positive or filled with movie scene joy'* (T2). Participant T2 believed that it is not possible to maintain a good life all the time. In their view, a life that met our descriptions of a good life on a daily basis would be a utopian life and does not exist. The parent focus group criticised social media as a tool for spreading this utopian ideal that does not reflect reality. The group held the belief that observing someone's life through social media could give the impression of perfection, yet it is common for individuals to share only the positive aspects of their lives. The following excerpt illustrates their thoughts.

> *P3: They might show that their life is great -*
>
> *P1: - they're having an amazing life -*
>
> *P3: - but at the same time they're not like, you know -*
>
> *P1: - showing their real life.*
>
> *P4: I'm sure people looking at it are saying oh they have it all, and really they don't, you know.*
>
> *P1: Everybody puts on a show, whereas behind closed doors their life is very different than what they portray, socially. Social media is not real,… you portray what you want other people to see.*

The child focus group were also cognisant of a non-utopian nature of a good life. This recognition arose in the context of a discussion on the quote from Theodore Roszak (1978). The students believed that Johnny's life as presented through the excerpt was not a good life. I then asked them how they would help Johnny to improve his life.

> *S1: We could teach him that he can't win all the time.*
>
> *S3: Yeah, that's very important.*

S2: You can't always get your way in life.

The students recognised that sometimes in life a person is going to be disappointed, and spoke of the need to be able to cope with disappointments as they arise. These disappointments in life are one of the pressure zones that parent participant P2 believed are a part of each individual reality. Even though each individual constructs their own vision of a good life, a life that is full of highs and lows and can be impacted by experiences outside of a person's control, the focus groups also believed that it is possible to discern some general features that are expected to be relevant to all in a democracy. These features are presented in the final theme that I next discuss.

Features of a good life expected to be relevant to all in a democracy

The focus groups believed that a good life is a balanced life, in which a person generally feels happy or satisfied. The adult groups recognised that there are differing understandings of happiness and life satisfaction, and the demands for each can vary from one person to another. However, it was suggested that a baseline for happiness is that the individual has enough money to get by and has secured the basic necessities of life. All three focus groups spoke of the importance of money as an enabling feature of a good life. Both adult groups did not want money to be the focus of a person's life, yet equally recognised that having enough to get by is important. The child focus group also spoke of the important contribution money can make to a person's opportunity to live a good life. This group believed that being able to earn money supported a person's independence. It was for this reason that the group suggested that children under the age of 16 could be legally entitled to be in paid employment. However, having discussed the risk of exploitation and an expectation to work for this age group, the students suggested that they could earn money by doing jobs at home for their parent(s).

The focus groups also reaffirmed the importance of having good health and having time to enjoy oneself that feature in Nussbaum's 10 Capabilities for a flourishing life. At least one member of each group independently spoke of the importance of good health in a flourishing life and the other members of each group concurred. The teacher group viewed nutrition and good health as necessary for a person to be in a position to learn, and the students believed that a healthy body, a healthy mind, and being able to think about one's own health contributes to a flourishing life. In reaction to the quote from Roszak (1978), the parent focus group also believed that healthy eating is an important aspect of education.

> *School should teach him about the right way of dieting, food, and what you put into your body is what you're going to get back out of it, and it's a different kind of education, it's not just learning all your literacy skills and that, it's different and it's important*. (P4)

The adult focus groups emphasised the importance of individual choice in a vision of a good life. The student group also believed that choice was important to a good life, but viewed the important choices as being left to adults. The idea of a balance between work and play was also identified by both parent and teacher focus groups as a feature of a good life. Teacher participant T3 spoke compellingly on the need for pastimes such as watching television and reading as a counter-measure to the challenges of her job. The parent group similarly spoke of the need for a balance between work and having time to enjoy life. This group spoke of a good life as a life that has time for:

> *Day to day things, just like go for a walk, or a run, go to the gym, spend time with family, there are important things that we sometimes don't see, or don't do often because we're worrying about the other things.* (P3)

4.4 Chapter summary

In this Chapter, I explored the concepts of a world that is worth living in and a good life through the perspectives of parents, students, and teachers in the Irish primary education system. The themes derived from the focus group discussions provide insight into the values and priorities of these stakeholders, and relate the CA concept of a flourishing life to a local context. The discussions affirm the principles of human development and the CA, but also suggest themes that may deserve greater emphasis within the CA. A world that is worth living in is characterised by peace, harmony, respect, acceptance, a fair justice system, and an economy that is managed in a manner to avoid hardship for people. Such a world values people above economic matters. A good life acknowledges the presence of challenges yet has balance with regard to the highs and lows, and a person's individuality and self-determination are respected, necessitating the presence of individual choice. Health, individual choice, securing the basic necessities of life, and having time to enjoy oneself all contribute to a flourishing life, and the opportunity to live a flourishing life is influenced by our experience of the environment in which we live and the people we meet, with some factors beyond our personal control. This world is created and maintained by the people who live in it, requiring acceptance, collaboration, effective communication, and the ability to work together for the common good. In the next Chapter, I explore the internal capabilities that schools can nurture in children to support each person's opportunity to live this flourishing life in such a world.

Chapter 5: Internal capabilities

5.1 Chapter introduction

The data supporting this Chapter was collected and analysed during stages one and three of my research. Stage one entailed an interpretive analysis of collected literature data to identify the internal capabilities and skills that could support an individual's opportunity to live a good life in a world that is worth living in. In stage three of my research, I introduced Nussbaum's 10 Capabilities and the internal capabilities and skills interpreted from the literature to the focus groups. The internal capabilities discussed in this Chapter serve to support an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life, in a world that is worth living in. This does not imply that developing these internal capabilities guarantees a good life. However, if all external factors are equal, an individual who develops these internal capabilities in line with their potential has a greater opportunity to live a flourishing life, characterised by potentials, opportunities, choices, and self-determination, than if they did not. Before outlining the remaining sections of this Chapter, I will review the concepts of internal capabilities, abilities, and skills that I advocate in this study and have discussed in Chapter Two.

Internal capabilities are personal capacities that can be trained and developed, allowing an individual to perform a particular chosen functioning under supportive circumstances. During my interpretive analysis, I considered whether my internal capabilities were merely a rebranding of Nussbaum's Capabilities or if they are indeed different. I concluded that they are different yet interconnected as Nussbaum's Capabilities are combined capabilities that encompass internal capabilities. Some internal capabilities combine multiples of Nussbaum's Capabilities, for example, the internal capability of health merges the Capabilities of Life, Bodily Health, and Emotions. Other internal capabilities correspond directly to a single Capability, for example the internal capability to choose relates directly to the Capability of Control Over One's Environment. The Capability of Bodily Integrity is different again as the focus groups related this to the internal capabilities of health and pursuing self-directed activities for pleasure. Furthermore, the focus of internal capabilities differs from Nussbaum's Capabilities in a partial theory of justice. For example, while Nussbaum's Control Over One's Environment is focused on political and material control, the internal capability to choose is focused on being able to make decisions on a day-to-day and long-term basis. The student group was sceptical about the

relevance of Nussbaum's Capability to them but, as will be discussed in Section 5.6, they considered the internal capability to choose as pertinent to their age group.

The aim of this research is to develop a list of internal capabilities and skills to help children develop these qualities during primary school. This endeavour seeks to broaden their opportunities to lead a flourishing life in a world that is worth living in, despite its imperfections that Nussbaum's Capabilities seek to address. My naming of internal capabilities avoids confusion with Nussbaum's Capabilities and recognises that some internal capabilities span more than one Capability. The internal capabilities are named based on their focus and use a code derived from literature data. Developing these capabilities increases one's ability, seen as a dynamic continuum of capability formation from latent potential to realisation through training and development. Skills, a subset of internal capabilities, are observable when exercised as functionings in the service of a goal. These skills not only help individuals pursue their own identified goals but also broaden an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life, in a world that is worth living in. Finally, this study focuses on transferable skills which can be exercised across various situations and contribute to multiple valued functionings. For example, motor skills are considered transferable due to a wide range of functionings such as reading, walking, and football, unlike football skills which are limited to that sport.

I organise my discussion according to five internal capabilities that align with Nussbaum's (2011) list. I also introduce an additional internal capability that does not seem to be explicitly addressed by Nussbaum in her list of Capabilities: to be able to aspire and to hope. Although the skill domains I interpreted through this exploratory study offer support across these internal capabilities, I align particular skill domains with specific internal capabilities based on the associations made by the focus groups. There are significant interrelationships between internal capabilities and skills, with one capability supporting others and a particular skill domain supporting several internal capabilities, and I draw attention to some key relationships throughout the Chapter. The remainder of the chapter is structured into seven subsections. Five of these explore a specific internal capability and a discussion of a skill domain associated with that internal capability, and I relate each internal capability to Nussbaum's Capabilities. Sections 5.2 to 5.6 examine the internal capabilities and supporting skill domains as indicated in the sub-section headings:

5.2 The internal capability of health, along with self-concept and emotional skills;

5.3 The internal capability of pursuing self-directed activities for pleasure, along with motor skills;

5.4 The internal capability to think and learn, in addition to the skill domain of reasoning skills;

5.5 The internal capability to live in the world with others, and two associated skills domains: social and relationship skills, and communication skills;

5.6 The internal capability to choose and the final skill domain of self-management skills; and,

Section 5.7 details the internal capability to aspire and hope. The Chapter then closes with a concluding section. One purpose of this study is to provide teachers with a framework of skills that they can draw upon to support children's opportunities to have a good life, and to help create and maintain a world that is worth living in. To this end, in Appendix 6, I present the individual skills discussed in this Chapter in a table that includes indicative functionings reflecting skill development. An observation of teacher participant T1 quoted below provides a reason for discussing the skill domains in this Chapter.

> *But we're saying that these are skills that we have the potential to develop in ourselves and in others; but we don't know half the time that we're doing them, we don't even know what we're doing! So then how are they developed if we don't even know what skills we're using?* (T1)

Both space and time limitations imposed in the context of this Dissertation do not permit an in-depth discussion of each internal capability and skill domain. As an exploratory study, I chose to present a breadth rather than a depth of discussion.

5.2 The internal capability to have good health

The focus groups identified the internal capability of good health as encompassing Nussbaum's (2011:33-34) Capabilities of Life, Bodily Health, and Emotions as I discuss below.

> *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.
>
> *Bodily health.* Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.
>
> *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.)

The internal capability to have good health supports elements of each of these Capabilities and a quote from parent participant P1 exemplifies the connection between the Capabilities of Life and Bodily Health.

> *Life, not dying prematurely like, yeah, physical health and bodily health would fall underneath our health. And she says not having a life so reduced that it's not worth living, well that's our good life in a way, and mental health too. So they both go under our health capacity.* (P1)

This dual concern with both mental and physical health is supported by literature data that views mental and physical health as influencing well-being (Biggeri et al., 2006; Pelenc, 2017; Domínguez-Serrano et al., 2019). By identifying the importance of being able to eat healthily as a support to overall health, the focus groups align with Doyal and Gough's (1993) assertion, cited by Alkire (2002), that nutritional food and water are preconditions of well-being. However, the focus group discussions also show an awareness that the opportunity to eat healthily involves more that the availability of nutritious food, stating that individuals need to learn about healthy eating and make choices regarding what they eat. This implies a relationship between the internal capability of health, the internal capability to think and learn, the internal capability to choose and Nussbaum's Capabilities of Senses, Imagination, and Thought, Practical Reason, and, Control Over One's Environment, Capabilities that I return to in Sections 5.4 and 5.6 respectively.

While physical health is supported by healthy eating, analysis of both focus group and literature data suggests that the opportunity to have good mental health is supported by being able to be the person you would like to be. For example, student participant S2 recognised a good life as marked by indifference to '*what other people think'*. Teacher participant T1 recounted facilitating a child with complex needs to perform on stage for the school, as all that child wanted was to '*be able to stand on the stage, and sing, and get clapped, that's her good life'*. For parent participant P1, it is important to be able to live in the world with others and with different cultures, but equally '*you gotta live your own life'*. These views align with Pelenc's (2017) interpretation of the abilities of individuality and self-actualisation as essential for satisfying the human need for identity. Self-actualisation requires the ability to recognise yourself, know yourself and confront yourself (Kellock & Lawthom, 2011; Pelenc, 2017), implying that self-awareness aids self-actualisation, which, in turn, supports positive mental health and influences an individual's opportunity for a

flourishing life. Positive mental health was also indirectly referenced by student participant S2 as discussed in Section 4.3. This student viewed a good life as one in which a person is not perpetually downcast but all groups recognised that a good life is not a life without problems. In the words of teacher participant T3, '*I would recognise a person as having a good life if they are … capable of dealing with everyday issues and bigger issues in a measured way …'.* These views are indicative of an aspect of the internal capability of health derived from litature data that I have termed emotional balance.

Emotional balance contributes to the internal capability of health and my analysis of literature data identified being able to experience positive emotions and deal with negative emotions as supporting this balance. It is necessary to be able to experience positive emotions[49] such as inner peace, relaxation, and tranquillity. Grisez et al. (1987) explain inner peace as the harmony that opposes inner disturbance, a disturbance arising from our own feelings being in conflict with themselves, or with our choices and judgements. This inner disturbance can also arise from the challenges associated with the relational nature of the internal capability of making choices, as I discuss in Section 5.6. A person's internal capability to have good health and emotional balance is also supported by being able to deal with negative[50] emotions such as grief and'justified anger' (Nussbaum, 2011:33). The focus groups also perceived daily setbacks, bigger issues, and the inherent disappointments in life, as a cause of negative emotions. Our potential to achieve inner peace, deal with negative emotions, and self-actualisation, is supported by various self-concept and emotional skills that I now discuss.

Self-concept and emotional skills

My analysis of literature data from 23 individual sources produced 46 codes that I categorised into three sub-domains of self-concept and emotional skills that I contend support an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life. These sub-domains encompass character strengths, self-perception, and emotional literacy. Character strengths subsume an individual's dispositions, characterological traits, and attitudes, often referred to in the literature as dispositions (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2009; Alvarez, 2017), personal attributes (Unesco, 2012), and personality traits (Van Ootegem & Verhofstadt, 2015). However, these terms overlook the developmental aspect of character strengths. For example, attributes and traits might be seen as innate, and dispositions as

[49] King (2013:676) describes positive emotions as a feeling that reflects 'a level of pleasurable engagement with the environment'.

[50] A negative emotion reflects 'a general feeling of distress' (King, 2013:676).

fixed. Yet in relation to nature and nurture, the teacher focus group believed that '*I think both play a role…*' (T1), supporting the view of Roberts & Jackson (2008) who speak of personality traits being shaped by the interplay between genetics and the environment. Furthermore these terms do not emphasise the concept of ability, that is, that latent character strengths can progress through stages of development. For example, Ireland's national early childhood curriculum framework defines dispositions as 'enduring habits of mind and action … the tendency to respond to situations in characteristic ways' (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2009:54). Similarly, Miller (2018) offers a comparable view of dispositions. However, both Facione et al. (1995) and Roberts & Jackson (2008) recognise that dispositions are malleable and can be trained.

My interpretation of literature data suggests that character strengths such as willpower, taking responsibility, and self-motivation can be seen as motivational beliefs and part of a positive mind-set. These motivational beliefs influence every internal capability for a flourishing life. For example, as motivational beliefs can frame failure as a personal trait or a learning opportunity (Shea & Bidjerano, 2010), they have an influence on the internal capability to think and learn. As a special education teacher, I recognised these alternative framings in a child named Sean (pseudonym). On my suggestion to improve Sean's reading as a potential learning target in Senior Infants, Sean stated 'I can't read' with a sense of finality and incredulousness at my suggestion. This current failure was a personal trait. However, when I reframed reading as reading toy catalogues, his perspective shifted to, 'I can read, and I can learn to read more', showing newfound motivation. His view of his challenges with reading transformed from a fixed trait to a skill we could develop together. Similarly, reflecting on Saudi Arabia's failure to build habits of life-long learning as argued by Algraini (2021), I would suggest that the aim of Sustainable Development Goal 4 to 'promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (United Nations, 2015:19) is rendered redundant if people have no inclination or motivation to avail themselves of these opportunities. Character strengths also support the internal capability of making choices that is discussed in section 5.6, as the actions needed to realise our choices can sometimes be demanding and challenging, as noted by teacher participant T3. T3 emphasised the importance of perseverance in following through on choices, especially when faced with difficulties, and teacher participant T1 noted particular skills to support this perseverance.

> *T3: I think the ability to make choices, and stick to them, I'd be adding on and stick to them, and stand by them, and follow through even when it seems hard.*

T1: That comes back to these here, the determination, the commitment …

Dedication, determination, and self-discipline are essential to persisting in the face of challenges. The parent focus group discussed how the character strength of an open mind supports the internal capability to live in the world with others, an internal capability I associate with Nussbaum's (2011) Capabilities of Affiliation and Other Species in Section 5.5. Literature data supports this view as openness is considered important for an individual to be able to accept understandings that do not 'align with their initial perspectives' (Redmond, 2014:49). Such openness also supports a dialogic attitude that is essential for critical, reflective, and creative thinking (Biggeri & Santi, 2012). This is the attitude indirectly referenced by the focus groups when emphasising being able to listen to others, particularly in relation to listening to understand the views and situations of others. I discuss the skill of listening further in Section 5.5 as a sub-domain of communication skills.

The second sub-domain in this category of skills is termed self-perception. This term includes codes such as confidence/self-confidence (Dejaeghere et al., 2016; Pelenc, 2017; Algraini, 2019), locus of control (Biggeri & Santi, 2012; Çelik et al., 2015; Dejaeghere et al., 2016), a positive view of self (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2009; Learning Metrics Task Force, 2013), self-efficacy and high expectations (Shea & Bidjerano, 2010; Van Ootegem & Verhofstadt, 2015), self-esteem (Dejaeghere et al., 2016; Pan et al., 2016; Pelenc, 2017), self-perspective (Wallace, 2007; Ballet et al., 2011), and positive self-respect (Qizilbash, 1996; Alkire, 2002). A common denominator of these terms is that they represent individuals' beliefs about themselves. Although influenced by social relations and experiences, self-perception skills are 'non-cognitive skills … generally conceptualized as residing within the individual …' (Dejaeghere et al., 2016:459). Furthermore, self-perception can be modified and developed, and Pan et al. (2016) offer several suggestions to support developing positive self-esteem.

Positive self-perception supports the internal capabilities of health, living in the world with others, and to make choices, linking to several of Nussbaum's Capabilities. For example, a negative self-view can 'create anxiety or feelings of depression' (Gambrill, 2002:122), challenging the internal capability of health. Equally, self-esteem can be developed and 'has a significant effect on mental and behavioral health' (Pan et al., 2016:367). As discussed above, the internal capability of health also includes being able to be the person you'd like to be, and as noted by Pelenc (2017), is supported by positive self-esteem and

self-confidence. The skills of self-perception also support the internal capability to live in the world with others, an internal capability that relates to Affiliation and Other Species and is discussed in Section 5.5. For example negative self-perception can hinder an individual's ability to initiate conversations (Gambrill, 2002) and I suggest the ability to communicate supports being able to build relationships with others. Indeed, as I will discuss below, interaction and communication are key elements of the internal capability to live in the world with others, and Nussbaum's Capability of Affiliation. Finally, positive self-perception also supports the internal capability to choose, an internal capability that supports Nussbaum's Capability of Control Over One's Environment, as it can resist the barrier posed by self-doubt to this internal capability, a barrier that I discuss in Section 5.6.

Literature data suggests that emotional literacy, the final sub-category in the domain of self-concept and emotional skills, involves the skills of recognising, understanding, expressing, and managing one's emotions, as well as those of others. It impacts an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life, and the opportunities others have to live their flourishing lives. Being able to understand and express one's own emotions supports the internal capability of health as our potential to achieve emotional balance is supported by emotional literacy. For example, Kellock (2020) observed that having the space to express emotions can help children to be 'notably calmer and engaged' (Kellock, 2020:232). Managing one's own emotions also relates to self-regulation, and I discuss this element in Section 5.6. Nussbaum (2006a) positions the skill of understanding the emotions of another as part of a narrative imagination which is essential to the Capability of Affiliation and, I suggest, to the internal capability to live in the world with others as presented in section 5.5. Furthermore, an individual's ability to express emotions enhances social relationships (Gambrill, 2002) and the ability to live in the world with others. However, drawing from Gambrill (2002), emotional literacy can also impact another's opportunity for a flourishing life, as an individual should learn to express emotions in a way that does not impose on, or intimidate others, for example through a threat of bodily harm, a threat that is central to Nussbaum's (2011) Capability of Bodily Integrity.

5.3 The internal capability to pursue self-directed activities

Having identified the internal capability to pursue self-directed activities based on 61 references across 14 literature data sources, I initially considered excluding it as it appeared closely related to Nussbaum's (2011:34) Capability of Play, which she defines as:

Play. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

However, upon further analysis, I decided to include it for four reasons. First, omitting this literature derived and focus group supported internal capability would leave the list of internal capabilities incomplete. Second, my interpretation expands on Nussbaum's presentation of the Capability of Play. Third, the focus of this internal capability, as explained in the introduction to this Chapter, differs from Nussbaum's Capability of Play, as it focuses on an individual's personal development of the ability to pursue self-directed activities for pleasure. Finally, the children's focus group related this internal capability to both the Capability of Play and the Capability of Emotions, '*... being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves, like hobbies, like sports, arts, listening to music or something'* (S2). All three focus groups supported the importance of this internal capability for a flourishing life. Parent participant P1 viewed it as important because '*everybody needs something ... that it's not just you get up, you go to work, you come home, you do the same thing, the same day'*, and teacher participant T3 stated it is an essential internal capability for a good life and includes being able '*to switch off*,' thereby extending Nussbaum's definition of the Capability of Play.

> *T3: If you don't have the ability to switch off, I don't care what you do, you know when I have exciting days at school I come home and watch the soaps on television, now my husband thinks I'm mad, but that works for me, and I would be an avid reader, if I didn't have those two things, the ability to tune out, I'd have kept going, but to what degree of my own person being reduced, my own ability to enjoy my life is what I'm trying to say.*
>
> T1: *And sometimes just to switch off, give your brain a break, just being able to sit and take some time.*

Literature data supports these teacher views, for example, Robeyns (2003b) views leisure activities such as watching television, walking or playing games, as intrinsic to well-being as they are important ways of relaxing. The student focus group referenced the importance of hobbies in their discussion on the character of Johnny as presented in the quote from Roszak (1978)[51]. In sharing their reaction to the quote, students S3 and S2 stated:

> *S2: The hobbies I think.*
>
> *SW: Can you explain that?*
>
> *S3: It's important for people to be able to relax, play sports, learn, pray, coz it says why not worry that he can't dance, can't think, can't breathe, meditate or relax.*

[51] This quote is reproduced in Appendix 8.

S2: Yeah, you need hobbies to be able to do those things.

Furthermore, the student group identified the significance of hobbies in fostering social connections and the ability to interact with others, supporting the internal capability to live in the world with others, a capability that spans Nussbaum's Capabilities of Affiliation and Other Species.

> *S3: If he wants to be able to like maybe play a sport or something, we could help teach him stuff about it, then he'd be able to play with his friends, the sport.*
>
> *S4: Yeah, coz he might feel better if he was able to spend more time with others, he'd have someone to talk to.*
>
> *S1: Yeah you do do that in like football and stuff, he could make new friends*.

When drawing their picture of a world that is worth living in, this group also discussed the importance of having spaces to play different sports to '*let the kids have fun'* (S3), '*And express themselves'* (S4). For this group, the internal capability to pursue self-directed activities for pleasure facilitates self-expression and is supported by developing the motor skills that can broaden the opportunity of pursuing varying hobbies and sports. Interestingly, for student S3, motor skills were also essential to Nussbaum's Capability of Bodily Integrity, specifically in relation to freedom of movement as this required developing the motor skills to support moving freely.

> *Bodily health and also maybe play, yeah like motor skills, if you're going to like play one of your favourite sports or something … and also bodily integrity might also be with motor skills, being able to move about, so bodily health and bodily integrity are probably linked together as well, both in motor skills.* (S3)

Nussbaum (2011:33) offers the following definition of Bodily Integrity.

> *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.

All three focus groups associated the element of violence and the necessity of being free from threats of violence of the above Capability with the internal capability to have good health. Additionally, the focus groups viewed freedom of movement as a feature of a world that is worth living in, as discussed in Chapter 4, and the student group also related freedom of movement with the ability to pursue self-directed activities for pleasure, as exemplified in the quote from student participant S3 above. The focus groups did not reference the elements of sexual satisfaction or choice in reproduction, perhaps because of

an awareness that the overall purpose of this research is to support the development of internal capabilities and skills in the primary school population. However, time constraints did not permit me to pursue this further with the focus groups and this could serve as a focus for further research. As stated, student S3 spoke of the important contribution motor skills make to the internal capability to pursue self-directed activities for pleasure and it is these skills I next discuss.

Perceptual motor skills

My analysis of both literature and focus group data identified these skills as supporting an individual's opportunity to achieve a flourishing life. As mentioned, in discussing a world that is worth living in, the focus groups associated motor skills with the ability to move freely from place to place. I suggest this association is supported by recognising that such freedom of movement requires both positive and negative freedom. Negative freedom involves removing external barriers to movement, for example, by providing 'wheelchair access on buses and sidewalks' (Nussbaum, 2006b:167). Positive freedom involves helping individuals develop the ability for movement, including being able to navigate the environment supported by the development of perceptual motor skills. Being able to navigate the environment independently in line with potential contributes to a person's sense of freedom and the opportunity to live a flourishing life. The development of perceptual motor skills also broadens an individual's opportunity to participate in various sports and leisure activities, contributing to the internal capability to pursue self-directed activities for pleasure. The teacher focus group identified these skills as gross and fine motor skills, primarily developed through physical education and art curricula. However, literature data indicates that gross and fine motor skills are supported by a broader range of perceptual motor skills, which involve the perception and interpretation of sensory stimuli and the coordination of movement in accordance with these stimuli (dos Santos et al., 2020).

Pienaar et al., (2014) and Howe et al., (2017) have identified visual perception skills and visual motor integration skills as essential for receiving and interpreting visual sensory information, thus also supporting the internal capability to think and learn that relates to both the Capabilities of Senses, Imagination, and Thought, and Practical Reason, as I will discuss in Section 5.4. Furthermore, these skills are also positively correlated with proficiency in literacy and numeracy, both of which require visual perception (Pienaar et al., 2014). Navigating the environment also involves the skills of directional and spatial

awareness, described by Jeon & Jun (2021) as an understanding of height, distance, directions, and how to change direction. Moreover, spatial awareness enables the recognition of another's personal space, and this recognition can support peer interactions in primary school. In my experience, a noticeable number of peer conflicts during yard time[52] arise from a child's inability to respect another's personal space, perhaps due to a lack of bodily spatial awareness. The final perceptual motor skill I introduce in this section is temporal awareness. Jeon & Jun (2021) explain temporal awareness as understanding concepts of historic time, speed, days, and hours, and the teacher focus group humorously noted the challenges their teenage children face with this skill.

> *T1: Well I have a teenager at home and I'm trying my best, well she's not a teenager yet she's 12 but she might as well be, to understand what 5 minutes means, and it doesn't mean 20, that awareness of time moving, and just doesn't get it. Maybe my approach is wrong, I don't know.*
>
> *T2: No I've come at it from loads of approaches, I've two at home, they don't get it.*
>
> *T1: And some do get it.*
>
> *T3: They get it -*
>
> *T1: - so can you develop it? -*
>
> *T3: - they get it depending on what you're talking about! [Laughter]*

Both adult groups categorised this skill as a self-management skill and the children's group categorised it as a numeracy skill. In viewing temporal awareness as an element of numeracy, the children's group associated this skill with the concept of time that is taught primarily through the mathematics curriculum. The teacher group viewed it as a self-management skill as '*... self-management, I suppose you manage your time with yourself*' (T2), and '*managing your time within a meeting'* (T3). However, teacher participant T1 also considered the awareness of time, '*... to understand what 5 minutes means, and it doesn't mean 20, that awareness of time moving ...*'. This awareness of time includes an understanding of the relationship between movement and time (Playground Professionals LLC, 2024) and an awareness of the rhythms of life that are a feature of the world in which we live (Mazur, 2021).

[52] Yard time refers to the children's break-times when they can play on the schoolyard. The schoolyard is sometimes referred to as a playground in the UK.

Although not explicitly referenced in the Irish primary school physical education curriculum, temporal awareness enables children to understand the dynamics of speed, movement, and coordination, an understanding used when passing and catching a ball with a partner. Temporal awareness also supports developing an ability and appreciation of using 'the body as an instrument of expression and creativity' (Government of Ireland, 1999:10). It supports the visual motor integration skills of hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, which in turn support academic abilities such as writing (de Sousa & Rueda, 2017), and supports various functionings associated with the internal capability to pursue self-directed activities for pleasure, as identified by the focus groups. As temporal awareness is relevant to more than one curriculum area, this supports its interpretation as a transdisciplinary skill. As I will discuss in Chapter Six, the notion of transdisciplinary skills could be fruitfully used in the Irish primary school curriculum. However, perceptual motor skills are influenced by an individual's attention and concentration skills (de Sousa & Rueda, 2017; Viktorin & Loosová, 2020), linking perceptual motor skills and self-management skills as recognised by the adult focus groups. I discuss self-management skills in Section 5.6 particularly in relation to the internal capability to choose, and in the next section I address the internal capability to think and learn that I referenced in the previous paragraph.

5.4 The internal capability to think and learn

In discussing the internal capability to think and learn, the focus groups believed this capability encompassed the Capabilities of Senses, Imagination, and Thought, and Practical Reason, defined by Nussbaum (2011:33-34) as follows.

> *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 non-beneficial pain.
>
> *Practical Reason*. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life.

For example, parent participant P1 stated:

> *You're able to use your senses, you're able to work out and reason in your own mind what you want to do next, where you want to go …* (P1)

As a personally held internal capability, the focus groups identified several ways by which developing this capability, in line with personal potential, can enhance an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life in a flourishing world. The internal capability to think and learn supports an individual to make informed choices, can broaden the choices available to an individual, and can help combat a non-realistic utopian view of a good life that may be promoted through social media, as discussed in Section 4.3. Furthermore, being able to think and learn allows a person to adapt their mindset and to learn new skills enhancing the opportunity for a good life.

> *Adapt, if you're in a job you don't like, to be able to learn and think and to change your skills or your mindset, to make yourself happy, adapt or move to a different job.* (P1)

P1's comment suggests that developing the internal capability to think and learn not only supports the character strength of adaptability but is itself supported by adaptability. Both adaptability and the internal capability support the primary language curriculum learning outcome of being able to communicate with 'a variety of audiences' (Department of Education and Skills, 2019:27), requiring students to tailor their style accordingly. Indeed, the vulnerable teenagers who reconsidered Max-Neef's fundamental needs as capabilities and functionings, identified 'being able to adapt' (Pelenc, 2017:890) as necessary for survival. The teacher focus group emphasised that adaptability involves the ability to re-think and to learn, and this ability supports being able to make informed choices and is essential also for enhancing environmental sustainability. This ability supports individuals to develop a critical understanding of environmental issues, enabling a better understanding of the importance of environmental sustainability. This internal capability is also a means to resist the following concern raised by the teacher focus group.

> *T1: But are they really having a good life like, do you know?*
>
> *T3: And how do they know when they haven't experienced other than that?*

However, parent participant P2 initially wondered if the need to be able to think and learn is important in a world where '*people have so much these days, there's an awful lot of things nowadays at your beck and call, you don't need to reason'.* At the heart of this capability is being able to think for oneself, regardless of the statements or decrees of those with perceived or granted authority. As also emphasised by parent participant P2, a lack of

independent thinking facilitates being controlled by another '*... the most heinous crimes were committed by those who were told that it was a good idea ... once you can make someone believe something, they'll actually do anything'.* Furthermore, teacher participant T2 spoke convincingly on the importance of questioning in relation to being able to think and learn.

> *So if we're not questioning everything we're doing, are we going to make right decisions ... that's something we do, don't we ... we agree on how we're going to tackle it, we put it in place, we give it a time, and then we bring it back to question it, and that informs the next part…to have a good life there has to be lots of questions*. (T2)

The views of the focus groups reflect Nussbaum's (2006a) emphasis on a Socratic examined life and the importance of critical thinking in a healthy democracy. Nussbaum (2006a) argues that a Socratic examined life is essential for a just society that includes differing cultures and values. Such a life involves critically questioning oneself and one's traditions and accepting 'no belief as authoritative simply because it has been handed down by tradition or become familiar through habit' (Nussbaum, 2006a:388). In turn, this requires the capacity of critical thinking that includes consistent reasoning with accuracy and correctness of fact and judgment. However, it seems difficult to understand a child's development of these abilities in Nussbaum's extensive writing on the subject. To this end, I offer the following sub-set of reasoning skills. Due to space limitations in the context of this Dissertation, I only briefly mention those skills that in my experience are already familiar to teachers, and concentrate on presenting an understanding that can help teachers in fostering a child's ability to think critically and reflectively.

Reasoning skills

My interpretive analysis of literature data identified reasoning skills as including the sub-domains of foundational reasoning skills, critical thinking, reflective thinking, and creative thinking. Due to word length limitations, I will briefly introduce the foundational reasoning skills and then focus on critical and reflective thinking skills, but creative thinking remains outside the scope of my discussion. Foundational reasoning skills include information storage and retrieval; analysis; synthesis; interpretation; evaluation; understanding, and, application. Although the sources of these codes were many and varied, these foundational thinking skills closely resemble those proposed in the cognitive domain by Bloom et al. (1956), and are discussed in great detail, for example, by Anderson et al. (2014). I have termed these skills as foundational thinking skills due to the role they play in critical and reflective thinking. Although Anderson et al. (2014) acknowledge that

these foundational thinking skills are used in critical and reflective thinking, they state that 'we did not see a way to effectively include problem solving or critical thinking as major headings in our revision' (Anderson et al., 2014:270). The following discussion on critical and reflective thinking is offered as a response to the challenge of including critical thinking in a taxonomy of educational objectives, and presents an understanding to help teachers support a child's development of the skills of critical and reflective thinking.

Related codes arising from my analysis of literature data included critical thinking (Biggeri et al., 2011; Dejaeghere et al., 2016; Algraini, 2019; Department of Education and Skills, 2019), reflection (Biggeri & Anich, 2009; Guo et al., 2013; Algraini, 2019; Department of Education and Skills, 2019) , and critical reflection (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007b; Landorf et al., 2008). This raises a question: are these the same concepts with differing terminology or is it both possible and beneficial to view these as separate skills? As I will explain below by use of an example, I present critical and reflective thinking as closely related but independent skills with differing foci, and critical reflection as the highest level of ability in reflective thinking. This discussion includes tabular representations of the different levels of critical thinking and reflective thinking with related indicative functionings[53].

I propose an understanding of the skill of critical thinking as thinking that is product orientated. This skill involves exploring problems, and evaluating options and evidence, to find effective solutions that meet specific criteria such as effectiveness or efficiency. Individuals who employ such thinking may not necessarily consider the effect of the solution on others. To use an extreme example, the leaders of the Third Reich may be considered as demonstrating effective critical thinking as their actions were efficiently aligned with their goals. However, helping to counter such atrocities, I suggest that reflective thinking should focus on the process of thinking and the effect that resulting decisions and actions may have on others. I use the fictional example of Jack, a teacher employed in Anyschool primary school to elucidate the varying levels of critical and reflective thinking, in which Jack was tasked by his Principal Teacher to organise the newly introduced Primary Schoolbooks Scheme[54]. In this example, I first consider Jack's levels of critical thinking as defined in Table 4 on the next page. Following this, I will continue the example to consider Jack's levels of reflective thinking.

[53] See Redmond (2014) and Kember et al. (2000;2008) for source of level titles.

[54] The Primary Schoolbooks Scheme (Department of Education, 2023b) was introduced in Ireland in 2023, providing a grant to schools to purchase all school books and copy books for students in order to alleviate parental cost.

Table 4: Levels of critical thinking

Critical thinking level	Indicative behaviours
Triggering	• Recognise a problem, for example has a task to complete or experiences puzzlement, doubt, unsettlement, cognitive dissonance
Exploration	• Can problem find • Can formulate questions to explore the problem • Can seek new information, perspectives, options, independently and through collaboration with others • Can draw on prior experience • Detects and corrects errors
Integration	• Can make connections with new & existing information to arrive at tentative conclusions (uses analysis/synthesis/inference/deduction) • Incorporating and adopting changes due to specific criteria • Can build on the ideas of others • Can support task with non-task related knowledge • Can evaluate alternatives and give examples
Resolution	• Testing new ideas/solutions • Applying the solution • Monitoring progress towards goal/evaluating 'goodness of solution'

At the triggering level of critical thinking, Jack wondered how he could determine the most cost effective option and not overspend the grant received. At the exploration level of critical thinking, Jack decided to request quotes from five local book suppliers for the necessary items. Having previously used spreadsheets to record children's assessments, Jack decided to create a spreadsheet to record, calculate and compare the cost per child from the received quotes, ensuring that the school grant was not exceeded. Jack manually entered all relevant numbers, using a calculator for calculated numbers, as he did for student assessments. Having double checked his calculations, Jack was confident of having no errors and was able to identify the most cost effective supplier. Jack then asked a colleague to look at his workings and give their opinion. This colleague noticed that one quote received included book covering and delivery costs, and the other four quotes did not mention either cost.

At the integration level of critical thinking, Jack recognised the need to adapt his approach based on this feedback and requested updated quotes that included book covering and delivery costs. Three suppliers provided the required costs including delivery and book covering costs, and two suppliers stated that book covering was not part of their service and did not include the related cost. Jack then entered the resolution stage of critical thinking and added a calculation that allowed him to evaluate the most cost effective

option that also included a load for the time the school would spend in covering the books, thus revising his calculations to take account of these new criteria. He re-entered all figures and provided the Principal with a cost effective solution that saved the school time and effort in covering the books and, while not the cheapest, the total cost remained below the grant received. Jack then ordered the books and completed the task assigned to him.

This example shows Jack moving through the levels of critical thinking in order to achieve a goal. Firstly, Jack's critical thinking was at a triggering stage in which he recognised a task to solve according to certain criteria. Jack then entered the exploration stage of critical thinking, defining specific things to consider and drawing on prior experience. He also sought the views of a colleague, and the new criteria of book covering and delivery costs were introduced to the task. By being able to incorporate these changes to his thinking, Jack is demonstrating skill at the integration level of critical thinking. Finally, Jack entered the resolution stage of critical thinking, checking that his selected supplier was the best option despite not being the cheapest and that the money he was spending remained within the limit of the grant. However, through the above process, Jack was at the habitual action level of reflective thinking as described in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Levels of reflective thinking

Reflective thinking level	**Indicative behaviours**
Habitual action	• Activates and applies prior knowledge (automatic)
Thoughtful action	• Examines/questions own current thinking/behaviour • Identifies confusion/inconsistency of reasoning/correctness of fact • Evaluates possible bias (own and information received) • Identifies and questions own assumptions • Considers accuracy of judgement
Reflection	• Identifies consequences of decisions; anticipates unintended consequences • Recognises own conceptual/affective/behavioural/social awareness changes • Identifies change in own understanding/knowledge/skill • Can articulate what has been learned
Critical reflection	• Justifies relevance of new knowledge/understanding/skill • Gives reasons for beliefs/provide evidence for claims being made • Makes choices based on ethical considerations • Identifies areas for improvement • Considers how new knowledge/skill/strategy may be applied in different contexts

At a reflective thinking level of habitual action, Jack sought five quotes as instructed by the Principal and he used the spreadsheet in the same manner as he had for recording student assessment. When another colleague reviewed Jack's work, they questioned Jack as to why only local suppliers were included? Jack responded that he wished to support local business. In examining his own thinking, Jack noted this was a form of bias and decided to randomly select from a list of nationwide suppliers who had already emailed the school. Jack had entered the thoughtful stage of reflective thinking, and randomly chose who to contact by writing all names on pieces of paper and asked a colleague to select three.

Jack also realised that he needed to include the five suppliers who had already quoted, as an unintended consequence of ignoring their quotes would be a possibility of complaints from these suppliers. In this reflection level of reflective thinking, Jack also noticed that his method of using the spreadsheet was very time consuming. Through discussion with others he had learned that the spreadsheet had mathematical functions that could automate all his calculations, and more importantly, facilitated changing prices and student numbers without redoing all the calculations. He explained to his colleagues that this meant the same spreadsheet could serve as a template for the following year. However, when using the supplied history book with his students during the year, Jack noticed that this book did not equally represent all voices of the time, relegating voiceless those who had been colonised. In this level of critical reflection, Jack also explained the challenges with the history book to his colleagues, justifying why the book needed to be changed in the following year, based on the ethical consideration of de-othering.

In applying these stages of critical and reflective thinking, an individual may move back and forth between levels and not necessarily proceed in a linear progression from one stage to the next. Although there are four levels in both critical and reflective thinking, an individual may be at differing levels in each at a given time. However, each level is more complex than the previous and an individual's skill development may be understood by the highest level they are able to employ. In summary, I propose that critical thinking is a product oriented form of thinking that focuses on the outcomes of the thinking process to find a solution that meets particular guiding criteria. This involves comparing and evaluating differing options, identifying errors during the process, and is supported by seeking and exploring different alternatives and perspectives. Reflective thinking should be viewed as going beyond critical thinking alone, being focused on evaluating the thinking process and not only the outcome, helping to recognise unintended consequences

and considering the impact of one's determined solutions and actions on others or the world. I suggest that critically reflective thinking is a higher level of reflective thinking that can help to challenge assumptions and bring about positive change. It embodies critical awareness, viewed by Dejaeghere et al. (2016) as essential for understanding systems that may limit future well-being and is necessary for enabling individuals to work as a collective to challenge these systems. The skills of both critical and reflective thinking support an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life and to make informed and ethical choices to support a world that is worth living in.

The reasoning skills of critical thinking, reflective thinking, and the foundational thinking skills these draw upon, support an individual's internal capability to think and learn by building an ability to engage in logical and ethical reasoning. Working together, these skills support an individual to think independently, question assumptions, adapt, and make informed choices, broadening the opportunity for self-determination, influencing one's environment, conceptualising a flourishing life, and challenging unjust practices and traditions. In this way, these skills also support the internal capability of being able to live in the world with others that is related to Nussbaum's Capabilities of Affiliation and Other Species, which I discuss in the next section.

5.5 The internal capability to live in the world with others

All three focus groups supported the importance of this internal capability, key features of which are being able to interact with, communicate with, and respect others. The focus groups also noted these respectful interactions include the environment and other species in a conception of those with whom we live. As noted by parent participant P3, '*we have to live in the world with other species'.* This internal capability thus supports Nussbaum's Capabilities of Affiliation and Other Species. Nussbaum (2011:34) provides the following understandings of the Capabilities of Affiliation and Other Species.

> *Affiliation.* Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other humans, 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 political 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 and species.
>
> *Other Species.* Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.

An understanding of living 'toward others' (Nussbaum, 2011:34) is arguably contained in Nussbaum's definition of the Capability of Affiliation, and being able to live toward others is an important part of the internal capability to live in the world with others. However, it is important to emphasise that this includes being cognisant of how one's actions may impact another person and the world we share. In this way, being able to live toward others is supported by critical and reflective thinking, and social awareness. An individual cannot assume full responsibility for the flourishing of another but should be mindful of how their actions may affect others, and live by the principle of not causing harm to others or the world in which we live. This is, I suggest, what it means to live 'toward others'. The focus group discussions also suggested that the importance of the environment could receive greater emphasis in the above Capabilities, believing this importance is encapsulated in the internal capability to live in the world with others.

> *Other species, well that links to living in the world with others, like others includes other species, like you were saying P1, was it … they need an unpolluted environment, well the biggest problem there is people.* (P3)

Parent participant P2 believed that the natural resources serving as a source of war will come to include the environment.

> *You can see the … the more kinda chaotic the weather goes the more the land will be sought for more kinds of natural resources, eventually it will go away from the likes of what wars have been fought of in recent times - of oil and diamonds and gold, to actual kinds of, you know, literally, a place that doesn't have drought, and doesn't have … huge fluctuations in temperatures, so that's … probably be the battleground in the end…* (P2)

Despite this stark warning, other members of the parent group articulated the view that it is hard for people to take responsibility for the environment.

> *P1: It's hard to make people responsible for that.*
>
> *P3: I think some people think you know we'll do that, we should do that, and then … just … I think it depends on the person that you are … really … mmm [6 seconds silence] … or things are sound, like a great idea, or, you read about it and you're like oh God that's awful and then you put it aside, you know … [5 seconds silence]*

However, the students identified intergenerational responsibility as part of developing an internal capability that includes protecting the environment. Having paraphrased the parental group view of it being hard to make people feel responsible for the environment and for an individual to take action in their own life in order to protect the environment, the children were quick and forceful in their response.

S3: Okay but -

S4: - for the future -

S3: - you have to care for like the next generation.

S2: Your grandkids.

S4: Yeah do you want your great great great grandkids to like have a bad planet to live on?

S2: Do you want your family tree to -

S3: - crumble.

SW: Okay, fair enough actually -

S3: - get chopped down.

S1: You have to be responsible.

The teacher group were more nuanced in their views on the environment and raised the importance of finding a balance between the needs of people and the planet. In their initial discussion on the inevitability, or otherwise, of environmental degradation and climate change, they shared the fatalism raised by the parent group. It was the view of the teacher group that we would need to start again if we were to protect the environment adequately, and even then our habituated actions could lead to the same outcome. To resist the challenge of habituated action, individuals need to develop critical and reflective thinking skills, skills that I discussed in Section 5.4 above. The student group also identified social and relationship skills as vital to the internal capability of living in the world with others, and also believed these skills helped people to co-exist with other species. In the next subsection I will present and discuss the social and relationship skills that support an individual's internal capability to live in the world with others. I will also indicate how these skills can also resist the lack of awareness, indifference, inaction, and lack of intergenerational responsibility that challenge an individual's ability to take action towards environmental sustainability.

Social and relationship skills

Data from focus groups and literature both affirm that enhancing an individual's social and relationship skills, in line with their potential, significantly contributes to an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life and helps in creating a world that is worth living in. The focus groups believed that the skills to support the internal capability to live in the world with others included social awareness, responsibility, '*empathy, and the ability to*

see from other people's point of view' (T1), '*... conflict resolution, to have the skills to have different opinions and move forward*' (T3), and '*you have to be able to work together'* (P2). However both adult groups wondered how can we support and understand children's skills of social awareness, being able to work with others, and managing in and of conflict situations, skills that are essential to support the internal capability to live in the world with others. To this end, I offer the following set of social and relationship skills derived from literature data that included 56 individual codes organised into the subdomains of social awareness, working with others, and managing in and of conflict situations.

In an empirical experiment to understand the impact of different forms of social awareness on helping behaviours, Hoover et al. (1983) build on the views of Wegner & Giuliano (1982) and consider the influence of the focal topic of attention and the perspective taken in a given situation. Building on Hoover et al. (1983), I propose a matrix of social awareness skill that combines the focal topics of attention and perspective taken, each of which can be the self, the other person, or the situation/unrelated others. I present these combinations in Table 6 on the following page, in which the rows represent the focal topic that is attended to in an encounter, and the columns represent the perspective the person adopts in this encounter. In each cell of Table 6, I provide a general explanation of the cell combination, and a concrete example drawn from a possible classroom situation in which: George and Kai, two fictional senior infants, have been provided with Lego blocks as a playtime activity. George is enjoying building a house with the provided blocks, and Kai has not yet engaged with the blocks and is looking sad.

Table 6: Matrix of social awareness skills

	Perspective taken		
Object of attention	Self	The other	The situation/unrelated others
Self	Primarily focused on self and own needs, viewing the situation from own perspective. Inclined to prioritise own interests and less likely to help others. *George continues to build the house and does not acknowledge Kai or her sadness.*	Focused on self but try to view situation from the point of view of others. Aware of own needs and also considers the perspective of others. *Continues to build the house and asks Kai if she would like to join in in an effort to cheer Kai up.*	Focused on self and takes the perspective of unrelated others – how oneself will be viewed by others depending on one's actions *If George believes that others will view her positively for doing something in this situation, then she will try to for personal standing.*
Others	Focused on others and their needs, but views situation from own perspective. Allows being aware of other's needs but may not feel personally responsible or motivated to help. *Acknowledges Kai's sadness but does not feel compelled to do anything about it.*	Focused on others and their needs, viewing the situation from the perspective of others. Attentive to the needs of others and more likely to help and empathise. *Acknowledges Kai's sadness and asks Kai how she can help.*	Someone else would help out in this situation so I will too. *If George believes that others would do something in this situation, then she will too as it is the right thing to do.*
The situation / unrelated others	Evaluating a situation based on own experiences and preferences. *George remembers a time she felt sad and her experiences of being helped/ignored will dictate her actions.*	Focused on the situation and evaluating it based on how it would be perceived and experienced by the other. *George recognises Kai's sadness and remembers feeling sad when she fell, will act to alleviate that sadness.*	Evaluates the situation according to the goals of that particular situation. *George recognises Kai's sadness, and will try to find out why Kai is sad and then take action to alleviate Kai's sadness in accordance with Kai's needs.*

In Table 6 above, the highest forms of social awareness allows an individual to act in order to help and support another. This requires being able to focus one's attention beyond one's own needs, and being able to take the perspective of others. Even though taking action in order to promote one's own personal standing may have the same objective outcome for

Kai, ideally alleviating the sadness, it would not be a higher form of social awareness as in so doing George is using Kai as a means to further her own standing in the community. When supporting children to develop their social awareness skills, teachers can evaluate the object of the child's attention, whether it be themselves, the other, or the situation, and also the perspective the child is able to adopt, whether their own, that of another, or that of the situation, seeking to develop from a self-interested perspective with a focus on one's own needs, to a perspective that focuses on the needs of others and their situation.

This higher developed form of social awareness is necessary for a person to develop the skill of empathy, a skill that is featured below as part of the skills to support working with others. Furthermore, this highest expression of the skill of social awareness supports people to feel motivated to take action towards environmental sustainability as it supports a person to see beyond their own personal interests when considering environmental concerns. That is, it is a form of social awareness that is necessary but not sufficient for Nussbaum's understanding of compassion[55] that involves recognising a 'bad state' and undertaking beneficent action, which includes cognitive processes beyond simply understanding another's plight (Nussbaum, 2001). I suggest this can help to resist the challenges of indifference and lack of generational responsibility that challenge environmental sustainability as previously mentioned.

The next subset of social and relationship skills I present are grouped under the heading of working with others. Although Nussbaum (2006a) discusses the capabilities that education should promote to enhance democratic citizenship, it is not easy to discern the skills that support the ability to work with others. To this end, using literature data I have interpreted the skills of working with others as a subdomain of social and relationship skills. This subset is represented by the acronym CARE that involves skills of Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility and Empathy. To increase an individual's opportunity of being able to work with others, teachers can support children to develop cooperation skills that include teamwork and collaboration, sharing, and turn-taking. Although such skills are identified as personal skills that Kellock & Lawthom (2011) view as being of benefit to children as adults, they also benefit children day to day. How can children engage in cooperative learning if they cannot cooperate with others?

Cooperative behaviours in school, as identified from literature data and personal experience, can include a child helping another, sharing materials with a peer (Kellock &

[55] I return to the concepts of compassion and empathy in the section below discussing the skill of empathy.

Lawthom, 2011), responding to the interactions of others, giving attention to another, for example listening to peers (Biggeri & Santi, 2012) and being able to engage in verbal turn-taking and perhaps the child can give and receive compliments and invites others to join their activity. In this way, cooperative behaviours can be interpreted as giving/receiving/reciprocal behaviours. Further elements of cooperative skills that can be seen in classrooms include being able to follow instructions and comply with rules (Phipps, 2002; Kellock, 2020), stay in a group, and respond in an appropriate manner to instructions and correction, for example by not displaying passive aggressive behaviours. Although, I believe that in evaluating a child's development of this skill, it should be noted that a child who presents as having difficulty with following rules may be impacted by language challenges, behavioural challenges, environmental influences, or perhaps the disruptive behaviour is itself a behavioural communication.

In working with others an individual's own flourishing is supported by developing assertion skills that can be exercised in response to the interactions of another or can be initiated by the individual. An interpretive analysis of Gambrill's (2002) consideration of assertion training, suggests that developing assertion skills through training can help decrease social anxiety, aid in making friends, secure assistance, transform negative self-views into positive views, and positively influence social environments. Example assertive behaviours in children include initiating interactions such as seeking information or requesting assistance from others. Furthermore, these skills are crucial for individuals, perhaps especially children or young people, to handle peer pressure without harming their own or others' well-being. They support an individual to counteract negative peer influences and promote positive behaviours and values in peer groups, leading to better social outcomes and effective management of peer pressure (Lease et al., 2020; Morris et al., 2020). Gambrill (2002) emphasises that assertion training focuses on the individual and does not address broader social, environmental, or political factors. While these systemic factors are important, the emphasis is on supporting an individual to recognise and take responsibility for their self-expression in social interactions in a manner that respects both oneself and others. The ability to be responsible is a skill in the sub-domain of working with others that I next explore.

Nussbaum (2006a) briefly mentions the importance of taking responsibility for one's own thinking as an essential ingredient 'to the peaceful resolution of differences' (Nussbaum, 2006a:389). This was also a key feature of creating and maintaining a flourishing world

presented in Chapter Four. Simple behavioural indicators of the skill of taking responsibility include showing concern for one's own property and that of others and being courteous. Not alone does being able to work with others require the person to take responsibility for their own thoughts, as observed by Nussbaum, but it also requires people to be able to take shared responsibility. This skill of shared responsibility is noted by Biggeri & Santi (2012) as a key support in the Philosophy for Children educational curriculum, a curriculum that seeks to support children's autonomy and ultimately benefit democratic living. The skill of shared responsibility may be recognised by a child making positive contributions in collective decision making and being able to contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere. Furthermore, I propose that the skill of shared responsibility is another means to resist the challenge of inaction that arises through people recognising environmental issues but not feeling personally responsible to take action in their own lives. This can be due to believing it is someone else's responsibility or believing that their own individual actions will not make a significant difference, as suggested by the focus groups and discussed above. The final skill in the subset of working with others is that of empathy, arguably key to Nussbaum's concept of a narrative imagination that requires 'empathetic imagining' (Nussbaum, 2006a:394).

Philosophical and psychological literature abounds with discussions exploring the similarities and distinctions between sympathy, empathy, and compassion, without reaching a consensus. See for example, Batson (2010) and Maibom (2019), who also consider differing opinions on the role of altruistic concern and the presence of emotional mirroring in empathy. Commonly, I find that sympathy, empathy, and compassion are used interchangeably in everyday language, reflecting the view of Batson (2010:20), in which empathic concern is equated with 'feelings of sympathy, compassion, tenderness, and the like'. Nussbaum (2001) associates compassion with recognising negative states and taking beneficent action that involves cognitive processes beyond merely understanding another's misfortune. A detailed examination of the convergence and divergence between the contested concepts of empathy and compassion is beyond the scope of this Dissertation. Rather, my understanding of empathy combines Batson's empathic concern, Maibom's (2019) concept of affective empathy, and an extended understanding of Nussbaum's compassion.

Empathy is the ability to understand the perspective and situation of another and be motivated by a shared sense of humanity, equal respect, and dignity, to offer support in

times of distress and joy. It manifests as a functioning when an individual, through social awareness, focuses on another and their circumstances, aiming to provide support in both challenging and happy moments. The final consideration in relation to the skill of empathy is whether the highest form of social awareness equates to empathy. In my presentation, empathy is distinct from the highest level of social awareness and does not require emotional mirroring. The highest form of social awareness is necessary for beneficent action but beneficent action does not necessarily follow from this form of awareness. Echoing Nussbaum's reflections on compassion, it's possible for an individual to focus on another, understand their perspective and circumstances, but feel no compulsion to act, perhaps believing the situation is self-inflicted or not as serious as the other perceives. However, while the skill of empathy can help address the challenges arising from difference and conflict, challenges that are an inevitable (Siregar & Zulkarnain, 2022) and persistent (Tickner, 2020) aspect of collective group interaction, children also need to develop the skills of managing in and of conflict situations. Given the relationship between conflict resolution and children's social and emotional development (Jones, 2004; Lee et al., 2022), conflict resolution is also an important ability in terms of personal well-being and this is the final sub-domain in social and relationship skills that I now discuss.

Implicit in Nussbaum's (2006a) discussion on the three abilities that schools should promote to the end of a democratic society, is an understanding that living with others involves the need to be able to find peaceful resolutions to common problems and differences of opinion. Nussbaum presents multicultural education supported by quality textbooks that represent all narratives accurately and fairly as a means to this end. The skill of managing in and of conflict situations that I next discuss also supports this need. In the context of supporting children to develop this skill through education, it can be understood in terms of the development of self-control and the maintenance strategies children use to manage their conflicts. The assertion skills described above also support being able to manage in and of conflict situations, for example, how the child deals with teasing from others and corrective feedback from adults. Particularly useful towards understanding a level of skill development in terms of managing in and of conflict situations, are the friendship maintenance strategies discussed by Sommerfield (2007) and identified as exit, neglect, loyalty and voice. I propose that an understanding of these strategies will enable teachers to assist children in developing the ability to manage and navigate conflict situations which are common in the context of maintaining friendships at school.

When a child uses an exit strategy in times of conflict, they actively try to destroy the friendship, for example, by saying, 'I'm not your friend anymore'. In my experience of yard supervision, it is this strategy that causes harm to the other person, recognised by the child who comes crying because X said they were not their friend anymore. A strategy that causes similar results is that of neglect. In using this strategy, children may ignore their friend or criticise them for unrelated issues. However, perhaps X used the strategy of loyalty, described by Sommerfield (2007) as waiting for the situation to improve. While this strategy has positives at times, for example it allows the child to be supportive to the other child, it also has negatives. For example, Leah always wants to control the direction of the game and Jamie always acquiesces to Leah's desires. Leah is not learning that, to use the words of student participant S2, '*You can't always get your way in life'*, an understanding student S2 believed was important in terms of a flourishing life. Equally, Jamie's needs are always being subjugated to those of Leah, a situation that seems unfair and negates Jamie's personhood as Jamie is being used as a means to Leah's ends. Ultimately, we seek to help the child to develop the strategy of voice. This strategy involves communication where both parties work together to resolve the conflict. Arguably, it is this strategy that the teacher focus group identified as essential for a peaceful and harmonious world that requires communication as an alternative to violence in times of disagreement, as discussed in Chapter Four. Furthermore, being able to communicate with others facilitates a form of social interaction that supports the internal capability to live in the world with others, and I discuss these communication skills in the following sub-section.

Communication skills

Communication skills seem underrepresented in Nussbaum's (2011) list of Capabilities for a flourishing life. These skills are an essential form of interaction that support the internal capability to live in the world with others, necessary if dialogue is to be used as an alternative to violence in times of disagreement. They also support the opportunity to reach one's own potential to live a flourishing life. For example, the effective use of communication broadens an individual's opportunity to function well in society and the workplace, and to effectively participate in dialogue with others (OECD, 2005). In this way, communication skills also support Nussbaum's (2011) Capability of Control Over One's Environment that I discuss below in relation to the internal capability to choose. Similarly, the teenagers who took part in Pelenc's (2017) study identified being able to communicate as fundamental to understanding and participating in the world around them.

People communicate through language using varying forms of communication including verbal, non-verbal, reading, and writing (Department of Education and Skills, 2019). However, as I stated in my introductory Chapter, I made a pragmatic decision to not include literacy skills in this study due to the time and word constraints of this Dissertation. As a result, I do not include skills that are associated with literacy such as conventions of print and word recognition, but I do include developing vocabulary as a skill and I explain this decision in a later paragraph. In my interpretation of a sub-set of communication skills, I focus on skills that support an individual to communicate with others, both verbally and non-verbally. However, many of the skills are relevant to all modes of communication including reading and writing.

Communication can be viewed as occurring in communicative experiences and requires developing the ability to give and initiate, to receive and respond, and engage in reciprocal communicative experiences using language. In my experience as a special education teacher, I have seen children with varying abilities in each of these subdomains. Some children are excellent at being the giver in a communicative experience, but struggle as a receiver of communication, and the opportunity to engage in communication with others is supported by both. Although presented separately in this discussion, it is also important to remember that the 'reciprocal exchange of meaning relies on the treatment of listening and speaking as reciprocal skills for development' (Department of Education and Skills, 2019:16).

The giving and/or initiating partner in a communicative experience

Building on the view of the teenagers who took part in a study with Pelenc (2017), the skill of giving in a communicative experience is a developing ability to be coherent and to communicate in a manner that supports rather than restricts the possibility to be understood by others. Biggeri and Santi (2012) describe this as the ability to express one's own mind, a skill they deem crucial to Nussbaum's (2006a) concept of cosmopolitan ability. This is due to its role in fostering children's independent reasoning, supporting participation and agency in decision-making processes, and enabling individuals to participate in meaningful dialogue. These abilities are essential to Nussbaum's (2006a) view of cosmopolitan ability that emphasises the importance of being able to exchange ideas with mutual respect for reason during times of conflict. Two key aspects of the skill of giving in a communicative experience can be discerned from Kempson's (2017) consideration of Grice's (1975) communicative principles. These are, clarity in conveying meaning and 'do not say that

for which you lack evidence; do not say what you believe to be false' (Kempson, 2017:423)'. The latter aspect may also provide insight into a child's self-concept and emotional skills. Colleagues often discuss concerns regarding the child who seems to need to have had the experiences of another and to a heightened level. For example, Mia says she went to the fun-fair yesterday and Niamh falsely replies that her family own the fun-fair. Furthermore, this element is more important than ever to combat the challenges arising from an age of social media and misinformation as discussed in Chapter Four. Understanding a behavioural indicator of clarity in conveying meaning may be supported by considering a counter-example. Does the child communicate unambiguously, or does their communicative effort more resemble a stream of consciousness?

Furthermore, to support being understood by others, an individual should speak distinctly (Csoti, 2001). This speaking may also include a non-verbal child who communicates through gesture, for example, does the child point directly to the item they are requesting or only in the general direction? However, initiating communication serves purposes other than requesting items or assistance. Research by DiStefano et al. (2016) and Kaiser et al. (2001) has shown that in supporting the communicative ability of children with developmental disabilities, identifying the purpose of communication and the length of the communicative efforts can provide valuable insights into a child's communication skill. A child's ability in the skill of giving in a communicative experience can be evaluated by considering the ability to communicate for a wide variety of purposes, for example requesting, rejecting, and discussing topics of joint attention. It also involves the length of the communication effort, for example one word utterances to complete sentences, and the type of communication used from gestural to verbal. In summary, the skill of giving in a communicative experience is supported by the elements of coherence and non-ambiguity, being able to communicate for a variety of purposes, the mode of communication, the length of communication, and, trying 'to make your contribution one that is true' (Grice, 1975:46).

The receiving partner in a communicative experience

The oral language learning outcomes in the Primary Language Curriculum (Department of Education and Skills, 2019) include being able to listen to others and discern meaning from the other person's communicative efforts as key skills of a receiving partner in a communicative experience. Similarly, the importance of being able to listen, in particular to understand, was identified by both adult groups as a key skill to support an individual's

opportunity to a live a flourishing life in a flourishing world. Parent participant P2 was aggrieved by communicative partners who do not know how to listen.

> *You can hear nothing when your mouth's flapping … they're not there to understand anything, it's just to give you their side, whatever their view is.* (P2)

This view was termed by teacher participant T3 as '*listening to reply',* and this participant emphasised that the skill of listening involves listening to understand. This form of listening, referred to by Arnett (2019) as dialogic listening, is essential for conversations through which mutual understanding can be fostered (van der Wilt et al., 2022). As such, this skill is essential to Nussbaum's (2006a) view that solving shared problems requires understanding the differences and commonalities between individuals and groups. This form of listening involves many other skill categories, for example the self-management skill of attention, the character strength of open-mindedness, and the social and relationship skills of social awareness and empathy.

Behavioural indicators that can support a teacher to understand a child's development of the skill of listening during a communicative experience including, for example, the child's ability to repeat or paraphrase what another has communicated (Csoti, 2001; Michaels & O'Connor, 2015). Also, ability with regard to following instructions can serve as a behavioural indicator of listening skill (Feyten, 1991). That is, in a supportive environment with the capacity to listen, can a child follow instructions of increasing complexity and length? For example, at the lower level of skill development, a child can correctly follow one part instructions requiring a mark to be made on a page, to a higher level of skill development involving more complex tasks with four parts. Further behavioural indications in relation to building on the meaning communicated by another are described below under the sub-heading of reciprocity in a communicative experience. However, as teacher participant T1 cautioned, sometimes an individual's ability to listen is compromised by factors other than listening skill alone, for example, during times of extreme emotional dysregulation.

> *T1: … sometimes like when we have children, and you know, the amygdala hijack … they have … the physical ability, and when they're not in the sense of heightened … they do have the skills to listen, but at the moment they don't have the capacity.*
>
> *T2: Yeah they're not regulated -*
>
> *T1: - they're not regulated yeah.*

This points to the complex relationship between skill categories and the need for teachers to consider many variables when making professional judgements in regard to a child's listening skill, including external circumstances and other internal capabilities, for example self-management skills.

Reciprocity in a communicative experience

The skill of reciprocity in a communicative experience, as interpreted through the Primary Language curriculum (Department of Education and Skills, 2019), involves an individual being able to engage in joint attention and stay on topic. That is, contributions and responses in a communicative interaction with another are relevant to the topic at hand. This also reiterates the conversational principle of being relevant (Grice, 1975; Wilson & Sperber, 1990; Kempson, 2017) that requires communication to be related to the topic at hand and contributes to the interests, needs, and existing knowledge of the participants involved. A child's skill of reciprocity in a communicative experience is also supported by being able to contribute as much information as necessary, but no more than is required (Grice, 1975; Wilson & Sperber, 1990; Kempson, 2017). In my experience as a special education teacher this was a skill I noted as lacking in children with whom I worked. When asked a question some children provided a one word answer whereas a more detailed answer would have been more appropriate. Conversely, in helping children to develop peer relationships, difficulties arose when one child dominated the conversation and/or spoke at length following a communicative gesture from their partner. There are various behavioural indicators a teacher can draw upon when evaluating a child's developing ability of reciprocity. For example, is the child open to receiving the views of others or do they talk over others, focused on imposing their own views (Arnett, 2019)? Is the child's response connected to the thoughts shared by another (Michaels & O'Connor, 2015)? Is the child building on the ideas of others shared during the communicative experience (van der Wilt et al., 2022)?

An equally important ability in relation to reciprocity in a communicative experience is that of sustained communication. Sustained communication refers to being able to engage in an uninterrupted back and forth communicative experience that involves verbal turn-taking (DiStefano et al., 2016). It is a skill that supports being able to express oneself, and is also a key skill to support social and relationship skills such as being able to connect with others and the development of cooperative skills. It enhances the opportunity for cognitive development and learning due to its crucial role in promoting language

development, which supports an individual in learning about, interacting with, mediating, and understanding their physical and social environment (Kaiser et al., 2001; DiStefano et al., 2016). It is a skill that contributes to the internal capabilities of being able to live in the world with others, and to think and learn. A simple evaluation of the ability for sustained communication may involve a teacher counting the number of 'communicative turns back and forth between partners' (DiStefano et al., 2016:1095). However, reciprocity in a communicative experience also involves each partner being aware of the other person (Csoti, 2001), and so the skill of social awareness supports communication skills in a communicative experience. In summary, the skill of reciprocity in a communicative experience broadens the opportunity for the mutual understanding and meaningful connections with other people necessary for 'effective democratic citizenship' (Nussbaum, 2006a:389), effective relationships, and to live harmoniously with others. This skill also supports an individual to learn from and with others, and to experience what teacher participant T3 described as 'A *sense of belonging'* (T3). However, the skills of giving, receiving, and reciprocity in a communicative experience are also influenced by a final subcategory of communication skills which I term supporting skills. These supporting skills include extralinguistic, paralinguistic, and developing vocabulary, which I next discuss.

Supporting skills

The Primary Language Curriculum includes eye contact, body language, gesture, facial expression, and sign as extralinguistic skills. These are the non-vocal elements of communication that can reinforce or contradict the spoken words in a communicative experience (Laver, 2006). However, it is my view, that as gesture and sign can be a form of communication, they only serve as extralinguistic skills when used as a support to, rather than a form of, communication. The teacher focus group viewed extralinguistic skills as essential to communicating one's meaning and to understanding the communication of others.

T1: There's a lot not said but said with your body.

T3: What's not said is a lot of it absolutely.

T2: Yeah yeah it's what you don't say.

T4: And it can be learned.

All: Yes.

> *T3: And reading the room, reading other's body language. Say you're at a staff meeting and it's very obvious that people aren't buying into it, you have to read the room, and then realise that you have to come at it in another way.*

However, I do believe that caution should be exercised in relation to children developing extralinguistic skills. For example, my professional experience has taught me that eye contact is not universally acceptable. One day, a child and I were discussing eye colour and he said he did not know what colour eyes his Mother had. His Mother explained that in their culture a child is not allowed to make eye contact with an adult. This supports Laver's (2006) interpretation of these elements of communication as being culturally specific. By requiring this child to make eye contact in order to support the internal capability to live in the world with others, the child's identity, personhood, and individual flourishing may be challenged. Furthermore, the skill of eye contact is highly contested in relation to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). For example, Trevisan et al. (2017) recognise that although difficulty with eye contact can create social barriers, requiring a person who is autistic/with ASD to make eye contact can cause emotional and physiological distress. That is, while trying to support the internal capability to live in the world with others, it is possible to simultaneously negate the capability of health.

Similar to extralinguistic skills, paralinguistic skills can also support or contradict the intended communication (Laver, 2006). Paralinguistic skills are defined in the Primary Language Curriculum as 'audibility, intonation, pitch, pause, emphasis, pace' (Department of Education and Skills, 2019:62). Such paralinguistic skills lie beyond the spoken words alone but are held in the words. Although Laver (2006) presents these skills as vocal aspects of communication, arguably elements of paralinguistic skills do apply to written and other non-verbal modes of communication. For example, pause and emphasis can be represented when communicating through text by the use of punctuation and capitalisation, and in my experience of working with non-verbal children, pause, emphasis, and pace, are supporting skills used in non-verbal modes of communication. In my opinion, the paralinguistic skill of audibility is closely related to being able to speak distinctly, a skill that I discussed in relation to the giving partner in a communicative experience, and my interactions with the children I work with suggest this skill is on the wane.

Finally, the ability to communicate with others is supported by a developing vocabulary. Whether or not to include vocabulary as a communication skill caused me a lot of thought. On one hand, I wondered if being able to develop vocabulary was simply increasing the number of words that were known by an individual, a kind of resource bank. On the other

hand, although vocabulary is positioned as a skill that contributes greatly to reading ability (Cruz et al., 2023), it is also necessary for expressing oneself and understanding the communication of others. For a non-verbal child, this vocabulary includes signs, gestures, and communication aids. Ultimately, I decided to include vocabulary as a supporting skill in communication as it is a skill that special education teachers need to be aware of, particularly for example, for children who need to learn a sign based form of language through which to communicate. In closing this sub-section, I draw attention to the importance of communication skills across the internal capabilities identified through this study. The relationships between internal capabilities and Nussbaum's Capabilities have been identified throughout the Chapter. As emphasised by the teacher focus group, communication skills are important for the internal capabilities of good health and being able to live in the world with others, as these skills are a means to resist violence in times of conflict. Communication skills and reasoning skills work in tandem, with communication skills supporting critical thinking, and critical thinking supporting communication skills. Furthermore, communication skills support an individual's internal capability to choose, which I discuss in the next section.

5.6 The internal capability to choose

Self-determination is a key element of personhood as discussed in Chapter Two. I argued that a dignified free individual is someone who can shape their own life in relation to others, with reflective self-evaluation and freedom of choice being integral to self-determination. This principle is connected to the internal capability to choose which relates to Nussbaum's combined Capability of Control Over One's Environment. Nussbaum (2011:34) defines this Capability as:

> *(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, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.

The focus groups thoroughly supported this Capability and viewed the emphasis on equality as reflecting part of their understanding of a world that is worth living in, as discussed in Chapter Four. However, this 2011 definition seems to lose a little of the beauty and simplicity of Nussbaum's definition provided in an earlier version of the Capabilities that included:

> … being able to live one's own life and nobody else's … non-interference with certain choices that are especially personal and definitive of selfhood … in one's own surroundings and context … (Nussbaum, 1996:85).

The importance of the internal capability of being able to choose and the challenges associated with making choices do not seem well represented in Nussbaum's rather clinical 2011 description. It is this aspect that is the focus of the internal capability to choose. The capability to choose is an internal capability that 'requires support and teaching from others for it to develop' (Powell, 2012:10), and Powell argues it enables individuals to make informed decisions about education and career paths and contributes to overall flourishing. While linking her discussion to a CA view of a flourishing life, Powell (2012) focuses on the challenges vocational education and training (VET) can pose to this capability, but does not consider wider challenges identified by the focus groups such as the relational nature of choice or the challenge posed by self-doubt and fear. Neither Nussbaum (2011), nor Powell (2012), consider the support that other internal capabilities and self-management skills can offer to this internal capability. In the remainder of this sub-section I will explore the challenges that were identified by the focus groups, and in the following sub-section I discuss the self-management skills that can support this internal capability. Throughout, I refer to the relationships between this internal capability and other internal capabilities.

The first challenge the focus groups identified concerning this internal capability arises from the influence of the internal capability to think and learn on the capability to choose. The student focus group felt '*It's important to make the right choices'* (S3), and sometimes this is difficult, '*Mostly you have to think it through'* (S4). The following excerpt from the teacher focus group also speaks of the need to make reasoned choices.

> *You know, be very clear in your thinking, then make your choice, and stand by them. Have put enough thought into it, make an informed choice, and then move on.* (T3)

Although the above statement from teacher participant T3 advocates being able to commit to choices made, the teachers also recognised that it is important to be able to evaluate and modify previously made choices and decisions.

> *So if we're not questioning everything we're doing, are we going to make right decisions about our choices … so take school, that's something we do, don't we, we have a look at something, we agree on how we're going to tackle it, we put it in place, we give it a time, and then we bring it back to question it, and that informs the next part, so …* (T2)

A second challenge to being able to make choices was raised by the student focus group who agreed that it is not always possible to take your preferred choice. In discussion they gave as an example, the case where parents might decide to move to a different area, even though the child might choose to:

> *Stay with your friends and everyone you know, and you wouldn't want to move to somewhere where you don't know anyone.* (S3)

Interestingly, the parent group gave a similar example showing the difficulty parents can have with such a choice.

> *Well there's obviously the choices made as a parent, well we're all heading off to Canada, the kids say I don't want to go to Canada, tough because it's better for me, we'll have a better life and a slightly bigger house. You don't just do that.* (P2)

In the above example, the parent group recognised a third challenge in making choices, making a choice is bound by consideration of others. Parent participant P4 also suggested that a person could choose not to work, but this choice will have an effect on how that person can provide for him/herself and their family. This consideration of others can cause inner conflict.

> *But making choices is a tough one, coz if you make choices, your choice could affect someone else's choice, so you go on to do something but yet you have to … there's a kind of conflict in there as well … you have to have consideration for others.* (P4)

This inner conflict is an example of an inner disturbance discussed in Section 5.2 in relation to the internal capability to have good health. In this case, it is a disturbance that threatens an individual's emotional balance, arising from a conflict between the person's preferred individual choice, and consideration of the effect that choice will have on others. As suggested by the focus group comments above, the internal capability to make choices includes being able to make reasoned choices that include a responsibility towards oneself and others in one's life. Finally, the internal capability to choose can also be challenged due to the self-doubt and fear that prevents an individual from pursuing a reasoned and considered preferred choice. As stated by parent participant P3, '*But then you're wondering was it the best choice to make'*. Furthermore, parent participant P4 articulated, '*I think sometimes you can have an idea in your head you want to do something, or be something, but you're afraid to take that leap'.* I suggest that the self-concept and

emotional skills discussed in Section 5.2 above can help overcome this challenge to the internal capability to choose.

In summary, the challenges to making choices stem from difficulties in decision-making and commitment, limited availability of preferred options, self-doubt, fear, and the balancing of personal desires with consideration of others. While Nussbaum's Capability of Control Over One's Environment primarily focuses on political and material control, the internal capability to choose extends this control to include the mundane decisions and actions a person must make as '*It's essentially how you manage your day, through planning and organisation...*' (P3). The student group found Nussbaum's Capability less relevant to their demographic, stating, '*Control over one's environment, we don't know much about that because it's more about political stuff and things like that, and we don't know much about that'* (S3). Yet, this group recognised the significance of the internal capability to choose in their everyday lives, endorsing its inclusion in the list of internal capabilities. They noted that individuals, including children, should have the ability to make responsible choices as these '*have a long-term effect on you*' (S4) and being able to choose fosters responsibility. Furthermore, the internal capability to choose supports participation in collective decision-making processes, influencing an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life in a world that is worth living in. Although self-management skills support various internal capabilities, I discuss them in the following sub-section due to their specific role in enabling an individual to actualise their choices.

Self-management skills

I propose that self-management skills are key to enabling a person to control the direction of their own life. This includes being proactive rather than reactive regarding both everyday and significant decisions as well as being able to participate in collective decision-making processes. In turn, such participation also provides opportunities to develop the self-management skills that facilitate this participation. Although Biggeri & Santi (2012) reference the contribution that participation can have to help children develop 'the skills needed to plan, design, and monitor their own physical and social environment', they provide no further information on what these skills entail. In this subsection I present my interpretive analysis of literature data that details these skills. To enhance the opportunity to develop the internal capability of being able to commit to and achieve choices and to proactively direct one's day to day and future life, I propose that schools

can support children to develop self-management skills in the areas of task management, attention and concentration, and regulation.

Task management

Key elements of task management that relate specifically to being able to achieve one's choices and to direct one's day are identified by Najdowski (2017) as the abilities to define and set goals, to plan and organise, and to manage one's time. According to Memisevic & Sinanovic (2013), planning involves the ability to set goals and to develop appropriate steps to undertake a task, and involves working memory. However, in supporting an individual's self-determination in line with their potential, it is beneficial to separate goal setting, step planning, and working memory. In my experience as a special education teacher, being able to define a goal and take steps to achieve it are two separate elements of task management. For example, a child may be able to plan to achieve a specified task but may struggle if asked to decide on their own task, and vice versa. Furthermore, some children may need to develop strategies to record the steps needed to complete a task instead of relying on working memory. These tasks may be physical tasks or mental tasks, and many tasks require the ability to identify and plan the individual steps. For example, as explained by parent participant P4, there are a multitude of steps to plan and organise when going on holidays.

Developing a skill of task management also makes an important contribution towards fostering independence. For example, student participant S3 said that managing the task of ensuring they have everything needed for school, such as organising their schoolbag, lunch, and uniform, can support a feeling of independence. In this way, task management supports children to take ownership of their actions and decisions, promoting independence and providing a sense of ownership over their day to day actions. Another element of task management identified by Di Bartolo et al., (2021) is being able to choose and manage materials when undertaking a task. This element is reflected in a writing learning outcome in the Primary Language Curriculum as an ability to 'choose appropriate tools, content and topics for their own writing …' (Department of Education and Skills, 2019:30). However, this skill is essential in contexts other than a writing activity, for example choosing and organising materials for an art activity. The focus groups also supported Najdowski's (2017) presentation of time management as an important element in task management. As teacher participant T3 stated, improved time management skills allowed her to complete tasks more efficiently leaving more time for other interests, allowing her to achieve a better

balance between work and leisure. Similarly, parent participant P1 viewed time-management as key to self-management defined as '*how you manage your time, your work-life balance'.* However, the ability to define and set goals is also influenced by the self-concept and emotional skills discussed above in Section 5.2. As teacher participant T1 noted, '*You have to have a very good self-concept of yourself to be able to define and set goals'.* Also supporting being able to commit and achieve choices and to proactively direct one's life, are the skills of attention and concentration.

Attention and concentration

In a world where we are bombarded with demands on our time and attention, the ability to focus and prioritise increases an individual's opportunity to achieve choices made, supporting the internal capability to choose. Furthermore, the marginalised teenagers contributing to Pelenc's (2017) study, identified the ability to focus as essential to understanding nature and people, reflecting Lamba et al.'s (2014:1) view that 'attention helps a person in gaining knowledge'. Such understanding supports an individual's internal capability to live in the world with others as well as the opportunity to make responsible choices. A succinct conceptualisation of attention is provided by Hebb (1949) who described it as choosing which external and internal events an individual responds to, and Moran (2004) defines concentration as an ability to ignore distractions while focusing on a particular task at hand. There are complex processes involved in both attention and concentration (Lamba et al., 2014; Buchele Harris et al., 2018), however, in this section I briefly consider the contribution being able to focus has on the opportunity to carry out one's choices and to direct one's day to day and longer term life experiences. I also provide some behavioural indicators teachers might use to understand a child's developing skills of attention and concentration. I believe this is a valuable exercise as, in my work as a special education teacher I struggled with understanding how to evaluate and support a child's skill in attention.

By engaging with literature for this study, in particular the works of Lamba et al. (2014) and Moran (2004), I was able to develop an understanding that I hope will support other teachers. I present this understanding through a fictional account of three children that might be encountered in a classroom. Ollie has not yet developed his latent ability of attention and concentration and is easily distracted by external stimuli, for example the child sitting next to him or the patterns on the wall reflecting from the stained glass art the children created the previous day. Lamba et al. (2014) describe this level of attention as

involuntary passive attention. Towards the other end of the continuum of developing attention, Pat is able to zoom in on the writing task assigned to the class, with particular focus on developing the protagonist character, and is able to block out the stimuli that are distracting Ollie from the task at hand. Pat is demonstrating a level of active attention known as 'selective attention' (Moran, 2004:1), a form of attention that supports focusing on an activity and ignoring distractions. Pat is able to engage in selective attention for approximately four minutes, whereas Bhavna can focus on the activity while ignoring distractions for up to 20 minutes. Bhavna is demonstating 'selective sustained attention' (Lamba et al., 2014:1), a more developed skill in selective attention that allows her to maintain this form of attention over extended periods of time. In summary, training attention and concentration skills seeks to develop an ability to aim attention on actions that are specific and relevant to the task at hand, thus increasing an individual's control. Influencing attention and concentration are the skills of self-regulation and the self-concept and emotional skills of character strengths and self-perception. For example, the character strength of self-motivation supports an individual to 'decide to concentrate effectively' (Moran, 2004:2). Positive self-perception allows an individual to believe they are in control of their attention, and self-regulation supports a person to refocus their attention if necessary.

Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is defined as the ability to monitor, control, and adapt, one's own thoughts, emotions, and behaviours to achieve personal goals (Baumeister et al., 2007; Ghanizadeh, 2017). This understanding suggests that self-regulation works in tandem with other skills such as being able to express emotions, reflective and critical thinking, and the self-management skill of planning and organisation. Consequently, I interpreted self-regulation as a self-management skill that supports, and is supported, by other internal capabilities. Self-regulation not only supports an individual to achieve their personal goals, thus enhancing their self-determination and personhood, it also supports other internal capabilities such as good health, being able to live in the world with others, and being able to think and learn. It is thus positioned as an important skill to support an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life. Referring again to my experience as a special education teacher, I had no tool to help me understand a child's developing ability for self-regulation, and in this section I offer a matrix of regulation skill development that I hope will be of help to other teachers.

A useful starting point is the differentiation Teng & Zheng (2022) make between the awareness of, and control of, thinking. Intuitively, awareness seems a prerequisite for conscious control of cognitive, affective, and behavioural presentations. If an individual is to regulate these presentations they must first be aware of them. Ghanizadeh (2017) provides a view of stages of self-regulation that complements Baumeister's et al. (2007) discussion on the conscious effort required in self-control that can vary across contexts. The requirement of conscious effort and a developing ability from impulsive to regulated is also explored by Blair & Razza (2007) who argue that the skill of self-regulation can be enhanced through school curricula which in turn supports children to succeed in and through education. To assist teachers in understanding and supporting a child's development of self-regulation, and building on the work of Ghanizadeh (2017), Baumeister et al. (2007), and Blair & Razza (2007), I propose the following matrix (next page) that outlines different areas and levels of self-regulation. To illustrate these levels of cognitive, affective, and behavioural self-regulation, I use the fictional senior infant student named Terri as an example. Terri's parents had a meeting with the class teacher and the Principal as they are worried about her reluctance to come to school, and her frequent claims of being sick even though she appears healthy. Terri has told her parents she does not want to go to school because the teacher is always correcting her for tapping her pencil on the table, she gets in trouble for hitting others when they make her angry, and she just can't be good even though she tries.

In this example, Terri is showing no awareness or control of self-regulation in the cognitive, affective, and behavioural (CAB) domains. As seen in Table 7 on the following page, Terri's level of self-regulation skill is at an automatic level that may be viewed as having no impulse control whatsoever. Over time, Terri has worked with her teacher and parent(s) and has moved through the levels of having a basic level of self-regulation, in which she has an awareness of, but cannot control, her CAB domains described in the above example and Table 7 on the following page, to a monitoring level in which she has an awareness of and can control in specific situations with either full or partial assistance. After several years of support, Terri has developed her cognitive, affective, and behavioural self-regulation ability. She is now in secondary school and has progressed through a control level of self-regulation, independently applying taught strategies in specific circumstances to a strategic level of regulation, demonstrating full awareness, control, and independent modification of her CAB domains.

Table 7: Levels of cognitive, affective, and behavioural self-regulation

Level of self-regulation	**Examples**		
	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioural
Automatic: no awareness or control	Terri often states negative self-beliefs and does not realise she does so.	Terri lashes out at others, cannot say why, continuing until an adult intervenes.	Terri constantly taps her pencil on the table without realising she is doing it.
Basic level: Has awareness but no control	Terri has awareness of her negative self-thoughts but cannot change the cycle of thinking.	Terri knows that her anger at minor irritations is an over-reaction but cannot change her emotion.	Terri is aware of her pen tapping, but cannot modify the behaviour
Monitoring level: Has an awareness of, but cannot modify without assistance	Terri is aware of her negative self-thoughts; with full or partial assistance can work through these thoughts and, in that moment, change them to positive.	Terri is aware of her tendency to lash out when angry; with full/partial assistance, she can employ strategies to regulate her emotion in a way that supports her health and relationships.	Terri is aware of the distracting effect her pencil tapping has on others; when teacher reminds her, she can choose a different behaviour that is not distracting.
Control level: independe-ntly uses strategies to regulate	Terri is aware of when she engages in negative self-thought, and independently uses the card teacher made to help her change her thinking pattern.	Terri is aware of when she is becoming angry over minor irritations; independently regulates her emotions using the grounding techniques her teacher taught her.	Terri is aware that her pen tapping is a need for sensory stimulation; when this need arises she instead uses the chair push to regulate her behaviour.
Strategic level: Effectively self-regulates to optimal potential over a variety of domains	Terri is aware of her negative self-talk in her life in general and can independently choose the most appropriate strategy in a given circumstance, to regulate these thoughts.	Terri is aware that she becomes frustrated and angry in many and varied situations; she independently selects from a variety of strategies to help regulate her emotions.	Terri has awareness of her sensory needs and how these needs differ across environments; she can independently determine activities to regulate her sensory input in varying situations.

In developing from an automatic to a strategic level of self-regulation, an individual is developing the ability to be aware of and to monitor, control, and adapt their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, enhancing the internal capability to choose and to direct their own lives. The self-management skills presented in this section contribute to an individual's opportunity for self-determination, a key aspect of personhood as outlined in

Chapter Two. For example, the organisational skills of goal identification and being able to develop a plan to achieve these goals, supports individuals to define and take steps towards a flourishing life. Furthermore, several internal capabilities are supported by, and support, a skill of self-regulation. Self-management skills also support the internal capability to aspire and hope, as these skills help an individual develop a sense of purpose and direction.

5.7 The internal capability to aspire and hope

In my interpretive analysis of literature data, I coded 96 references across thirteen pieces of literature to the internal capability to aspire and hope. Biggeri et al. (2011:342) assert that 'children may develop a capability to aspire through their involvement in the decision making process', supporting the notion that the ability to aspire and hope is an internal capability, a personal ability that can be developed through training. Literature and focus group data indicate a link between this internal capability, self-concept and emotional skills, and an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life. For example, Pelenc (2017) notes that a positive self-concept supports the ability to aspire and hope while a negative self-concept limits this ability. This ability can influence preference adaptation, either limiting or broadening an individual's opportunity for a flourishing life.

Being able to aspire and hope for a better present or future for oneself or the world involves being able to envisage something different from the current reality. Thus imagination plays a role in aspiration and hope but is not sufficient for these concepts. Hope involves a desire for a particular outcome, the belief in its possibility however improbable, and an emotional investment in the possibility of this result, exceeding an understanding of imagination (Bloeser & Stahl, 2022). Neither is the internal capability to aspire and hope adequately captured by Nussbaum's Capability of Senses, Imagination, and Thought. Nussbaum's Capability appears to focus on the experience and achievement of personally significant and chosen activities. However, the internal capability to aspire and hope recognises that 'one can hope for outcomes that one considers to be very unlikely and that one does not expect to happen, such as a miraculous cure of an illness' (Bloeser & Stahl, 2022:Introduction, Paragraph 2). That is, Nussbaum's Capability does not appear to encompass the elements of hope and aspiration that include unlikely possibilities or those beyond expectations, and which involve an emotional investment in such possibilities.

The focus groups unequivocally supported the inclusion of this internal capability in a list designed to broaden an individual's opportunity to live a good life, in a world that is worth

living in. Both the parent and teacher focus groups believed this internal capability is fundamental to a flourishing life.

> *P1: I think everyone needs to aspire and hope, or you might as well just say okay and wait to die.*
>
> *T4: What's standing out there for me is just the word hope, in your chart*[56]*, although you need everything else there, but if you don't have hope then …*
>
> *T3: Yeah, we probably didn't focus on it as much as we could have.*

I asked the teacher group how this internal capability helps an individual's opportunity to have a good life, or to live in a world that is worth living in. The group suggested that this internal capability is a source of the drive a person has to direct and choose their own vision of a good life. This view rearticulates that of Markus and Nurius (1986) as related in Dejaeghere: aspirations and positive imagining of 'possible future selves serves as motivation and guide for actions' (Dejaeghere et al., 2016:468). The students also consider hope and aspiration to be motivational qualities, as suggested in the following extract.

> *S4: You need to be able to dream of things.*
>
> *S3: And believe, believe is part of that.*
>
> *S2: Yeah, because if you don't believe in a thing that you want to do, you'll never get there. Like if you've no hope, then you might give up on the environment, you have to believe we can make it better.*

The views of the focus groups have philosophical support as 'almost all major philosophers acknowledge that hope plays an important role in regard to human motivation' (Bloeser & Stahl, 2022:Paragraph 1). Furthermore, the internal capability to aspire and hope allows a person to look forward in their life, and the teacher focus group believed that being able to look forward, and having something to hope for and aspire towards, can help overcome the bleakness of life.

> *T3: When life is bleak, it's something to look forward to and something to hope towards.*
>
> *T2: And it's in the future, and there's something nice about that, isn't there?*
>
> *T1: There is, you're not going to be stuck in the present.*
>
> *T2: And I suppose in this world, the past, the present, the future, that's our timeline isn't it? Aspiration and hope allow us to construct our own personal timelines.*

[56] The chart to which teacher participant T4 was referring is reproduced in Appendix 9.

The future orientation of aspirations as elucidated by the focus group, is also referenced by Appadurai (2004). In nurturing this internal capability, along with the power of voice, Appadurai (2004) offers a means to empower those in poverty, as this internal capability broadens the future opportunities that can be conceptualised, designed, and addressed. Although Nussbaum (2016) speaks of her Capability list as an aspirational list that serves as a source of motivation for human flourishing, she does not emphasise that this requires people to be able to hope and aspire. The internal capability of being able to aspire and hope is unobservable, and it is necessary to ascertain its development through observable behaviours and utterances. The teacher focus group discussion suggested that these observable behaviours are both temporal and situational in nature. Behaviours are temporal from the point of view that the hopes and aspirations of a child may differ from those of an adult. They are also situational in the sense that an individual's situation can greatly affect the kinds of things that individual will hope for, and aspire to. The teacher focus group identified the family context of the individual as greatly effecting the kinds of aspirations a person can hold, and the support a person can receive. Teacher participant T3 aspired to be a teacher from an early age, and this participant believed that, for another individual in a different family and social context, an equally valid aspiration might have been to get married young, have a family, and obtain social housing. As stated by Appadurai (2004:67) 'Aspirations are never simply individual … They are always formed in interaction and in the thick of social life'. However, as a counter-experience to the early aspirations of teacher participant T3, participant T1 described a lack of personal aspiration as:

> *Like I am just thinking back to a time where I did my Leaving Certificate*[57]*, and I didn't have any aspirations or any hopes, and I remember that sense of … like a fog, which wasn't a good place.* (T1)

This participant wondered how she eventually managed to develop the internal capability to aspire and hope.

> *… you can't be taught that, so where does that come from? Where did I get it eventually? Like, I don't know, maturity, did I experience life, grow up, whatever?* (T1)

Participant T3 responded by saying that they strongly believed that particular aspirations are picked up from the home environment. An important aspect of the home environment

[57] The Leaving Certificate is a two year secondary school programme designed to offer students a broad and balanced education. The results are used to determine the further educational opportunities available to a student.

that impacts on the internal capability to aspire is the support provided to the person. For example, Powell (2012) relates several examples of disadvantaged South African students who aspired to, and did, engage in further education. Many of those students cite parental support as key to their success, even though the families had no experience of further education and many were living in poverty. These cited examples suggest a relationship between the internal capability to aspire and hope, and the internal capability to live in the world with others. This is because the value of support is integral to both internal capabilities and to the social and relationship skills discussed in section 5.5 which can enhance the opportunity of living a flourishing life in a world worth living in.

Teacher participant T2 further examined the temporal nature of the internal capability to aspire and hope.

> *T2: Yeah, I would think what you're hoping for is definitely linked to your age, and what's happening in your life at the time. Even small little people, they all have hope, it just, it could be so many different things. You've got someone here who hopes they're going to McDonald's on the way home, you've got someone else who hopes Dad's not there when I arrive, coz that's not good -*
>
> *T3:*
> *- hope in adversity, you're absolutely right -*
>
> *T2: - hope I get my first kiss … So I think … to aspire and hope has to be in our list, but relative to age.*

In the above extract, T2 focused on the element of hope in this internal capability that includes both hope and aspiration in its title. Both terms were included as it is possible to determine two elements to the internal capability to aspire and hope. Firstly, being able to hope for something that is different to the present, and secondly, being able to make that something come to be. From analysing the focus group discussion, hope and aspiration are linked but they are also different concepts.

The concepts are linked as they involve an individual looking to the future and they serve as a positive in a person's life. For example there can be '*T3: Hope in adversity*', and an individual may have aspirations that serve to increase that person's opportunity to living a good life. I do not have the space in this Dissertation to consider this difference except to suggest that it seems that the object of an individual's aspirations may be more in their control than the object of their hopes. For example, Powell (2012) considers the capacity to aspire as a capacity concerned with the 'ability of individuals and communities to affect their own lives' (Powell, 2012:10). However, what power over their life has the child who

hopes their Father is not home, or who hopes Santa will come? While both aspiration and hope are concerned with an imagined future, perhaps hope lies in situations in which the individual has no control over the situation, and being able to aspire motivates a person in situations where they do have control. A personal circumstance that I am experiencing at the present while bringing this Dissertation to its final presentation starkly taught me the difference between aspiration and hope. In supporting a family member's return to health, my enacted aspiration as functionings include consulting with medical professionals in an acute hospital, determining care steps, and fighting for supports needed going forward. Ultimately however, I only have hope. My actions could all be rendered redundant at any time.

5.8 Chapter summary

In this Chapter, I have elaborated on the internal capabilities and skills that serve to broaden an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life, and to help build and maintain a world that is worth living in. These internal capabilities involve being able: to have good health, to think and learn, to live in the world with others, to choose, and to aspire and hope. These internal capabilities are supported by developing self-concept and emotional skills, perceptual motor skills, reasoning skills, social and relationship skills, communication skills, and self-management skills. These are the personally held characteristics and capacities that schools can support children to develop to enhance the opportunity for self-determination, well-being, and to live in a world that is worth living in. The explicit skill domains also serve as a support to teachers in identifying individual targets and measures that children can work towards in and through education. Throughout the Chapter, I have drawn attention to the intricate web of relationships within and between internal capabilities and skill domains, and I believe this supports the non-fungibility of Capabilities as argued by Nussbaum (2000, 2006b). In relation to this skills framework, this means that each capability is important and a lack of one capability cannot be ignored due to an abundance of another capability.

Chapter 6: Imaginings and reflections

6.1 Chapter introduction

This final Chapter represents both an ending and a beginning, and offers an opportunity for reflection. In this Chapter, I review the Chapter foci and propose a method to apply my skills framework in teaching practice that includes an alternative approach to evaluating educational progress. This considers the issues raised in Chapter One concerning the assessment of educational progress and the challenges associated with measuring the unmeasurable in education. I next consider some implications and contributions associated with this research. Following this, I acknowledge the limitations of my study, explore potential future directions in education, and reflect on my professional and personal transformation experienced during my research journey.

In Chapter One, I expressed a feeling of powerlessness within the education system. This inability to affect an education system that can have damaging unintended consequences is a source of frustration, debilitation, and despondency. Nonetheless, I have chosen to reject a sense of powerlessness. My research seeks to empower educators by providing a framework designed to cater to the diverse needs of children. This framework extends beyond literacy and numeracy to encompass a broader range of skills. In Chapter Two, I noted the lack of an explicit specification of 'key dispositions and skills' (Government of Ireland, 2022b:7) in local policy documents. These are the skills and dispositions necessary to promote development that meets present needs 'without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Department of Education and Skills, 2014:6; Government of Ireland, 2022b:5). At an individual level, these skills and dispositions enhance an individual's ability for well-being and navigating life's challenges (Department of Education and Skills, 2018).

Chapter Three detailed the methodological framework of this research, including my philosophical stance and methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. I discussed the iterative nature of data collection, analysis, and interpretation and presented the ethical considerations, methodological requirements, and measures of goodness that were pertinent to this research. The framework of internal capabilities and skills presented in this Dissertation drew on data collected from both literature and empirical research that included three focus groups of students, parents, and teachers. My interpretive analysis synthesised literature and empirical data to create a framework of six internal capabilities and six skill domains that could broaden an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing

life in a world that is worth living in. In Chapter Four, I presented an interpretive analysis of the focus groups' views on what constitutes a flourishing life in a world that is worth living in, localising these concepts to the context of Irish primary school education.

In Chapter Five, I discussed an extensive framework of internal capabilities and supporting skills, including the internal capabilities to: have good health, pursue self-directed activities for pleasure, think and learn, live in the world with others, to choose, and to aspire and hope. The skill domains discussed in that Chapter include self-concept and emotional skills, perceptual motor skills, reasoning skills, social and relationship skills, communication skills, and self-management skills. In this discussion, I argued that these skills support the opportunity to live a flourishing life and help to create a world in which it is worth living. I also contend that these skills, including dispositions, provide the detailed definition that is lacking in key local policy documents, as I discuss further in Section 6.3.

Robeyns (2005) advises that the CA is useful for assessing various dimensions of well-being, including individual well-being. In my application, I argue that focussing on the development of an individual's internal capabilities, from latent basic capabilities to developed abilities[58], supports an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life. In this way, I emphasise the CA's generative function over its evaluative role, although broadening an individual's opportunity to flourish necessitates evaluating their skill development. I acknowledge Robeyns' (2005) assertion that the CA should assess not only individual capabilities but also the broader environment that can either enhance or restrict an individual's ability to flourish. However, as stated in Chapter One, in the absence of a supportive environment, teachers and individuals can nonetheless be empowered by focusing on internal capabilities while hoping and aspiring for this environment. In my introductory Chapter, I also expressed concerns regarding the practice of ascertaining an individual's educational progress through standardised tests, especially the reliance on STen scores. I next provide a means of operationalising my framework in the daily practice of teachers, thereby empowering both teachers and students, and offering an alternative method for assessing educational progress.

6.2 Operationalisation

Alkire (2005) explores the practical challenges of implementing the CA across diverse contexts, and in my view, an unstated goal of Alkire is to bridge the gap between theory and practice. She proposes that these challenges can be overcome by developing user-

[58] See 'Ability as a process of capability formation' in Appendix 1 for a detailed presentation.

friendly approaches, a creative study of existing applications of the CA, and ongoing public debate and dialogue. This reflection prompts me to propose a method for operationalising the skills framework in teacher professional practice, with a focus on evaluating skill development. This approach also reconceptualises measurement as evaluation and celebrates the multi-dimensional nature of people, rather than reducing identity to Ball's (2018) unidimensional construct, as discussed in Chapter One. The method I propose embraces the metaphorical concept of negative capability, which Unterhalter (2017) explains as being comfortable with the understanding that measurement can involve both certainties and uncertainties.

According to Unterhalter (2017), embracing uncertainty in education does not imply a resignation to the unmeasurable nor an abandonment of efforts to measure these. Instead, Unterhalter suggests exploring alternative educational measurement methods that transcend traditional frameworks, promote holistic and inclusive strategies, and value diverse forms of knowledge. For this study, this requires a departure from STen scores to evaluate an individual's educational progression, involving the professional judgement of teachers on skill development instead. As previously described in Chapter Two, functionings are the observable behaviours associated with an internal capability, and these allow us to infer the presence of the corresponding internal capability. Key steps in operationalising my framework of skills are identifying strengths and areas for improvement, setting goals, providing targeted interventions, monitoring progress while fostering motivation, self-awareness and holistic development. I illustrate this operationalisation using the following fictional example of an eight year old child named Ollie.

Method of evaluating skill development

Ollie is a fictional First Class[59] student who has been participating in special education teaching. Through a collaborative process that included Ollie's parent(s), teacher(s), Ollie himself, and external professionals, a key strength and two primary needs have been identified.

- Ollie has exceptionally well developed motor skills compared to his peers.
- Ollie struggles to maintain attention on tasks.
- Ollie can follow single-step instructions, but not multi-step instructions.

[59] First Class in Ireland corresponds to P2 in Scotland.

Although Ollie has additional areas for development, it is beneficial to concentrate on a select few, as Gambrill (2002) suggests. The focus for Ollie includes enhancing self-management skills, particularly attention and concentration, as well as improving communication skills with a specific emphasis on his ability to receive communication. Over a period of one week, Ollie's special education teacher evaluated his ability to follow single-step instructions involving mark making on a provided picture. Ollie successfully completed all instructions across three separate days and his teacher evaluated Ollie as successful at this task. Considering variables such as tiredness or anxiety, his teacher considered a three-day average to be a more reliable indicator for evaluation than a single assessment on one particular day. The skill evaluation then progressed to more complex two-step instructions, such as *Colour the box red,* with each picture worksheet containing 10 two-step tasks. Over three days, Ollie demonstrated an average of seven out of 20 correct responses, equating to 35% accuracy. This establishes his baseline performance before a period of intervention[60]. Aiming to also boost Ollie's confidence in task completion, his teacher set a goal for a 10% improvement in accuracy with two-step instructions.

Following a period of intervention of two weeks, Ollie's average increased to nine correct answers, equating to 45% accuracy. Ollie has met his target and this can be celebrated. Now, with a new baseline of nine correct responses, a fresh target is set. The improvement required in this new target may continue at the same rate of 10%, or perhaps this rate will be increased. However, Ollie's ability to follow two-part instructions must progress beyond mere mark making on a page, which I will address in the sub-section describing a tiered model of skill development. Prior to presenting a second measure to evaluate skill development, it is important to note that while percentages serve as a tool for teachers to gauge skill development progress, they do not represent absolutes or certainties. For example, although two children may demonstrate ability to meet a given target to 100% accuracy, the complexity of these targets which are tailored to each child's current ability can vary. A child with higher ability is expected to show more advanced skill mastery than one beginning intervention at a lower level of skill ability. Observations and evaluations are made based on the child's present abilities and their next ability milestone. This approach offers a personalised interpretation rather than a uniform attainment level. For

[60] Children's development and progress rates vary, rendering a predetermined time frame for intervention impracticable. Teachers should customise the learning pace to be comfortably challenging. If there is a lack of progress then it may be necessary to re-evaluate the intervention strategy and possible additional contributing factors.

example, Sam and David might both demonstrate 100% accuracy on a task, yet their levels of achievement may differ. Sam achieves 100% in applying phonics knowledge across all 42 sounds of a specific phonics programme, while David achieves 100% on his personalised goal of applying the first six sounds of the same programme. Both have scored 100%, but their levels of achievement are significantly different. This method allows each child to experience success.

Returning to Ollie's second target in skill development, identified as the self-management skill of attention, his teacher used a different form of target. Similar to the method previously presented for determining a baseline of skill ability, Ollie's teacher observed the number of reminders needed for Ollie to maintain focus during a three minute task. Across three days, it was observed that Ollie required an average of 20 reminders to stay engaged for three minutes. Ollie's teacher set a target to reduce the number of reminders by 10% for such tasks. Following a period of intervention of four weeks that supported Ollie to develop an awareness and control of self-regulation ability, Ollie achieved this target, allowing for the establishment of a new baseline, and potential modification of the reduction goal. If Ollie shows significant improvement, his teacher might revise the target to, say, 'a maximum of 5 reminders'. This example illustrates that Ollie is not yet able to independently focus on the task at hand. Similarly, while Ollie can follow two-step instructions during mark-making activities, it is unclear if this skill generalises to other tasks and settings, such as following two-step instructions in the general classroom setting. In response to these observations, I propose a four-tiered skill development model that caters to children's differing levels of independence. This model aligns with the broad range of needs found in primary schools, and facilitates a more inclusive approach to diverse student needs.

Four-tiered model of skill development

In the example presented above, I noted that Ollie may be demonstrating skill development by successfully following two-part instructions involving making marks on a page. However, I raised the question of whether Ollie can generalise this skill to different situations. In this usage, generalisation does not imply broad or hasty generalisations that Lipman (2003) associates with stereotyping. Instead, it refers to the transfer of learning from the original context to other contexts where such learning would be beneficial, as Anderson et al. (2001) describe. An individual should be able to independently apply their internal capabilities and skills across various relevant situations and contexts. Gambrill

(2002) describes generalisation as the transfer of behaviours to contexts that are similar yet distinct from the original learning environment. Najdowski (2017) further clarifies this suggesting that generalisation encompasses various stimuli including different situations, people, and settings. An example of this would be the ability to use a skill such as assertion in the presence of individuals who were not part of the initial training, or applying a skill such as self-management learned at school within the home environment. Najdowski (2017) characterises this generalisation as demonstration of skill mastery, and such generalisation represents the highest level of internal capability and skill development. That is, when a child develops a skill in one situation, or with one person, or in one place, the objective is for the child to be able to apply that skill across other pertinent contexts, individuals, and settings.

Although Najdowski (2017) identifies 12 types of prompts an individual may receive to support the execution of a skill, these can be effectively reduced to four levels. At the lowest level of skill execution, an individual requires full assistance. For example, Ollie may need constant guidance to maintain focus on a task for three minutes, whether through persistent redirection or continuous task-related dialogue. If the task is physical, such as hand-washing after toileting, Ollie might need full physical assistance. Progressing to the next level of skill execution, Ollie still requires assistance, albeit to a lesser extent, and this is identified as partial assistance. This might involve intermittent leading questions or another individual modelling the hand-washing steps that Ollie can mimic. Eventually, partial support may be provided through the use of visual aids such as flashcards. The third level of skill execution is independent execution, where Ollie can independently concentrate on specific tasks in familiar contexts, and has learned to wash his hands independently after using the bathroom in school, without needing any assistance. The fourth, and final, level of skill execution, generalised ability, is as previously described. For example, Ollie independently washes his hands after using the bathroom at school, at home, and other locations, in the presence of various responsible caregivers and in the absence of other individuals.

When devising individualised education programmes, these levels of execution must be considered. They not only provide space to meet diverse needs but also, as Najdowski (2017) emphasises, the development of a generalised ability must be planned from the beginning, rather than relying on training and expecting generalisation. Furthermore, the levels of skill execution can also be viewed as indicative of the support an individual

requires to exercise a skill in response to task demands. In this view, levels of skill execution are crucial in a framework that honours the concept of personhood as represented by the CA. As discussed in Chapter Two, if an individual can be supported to assuage the winds of chance and learn to exercise capabilities independently, they should be supported to do so, and, if requiring assistance, this should be provided in ways that afford respect and dignity to the individual. Aligning with Nussbaum's (2006b) discussion on disability, a framework that respects individual dignity must support both those who can function independently and those who require assistance. This section began by referencing Unterhalter's (2017) discussion of the challenges in measuring the unmeasurable aspects of education, in which she considers the four key questions of what, when, why, and how to measure. Having described a method of evaluating skill development in the previous paragraph, I will now revisit additional issues pertaining to this, and the questions of what and why. Since Unterhalter (2017) addresses the question of when by discussing the historical and contextual backdrop of measurement in education, I will provide a brief summary of Unterhalter's perspective without further elaboration.

Re-visiting Unterhalter's treatment of the unmeasurable in education

Unterhalter (2017) examines the historical context of educational measurement with a particular focus on gender equality, critiquing the evolution of measurement practices and their association with educational policies such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She notes that the search for precision in education measurement has roots that reach across centuries and that measurement has been designed towards easily answerable questions such as the number of males and females participating in education. Unterhalter traces how measurement indicators have evolved to serve a regulatory discourse linked to New Public Management. She calls for a more nuanced measurement approach that includes qualitative analysis and focuses on capabilities rather than mere outputs, advocating for embracing uncertainty and consideration of whose interests are prioritised and neglected in the pursuit of measurement in education. In the above sections detailing the operationalisation of the skills framework in practice, the interests prioritised in evaluating skill development are those of the individual child. In those sections I also suggested a means of evaluating skill development, addressing the *how* of measurement in the context of skill development. Revisiting the challenge of *how* to evaluate skill development, I next address three additional crucial points. These include the aggregation of various skills to a singular measure of ability, the weighting of domains, and a threshold level of skill development.

Firstly, while teachers may use numbers to understand a child's progress across various skill domains, I suggest that it is crucial not to aggregate these distinct areas into a single score. In the context of the CA, such aggregation can occur at an individual level[61] or across individuals[62] (Ibrahim, 2014). In aggregating on an individual level, an individual's ability in each separate domain is considered collectively, perhaps to reflect an individual's overall flourishing. At a group level across individuals, aggregation considers a specific skill across a population, perhaps to reflect ability in that skill domain for that population. Neither form of aggregation is acceptable in the context of the skills framework I propose here. This principle stems from the non-fungibility of capability domains (Nussbaum, 2000, 2006b), recognising the unique nature of each domain. Additionally, and as importantly, it recognises a concern with the uniqueness of each child in a classroom. Individual aggregation can mask significantly underdeveloped skill domains by high ability in other domains. For example, consider Ollie previously introduced. His skill development has been evaluated and documented as follows: self-concept and emotional skills 88%, perceptual motor skills 85%, reasoning skills 92%, social and relationship skills 90%, communication skills 15%, and Self-management skills 25%. This results in an overall skill development score of 66% for Ollie. However, focusing only on Ollie's aggregated score of 66% may cause his significant needs in the areas of communication skills (15%) and self-management skills (25%) to be overlooked.

In the context of this skills framework, it is also unacceptable to aggregate across individuals as this approach undermines the emphasis on the individuality of each child in our classrooms. Furthermore, such aggregation may mask individual needs as interpersonal diversity is unobservable (Comim, 2001). For example, perhaps the skill domains of all the children in Ollie's class were considered as a class group. This consideration indicated that the class showed less ability in the area of motor skills than in communication. The teacher might focus on developing the motor skills ability of the class and fail to recognise Ollie's individual low ability in communication skills.

I acknowledge the practical challenges of operationalising the skills framework in classrooms with more than 20 children of diverse needs. There would be, for example, the challenges of the number of children in the class and how to collect and manage information on skill progression. Nonetheless, screening tests for senior infants are used to

[61] Aggregating an individual's capabilities to a single figure is also termed horizontal aggregation (Comim, 2001) and intrapersonal aggregation (Robeyns, 2006a).

[62] Aggregating one capability across many individuals may be termed vertical aggregation (Comim, 2001) and interpersonal aggregation (Robeyns, 2006a).

identify potential literacy and numeracy needs despite class size. This suggests that the approach is possibly more aspirational than merely hopeful. As noted by Nussbaum (2011:42), an aspirational application of the CA challenges us 'to be ingenious and to do better'. In response to this challenge, I offer the following suggestions to operationalise the framework in a classroom situation. Begin with a targeted, gradual approach. In my experience, teachers typically know their students well and can identify the strengths and needs of children at either end of the continuum in their classroom. For example, a teacher can quickly identify that Adam struggles with group work as he disrupts most group activities, although he works well independently. This behaviour reduces the benefit other children derive from the group work, as much time is spent managing Adam's behaviours. Adam can receive targeted intervention on his cooperation and collaboration skills. Alternatively, the entire class can work on these skills but only Adam will be monitored for progress. Rather than trying to progress Adam's ability in all the sub-skills in the 'Working with others' skill domain, the teacher can choose one sub-skill and begin with one indicative behaviour that appears least developed for Adam and may have the most impact on group activities. Such a behaviour may be, for example, 'accepting the ideas of others'. An initial target is set for Adam which is then reviewed and amended as he makes progress. For example, Adam's first target may be 'with assistance, to accept the ideas of others twice during a group activity'. This may progress to 'with assistance, to increase the number of times Adam accepts the ideas of others during a group activity by 10%'. A further refinement of the target may be to remove the assistance and create similar targets that require Adam to independently accept the ideas of others.

Regarding recording and monitoring Adam's progress, various online subscription services facilitate the recording of assessment information, but paper based methods or spreadsheets can record the evaluation information equally well. For example, the teacher may have a page or worksheet for Adam on which they record the evaluation of his cooperation and collaboration skill development. In the above example, only one sub-skill is being recorded, that of accepting the ideas of others. The page is divided into columns with the first wider column listing Adam's current target. The remaining columns record the number of times Adam accepted the ideas of others during a group activity on a certain date, and these are suffixed with a letter indicating his position on the four-tiered model of skill development. As Adam meets a specific target, the revised target is written underneath and recording continues using the same method. In this manner, the teacher (and Adam) can evaluate Adam's progress.

Furthermore, as the class teacher becomes comfortable with implementing the skills framework and monitoring Adam's progress, they may decide to add a targeted intervention for Alice regarding her reluctance to contribute to class discussions despite her verbal ability. Following a similar manner as for Adam, the teacher may decide to select one sub-skill, perhaps self-perception or being able to respond to the communication of others. Alice's targets may develop from one word contributions during paired activities, to group activities, to whole class activities. Her target goal may increase from one contribution per activity to a greater number. Similarly, the length of communication may increase and further develop to involve reciprocal communication skills. As the targets of both Adam and Alice occur in different classroom situations (group work versus whole class discussion), the periodic evaluation of both occurs at different times during the day. In summary, given the demands on teacher time in a classroom situation, I suggest that it is better to target those children who will benefit most or whose need presents as severely underdeveloped compared to class peers, and better to begin with a small number of manageable targets. These targets are selected based on the child's presenting need and not in accordance with a system that universally prioritises certain skills. A system that prioritises certain skills over others assigns a pre-determined weight rating to skills, as I next discuss as the second crucial point in revisiting the challenge of *how* to evaluate skill development.

Secondly, there is no overarching uniform weighting system associated with this skills framework. This is the case even though the teacher focus group identified communication skills as a key domain, or a 'fertile capability' to use Nussbaum's (2011:44) term, recognised as a capability that particularly influences the development of other capabilities. In the context of the CA, Comim (2001) explains weighting as a valuation exercise that involves identifying and ranking different capabilities. Robeyns (2006a) further clarifies that the method to identify and rank capabilities may involve reflection and justification, or statistical methods. Ranking internal capabilities with varying weights would imply that certain internal capabilities may be considered more important than others. While certain domains may hold more significance for one individual's opportunity to flourish compared to another, no single domain should be universally prioritised for everyone. For example, if Danni possesses excellent communication skills, evaluated as a developed ability in line with potential, then developing these skills further is not a priority for her personal development. Thus, in the presence of other underdeveloped internal capabilities, a focus on Danni's communication skills is misplaced, and any associated overarching higher

weighting becomes irrelevant. If Danni is currently struggling with various motor skills, evaluated as areas needing attention to enhance Danni's opportunity to live a flourishing life, then these are skills that, for Danni, deserve a higher weighting than communication skills.

Thirdly, there is no definitive threshold level that signifies the attainment of a minimum level of skill development. In Nussbaum's (2000:6) discussion of a 'threshold level of each capability', she holds that human functioning is not truly available to people below a threshold level. Her argument is important in terms of the focus of her application which is to develop a partial theory of justice. However, in viewing internal capabilities as developing from a latent potential to a competent[63] ability, I contend that it is not helpful to say that human functioning is unavailable below this threshold, as we all start at a level of latent capabilities. Furthermore, in the case of primary school, there is almost always potential for further progression of abilities[64]. In the above discussion, I focused solely on evaluating skill development. I acknowledge the significance of external factors such as environmental, political, and socio-economic influences, yet these lie beyond this study's scope. Questions regarding pedagogical approaches, the learning environment, and task demands relative to a child's current abilities also arise but are not addressed here. Although important, these considerations lie outside the scope of this study that has been limited to considering internal capabilities in an imperfect world.

The notion of evaluation embraced in this study emphasises progress over achievement, aligning with Unterhalter's (2017) view of education as a process of being and becoming. Implicit in the above discussion, is consideration of Unterhalter's (2017) question of *what* is being measured. An individual's development of internal capabilities and skills is being evaluated, with a focus on their developing ability rather than a state of attainment. Finally, relating Unterhalter's (2017) question of *why* we measure to this exploratory study concerning internal capabilities, I offer the following response. The purpose of evaluating internal capabilities is not for interpersonal comparisons, or to improve educational quality, policy, or to enhance accountability, but to understand a child's development of internal capabilities. This understanding can aid educators, parents, guardians, and the child, in prioritising areas for development in an individualised education programme, and enhance

[63] Competence, as discussed in Chapter Two, is understood as '…if, optimizing resources and opportunity, S would likely A if S tried to A' (Cowden, 2016:43)

[64] This issue pertains to distributive justice, for example determining which students should receive special education support in a school with limited resource availability. However, this question falls outside the scope of this research.

the decision making process. Unterhalter (2017) suggests we measure what is valued and I posit the act of measuring can also shape our values leading us to value what we measure and to overlook the unmeasured. Thus, measuring internal capability development may support appreciating their value in a child's educational experience.

This operationalisation of my skills framework in practice offers a strategy to resist Ball's (2018) concerns about the unintended consequences of standardised testing, which can lead to individuals perceiving themselves as a mere number. Furthermore, high stakes testing can inadvertently foster a sense of failure rather than encourage learning. However, it is questionable whether the issue lies with an inanimate metric such as a STen score, or if it stems more from public and personal perceptions. Developing positive self-concept and emotional skills are vital to prevent individuals from simply substituting numerical metrics with skill development assessments. Consider the case of Charlie from Chapter One, who deemed himself a failure in mathematics because of a low average STen score. Similarly, Charlie might consider himself a failure at communication if his communication skills were identified as an area for development. It is important for Charlie to view this as an opportunity for learning rather than a mark of failure and this requires two actions. Firstly, it is essential to discuss this with Charlie who may need individualised support to develop his self-concept and emotional skills. Secondly, as Charlie's understanding of the world is shaped by his environment, changing societal views on educational achievement is important for his identity and emotional skills. This transformation necessitates conversation, and it is my hope that my Dissertation will contribute to this conversation and to eventual change. Additionally, my research has broader implications and contributions, which I next discuss.

6.3 Implications and contributions

In this section, I discuss further implications and contributions arising from my research endeavour. These include contributing to the existing literature on the Capabilities Approach (CA) in education, and enhancing the Irish primary curriculum with transdisciplinary skills.

Making a contribution to the CA and Human Development

This research enhances the understanding and literature on the CA, particularly in broadening the opportunity to flourish through education by identifying internal capabilities and supporting skills. These are linked to Nussbaum's list of Capabilities necessary for a 'dignified and minimally flourishing life' (Nussbaum, 2011:33), and help

an individual to realise their personhood. In Chapter Two, I explained Nussbaum's perspective that flourishing through the CA is predicated on a concept of personhood that values individuality, self-determination, dignity, and respect. Individuals shape their own conception of a flourishing life, supported by internal capabilities such as hope and aspiration as well as the capability to choose. This also involves self-management skills to support planning, and the internal capability to think and learn, supported by skills of critical and reflective thinking. These internal capabilities can enhance an individual's powers of self-determination and participation. Furthermore, reflective thinking can also support the internal capability to live in the world with others, helping create a world that is worth living in. This is crucial not only for societal flourishing but also for personal flourishing because the world in which we live, both on a large and small scale, impacts individual flourishing. For example, daily interactions and the manner in which we interact with, and are treated by others, influence individual flourishing. These internal capabilities are essential for affording equal respect and dignity to all individuals, explained by Green (2010) as striving to preserve in them what is valuable to being human, protecting the possibility of their realisation, and supporting the ability for self-realisation.

Furthermore, the internal capabilities and skills identified through this research provide a framework to support human development and holistic education as advocated in the Primary Curriculum Framework (Department of Education, 2023a) and the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (Department of Education and Skills, 2018). While literacy and numeracy are important, the students, parents, and teachers in this research did not consider them more important than other internal capabilities and skills that support an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life in a world that is worth living in. Similarly, although material well-being is important for the basic necessities of life, the research participants advocated for an education system that supports children from a broader perspective on human development. The internal capabilities and skills interpreted through my research offer a clear understanding of holistic development and 'a holistic approach to children's education' (Department of Education, 2023a:3) that can be implemented in and through education. Additionally, this study proposes a set of possibilities for education that could enhance the existing Curriculum Framework (Department of Education, 2023a), Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (Government of Ireland, 2022b), and the Well-being Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (Department of Education and Skills, 2018). It achieves this by providing a framework of transdisciplinary skills, as I next discuss.

Enhancing the curriculum with transdisciplinary skills

This study develops educational possibilities that could enhance the existing Primary Curriculum Framework (Department of Education, 2023a), the Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (Department of Education and Skills, 2014; Government of Ireland, 2022b), and the Well-being Policy Statement (Department of Education and Skills, 2018). I have previously mentioned that local education policy lacks an explicit specification of the skills and dispositions that should be fostered in students for their holistic development, and to broaden their opportunity to live a flourishing life in a world that is worth living in. This is discussed in Chapter Two and was noted by the teacher focus group, providing evidence for the necessity, appropriateness, and usefulness of the framework I propose.

> *T1: Yeah, it's like only one of each skill, but in the curriculum the same thing gets mentioned in a load of different places.*
>
> *T4: Yeah, and they're transferable.*
>
> *T3: That's the sign of a successful education system, that you can transfer your skills, and I don't think our system helps teachers to work on that.*

In Chapter Five, I discussed the transdisciplinary nature of motor skills and I support this transdisciplinary nature of skills by briefly discussing the Primary Language Curriculum (Department of Education and Skills, 2019). This discussion shows the complexity of skills involved in a single learning outcome, and indicates that a single skill can be involved in multiple learning outcomes. Table 8 on the next page reproduces some abbreviated learning outcomes for Oral Language and Reading, showing the learning stages[65] at which they are stated.

[65] The Primary Language Curriculum (Department of Education and Skills, 2019) presents learning outcomes across four stages: Stage 1 (S1) encompasses Junior and Senior Infants; Stage 2 (S2) relates to First and Second classes; Stage 3 (S3) applies to Third and Fourth classes; and, Stage 4 (S4) covers Fifth and Sixth classes. Relating these to education in Scotland, Junior Infants equates to Nursery, Senior Infants to P1, and First to Sixth classes correspond to P2 through to P7.

Table 8: Some abbreviated oral language and reading learning outcomes in the Primary Language Curriculum (Department of Education and Skills, 2019:22-27)

Oral Language	Stage	Reading	Stage
(a) Give and follow instructions	S1,S2	(i) Recall significant details of text	S1,S2
(b) Comprehend texts	S1,S2	(ii) Discuss significant details of text	S1,S2
(c) State a case clearly	S1,S2	(iii) Sequence significant details of text	S1,S2
(d) Listening actively	S3	(iv) Identify key points in text	S1, S2
(e) Analysing conversations and texts	S3	(v) Draw on background knowledge to engage with and create meaning when working with text	S1, S2, S3, S4
(f) Responding appropriately	S3	(vi) Draw on a range of comprehension strategies to engage with and create meaning when working with text	S1
(g) Comparing conversations and texts	S4	(vii) Draw on a repertoire of comprehension strategies	S2
(h) Evaluating conversations and texts	S4	(viii) Compare and select comprehension strategies flexibly and interchangeably	S3
		(ix) Choose comprehension strategies…	S4
		(x) Justify comprehension strategies…	S4
		(xi) Apply chosen and justified comprehension strategy	S4
		(xii) Compare & synthesise information, thoughts, ideas from variety of sources	S4

Table 8 exemplifies the repetition of learning outcomes across different stages of learning. Additionally, the skill of understanding is involved in both oral language and reading, and there is a significant link between being able to justify comprehension strategies in reading and the ability to articulate a case clearly in oral language. I contend that being able to articulate a case clearly is a goal to achieve in writing as well as in speech. Furthermore, the act of justification presented as a learning outcome in reading is supported by critical and reflective thinking, and equally valuable is being able to justify one's thoughts, opinions, and actions in general. The case for transdisciplinary skills is further strengthened by the observation that the learning outcomes for reading are also relevant to oral language, encompassing reasoning and communication skills. However, the transdisciplinary nature of these skills may be overlooked in the above presentation of learning outcomes, potentially hindering their transdisciplinary application and limiting

generalisation. Similarly, the primary language curriculum overview of learning outcomes (Department of Education and Skills, 2019:19) includes attention in the oral language outcomes but not in those for reading and writing. I suggest that the self-management skill of attention and concentration contributes to oral language, reading, and writing. For example, focussing on a text supports understanding and error detection, and this attention also supports letter formation and presentation in writing. Personal experience with Dissertation writing has shown me that fatigue can reduce attention, making it counterproductive to continue writing at that time. Additionally, attention and concentration are vital in reciprocal communication as they enable one to be attentive to the words, intentions, and needs of a conversation partner. Integrating these insights into Irish primary education curriculum documents and strategies is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness and significance of the educational experience, offering several benefits to the existing presentation of curricular learning outcomes.

Transdisciplinary skills foster holistic development by facilitating the integration of skills across various learning domains. Emphasising the transdisciplinary nature of these skills encourages students to transfer their knowledge and skills from one context to another, enhancing their capacity to generalise and apply their knowledge and skills in real-world situations. This approach might help students recognise the relevance and interconnectedness of different subjects and skills, leading to a more meaningful and integrated learning experience. Finally, a focus on transdisciplinary skills supports students to develop the flexibility and adaptability needed to flourish in a rapidly changing world. These skills prepare students to meet new challenges and adapt to different environments, supporting them to navigate the uncertainties and complexities of the future. However, implementing transdisciplinary skills in a curriculum also requires sensitivity to cultural norms.

Transdisciplinary skills and cultural norms

In Chapter Two, I discussed cultural relativity in relation to the CA and this study, acknowledging that the concept of a flourishing life may vary across cultures. The internal capabilities and skills identified in this study are specific to the context of Irish primary school education and to the cultural and moral norms considered acceptable to the participants and myself. Furthermore, I argued that children must first develop a skill to have the choice to exercise it. However, in Chapter Five, I raised the importance of considering cultural norms when supporting a child in developing their extralinguistic

skills. For example, demanding eye contact from a child whose culture prohibits it can potentially challenge the child's cultural norms, health, and identity.

Conversely, it is important to consider how cultural adaptation may contribute to an individual's opportunity to flourish in a particular environment. Addressing the potential conflict between cultural norms and skill development requires a delicate balance between respecting cultural practices and promoting skill development. This suggests that implementing transdisciplinary skills in the curriculum requires reflective thought and social awareness from teachers with a continued focus on the purpose of exercising specific internal capabilities and skills. Returning to the premise of non-maleficence underlying this research, I propose that children should be supported to develop skills in line with their potential and in a comfortably challenging manner. Skills deemed culturally inappropriate, such as eye-contact, might be disregarded provided their absence does not lead to harm, support unjust cultural norms, or negate individual personhood. Equally, it is important to promote internal capabilities and skills, such as critical and reflective thinking and communication skills, that can challenge what I would argue to be unjust cultural practices such as female genital mutilation. In summary, cultural norms should be respected provided these norms in turn respect the view of personhood described in Chapter Two. This discussion on cultural norms indicates a need for further research in educational practice, and I offer suggestions for this in Section 6.4 after a brief discussion of implications for education policy.

Policy implications

Education policy often emphasises economic development, which suggests a potential tension in integrating this skills framework, designed with a broader understanding of human development. The Action Plan for Education (Department of Education and Skills, 2016) and subsequent strategy statements (Department of Education, 2023c; 2024) identify equality, equity, and social inclusion as drivers in economic growth. However, Rezny et al. (2019:291) challenge the view that social progress is a means 'to achieve both higher and sustainable economic growth'. Furthermore, social trends interpreted from news reports, such as increasing division, intolerance, aggression, and violence, raise questions about the effectiveness of current education policy in fostering social progress. I next offer four key considerations for policymakers regarding the integration of my proposed skills framework into education policy.

Firstly, the framework aligns with the skills language emphasised in government strategies such as Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025 (Department of Education and Skills, 2022). Local government initiatives have recently collaborated with employers to identify skill needs (personal communication) and I suggest this further supports the relevance of the internal capabilities and skills identified in my research. This is because I anticipate that the internal capabilities and skills identified through this research are skills valuable to employers, and I return to this point when considering future research directions in Section 6.4. Secondly, as previously stated, education metrics have historically focused on easily quantifiable outcomes such as standardised test scores and enrolment rates. This framework offers a way to measure previously unquantifiable aspects of education, using familiar metrics like percentages to make it accessible to educators and organisations.

Thirdly, many current employment opportunities will be significantly transformed or eliminated by the time today's younger school children enter the workforce (World Economic Forum, 2025). A future-oriented approach to skills development would benefit from the internal capabilities and skills identified in this research. For example, the internal capabilities to aspire and hope, think and learn, live in the world with others, and to choose, support the entrepreneurial abilities suggested in the 2025 Future of Jobs Report (World Economic Forum, 2025). These abilities are further supported by an individual's self-concept and emotional skills, reasoning skills, communication skills, social and relationship skills and self-management skills. Finally, teacher participants expressed the view that policymakers and patron bodies should support the integration of the internal capabilities and skills framework into education policy, stating '*I think policymakers should be looking at all of this'* (T3), and T2 adding '*and patron bodies'*. These comments suggest the need for collaboration between policymakers, educators, and patron bodies to further consider the benefits of this framework.

In summary, my proposed framework aligns with existing government strategies and concerns, offering a method to evaluate previously unmeasurable aspects of education, ensuring relevance to educators, employers, and policymakers. In the above text, I signposted that I would consider future research directions and it is this topic I next discuss.

6.4 Limitations and future research directions

Throughout this text, I have acknowledged the limitations of my research. For example, when addressing the criticism of Westernisation in Chapter Two, I signposted that I would

identify future research areas. Similarly, in Chapter Three, I suggested that participant screens in future research may include a range of teaching experience. To support both of these suggestions, participants could be selected from schools with diverse patronage[66], from particular cultures attending those schools, from various socio-economic groups, from differing educational abilities, and with varying years of relevant experience. A subsequent meta-analysis could then assess whether the internal capabilities and skills, that I propose contribute to an individual's opportunity to live a flourishing life in a world that is worth living in, show patterns of convergence or divergence among these groups. Further research could explore the underlying reasons for any identified patterns. Similarly, the research presented through this Dissertation could be conducted in other countries and regions worldwide, helping to understand the internal capabilities and skills considered appropriate in diverse cultures. Exploring the convergences and divergences of patterns between cultures and the reasons underlying these patterns may provide valuable insights.

In Chapter Three, I suggested conducting research to determine the framework's impact on teacher understanding when applied in practice. Future research could also investigate the framework's influence on children's skill development. For example, prior to introducing teachers to the framework, children's skills could be evaluated at the beginning and end of a specified period of time, providing insights into skill development over this time. Through continuous professional development opportunities, teachers could be introduced to the framework and its use in designing and implementing individualised education programmes. A subsequent period of intervention followed by a re-evaluation of the children's skills would allow for an analysis of their progress across the two phases, pre- and post-framework adoption. Additionally, the small participant base in this exploratory study was necessary to complete the research and Dissertation in the time available, but presents an opportunity for more extensive research. A larger participant base could be involved using a research design that draws on surveys or questionnaires for data collection. The questions asked of the participants could explore the internal capabilities and skills identified through this study.

Future research directions also emerge from topics arising in focus group discussions that were not explored in this study. For example, as indicated in Chapter Five, certain aspects

[66] In Ireland's primary education system, state-funded schools are established by a Patron, which defines the school's characteristic ethos. The school's patronage can be denominational, multi-denominational, or inter-denominational, and there are several distinct bodies offering varied patronage.

of Nussbaum's (2011) Capabilities list, such as the freedom of choice in matters of sexual reproduction, were overlooked by the participants. Additionally, this research did not explore the divergence, convergence, and frequency of responses across the homogenous focus groups. Future research could consider these aspects, perhaps enabling a deeper understanding of people's beliefs. Another aspect of my research that warrants further exploration is the rehabilitation of the notion of skills. This involves shifting away from neoliberal interpretations linked to an individual's employability, towards a human development perspective that connects skills with an individual's opportunity to pursue a flourishing life in a world that is worth living in. At the time of my Dissertation proposal my research intended to explore this aspect, but I had to abandon it due to under-estimating the time required to develop an understanding of internal capabilities and supporting skills. This suggests an opportunity for future research to examine the significance of each internal capability and skill domain from the perspective of employers, where I anticipate considerable commonalities.

6.5 Transformed commitments, perspectives, and practices

At the outset of this Dissertation phase of my EdD, I anticipated developing an understanding of the internal capabilities and skills that could support individuals to lead flourishing lives, and contribute to creating a world that is worth living in, as guided by my research questions. However, my learning exceeded the boundaries of these expectations and questions. I have shared some of my transformed perspectives throughout this Dissertation. For example, in Chapter Three, I discussed the methodological adjustments made to my literature data collection approach, a decision prompted by critical and reflective thinking regarding the time intensive nature of this approach in the context of my Dissertation study. I next discuss my additional transformed perspectives on children's agency, their perspectives, the capability to work, and the importance of understanding interpretation as an experiential process rather than a mere task.

Children's agency and perspectives

Accepting the view discussed in Chapter Two, which posits that children lack the capacity to make decisions in their own interests, would have precluded their participation in this research. However, my experience supports Bessant's (2014) view that children can exercise agency responsibly if adequately supported. During the design stage of this research study, I included a children's focus group in response to the normative demand of the CA that 'attention … should be given to the child's right to participate in shaping her

own future' (Peleg, 2013:539). My experience with the focus group moved this decision beyond the normative. The insightful and considered contributions from the children's focus group significantly enriched this study, evidencing their ability for agency and autonomy. Despite initially considering simplified materials for the children's focus group, I opted to use the same materials designed for the adult groups. The three organisational differences between the adult and child focus groups were longer opening activities for the children, shorter session durations, and the children's tendency to ask more clarifying questions than the adults. I will be forever grateful to the children who participated, who challenged my thinking, and who bolstered my faith in humanity.

In the paragraph above, I explained how my initial assumption that the children's contributions would be less sophisticated than the adults has changed, reinforcing the importance of considering children's perspectives and involving them in shaping their own future. The children also demonstrated an eagerness to learn, engage in dialogue, and consider different opinions, which is a valuable insight for my interaction with the student council at my Junior National School, serving children aged four to nine years old. Recently, the student council was asked to gather suggestions to improve our school break times. Their suggestions included buddy benches for those lacking playmates and the addition of swings to the playground. Based on health and safety concerns, I initially deemed the addition of swings unfeasible. However, I did not explain this rationale to the children, focussing instead on safer actionable suggestions. Through my experience of engaging with the children in this research, I have learned that I should have discussed the reasons against swings with the student council. Perhaps they would have ideas to alleviate my health and safety concerns, and they would learn about the broader considerations at play. In general, undertaking this research has positively influenced my personal commitment to engage with different perspectives and consider new ideas that arise through my role as Principal Teacher.

The capability to work

Throughout my research journey, I revisited certain perspectives during my interpretive analysis, sometimes revising conclusions I had previously considered complete. For example, although all three focus groups agreed that the internal capability to work contributes to a flourishing life, I ultimately excluded it from my framework. The adult focus groups considered paid work as vital for securing basic necessities such as shelter and food, echoing Narayan-Parker & Patel (2000, cited in Alkire, 2002), who view

material well-being an important aspect of overall well-being. The focus groups viewed the capability to work as a means to counteract the disadvantage raised by Wolff & de-Shalit (2007), arising from the struggle to secure basic necessities in a law-abiding manner. The student group also recognised the significance of earning money for broadening opportunities to engage in various activities. Both adult and children's focus groups also recognised the value of paid and unpaid work for developing a sense of responsibility and fostering a sense of purpose and achievement. Being able to work enables individuals to use their skills and interests, enhancing self-esteem and fostering a sense of pride and identity. It also allows individuals to develop their skills, broaden their opportunities, and enhance future prospects. The focus groups noted the role of the capability to work in contributing to societal development as well as personal flourishing. The capability to work also supports, and is supported by, the internal capability to live in the world with others and Nussbaum's Capability of Affiliation. This support arises as work often involves interacting with others and fostering social connections and relationships. These connections can offer a sense of belonging and support, which became evident to me during a colleague's retirement speech. This realisation supports a non-bifurcation of employability and human development, a bifurcation I previously would have supported.

However, upon further reflection, the internal capability to work does not meet Robeyns' (2003b) fifth methodological requirement for determining relevant capabilities, namely the criterion of non-reduction. As explained in Chapter Three, this criterion stipulates that no domain should be reducible to another (Robeyns, 2003b; Biggeri & Mehrotra, 2011). The internal capability to work is not independent of other identified internal capabilities. It requires the interaction of various internal capabilities such as being able to think and learn, to live in the world with others, to have good health, to aspire and hope, and to choose. For example, parent participant P1 noted that the capability to think and learn broadens employment options because, '*if you're in a job you don't like, to be able to learn and think and to change your skills or your mindset, … adapt or move to a different job'* (P1). Similarly, Dominguez-Serrano et al. (2019) suggest that being able to learn broadens the variety of choices in work and play. Additionally, the teacher focus group acknowledged the influence of being able to live in the world with others on an individual's working life, '*I could have the skills to be a carpenter, but I mightn't be able to work with a team, work with people, have a boss* (T1). Teacher participant T2 suggested that individuals may require support from others when seeking employment, '*I have the skills to get a job, but every one I go for, I keep getting knocked back … I need the people*

around me to have the capacity to support me, encourage me' (T2). This perspective is supported by Dejaeghere et al. (2016), who argue that affiliation and care help increase confidence and self-esteem, while social relations enhance the opportunity to find meaningful employment.

This suggests that the internal capability to work is not distinct but relies on the interplay of various other internal capabilities. Consequently, I concluded that the capability to work is not an internal capability, but perhaps deserves greater emphasis in Nussbaum's (2011) list of Capabilities. Nussbaum recognises 'having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others' (Nussbaum, 2011:34) as part of the Capability of Control Over One's Environment. This Capability includes 'being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason, and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers' (Nussbaum, 2011:34). Arguably, Nussbaum captures many benefits of being able to work as identified by the focus groups. However, these benefits are incorporated into the broader concept of material control over one's environment, thus overlooking the intrinsic value of the capability to work that is suggested by the focus groups' insights previously discussed.

Interpretation as an experience

Upon undertaking this research, my initial understanding of skills was quite basic, and I had not appreciated the complex network of relationships between internal capabilities, skills, and their sub-domains. However, these complexities became apparent by my application of a dialectical hermeneutic approach involving interpretive analysis. This approach emphasises the significant interplay between data collection and analysis, which together with the researcher's engagement with the data, helps deepen understanding of the topic. Furthermore, I have grown to value the Gadamerian principle, as cited by Moules et al. (2015), that interpretation is an experience and not merely an activity. This research journey has taught me that interpretation is not merely a task that is performed but that I myself undergo change through this activity. To illustrate this, I recount a personal incident that occurred while I was developing my understanding of social awareness skills, at a time while I was also caring for a family member. I offered to prepare a meal of pasta, chicken, and mushrooms for this family member. Believing I was being considerate and kind, I initially insisted on including mushrooms when they requested no mushrooms, as I considered them essential to the recipe. However, I realised that the meal was for their enjoyment, not mine. This insight was prompted by my focus on developing the matrix of

social awareness skills. This matrix separates consideration of the other person as a focus of attention from the perspective that is taken. This allowed me to respect their perspective and situation, and fostered greater empathy towards their needs and desires.

6.6 Final thoughts

In conclusion, this study is premised on the principles of freedom and choice that are fundamental to the CA. The framework of internal capabilities and skills proposed in this Dissertation supports individual freedom by broadening the opportunity to live a flourishing life. Developing these internal capabilities is crucial for increasing an individual's potential to choose: without them, one does not have the choice to exercise them as functionings. Furthermore, this framework offers an educational approach that supports the holistic development of primary school children, emphasising transdisciplinary skills. It seeks to broaden each student's opportunity to flourish in an ever-changing and imperfect world. Educators implementing this framework can, I suggest, create learning environments that respect diversity and nurture every child's potential. Equally, educators who strive in an imperfect system and a world that is yet far from utopian could be supported by the provision of a framework that is missing from the policy documents discussed in Chapter Two. Finally, in closing this Dissertation text and embracing the spirit of dialectical hermeneutics, I circle back to the image presented in the abstract, enriching it with words prompted by this study that complement those inspired by the image nearly four decades ago. This return to the commencement of the circle symbolises not a conclusion, but the dawn of new beginnings.

Born free, in chains to be,
Help cast these binds from me,
Provide a key to unchain me,
So I can stand, proud and free,
The person I, was born to be

Appendix 1: Ability as a process of capability formation, in the context of skills and internal capabilities for a good life

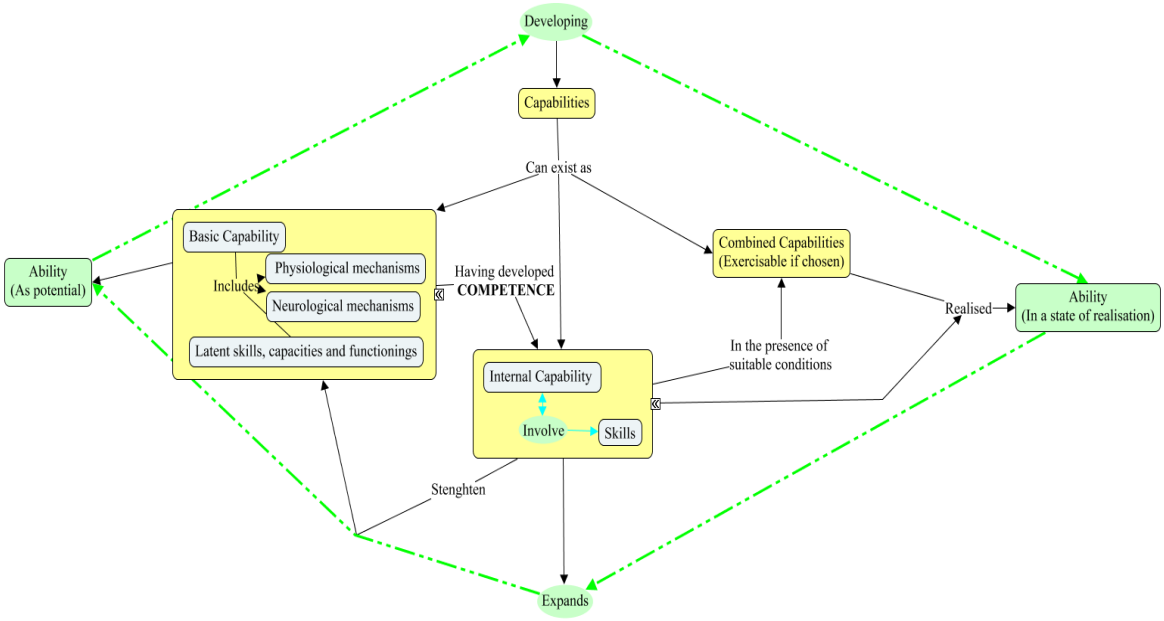


Figure 4: Ability as a process of capability formation, in the context of skills and internal capabilities for a good life

Textual summary of Figure 4 above, Ability as a process of capability formation, in the context of skills and internal capabilities for a good life, including both internal capabilities and Nussbaum's Capabilities:

1. Capabilities can exist as:
    a. Basic Capabilities (Latent/Inchoate State), includes:
        i. Latent skills, capacities and functionings
        ii. Neurological mechanisms
        iii. Physiological mechanisms
    b. Internal Capabilities
        i. Are Basic Capabilities that have developed to competence
        ii. Involve skills
    c. Combined Capabilities
        i. Exercisable if chosen
        ii. Positive freedom to do so
2. Existing in a system of ability as a dynamic and evolving process of capability formation
    a. Begins with ability as potential;
    b. Develops to ability in a state of realisation
        i. Can, at a point in time, be recognised as an internal capability;
    c. This (b) in turn feeds back into and expands ability as potential, potential is now increased; Level of basic capability is also increased; internal capabilities continue to strengthen basic capabilities
        i. Ability continues to develop up to a point of full potential

Appendix 2: Database return validation

Table 9: Results of database return validation

Criteria	(a) Related to and contains the phrase 'Capability Approach'	(b) Related to skills and capacities; Contains the terms 'skills' OR 'abilities' OR 'capabilities' OR 'capacities'	(c) Related to individual or societal well-being; Contains the term 'flourishing' OR 'good life' OR 'thriving' OR 'well-being' OR 'wellbeing' OR 'human development' OR 'eudaimonia' OR ' eudaimonism'
Database	**Records returned**	**Records selected (20% - rounded)**	**Invalid records (rounded)**
Web of Science	261	52	3/52 = 6%
Scopus	594	119	2/119 = 2%
EBSCOhost	198	40	1/40 = 3%

Notes:

1. I do not assert positivist claims through my process of validation. I acknowledge that variations could arise if the random number generator created a different sequencing of the articles, and I do not address any possible impact of difference in sample size selected. Through this process of validation I am not claiming that 94% of articles retrieved from the Web of Science database are valid. Rather, I am interpreting that the high validity rate of the articles randomly checked allows me to reasonably assume that due to the high percentage of validity from the articles randomly checked it is reasonable for me to assume that my search criteria and string are functioning as intended and meeting my requirements.
2. I used a Random Integer Generator[67] to generate the numbers that I used to randomly select records to validate. This generator lists all numbers from 1 to N in a random sequence, where N is the maximum number in the sequence and corresponds to the number of records returned for each database. I then chose the first X numbers, where X was the numbers of records to check as indicated in the relevant column in Table 9 above.

[67] The random integer generator used is held at https://www.random.org/integers/

Appendix 3: Examples of process and outcome of evaluating my subjective scoring of title and abstracts returned from database search

1. The purpose of validating the subjective scores assigned to the relevance of article title and abstract was to ensure that the articles with the highest ratings satisfy my literature research questions[68]. Table 10 below reproduces my notes on the first three articles I read in order to ascertain the usefulness of my subjective ratings.

Table 10: Example of notes relating to subjective scoring of article title and abstract

Reference	Combined Score	Position in ordered list	My notes
Pelenc (2017)	11	1	'Great paper & it scored my highest! Also returned from all three databases; But Web of Science citations = 1, Scopus = 2 – so low citations. Positives: Scored highest, top of my list, very useful; all searches; Negative – low citations.
Dominguez-Serrano et al. (2019)	10	2	Key from abstract – 'involved children in their conceptualisation of well-being and in validating a list of relevant capabilities necessary to have a good life'; capability now as child and in future as adult – Very relevant; Positives: methodological considerations; Capability list; a lot of references not returned in my list – check usefulness of references, some conceptual and/or methodological; returned in all searches.
Dejaeghere et al. (2016)	10	3	Useful…maybe for other references?? eg page 462, Paragraph 1; tight focus – affiliation; + social relations as an outcome; not a list but is important; prompted thoughts – capabilities AS conversion factors.

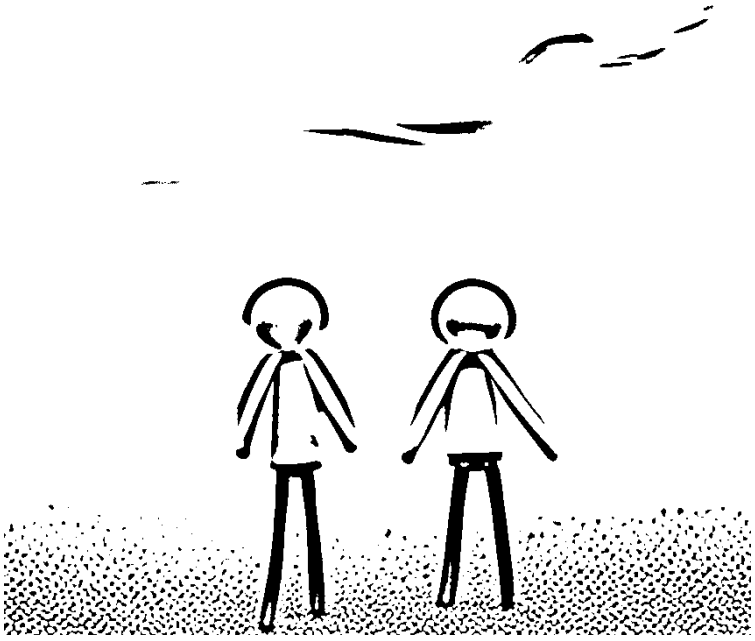
[68] These research questions were: (a) what are the capabilities/capacities that help broaden our potential to have a good life in a world that is worth living in?; (b) what internal capabilities (or skills) underlie this capacity?

2. In following Pelenc's (2017) reference to Biggeri et al. (2006), I identified a highly relevant article that was not returned from my search of Scopus, Web of Science or EBSCOhost.

3. An initial search in the Google Scholar database using the same boolean search phrase applied to the previous databases produced six articles. These did not meet my relevance criteria as they were not based on the framework of the capability approach. Refining the search string to 'Nussbaum AND education AND internal AND capabilities' returned no immediately relevant literature missing from the list compiled through Scopus, Web of Science and EBSCOhost database searches. However a further refined search using the phrase "capability+approach+education+internal+capabilities" returned a further seven relevant articles.

Appendix 4: Text of the second thought experiment including a modified veil of ignorance

The Characteristics, abilities, and skills of the person who affects your life in 'the new world'



Here's a picture of two people. One of the people is you, and one of the people is somebody else. Now the problem is, the you in the new world, we don't know anything about this you. So we don't know if you've enough money in your family to buy all the things that you need, or maybe you have no money. Or you might love climbing mountains or you might be a person who needs a wheelchair or help. You could live in a beautiful house or maybe you have no house. So consider everybody you know, or read about, or saw on the news, any of those lives in this new world, could be yours. And the reason we use that idea is that it kind of makes us be very fair because we have to think about oh, if that was me, what would I do? Now, the other person, we don't know who they are but they have something to do with you in this other world. They are going to affect your life. So they might be the president, they might be a doctor, or your next door neighbour, or your best friend.

So have a think, what kinds of skills and abilities do you want this other person to have?

Appendix 5: Screenshot of code development worksheet

	E	F	H	I
1	**Learn**	**Make choices**	**Pursue self-directed activities**	**Live in the world with others**
14	Relationship between "**Learn, narrative imagination**" and "Living in the world with others...**dispositions - dialogic attitude**			Dialogic attitude (pg 374) - a disposition as it is an 'attitude'
15		Relationship between "**Able to Make Choices**" and "**Living in the world with others**". See pg 374 re 'socializing them' and Research diary, coding, 2/7/2020 note 2		The abilities / skills I have listed under 'can communicate' seem a good understanding of their 'argumentative practice' - a faculty nb for child well-being and well-becoming as 'democracy involves participation in public deliberation" (pg 374)
16	Renamed 'Combined thinking skills' to 'Complex thinking skills'. Prompted by use of phrase in Biggeri & Santi (2012). The definition is one or more of the thinking skills combined together. So, lower order, higher order, and complex thinking skills	Relationship between "**Aspiration and Hope**" and **Dispositions.** "A key component of the capability to aspire is the capacity to be committed..." (pg 379)		Added "**Can resolve differences**" as a 'doing' under 'Can communicate', 'living in the world with others. (pg 380)
17	Added 'Can formulate questions' as a thinking skill under learning	Added 'Reflective thinking' to 'complex thinking skills' NOTE NB - Make choices and able to learn need review.		Added "**Can listen to others**" as a 'doing' under 'Can communicate', 'living in the world with others. (pg 380)
18	Added '**Explorative**' and '**Dialogically inquisitive**' as characteristics of creative thinking (pg 383)	Refined 'Can evaluate" to "Can evaluate_evaluate alternatives (pg 380)		Added "**Welcomes challenges**" as a 'doing' under 'Dispositions', 'living in the world with others. (pg 380)
19	Relationship: "**cognitive** and **communicative** dimensions of good judgement and argumentation" (pg 384). Both involved in being able to make choices and to live a life one values in a world worth living in.			Refing '**Being able to do things with others**', added "**Take responsibility for comments and actions** (Biggeri & Santi, 2012:383)"
20	Note: Added, Openness to alternative as disposition under critical thinking (pg 386)			Can communicate, added "**Can formulate questions**" as an ability (pg 386). See Research diary, coding, 05/07/2020 note 2

Figure 5: Screenshot of code development worksheet

Appendix 6: Framework of skills to support a flourishing life

Domain: Self-concept and Emotional skills	
Sub-domain	**Indicative functionings**
Character strengths	• Behaviours suggesting will, determination, enthusiasm, commitment, persistence, wholeheartedness • Welcome challenges • Takes responsibility and self-reliance • Can see new possibilities • Risk-taker • Self-motivated • Flexible and adaptable, for example, to situations • Has a desire to succeed • Optimistic • Curious • Open-minded • Takes initiative *Note: behavioural presentations meet 'the Goldilocks effect', that is, not too much, not too little, but just right*
Self-perception	• Positive self-esteem • Positive self-efficacy • Accurate self-evaluation (as opposed to none/under/over) • Self-confidence • Internal locus of control • Positive self-respect
Emotional Literacy	
Recognising	• Has vocabulary of emotions • Can assign labels to general pictorial representations of emotions • Recognises feelings about a given situation • Can identify the emotions of another • Can identify things to be grateful for/appreciate
Understanding	• Shows understanding of the reasons for the emotions of another *(links with social awareness)* • Shows understanding of own feelings about a given situation
Expressing	• Expresses emotions in a way that does not harm or endanger self or others • Links to communication skills – can express feelings about a given situation/current state of emotion • Links to critical and reflective thinking and self-regulation – for example, shows awareness and control of emotion

Domain: Reasoning skills	
Sub-domain	**Indicative functionings**
Foundational thinking	• Information storage and retrieval: can memorise and retrieve 'facts' from memory • Analysis: Can analyse information into separate pieces • Synthesis: Can combine information from different sources, different foci, to create new information • Interpretation: Can interpret information received • Evaluation: Can evaluate • Understanding: Can build understanding • Application: Can select and apply learned procedures to complete a given task *Note: Included for completeness, detailed elsewhere, for example Bloom et al. (Bloom et al., 1956) and Anderson et al. (2014).*
Creative thinking	• *Shows innovation* • *Demonstrates imagination/imagines new ways of seeing things* • *Loses the box: instead of thinking 'outside the box', can think beyond the box* *Note: Included for completeness, not addressed in Dissertation*
Critical thinking skills on next page	

Domain: Reasoning skills (continued)	
Sub-domain	**Indicative functionings**
Critical thinking	
Triggering	• Puzzlement, doubt, unsettlement, cognitive dissonance prompts recognition of a problem, or, recognises a task to be completed

Exploration	• Can problem find
	• Can formulate questions to explore the problem
	• Can seek new information (for example, independently through reading, or with others through discussion), perhaps to:
	  ○ Clarify the issue
	  ○ Consider alternative perspectives/options
	• Draws on prior experience
	• Detects and corrects errors

Integration	• Makes connections with new and existing information (explicitly/implicitly, tentative conclusions, uses analysis and synthesis, inference and deduction) • Can give one or more examples • Incorporates and adopts changes due to specific criteria • Supports task with non-task related knowledge • Evaluates alternatives • Builds on the ideas of others *Note: The goal of the task is directing the thinking*
Resolution	• Tests new ideas/solutions • Applies the solution • Monitors progress towards the goal • Evaluates the goodness of the solution
Reflective thinking skills on next page	

Domain: Reasoning skills (continued)	
Sub-domain	**Indicative functionings**
Reflective thinking	
Habitual action	• Activates and employs prior knowledge
Thoughtful action	• Examines/questions own current thinking/behaviour • Identifies inconsistency of reasoning, correctness of fact • Identifies and questions own assumptions • Evaluates possible bias (own and others) • Considers accuracy of judgement
Reflection	• Identifies consequences of decisions/actions • Anticipates unintended consequences of decisions and actions • Recognises own conceptual/affective/behavioural/social awareness changes • Identifies change in own understanding/skill development • Links to communication skills – can express what is learned, including through experiential error
Critical reflection	• Awareness and justification of relevance of new knowledge/understanding/skill • Awareness of how new knowledge/skill/strategy may be used in other/future contexts • Can give reasons for believing something or provide evidence for a claim being made • Recognises/identifies new future [life] possibilities and opportunities • Identifies areas for improvement • Makes choices based on ethical considerations & justify why supporting one thing over another

Domain: Communication skills	
Sub-domain	**Indicative functionings**
Giving/initiating	• Can articulate thoughts and beliefs • Can make oneself understood, includes can explain ideas to another, speaks distinctly with clarity/without ambiguity, communication accurately aligns with intention • Communication is based on what is believed to be true • Initiates communication for a variety of purposes/contexts *The above behaviours should range from gestural to verbal communication in line with potential*
Receiving/responding	• Listens to others dialogically (to understand) • Can repeat/paraphrase what has been heard/read • Can follow instructions of increasing length and complexity • Accurately determines the meaning of another's communication, matching intention of person communicating, from simple to complex communications
Reciprocal	• Engages in appropriate turn-taking, does not talk over another • Communication recognises the communicative gestures of others made during the communicative experience, for example, questions/extends what another has said • Abides by the maxim of quantity – length of communication is appropriate • Topic relevance, for example, responses are relevant to the topic at hand, the interests and needs of the other • Engages in sustained communication, for example sustains increasing number of back and forth communicative turns with partner(s) as appropriate to the situation • Links to self-management skills such as being able to maintain joint attention to the topic
Supporting skills	
Extralinguistic	• Awareness and use of body language, gesture, facial expression to support and interpret intended communication, for example, using these elements to interpret humour/deceit/irony from a communication
Paralinguistic	• Awareness and use of audibility, intonation, pitch, pause, emphasis, and pace to support and interpret intended communication, for example can detect a question that is not explicitly phrased as a question
Developing vocabulary	• Is developing an extended range and variety of vocabulary, according to non-verbal, emerging verbal, verbal communication in line with potential

Domain: Social and relationship skills	
Sub-domain	**Indicative functionings**
Social awareness	• Shows developing awareness of focussing on oneself in a situation to being able to focus on another; and, of taking one's own perspective in a situation to being able to take that of another person and situation. • The below matrix shows a developing skill ability, moving from focussing on oneself as the object of attention, from one's own perspective, to higher skill levels of being able to focus on another/their situation and taking the perspective of the person/situation instead of one's own

Matrix of social awareness skills

	Perspective taken		
Object of attention	***Self***	***The other***	***The situation / unrelated others***
Self	Primarily focused on self and own needs, viewing the situation from own perspective. Inclined to prioritise own interests and less likely to help others.	Focused on self but tries to view the situation from the point of view of others. Aware of own needs and also considers the perspective of others.	Focus on self and takes the perspective of unrelated others, for example how oneself will be viewed by others according to one's actions in the situation.
Others	Focused on others and their needs, but view situation from own perspective. Allows being aware of other's needs but may not feel personally responsible or motivated to help.	Focused on others and their needs, viewing the situation from the perspective of others. Attentive to the needs of others and more likely to help and empathise.	If the person believes someone else would help out in this situation, they will too.
The situation / unrelated others	Evaluating a situation based on own experiences and preferences.	Focused on the situation and evaluating it based on how it would be perceived and experienced by the other.	Evaluates the situation according to the goals of that particular situation.

Working with others skills on next page

Domain: Social and relationship skills (continued)	
Sub-domain	**Indicative functionings**
Working with others	
Cooperation & collaboration	
Giving	• Invites others to join activity • Gives encouragement and complements to another/ reinforces others • Gives attention to another
Receiving	• Accepts the ideas of others • Responds to the interactions of others in an appropriate manner • Follows instructions • Complies with rules
Reciprocal	• Helps others and accepts help • Sharing behaviours, for example shares materials with a peer • Stays in the group, physically, cognitively, affectively, for example group work at table requiring team effort • Takes turns • Interacts with one or more others for extended periods of time • Engages in reciprocal relationships with others
Assertion	• Asserts oneself, for example, when requiring assistance • Responds appropriately to peer pressure • Initiates interactions with another • Can take corrective feedback from adults, for example, does not display passive aggression
Responsibility	• Shows concern for own property • Shows concern for the property of another • Contributes to a positive atmosphere, for example, is not disruptive • Acknowledges shared responsibility and takes appropriate actions in such situations, for example makes a positive contribution in collective decision making
Empathy	• Shows concern for the perspectives, situations, and feeling of another and acts in a manner to support that person
Skills relating to managing in & of social situations on next page	

Domain: Social and relationship skills (continued)	
Sub-domain	**Indicative functionings**
Managing in & of social situations	*The skills and behaviours listed in this section are specifically in relation to situations of disagreement/conflict*
Self-control and regulation	*Links to self-regulation skills in the domain of self-management with specific application during times of disagreement/conflict*
Maintenance	*Concerns the strategies an individual uses in relation to disagreement/conflict with, for example, friends and neighbours*
Exit	• An attempt to shut down/leave the situation immediately, for example, tells another 'I am not your friend anymore'
Neglect	• Passively allows situation to fall away or deflects from the situation, for example avoids the person or criticises them for an unrelated issue
Loyalty	• Waits for the situation to improve and does not take any action to change the situation, for example A always plays the game the way B desires even if their desires are different
Voice	• Actively trying to improve the situation by constructive engagement with the other person *Note: this will involve other skill domains such as social awareness, working with others, and communication skills.*

Domain: Perceptual motor skills	
Sub-domain	**Indicative functionings**
Gross motor	• Can control larger muscle groups to complete a task, for example, moves legs and arms in controlled fashion in line with intention, can hop, jump, skip
Fine motor	• Can control smaller muscle groups with precise coordination, for example, with cutting tasks: holds scissors with thumb on top, cuts simple and short shapes with increasing accuracy, extending to more complex shapes
Visual perception	• Can identify objects and symbols met in the environment • Visual discrimination, for example accurately completing 'spot the difference' activities of increasing complexity. • Visual closure, for example identifies partially hidden object/completes partially revealed word in 'hangman' • Visual spatial relationships, for example writes on line with appropriate spacing, accurately copies stimulus block building/picture • Form constancy, for example recognising words/objects that are upside down, putting shoes on correct feet, sorting/categorising objects based on size/colour • Visual figure ground, for example, finds items in cluttered spaces such as a full pencil case, can keep place on page when reading, complete jigsaws of increasing complexity
Visual motor integration	• Can successfully complete tasks requiring hand-eye co-ordination such as pre-writing activities involving tracing a dotted line of increasing complexity • Accurate foot & ball/bat & ball coordination
Body & spatial awareness	• Can balance • Shows awareness of the personal space of others • Moves in accordance with varying pieces of dance music • Effectively completes obstacle courses • Demonstrates successful bilateral integration
Directional awareness	• Appropriately uses directional instructions such as up, down, left, right, in, out • Can coordinate movement in accordance with perception and interpretation of sensory stimuli including in relation to height, distance, direction
Temporal awareness	• Recognises concepts of historic time, for example present, past and future and the passage of time • Can distinguish rhythms and follow sequences accurately • Can change speed of own movement in relation to the rhythm of music being listened to • Can move/march to both regular and irregular beats

Domain: Self-management skills	
Sub-domain	**Indicative functionings**
Task Management	• Defines and sets goals • Sequentially follows task steps to complete task accurately • Identifies/plans/organises task steps/the task as a whole • Chooses and manages materials necessary for a task • Manages time efficiently
Attention & concentration	• Engages voluntary, selective, active, and sustained attention to the task at hand, directs focus without allowing thoughts to wander; moving from involuntary passive attention (easily distracted), to selective attention (focused on task, blocks out external stimuli), to selective sustained attention (longer periods of selective attention) • Ignores external distractions • Focuses on one train of thought at a time • Can effectively use divided attention
Self-regulation	*Demonstrates increasing level of awareness and control of cognitive, affective, and behavioural states in accordance with the descriptions below, from the lowest to higher levels of skill*
Automatic	• No awareness nor control of own cognitive, affective, behavioural (CAB) states, for example, is unaware of own patterns of thought, feeling, or behaviours, is impulsive
Basic	• Has an awareness of personal CAB state but no control, for example, can discuss their thoughts, feelings, behaviours and their impact, but states 'I just can't help it'
Monitoring	• Has an awareness of personal CAB state and can control these when they have direct assistance from another, for example, is aware of their automatic thoughts, feelings, behaviours in specific situations and with assistance can modify these during the situation
Control	• Has an awareness of personal CAB states and can independently use specific learned strategies with built in prompts to control these states in previously identified situations, for example, uses a learned breathing technique to regulate thoughts, feelings, behaviours when friends won't play a game in the manner they desire, as previously taught to do in that situation
Strategic	• Has an awareness of personal CAB states and effectively self-regulates to optimal potential over a variety of situations and circumstances, for example, chooses from a range of strategies and uses the most appropriate across various circumstances and situations to control their thoughts, feelings, behaviours to optimise flourishing

Appendix 7: Pictorial representation of focus groups 'Good world'

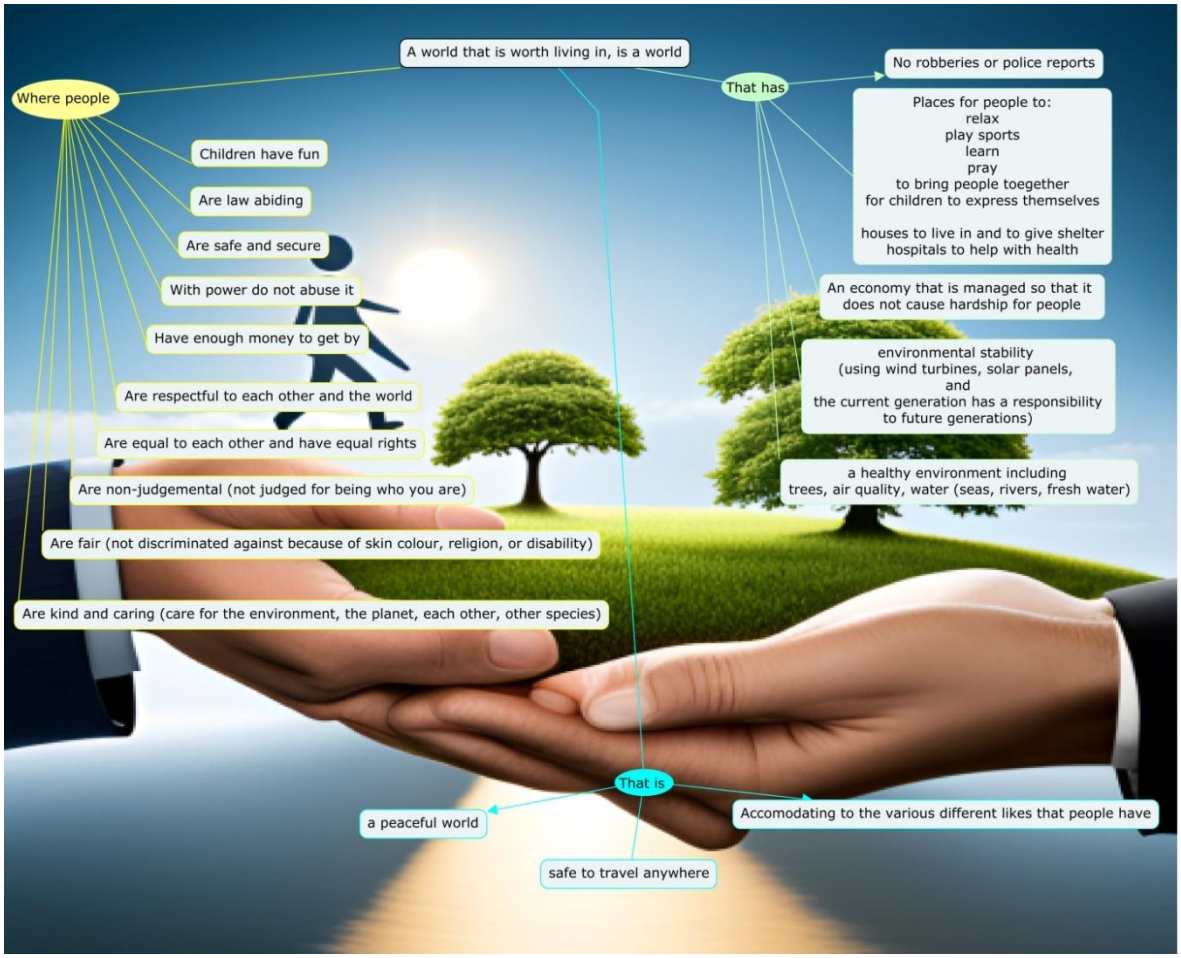


Figure 6: A vision of a world that is worth living in, Child focus group

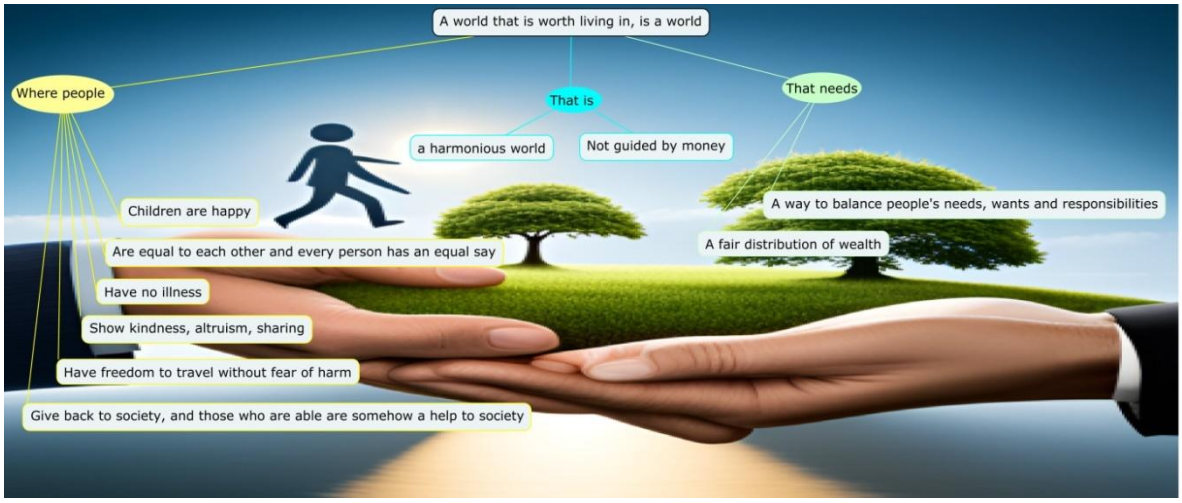


Figure 7: A vision of world that is worth living in, Parent focus group

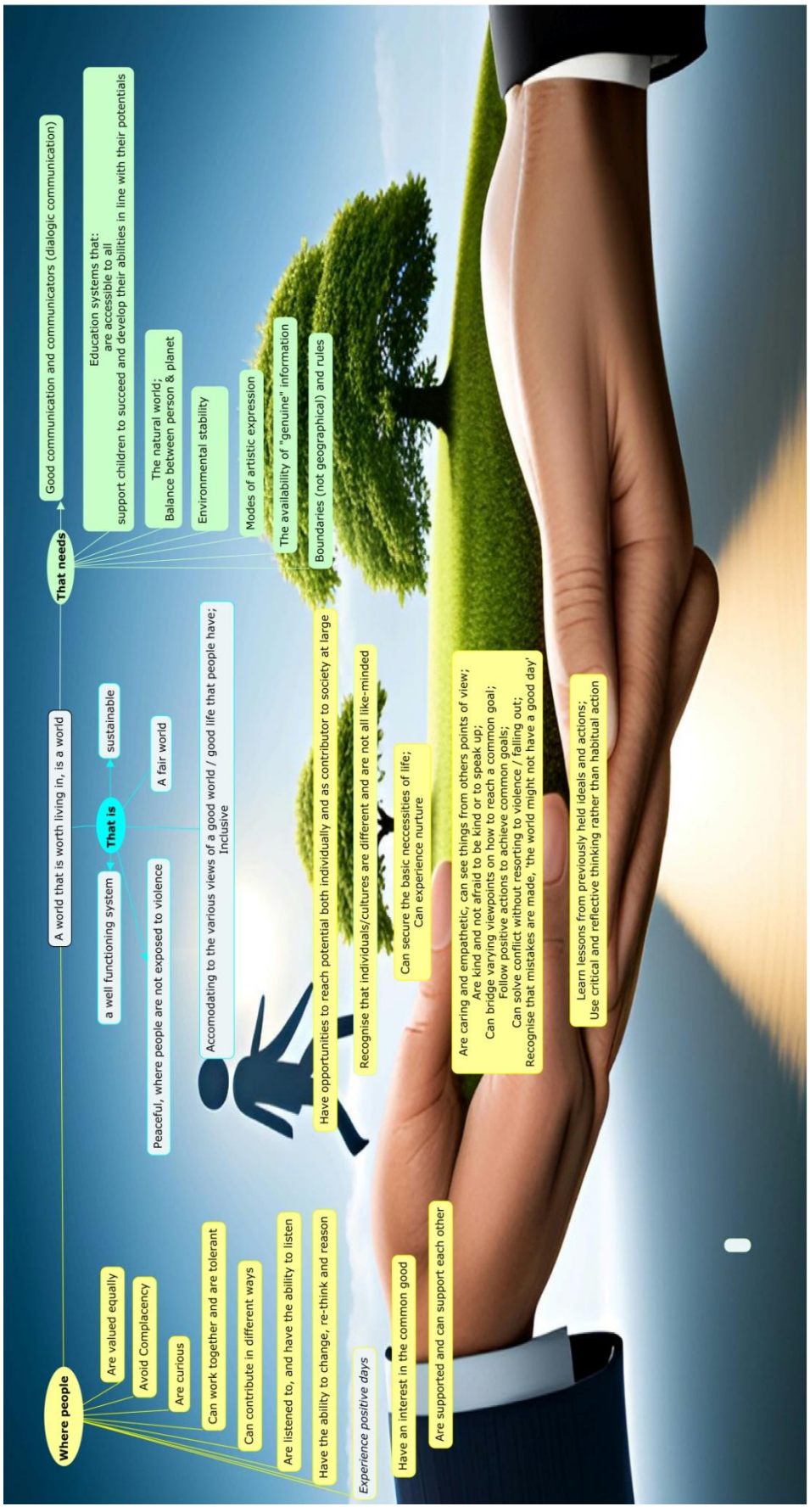


Figure 8: A vision of a world that is worth living in, Teacher focus group

Appendix 8: Quotation from Theodore Roszak (1978), provided as a stimulus for discussion to the focus groups.

> *Are we so sure we know what the basic skills of life are? Bad enough that Johnny can't read or write. But why do we stop worrying there? Why are we not every bit concerned that Johnny is such a stranger to his organism and emotions that he will (like most of the rest of us) spend the rest of his life struggling under the burden of his ignorance? Why do we not worry that Johnny's body is gripped by thwarted anger and desire, that his metabolism is tormented by a diet of junk foods and nervous tension, that his dream life is barren, his imagination moribund, his social conscience darkened by competitive egotism? Why not worry that Johnny can't dance, can't paint, can't breathe, can't meditate, can't relax, can't cope with anxiety, aggressions, envy, can't express trust and tenderness? Why do we not spare some concern that Johnny does not know who he is, or even that he has a self to find? If the basic skills have nothing to do with all this, then let us admit that they have nothing to do with Johnny's health, happiness, sanity, or survival, but only with his employability. Whose interest, then, is Johnny's education serving?*
>
> (Roszak, 1978:196-197)

Appendix 9: Chart referred to by teacher participant T4, see page 136

Figure 9: Initial chart of internal capabilities provided for focus group discussion

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