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A Narrative Inquiry into the experience of using Dorothy Heathcote's Commission Model with young people, at risk of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) in a college in Port Talbot

A thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of Liverpool Hope University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Iona Towler-Evans (B.Ed., MPhil)

July 2025

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my deceased mother, Irene Evans (Daniels)
for her wisdom, compassion and joy

Abstract

This thesis documents and analyses the extent to which the agency, identity, and positioning of three young people, marginalised by the education system, changed. The research took place between September 2016 and January 2018 at Port Talbot College, South Wales. It documents the use of the Commission Model, one of Dorothy Heathcote's pedagogical approaches, with a group of young people, aged 16-19, who had been designated as 'being at risk of NEET' (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). Narrative Inquiry was a method used to document and analyse stories of three research participants. The findings show the shifts made by each of the three research participants during their engagement with the Commission Model constituting; Carl, who made a move from being outside the group to becoming an integral part of it, David, who shifted from being monologic to becoming dialogic, and Assim who learned to trust others and developed a belief in the self.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family for their support, my husband Carl, my daughter Sian for her honest feedback, for inspiring me with her own work with marginalised young people using Heathcote's pedagogy, and her partner Lee for spending time reading and checking it. I value my grandchildren Carys and Jonathan, who remind me of the value of relationships. I remember with gratitude my deceased parents, Henry and Irene Evans, from whom I experienced the value of stories, laughter, family and community. A Thank You goes to colleagues from the Heathcote community, particularly Luke Abbott, whose teaching and vision inspired me, and to Richard Kieran and staff at Woodrow Frist school, whom I continue to learn from.

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I am grateful to the Birmingham Newman University supervisory team who have supported my work throughout the years, Professor Peter Childs for helping me to bring much needed clarity to my work, Dr Dan Whisker and Dr Peter Harris for their continued support and especially Professor Mairtin Mac an Ghail, who has always been there for me, and had faith in my work, along with Professor Mike Seal

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A very heartfelt thankyou to the late Dorothy Heathcote, the inspiration behind this thesis, whose teaching changed the way I thought and the way I taught. She left the world a better place for having lived in it.

I conclude my acknowledgements with a vignette into the journey of one of my participants in recognition of all their contributions: “Using his agency, he began to tell himself a new story about himself. He no longer accepted someone else’s story about himself, as a NEET student, or to replicate an earlier story about himself (Clandinin and Connelly 2000), as a student with ‘disabilities’. In his new story, David made new connections and patterns to create a different sense of himself in relation to other people. David’s shifting agency and positioning shaped his life as a student differently, since “the meaning of the world to which the story refers” is “reshaped” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 17). His re-storying transcended his earlier story of himself. He changed how he connected with the past and how he imagined his future relationships with others. This was evident from the way in which he acted with agency, to join and mentor the new Gateway group, to collaborate with the A-level students and the way he volunteered to take a key role in supporting Richard Burton’s niece and myself as an equal with an unfamiliar group. As Brené Brown (2015) puts it, telling a new story about ourselves, “transforms who we are and how we engage with the world” (p. 41).”

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Chapter One
Introduction

> ‘You can see how my main teaching drives have never changed. To present children with the ever-increasing webs of information and skills within a framework of social and cultural awareness’ (Heathcote, 2003, p.57).

Heathcote, throughout her lifetime, wanted students to ‘be citizens of the world’ (Edmiston and Towler-Evans, 2022, p.xvii). This humanising thread runs through this study, to illustrate how Heathcote’s pedagogy is focused on who young people may become. In this chapter I introduce the focus, purpose, context of the research, and explore how I arrived at my research questions. I include a summary of my qualitative research design and a statement of the study’s contribution to learning.

The intention of this research is to document and analyse, over the course of a 23-month project, the extent to which the agency, identity, and positioning of three young people, marginalised by the education system, changed over the time of the research. Data for this research was collected over 23 months from 2016 to 2018. Participants for this research were drawn from my innovative teaching experience of using Dorothy Heathcote's Commission Model (CM) with a group of 18 students, my 3 research participants included. I found Dorothy Heathcote's Commission Model to be transformational for these young people, aged 16 to 19 who were designated as 'being at risk of NEET' - Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET). The commission discussed in this thesis culminated in a ‘publication’ in the form of a film, in June 2017 and a promenade performance in Port Talbot to celebrate Richard Burton’s 91st Birthday in November 2017. In a promenade performance the audience move to follow the performers around the space. In collaboration with the coordinator of the project, and my growing understanding of the interests and aptitudes of the students, the project was resourced by enlisting the support of a film maker, a rapper, a visual artist, as well as the librarian, principal and senior leaders, teachers, and support staff at the college where the students and study were based. Richard Burton’s niece also contributed to the research. This was a real-life local collaboration with Sally Burton (Richard Burton’s surviving wife) and Swansea University. Richard Burton was an international film star and local celebrity up until his death in 1984. Sally Burton had gifted his diaries to Swansea University. This commission was chosen because the students lived in the area where Burton was born and grew up.

Before I documented and analysed the findings from research into the effects of this commission, I examined research literature on Dorothy Heathcote’s life and literature related to ideas about children who are at risk of NEET. Chapter 2, my literature review, focuses on Heathcote’s work within a

historical context. It documents my encounters with Dorothy Heathcote, the curriculum content of her teaching, a brief biography of her work and life in relation to the concepts of positioning, agency and identity. Attention is paid to her four teaching models: Living Through, Rolling Role, Mantle of the Expert, and the Commission Model. Chapter 2 also addresses the current provision for marginalised youth, in this case young people at risk of NEET and contrasts this with what the Commission Model offers. Chapter 3 explains my conceptual framework, illustrates Dorothy Heathcote's unique approach within the context of drama in education and shows how her models act as instruments for change. Chapter 4 outlines my methodology and methods employed, explains how drama as a research tool contributes to my research, and provides justification for the use of my selected methodology, Narrative Inquiry. I also outline the ethical procedures I undertook and the implications for this research group.

My findings are divided between Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. In Chapter 5: Findings 1, I analyse data through the lens of the three concepts central to this thesis: positioning, agency and identity. I introduce these concepts in Chapter 3 and in Chapter 5 and illustrate how the research methods I employed generated the data that I analyse in Chapters 5 and 6 using narratives that capture how each of the three research participants changed over the time of this study. In Chapter 6: Findings 2, I continue to use these concepts but now as I analyse through the lens of the three research questions. As I answer my research questions and show the significance of elements of the Commission Model, I analyse for commonalities across the narratives of all three research participants.

Below I summarise my findings. The three research participants (which I named using pseudonyms) shifted their positioning, agency and identity throughout the time of their engagement with the Commission Model, in significant ways:

1. Carl, my first research participant, shifted from being disconnected from the group to becoming central to it, from being passive to becoming a leader, significantly when he was positioned with responsibility, as a film maker
2. David, my second research participant, shifted from being highly monologic and isolated to becoming dialogic and social. For example, following the completion of the film and during the second year of the study he took on a mentoring role for new students
3. Assim, my third research participant, identified with Richard Burton's troubles. This seemed to act as a metaphor for changes in his life and his own struggles, for example, learning to trust. He learned ways to trust others as he became the writer for the group

The following elements of Heathcote's pedagogy essential to the Commission Model that was central to this study are integral to my analysis using the concepts of positioning, agency and identity:

a) An invitational approach which can afford the participants with more agency

b) The use of frame in relation to the positioning of participants

c) Heathcote's concept of the 'other' as a way of affording agency

d) Heathcote's use of role to reposition participants

e) Heathcote's concept of the self-spectator and how it aligns with agency and identity.

g) Working within a community including the classroom community and beyond

h) Taking responsibility for helping others

In this introductory Chapter, I state the focus, purpose and context of the research, and a summary of my qualitative research design. I also include a statement of the study's contribution to knowledge.

1.1 The purpose of the research

The purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of how young people changed through their participation in Heathcote's commission model. This research focuses on the way in which students are positioned and position themselves when the Commission Model is used as a learning approach, and how this affects their sense of identity and levels of agency. With the transformational nature of the Commission Model**,** this research explores the question of identity, considering that the research participants are NEET, and what the shifts in their identity might be. Heathcote (Heathcote, 2003, cited in O'Neill, 2015, p.140) defined the Commission Model as follows:

> 'It operates like this. The work of the staff and students will be that of responders to commissions sent to them from the community. The commissions will make precise demands and will have a built-in time structure so that when the commission has been accepted, an allowance of time and resources will be decided'.

I used Narrative Inquiry as a methodology to document and analyse stories of the three research-participating students which I gathered in my interviews (semi-structured as well as unstructured) and fieldnotes. I selected the concepts of positioning (Harré, 1998), agency, and identity (Holland *et al.*, 2001; Gee, 2001; Gee, 2017) because they were foundational in Heathcote's theory and practice. This study shows significant change in the positioning, agency, and identity of all three students who were the participants of this research. Throughout this study, I aim to introduce Heathcote's ideas and approaches to a wider audience, to conceptualize them more robustly, and apply them to the stories of three young people who formed part of the commissioning team at the college.

The aims of the research were to explore:

1. How far Heathcote's Commission Model provides a secure environment for young, marginalised people.
2. How far working on Heathcote's Commission Model creates a shift in their positioning, agency and identity.

The rationale for these aims, was that Heathcote's pedagogy, pays attention to positioning and agency, and from my experience, this seems to make a difference to how young people engage with the work. This research investigates over a sustained period, any shifts in their agency and identity through the way they are positioned in this pedagogy and aims to document any significant changes in their pedagogical lives.

Based on the research aims the following two research questions emerged and were formulated as follows:

1 In what ways do positioning, agency and the identity of young people, marginalised within the education system, change over the time of a Commission Model project?

2. Which elements of The Commission Model made a difference to the changing positioning, agency and identities of the young people as learners?

It is not easy to measure change in concepts such as identity, agency and positioning. However, through the medium of narratives, the journey of where the students were at the start of the research to where they were at the end of the project is captured, analysed with a view to gaining better insights which will subsequently provide me with the data to answer my research questions, and impact on pedagogical approaches with young people. Narrative inquirers begin with an interest in experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2023) and how we explore ways of understanding and evoking experience arises from within the inquiry (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007).

1.2 Statement of contribution to knowledge

In this thesis, I contribute to reconceptualising the work of Dorothy Heathcote, by drawing on the concepts of positioning, agency and identity. The Commission Model has been studied by others, including Allen and Handley (2022), Ozen (2017) and its creator, Heathcote (2003) but without the focus on individuals and the changes made to them. There is an innovative focus in this study on agency, identity and positioning which adds to the emerging interest in this relatively under-researched area of Heathcote's pedagogy. Indeed, only one example of Heathcote's (2003) own work on the Commission Model is recorded in published form alongside my own work.

1.3 The context of the study

This section aims to provide the reader with the background from which this study evolved. It 'touches' on my own life experiences from an early age, and in particular, my experience of schooling and education as a child and student. It attempts to answer the questions 'Where?' 'When?' 'Who?' 'Why?' and 'How' I came to engage in this study and apply Heathcote's Commission Model to working with a

group of marginalised youth, referred to as at risk of NEET (Not in Education and Training). I also include Heathcote's own definition of The Commission Model.

I met Eirwen Hopkins, from Swansea University, in 2009. She was keen to apply Heathcote's work with young people who were labelled by the government (SEU, 1999) and school/college system as NEET, or at risk of NEET. This was in 2009; and I have worked with her ever since, including as part of her 'First Choice Project (2012) aimed at supporting the life chances of marginalised young people. Through the extended work I engaged in at Swansea, I became increasingly convinced of the power of Heathcote's work, and in particular the fourth model she invented, known as the Commission Model, where the work of students would be as responders to real-life commissions, sent to them from the community.

Encountering the work of Dorothy Heathcote in the 1980s, had a profound impact on me. When I first read her *Collected Writings* (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984) it was more than a book about teaching, but a book about life. In the book, Heathcote shared stories about children and their learning through drama. I was struck by the way she used dialogue to negotiate with children, and this influenced my practice from then on (Edmiston and Towler-Evans, 2022). When I first read Heathcote's writing about her teaching, it felt like I was in dialogue with her, as her approach seemed to address elements of learning though drama, which I struggled with at the time. How could I engage all young people through drama? What about those young people who lacked confidence in participating through drama? It was like having a conversation with someone who understood my anxieties about teaching, and my confusions within the system. I was fortunate to meet Heathcote herself, who generously gave of her time to guide me in my work and planning. Here was someone who looked at people holistically, and never separated teaching from who the children were, what they could bring to the learning process, and who they could become. She was a humanising teacher.

My previous work with students marginalized in their schooling, using Dorothy Heathcote's pedagogy, included Mantle of the Expert (Towler-Evans, 2009) where marginalized students were framed to explore the work from the perspective of an insurance company dealing with claims regarding the Celeste, a sailing vessel, which disappeared in the nineteenth century. The work is also documented in the resultant book (Edmiston and Towler-Evans, 2022). My experience of running the Commission Model at Referral Units was documented in Hopkins, Cope, and Towler-Evans (2015). Having studied and trialed the Commission Model, I wanted to see the effects of working on a commission for a whole year, and beyond, and see whether this might help me to transform education for a group of marginalized young people as described in O'Connor (2009), O'Toole, Burton and Plunkett (2005) and O'Toole and Burton, (2002).

In 2015, I was invited to run a Commission Model with a group of 'marginalised' young people, based on the Hafod Copper Works, Swansea (2013). This was funded by Heritage Lottery and run by Eirwen Hopkins from Swansea University (see Appendix B Copper Works Commission, p.239). The Copper Works was originally founded by John Vivian in the nineteenth century. The land where the Copper Works once flourished was derelict, and the group of marginalised students were invited to explore the stories of the lives of people who worked and managed the Copper Works. The intention of this project was to connect the young people to their immediate environment near their school. It was hoped that students might see the relevance of their learning and how it is clearly linked to their community so that they would get a better understanding of the lives of people who lived in the community before them and understand their experiences. This would, hopefully, generate pride in themselves, impacting positively on their self-esteem, and subsequently improving their self-confidence and well-being (Edmiston, 2015). These areas of growth are important for learning and development of agency, as without their work creating presentations for visitors, there would have been no trail of the voices of the past which they had uncovered. The group of 14-year-old students were in a class labelled as 'low ability'. Yet, the work engaged them, and they succeeded in fulfilling the commission at the Talieson Theatre Swansea University, in 2013. Together, we would decide which stories we would share with interested parties from our understanding of them. The students presented the stories to planners, funders, local people and designers at the Taliesin Theatre in Swansea; and they were also shared on recorded devices which people could listen to on a designated trail set up on the land of the original copper works. The local people, including those whose families had worked at the Copper Works, could appreciate their own heritage, strengthen their links with the students at the local school and witness the results of their research, when they met with community members at the Talieson Theatre. Eirwen Hopkins and I were both convinced of the value of the Commission Model (Copper Works Commission, 2013) particularly for marginalised youth, as it seemed to provide something tangible that they could bring to the lives of others beyond their own.

The Richard Burton Commission, on which this study is based, was born in response to Sally Burton's request that the life of her late husband, would be honoured in his hometown of Port Talbot, and would contribute by offering encouragement and vision to young people. It was first necessary to gain funding. In 2016-17, gaining funding for this project facilitated travel arrangement for me as the Principal Investigator (PI) for this research. Gaining funding also demonstrated that there is interest in this area of research both from the funder and the Port Talbot community (Neath and Port Talbot's Recover, Reset and Renew Plan 2022-2027). Neath/Port Talbot Council (2022-2027) for example, includes a mission to extend the work in our communities and neighbourhoods to map strengths, vulnerabilities and opportunities to:

1. Identify and help set up more informal care and support networks
2. Help more people connect with them and

3. Identify potential community hubs

One such community hub is the Rich History group, which developed because of the Richard Burton commission, thus the name Rich (the name Richard Burton was known as in the locality). The relevance of my area of research has strengthened and sharpened my focus on the Commission Model.

The life of the locally born, though internationally famous, actor seemed a likely topic to engage the young people, and it meant that I could start by drawing on knowledge of current celebrities. The life of Richard Burton (RB) seemed especially relevant when we discovered that Swansea University held original artifacts, along with Burton's original diary with entries beginning when he was aged 14. As well as financial support, there was also local family support, such as: Burton's niece, who visited the students and shared stories; the local film community with whom a pilot of our film was shared with the local community; visits from the local librarian, along with Swansea University representatives, who supported the request from Sally Burton to honor her late husband's life in his hometown. Financial support also meant that we were able to fund professionals including a documentary film-maker and local artists (including a visual artist, a musician, and a rap artist) to work with the young people, and also pay for field trips by bus to the small towns where RB grew up, lived, went to school, and worked; to the archive at Swansea University; to a coal mine similar to one where his father and brothers had worked; to Oxford University, where he travelled as a visiting tutor; and to local venues, including a theatre company and a film-watching group. By June 2017, at the end of the first year of the Richard Burton Commission, two films had been created: *Richard Burton: The Boy from Pontrhydyfen*; a 35-minute film, under the direction of a professional documentary filmmaker, and *Rich History*, on the making of the film; a 15-minute film, under the direction of a local amateur filmmaker**.**

The films have since been shown locally, and as a direct result of the commission, a 'Rich History' community group continues to meet in Port Talbot today. Many of the young people stayed on at the college, and enrolled in courses that would lead to qualifications, and this included all three of the research participants: David and Assim joined the Media group, and Carl joined the Information Technology group (pseudonyms have been used for the participants). Theoretically, this bridging course for students considered to be 'at risk of NEET' was scheduled to last one academic year, from September until July but when the project, (which was funded by Heritage Lottery for another term the following year) continued, some of the young people worked with me alongside new students at the college, to plan an evening of public events on Burton's birthday.

At the gala evening organized to share the students' film, the young people took the lead throughout, including serving drinks and food at a reception. The films were presented alongside extracts from Richard Burton: In from the Cold? (Palmer, 1988), a documentary film which was made by Tony Palmer. Palmer attended the gala evening and spoke briefly about his admiration for the work

by the young people; and there was also a recorded ‘well-wishing’ interview with another local actor, Michael Sheen, which was made by one of the students. The event was featured on local television and reported in the local paper (BBC, 2017). The theatre was filled with local citizens, college teachers, as well as family and friends of the young people. The college principal spoke movingly. Professor Brian Edmiston of Ohio State University, who had studied with Heathcote and who acted as an associate advisor to this doctoral study, was also able to attend.

1.4 The Richard Burton commission

In Heathcote’s (cited in O’Neill, 2015, p.140) definition of the Commission Model, she refers to the following:

> ‘The commissions will make precise demands and will have a built-in time structure so that when the commission has been accepted, and allowance of time and resources will be decided’.

The built-in time structure of the Commission Model naturally lends itself to the research design which has a longitudinal scope because time (see Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018; Creswell and Cresswell, 2023) is a key determiner in longitudinal research. There was also an allowance of time and resources for the commission, an entire academic year, including participation in the summer vacation, to produce the film, with the support of a film maker and members of the community, and Burton’s niece.

The work began with an exploration of the life of RB. The group were invited to look at images of his life, significant objects and his written diary up to age 14. They looked at his journey from schoolboy to teenager and eventually as celebrated actor. They began to unravel the narrative of RB’s life based on their reading, engaging, interacting with each other as well as various sources, such as newspaper articles, books, films, short videos, each other’s stories and RB’s diary. Questions arose from the young people, as they investigated the material, and explored the events in Burton’s life though drama such as:

1. Who was the man behind the ‘media mask’?
2. Why would he find it so hard to remain faithful to one wife?
3. Should he leave his life in Port Talbot for Oxford (and eventually Hollywood)?
4. Despite his fame, did he believe that he was good enough?

The students reflected on their own journey of 'coming to know' about Burton and how their participation in their journey of 'knowing' his life journey in this research intersected with their own life journey. As they participated in the process, they were supported to be reflective about the various perspectives. The work assumed they were able to tackle the commission, and they were positioned as people who could do it. Moreover, they were trusted to take on the responsibility of working on it to its completion. This was a different way of learning; they were being invited to contribute, and the decision

was theirs. One of Heathcote's core principles is to connect the knowledge to be learned to the lives of the actual students.

1.5 Summary of research design

This study gathered data throughout a 23-month period from the Richard Burton Commission. Such data allowed me to analyse change over time at an individual level, and in this case within the context of a group of peers. It also makes it possible to identify factors within Heathcote's pedagogy which are linked to certain trajectories (Sullivan and Calderwood, 2017). A Narrative Inquiry, with longitudinal scope was employed to identify over time the shifting positioning, agency and identity of three participants. Three young people designated as 'at risk of' NEET were purposively selected (Patterson, 2018). Field notes, interviews, and observational data were gathered at the beginning and the middle of the process and during the sharing of the work at two events in honour of RB's life. I focused on three participants in my research as it is suggested that a small number of participants are preferable in order to delve deeply into the stories and analysis (Aarikka-Stenroos, 2010; Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000; Hunter, *et al.*, 2002; Butina, 2015; Muylaert *et al.,*2014). The three research participants central to this study I have given these pseudonyms: Carl, David and Assim.

The development of the research participants' stories was explored through the research methodology, Narrative Inquiry **(**Schaafsma and Vinz, 2011; Clandinin and Connelly, 1994; Clandinin, 2023) and influenced by Connelly and Clandinin's 'reconstruction of meaning' (1988, p. 296). Narrative Inquiry is reflected in the work of Heathcote, who stated that, 'All you can prove is that you can use experience of different kinds and put them all *together* in a new shape and learn something new' (Heathcote cited in Wagner, 1976 p. 27). As O'Grady, Clandinin and O'Toole (2018) show, narrative methods enable unspoken knowledge to be articulated. Throughout the 23-month period of the research, unstructured narrative interviews took place (Bihu, 2020; Kirkpatrick, 2015) These were voice / film recorded where possible or /and documented via field notes. More formal interviews were recorded after the commission had been fulfilled.

The films involved students making choices about the events in Burton's life to include: creating scripts which evolved through work-shopping ideas with myself, deciding on and shooting outdoor locations. I recorded their work through field notes, videos, and voice recordings. In addition, the participants recorded their interviews with members of the community as part of their research, some who had known Burton. In conjunction with the field trips, and interviews with local people, scenes had been researched, scripted, acted, revised, filmed on video, and edited with commentary. As their teacher throughout the period of the research, I engaged in participant observations (Creswell and Cresswell,

2023), drew on the observations of other adults involved in engaging in the work, and involved in the college life of the participants, including their parents where this was possible.

Narrative Inquiry involves a recursive, and reflexive process conceptually (Caine *et al.*, 2019; Caine *et al*., 2021). The challenge of writing to express another individual's story is supported using narrative devices such as field notes, interviews, conversations, research participants' drawings and sharing of stories (Holy and Colyar, 2012). This helped to make sense of the participants' narratives and enables the researcher to identify commonalities across all three research participants, focusing on key aspects related to shifts in positioning, agency and identity which answer the research questions. The use of a fictionalised story and drama which is central to the study, as we look at the life of Richard Burton, serves as a useful research tool which contributes to the participants' narratives in relation to the Commission Model experience, and their developing agency and identity. Heathcote's pedagogy provides participants with two worlds, the fictional or fictionalized world, in this case, the world of Richard Burton, and the 'everyday world' (Edmiston, 2003) of the classroom. Exploring the narratives, of the participants therefore provides me, as the researcher with an added dimension, an imagined world through which the participants make meaning about their own lives, through the lives of the other, through the protection of a fictionalized narrative. In-between their movement, from the 'as if' world and the 'as is' world (Edmiston, 2003 p.223) lies rich data which contributes to their narratives. Drama contributed to the documentation of the narratives of the participants in this study (Haseman, 2014; Gray, 2003; Bolton, 1997; Norris, 2000).

Conclusion

Having given a rationale and details of the study, Chapter Two will illustrate how Heathcote's pedagogy evolved, and examine her Worldview and Core principles. This will demonstrate how she arrived at her thinking and practice, and her narrative (just like the narratives of the research participants) illustrates how we become the stories 'we live by', and how change is always possible: 'if we change the stories we live by, quite possibly we change our lives' (Okri, 1997 p.46). Heathcote's pedagogy shifted and changed as she invented new pedagogical models as she met new experiences and learned through her practice, but her core principles (See Table One, p.22) always remained consistent, and, through her experimentation with different models, she found new ways her students might best learn.

Chapter Two
Literature Review

One of the key purposes of this chapter is to share with the reader the significance of Heathcote's story in this study. Heathcote saw learning as holistic, and did not separate the child as a person, from the child as a member of a class. The rationale for including Heathcote's story is so that we can take a holistic view of her as the teacher she became. This chapter discusses the uniqueness of Heathcote's approach, within both her life narrative and the historical context of drama for learning, including the theme of community, her core principles and holistic view of learning. In addition, I share Heathcote's invitational, rather than instructional approach to teaching, as reflected in all her four invented teaching models. A comparison between Process Drama and the Commission Model serves to illustrate the unique dimension of the model adopted in this study and how it can provide true education for young people designated as, or 'at risk of' NEET. Finally, I illustrate how Heathcote's humanising pedagogy, particularly The Commission Model, provides purpose, rigour and challenge to research participants, and can challenge the deficit label of 'NEET'.

The chapter begins with a brief reflection of Heathcote's life, based on existing records from her childhood through to retirement (Hesten, 1994; Bolton, 2003) to illustrate how her pedagogy and approaches to learning and teaching evolved. The experiences in Heathcote's life illustrate continuity: 'the imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future' (Clandinin, 2013, p.16). I share also my story of how I met Heathcote, to illustrate how this experience led to further experiences, throughout my career, including my work on this study, and how my story intersects with that experience.

2.1 Heathcote's life

Despite being very inexperienced in teaching, with no formal education, or national teacher qualification, and little experience of teaching children, in 1951, Heathcote (aged 24) was appointed by Brian Stanley as a staff tutor at the Durham Institute. Her job was to improve the practice of experienced teachers. Her approach to this was to teach demonstration lessons in front of her students. Perhaps because of her lack of formal training, she adopted an approach which was unusual, and considered strange by university tutors whose approach was different. She started teaching a full-time Advanced Diploma teacher training course at Newcastle University in 1964 (aged 38). Later, this was developed into a full time M.Ed. course. These courses became among the most influential university teacher training courses in the country and influenced the lives and careers of her students, some of whom develop her work to this day, including Luke Abbott (mantleoftheexpert.com) and Brian Edmiston (2003; 2014; 2015).

Heathcote's work first appeared on film in *Improvised Drama* (Smedley, 1966), where her teaching and interactions with young people were demonstrated. She soon became known to a wider audience and began travelling extensively abroad to teach and lecture in other countries. She was featured in a BBC Omnibus production in 1971, a documentary film celebrating her work, entitled *Three Looms Waiting* (Smedley, 1971). In early films of her work, it is clear how Heathcote always paid attention to what the children were interested in. Her work at the time aligned her to child-centred learning (Bolton, 1985, p.152), which was a misconception, as there were significant differences (Bolton, 1985). Children used their voice to identify her focus on what was relevant to them, and what they brought to the class was often a starting point. In the Chapter Two TV series *Teacher* (1981), for example, she positioned children through drama as people running a shoe factory; the subject was chosen in response to their concerns about automation and unemployment in the region. Like child-centred education in the sixties, Heathcote's work paid attention to the children's perspectives. However, it did not fit neatly into the context of child-centred education. More than the drawing out, and the empowering, and the meaning-making of the participants themselves, this was a curriculum that grew from the children. While much child-centred learning acknowledged the natural development of children and how to harness this to guide learning, Heathcote's was a model about finding a focus which would enable children to make their own foundations and grow the learning from within, rather than 'hijacking' learning on top of a process already in progression. This was substantial empowerment made safe by the skilled use of an art form.

Heathcote's work throughout her life illustrated her inclusive approach to every participant she worked with, including teachers, children and young people, people from industry and people within the community (*The Thin Screen*, 1992; *What's in Store*, 1997; Rouse and Wilde, 2007). It is an approach that Edmiston (2022 p. 131) refers to as a 'we for us' approach. She saw beyond labels such as 'special needs' or 'low ability' and connected with all participants as people she would build a working relationship with and accept them for who they are. In Figure 1, I outline the key features of Heathcote's pedagogy, including her core principles and approach, which reflect her firmly held beliefs about learning and illustrate her humanising approach, reflective of that of Freire (1970) within a community context, her positioning of participants, and the space allowed for the development of agency and identity, which are foundational to her work.

2.2 Heathcote's pedagogy

When I refer to Heathcote's core principles, I am referring to her fundamental beliefs about how people best learn, and in Heathcote's case, her beliefs about creating a humanizing world, which informed her pedagogy. One of her core beliefs, for example, aligns with Freire (1970) who, like Heathcote, challenged the 'banking model' (pp. 105–117) of education, in which the teacher 'owns' knowledge,

and deposits it in students: 'In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing' (Freire, 2011, p.1). Boland (2015) also makes significant connections between the practice of Heathcote and Freire, noting that both practitioners pay attention to the participants meaning making. This holistic attention to participants is reflected in this statement by Freire and Macedo: 'Words should be laden with the meaning of the people's existential experience, and not of the teacher's experience' (Freire and Macedo, 1987). Freire's (1996) emphasis on opening the world beyond the classroom is reflective of Heathcote's pedagogy, where the teacher's role is significant in collaborating, dialoguing, and intervening within a humanising context. The process of 'becoming more fully human' was defined by Freire as the 'ways in which we, as educators, act to enlarge the "pedagogical space" in which both students and teachers are empowered to express themselves' (Freire, 1998, p. 64). Both Heathcote and Freire insisted, and consistently demonstrated, how the learning encounter needs to be constructed around the 'thematic universe' (Freire, 1996, p.90) of the learners (Boland, 2015, p.36). Boland made this connection to Heathcote's work, where participants enlarged and transformed their understanding of the drama-based project of the moment, or the socio-historic dimension of the curriculum content under consideration. In contrast to the banking model, Heathcote was concerned with young people creating, interpreting and ascribing meaning to their experiences as they interact with other participants and the content of learning. A summary of Heathcote's core principles relevant to this study is set out in Table One.

Dorothy Heathcote's Core Principles	**Dorothy Heathcote's Pedagogy informed by her Core Principles**	**Approaches which stem from Heathcote's Principes and Pedagogy**
The need for young people to have a sense of **purpose** in the 'now time'	The concept of the self -spectator	Her approach is inclusive and language use, a 'we for us' (Edmiston & Towler Evans 2022) contributes to that inclusivity
An emphasis on young people ss central to community**, belonging** within schools/colleges and beyond, becoming responsible citizens and stewards of the future	Dramatic action for Heathcote was about attending to the meanings negotiated with her students and leading to action (Bolton 2003,p.80)	Heathcote's use of role, and participants use of role is to detach oneself from what is implicitly understood and to blur temporarily the edges of a given world
Young people **solve problems** in the outside world, to become '**citizens** of the world'	Learning in drama is essentially a re framing. The knowledge a participant has, is placed in a new perspective	The application of Dorothy Heathcote's (1984) 33 conventions focusses participants on the 'other', and protects them from feeling stared at
learning within a '**crucible' paradigm** to explore perspectives and solve problems. 'an educator becomes a liberating teacher, according to Freire, who does not do anything to learners, but with them (Freire & Shor, 2011).	She wanted her participants to make connections, to see implications	Participants build a group point of view which generated participants' agency, shifts in positioning and identity, which are central to this study which aligns with Bruner's view, cited in Avdi & Chatzigeorgiou, (2007, pp. 24-26).
Humanising- to be in the '**process of becoming'**(Heathcote :1978. p.78)	Heathcote's pedagogy positioned participants as competent and capable	Heathcote's approach is inductive and builds on what the child brings to the learning.
Drama is a form of group symbolism **seeking universal, not individual truths**	This positioning of participants became foregrounded in Mantle of the Expert and in The Commission Model, with the introduction of a 'client/s'	Dialogue is at the heart of the practice
We are always intending to '**motivate study of the real world** and of humanity (Heathcote:1978: p107)	Heathcote's pedagogy shifts the responsibility in the learning context where power is shared.	Participants are framed with a point of view, through which they explore multiple viewpoints
The use of the **Art of Theatre** in all her four models	The Art form opens up new worlds	Drama employs theatre elements
Heathcote steps into the grey of **ambiguity** and uncertainty		Drama is co -constructed with participants
Heathcote works through metaphor. The ambivalent position between fiction and reality creates drama's potency.		We draw from the 33 role conventions (Heathcote, 1984) to explore multiple perspectives from the lives of other people .Through our imagination , supported by the role conventions ,we "makes present what is absent" (Dewey, 1930, pp. 201-202).
Participants implicitly connect the fictional world to their own lives. Nothing was learned that was separate from life.		We draw on what the participants already know, raise questions alongside them to challenge their perceptions

Table One: Dorothy Heathcote's Core Principles generated from her theory and practice

2.3 Heathcote's holistic view of learning

Education, for Heathcote, needs to be holistically humanising, and her four models of teaching: Living through, Mantle of the Expert, Rolling Role, and Commission Model expand on ways of doing it. First and foremost, they are based in true dialogue between learners and educators, presupposing that there is enough willing flexibility to accommodate the interests and concerns of both parties. Heathcote's

pedagogy offers us a dynamic and powerful medium to achieve these holistic aims. For Heathcote, drama was about attending to the meanings negotiated with the students rather than a one-size-fits-all approach; this was often at odds with orthodox educational theory and practice. Throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, there existed a tension between teacher-led and student-led learning (Bolton, 1985). While her thinking could be seen as symbiotic with the Progressive Model which was becoming the mainstream norm in schools, away from the traditional model of rote instruction, Heathcote did not fit neatly into either 'camp,' as she believed in working collaboratively with students, but that the teacher was the most experienced member of the group, who had the responsibility for planning and resourcing the learning of students. Unlike much child-centred educational thinking at the time, Heathcote was a powerful intervening teacher, often using the convention of 'teacher in role' to explore the content and context of the learning, but always in the service of opening an inquiry for her students (Bolton, 1985).

Heathcote's pedagogy also contrasts with the traditional model which has been, historically, the main mode of teaching in schools. Traditional education has tended to view children/students as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge emanating from the teacher or textbooks. While Gavin Bolton (1984), Heathcote's close colleague and co-writer of *Drama for Learning* (1995), points out that any extreme versions of these competing educational philosophies, Progressive or Traditional, were never put into practice on a wholescale level, the traditional model has been and remained the dominant approach in school. Bolton added:

> Had drama pioneers been able to demonstrate that drama is concerned with knowing rather than with self-expression, the traditionalists might have been more ready to listen (Bolton, 1984, p.10).

The tensions regarding these different views of teaching and learning continue in the current climate. O'Neill (1995, p.ix), for example, describes Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert model as an approach which challenges ideas about the nature of teaching, such as the current 'obsession with measurement and lack of challenge'.

Each mode of teaching has implications for our views of the children and young people we teach. Heathcote offers us her paradigms of views of children in education:

> Child as flower - given enough time and care...Child as candle - you can rely on me to keep you lit up. Child as echo - no, do it the way I've said/shown you. Child as friend - if I'm nice to you, will you...Child as adversary - the trouble with you (lot, class, etc.) is…Child as clay - in time you'll turn into the class I want…Child as crucible - me and you have to keep stirring everything around. Child as machine - by October they should all be able to…Child as vessel - We did the towns yesterday, today we're going to do Indian crops (Heathcote, 1990, p.27).

Heathcote believed that the process of learning should be like being in a crucible where the students work together on raising questions, exploring perspectives and resolving problems. Dewey (1916)

similarly described the importance of testing ideas in the 'crucible of real-life experience' (Ozmon and Craver, 2003, p.139), and Heathcote adopted this metaphor as she described a paradigm of learning with children and teacher stirred things together in a 'crucible', in contrast to the traditional view of 'child as vessel'.

While Progressive education seemed to be a reaction to traditional and restrictive views of learning and of children, there was a danger that it was seen as being lacking in subject 'knowledge' and paying little attention to content. The early progressives were concerned primarily with innovation in how children learned, rather than what they learned. Heathcote was always concerned with knowledge, but this was not restricted to content learning but also learning about oneself in relation to others. Heathcote (1998), in conversation with the author, claimed there is a difference between 'knowing and 'realisation'. 'You can know things, but realisation is different'. Realising the implications of knowledge was key to her work. Heathcote brought back drama to the track of pursuing knowledge. She talked about this also, in a training session for teachers (1994):

> You don't teach children to know things. You teach children to realise they know things. And it is the second element which is usually missing; because it demands the setting up of the cultural structure in the classroom, that their realisation of knowledge is what they walk out with. Otherwise, they say, like so many people have said to me: 'I don't think I know anything about that, miss. And they're due for an exam, and they don't realise their knowledge; they can't summon it.'

2.4 Heathcote's approach and the teaching of drama

An early example of a form of classroom drama which was not focused on drama as a performance to an audience, is the work of Harriet Finlay-Johnson (1911) who adopted a dramatic method of teaching. Like Heathcote, Finlay-Johnson believed in the value of dramatic activity as a tool for cross curricular learning. Ironically, Finlay-Johnson's approach did not encourage play amongst her pupils but required them to be active in the sense of being involved in action in their learning. Her purpose was on the teaching of facts connected with nature study, history, scripture, and other subjects. Her key purpose was on the pupils learning a body of knowledge dictated as part of the school curriculum.

Caldwell Cook introduced theatre into English education for the first time in England and Wales in the 1910s. Cook attempted to make the best use of drama as an educational means. His method was known as *The Play Way* (1917), in which all subjects were systematically dramatized. He initially used drama for the subject of English, but he did not restrict its use to this subject. He believed that drama was significant for helping students to prepare to become good citizens in society. His 'play way' emerged from his belief in the theatricality of human existence. His fundamental idea of education through 'play'

enabled teenagers to consider realistic, social, political and economic problems, and to develop the skills necessary to live in society. The Speech and Drama movement emerged in the 1930s and 1940s (Bolton, 1984, 1985); the connections between drama and child play seemed to have been lost. It was Peter Slade (1954) who first attempted to bring natural play into the classroom. He disliked public performers, the use of scripts and the training of children to act, and most significantly, teacher intervention in children's playing. Slade allowed children to engage in dramatic playing for hours. Like Froebel's gardener, he would be careful not to interfere with the creative growth of the child, unlike Heathcote who described herself as an interfering teacher. Sladian lessons appear to be without content, form, structure or direction. Slade's books (1954; 1958) are probably the closest any individual has come to giving a practical form to the Rousseauesque concept of education. Slade's use of stories (told then acted) sometimes encouraged teachers to concentrate on 'the sentimental actions of plot rather than the inner dynamic of a situation' (Bolton, 1984, p.29). Bolton was critical of Slade's approach because it failed to show the teacher as having any notion of direction. For Bolton, this factor was essential in separating the role of the teacher from the baby-minder or classroom helper. Content did not appear to matter to Slade, for what was expressed was seen to be less important than the freedom to express it. The absence of content, the focus on the individual and the non-intervention of the teacher were key features of Slade's work which were contradicted by Heathcote's pedagogy. However, the significance of play, and learning through play formed a vital aspect of Heathcote's work.

In the same year as the Plowden Committee published its 'stamp of approval' on progressive education, Brian Way published *Development Through Drama* (1967). Child-centred education was seen as respectable. He influenced a new kind of college course where drama formed the basis for the students' personal development. Emphasising the uniqueness of the individual, he was seen as articulate, effective, militant even, voice against the authoritarian stance of traditional education. He too was concerned with drama's potential in child development. Way's method of teaching had a great deal of influence on how drama teachers were trained. He devised a system of exercises, often involving direct, non-symbolic, sensory experiences, aimed at developing students' concentration, sensitivity and imagination. His focus was on developing life skills, rather than on acting skills. His emphasis on the individual also reflected the philosophy of progressive education in the 1960s.

Bolton challenges this view of drama. According to Bolton:

> To encourage individual children to search for a drama within themselves is to distort the meaning of dramatic form. Drama is not self-expression, it is a form of group symbolism seeking universal, not individual truths (1985, p.154).

By the 1970s, the focus on drama as training in acting was virtually 'out of the picture'. However, in Bolton's (1985) view, 'it had been replaced by equally damaging misconceptions' (p.154). Teachers were encouraged to train students through a variety of life-skill exercises. The symbolic nature of the

art form of drama was replaced by direct sensory experience. The content of the drama, it could be argued, was considered as almost irrelevant. Consequently, this kind of teaching did not introduce students to any sense of dramatic form. Heathcote's pedagogy was quite different to this approach. In her work, there was greater emphasis on teacher intervention, structure, knowledge and learning. The participants in Heathcote's work always worked within a context, and life-skills exercises out of context were never part of her work. Participants were also positioned differently, as people who already brought their own knowledge and understanding to the context.

There is a tendency today in current research on drama, to focus on what drama can do to improve some other aspect of curriculum, which Heathcote, too, paid attention to (Heathcote and Bolton, 1995), as have Fleming (1997; 2017); Bowell and Heap (2013); Bryer, Pitfield and Coles (2023); Gaudart (1990); Kalidas (2014); and Podlozny (2000). Their focus is on how drama affects positive change in cognitive ability through its effect on other curriculum areas. Podlozny's definition of her use of drama is reflected in the work of Kardash and Wright (1987), who view classroom drama as a process of acting out stories that are used in the regular academic curriculum. Classroom drama is used as a way of supporting the curriculum and is 'an integral part of the curriculum' (p.239). In even more recent research, the notion of drama-based pedagogy (DBP) has been theorized to be an effective instructional approach likely to enhance achievement and other adaptive student outcomes compared to traditional instruction because it aligns with social constructivist ideas (Dawson and Lee, 2018). The reference to drama as an instructional approach seems to contradict Heathcote's approach to drama, which is one where teachers build on what participants bring to work, who position them as knowers who have agency within the process. Kardash and Wright (1987) found a strong positive relationship between drama and a variety of cognitive outcomes, including reading, oral and written communication, person-perception, and drama skills. These studies, focused on the use of drama as a way of learning about another subject, paid little attention to the position and agency of participants, and in my view, are too mechanistic, as they were looking at drama's impact on other subjects and on cognitive ability. Contrasting this focus on cognitive change and cross curriculum development Heathcote's vision was one which saw drama being utilised as a pedagogical tool or instrument beyond the drama classroom. This might include drama teachers, primary school teachers, or adults in the community or teachers of any subject. The most important thing for Heathcote was that they were teaching children, students, or older people, and they could come from any context. Heathcote once stated: 'I want students to be citizens of the world' (Heathcote, cited in Edmiston and Towler-Evans, 2022, p.xvii).

While Finlay-Johnson and Heathcote shared a respect for the objective world and both paid attention to knowledge, there was a significant difference in how each interpreted this. Heathcote took it beyond content as learning the facts, as was the case with Finlay-Johnson, to a way of looking at issues, principles, implications, consequences and responsibilities beyond the facts. However, there was a

danger that Heathcote's followers, eager to move beyond the exercise approach of Brian Way, and to reintroduce the importance of content, interpreted the phrases of 'living through' and 'at life rate' to imply that drama was a simulation. The meaning of drama, however, lies in the interplay between two worlds, the fictional world and the actual world, what Edmiston (2003) refers to as the 'as if' world and the 'as is' world. Heathcote (1984) claims: 'People have to live in two worlds at once … drama uses fiction and fantasy but makes people more aware of reality' (p.204). In relation to Heathcote's drama, when we refer to 'the world,' we mean more than physical and material reality. We also mean how cultures have been constructed via social relationships over time. The classroom is a cultural world, as are the worlds beyond the classroom where each student lives. Regardless which of her models we adopt, as Heathcote put it, we are always aiming to 'motivate study of the real world and of humanity' (cited in Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.107).

While Heathcote may have used drama largely as a learning medium, she was, however, concerned with theatre elements in her practice, and for the view of drama as an art form. Bolton's (1982) definition of drama as an art form clarifies Heathcote's position:

> For dramatic action to qualify as an art form not only should these three basic elements of focus, tension and symbolisation inhere within the form, there should also be a consciousness on the part of the group that a form is being created (p.138)

Neelands and Goode's interpretation of theatre is also useful in illustrating how theatre operated in the work of Dorothy Heathcote: 'Theatre is the direct experience that is shared when people imagine and behave as if they were other than themselves in some other place at some other time' (Neelands and Goode, 2015, p.3). Heathcote herself describes her use of the elements of the art of theatre:

> Classroom drama uses the elements of the art of theatre. The difference between the theatre and the classroom is that in theatre everything is contrived so that the audience gets the kicks. In the classroom the participants get the kicks. However, the tools are the same, the elements of theatre craft (cited in Wagner, 1976, p.27).

Heathcote worked through metaphor and symbol, and her work was not simulation. The ambivalent position between fiction and reality is what creates drama's potency. If teachers attempt to set up a drama as a piece of real life to be lived through, this is to misunderstand drama. Bolton (1985) describes how learning is viewed through drama:

> Learning in drama is essentially a reframing. What knowledge a pupil already has is placed in a new perspective. To take on a role is to detach oneself from what is implicitly understood and to blur temporarily the edges of a given world. (p.156)

One of Heathcote's most noticeable innovations was the use of Teacher in Role which distinguished her work from what had gone on before. She initiated the drama by taking on a role, endowing students with a generic role and a shared viewpoint. Heathcote's use of role was controversial and often misunderstood by those who failed to grasp its purpose. She was sometimes regarded as a manipulative

and interfering teacher. Cecily O'Neill (1984) describes her practice where she would often negotiate with the group and invite them to decide on the kind of role they were prepared to deal with.

Heathcote focused less on teaching drama as a separate subject, while being very supportive of teachers of drama. I observed Heathcote's teaching for a week at Kings Norton High School, Birmingham with the Head of Drama, in 1996, with students of GCSE Drama (14- to 15-year-olds). Her approach was consistent with all her teaching, where she paid attention to what students already knew and were interested in and used strategies which protected them into the drama. Heathcote's work was driven by key questions, which she did not know the answer to, but which she explored with the participants; for example, when she explored the historical content of the events surrounding Burke and Hare, the infamous body snatchers who supplied bodies to Dr Robert Knox. While the subject on the curriculum was Drama, Heathcote always raised questions for the young people, which drove the work. They included:

1. 'What is the moral responsibility of scientists and anatomists to others, when searching for innovation to heal people and prolong life?
2. 'How far should their work remain confidential in the process?'

There were no right or wrong teacher answers to such questions, but they were questions which demanded a deep consideration of multiple viewpoints, through exploring the evidence available. The students, guided by Heathcote, used theatre conventions and elements to explore these questions through drama. She was always interested in what participants learn through the drama, so she focused on using drama to teach young people and adults in a range of learning contexts. She saw the potential of drama as greater than Drama as subject, and for eroding the boundaries between the school and the wider community. As David Davis observed:

> She [Heathcote] sees Drama as the means of rooting all the curriculum back in a human context where it sprang from, so that knowledge is not an abstract, isolated subject based discipline, but is based in human action, interaction commitment and responsibility (cited in Kipling and Hickey-Moody, 2015, n.p.).

Heathcote came to believe, for example, that working with young people and adults with special learning needs, was the ideal situation for a teacher to realise that she could not rely simply on *what* she knows, but on *who* she is (in conversation with the author, 1998). Here, I believe Heathcote was referring to the teacher as an authentic person interacting with others, rather than a person adopting a teacher-role and position. However, there were critics of her work, and a binary debate developed regarding drama and theatre, which I discuss in the next section.

2.5 How I met Dorothy Heathcote

My first encounter with Heathcote was in 1985, when I studied at the University of Central England (now Birmingham City University), under the supervision of David Davis, course director for PGCE and master's degree students. Heathcote was a visiting tutor on the course. We were invited to the University of Newcastle, where she was based, to join her, and to submit questions for her, which her M.Ed. students would help us address. My question was: 'How can drama motivate the learning of marginalised learners of lower ability?' Each of the UCE students was invited to attend one of the 'stations' where her small group of M.Ed. students were seated, to hear the question, and discuss the implications of it. I was asked to think about the bedrock of my question, and I had no idea how to respond, because at the time, I was just looking for a straightforward answer to the question, and probably some useful approaches, including strategies. I was not considering core principles and pedagogy.

Looking back, I was really being asked, 'What did I stand for? What were my core principles and values, that informed such a question?' The bedrock of this question, I understood, was the underlying principles that I held, which informed such a question. I recognised later that I was beginning to wear the institutionalised cloak of formal education, and I was in danger of labelling children, and viewing them as being in some way deficient. I was working inside a curriculum which suggested this way of seeing children. I felt this way because I realised how I had wanted some solutions to teaching 'lower ability' students. The school system had categorised them in this way, and because they were not academic writers, or naturally motivated by school, I felt it was my role as a teacher to motivate them to learn the school curriculum. I was looking for some approaches and useful strategies. Reading Heathcote's work and meeting with her helped me to learn that her vision was greater than that. Her transformative vision is of teachers and young people working collaboratively as they 'change the schools so that more young people begin to question what they are told…and in positive ways to find their own deep interests, skills and competencies so that they become life-long learners' (Heathcote in O'Neill, 2015, p.153).

That first encounter with Heathcote demonstrated that she was paying attention to what we, as learner-teachers, were concerned about; that our concerns would form the basis of this session, and that any change would emerge from us and our recognition of ourselves as teachers. This was my first real lesson from Heathcote: that I mattered, my voice was being heard, and my thoughts and concerns were worthy of consideration. She helped me to negotiate my own understanding of what it meant to teach. She was modelling a way of teaching that we could employ with our students. How far did we listen to them? How far did we position them as people with something worthy of our consideration? How far did we trust them?

Heathcote had also set up her students to 'teach' us, which reflected her view that the best way to learn is to teach someone else (Edmiston and Towler Evans, 2022). This encounter also reflected her professional commitment to the promotion of drama as a tool for triggering holistic learning situations across the curriculum. Heathcote (2010) described conventional curriculum work as more akin to a highway, or railway links where one 'solution' follows another in linear format:

> When considering this form of curriculum teaching it may be useful if the teacher holds the image of a flowing system as a river, tributaries feeding in, and an estuary where all the different aspects of the work achieved come to conclusion of wide and inter-related understanding of the many strands of enquiry and skills. The usual image of curriculum work may be more akin to a railway where one 'station' follows another in linear format. This feels more controllable and orderly and more comfortable for the teacher but does not achieve holistic understanding of the curriculum. (p.74)

I met Heathcote many times over the following years (1984-2011), collaborating with her via exchange of letters and through visits to her home or venues where she would be teaching or speaking at conferences. Her M.Ed. students at this time (1985) would test out the theories of Heathcote's course in their own classrooms. As described by Wagner (1976), Heathcote was the first drama pioneer to sit on the floor with her learners and 'make a play' with them. This is well demonstrated in the television documentary *Three Looms Waiting* (Smedley, 1971). Heathcote created a whole school of drama practice based around the teacher shifting her pedagogy from that of an instructor to inductor, coach, facilitator and fellow artist, recognising the drama in education. She used a range of ways of enabling young people to access learning, drawing on her thirty-three role conventions (Heathcote,1984) which challenged the notion of the teacher being the 'one who knows' (Wagner, 1976, p.38). Heathcote's students tested out her principles, by applying them to their pedagogy in schools, positioning themselves as co-constructors of learning, adopting an inquiry approach, and utilising her role conventions to support them. On the occasion when they met with us as a group of visiting teachers, they were testing out, I imagine, their use of inclusive language, and 'withholding expertise' (Wagner, 1976, p.97) — what they knew or thought they knew — so that we would look at the implications of the question we had raised for ourselves. Her approach was very different to my previous training experiences, where the focus was very much on theatrical skills and performance, and the idea of a teacher 'withholding expertise' was in sharp contrast to my own experience of schooling as a teacher and as a pupil. Neelands and Goode (2015) remind us that theatre does not necessarily refer to performance, but exists in the process of drama in education, and this is the case with Heathcote's pedagogy.

Meeting Heathcote in person and reading her work changed the way I began to think about my relationships with young people, and the way I viewed drama. I remember her saying to me once (Newcastle, 2000), that 'change worth having is wrought slowly,' and she continued to say, that

‘knowing something is different from realising it’. This notion of realisation applied to my application of her practice in my own professional career. At first, I would attempt to mirror her approach by adopting her linguistic phrases, because I knew, for example, that inclusive language was a key feature of her work. I began by focusing on my role in the teaching situation, by asking students a question that might begin with, ‘I wonder…’, which was intended to invite their responses, but often I would continue by answering my own question. It took me longer to realise that knowing how to phrase the questions was not enough on its own, but that my response to students’ offerings, and the development of their ideas, was key. I came to realise that, if used as part of an inclusive approach, her pedagogy shifted the responsibility and power in the classroom. It did not mean that you hand the power to the class, but that power is shared. Her use of language was a key factor in creating this inclusivity. For example, she would never ask a question that she as a teacher already knew the answer to (Wagner, 1976, p.60). The work always adopted a ‘we for us’ (Edmiston and Towler Evans, 2022, pp.105-106) approach, and this was reflected in the language. In Mantle of the Expert, we are all working for a ‘client’, who becomes the authority, rather than the teacher. This is also evident in the Commission Model, which is central to this study. Most significantly for me, it taught me to really pay attention to the children, to their responses, and that dialogue was at the heart of what we do. The more I learned about Heathcote’s work, the more I discovered there was more to learn, as she invented new ways, through her four models of practice of helping children and young people access learning. More than this, her teaching was humanising, where children and young people are seen as a central part of their community, becoming responsible citizens, and stewards of the future (Edmiston and Towler-Evans, 2022). Working with all children in this way by-passes (does not remove) any labels they might have around all aspects of their learning, because to Heathcote, they are who the child is, not a barrier to the child's learning. Heathcote’s approach is inductive and builds on what the child brings to the learning. This contrasts with a deductive approach which imposes the learning or approach upon the child.

Heathcote’s curriculum *is* the human condition. Writing two years before her death aged 85, Heathcote (2009) remained adamant, after six decades as a teacher educator in her native Britain, and as a guest teacher in classrooms throughout the world, that—in addition to any short-term curricular objectives—the core goal of teaching ought to be embracing learning about life. Heathcote was a humanising educator. She was not interested in generic teaching, targets or abstract standards. Rather, she recognized that young people are on journeys of personal discovery rooted in social relationships and cultural worlds yet inspired by imaginative possibilities. However, there were critics of her work, and a binary debate took place in the 1980s, between perceptions of drama and perceptions of theatre. In the next section I will discuss this debate and its implications.

2.6 A discussion of the binary debate about drama

To provide a context for the debate around Heathcote's theory and practice which affected how her work was received, particularly amongst drama teachers, I turn to the Education Reform Act (1988) which introduced the National Curriculum. The Act was followed shortly by an HMI document: *Drama 5 to 16 Curriculum Matter No:17* (Department for Education and Science 1989 HMSO) which aligned Drama with English. Robinson (1990) described this move as 'an intellectual mistake' and aimed to contribute to the discussion concerning drama's place in the National Curriculum which recommended what children and young people should be expected to reach by a certain age. In 1989, *Education and Dramatic Art* by Hornbrook was published, the first sustained critique of drama in education since the Education Reform Act (1988). He concluded that The National Curriculum did not support the teaching of drama as a subject and that placing it within the subject of English was undermining it as a discrete subject.

Hornbrook viewed drama from one perspective -a subject perspective, which is a legitimate way of teaching it as a Theatre skills course, but it is a very different function from Heathcote's models. Heathcote herself came from a theatre background and did work with theatre texts within schools and in the community, for example tackling Hamlet with students (Bolton and Heathcote, 1999, p.15), exploring theatre genres and use of scripts including Hamlet and Othello (Bolton and Heathcote, 1999, p.69) and Anthony and Cleopatra (p.99). In these instances, Heathcote still applied inquiry methods in her work, where she prepared questions alongside colour coded copies of the text, such as, 'Is there evidence regarding why Anthony took Octavia to wife whilst still involved with Cleopatra?'
This debate may have been fuelled by how Heathcote's work was and is interpreted by teachers in practice. The Commission Model used drama to help the students understand the material they are drawing from to bring to the lives of their community.

Heathcote introduced the concept of teacher in role and was concerned with employing, 'children's ideas and make them 'work' positively employing the natural law of the medium' (cited in Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.51). Heathcote's emphasis on the individuality of the child was far more complex than the more easily assessed theatre and technical skills and knowledge advocated by Hornbrook (1989). This made it difficult for subject organisations such as the National Association of Teachers of Drama (NATD) to support their members and promote their humanising values within a culture of measurement and assessment. The NATD were formed in the late 1980s, to campaign against the marginalisation of drama following the National Curriculum Act. It was founded to defend and promote Drama in Education as a distinct, child-centred, and humanising pedagogy, rather than just a subject within the English curriculum. Heathcote was the president of the NATD, replaced by Luke Abbott, following her death in 2011. National Drama is another leading subject association which includes

practitioners who are actively engaged in the process of learning through, and about, drama and theatre education.

Hornbrook reported in May 1989: 'the Arts Council has this month established a working group of its own to look at attainment in drama. Its task will be to fit the new existing pieces of the drama jigsaw into the Arts in Schools framework and then to set about completing the picture of the dramatic curriculum' (Hornbrook 1989, p.30). This statement about the role of the Arts Council working group, of which Hornbrook was a member, is contentious. If this were part of the original brief, it means that the Arts Council, of which Hornbrook was a working group member, had decided to establish a working group to define the place of drama as an arts subject rather than as a subject with a wider remit.
Sayers (2013) describes this debate as 'binary' (p.37), between those who favour the teaching of theatre and those who favour using drama/theatre for learning and process drama. She traces this debate back to 1973 when Clegg (1973, p.34) cited two camps: theatre and drama.

This binary debate was recognised in the 1970s and 1980s (Allen cited in Ackroyd 2004, Clegg 1973). Bolton (1985) contributed a keynote speech at a major conference called Positive Images in Nottingham, the aim of which was to unite drama associations. In his speech, Bolton (1985) claimed that Heathcote's 'teacher in role' work, was not a manipulative process. This was in response to Hornbrook's (1989) assertion that, Heathcote increased the teacher's power in the pedagogical relationship. Hornbrook (1989) expressed his views thus: 'The authoritarian presence of charismatic drama teachers like Heathcote sets up a strong framing which reduces the real options of the students to control events' (p.133). Papers shared during the 1981 National Association of Teachers of Drama conference also expressed concern about this division (Norman, 1981) followed by Day's publication of collection of papers in 1983, including Robinson (1980) who challenged the 'increasing moves by many drama teachers towards examinations and separate departments… warning that this would fail to promote social, perceptive, intuitive and aesthetic and creative learning' (p.18). O'Neill (1983), together with Robinson (1980) deals with issues at the heart of the debate within drama concerning its intrinsic value as an educational activity and its contribution to learning generally. O'Neill's concern is less with the role of drama for personal and social development, and far more about employing theatre for learning. Strong arguments and objections were raised at the event which led to a long running debate (Carey,1985, Carey and Good, 1989). This debate might have impacted the way Heathcote's methods were applied in schools.

This binary debate also existed between practitioners who proposed that drama was taught as an art form and those who viewed drama as a means of personal growth and group expression rather than a theatre arts discipline. Heathcote was called 'anti-theatre' by Ross (cited in Waks, 1982), voicing the pedagogy of those who advocated a theatre arts curriculum. Heathcote saw it as a 'stupid argument'

(cited in NATD, 1989, p.7). It is likely that she saw this argument as pointless, because in her work she applied drama as an art form, and used theatre conventions which also served as a tool for learning. Heathcote (1975 cited in Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.98) stated: 'I believe the child and the actor have to follow the same rules. It is not possible to simplify these rules; it is only possible to simplify demands we make'.

Personal growth and group expression may have been by-products of Heathcote's work but as Robinson (1980) recognised: 'simply giving out energy is not necessarily expressive in any way which is educationally useful or valuable' (p.155). In relation to drama as an art form Bolton (1986) stated: 'Some of you may have been expecting me to say that drama does not operate as an art form until there is an audience. This is not the case' (p.159). He continued:

> That for dramatic action to qualify as an art form, not only should these three elements of focus, tension and symbolisation inhere within the form there should also be a consciousness on the part of the group that a form is being created (p.161).

There appears to be a misunderstanding of Heathcote's philosophy and approach, and a failure to see the application of drama from different perspectives, applied in different contexts for different purposes. Heathcote's practice always drew on the laws of theatre. 'Coming from a theatre training, I therefore used the one thing I knew most about' (Heathcote, 1980 cited in Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.160). Neelands describes theatre as a meaning-making process while Hornbrook (1989) appears to reduce dramatic art to a skill. Neelands (1993) recognises that for students to find these skills meaningful they must serve a purpose for them. To clarify the definition of theatre which aligns to Heathcote's application of it in her work, Neelands (1993) provides a definition of theatre which helps us to understand how Heathcote interpreted theatre in her work:

> Theatre is the direct experience that is shared when people imagine and behave as if they were other than themselves, in some other place at another time (p.17).

This definition embraces the various ways theatre is used for different purposes and functions. Heathcote's vision for drama was bigger than drama as subject, as she saw its implications in shifting the position and agency of young people whereas Hornbrook viewed her drama pedagogy as being devoid of content. However, Heathcote's work always contained a rich content and context for learning. As Robinson (1980) stated: 'we cannot create drama about nothing and for what we do to be expressive we must feel an involvement with whatever the work is about' (p.155). These views are clearly attempts to illustrate a move away from the self-expression work of people such as Slade (1954) and to acknowledge that the work is about content. The non-interference by teachers/adults in Slade's creative work whose focus was on child's play, meant that formal curriculum was less of a focus with the child's imaginative play, and self-expression given a great emphasis.

Criticisms of Heathcote's pedagogy seem to misunderstand her work, her use of theatre and drama as an Art form and view it as self-expression. Ross (1982) for example, argues that 'Drama in education is a doomed mutant unless it can draw life from the theatre' (p.152). Heathcote and Bolton would undoubtedly have agreed with that statement. However, Ross took Bolton to task for the expansive pedagogic claims made on behalf of drama in education and accused Bolton's work of being 'anti-theatre' (Ross, 1982, pp.148-52). Bolton has argued that because of the sometimes-pointless arguments regarding theatre and drama, that they have ignored the common ground between them, and that includes the way Heathcote and Bolton were always concerned with form as well as content, and in their work employed theatre devices. In the 1990s Neelands (1993), for example, emphasised the kind of knowing achieved through drama:

> Insights and learning in theatre occur when there is a realisation of the relationship between form and content. Quite simply what the drama is about is as important a consideration as what form it takes (p.17).

While these arguments proved to be divisive, they highlight the need to acknowledge the similar medium shared by theorists and practitioners who use drama/theatre in their work, but often for different purposes. Drama can be employed in a variety of contexts, and the purpose and function of the drama employed will vary accordingly but as Robinson (1980) pointed out: 'Drama and theatre are not separate, but they are different' (p.150). Bolton (1986) alluded to the different ways in which drama is employed: 'The clay of drama is the same for the teacher, the pupil, the playwright, the director and the actor. It's just that they handle it differently' (p.160).

I suspect that the criticism that drama is devoid of theatre, comes from those who still equate theatre with performance. Hornbrook (1989) and Ross (1982) interpret theatre as an art form of craft and skills, one which allows for easier measurement of achievement. This is a significant difference between Hornbrook and the Drama in Education theorists and teachers. In Hornbrook's publication, Dramatic Art (1989) he does not once mention the students' perspectives, student enquiry or teacher/student partnership in learning, which are strong elements in the work of Heathcote. Hornbrook (1989) seemed to be critical of a Drama in Education practice which existed in Sladian days, describing it as a psychological process, rather than a body of theatrical skills, and practical strategies for participants to learn from. Hornbrook (1989) felt that Drama in Education concerned itself with being a learning medium, not art: 'It is my contention that conceptually there is nothing which differentiates the child acting in the classroom from the actor on the stage (p.104). This, of course, may be true of students following a theatre arts course, where they focus on crafting the skills of performance. *Day* (1983) illustrates the distinction between drama as a craft and drama as art:

> Craftsmen usually plan work where enquiry on the part of the student is not required or encouraged for the completion of the learning tasks set, whereas artists plan work where

> enquiry on the part of the student is required if he is to complete successfully the tasks set (p.87).

Hornbrook's concern with drama used as a learning medium rather than an art form, is to some extent justified; a view shared by John Fines (1974), a historian who used drama as a learning medium:

> Because I am a consumer of drama, as it were, I have frequently in the past emphasised that role, explaining that I don't want artifice, theatricality, acting, form, beauty or any of those things that go to make dramatic events. What I want are the tools of drama to use for my own purposes (p.4)

When Hornbrook produced his own recommended attainment targets for drama (1991) he used anecdotal evidence from the National Curriculum Council Arts in Schools Conference at Warwick University, which had 600 delegates, to illustrate the demand. He claimed that 90% of practitioners at the conference wanted to see the publication of arts attainment targets for drama. Reflecting on the purpose of drama, Hornbrook focused on drama as subject, and the work of drama teachers. Heathcote went beyond that, as her vision of drama is wider reaching and she sees the potential of it beyond the drama curriculum.

In the next section I outline and discuss Heathcote's four teaching models, which addresses many of the issues raised by critics of her work.

2.7 Heathcote's four models of teaching

Having examined Heathcote's life and pedagogy, I introduce here, Heathcote's four models of teaching: Living Through; Mantle of the Expert; Rolling Role and Commission Model. The models, Heathcote (cited in O'Neill, 2015, p.134) described:

> I propose to examine four models of teacher/student activity using what I've always thought of as a drama approach. But in reality, the base building block of all four models is that of agreeing to work through an invented an agreed fiction. Fiction contains the word drama. It widens the possibilities for action and necessarily blurs the genre. This broader spectrum of action has earned much criticism, because I wasn't able to explain my vision of fiction being more overarching than drama.

As Heathcote explains here, fiction using drama widens the possibilities for action, so while all four models draw on the use of drama, they are models that are available to all teachers. Heathcote's approach to co-constructing drama with participants began when she found herself 'out of the blue' asking a group of boys the question, 'If you were Captain of a ship, what would you look for in the men who were going to sail it?' (cited in Bolton, 2003, p.25). She reflected on this during a teacher training event at Ringsfield Hall (2009) where she shared that time with the teachers there:

> I remember my first moment in the classroom, with boys who'd been turned out because they were naughty. And they were all standing around the hall … and I remember saying: 'If you were captain of a ship, I'm just wondering what qualities we would need to be the men? (they were all boys).

Bolton (2003) also refers to this and speaks of the influence of Esme Church (her teacher at Acting School) planting the seed (p.25) for her concept of 'The Drama of the Mind' whereby children could make up their own plays. Unlike skill-based performance drama, Heathcote's work was driven by inquiry, where she would draw on the decision-making processes of the participating group, positioning them as capable and competent and generating their agency in developing the work.

Heathcote devised four complementary models over her lifetime (O'Neill, 2015, p.133). Her first model was named, 'Living through', and this was followed by Mantle of the Expert, Rolling Role, and culminated in her final model, The Commission Model. Rather than being seen as distinctive, she envisioned them as facets of a comprehensive approach to education, that educators could move between, and supplement with other methodologies, within, between, and beyond individual classroom spaces. All of them can be regarded as pedagogies. Heathcote's core principles drive each of her models and are evident in all her work. That does not change. However, as she continued to practice and learn more from her participants, her practice evolved and culminated in her fourth model, The Commission Model.

Heathcote, throughout her four models (O'Neill, 2015, p.133), demonstrated that she was predominantly interested in various ways of knowing and importantly, participants' relationship with knowledge. It was not something to be received passively but something to be operated on. This perception of knowledge is reflected in Freire's writing, as Boland (2015) reports:

> We would do well to recognise that the 'role conventions' that Dorothy Heathcote enumerated in Signs and portents (1984, pp.160–69) represent what Paulo Freire's called 'compound codifications' (Boland, 2015, p.135).

Freire's advice is to dialogue on the part of learner-participants, to solve realistic problems that enable them to use their knowledge for those 'compound codifications that will function as the central value/means for guiding and sustaining a deepening of the situated purposes. As Freire observed: 'it is to the reality which mediates men, and to the perception of that reality held by educators and people, that we must go to find the program content of education' (1993, p.77).

Building a community culture was always important to Heathcote. As she invented further models, the extended community beyond the classroom became more foregrounded. Although the four models are separate, they are not entirely distinctive. As Heathcote stated:

> You can see how my main teaching drives have never changed. To present children with the ever-increasing webs of information and skills within a framework of social and cultural awareness (2003, p.57).

Heathcote emphasised the need for young people in schools to have a sense of purpose in the 'now time' of their existence, which Heathcote describes as 'this now time state' (cited in Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.161). Heathcote's outlook is apparent in each one: the relationship between students and knowledge; the focus on community; collaboration and the group point of view; the elements of theatre; the inclusive use of language and questioning; the key feature of student responsibility. She invented the use of teacher-in-role and role conventions which applied to all four models. Teacher-in-role, Heathcote's significant and lasting contribution to the practice of drama-in-education, initiates collaboration and is a way of beginning to share power with the class. The teacher adopts the role of another person, significant to the context of the work, and says of the purpose of the role, 'The role helps the students to do, and the teacher helps them to see' (Heathcote cited in O'Neill, 2015, p.38). This function of role is especially relevant in a study centred around marginalised students as 'The teacher in role operates as an "anti-corrosive agent" by deflecting students' embarrassment and preventing them being stared at' (Heathcote cited in O'Neill, 2015, p.38). For Heathcote, the curriculum is the human condition. All four models provide evidence of Heathcote's concerns with students' agency, positioning and identity (De Waele and Harré, 1979; Harré, 1998; Harré and Secord, 1972; Holland *et al.,* 1998*)*.

While her 'Living Through' model and 'Rolling Role' model focused on students making meaning for themselves within fictional worlds, Mantle of the Expert and the Commission Model while drawing on fiction, shifted the element of responsibility and focused on people who need our help. Heathcote's positioning of participants, for example, becomes particularly evident in her second model, Mantle of the Expert, where she first introduces the notion of the client into her work and where her addressing of the students as competent and responsible, translates into fulfilling a fictional commission. This later developed into the Commission Model where the demands are increased to respond and fulfil the needs of actual client/s.

For Heathcote, teachers are primarily artists. In the classroom, for educational purposes, drama allows us to select and shape materials, design activities, focus attention, and productively distort imagined experiences of space and time. She most often positioned herself as working with young people in a collaborative role, frequently referring to people, of any age, as 'colleagues,' a term which was foregrounded in her second model, Mantle of the Expert, and in the Commission Model (which included actual, rather than fictional clients). For Heathcote, education is much more than planning the formal learning of what is on any curriculum, dictated by bureaucratic institutions. Heathcote was eclectic. She turned to theatre artists (e.g. Brecht, 1964), sociologists (e.g. Goffman, 1974), cultural anthropologists

(e.g. Hall, 1959), socio-cultural theorists (e.g. Britton, 1970; Bruner, 1961; Vygotsky 1978), critical pedagogies (e.g. Freire, 1970), and indeed, to anyone who could provide her with theoretical frameworks for better understanding how drama may illuminate the social, cultural, historical, and ethical complexities of life for people of any age.

2.7.1 'Living Through': Heathcote's first model

Heathcote's first model, 'living through', was her earliest model, and one which placed her practice within the context of the progressive movement in education (Bolton, 1985). Drama was generally accepted by progressivists because it appeared to be about self-expression. Drama appeared to be supported by educational policies at the time. The Hadow Report (1931) stressed activity and experience rather than knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored. In 1967, the Plowden Report put its stamp of approval on progressive education and child-centred approaches. The report's recurring themes are individual learning, flexibility in the curriculum, the use of the environment, learning by discovery, and the importance of the evaluation of children's progress; teachers should 'not assume that only what is measurable is valuable' (Plowden, 1967, p.202).

'Living Through' was her first model and was a useful way of describing Heathcote's early drama work, as it distinguished it from drama for performance. Current practitioners and writers have adopted Process Drama as a term, which stems from Heathcote's 'Living Though' model. Wagner (1976, p.138) popularised the phrase 'man in a mess' which was often used to describe 'living through'.

Heathcote had a great respect for knowledge, but demonstrated, through her practice, the relationship between the participants and the knowledge they would meet, in context, and the knowledge they generated in the process. Heathcote (cited in O'Neill, 2015, p.134) describes her model known as 'living through', as 'Drama used to explore people'. This earlier work was often referred to as 'Man in a Mess', because it was about trying to sort out problems that people found themselves in. The use of teacher in role was a strong feature of this model. This empowered young people to be intrigued, using productive tension. The teacher in this kind of drama would use role to challenge preconceptions; to raise questions, and the class would respond in role. Heathcote would select the context according to the needs and interests of the class. This context might serve as a metaphor for their concerns, and the group would have to agree to accept the 'One Big Lie', and 'an agreement to pretend that we are in the situation we have chosen' (cited in O'Neill, 2015 p. 51).The purpose of this approach was not to perform the drama for an outside audience, but the teacher and the class would be in role in the drama together in order to make meaning from a context for themselves.

Heathcote addressed young people as competent, responsible people, capable of having ideas. The teacher is inside the drama with them, challenging from within the fiction, and reflecting with them on their experience, both inside and outside the drama. She honours their choices and supports the development of their ideas in the drama. They take responsibility for sustaining the drama, supported by the teacher in role, and in resolving the problem implied by the inquiry question. The purpose here is for 'us as a group' to learn about the problems people face and find ways through them.

2.7.2 Mantle of the Expert: Heathcote's second model

What if, in a school classroom, young people of any age had collaborative responsibility for completing a project through activities that would feel challenging even for professionals in their field? What if the project revolved around the lives of people as they navigate difficulties and problems that intrigue everyone? What if the outcomes of the project could make a difference to learners' futures? Inquiry questions, such as these, drive planning for Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert pedagogy (Herbert 1982; Heathcote and Bolton, 1995; Taylor, 2016).

Mantle of the Expert has been used very successfully in engaging children and teaching the curriculum. The seeds of the approach had occupied Heathcote's thinking for some time. The publication of the National Curriculum (1988) ushered in a more formal and traditional method of knowledge transmission, for example, the teacher would be at the blackboard or white board as the key resource within the classroom and was seen as the one who knows. This was then followed by the literacy and numeracy strategies. During this time, it was difficult to implement Dorothy's pedagogies in schools. The difficulty of this situation prompted Bolton to write (2003, p.177):

> If mantle of the expert is to become part of curriculum structure, educationalists need to acquire a vested interest in fundamentally revising current conceptions of education. They must be prepared to inspire politicians, advisers, headteachers and their staff of all curriculum subjects—and introduce it into teacher-training. Left to drama teachers alone, Dorothy's MOE [Mantle of the Expert] will die with her.

Earlier elements from 'Man in a Mess' might still apply in Mantle, but this approach contained the unique feature of taking the common/shared viewpoint into task situations, where a fictional client is involved. The class would collectively run an enterprise of some kind and meet the needs of a fictional client or clients. Through focusing on tasks, this cut out the need for children having to act; instead, they gradually build a collective point of view as people running a particular enterprise to meet the needs of people beyond their workplace. The (fictional) 'client' was a new dimension to Heathcote's work. The enterprise would be selected to carry the learning, and this model focused on the curriculum to be taught. Inclusive language and questioning were always an important feature of Heathcote's work,

and in this model, she introduced the term ‘colleague,’ as the teacher and participating young people would work as colleagues running an agreed enterprise.

Heathcote (cited in O’Neill, 2015, p. 136) wrote about this model: ‘Everyone is “grown up” carrying the responsibilities of adults and facing up to the results of their decisions.’ This definition of Mantle of the Expert also implies a greater shift in power. Heathcote (personal conversation with the author, 1996) devised this way of working because she wanted children to have greater power over their learning. This model brings purpose to the children for the curriculum work under study. Heathcote continues to address participants and treat them as ‘grown ups’, working as a ‘grown up team’. However, in Mantle of the Expert, it is not the teacher doing the addressing, but the fictional ‘client’. The purpose here lies beyond the group in the classroom, and is driven by the client, that is, the person or persons who needs ‘our’ help from the community. Responsibility is therefore extended. This fulfils what Heathcote describes as a very important function: that of developing the self-spectator (Heathcote, 1991; O’Neill, 2015, p.136). It achieves this because our enterprise includes our client and considering this makes everyone aware of why things have to be done. The children recognise the processes they are engaged in, and own their own understanding, which avoids teacher dependence. Because of this dimension of the fictional client, the participants are very aware that what they are doing is for someone else beyond the classroom community, albeit in the fictional world created.

2.7.3 ‘Rolling Role’: Heathcote’s third model

Rolling Role applies the features of the first two models, in foregrounding a fictional community, and devising a new way of accessing the school curriculum. In Rolling Role, teachers share a common fictional context, and the work rolls from one class to another. The participants create a community, although they are not part of the community, or serve it in the way that participants do in a Mantle of the Expert context. There is no one ‘client’ in this system who needs their help. She invented this model to relieve the isolation teachers felt, particularly in secondary schools, and so that students could carry the same context with them from lesson to lesson. The bank of work developed by the participatory team of teachers and students serves to meet the needs of the curriculum. They have access over time to how the community has been, and is now, and they have power over how it develops in the future. In Rolling Role, the participants can identify connections between subjects, as each subject/class explores different facts of the fictional community. Work may be left unfinished by one subject area/class, to be taken up by another; or material created by one subject may be recycled to serve the curriculum needs of another. This model builds on previous models, including Heathcote’s concern that participants make meaning for themselves from the work. She refers to the principles which govern all her teaching models explaining that her core principles have never changed. She always worked ‘within a framework of social and cultural awareness’ (Heathcote, cited in O’Neill, 2015 p.57).

2.7.4 ‘Commission Model’: Heathcote’s fourth model

Heathcote’s most ambitious pedagogy, the Commission Model, remains largely unknown and less used in comparison to Heathcote’s ‘living through’, and Mantle of the Expert models. The Commission Model is most closely aligned with Mantle of the Expert, in that the notion of ‘client’ remains a determining factor which drives the work. However, the client is not fictional, but an actual person or organisation which needs ‘our’ help. The strength of the Commission Model is in its potential to realise Heathcote's emphasis on taking drama across the curriculum, and in contexts outside of the curriculum, and into the community. In Heathcote’s only published Commission project (2003), students at Queen Elizabeth High School designed a garden for Hexham Hospital, to serve the needs of the community. As Heathcote observed of this project: The final form of the garden requires information related to the service of people. Out of the old garden, a growing future…begun in Queen Elizabeth High School, Hexham, to serve all who may use it’ (Heathcote cited in Allen and Handley, 2022, p.13). Heathcote stressed to the teachers in Hexham: ‘this is a teaching enterprise. It’s not just providing a garden. It’s realising what we know because we provided a garden’ (cited in Allen and Handley, 2022, p.13). The students were commissioned to design a hospital garden, but as Heathcote advised (1994) that if you want people to penetrate a difficult thing like a text, it is useful to give them a human being to take evidence from it. This work sought to bring together the feelings likely to be experienced by the future users of the garden, and interestingly, of the garden itself. In one episode, the ‘senior commissioners’ (the teachers) prepared the ‘voices’ of the garden: poetical texts, as if speaking in the ‘voice’ of a garden type (‘The Remembrance Garden’, ‘The Bog Garden’, etc.). They read their texts, the students listened and made notes on their thoughts and impressions (Allen and Handley, 2022, pp.9-10). Here, Heathcote was applying the idea of ‘What if?’— in this case, ‘What if the garden could speak to us?’ She was humanising the garden, and through poetic language, encouraging her students to ‘visualise or note any emergent sense of mood or place’ (Heathcote cited in Allen and Handley, 2022 p. 10). As Allen and Handley point out (2022, p. 10): ‘There was an evocation of “concern” for the people who will use the garden; for example: “People need my silence; they need my tranquillity”.’

Here is an extract from one piece of the text for ‘The Remembrance Garden’ (Heathcote, 2003, p.19):

> I used to feel awkward, unworthy even, when people visited me. It’s awkward, you know when you don’t know what people want from you. As time passed however, I began to get a feel for my role. The people who visit me are not unhappy. I am not a place to grieve. I provide support and encouragement; I help people to regain perspective, to regain control over their lives.

O’Neill (2015, p. 31) stated that Heathcote ‘hoped that involvement in authentic learning would alter the learners’ sense of themselves and their relationship to the world’. This connects to identity, the altering of the self, the evolving knowledge of the self which contributes to the development of identity.

This is how Heathcote explains her vision for the Commission Model (cited in Ozen and Adiguzel, 2017, p. 21):

> I have a dream that has not yet been realized; I would like students, not to learn what their teachers teach them, but be people who solve problems in the outside world that their teachers bring to them…This is actually a radical way of learning. I want students to be citizens of the world. The Commission Model brings Mantle of the Expert to the real world'.

In Mantle, we have 'clients in the head' (or represented by letters, emails, or through various role conventions). In the Commission Model, there are actual clients, who bring their own views and perspective to the work. This might seem like a risk for more vulnerable students who have been let down by schooling. However, the Commission Model offers them something 'real,' not a 'dummy run', which is how Heathcote described a great deal of schooling (1993). For students who have lost faith in formal schooling, this creates an opportunity to realise the significance of what they can bring to the community in a very real sense. Heathcote took the phrase 'dummy runs' from the literacy scholar, James Britton (1970). In dramatic inquiry, there are no 'dummy runs' where students are expected to complete a task simply to make something for only a teacher, or because it has been bureaucratically predetermined.

Heathcote emphasised the need for young people in schools to have a sense of purpose in the 'now time' of their existence. She stated (Heathcote cited in Allen and Handley, 2022, p.3) that they are often told in schools, 'Do it because at some dim and distant future it will be important to you'. She saw, then, that the curriculum in schools represented a 'waiting room,' rather than a place where young people could take on a 'big job.' Heathcote's work, particularly The Commission Model, has the potential to close the gap exposed by the provision and its aims for NEET young people. The purpose of the NEET classification was to assist young people into employment, apprenticeships or further education and the training did not position them as capable and competent, but as young people who were problematic and needing our help.

The Commission Model is a very real undertaking, with real clients, and real outcomes. As Carroll, Anderson and Cameron (2006, p.14) point out, there is no pre-planned curriculum map in the Commission Model. Research into the problem the participants agree to deal with, requires a varied and complex curriculum based on the needs of the commission and the clients. In the Commission Model, the people who need our help are actual people who want our help in the real world. This drives the curriculum. In this way, the connection between schooling and the world beyond the classroom is particularly foregrounded. The Commission Model carries a very real responsibility, where the outcomes will be received by the client, the person/s needing our help. The students are working, as themselves (not in a fictional frame), but positioned as themselves in a new way, for actual people, with

consequences in the real world. Where, in Mantle, the students collaboratively create something for imaginary others, that feels like a significant accomplishment, in the Commission Model, they produce something that has a legacy in the world outside the classroom. Of the Hexham Hospital Garden commission, Heathcote stated (2003, p. 19):

> Our garden would serve so long as the new hospital existed. We were aware that we might be patients in the hospital. Our babies may be born there, and our relations might be visited during times of illness.

In Mantle of the Expert, 'life [is] depicted in a no-penalty zone'; as it is not real, 'it takes the burden of future responsibility temporarily out of the picture' (Heathcote, 1980, p. 88). In the Commission Model, as in Mantle, participants use drama and role to explore the implication of their plans for others. However, in the Commission Model, 'the burden of future responsibility' is never 'out of the picture' (Heathcote in Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p. 88).

Heathcote regarded young people as active contributors, able to make a difference in service to their communities, within and beyond the school, and as critical citizens, embarking on projects that could extend beyond the classroom walls, to presage a more hopeful future for themselves and others. Essentially, the Commission Model is about engaging students with a 'community of practice' (Wenger cited in Carroll, Anderson and Cameron, 2006, p.14). These communities, existing in the wider world of work, are where much real learning in our society occurs. A community of practice is a specific group with a local culture, what James Gee describes as a way of 'seeing, valuing and being in the world' (cited in Carroll, Anderson and Cameron, 2006, p.14).

Examples of The Commission Model are rare, but one example, which claims to draw on Heathcote's Commission Model and Mantle of the Expert Model, is the work of Busby *et al.* (2024). This project, described by Busby *et al.* (2024) took place in Kenya in collaboration with Collar and Tie theatre Company which uses digital technology. The article raises awareness of the anxiety young people feel about the future, that of climate change and the danger of overwhelming them with the responsibility of trying to solve the problems of climate change which has been brought about by earlier generations. Busby therefore focuses on the history of Rock Art, where the young people in Kenya investigate what these works of Art communicate to future generations, which provides some distance from this anxiety. While Busby *et al.* (2024) claim to draw on Heathcote's models and involves people expert in the fields of Rock Art and Science, her description of the process implies a more instructional approach. Busby includes the introduction, via a filmed resource, to the students including , 'when I have returned to you with this digital material, I will need your fresh eyes to help us understand what they tell us about the future of our country and our shared planet' (p.260). There is a focus on 'I' in this introduction to the students, from the teacher/commissioner which seems more like an instruction rather than an invitation to help a client/s or a negotiated response to what the 'client' requires of us. There is an assumption that

the participants will just go along with it as the speaker says, 'Let's go", and there appears to be little negotiation with the students. The way Busby *et al.* (2024) communicate the work implies a more instructional approach, rather than an invitational one, for example: 'The drama work, which is delivered also meant that the children were placed in role as earth scientists and climate activists' (p.261). Despite the shortcomings, the project seemed to have been well and richly resourced including various experts, in rock art and science, intriguing images for young people to interrogate, and an established relationship between Collar and Tie and members of the Kenyan community.

In the next section I compare The Commission Model with Process Drama, to illustrate how the Commission Model is Process Drama plus this additional dimension of working toward the actual community beyond the school. To illustrate this unique dimension of the Commission Model, I will draw on the work of Jonathan Neelands.

2.7.5 Process drama and Heathcote's commission model

Definition of Process Drama:

> Process drama is a complex dramatic encounter. Like other events it evokes an immediate dramatic world bounded in space and time, a world that depends on the consensus of all those present for its existence. Process drama proceeds without a script, its outcome is unpredictable, it lacks a separate audience (O'Neill, 1995, p.xiii).

Definition of The Commission Model:

> The work of the staff and students will be that of responders to the commissions sent to them from the community. The commission will make precise demands and will have a built-in time structure so that when the commission has been accepted, an allowance of time and resources will be decided. The work and the results of the commission will always culminate in a publication that can vary according to the nature of the commission. This builds in standards and quality, because the publication will be submitted to the original commissioners. (Heathcote cited in O'Neill, 2015, p.140)

These definitions may at first sight imply very different practices. While the intentions may be different, I argue that the Commission Model is Process Drama plus. In addition, Heathcote was more concerned with a vision of fiction being more overarching than drama and describes all her four models as forging 'links between schooling and society' (cited in O'Neill, 2015, p.134).

The group working on the 'Richard Burton' commission engaged at times in Process Drama, where I introduced Heathcote's person in role strategy. For example, I introduced Eirwen, my colleague, in role as Sally Burton, Richard Burton's surviving wife (and the person who had commissioned them to honour his life in the town) to unravel the tensions she experienced in their life together. In addition, the stories

we unfolded through Process Drama and the questions it raised for us, became the content of a film for the local community. We used Process Drama plus, to bring in this added dimension of the real-world client, and our work was directed towards that. This highlights one of the most striking differences between Process Drama and the Commission Model - the level of predictability. In the Richard Burton commission, for example, the outcome is not entirely predictable, but the group do commit to the making of a film to honour the life of Richard Burton. Although we predict the outcome, the nature of the film evolves as the students research it and dramatize the dilemmas of his life, which builds in a degree of unpredictability, especially in terms of how it will be received by the community and Sally Burton who commissioned the group. O'Neill (1995) claimed that the features of Process Drama 'owe much to two of the most influential figures in drama in education, Gavin Bolton and Dorothy Heathcote' (p.xvii). O'Neill explained, however, that she had taken a different direction, focusing on the connections between Process Drama and theatre form, where explicit educational outcomes are less emphasised than the intrinsic dramatic fulfilment of the work.

Linking her work to the art form, she says she found it reassuring that 'you didn't have to come out of nowhere, you had the whole world of theatre to support you' (O'Neill cited in Bethlenfalvy, 2017, p.27). I imagine that Heathcote felt that she and the participants also had their whole experience of life to support the drama. Like Heathcote, O'Neill involves herself, using teacher-in-role in the drama. Working with teacher-in-role and the whole group together has also been considered a central element of Heathcote's 'living through' drama, as well as her other models. Heathcote (O'Neill, 2015, p.53) from her first teaching encounter, realised the importance of a group point of view: 'one element … seems to have come from nowhere but which I used in my very first teaching encounter. I knew how to create a group point of view, not cast children into parts as actors are organised.' Process drama 'is a whole-group drama process, essentially improvised in nature, in which attitude is of greater concern than character' (Bowell and Heap, 2013, p.6).

In the Commission Model, Heathcote carries the social element that is present in all her work out into the community. Neelands (2009) also supports this dimension of the social element of his work, in his reflections on the work of two practitioners, whose work he analyses, and which I critique, in this section, to illustrate the uniqueness of the Commission Model. Positioning, agency identity and transformation are particularly relevant to Neelands' work (2009, p.16): They are doing this [the Process Drama] in social circumstances. Drama and Theatre is the quintessential social art form, and this quality is also essential to its educational uses. People must come together in order to make and to share in its makings'.

Process Drama could therefore be seen as a development from Heathcote's 'living through' model and was a significant ingredient in all her models, including the Commission Model. The notion of transformation in this study reflects the changes Neelands (2009) writes about, a change in how the

participants see the world and their part in it, and the changes in who they might become. As Heathcote (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.115) also believed: 'The most important manifestation about this thing called drama is that it must show change'; and 'change must be seen to happen'. Neelands (2009) referred to the term 'ensemble-based' learning (p.16), a term based on his participation in RSC rehearsal and teacher-led drama classes where participants were engaged in a 'shared absorption in the artistic process of dialogic and social meaning making'.

Like Heathcote, Neelands and O'Neill built a culture of community within their practice. In definitions of both the Commission Model and Process Drama, a separate audience in the conventional theatre sense is absent. Work evolved from Process Drama can be created for an audience, but its focus is on the exploratory group experience, the manipulation of theatre processes, and the generation of meaning from these theatre processes for the group. In the Commission Model, the focus is on the community beyond the classroom. There is an added dimension of the real life 'client/s' who requested the work, and whose needs should be met. Both models draw on 'dramatic inquiry' (Edmiston 2010; 2014), as in both models, students raise questions which they explore through drama. The Commission Model offers a more direct connection to drama's application beyond the classroom. It is also a longer-term process, so has the advantage of analysing experiences and stories over months, or even years.

Neelands and Goode (20015, p.157) describe the theatre process 'as involving students engaging with complex areas of human experience' to discover the questions and issues which are relevant to their needs and levels of experience. They continue, 'The process of inquiry is cyclical and ongoing because the nature of theatre is to discover and rediscover new depths in the material in focus' (p.157). I would argue that these elements exist in all of Heathcote's models of teaching, including the Commission Model. The meanings interpreted in Neelands and Goode's (2015) definitions are focused on the group and their interests and the materials presented. In the Commission Model, the purpose is different. The participants interpret the meanings of his life and their significance for the community. The interpretation in Process Drama is focused on the meanings a narrative holds for the group, and the material presented for exploration.

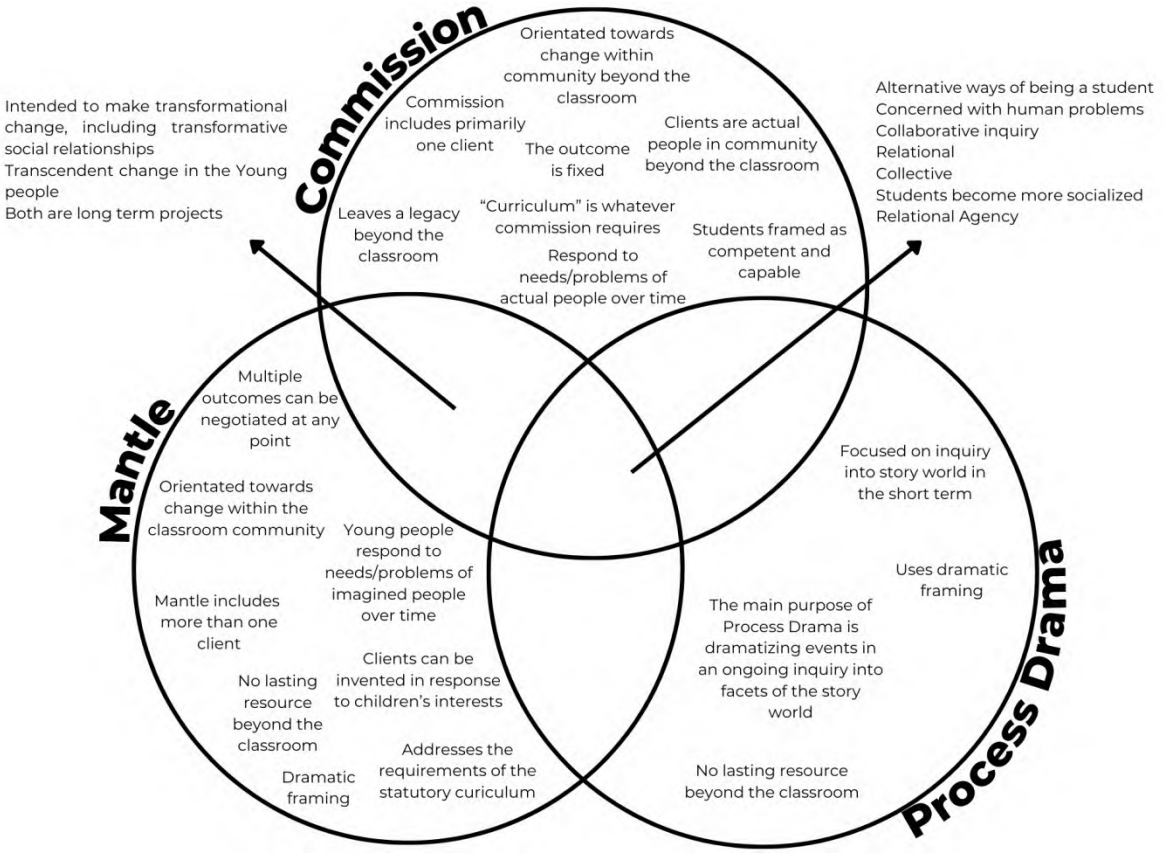

Figure One: commonalities between Commission Model, Process Drama and Mantle of the Expert, and the unique dimension the Commission Model brings to students' learning.

2.8 Marginalised students

Having outlined the value of the Commission Model, I now consider how it may benefit a target group of marginalized students. In this section, I explain the educational context the young people in this research study inhabited.

Young people who are not in education, employment, or training are labelled as 'NEET' by government agencies in England and Wales. These young people are assumed to be hard to reach, regarded as 'lost' to education and training, and thus difficult to re-integrate into the mainstream of economic life. NEET has become regarded as an individual attribute and used in official documents to label young people so that those still in education may be determined to be 'at risk of being NEET.' In this study, I use the term 'marginalised students' in preference to the label NEET.

The classification NEET originated in the England and Wales in the late 1990s, and its use has spread, in varying degrees, to other countries. The purpose of the NEET classification was to assist young

people into employment, apprenticeships or further education. A range of factors were considered as proxies for 'at risk' of being NEET. These included being NEET at least once before, being an unpaid carer, eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM), poor mental health, school exclusions, pregnancy and special educational needs and disabilities (Learning and Work Institute, 20202 p.6). Wrigley (2017) sees the purpose of the label NEET as a political move, and the Labour Party's setting up of the Social Inclusion Unit as a way of tackling the problem of NEETs. He quotes Tony Blair who had stated that, in his view, the best defence against social exclusion was to have a job. The NEET label, at this time, carried negative connotations, and the young people were viewed as deficient. NEETs were seen as a problem, considering the government's desire to reduce unemployment statistics.

The purpose of the NEET agenda was to encourage young, disaffected youth into the employment market through training and apprenticeships and earnings outcomes for young people who were designated 'at risk of NEET'. The Traineeships Programme in Wales provided 16 to 19-years olds with numeracy and literacy support and work experience placements. It seems that the label NEET emerged from a political desire to get young people into further education or employment, and in particular, young people who were perceived in a negative light, as dependent on others, and in need of further support. The training programmes tend to be imposed from a government perspective to address these shortcomings demonstrated by the young people, but it does not appear to pay attention to the perspectives of the young people themselves. This is illustrated in the way in which David Cameron, when he was Prime Minister, addressed young people's social problems. He claimed that he wanted National Citizen Service to become a rite of passage for all 16- and 17-year-olds, as he thought this would change attitudes by bringing young people from communities and give them the skills they would need to get on in life and get a job (Wrigley,2017). Cameron referred to private and voluntary sector organisations which 'succeed in helping the hardest to reach get into work can be rewarded with some of the savings they deliver to the taxpayer' (cited in Wrigley, 2017), which reveals, perhaps, a greater concern for the taxpayer than the students.

As in England and Wales, Reiter and Schlimbach (2015) in their study of a city in West Germany, agreed that the concept of NEET was used as a 'standard statistical indicator for labour market performance' (Reiter and Schlimbach, 2015, p.2). In their research, they found that 'qualitative research is a particularly suitable approach for differentiating the NEET status and depicting the diversity of lived experience behind the label' (p.4). They also found evidence of young people avoiding the label of NEET, by taking on jobs that they found meaningless, so that they would not carry this deficit label. They paid attention to the narratives of young people labelled as NEET and exposed the experience of being NEET from their own perspective. Similarly, my own research study drew on the Narrative Inquiry approach, and while my intention was not to focus on the NEET or at risk of NEET label, the stories of the research participants revealed what they were able to do, when invited to take on a

responsible commission. They were not being helped, but were positioned as helping others, which is not, it seems, a position NEETs or students at risk of NEET are often placed in.

Being labelled NEET can have a detrimental long-term effect on individuals (Ralston *et al.,* 2016). A consistent factor is that NEETs are seen as workless youth who inherently have a problem to be sorted (Yates and Payne, 2006). NEET, as a concept, is framed politically, and implemented in a way which positions them as needing help to get into the workplace but does not address the possibilities of transformative change in individuals, labelled as such, which is something this study addresses. Change is intended, politically, to bring about a change in the employment figures, rather than in young people themselves. Yates and Payne (2006, p.330) state that, initially, there was a 'holistic focus' on the NEET group by policy makers, who looked at the problems young people went through, but this changed as the NEET status became framed in negative terms as reflective of a raft of risks, problems and negative orientations on the part of young people. This assumption which appears to run through the NEET literature is, however, questioned by Yates and Payne's research which identifies other sub-groups within the NEET group - for example, those with temporary parental or caring responsibilities (2006, p.331), as well as those in transitional states for whom being NEET is not necessarily a negative or problematic situation (2006, p.334).

The improvement of employability skills is a common aim of courses for NEET young people. Ralston *et al.* (2016, p.3) argue, however, that NEET young people might suffer from the 'Matthew Effect', a term was coined by sociologist Robert Merton (1968) to describe a phenomenon where often small differences between individuals at the start of their careers can widen over the course of their lives. Several initiatives have been tried to address the needs of students who are at risk of becoming NEET. The following examples of these initiatives illustrate the directness of the approach; the starting point is concerned with fitting youngsters to the economy in low paid jobs. They also illustrate the deficit view of NEETs, who are seen as problematic, and need 'fixing' by training and activities that are imposed on them in a one-size-fits-all approach. This view of NEET young people as problematic results in low expectations of such students. Table Two, lists examples of the provision for NEET young people.

Name of Programme	Focus of Programme	Outcomes of Programme
The Youth Village Transitional Living Programme Manno *et al.* (2014)	Included Money management Job seeking	Research did not find significant differences between this group and the control group
The Learn and Achievement Potential (LEAP) (McIntosh and Barden, 2019).	Targeted individuals who had been involved in the justice system and provided curriculum focused skills for those in school	75% of participants from the group focussing on curriculum skills were

	or employment. A second group enrolled in post-secondary education or job training	either in school or employment in the six months follow up period.
The Traineeship Programme in England (Collis, 2000)	Provided an intensive period of work experience, and work preparation training	75% of participants started in a positive destination (further learning, employment or apprenticeship)
Year Up Programme (PACE) (Fein and and Hamadyk, 2018)	Disadvantaged young people were given 6-month internships based at large organisations	The impact assessment identified the intervention group were more likely to gain employment than their control group

Table Two: Examples of Provision for NEET Young People

All the above initiatives, in Table Two, are researched quantitively, providing percentages of success at attaining employment or meaningful study. They reflect the government aims of reducing numbers of disadvantaged young people, who were not in employment or training. They tend not to describe the process of how things change for individuals so-called 'at risk of NEET.' This study aims to get close to the experiences of marginalised young people, and document the process of their journey, using Narrative Inquiry, to explore their stories, and how they create new stories about themselves.

2.8.1 How Heathcote's humanising pedagogy, in particular the Commission Model challenges the deficit label of 'at risk of NEET'

The Commission Model, I would argue, increases young people's sense of responsibility and realisation of their work, for someone or something beyond the classroom and in the real world. Heathcote (cited in O'Neill 2012, p.58) describes three teaching values that will be built-in from the very start when engaging with a Commission Model project, with all participants:

> These are rigour, responsibility and realisation. The latter is very significant because it embodies a factor often missed out of schooling. Realising now what we have learned, can understand, and put to use in our lives, that previously we had not recognised. Publishing careful organised results provides the necessary casting off point of realisation.

The meanings for the participants in the Commission Model, in addition to the meanings they interpret as a group, relate to how the work will hold meaning for the community, their community. It draws on who they are in their locality, and what they understand about the people they live amongst. We are not just telling a story for ourselves, but we are turning it into something (in the case of the Richard Burton project, a film) for the community. The students in a commission agree to take on the responsibility for presenting their work for their actual community, so the stakes are much higher. The purpose becomes more meaningful for the participants, in the sense that their work will make a difference to the community. The purpose in the Commission Model is more explicit. The work does not remain in the fictional world; it will be witnessed and received by people beyond it. It also becomes more meaningful for the participants' real lives, because the feedback from their efforts comes from people who have requested it and who make use of it. Consequently, it makes a significant difference to the way that the participants begin to see

themselves, it shifts their identity. Participants come to realise that they are people who can do something to make a difference to the lives of others. In so doing, they make a difference to their own lives, to the realisation of what they can do; and a difference to the ways they see themselves and are seen by others. This is particularly relevant for a group of marginalised young people.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the life and work of Dorothy Heathcote. I have moved to her final model of education: the Commission Model. I have also discussed the nature of 'marginalised' students. The purpose of the Commission Model, I have argued, is to encourage a meaningful purpose for young people, in this case those at risk of NEET, in terms of their community beyond the school. It addresses young people as competent and capable and therefore expectations are high, requiring responsibility and commitment in a process that holds meaning for them in their community, and draws on what they already know and can contribute to the process. This contrasts with complying with someone else's agenda as in the NEET programme. In the Commission Model, students are seen as subjects, not objects to fulfil an agenda imposed on them; instead, they are invited to contribute to a request made to them, because of who they are and what they can bring to it.

I have outlined problems with the contemporary conceptualisations of marginalised students, as van Vught, Levels and van der Velden (2024, p.217) specify:

> This risk of being NEET is likely to be associated with a lack of basic skills, such as literacy skills. Literacy is a fundamental, 'key information-processing skill' (OECD, 2013), and while such skills are crucial to learn and obtain new knowledge, not everybody acquires them to a sufficient degree. People with low literacy skills are generally less integrated in society. They are more likely to drop out of school and to be unemployed, and they are also less politically and socially involved...

Being at risk of NEET suggests, then, a deficit view, rather than a positive view of what young people at risk of NEET can do. Rather than aiming to make a change to NEET statistics, the Commission Model aims to change what they are doing and who they are becoming in a collaboratively shared journey. This view is reflected by Freire who maintains that no-one is fully formed and that it is through their own self-experience in the world that they become what they are' (cited in McVeigh and Manlaykhaf, 2021).

In order that young people begin to change the way they see themselves, and the way they are seen by others, they need to be engaged in something that matters to them and make a difference to lives beyond their own. The Commission Model offers the chance to re-position participants so that they are not stuck with the stories they tell about themselves, or others tell them; in other words, they do not need to live

by the NEET story of being deficient. Transformative change in the Commission Model means to 'exist in the world in a grown-up way' (Biesta, 2017, p.98). In this grown-upness, a person recognises their uniqueness, while changing how they relate to others, and acting in the world with more responsibilities (See section 3.2 Transformation, p.58).

Chapter Three addresses the natures of positioning, agency and identity as conceptual tools to develop the concept of transformative change. I will also look at more current research into drama as an instrument for change, sometimes with marginalised young people, and include Heathcote's vision for transformative change. Within this, I will describe her use of Frame (adopted from Goffman, 1974) which shifts the perspectives of participants, thus contributing to a change in the way they are positioned and position themselves. I will address Heathcote's position, to clarify for the reader her worldview. I will draw on drama research which is very close to the intentions of this research, but which uses different models of drama practice, Process Drama and Applied Theatre, and compare this closely with this study, to identify more specifically the unique dimensions that the Commission Model contributes to shifts in positioning, agency and identity.

Chapter Three
Conceptual Framework

Introduction

The framing of the study is around relational agency, relational identity, and positioning. It is evident from Heathcote's writing and practice that affording agency to participants was central to her work. The relational aspect of Heathcote's work was significant throughout her four models. The dimension of colleague relationships repositioned students; Heathcote explains, 'The teacher never uses the voice of the expert instructor. The form of the communication will be as 'helpful colleague' (Heathcote cited in O'Neill, 2015, p.134). Heathcote, writing in 1978, was always concerned with 'what they are in the

process of becoming' (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984 p.18), in other words, their growing identity. All these concepts can be identified in her work in a relational context. I have therefore drawn on the conceptual tools of positioning, relational agency and positional and narrativized identities to reconceptualise her work**.** These have been analysed in relation to the research participants' narratives in Chapter 5.

The purpose of this chapter is to:

a) theorize the nature of positioning, agency and identity, (Holland, 1998: Harre, 2012) as conceptual tools to develop the concept of transformational change;
b) illustrate how these concepts exist in Heathcote's work, (1984, 1991,1995, 2003) in particular, the Commission Model;
c) show how the concept of distancing (Bollough, 1957), contributes to the shifting positioning, agency and identity of participants in the Commission Model;
d) address the context of neo-liberalism, its impact on education, and how this is challenged through an alternative lens, by Biesta (2025), Ball (2017), Jefferson and Anderson (2017), O'Connor (2015), which supports the aims of Heathcote's Commission Model;
e) identify the uniqueness of the Commission Model by drawing on Drama Research such as that by: Bethlenfalvy (2017 & 2023); Bolton and Heathcote (1999); Davis (2014) and Neelands (2009 in O'Connor, 2010).

3.1 Relational agency, positioning and narrativised identities

I begin this Chapter with a definition of Holland's concept of agency and identity, which, in my view intersect with the work of Dorothy Heathcote. I also include Harre's definition of Positioning, to illustrate how this is evident in Heathcote's theory and practice. All three concepts, positioning, agency and identity, intersect and overlap. Holland's definition of Agency is as follows:

> The realized capacity of people to act purposively and reflectively, in more or less complex interrelationships with one another, to reiterate and remake the world, in circumstances where they may consider different courses of action (Holland, 1998, p.5).

3.1.1 Holland's definition of identity

'People tell others who they are, but even more important they tell themselves who they are [these self-understandings are their identities], and then try to act [i.e., with agency] as though they are who they say they are' (Holland *et al.*, 1998 p. 3). Holland *et al* used the terms 'positional identity' and 'relational identity' (1998, pp.137-8). Both terms refer to the same concept. Both refer to the idea that we are relational; we relate to others, and over time, we create relational identity. Teachers are consistently

addressing students as competent and knowledgeable, even when students show very little agency, within Heathcote's pedagogy. However, as the teacher, you are positioning students as competent, as knowledgeable, as capable. Addressing young people as subjects, we invite them to respond. If they feel addressed as objects, that is, being talked at rather than being invited to be part of a dialogue, invites a passive reaction. Only as subjects do people have relational agency to initiate action and offer unique responses in dialogue about a topic. Talking with young people about an event invites dialogue among subjects. Talking *at* students is monologic and objectifies them. Holland *et al* stress that we should 'take imaginary worlds seriously', because people's 'collective ability to imagine themselves in worlds [can] enable the creation of new worlds and new identities' (1998, pp. 280-281). In everyday life, this process is mostly hidden and unconscious. With Heathcote's pedagogy, it may become more visible and intentional. With storying, we are creating new worlds. Dramatizing events opens social spaces where new identities may begin to form, that people may shape when they act with relational agency. In other words, when young people act with more awareness of who others are, and how they may be affected, then they are not only shaping their own dispositions, but are also changing how they identify with others in a particular community.

Anything complex demands a struggle to figure it out. This can include figuring out what Holland *et al.* (1998) see as the relational dimension of our identities, what it means, for example, to live with a person who is an alcoholic. Using Heathcote's pedagogy, we collectively create imagined time-spaces in story worlds, where we can figure out with young people - and they may figure out with one another - how they might respond to other people, in this fictional context. Who young people have been, are, and are becoming, is shaped by interactions in every moment in their lives, inside and outside the walls of any classroom. As teachers, we envision young people becoming more conscious of changes in how they are being, as well as more intentional about how they might be, in relation to others, while also becoming more active in their contribution to transformative change in the social practices of the classroom community, and in this study to the way they contribute to making a change in their community beyond the college. As teachers, we can promote and point out changes, though we recognize that we will not be aware of many changes that may be happening, especially with older students. Improvising in Heathcote's work is a significant tool in mediating and making change more visible and intentional, while developing relational agency, and affecting how young people identify, as students and as people.

3.1.2 Harré's definition of positioning

Harré (2012, p.193) defined 'positioning theory' as being:

> Based on the principle that not everyone involved in a social episode has equal access to rights and duties to perform particular kinds of meaningful actions at that moment and with those

> people. In many interesting cases, the rights and duties determine who can use a certain discourse mode… A cluster of short-term disputable rights, obligations and duties is called a position.

The positioning triangle is an analytical framework that proposes three mutually influential elements in the unfolding of social episodes: positions, storylines, and social forces of discursive acts (Slocum-Bradley, 2009). Positioning refers to the assignment of rights and duties (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999). A storyline is the unfolding of the dynamics of a social episode, which follows an already established pattern or narrative (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003). Positioning is defined as 'processes by which rights and duties are assigned, ascribed, or appropriated and resisted, rejected, or repudiated' (Harré, 2012, p.196). Positioning theory is a lens for understanding relationships. How we address young people can shape who they are becoming as students in the classroom world. How we address them affects the stories they are telling themselves about life within and beyond the classroom

Over time, the 'terms' of how we address students affects how social interactions and practices are 'shaping, anticipating, meeting, or changing who a student thinks she is', which in turn affects how young people tend to respond, and who they may become (Ellsworth, 1997, p.7). Positioning is connected to what you do in relation to other people, in particular, whereas a person's agency can be in relation to what you are doing. Heathcote consistently addressed and referred to young people of any age as 'colleagues.' They were her partners in ongoing explorations, as everyone engaged in inquiries that might become critical, and in which anyone, at any point, might be the 'teacher.' She suggested a possible mission statement: 'All work undertaken shall be in the spirit of stewardship not exploitation' (O'Neill, 2015, p.142).

In contrast to teaching based on 'facts' and 'abstractions,' as a humanizing, transformative teacher, Heathcote was adamant that, 'You are using the human condition of your students, their attitudes, their philosophy, their ideas, and you have got to use them as they really are' (1984, p. 116). Heathcote uses the metaphor of people as living trees, that we could extend to living beings in a forest. What young people already know and bring with them to school (their roots), though unseen, are always affecting potential growth. Teachers are always introducing new ideas and new content, to explore who young people already are, as whole people are, at the 'roots of the tree of knowledge' (Heathcote, 1984, p.123). Because they bring experiences and knowledge with them into the classroom, we need to address them as competent and capable.

Heathcote shows how the learning and teaching possibilities in classrooms may be transformed into an inclusive community that can 'give birth to new knowings in self and others' (O'Neill, 2015 p. 31). In school, work is often decontextualized, and its immediate meaning is often a mystery to students, so it becomes 'contextually contrived'; it does not always connect that learning to the world beyond its

walls. Bolton (2003) carefully describes Heathcote's pedagogy as working with, rather than teaching. Allen and Handley (2022) support this view in their analysis of Heathcote's Commission Model. They state, 'In life learning always takes place in a context: we learn things because we have a need for a particular skill, or knowledge. Schooling, however, takes knowledge out of context' (p. 2).

Heathcote's pedagogy arguably creates the opportunity for participants' positioning to be 'doubled,' as they play with how they might position themselves in invented worlds which are yet interrelated with everyday worlds. Heathcote's pedagogy introduces fictional and fictionalized storylines, with multiple possible subject positions in imagined worlds, as well as the possibility for participants to act, interact, and position one another using discourse as if they were other people, living in a different time and place, or in this case, living in the same place at a different time. Participants in Heathcote's work are shifting in dramatic imagination between the everyday world of the classroom, and the fictional or fictionalized world. In doing so, they are always experiencing a doubled 'gaze,' in the way they can position one another, not only as 'students' and 'teachers' in a classroom, but also as if they are other people elsewhere.

This is an appropriate time to refer to the element of distancing in the work of Heathcote where she maintained that the greater the distance, the closer the participants attend to the meanings within the work and the lives of people who are clearly not them. In theatre, for example in Brecht's work (1964), the concept of distancing is used stylistically, to create an avoidance of emotional involvement with characters and events; to distort familiarly routine conceptions by applying distancing devices, to make the familiar strange. Used this way it is supposed to affect a reflective 'stepping back' and to encourage critical examination. Bullough (1957) describes aspects suitable for broadening the understanding of what distance amounts to. He refers to properties associated with distance, like protection, degrees of involvement and detachment, self-spectatorship, perspective shift, frame distance, etc. In his definitions of terms, Bullough conceives of distance as something causing an 'illuminating outlook' or purveying a 'difference of outlook' (1957, p.94). I would argue that this difference of outlook is broadened when we look beyond ourselves and contribute to the lives of people beyond our immediate circumstances. All three writers Shklovsky (2015), Brecht (2003) and Bolton (1986) display interesting parallels to Bullough's pioneering concept of distance — a phenomenon exhibiting both 'illuminating' (Erikson, 2007), 'transformative', and 'revealing' qualities (Bullough, 1957, p.94-95). This aspect of making the ordinary extra-ordinary, seen in relation to Bullough's concept of putting the outer world of reality out of gear through distancing, brings another aspect relevant to distancing in drama pedagogy into discussion, namely protection. Bullough (1957) claims that distance allows the transformed experience, that a function of distance in relation to this aspect is to allow for a positioning 'outside the context of our personal needs and ends' (1957, p.95).

In the area of drama/theatre education these uses are being applied educationally, and framing and protection, two of the implicit extensions of the distance concept are often applied. These concepts are central to the work of Heathcote and can be considered aspects worth noticing in relation to distancing applied in her pedagogy. On distancing, Bullough (1957) maintained that it enabled us to explore the context without being restricted by modes of our being, but rather as characteristic of the phenomenon. I would argue that the Commission Model in this study aims to do the same thing, by shifting the context of their learning, not restricted to the assigned labels they carry as students at risk of NEET as they look beyond the 'modes of their being' but as people who can attend to a need beyond their own circumstances. In addition, this study explores actual visible shifts in their identity, which were witnessed during working towards the Commission. It is not just a future aspiration but evolving as the work develops. There was a 'casting off point' where the work was handed over to the community, who currently run a Rich History group, which evolved from this study to build on the community involvement which the participants started. The Rich History group has been running for seven years, and continue to explore their local, historical stories. The participants have contributed to a tangible change in the lives of the community, and their identities have shifted throughout, inch by inch.

3.2 Transformation

Transformation in this study looks at the transformation of three students. I am aware that I am zooming in on three young lives, within an educational culture which tends to view them less as people and more as numbers or categories within a system. In this case they have been categorised as at risk of NEET (Not in Education or training), a label which sits within a neoliberal view of education.

3.2.1 Neoliberalism, the need for transformation, and Heathcote

The need for transformation is highlighted in the work of Ball (2017), Biesta (2025), Jefferson and Anderson (2017) who describe the neoliberal context, and its implications for education. Biesta (2025) refers to 'the transformation of clients, patients and also students into customers' (p.320) Considering this, Heathcote's term of the 'client' in her Mantle of the Expert and Commission models may at first seem to reflect the modern concept of the term 'client' with connotations of market forces. However, her intention was not to commodify people as customers, but to view people in the wider community as people we could help and support. Her intention was humanising, and she was writing about the term 'client' in the 1970s when Mantle of the Expert was evolving. Heathcote reflects Biesta's view that 'it is not that an already existing individual changes their view about the world, but rather that individual and world emerge together in a new relationship and with new identities' (2025 p.323). Heathcote's work does not reflect the neoliberal regime of 'standards, measurements and inspection' to 'try to secure the quality of the product on offer' (Biesta, 2025, p.320) but focuses on the quality of what human

beings can do for each other. Thus, Biesta (2025) argues ‘that the one and only pedagogical task is the encompassing concern for the person (p.319).

3.2.2 Transformation as opposed to transmission

For Biesta (2025), the education process is not one of transmission, but of transformation, one in which the ‘whole person is involved, not only his or her cognition, but also his or her feelings, beliefs, attitudes, values, emotions, volitions, habits, predispositions, and actions’ (p.320). On transmission, Heathcote (1991) stated:

> Frequently in teaching, transmission teachers want it now, in sweeps. And they put a plaster on the top, and nobody understands any concepts, and they've made no moves towards understanding anything. But I'm thinking totally differently; and therefore, the work we’ll be doing together, you'll find I do try to show you each minute. (The Thin Screen)

Jefferson and Anderson (2017) recognised the need to transform schools for the 21st century, which O’Connor (2016) claim reflect the outdated factory model of the 1800s. He claims that ‘Rich, broad curriculum designed to create critical, creative citizens has been deliberately replaced by mechanistic functionalist outcomes’ (xi & xii). O’Connor (2016) cited the global education companies’ realisation of their profits from testing regimes, as a replacement of schools run on a factory model to schools, to the idea of schools as competing small businesses. O’Connor introduced Jefferson and Anderson’s (2017) offer of an alternative to the four Cs of the GERM (Global Education Reform Movement), changing Choice, Capitalism, Conformity and Consumerism to Creativity, Critical reflection, Communication and Collaboration. O’Connor (2016) added another ‘C ‘which he sees as necessary to bring about transformation of schools and that is Compassion, and a commitment to social action influenced by the philosophy of Freire, who ‘reminds us that the purpose of education is to make us more fully human’ (cited in Jefferson and Anderson, 2016, p.xiii). Jefferson and Anderson (2017) acknowledged that teachers have attempted to make changes to their teaching but in a system which is stuck in forms of curriculum and learning and privilege the transmission of knowledge. They asserted that ‘in a classic case of ‘cart before the horse’ thinking, testing has been allowed to dictate the curriculum and learning and teaching approaches’ (p.16). Heathcote (1984) believes in the power of teachers to make changes in the worlds of their classrooms. She explained:

> Between these energies, the school curriculum and change in society, stand a collection of teachers, who are freed in the main from ‘hewing of wood and drawing of water. What a privilege and awesome responsibility’ (cited in Johnson and O’Neill, 1984, p.196).

Heathcote claimed that:

> Nothing says they must preserve the present systems of teaching, and we have more to fear as a society if we hang on to the lumbering ox cart (p.196 Johnson and O'Neill (eds), 1984).

Heathcote described this in 1984, (prior to the Education Reform Act 1988, and the establishment of National Curriculum, which brought more stringent systems of control and accountability, at a time when the testing regime of schooling was not as intrusive to the work of teachers as it is currently). Ball (2017) commented on the current education culture in England, 'The embedding of education in a welfare model of common provision, which was always fragile and uncertain in England has been gradually and drastically weakened since 1976 and has been superseded by what might be called a neoliberal model of education, in both organisation and practice (p.2). Ball's (2017) interpretation of neoliberalism is that it is 'antagonistic to the welfare state, which is seen as the source of all evil, and its antidote, which is market-led economic growth' (p.86).

3.2.3 Commission model within a neoliberal context

Throughout her career up until her death in 2011, the changes Heathcote implemented were through teaching alongside teachers in classrooms, rather than focusing on structural changes to the system, while she also recognised the outdated system of schooling. However, her Commission Model adopted a different structure, encompassing the community, taking students beyond the classroom into the community, where they take responsibility for helping others. In her own way she challenged the 'cart before the horse' thinking by encouraging us, through her models of teaching, not to hang on the 'lumbering cart'. Heathcote proposed a mission statement: 'All work undertaken shall be in the spirit of stewardship, not exploitation' (p.142 O'Neill, 2015). In contrast to this in his speech to a Conservative Party Conference Micheal Gove (2009) stated:

> If we are to provide the next generation with anything like a fair chance in the future, we need to ensure that they enter the labour market with the knowledge, skills and qualifications to compete with the best in the world (cited in Ball, p.21).

Gove (2009) here illustrates the neoliberal focus on competition and market forces in the economy. This is reiterated in The White Paper (DfE, 2010) under the coalition Government, who state, 'The truth is, at the moment we [the country] are standing still while others race past' (p.16). Heathcote's approach, in contrast, was concerned with collaboration, rather than competition, and her focus was not just on providing young people with a fair chance 'in the future' but on embracing their strengths in the service of others within their school or college now. This is particularly the case in the Commission Model. Heathcote says of the Commission Model that it 'offers them something 'real,' not a 'dummy run', which is how Heathcote described a great deal of schooling (Heathcote,1993). She stated (Heathcote cited in Allen and Handley, 2022, p.3) that they are often told in schools, 'Do it because at some dim and distant future it will be important to you'. She saw, then, that the curriculum in schools represented a 'waiting room,' rather than a place where young people could take on a 'big job'.

Heathcote wanted students to develop knowledge, skills and qualifications, but built on what they already brought to learning, which they could develop and apply in their community according to their own strengths and the needs of that community. This study aims to share how this humanising pedagogy opens opportunities for student agency, a repositioning of young people beyond the label of 'at risk' of NEET, and a shift in how they see themselves as people, rather than viewing them as commodities for the employment market.

3.2.4 Leadership for change and Heathcote

Heathcote's view (1997), that teachers, and leaders, in their moment-by-moment interactions with young people in classrooms can bring about change is captured in the following:

> A leader who can help groups made up of individuals consider their personal life-view, is in my opinion one of the most important things a teacher (and drama experience) can offer to society, and in the end should sow those seeds of small "p" politics which may turn individuals into aware members of social communities, nations and the world (Heathcote cited in Gillham, 1997, p. 17)

This statement could reflect a school policy. Policy action, according to Ball (2017), is about doing things differently, about change and improvement. Through her practice Heathcote was keen to bring about change in the way young people viewed themselves, which is contrary to policy change which is imposed on teachers and students by the government. Hesten (2013) describes how one of the first tasks Heathcote gave teachers was to transform their classroom into a landscape of imagination, using theatre elements.

This distinction between policies with a big 'P' and policies with a small 'p' has been made by Ball: 'For the most part, a common-sense concept of public policy as something constructed within government (in the broadest sense) what we might call big-P policy (Evans *et al.,*2008, cited in Ball, 2017, p.10). Ball (2017) added that, 'policies are made and remade in many sites, and there are many little-p policies that are formed and enacted within locations and institutions. Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) remind us that 'texts and meanings of policy makers do not always translate directly and obviously into institutional practices' (cited in Ball (2017). Policy action, according to Ball (2017), is about doing things differently, about change and improvement. Heathcote's approach strived to shift young people's position in the world as echoed by Hesten, (2011) who expressed her view, that Heathcote was consistently concerned with the underprivileged and vulnerable in society which led her to a passionate belief in the politics of empowerment. Heathcote, in terms of leadership and

structure, aligned herself with Capra (1996), who states that an emerging structure is facilitated 'by creating a learning culture, by encouraging continual questioning and by rewarding innovation…by creating conditions rather than giving directions (cited in O'Neill, 2015, p.142). Reflecting Capra's view that emergent 'leadership is not limited to a single individual but can be distributed' reflect in her work as a teacher which always drew on people working together. One of the elements she claimed makes drama a possible learning tool is, ''People have to express thinking, feeling, and actions to each other' (cited in O'Neill, 2015, p.42).

Leadership appears to be a significant factor in promoting and embracing Heathcote's pedagogy in schools. Woodrow First School in Redditch, Worcestershire, implements Heathcote pedagogy throughout the school, engaging in all four models including the Commission Model. Their headteacher is fully committed to the pedagogy They continue to run training sessions for other schools in the area and beyond, welcoming students and international teachers to visit their school to witness the practice. This has continued for fourteen years. Grimley and Holt primary in Worcestershire has also adopted the pedagogy, led by the headteacher, and this has also continued for over fourteen years or more. Bealings primary school in Suffolk is another example of a school using Mantle of the Expert over several years, as its key pedagogy, inspired by the commitment of its headteacher. All headteachers were exposed first hand to the work, practice and influence of Dorothy Heathcote, who contributed in person to each school's practice development. In each school, leadership was not limited to one person but drew on people working together.

Heathcote was influenced by William Blake's (1904) quote from *Jerusalem*: 'He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars: minutely organized particular…They do it in the way that matters to them, and because it matters, it has significance' (p.60). For Heathcote change would happen in 'minute particulars'. While Heathcote, focused on the 'minute particulars', those moment-to-moment interactions within classrooms and learning spaces, she sowed the seeds of interest from people beyond the classroom, who were concerned with leadership. Matusiak-Varley (2016), a student of Heathcote and someone who continues to work within school inspectorate organisations at a senior level, based her PhD study on a model of Alchemical leadership based on her observation of Heathcote's teaching of young people and interviews with her about leadership. Her thesis explored the possibility of using a drama in education classroom model of practice, to construct a leadership model that may be used in commercial organisations and in schools. Matusiak-Varley explored the chronological development of the leadership theory continuum to see where the classroom practice of Heathcote may be placed among the recognised models of leadership. References throughout were made to the importance of finding a new model of leadership that can contribute to the many changes facing the leading of organisations in the twenty first century.

According to Jefferson and Anderson (2017), 'learning is transformational when it is a comprehensive shift in how we see ourselves, it involves a recalibration of personality and identity' (p.22). This reflects Heathcote's assertion that she felt that the hardest thing in the world was to show somebody that they actually bring their own experience of life to learning (cited in Matusiak-Varley, 2016), and this is something she also applied to leadership, which is evident from the study by Matusiak-Varley's who explored how Heathcote's approach in classrooms can be applied to leadership which she described as A Model for Alchemical Leadership.

In my research study, I focused on the group I was teaching and in this instance was not constrained by the influences of formal testing and curriculum. The group were part of a bridging year which prepared them to move on to subjects the following year. However, the context of testing regimes and the objectifying of students is something the three subjects had suffered from in their previous schooling. My focus, however, was to create a learning experience that took them beyond the confines of the formal classroom to the community beyond, where their position as students waiting to be taught shifted to young people taking proactive decisions to create a community film which mattered to them and their community. Heathcote's models incorporate Jefferson and Anderson's four Cs, (Creativity, Critical Reflection, Communication and Collaboration) along with O'Connor's C (compassion) and as Heathcote asserted in an interview I conducted and recorded with Heathcote (1997) 'Children are very rarely not compassionate'.

3.2.5 Individualism and the work of Heathcote

Ball (2017) referred to an 'emphasis on a new form of individualism that draws at least in part on 19th century liberal political philosophy' (p.216). He describes 'the state as a 'market maker and regulator, setting and monitoring the terms of the trade, and at the same time allowing new providers to enter and compete, and creating new opportunities for profit from education services' (p. 218). Heathcote always built community in her teaching, and group collaboration. Heathcote (O'Neill, 2015, p.53) from her first teaching encounter, realised the importance of a group point of view. Jefferson and Anderson (2017) asserted that high stake testing tends to separate out skills as disconnected, for example in literacy and numeracy. They also highlighted their view that the inability of this assessment to examine complex connected knowledge, is evident in the current system. Testing is encountered by individual students as individual and there is a tendency to teach young people as individuals, disconnected from each other, with little agency in what is being taught. This was very evident in the literacy and Numeracy hours and in standard assessment tasks.

3.2.6 Heathcote's pedagogy within schools

While Heathcote's pedagogy does not appear to be widely used in schools, she had an enormous influence on teachers she worked with in England, Wales and internationally. Her models contained several and complex concepts of teaching and learning, and even though her models may not have been totally embraced by schools, the impact on individual teachers and schools of elements of her teaching are difficult to statistically quantify. Coupled with this, is the relatively limited research into Heathcote models and pedagogy, so much is unknown regarding the extent of her influence. There is evidence of its use in practice and the growing interest in her work, as evident by the Commission Model's international network and the globally accessed Mantleoftheexpert.com site. A fundamental conclusion, of Sayer's (2013) PhD thesis on the legacy of Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert Model, is that teachers who do not understand drama conventions and theatre form may have difficulty in delivering Heathcote's model successfully. She further concluded that Mantle of the Expert has a better chance of being sustained in English schools than Heathcote's earlier models. This may be since Mantle of the Expert is designed to teach the school curriculum. Where Mantle of the Expert has been embraced by schools, they tend to be primary schools. It may be possible that the lack of experience of expertise in drama in education pedagogy amongst primary school teachers may contribute to its apparent failure to be fully embraced. Sayers (2013) research concludes that the explanations that are offered for this apparent failure include recurring debates about the nature and function of educational drama, political pressures on curriculum design and a shift of interest from educational drama towards applied theatre, as reasons why Heathcote's models do not appear to have been established widely.

Transformative, humanising education creates transformative change, when people come to see themselves differently in relation to others, as they change what they do, how they feel, and how they understand themselves in relation to past, present, or future events. I define transformative change, in this thesis, as that which leads to a willingness 'to make and ponder the distinction between one's desires and their possible desirability' (Biesta, 2017, p.18). Through transformative change, we find the desires in ourselves which help us to 'exist in and with the world in a grown-up way—in the world without being the centre of the world' (Biesta, 2017, p. 98). Biesta (2017) understands grown-up-ness, not in terms of a predictable developmental path from childhood to adolescence to adulthood, but rather, in the ways a person recognizes more of their uniqueness, while changing how they relate to others, and acting in the world with more responsibility. He sees that transformative change can happen, not just in what you know (which is what learning is often reduced to), but in who you are. Teaching should be aimed at grown-up freedom, at the existence of the student in the world as a subject, not an object (Biesta, 2017, p.98).

For change to be transformative, it cannot replicate a passive acceptance of the status quo, of 'the way things are,' in terms of who each young person is in relation to others, and how we are all expected to

be within the school system. Humanizing, transformative change is change that, in collaboration with others, we are all bringing about, to move in the direction of a future that we collectively desire, not just in terms of intended outcomes, but also, more fundamentally, in terms of what we are doing (and thus the people we are becoming) on our shared journey. While education should focus on qualifications, and the commonalities between people, it must also have an emphasis on each person recognizing and developing their own uniqueness and valuing and seeking to understand the particularity of everyone else in the world. Every young person must be regarded and treated as a subject, not an object. In turn, to become more grown-up means seeing more people in the world as subjects; in other words, being expected to act with personal or collective agency, to make distinctive contributions but always in relation to other people. In that sense, grown-up agency is always relational and is not inevitable because of physical growth. Not being grown-up, or not being treated as such, could mean, for example, subsuming one's own ideas or being required to merely comply to someone else's agenda, or acting with agency, with volition, yet without regard for other people's perspectives. Our educational journey with students ideally begins with us imagining the world of the classroom from the position of the young people. As Heathcote puts it, 'I must see the world through my students … I must see what they are in the process of becoming' (O'Neill, 2015, p.12).

Like the education scholar, Anna Stetsenko (2017), I envision that, by transforming the classroom community with students, we are co-creating a more humanizing 'society-in-the-making' (p.355). Biesta shares his thinking at a theoretical level about the way education ought to be, rather than how it is. Stetsenko (2017) is concerned with intervening, challenging and making a change in the world, and has some examples from practice. Biesta's approach (2017) is more responsive, while Stetsenko takes on a transformative, activist stance. For Stetsenko, being an activist means acting on the world to make it better. In order that young people begin to change the way they see themselves, and the way they are seen by others, they need to be engaged in something that matters to them and can make a difference to lives beyond their own. The learning culture we set up for young people needs to offer them opportunities to make choices, to act with agency. Stetsenko (2017) and Biesta (2017) are both in agreement that agency is not something within people but is something they do in action. Biesta, Priestley and Robinson (2015, p. 626) take agency to denote a 'quality of the *engagement* of actors with temporal-relational contexts-for-action, not a quality of the actors' themselves'. Stetsenko (2017) also agrees that agency is not about something that people have, but something that they do. While Biesta emphasises agency as 'the ability to shape our responsiveness to…contexts' (2017, p.13), Stetsenko adopts a more activist stance of challenging the world as it is and challenging the status quo. Characterizing people as 'knowing-being-doing' (2019, p.7), Stetsenko stresses the intertwined nature of what people do in relation to other people, what they already know and are coming to understand, and their ongoing socio-emotional embodied experience of being in particular cultural time-spaces. Put

another way, the epistemic - i.e., how we come to know and understand the world - cannot be separated from the ontological (how we experience being in the world).

Schooling, it might be argued, typically minimises unpredictable experiences, and establishes expected routines in classroom cultures, that may deaden experience in attempts to control learning as change for individuals along predetermined cognitive pathways, to be implemented by teachers, textbooks, or computer programs. Schooling culture can become driven by external 'accountability,' measured by standardized test results rather than being grounded in professional trust in teachers that is built on shared humanizing values and beliefs about the meaning and purpose of education. Both Stetsenko and Heathcote suggest that outcomes for the participants are purposeful and matter to the people engaged in the struggle to make something happen. Stetsenko (2017; 2019) supports this active role of people in education, and stresses that human beings must also be regarded as people who act in the world, and who are coming to know and understand themselves in relation to other people in the world. When young people are invited to do something, rather than have something done to them, their knowing is different, and they come to know something about themselves in relation to the world and activate what they already know. As they engage in a 'commission' which addresses them as competent and capable, they become a different self. Their relationship with the content of knowledge is changed, because of what they do in making that knowledge significant to others. This changes their 'being' as they contribute simultaneously as knowing-being-doing' (Stetsenko, 2019, p.7). Knowing-being-doing is possible only through an engagement in collaborative projects of social transformation, that attempt to transcend the status quo and transform key conflicts in the world 'in the making'; and, while contributing to these projects, they lay claim to their own position and stake on how the world is, and how it could be and ought to be (Stetsenko, 2017, p.366). Stetsenko could be describing Heathcote's pedagogy, when she stresses that people are actively contributing to 'transformative shared social practices', which are 'collaborative meaningful practices/activities of people aimed at purposefully transforming the world in view of the sought-after future' (2017, p.5). However, as Patricia Enciso (2014, p.147) has shown, teachers can use storying with Heathcote's pedagogy both to envision and create transformative change in the cultural world of the classroom: we can 'make change visible' when we 'bring the future forward'. Rather than just talking about our ideas about how things might be, we can embody social interactions, as if that future possibility was happening. Heathcote's (2014, in O'Neill, 2015 p.187) view is that change can only be sustained when settings are not only motivated for learning but are also open to uncertainty and experimentation and reflection as people support each other in a collective effort.

Hesten's thesis (1994), the creation of an archive on the work of Heathcote, provides evidence of Heathcote's holistic approach to learning. Bolton (2003) writes about Heathcote's intention of getting her classes to take responsibility for the work. Heathcote saw education as bringing about change in

people and change is a theme that is referenced by her in her writings. She explains how she sees change occurring through her drama pedagogy. While she saw much of formal education as lacking in real purpose for young people, where they were expected to engage with their learning which promised a future in the years ahead, as she puts it, young people's relationships with peers and teachers may be transformed when,' in relation to activities that feel purposeful because they bring about an imagined future that they care about, they hear: "Today you are good enough and you really are going to do it" (Heathcote, cited in Johnson and O'Neill, 1984 p.178). She saw this change as a shift in the way participants see the world, 'We slowly grow into understanding and change our perspectives … inch by inch' (Heathcote cited in Johnson and O'Neill,1984, p.103).

Heathcote imagined schools as places where young people could be learning for life. She described herself as a radical teacher. Her vision was to transform schools, to 'change the schools so that young people would begin to question what they were told … and in positive ways to find their own deep interests, skills, and competencies so that they become life-long learners' (Cited in O'Neill, 2015, p. 153), as they embark on a potentially life-long exploration of what it would mean for them and other people to be human in society. Young people's rich lives beyond the world of schooling were dignified and respected by Heathcote. She consistently invited young people, teachers and all participants, including those from industry who valued her work, to join her on journeys, which demanded 'rigour, responsibility, and realization' (cited in O'Neill, 2015 p.140). She wanted educators to work alongside participants of any age or perceived ability, to recognise the time, effort and value of worth-while learning, whilst also recognising the responsibility everyone had toward others in the classroom community, and to the community beyond school. Young people must feel connected to peers and teachers in relationships in which they become people who together confront the challenges, and experience the joy of learning, realising what they already know by teaching others, while recognising what more they need to learn.

Heathcote was not interested in generic teaching, targets or abstract standards. Rather, she recognized that young people were on journeys of personal discovery yet rooted in social relationships and cultural worlds. A social pedagogy within a collegiate and collaborative process of inquiry, Heathcote's purpose was always social, never individualistic. Her aims were never superficial, nor aimed at manipulating others. Instead of 'covering' or 'delivering' any predetermined curriculum, she worked alongside young people, seeking together to uncover, explore, create, and mutually recognize more of the complexities of people's lives. Where so much schooling is concerned with black and white, Heathcote steps into the grey of ambiguity and uncertainty - because life is never either 'black' or 'white'. Change in this study reflects the changes Neelands writes about; a change in how they see the world and their part in it, and the changes in who they might become. His examples show a change in how the students see Shakespeare, and the changes they can make in the playing around the play. In

this study, the Commission Model demonstrates a clear change in identity beyond the short term, in how they see themselves as they do something which makes an actual difference to the world of their community. To quote Heathcote (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.115) 'The most important manifestation about this thing called drama is that it must show change' and 'change must be seen to happen'. Like Neelands I believe in that aspiration of hope, where the changes they have made in the way they see themselves sustains them into their futures beyond the college.

Heathcote's work is largely written about by others, as drama in terms of learning outcomes. These include improvised theatre and process drama (O'Neill, 1995; Bowell and Heap, 2013; Morgan and Saxton, 1987) with teaching and pre-planned lessons, O'Neill and Lambert (1982) and Neelands and Goode (2015) with ways in which drama conventions may be employed by teachers. These writings on Heathcote's work are largely focused on how the use of teaching drama in a classroom can be supported and is largely relevant to secondary school drama teachers. Heathcote and Bolton, (1995) and the mantleoftheexpert.com website, (created and managed by Tim Taylor) address drama as a cross curricular means of teaching and learning. Swanson (2017), for example, used Heathcote pedagogy to research the impact of Mantle of the Expert on learning about science, and Grumet (1978) focused on using drama for curriculum inquiry. Taylor (2016) published *A Beginner's Guide to Mantle of the Expert*, which illustrates Heathcote's concepts, and applies them in learning contexts, as a way of offering teachers' guidance on planning, and models which they can try for themselves. These researchers focus then on drama and its use by teachers in the curriculum. This study expands the research by looking at dimensions beyond formal curriculum requirements, and at how the participants learn about themselves, shifting the way they view themselves and are viewed by others, through the way the pedagogy repositions them and affords them agency.

Personal and social development in young people was also explored by Hanlon (2007), Freeman *et al.* (2003), and Chou (2007). Drama's potential for transformational change in individuals' well-being is also reflected in research by Hefferon (2000), which considers the impact of drama on self-esteem. It is informed by the work of Freire (1993; 1998), and symbolic interactionism, e.g. Cooley's (1912) concept of the 'looking-glass-self, where I judge my self-esteem by what others reflect to me' (Hefferon, 2000, p.2). Kipling (2018) considers the notion of healing in Heathcote's praxis. All these researchers explore the potential of drama in bringing about change in a holistic sense.

Heathcote's work reflects the themes of drama theorists and practitioners who explicitly connect their work with Critical Pedagogy. Gallagher (2006, p. 76), for example says of critical ethnography: 'The critical ethnographer of drama has the opportunity to bring the "stories" of the marginalized "other" to a critical agenda in order to examine the discourses and practices that maintain such inequalities'. Heathcote's work is aligned to critical pedagogy, because it was considered revolutionary, in the way

that it shifted the power in the classroom. However, it was not as political in the way that is implied here by Gallagher. Heathcote wanted to bring about change in how people viewed the world and their role within it. Change, for Heathcote, was achieved through what young people did with teachers, and through positive ways in which students could bring about change in the lives of others in their community, drawing on what they could contribute and who they were, thus bringing about positive changes in themselves. Some people have politicized her work, for example Katafiaz (2021) and Gilham (1997) who critiqued and interpreted Heathcote's levels of motivation as political. Heathcote did not approve of Gilham's interpretation of her work, as this was not her intention when she devised these levels (Conversation with the writer, 1997). The levels generated student concern for learning (Taylor, 2018).

Bethlenfalvy *et al*., (2020) researched Heathcote's model 'living through' and a Bondian approach to Theatre in Education. Davis (2014) who strongly influenced Bethlenfalvy's thesis, aimed to raise awareness in students of the social context within the personal, particularly the political context. Davis (2014) sees Heathcote's later model of Mantle of the Expert as moving away from the 'living through' approach and towards a more distancing mode of engagement. He calls for a more direct engagement with the theatre process. Like Heathcote, Davis wants to bring about change, it seems a change in students' awareness of 'society madness and injustice' (Bond, cited in Davis, 2014, p.21) whereas Heathcote too wanted to bring about change and as Bolton (1998) agrees, that Heathcote wanted her pupils to continually make judgements, but not ones that were political. The function of the drama is different in each case; Davis is talking about drama teachers and drama lessons whereas Heathcote is focused on learning across all dimensions of education. Heathcote's work encourages change within individuals within social contexts, while Davis's work is concerned with raising political awareness and exposing them to his political vision. This study, unlike Davis's approach, does not seek to raise political awareness, although this may occur in the process. It positions the group as contributors to their community. Rather than as campaigners for a better society, they take positive action to create a better community. Fulfilling an actual commission creates this positioning and sense of responsibility. In this study about the Richard Burton commission, it also provides a distance between their own lives and the lives of others. The life of Richard Burton acted as a metaphor for their own lives and reflects Heathcote's premise that the further away we are from a situation, the closer we get.

In the Commission Model, Heathcote appears to see a better way of achieving those same aims. However, very little is recorded about Heathcote's invention and application of the Commission Model. Prior to Allen and Handley's article (2022), the few examples recorded shared some of the ways that the Commission Model could be applied in practice (Bolton 2003; Carroll, Anderson and Cameron, 2006; Anderson, Carroll and Cameron, 2009; Davis, 2016). The view that drama in education is a powerful medium that can bring about a change in understanding is evidenced by the number of research

projects, which look at wider issues beyond drama as subject. Grumet (1991) points to the power of narrative in the curriculum. She refers to storytelling as 'a negotiation of power' (1991, p. 68). The students in this study, however, in fulfilling a very real commission, were individually engaged in what Gallagher (2006, p.76) describes as 'a self-other dialogue', where the group is occupied by the 'always shadowy interplay between real and imagined worlds.

In the work of Neelands and Goode (2000), for example, it is evident that while they address the drama curriculum, they are also concerned with agency and want young people to look at the world differently. Both O'Neill (1995) and Neelands (2000; 2009) use process drama and build a culture of community in their practice which intersects with the aims of this study. The Commission Model brings a unique dimension to shifting the agency, positioning and identity of the participants in this research. The Commission Model works towards a real-life commission plus draws on process drama, in striving to navigate the needs of the real life 'client'. It is this new dimension in the Commission Model which makes it unique. Evidence of the use of drama to bring about change is also explored by Bolton (1999) who investigates sociological explorations, Gallagher (2006) who focuses on pedagogy within a socio-cultural context, O'Connor (2007) who applied process drama in the area of Mental Health, and Elliot and Dingwall (2017) who applied drama with 'at risk' students. Werner (2017) applied drama for social justice and Landy and Montgomery (2012) focused on theatre for change. Cahill, (2010), used drama in HIV prevention projects in Vietnam and Yun Sun (2005) who investigated the process of self-discovery and transformative learning in Early years. Neelands (2009, cited in O'Connor, 2010) stated: 'There is here the hope that they can make interpretive choices in the wider world as well, including choices about who they might become or how the world might be reimagined (p.138). Here, Neelands (O'Connor (ed) (2010), shares his view that process drama, through the affording of agency, can lead to a shift in identity, of who the students may become, and how they can imagine the world differently. In describing 'a pedagogy of hope-based-in-action' Neelands asserts that young people are 'offered the possibility of 'futuring' (as Greene, 1978, p.173) described it and actioning a better world for themselves and others is essential to the work of Anna and Jo' (the teachers he refers to in his examples) (p.138). Neelands' (2009) description of process drama and the work of two practitioners, reflects the views and findings of this study. Given that Neelands' analysis of process drama work reflects hope, change and choice, I will analyse what this means and how it intersects with this study. I am in no doubt that for young people engaged and positioned with agency consistently in process drama, who make decisions about the work and the roles they meet within it, that their sense of agency and who they are becoming is increased over time. My question, therefore, is 'How do the students move from interpreting Shakespeare to taking on a different identity in the world? 'How do they move from helping child labourers within the fictional world of drama to making a difference to their community / world outside the classroom?' The links between those questions and how young people shift their identity in

the ‘real world’ through such practice, is tenuous. Neelands’s use of the term ‘hope’ and ‘futuring’ suggests that such a shift is aspirational.

Neelands’s work reflects the promotion of agency, he repositions young people, and they begin to experience different ways of being in the classroom. Neelands (2010) locates his argument within relationships with other people, for example Freire (1970), Dewey (1916), Bruner (1961) Greene (1978), who all write generically about pedagogy. His analysis of the two examples, refer to a generic group of young people and the description is focused on the individual teaching rather than on individual students’ responses. In this study I am trying to document the change in research participants’ shifts in identity and document how the work creates the possibility for them to be transformed, to have more agency, more choice and to be more hopeful. All that is a given in Neelands’ work and in this study. In this study I am demonstrating how this happens for three individual students, which is why I have used Narrative Inquiry as a way of documenting their journeys. This study goes beyond process drama and extends it into the community. This approach includes hope and a shift in their commitment to the real world, for marginalised students, which is demonstrated and evidenced within the twenty-three-month period. It is not simply aspirational.

3.3 Using the Commission Model with marginalised young people for change in positioning, agency and identity

This study seeks to evidence change in how the participants can be in the world. That is change and identity. Neelands refers to agency. He maintains that if the students are offered choices in the classroom, then they know they can look at the world differently. In the same way, Heathcote, delivered at Cleveland State University, March 1976 and referred to by Johnson and O’Neill (1984, p.116) maintained that one of the developments of her work may be,’ just a new awareness, not an understanding but a slight feeling that “There’s something I haven’t conceded before. That is what theatre can do for us”

This study is a close-up of three marginalised young people’s journeys through the process of drama and extending it beyond the classroom to the outside world. I follow closely how three individual students experience the process of meeting the needs of the commission, drawing on who they are, what they know and their strengths at making it work for the community. The Commission Model offers a more direct connection between our intentions for young people and their application beyond the classroom. It is also a longer-term process, so I have the advantage of analysing their experiences and their stories over a twenty-three -month period. It gave me the opportunity to witness their

realisation about the hopes of their achievements within this time frame, to witness the shifts in their agency and identity through their contribution to the world beyond the classroom.

Change in this study reflects the changes Neelands writes about, a change in how they see the world and their part in it, and the changes in who they might become. His examples show a change in how the students see Shakespeare, and the changes they can make in the playing around the play. In this study, the Commission Model demonstrates a clear change in identity beyond the short term, in how they see themselves as they do something which makes an actual difference to the world of their community. To quote Heathcote (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984 p.115): 'The most important manifestation about this thing called drama is that it must show change' and 'change must be seen to happen'.

Recent literature that considers the role of drama with at risk youth is explored by Elliot and Dingwall (2017), Wong and Bundy (2020), Edmiston and Sobjack (2017), and Barlow and Macgregor (2021). Elliot and Dingwall (2017) emphasise the use of role to escape negative stereotyping and to re-engage with schooling and family, and to be seen outside these labels of marginalisation. Wong and Bundy (2020) in their theatre-making processes and performance work with young, marginalized people, noted how the process enabled participants to rethink their current identities and consider different ways of being. They included elements of authentic stories from the lives of the participants. Edmiston and Sobjack (2017) working with 11- to 12-year-old students over a 3-week period found that through Heathcote inspired practice, they developed a more positive self-concept, social reciprocity, a sense of community cohesion, and some shift in their vision of who they are and might become.

Table Three provides a comparison between the features of Heathcote's application of The Commission Model, and the Richard Burton Commission, central to this thesis

	Common Features	Differences
The Garden Commission (Heathcote, 2003) **Fostering Success**	'Using drama systems' to foster success'	
The Richard Burton Commission (Towler-Evans 2016 -2018) **Fostering Success**	For a marginalised group, finding success in their work was very important.	
Heathcote's Garden Commission **Self-Spectator**	Self-spectator Heathcote 'carefully positioned her students so that they became watchers of the event-self spectator outside the action' This was a 'double stance' which invited the group to contemplate the meaning of the work from inside the drama, which created reflection e.g. when they worked with adults in role to represent the community they would meet.	
RB Commission **Self-Spectator**	Self -spectator in the RB Commission. When they met 'Sally Burton' (adult in role) they reflected on her needs and wishes 'inside the drama'. Assim, for example. one of the research participants, brought his 'existing	

	understanding into awareness' when he reflected on the several moves, he had made in his life as he learned about the changes in RB's life.	
Heathcote's Garden Commission **Legacy**	The legacy. Bringing together the feelings of the future users of the hospital garden.	
The RB Commission **Legacy**	The legacy Bringing together the feelings of the future of this work for the community, for example the development of the Rich History Group in the community.	
Heathcote's Garden Commission **Client**	'Throughout the work we carry our 'client' in our heads'	
The RB Commission **Client**	In this process we carried the 'client/s' in our head, Sally Burton and the community who would receive our work	
Heathcote's Garden Commission **Language**	'There will be no pupil talk or teacher talk. This language has to be 'found 'in practice during encounters, so that power and responsibility are shared, and trust develops that promises will be kept'. 'There is less opportunity for instruction and transmission talk'	
The RB Commission **Language**	The language used in this commission was always invitational and inclusive	
Heathcote Garden Commission **Curriculum**		Heathcote refers to 'all the curriculum we would have to engage with' and 'Curriculum Learning will be paramount' (2003). However, Heathcote quotes from Capra and explains that teachers 'were obliged to set aside the usual subject boundaries, for the sake of the "central focus"—to serve the commission, and the team. To some extent at least, then, the commission drives the teaching, and the curriculum is dictated by it.
The RB Commission **Curriculum**		There was less emphasis in this study on areas of the curriculum to be addressed. The focus was on meeting the needs of the commission, as a vehicle for the development of research participants' positioning, agency and identity. Clearly the curriculum areas of drama, writing and media emerged as curriculum areas that were addressed.
Heathcote's Garden Commission **Involvement of Teachers**		This "commission" forms the basis for a programme of teaching across the curriculum. Seniors (Teachers) have never worked in the role before in a dramatic mode. The project team included teachers from different subject areas, which would function as "resources in service of a central focus"
The RB Commission		The teachers involved in the RB Commission, supported but

Involvement of Teachers		didn't work in a dramatic mode. They contributed their skills, from their subject expertise e.g. English teacher supported writing, school officer Film makers, external to the college became mentors in film making
Heathcote's Garden Commission **Dimension in teaching**	Heathcote stressed the importance of what she termed "dimension" in teaching. She defined this as the affective side of the brain that "expands the cognitive aspects and makes the academic study of things in the world mean something" In part, this was a question of "concern", which can "light up the information" The aim was to create a "shift in the head" towards "the affective area" of experience	
RB Commission **The Dimension in Teaching**	In the RB commission, the study of Burton's life meant something to the lives of the research participants. They lived in his community. Learning to script write, to dig deeply into RB'S motivation through acting events from his life to film them were driven by a concern for the community and the request from Sally Burton	
Heathcote's Garden Commission **Learning in Context**	Learning takes place in a context; and to empower children as active "citizens of the world"	
The RB Commission **Learning in Context**	Learning occurred within the context of meeting the needs of others: Sally Burton and the Port Talbot community	
Heathcote's Commission Model **Frame**	Frame Each shift in frame, Heathcote argued, demands a different language and a different way of thinking and knowing Heathcote's emphasis on "frame" may be seen, in this sense, as a shift, from "bodies of knowledge", to "ways of knowing". The shift changes the students' relationship to knowledge and gives them greater ownership over it.	
The RB Commission **Frame**	The research participants in the RB Commission, relationship to knowledge was purposeful and meaningful, because they were framed with responsibility. It was also more humanising. Assim, for example in his research, was surprised when a community member trusted him with documents	
Heathcote's Garden Commission **The impact on participants**	The impact on participants 'This is the first time something I have done in school has been important to anyone'	
The RB Commission **The impact on participants**	Note how the young people in the RB projects reflected on the impact of the commission on them and in Heathcote's Commission There is the indication of what it has done for the Garden commissioners. In both commissions the impact on young people themselves is evident	
Heathcote's Garden Commission **The Other**	The Other Teachers who understand this notion of 'the other 'create for themselves a richer palette of tasks and behaviour than those who set tasks merely for the completing *Every task the commissioners undertook first had a powerful 'other'-the garden for a hospital-to drive it. But each task also had its individual 'otherness' because it was organized to be reflective'* 'Awakening an awareness of self in relation to "Other"	
The RB Commission **The Other**	The community and client's invitation created the other, which shifted the position and behaviour. The creation of scene about 'money 'in RB's life involving Assim, Carl and David provided the 'other' as did the creating of a symbolic map to represent RB's journey. Carl's use of the camera provided him with the 'other'	

Heathcote's Garden Commission **The immediate now time of drama**	'The Sense of the 'immediate now' which is generating its' own future'. School tasks are often set in 'over there' time. (You do it, it will be judged by someone else)	
The RB Commission **The immediate now time of drama**	In the RB commission, participants explore the perspective of Sally Burton in the 'now time' of drama, as if they are talking to her the year following RB's death. They evolve questions they want to ask Michael Sheen, to support their understanding of the pressures of being 'famous'.	
Heathcote's Garden Commission **Humanising the work**	Humanising the Garden Humanizing the "garden" as a "voice" was a way of emphasising the human The structure had moved from understanding "the people using the garden" to "the garden made for the people" Humanizing the "garden" as a "voice" was a way of emphasising the human meaning and value of the "garden," and how it might resonate with or affect the people who visit it.	
The RB Commission **Humanising the work**	Humanizing the objects and location significant to RB was also a way of emphasising the human element and served as a metaphor for their own lives	
Heathcote's Garden Commission **Dimension in Heathcote's work**	The Dimension in Heathcote's work, which she defines as the affective side of the brain, that "expands the cognitive aspects, and makes the academic study of things in the world mean something"	
The RB Commission **Dimension in the RB commission**	This dimension is significant in this thesis, which provides purpose and meaning to the 'curriculum 'the participant study. We investigated the material using drama, historical inquiry skills, and wrote scripts drawn on research and improvisation, we applied poetic language as we explored significant objects in Burton's life	
Heathcote's Garden Commission **Final Presentation of the Commission**	Final presentation of the Commission	Heathcote stated that Commission Model projects should end in a form of "publication" or public sharing, and a major event to mark the occasion Garden Commissioners presented their report to the hospital committee as a series of **active questions** which must be considered before the garden could reach the design stage.
The RB Commission **Final Presentation of the Commission**		The presentation of their work, was less of a dialogue and more of a sharing of the final product

Table Three: Comparison between the Features of Heathcote's application of The Commission Model, and the Richard Burton Commission, central to this thesis

Chapter Four details the methodology I selected to document the narratives of three research participants, designated as being 'at risk' of NEET, as they engage in The Commission Model.

Chapter Four
Methodology and Methods

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters the core overarching themes of the uniqueness of Heathcote's inclusive, invitational approach to teaching, which emerged from her life narrative, was shared. I considered Heathcote's work within an historical context of drama for learning, her emphasis on community, her core principles and holistic view of learning, and how her Commission Model challenges the deficit label of 'at risk of NEET'. These themes have been examined evidencing the gap in existing research. To develop these themes, I described and analysed the pedagogy of Dorothy Heathcote, in particular her Commission Model and how the concepts of positioning, agency and identity are fundamental to her work. Like Freire (1998), she acted to 'enlarge the 'pedagogical space' (p. 64) and never wanted to be confined by the constraints of drama as a discrete subject (O'Neill, 2015). Her vision of fiction was more overarching than drama (O'Neill, 2015, p.134). Heathcote, writing in 1978, was always concerned with 'what they (her participants) are in the process of becoming' (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.18).

As specified in the previous chapter, I am focusing on three participants in my research as it is suggested that a small number of participants are preferable so that I can delve deeply into the stories and analysis in a detailed way (Aarikka-Stenroos, 2013; Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000; Hunter, 2002; Butina, 2015; Muylaert *et al.,*2014). This study focuses on the experiences of young, marginalised people who are exposed to Heathcote pedagogy over a 23-month period. While this research focused on three participants with data collected following the fundamental narrative inquiry principles, their stories were captured across contexts, spaces, and time, sometimes directly e.g. through semi-structured interviews, and at other times their stories were mediated through significant others in their lives e.g. teachers, friends, family members, etc. Inevitably, through working with them as their teacher throughout this time, I learned a great deal, and it developed my practice. However, this was not the focus of this study.

I selected Narrative Inquiry as my research methodology for this study, mainly because the distinctive features align with the principles of Heathcote's pedagogy. David Booth (1994), whose work developed from the teachings of Heathcote and Bolton, has long advocated the power and need for story in our lives. Both Heathcote and Clandinin see knowledge as personal, subjective and unique. Both Narrative Inquiry and Heathcote focus on interaction and language, and most importantly seeks to understand situations though the eyes of the participants.

In this chapter, I outline the research paradigm which informs the methodology adopted in this study and will serve best to answer my research questions. I provide a rationale for drawing on Narrative Inquiry as a research methodology, and how drama and fictionalization, have contributed to the Narrative Inquiry research model as a research tool to explore those research questions. I also detail other qualitative methodologies I considered as possibilities for this study, but which I dismissed in favour of Narrative Inquiry. I will illustrate how Heathcote's pedagogy contributes, as a research tool to the narratives of the research participants. Both Clandinin and Connelly (1994) and Heathcote share a commitment to the power of narratives in the lives of young people. I will, therefore, discuss the values they share, and continue to illustrate how drama as a research tool, within Narrative Inquiry, provides a means through which young people's narratives can be explored, by drawing on my own practical examples, which were guided by Heathcote. Table Four gives a summary of the methods employed in this study, the sequence of the events, dates and places, and the people involved in the research study.

METHOD	WHO	WHEN (TIME)	WHERE (PLACE)	SOCIALITY	HOW DATA WAS RECORDED	DATE OF RECORDING
Participant Observation	Alison, Anwen, Iona plus 5 teachers/ support staff of Gateway groups	Classroom at the College Afternoon INSET September 2016	In a classroom at college	Also, present Head of Gateway courses. To share Heathcote methodology	Iona's and Anwen's field Notes Iona Reflective journal	September 16th, 2016
Participant Observation	Entire group-focus on Carl and David (Research participants)	September 2016 Morning Session	In the classroom at college	Iona, Anwen, Alison, the 17 students. Examining objects and artefacts related to RB's life. Creating RB's study using paper and materials. Carl has his head down. David works individually.	Field Notes from Iona Field Notes from Anwen Iona reflective journal Purposeful conversation with Alison	September 23rd 2016
Participant Observation	Carl] David	September 2016 Morning session	In the classroom at college	Carl and David along with group David represents 'Sally Burton'. Carl 'sculpts' role	Field Notes Mine and Anwen	September 30th 2016
Participant Observation	Focus Carl	September 2016	In RB's birthplace in Pontrhydafen	Walking uphill to pub where RB's father frequented-accepts offer of camera-his peers want to see	Field notes Reflective conversation with Anwen	September 30th 2016

				photographs he has taken		
Participant Observation	Assim (research participant)	October 2016	In the classroom at college	Assim, along with the Gateway group. Assim looks through RB materials. Makes insightful comment about the work of his peers	Voice recorded Reflective discussion with Anwen and Alison	October 7th, 2016
Participant Observation And Unstructured interview	Assim	October 2016	In Port Talbot Visiting memorial to RB	Assim walking with me in Port Talbot Park, says that his 'insight' was a coincidence	Field Notes And unstructured interview	October 7th 2016
Unstructured interview	With Alison	October 2016	In the classroom after the students have left for lunch	Her impressions of this way of working	Field notes My reflections and Anwen's impressions shared collaboratively	June 2017
Participant Observation	Focus on three research participants	October 2016	A visit from the librarian who represents one of our community clients	She has a conversation with the whole group, many of whom share their ideas and work	Field Notes	October 2016
Participant Observation	Focus on Carl	October 2016	Visit to Community Centre Film club	Visit to Community Centre Film Club A group of 8 students joined the local film group in the evening (consisting of around 30 adult members). They wanted to share very draft footage of their work. They had a technical problem so Kenny, one of the students asked for Carl's help. He walked out from the large group and fixed the problem. They all clapped.	Field notes	October 2016
Participant Observation	Focus on Assim	October 2016	Visit to Community Centre Film club Followed by visit to Trina's house a community member	Visit to Community Centre Film Club A group of 8 students joined the local film group in the evening (consisting of around 30 adult members). They wanted to share very draft footage of their work. Following this, Assim was invited to Trina's home. She entrusted him with documents valuable to her. He was surprised to be 'trusted'	Field notes	October 2016
Participant Observation		Classroom at the College	I share my reflective notes with the students, and how the project is impacting me.	Assim decides to share his reflections. We discuss the effect Burton's story is having on us	Field notes	October 2016
Participant Observation	Focus on David and Carl	Classroom at the College	Working on mapping out RB's journey, and	The entire group. Carl followed people's ideas	Voice recorder Field Notes	November 8th, 2016

			representing inanimate objects in the pub where RB's father frequented, in the classroom - desks cleared -map on the floor, where Carl sat to draw routes	by drawing RB's emotional journey. David along with Sheila spoke as if they were the 'bar' in the pub. They built on each other's contribution		
Participant Observation Unstructured conversation	Focus on Assim	November 2016	In the classroom at college	Assim is looking through diaries- connects his life with Burton who wrote 'I am not wanted here' 1941 p.6. Assim shares his own notes and feelings connected to this with the group. I disclose my diary entry to the group	Field notes	November 2016
Participant Observation	Focus on Carl	November 2016	In classroom, continued into Alison's office during lunch break. A visit from Richard Burton's niece	Carl stayed to hear more from RB's niece. She said to him, 'I love your hair' (it was a beautiful amber colour). She asked for details of his hairdresser. Carl responded confidently with the details - smiling.	Voice recorded and field notes	November 16th, 2016
Participant Observation Iona - Unstructured interview with Angela Johns	Focus on Assim	November 2016	Assim interviewing Angela Johns about her memory of knowing Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, for the film	Assim in the film studio. Interview filmed by Greg. accompanied by Carl	Filmed	November 17th, 2016
Participant observation	Focus on Carl	Between 17th November and 31st November. Carl working with Greg (film maker) and small groups of students who are performing their draft scenes, in the film studio	In the film studio - between November and th17 November and 31st November Carl working with Greg ((film maker) and small groups (2/3/4) of students who are performing their draft scenes, once a week	Carl is focused on working on the filming and learning from his mentor Greg.	Video evidence Reflective interview (Iona with Greg)	December 1st, 2016
Participant Observation	Focus on Assim	Assim is to be filmed interviewing Burton's niece.	We work on it together and try out an interview where he is not allowed to interrogate me.	The interview has gone well. Assim feels good about it, and shares the content of it with me on film	Field Notes and film	November 2016
Participant Observation	Focus on David (working with Kenny on Heathcote's motivation levels)	Classroom at College December 2016	In the classroom in the college. Small groups are spread across classroom and corridor working on their contributions to the film	David and Kenny collaborate on David 's (as Burton) monologue drawing on Heathcote's levels of motivation	Voice recorded Field Notes	December 2016
Participant Observation	Focus on David and Assim	Classroom at College	Assim contributes to writing a scene from Burton's life	He works collaboratively with others, showing how a teacher fought to have Burton return to school, after he had left.	Field notes	December 2016

Participant Observation	Focus on Assim Unstructured interview with Assim during visit to St Fagan's Museum and on the return journey home from the theatre on the coach	February 2016 Trip St Fagans and to Cardiff Theatre to watch performance	At St Fagan's On the coach returning from Cardiff	Assim commented on how 'we have entered each other's lives for a day' at St Fagans. He and I were walking together -the whole group wandering around. On the coach returning home we shared stories of our lives. The group on the bus chatting together	Field Notes Voice recording on the coach	February 2017
Participant Observation	Focus on Assim	Trip to Oxford February 2016	Trip to Oxford to visit Burton and Taylor Theatre and Oxford University	In the minibus with 14 members of the group. Assim and I sat together -he talked about his ambition to write	Comments from individual members about the experience My field notes and voice recordings of conversation with Assim	End of February 2017
Unstructured interview	Focus on Assim's story. Talking with Anna, Assim's English teacher about his desire to write	-the day after the Oxford trip, February	In Alison's office	In the office but very informally-Alison is in and out-it is a break time	My field notes where Alison shares Assim's draft of a children's story. She has noticed his commitment to writing	End of February
Participant Observation	Focus on David	March 2017	David with RB's niece. In classroom of the parallel Gateway group	David and RB's niece work in a collective role in response to questions from class of 18 students. They focus on the effect of RB'S brother's accident on him. Iona facilitating	Iona's field notes RB's niece reflections David's responses Voice recorded session Responses of the class	March 21st, 2017
Participant Observation and unstructured interview	Focus on Carl and David	April 2017	At the end of the lesson, lunch time. Carl and David have this conversation about money	During the lesson, Carl and David had selected the theme of money as important, and at this point Carl is more open about the content of the drama and how money affects 'people round here'	Voice recorded Field Notes My reflective notes	April 2017
Participant Observation	Focus on all three, David Carl and particularly Assim-	April 2017	Classroom in the college this is connected to the pervious entry about the theme of 'money'. Assim constructs the scene. David performs and Carl films	Students are spread out into different rooms. Only one boy works on the computer. Carys participates with the boys. Carl on camera, David takes on role of Burton and Assim writes and directs. Assim sees writing as a collaborative activity	Voice recorded Field notes My reflective notes	April 2017
Participant observation	Focus on David	May 2017	Classroom in the college	David shares his problem with girls with a small group of students in the classroom, including three girls. Eight other students present	Field notes Voice recording Iona reflective notes	May 2017

Semi structured interview	Focus on David	May 2017	Alison's office	David talks about his view of drama, 'he didn't think it could be like this'	Field notes Voice recording Iona reflective notes	May 2017
Semi - structured interview	Focus on David	May 2017	Alison's office	David talks about his view of school trips	Field notes Voice recording Iona reflective notes	May 2017
Semi structured interview	Focus on David	May 2017	Alison's office	David talks about his previous bullying by girls and his view of the current group as being 'like a family' following a rehearsal prior to the Gala evening	Field notes Voice recording Iona reflective notes	June 2017
Participant Observation	Focus on Assim. His interview with RB's niece	May 2017	Film studio	Assim talks with me before hand in preparation for the interview The interview is filmed for their story of RB	Field notes Filmed recording	May 2017
Semi structured interview	Anna and Alison	June 2017	Alison's office	Professor Brian Edmiston interviewed them to find out what they though the commission project had done for them	Brian Edmiston's recording and Notes on my reflections with him	June 2017
Semi structured interview	Interview with Greg, film maker	June 2017	Telephone conversation which followed several conversations throughout the course of the work	Greg talks about his view of Carl as competent and responsible. He could trust Carl to execute the filming, and advise on editing	Voice recording	June 2017
Semi structured interview	Interview with Head of Gateway	June 2017	Alison's office	Sharing views about the impact of the commission	Voice recording	June 2017
Participant Observation	Conversations with parents of Assim and Carl's parents and Tony Palmer, who made a documentary about RB 'In from the cold'	June 2017 Evening of the Gala performance and sharing	At the theatre foyer of the college	Their response to the work and the shifts their children had made	Field Notes	June 2017
Semi structured interview	The principle of the college	June 2017 The day after the Gala evening	Principles office	The principle talked about the significance to the students, his beliefs and values	Voice recording	June 2017
Semi structured interview	Focus on Assim	July 2017	In a classroom following our viewing of the entire film they have made and presented	Assim referred to the group as being 'like a family' Talked about his feelings using the metaphors of the green and red dragons. He said the 'braver me' has emerged though this work	Voice recording Iona reflective notes	July 2017
Participant Observation	Focus on Carl	August 2017	In a room in the local library	David joined Kenny and Sheila to work with a group of 8 'A' level media studies students to help with	Field Notes Iona reflective notes	August 2017

				forthcoming Promenade performance to celebrate RB's 92nd birthday		
Unstructured interview	Focus on David	November 2017	In a street in Port Talbot	'I never thought I would see that' as they watched David walking along the road flanked either side by two friends, he had met though the project	Field Notes Iona Reflective Notes	November 2017
Unstructured interview	Focus on Assim	May 2018	In Alison's office	Assim talked through the metaphor of a film his personal struggles, and reflected on the experience of participating in the RB commission	Field notes Voice recording Iona Reflective Notes	May 2018

Table Four: Summary of methods employed in this study

4.1.1 Narrative Inquiry as a methodology for exploring young people's stories as they participate in Heathcote's Commission Model

Narrative inquiry is:

> a way of understanding and inquiring into experience. It is nothing more and nothing less. Narrative inquiry is situated in relationships and in community, and it attends to notions of expertise and knowing in participatory ways (Clandinin, 2013, p.17).

In this section, I will explain the rationale for the choice of this methodology and show the intersections with Heathcote's core principles. I will be undertaking Narrative Inquiry research and illustrating how Heathcote's pedagogy contributes, as a research tool to the narratives of the research participants. I will, therefore, discuss the values they share, and continue to illustrate how drama as a research tool, within Narrative Inquiry, provides a means through which young people's narratives can be explored, by also drawing on my own practical examples, which were guided by Heathcote. Heathcote's pedagogy also reflects the work of narrative inquirers because it looks at the complexity of lives and learning (Schaafsma and Vinz, 2011; Clandinin and Connelly, 1994) and inspired by Connelly and Clandinin's 'reconstruction of meaning' (1988, p. 296).

Clandinin (2013, p.13) stated of Narrative Inquiry, that it is 'situated in relationships and in community, and it attends to notions of expertise and knowing in participatory ways'. This phrase could equally describe the work of Heathcote, and particularly the commission fulfilled by the participants in this study. Just as participants in Clandinin's (2013) research come to 'knowing' in this way, so do the Port Talbot students, and the participants in the Hexham Garden commission. Clandinin's (2013) approach is a more direct one than Heathcote's approach, in the sense that researchers using Narrative Inquiry

listen to actual stories of their lives. Clandinin (2013) provided an example of this related to her Narrative Inquiry with children where they 'took photographs of their belonging places in the classroom, in their homes, in their communities, and together they shared them with one another and with us (researchers), telling and retelling stories of their experiences of belonging' (p.28). Clandinin also asked the group to take a photograph that represented a metaphor of their sense of belonging.

Fictionalization is something Narrative Inquirers have paid attention to (Caine, *et al*., 2017); who noted that the use of pseudonyms is one of the most common forms of fictionalization in Narrative Inquiry. Clandinin (2013) draws on fictionalization within Narrative Inquiry:

> When participants are uncertain about being too visible or too vulnerable as interim research texts are negotiated, sometimes strategies such as fictionalizing and blurring of times, places, and identities become part of the process of negotiation (p. 201).

Clandinin (1995) referred to these fictionalised accounts as cover stories (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995 cited in Caine *et al*., 2017, p.201) which suggested that, as in Heathcote's pedagogy, research participants are protected by the fictional or fictionalized story. Caine *et al.* (2017) recognised the power of fictionalisation in Narrative Inquiry, and the way that enough distance is created to 'perhaps see one's own experiences with new eyes, a strategy for making the familiar strange' (p.202). The recognition and use of fictionalisation by Narrative Inquiry researchers is evident also from the work of Paley (1992) and Murphy (2004). Murphy (2004) describes it as 'moving in and out of worlds, the worlds of the children in the inquiry, the fictionalized world, and the world inhabited by the narrative inquirer' (pp. 45-46). Paley observes that 'through the fictionalizing that carries participant and researcher understandings to new and unanticipated understandings and insights'. Narrative Inquirers such as Clandinin (1995), Caine *et al.* (2017), Paley (1992), and Murphy (2004) recognize, as Heathcote does, the impact of stories on their lives. Baldwin (2016) supported this view when he discussed the notion of thinking with stories: 'Thinking with stories is to take the story as already complete and experience the story having an effect in one's own life' (p.3).

As a teacher, Heathcote, too, sees the world through the eyes of the children/students, and uses what they know (but may not know they know). Heathcote (O'Neill, 2015, p. 12) stated: 'I must also have the ability to see the world through my students and not my students through the world'. She connects their developing narratives to the young people's own culture, by positioning them as 'doers and creators exploiting opportunities so that their skills are needed and welcomed' (O'Neill 2015, p. 144); in Heathcote's case, in the Hospital Garden commission, this took the form of the creation of a memorial garden for their community; and in this study, it took the form of honouring the life of Richard Burton in his local community.

There are features which resonate in the work of both Clandinin and Heathcote. They both actively respect the lived experience of participants. Clandinin observes: 'Narrative inquiry *begins and ends* with a *respect* for ordinary lived experience' (2013, p. 18,); and Heathcote (O'Neill, 2015, p. 14), with reference to excellence in teaching, says: 'this can be achieved only when we recognise that we must pay constant attention to others and be slow to make judgements. This isn't a matter of survival, but a matter of respect.' For the year 9 students, their 'stories to live by' (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994, p. 4) included meeting the needs of the community of Hexham, exploring possible designs which would accommodate different members, and flowers and plants that would flourish. They told stories of the garden from multiple perspectives.

Clandinin (2013, p.147), like Heathcote, grapples with children's stories to live by; she refers to reading field notes 'with the intention of looking for, and identifying, moments where there was a possibility of making a curriculum of lives.' She describes a visit to the Fort Museum, where the teacher, George, engaged two of the children in role play, casting them in the role of natives bringing furs for trade. Many of the children's ancestors would have been the 'natives' to whom George was referring, but he did not ask the children what sense they made of it. During the Bannock-making activity, George instructed the children how to wrap the Bannock dough around sticks. He did not ask the children about the Bannock, although many of them told their teacher that they knew how to make Bannock with their grandmas. It seemed like a missed opportunity to involve the children in 'realizing now what we have learned, can understand, and put to use in our lives, that previously we had not recognised' (O'Neill 2015, p.140). Heathcote's example from the Hexham Garden Commission, provides us with a contrasting view of children, and what they can bring to the process. An example of how Heathcote tapped into what the students already knew about the community of Hexham was when they (the students) taught the staff about the kinds of people they would meet, and the different ways of handling them sensitively, as they explored the kind of hospital space they would favour. Tensions were clearly felt by the visiting teachers, in Clandinin's Narrative Inquiry example, and George's view of Native life as an exotic 'other' reflected their school curriculum guide. Clandinin recognises the way that the children are being positioned here, and how the out-of-school experience contrasted with the school's inquiry approach. She suggests: 'these stories were most visible when marked by tension—that is, by bumping places between stories' (2013, p.147). As we think about our in-classroom curriculum making we know that what happens there is part of a complex unfolding narrative in which children's and teacher's [*sic*] stories are intermingled with subject matter and situated within a nested set of narrative contexts.

The significance of context is apparent in the work of both Heathcote and Narrative Inquirers. Clandinin and Connelly (1994, p. 4) suggest that 'stories to live by' is a term that allows us to 'understand how knowledge, context, and identity are linked and can be understood narratively'. Heathcote, in discussing

the Hexham Garden commission, is acutely aware that, 'we must recognise ourselves as people, co-workers with different contributions (and faults!) to bring to work' (2003, p. 18). Heathcote's pedagogy in her Commission Model reflects, in my view, the work of Clandinin and Connelly (1994). When Heathcote (2003, p. 20) described curriculum, she wrote:

> Curriculum learning will be paramount, but it will be shaken into new connections and blurred at the edges as a holistic approach responds to the contextual demands of commissions.

David Booth (1994), whose work grew out of the teachings of Heathcote and Bolton (1984) has long advocated the power and need for story in our lives. He outlines the process of building a story culture, encouraging teachers to understand the possibilities of story (1999, p.3). Narrative Inquiry supports a story culture by offering possibilities for critically examining personal narratives, performing identity and provoking story communities. An inquirer enters in the midst of this matrix, and progresses in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people's lives, both individual and social (Clandinin, 2013 pp.17-18).

From the outset, these three young people are addressed as competent and capable, reflective of Bakhtin's concept of 'addressivity' (2010), as if they are capable of working as a group who share an expert framing of everyday events. Ideally, the students come to 'identify' as people with more expertise, because the purpose of the work is to meet the needs of a client beyond the classroom (in this case, beyond the college). This is as Heathcote (O'Neill, 2015, p.16) observes 'pupils often find their hard work has no real purpose for the world outside school'

4.1.2 Heathcote and story

> When we res-tory we use our agency to tell a new story about ourselves. We no longer accept someone else's story about us or replicate an earlier story about ourselves (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; p.71).

In this quotation, Clandinin and Connelly share with Heathcote similar principles about the often-untapped resourcefulness of children and young people, and the power of narratives in shaping our lives. Heathcote (1984, p.204) uses story and metaphor to reflect and shape the lives of participants, as she says, 'People have to live in two worlds at once…drama uses fiction and fantasy but makes people more aware of reality'. Heathcote's belief in the power of narratives interconnects with Clandinin (2013) who quotes from Okri (1997, p.46):

> 'we live by stories,
> we also live in them.
> One way or another we are living the stories

planted in us early or along the way,
or we are also living the stories we planted-
knowingly or unknowingly-in ourselves.'

Such fictionalization is addressed in Narrative Inquiry (Caine *et al*., 2017) They point to three purposes of fictionalization; the first purpose is to protect and blur identities of participants and research sites so that fictionalizing times, places and identities are negotiated. The second purpose is the process of creating another to tell more. An example provided by Clandinin is when she was asked by a child to write a story from her own childhood in response to the child's story.

Gray's (1996) view is that the practice-led researcher does not need to have identified a pre-existing research problem before the research process gets under way, as the problem will emerge for the research through the practice. In this study I had already decided on concepts that seemed to exist in Heathcote's work in advance of undertaking the research and or this study, however, through years of teaching experience using Heathcote's approaches, tentative concepts had emerged from my practice as a teacher, so in a sense, like Gray's assertion and Heathcote's practice they were not initially pre-determined, as they emerged from my long experience of teaching using Heathcote pedagogy. My research questions, therefore emerged from practice, and my own experience of recognizing shifts in students' identity as they engage in Heathcote pedagogy over time. In this study I wanted to explore my 'hunch' that Heathcote's pedagogy shifts the positioning, agency and identity of participants, and to identify aspects of her work that contributed to students' positioning, agency and identity.

Gray's (1996) view of drama as research is that the research strategy is carried out through practice, using predominantly methodologies and specific methods which practitioners, who are familiar with teaching through drama, could apply to their research. Norris (2000) for example, cites improvisation as a valuable research tool as a form of inquiry. He sees its value in it as a process which helps us to know what we don't know we know and claims that improvisation is of value to all researchers. In his research, for example, he draws on the "hot seat" (Neelands, 1984) while the class "drills" them in role as newspaper journalists on their research topics, he comments 'The journalists tend to ask a different type of question and often the researcher finds herself/himself articulating things that she/he might not otherwise do" (Norris, p.41).

I wanted the research to give 'voices to participants' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.288), especially as the young people seemed to have had their voices denied during their mainstream schooling. Qualitative research is characterised as involving 'verbal descriptions of real-life situations', and qualitative methods enable 'rich descriptive accounts of the phenomenon under investigation' (Silverman, 2014, p.4) to be a central part of this study. I wanted to tell stories, to capture the

complexities of classroom life. I cannot capture the complexities of the lives and learning of the young people, unless I use a qualitative approach, in this case Narrative Inquiry (Schaafsma and Vinz, 2011; Clandinin and Connelly, 1994).

4.1.3 Authenticity in narrative inquiry

Rosen (1988) refers to authenticity in narrative research as the particular and not the general, which triggers emotion and moves people and gives rise to authenticity. Tannen (1988) supports this view of authenticity and suggests that a reader of a story connects with it by recognising particulars, by imagining the scene in which the particular not the general occur. Heathcote (1984) herself paid attention to the 'particular' and quotes from William Blake (1904), who wrote: 'He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars 'which she applies to authentic teaching behaviours.

Heathcote (in Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.175) provided a list, of what she considers to be authentic teaching which she relates to authentic climates:

1. Seeing students as they really are demonstrating themselves to be
2. Being interested in students as they demonstrate themselves to be
3. Having a personal 'something', a philosophy, a belief a creed, whatever you call it, to stand for from within yourself or derived from the establishment you relate with
4. Realisation and recognition that because one f*eels* to be acting with authenticity, it does not mean that others perceive it as such whether they are participating or observing.

In Narrative research, Schaafsma (2011) discusses stories with Vinz, (2011) within the context of fiction as educational research and authenticity. He raises these questions,

> Have these stories moved, touched or taught us? Are they useful, believable, interesting? Are they generative of readers' stories on related topics? You can assess fictional research according to the standards of any story: degree of engagement and aesthetic standards, verisimilitude and authenticity, and ethical considerations such as integrity (p.111)

While I share the narratives of research participants, my intention is not to create fictional stories but Schaafsma's reflection on the use of fiction in Narrative research raises issues of authenticity. His comments remind me of what Heathcote (1996) said when working with 15- to 16-year-olds on the actual Burke and Hare events with young people in Birmingham (see Chapter 2.3. of this thesis). A young person had asked her, 'Is this real?' to which she replied, 'It's not real, but its truthful', and in any narrator's account of other people's stories, it can never be real in the sense that captures exactly how it was on the day or moment referred to, but as in the Burke and Hare drama context, it is truthful in that it captures the realities of the lives of people at the time and their possible motivations. This is

echoed by Vinz (Schaafsma and Vinz, 2011) as she responds to Schaafsma's comments, 'the important issue for educational research is how these fictional stories relate to the experienced realities of the classroom' (p.111). Authenticity, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2023) is the ability of the researcher to report a situation through the eyes of the participants, and that includes fairness, 'that there should be a complete and balanced representation of the multiple realities in, and constructions of, a situation' (p.185).

I have ensured in my telling of the stories, to focus on the moments I considered significant, and that the research participants themselves considered significant reflective of the work of Rosen (1988) and Tannen (1988). As a teacher and a researcher, I have also attempted to see and be interested in students 'as they are demonstrating themselves to be' (Heathcote in Johnson and O'Neill, 1984 p.175). By applying Heathcote pedagogy through the lens of positioning, agency and identity, selected elements of their narratives illustrate these concepts. I draw on Heathcote's words, on a 'belief…to stand for 'within myself', a conviction of the power of her humanising pedagogy.

4.1.4 Trustworthiness

'To what extent can we trust the narrator or narrators in the depiction of details? What are responsible ways of making those decisions?' - these are questions raised by Schaafzma and Vinz (2011, p.5). Vinz added: 'At what point do we feel it is responsible to surmise what others are thinking or feeling? Is the omniscient - sometimes referred to as the *God's eye*-point of view a tenable or believable narrator stance for narrative researchers?' (pp.105-106). Schaafzma and Vinz (2011) claim that 'all narrators are ultimately unreliable, since perspective is always limited' (p.106) and that in narrative inquiry the subject of narrator reliability necessitates subtle and careful crafting decisions. They, like Peshkin (1985) agree that multiple tellings of the same event enrich the interpretive turn. As Peshkin (1985) notes, narrative inquiry will not transact in the same way for each person.

> 'When I disclose what I have seen, my results invite other researchers to look where I did and see what I saw. My ideas are candidates for others to entertain not necessarily as truth, let alone Truth, but as positions about the nature and meaning of a phenomenon that may fit their sensibility and shape their thinking about their own inquiries' (p. 280).

This reminded me of a time when I had taught a series of lessons applying Heathcote's pedagogy, based on her collaborative planning with me. It meant that my teaching colleague, working alongside me, could 'look at what I did and see what I saw' (Peshkin, 1985), and bring to our reflections our interpretation of the same event, which was coloured by our experience and our worldview. The lessons applied Heathcote's pedagogy. When I reflected on the experience, I felt the strong connection between

Narrative Inquiry, particularly the work of Paley (1992) and Caine (2016) and Heathcote's pedagogy. This work, along with another context Heathcote helped me to plan and teach, is shared in the conclusion to this chapter to support my justification for selecting Narrative Inquiry as a research methodology. It was the connection between fiction and the narratives of participants' lives, that helped to sharpen my justification for my use of Narrative Inquiry. My colleague shared an anecdote about how one of our students at the time, a boy I will refer to as Lee responded. Lee had had a troubled background and was classified as special needs. He totally immersed himself in the work, because he was totally engaged in the story of a fictional client, a 'child' in our drama, we were trying to support with fictional stories. I became interested in Narrative Inquiry and particularly, the role of fictionalization in research.

I as the narrative writer, invited my colleague Eirwen to read several accounts of my writing and to respond to questions such as 'What do you make of it?' 'Do you see what I see?' Each research participant's narrative contains multiple perspectives, for example, the participants perspectives, mine, their peers, their family, their teachers. Some of these perspectives are shared through the lens of the research participant, but others are gleaned separately, through unstructured interviews, conversations, and semi structured interviews as was the case with the school principal, Alison, the school officer, and in Carl's case with Gary, the professional film maker, for example. In Table Five, I clarify the roles of the key people I refer to and gain their perspectives, as part of the research.

Gateway Group 2016-2017 Research Participants	Other students of the Gateway Group 2016-2017 who contributed to the narratives in this research 2016-2017	Gateway Group 2017-2018	Adults	Community Members, and volunteers involved in research
Carl, David and Assim Students of the Gateway Group 2016-2017	Alan Sheila Kenny Kenny P Sian Carys Lee Simon Carol	Kathy, who was interviewed by research participant David	Eirwen Hopkins Project Manager of Burton@14 and A Gateway Welfare Officer English teacher The Principal of the College Head of Teaching and College Teachers and support staff of 'at risk of NEET' students	Trina from the community film group RB's niece Local author Parents of Research Participants Michael Sheen Jack -Amateur Film maker Librarian from local library Archivists from Swansea University

Table Five: The roles of key people I refer to in this study

4.1.5 Credibility

In order that I was able to present my own narrative and that of the research participants adequately, I provided opportunities for each to review the research work on a termly basis at least. They were also invited to look at anything recorded at any point in between these times, so that multiple realities were presented. I decided that the best form of doing this was informally, as this is more immediate and

involves recordings or transcripts being played back, or observations as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). This provided me with opportunities to check that the meaning participants had intended were accurate. It also meant that participants could recall additional points/ideas, correct errors and provide content.

4.2 The role of the researcher in narrative inquiry

Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) make clear that Narrative Inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience. It is situated in relationships and in community and attends to knowing in relational and participatory ways. Narrative inquirers see their research as relational research. They are part of the inquiry, and the threads of their stories are intertwined through the research with the threads of the participants' stories. Geertz (1995) where he explored the concept of the stories people tell themselves (Zatzman, 2006). Clandinin (2013, p.18) stated:

> Narrative inquiry begins and ends with a respect for ordinary lived experience. … Respect entails an honouring of the lives and stories of others who have trusted us enough to share their stories with us.

Cardinal (2011, p.86) discusses the responsibility that is closely connected to respect, when investigating the stories of her relatives: 'As I held their stories in my hands, I realized what an honor and a deep responsibility I had now to care for them'. She quotes Barry Lopez (cited in Cardinal 2011, p. 85):

> Remember only this one thing. The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. If stories come to you, care for them. And learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive. That is why we put these stories in each other's memory. This is how people care for themselves.

This implies that when people share stories, they are sharing something of themselves, their own lives. Respect, for me, means that we honour their stories, we reveal their stories rather than represent them in our own way, we allow their stories to speak to others. As with the Aboriginal peoples, whose stories Lopez shares (1990), it is clear that they own the stories, and that is the power of their stories which needs to be shared. Cardinal observes (2011, p. 84) that—through research for her thesis, 'For All My Relations'—she learned 'that I cannot speak for the family who stayed on the reserve. I cannot fully understand their stories'.

In researching a group of young people, and uncovering their stories, I am trying to make sense of them and interpret them, alongside them. I am adopting insider and outsider research. My role in the work cannot be one of an objective researcher, as I am part of the evolving storylines that emerge as part of the work, we do together, and my stories and their stories connect. Since the work is drama based, and

interactive dialogue, students' positions are often revealed though non-verbal body language, facial expression, and the context within which these are viewed provides a holistic picture of them.

4.2.1 What is unique about narrative inquiry as a research methodology?

What is unique about Narrative Inquiry is the significance of the researcher's storied life (Harré, 1979) as part of the study, and the ways this is intertwined with the storied lives of the participants (Holland *et al.*, 1998). As I consider my stories, some of which I share with participants, it has led me to consider questions such as, 'What brought me here?' As a practitioner-researcher, it also leads me to ask questions such as, 'What are the stories that make me the teacher I have become, and am still becoming? How have my narratives worked on me?' Clandinin (2013) recognizes that, as Narrative Inquirers, we become part of the participants' lives, and they part of ours. Therefore, our lives—and who we are, and are becoming, our landscapes and theirs—are also under study. What brought me to work with young people on the edge of institutional learning? Where do my stories resonate with theirs (cited in Lin, 2013, p. 135) who observes: 'Regardless of the type of narrative inquiry undertaken, the current critique calls attention to the researcher's presence and why it must be taken into account from the start.' Clandinin and Connelly (1994, p. 422) warn 'when we become characters in their stories, we change their stories'; and so, we must consider how, in representing their stories, 'our research texts shape their lives'. Insider and outsider research pays attention to these dimensions of Narrative Inquiry. One of the implications of my research questions is, 'How do changes in the classroom culture, the social relationships, the power relations, the positioning of adults and young people, and the use of dramatic pedagogy, all seem to make a difference, if any, to the identities and agency of young people labelled as "at risk of NEET"'?. The Commission Model offers them a different narrative of how they are positioned, what they are invited to do, how they are addressed as capable and competent, and how they can contribute to the narrative of others in their town of Port Talbot.

Morris (2001, p.55) also makes the distinction between thinking about stories and thinking with stories, which 'is a process in which we as thinkers do not so much work on narrative as take the radical step back … of allowing narrative to work on us.' Therefore, this way of researching brings new insights into my practice and indeed my life and helps me see why there are resonances between my narratives, and those of the research subjects. Kramp observed (2004, p.104): 'What distinguishes narrative as a mode of inquiry, is that both the process, a narrator/participant telling or narrating, and the product, the story or narrative told' is part of the research. When you use Narrative Inquiry, you tell stories. For the teacher, it is a way to capture the complexity of classroom life, as opposed to reducing life to observable data. You are, in any case, never in an objective position. Narrative Inquiry is very useful for teachers because you are acknowledging that you are part of the study. You were there. You have stories to tell. You are trying to report what happened, and you can use stories to show some change in people as

subjects, as whole human beings, or, to use Stetsenko's term (2019, p. 7), as 'knowing-being-doing' individuals, who are becoming changed in some way across time, in terms of what they know, can do, and who they are becoming. Your stories can be about yourself, your experiences, and/or the young people. Narratives are stories told by someone about past events. Narrative Inquiry involves exploring a topic, focused by implicit and explicit questions, over time. It is using narratives to explore a topic from viewpoints and positions of different narrators, at different times, and in different contexts.

In the next section I will discuss Drama as a research tool in relation to Dorothy Heathcote's work to illustrate how the drama model we were engaged in contributed to the young people's narratives and fed into the Narrative Inquiry methodology.

4.3 Drama as research

Heathcote, according to, Haseman (2014), was a practice-led researcher, long before we had a category to understand and explain the species of research she was inventing. Bolton (1996) at the Institute of Drama Education, in Brisbane sensed 'the possibility of drama itself being an investigatory tool' (p.187). If we consider Heathcote as a practice-led researcher, we find her methodology reflected in Gray's (1996) assertion that research which is initiated in practice, questions problems, and challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioner. I would assert that this study focuses on the needs of the participants, and the challenges identified are on their needs and responses to working on Heathcote's Commission Model. When using dramatic inquiry (Edmiston 2014), as the term suggests, as teachers we are always inquiring alongside our young people and reflecting on our practice. In this study the use of drama and story served to reveal the different perspectives of the three focused research participants. Many drama classrooms have highly complex meaning-making activities that are parallel to those of researchers (Bolton, 1996).

The findings drawn from the experience of participating in a drama, and/or entering the fictional stories of other people's world at a different time and place, as in this study, is supported by Norris (2000) who describes the drama research he engaged in, related to a performance, *Snapshots of Playing Together* (Mirror Theatre, 1991). He suggested that the Play-building stage parallels focus group research. The casts, as informants, provide data from which a performance will emerge. The difference in his view is that the data is analysed and disseminated dramatically. The construction of the scene with the participants used dramatic techniques in the data collection, analysis and dissemination stages. For Norris the potential of drama as research is fully realized when the dramatic activities shape the presentation, rather than when data is translated into a play.

I would argue that the devising of episodes related to RB's life, the challenges of his life, also shaped, not simply their presentations in the film, which featured two of the research participants (the third research participant working as the cameraman and assistant editor) but their perceptions of him, of each other, and of themselves in the making of the work. This provided data which fed into their own narratives, their personal narratives often colliding with the narratives of people, like Burton, for example with their own life narratives. In the view of Norris (2000), drama becomes a complete research activity and is applied to when data is collected, analysed and presented in dramatic form. However, in this study I am less concerned in drama becoming a complete research activity, but in acting as a vehicle through which the stories of the participants emerge, sometimes directly and at other times through the metaphor of Richard Burton's narrative, within the context of a Narrative Inquiry.

In drama classrooms, students continually generate and test hypotheses through the magic of 'if'. Research is nothing new to the drama classroom; it is embedded in the warp and woof of our fabric (Norris, 2000, p.41). The use of drama to inquire and explore the fictionalised lives of actual people from the past, therefore, served as a research tool and contributed to a Narrative Inquiry which explored the pedagogical lives of the research participants, often through the metaphor of the lives of others. Live performance, performed by the group I was working with, was not something they would have felt comfortable with, yet exploring a narrative of a local celebrity seemed to intrigue them. In many ways, the drama was useful as an investigatory tool, when they questioned across time Sally Burton (represented by my colleague Eirwen in role as Sally Burton) as she collected her husband's personal and academic possessions, following his death. The investigation at this point was into the life of Richard Burton, and the drama convention of talking to a role across time, was an opportunity for the students to explore Burton's relationship with his wife. It also revealed their feelings of loyalty, family values, compassion and what mattered to her, and to them, as they worked to fulfil a commission for her to honour the life of her husband. The story they were investigating was of someone else's life, but as the analysis reveals, often resonated with their own lives and experiences. Norris (2000) too supports the value of drama itself as a research tool. Drama as research is growing in popularity and, while presently most research is translated into theatre after the data collection and analysis stages, Norris has provided a beginning model indicating how drama discipline may contribute to research at all stages. He feels that we have a valuable contribution to make to the research community, one that utilizes the full potential of the drama discipline.

Haseman (2014) argues that 'Heathcote and her colleagues knew that the dynamics of the drama classroom with its transformatory learning-in-action cannot be adequately captured in numbers and words - the symbolic languages of traditional scholarship' (p.2). McLeod (1988) challenges teachers to expand their teaching repertoire to include more of the other ways of knowing and representing in their

classrooms, beyond words and number' (p.24). O'Neill (cited in Taylor, 1996, p.142) supported this view, and stated:

> It is frustrating that so many researchers, including those of university PhD committees, still seem to believe that quantitative methods carry more weight, more 'truth', and are more persuasive than other methods…What is this urge to pin down creativity with numbers?

O'Neill added: 'many theorists in a variety of subject areas use drama as a model or metaphor in their own thinking'. Burke, Goffman and Burns, among others, have viewed their subject through the lens of drama' (Taylor (ed) p.142) and, like Heathcote, O'Neill (1996) saw the field of drama as a research site which is itself a laboratory.

If research means to 're-look' as Walker (1991) puts it, then this is a challenge to be made to those of us in educational research to find as many ways of looking and re-looking at the world around us, as we can find. The interpretation of the unfolding stories of the research participants in this study found in Chapter 4, relies on several ways of 're looking', including through gesture, what they say and what they don't say, as well as through the images they create and make. Narrative inquiry allowed me to witness their unfolding and changing stories, while sharing my own. It provided me with a vehicle for getting in close to their evolving narratives, either directly or via their reflections on the fictionalized stories of people who once lived in their town. Thus, I aimed for depth, authenticity, richness, trustworthiness (Winter, 2000; Flick, 2002). Taylor and Littleton (2006) suggested that 'a research narrative can become satisfying when it recognises that there are multiple positions and stances around any given event. Researchers need to struggle with the many perspectives and voices while acknowledging the contradictory tensions that often power the human experience' (Ackroyd, 2006, p.12). This reflection of the challenges of drama and narrative inquiry apply to this study. Making sense of participants' experience, using drama, and capturing the meaning of drama events with all its complexity, aligns with the practice of Heathcote's drama and the search to make meaning from the narratives of research participants. Many drama classrooms have highly complex meaning-making activities that are parallel to those of researchers. Bolton (1996) identified how some delegates of the 1995 Institute of Drama Education Research in Brisbane saw 'the possibility of drama itself as an investigatory tool' (p.187). Much of what we do in process drama helps us to re-look at content to draw insights and make new meanings; this act can be considered a research tool (Norris, 2016, p.127). Hatton *et al.* (2019 p. xx) developed this notion: 'We did not merely want to ask what drama research is, but what it does and can become?' (p.18)

Heathcote's work as inquiry, has been well documented by Edmiston (2010, 2014) who coined the phrase 'dramatic Inquiry'. Hatton *et al.* (2019, p.11) include a quote from Heathcote which inspires her work on drama as research:

> My task as I see it to arm myself well for this struggle, so as to lead my class well into this forest of ideas, where light, dark, soft, hard, shallow, deep elements wait so that we carry well-guarded the questions to which we have as yet no answers.

For Hatton *et al.* (2019) students in Heathcote inspired classrooms are already 'researchers. As they are in drama classes generally: 'students continually generate and test hypotheses through the magic of "what if." Research is nothing new to the drama classroom; it is embedded in the warp and woof of our fabric' (Hatton *et al.,* 2019, p.10).

Drawing on the ingredients of drama, such as contrast, theatre elements, and metaphor, extends and deepens the participants narratives and multiplicity of views. In this study, for example, recreating RB's emotional journey through the making of a physical map, encouraged research participants to interpret moments in his life. I therefore argue that drama as a research approach is a useful contribution to Narrative Inquiry. Like Narrative Inquiry drama as a research approach is a model of research, which is 'not bounded in the same way as outside models of research' (Neelands, cited in Ackroyd, 2006, p.17). Gallagher and Sallis (cited in Duffy, Hatton and Sallis, 2019) considered how drama interplays with the 'real' worlds that inform the creative inquiry. Drama provides us with experiences in two worlds, the 'as if' world of the fiction and the 'as is' world of the classroom (Edmiston, 2003) which yields rich data we might otherwise miss. Hatton (2019) inspired by Heathcote (2005/2010, p.8-23), reminded drama educators that 'all our practice is situated, contextual and steeped in imaginative worlding of one kind or another' where 'the artistic moments we create bring diverse stories and worlds into being though enactment in 'now time'. Drama as a tool within Narrative Inquiry therefore extends the narratives of young people who explore meaning though imaginative, fictional and fictionalized worlds. Drama as a tool has been utilised in the work of Narrative inquirers such as Paley (1992) and Caine *et al.* (2019, 2021).

In the work of Hatton, Duffy and Sallis (2019) researchers share their use of drama as a research tool in pairs, foregrounding a dialogue between researchers, creating a reflective and dialogic approach, which supports a deep interrogation of assumptions. This reflects the view of Arendt's model of active citizenship on a shared space of appearances, in which she suggests: The presence of others who see what we see and hear what we hear assures us of the reality of the world and ourselves (1958, p.50). Drama as research focuses on practice-based knowledge, participation and lived experience which can produce rich, embodied, and relational insights. Drama as research also blurs the lines between doing and knowing, which makes it a particularly relevant approach to a teaching and learning context, in particular one which involves working though drama. Such research can be inclusive and empowering which better reflects the perspectives of participants. The emphasis on collaborative inquiry and co-creation supports the researcher's ethical concerns. However, there is the challenge of grappling with

ethical and methodological tensions, reflecting on how researchers' presence and methods shape the research.

Drama as a research tool, being relatively new, may not fit easily into the expectations of education research paradigms and the challenge of representing practice-based research in non-traditional forms of representation, for example transcripts of dialogue and sharing of stories, which can challenge standard expectations of data and analysis. However, drama research opens new ways of knowing that conventional methods often miss. This study provided a fertile ground for drama research which naturally stemmed from the drama worlds we explored. Drama supported the exploration of the narratives of the research participants, by opening new and fictional worlds which extended and enriched their storied lives.

4.4 Participant observation

Participant observation is the 'most subtly intrusive' (Simpson and Tuson, 2003, p.14) form of observation since it requires the researcher to be an empathetic, sympathetic member of a group, in order to gain access to insiders' behaviours and activities, whilst still acting as a researcher with a degree of detachment (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). It can help in guiding relationships with participants, find out about interactions and relationships, raise questions for further investigation. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) argue that by being fully involved in a particular context over time significant features will emerge, and a more holistic view will be gathered. From such research 'thick descriptions', particularly of social processes and interaction emerge, which lend itself to interpretation of events rather than relying on the researcher's own inferences. According to Connelly and Clandinin, (1990), field records collected through participant observation in a shared practical setting is one of the primary tools of narrative inquiry work. This is also evident in the reflections of Blix *et al*., 2024) where they explore the significance of reciprocity though the relational. Narrative research design focuses on interviewing a person, collecting information from stories, reporting experiences, and drawing the meaning of those experiences for the individual (Creswell and Creswell, 2023) Similarly, Cohen Manion and Morrison (2018) identify key elements of participant observation, which includes visual observation, document analysis, interviewing, direct observation and introspection. Therefore, participant observation is an appropriate tool for this study.

According to Spradley (1980), the participant observer comes to a social situation with two purposes, one to engage in activities appropriate to the situation and two, to observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation. He explains that the 'ordinary participant' (p.54) comes to that same situation with only one purpose to engage in the appropriate activities. Gray *et al.* (2022) also draws our attention to the notion of paying particular attention to elements such as language and the ways in

which terms are used in certain cultures, when we enter a context as a participant observer. Therefore, the participant observer comes to the situation with an explicit awareness, to notice details that are normally overlooked. In my work, I would normally focus on the first element, to engage in activities appropriate to the situation, and most importantly in my work to engage the participants, to find a way of attracting them into the context of the learning context and maintain their engagement and develop their commitment to the work. I may not, daily, pay attention to the concepts I have selected to examine for this study, namely positioning, agency and identity. I would not ordinarily be documenting verbatim utterances made by my research participants, or noting their proximity to others in the group, or recording their group conversations, and documenting the agency they demonstrated or otherwise within the context of the work. Spradley (1980) states 'for the participant observer, a wide observational focus leads to some of the most important data' (p.56), so being aware of groupings, where participants chose to sit and with whom, who responds, who remains distant are elements I may ordinarily overlook as an 'ordinary' observer.

4.4.1 Insider/outsider research

Negotiating entry and access to a group for research purposes was not an issue for me in the context of this study, as my role within the process was to be the visiting teacher/practitioner over a period with a group of young people who were designated 'at risk of NEET'. From the outset, then, I was seen as someone, albeit an outsider, contributing to the work as a visiting teacher, rather than someone who was coming in to primarily do research. My role was twofold, to find ways of using Heathcote's Commission Model to engage the young people in the story of RB and to connect with their locality. I was also interested in the narratives of young people's pedagogical lives, as they engaged in this work, and how far their positioning, agency and identity seemed to shift.

I was welcomed by the college, because they were delighted to have this additional provision for their young people. In the previous year Eirwen and I had invited another group at the college to advise us on our planning for the Burton Commission. They were surprised to be asked and pleased that their views would be documented for the funding application for The Heritage Lottery and influence our work with another group.

This opportunity of working with young people over a period of time provided possibilities for insider research. Defined as 'conducting research with communities in identity groups of which one is a member' (Kanuha, 2000, p.440), insider status has the potential to influence the whole research process (Hockey,1993). The challenges of undertaking qualitative research as an insider are increasingly being addressed by practitioner researchers in their places of work (Coghlan, 2007; Drake, 2010; Moore, 2007). I was not an insider in the same way, although over time I was able to build relationships with

the young people and the teachers at the college and became more of an insider. Pike (1954) argued that emic and etic research 'lenses' complement each other and can assist researchers to make sense of a deeper cultural story. But he adds the caution that too much focus on the etic (the universal), especially when researchers enter distinctly different cultural settings from their own, can distort the story or even overlook it completely. My focus has been on the emic lens, to connect their stories and my own, rather than on the universal meanings of such stories. That is for the reader to decide. However, I did not carry the baggage of having a history at the college. Neither was I seen as a colleague with previous working relationships with colleagues at the college or carry any of the possible tensions of that position. The advantages of this were that I had no previous knowledge of the history of the young people, or a professional relationship with their teachers, which avoided, assumptions about them, so avoided the ambiguities highlighted in research (Blackmore, Chambers, Huxley and Thackwray, 2010; Brew, 2010; Lee and McWilliam, 2008).

There are times, when emerging researchers find themselves grappling with notions of emic (insiderness) and etic (outsiderness) and negotiating where they sit, as insiders or outsiders, in the lifeworld of their research subjects (Taylor, 2011). That I was a visitor from outside meant I was positioned as an outsider. The extent I became an insider relied on how far the group accepted me as such. I took on a teaching role which made me an outsider from the point of view of the group who were students. Heathcote's commissioning pedagogy, however, emphasises, the notion of 'we ness'. We are as an entire team being commissioned to do something of significance for others, which as a team, teachers included, we explore together.

Schutz (1932/1967) more than a half century ago, called a genuine relationship in which two persons enter each other's lives and value each other as a unique irreplaceable We-relationship. Schutz maintains that only to the extent the We-relationship is present between two persons, they "can live in each other's subjective contexts of meaning' (Kanno, 1997 p.7) This is highly relevant in terms of Heathcote's pedagogy, who advises that as teachers, we focus on inclusive language which involves the group as a community. Instead of 'You' we use the inclusive 'we' (Heathcote, 1997). This is a very supportive approach when adopting participant observation contributing to our aim to align with the participants.

Defining insider research as 'conducting research with communities or identity groups of which one is a member' (Kanuha, 2000, p.440), insider status has the potential to influence the whole research process (Hockey, 1993). Applying Heathcote pedagogy with a group designated as 'at risk of NEET' is different from other research on similar groups, for example in the work by Lisa Russell (Russell *et al.,* 2025) where she focused on her single role as researcher.

The qualitative researcher's perspective is perhaps a paradoxical one: it is to be acutely tuned-in to the experiences and meaning systems of others—to indwell—and at the same time to be aware of how one's own biases and preconceptions may be influencing what one is trying to understand (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994 p. 123). I was very aware of my own convictions that Heathcote pedagogy made a difference to the lives of young people, from my long experience of working with groups in this way. However, I remained open to explore the aspects of this pedagogy which seemed to make a difference, if any, with this group. Heathcote always reminded me that 'we are all amateurs in teaching' (conversation with the author, 1997) which meant that each group we worked with was different from the previous group I had worked with and would provide new opportunities for learning. I viewed this opportunity as a new experience, which it was, as I had not at the time of the research worked for such a long period of time with one group on the Commission Model, and one who was labelled as 'at risk of NEET".

I explained to the group early on, that I was interested in their views on this way of working together, that I was doing research on ways of learning, and wondered what difference it made to them, if any, and to myself, learning about the life of Richard Burton, and creating a way of celebrating it for his widow, Sally Burton. I explained how I had met Dorothy Heathcote, many years ago, and her way of working seemed very different to my time at school. I was curious to see what I might learn from trying out this model over a sustained period in practice and what they might learn if anything. I did not mention the concepts of positioning, agency and identity, but indications of these were revealed though their narratives. I followed the narratives of three research participants and documented any shifts I observed and heard. Some of these shifts became apparent through their sharing of their narratives, and the narratives of their peers verbally with me, some with each other, some through the metaphor of Richard Burton's narrative, and some of these shifts became apparent through the way they participated, through changes in their body language and non-verbal responses. I continuously shared my documented notes and summaries with individual research participants and asked for their permission when I wanted to share their stories with other teachers at a conference. They agreed, and surprised that their narratives contributed to the learning of others in the professional world of education. I was open with them about what I was doing throughout and asked for their help as part of the research. Over time, we developed trusting relationships. My view is that while I was researching, I was also involved in the work we agreed to do for our 'client/s', which meant that the participants, always had their eye on the 'client', the job to be done for someone beyond themselves, rather than a focus on themselves. This is very different from being there simply as a researcher as in, for example the work of Russell (2013), Määttä *et al.,* (2011) and Toiviainen *et al.,* (2020).

In a sense my role had a dual purpose, one as teacher and one as researcher, and I realised the importance of being able to 'view the familiar as strange and address it from an analytic point of view' (Hammersley

and Atkinson, 2019, p.3). This dual purpose is reflected in the insider/outsider experience, where I experienced being an insider, along with my research participants as 'colleagues' working out selecting and trialling the dramatization of events for the final film. I was experiencing the anticipation of how it would all work out and be received by our 'clients', grappled with areas of selection, felt the apprehension of getting it right, worked in role alongside them to explore the tensions in Burton's life, as he grew up, and reflected alongside my 'colleagues' while reaching final decisions. Simultaneously, I was experiencing the 'outsider' position, where I viewed myself and my research participants. I was part of the work, yet outside of the work. There were moments of these 'simultaneous' insider/outsider experiences. As Spradley states: 'On some occasions you may suddenly realize you have been acting as a full participant, without observing as an outsider. At other times, you will probably be able to find an observation post and become a more detached observer' (Spradley, 1980 p. 57). Opportunities to become a more detached observer, were available to me, when the group worked with a visiting visual artist, a musician and a rap artist , as well as when we were on field trips, where I was not so central to the work, but would participate in activities alongside my participants. Reflective conversations took place with other participants/observers following the sessions, for example Eirwen, my colleague, who became a more detached observer while I was working with the group, where we shared our observations. Greg, the film maker, also shared his reflections with me, particularly around one of my research participants who became the film maker for the project and Alison the school officer who was often in attendance during our sessions and visits provided me with her perspective. I would also reflect on the sessions with my three research participants, in particular.

It has been argued that in a sense all social research is a form of participant observation because we cannot study the social world without being part of it (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). From this point of view participant observation is not a particular research technique but a mode of being-in-the-world characteristic of researchers' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019, p.3) like Spradley, it reminded us of this dual role of the inside/outside position, stating 'while it is important to "learn the culture" one must also view the familiar as strange, and address it from an analytic point of view' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019, p.3).

While I was not a member of the community I was researching, I did share cultural commonalities with the group. I was also Welsh, born in an area near to Port Talbot. I was from a working-class background, like them. I shared with them my 'failures' at school and my stories of vulnerability in conversation with them, as they shared their narratives with me and others in the group. Assim, one of the research participants, said I made him think of me as 'the gran he never had'. It felt like we were building a family culture. They trusted me to represent their stories, and I shared these representations with them throughout. It has been widely acknowledged that the 'native' researcher who is able to participate, observe and blend into situations is less likely to alter the research setting and more likely to win the

trust of respondents (Kanuha, 2000). While I was not totally a native, I worked to build relationships with the group over time, and they came to accept me as part of the team.

Personal involvement with participants is an essential ingredient in Narrative Inquiry. Learning must be reciprocal, and dialogue that has a significant impact on the participant which means I will also transform myself as the researcher as well. As Oakley (1981) states): "Personal involvement is more than dangerous bias--it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives" (p. 58). Spradley (1980) usefully categorises types of research participation into degrees of involvement, both with people and in the activities, they observe. If I apply these categories to my study, I will say that my participation was always active, sometime moderate, but never non participatory. For the most part in sessions, we shared both within classroom sessions, and during field visits including to the theatre and the local community film club, I would describe my involvement as nearer to complete participation. My only reluctance regarding categorising my involvement as 'complete participation' is that I was not there as a student as my participants were, I was not labelled as NEET, and I was a mature adult. I was also an overt researcher, something I shared with them as we began to build relationships in the early stages of the study. We therefore all had a shared purpose for the work, and the participants had a greater knowledge of the community than I did, so while I was immersed in working and collaborating alongside them, at times my role was one of apprentice, needing to learn from the participants the significance this story might have for the community, their community.

One of the methods of collecting data in Narrative Inquiry is "lived stories" from direct observations of participants, and interactions between the participant and the researcher. The data are transcribed by the researcher for storytelling and revealing the story of participants. This study is about change, and participant observation made it possible to explore and reflect on change that occurred in the pedagogical lives of the research participants, as well as in my own, as the researcher. Yasuko (1997) argues that the researcher who wants to make a difference in the lives of participants must be open to change in return.

4.5 Unstructured interviews

An informal interview is different from a conversation, but it typically merges with one, forming a mixture of conversation and embedded questions. The questions typically emerge from the conversation. In some cases, they are serendipitous and result from comments by the participant. In most cases, the ethnographer has a series of questions to ask the participant and will wait for the most appropriate time to ask them during the conversation (if possible) (Fetterman, 2019, p.52). Unstructured interviews are therefore a natural choice in conducting a Narrative Inquiry research methodology. There is a strong need for inclusivity, if we, researchers and participants are going to work collaboratively.

All Heathcote's work is based on collaboration. Since, as an entire group we were already collaborating on Heathcote's Commission model for people beyond the college, this intersected very naturally with the collaborative nature of Narrative Inquiry, participant observation and unstructured interviews. According to Connelly and Clandinin (1990) field records collected through participant observation in a shared practical setting is one of the primary tools of narrative inquiry work.

Patton (2014) also described unstructured interviews as a natural extension of participant observation, because they so often occur as part of ongoing participant observation fieldwork. He too argued that participant observation relies entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction. Unstructured interviews are closer to conversations we share in the social world. Minichiello *et al*. (1990) defined them as interviews in which neither the question nor the answer categories are predetermined. Instead, they rely on social interaction between the researcher and the informant. Building social worlds is a significant element throughout all of Heathcote's teaching models, and in 'shifting the power' of participants she adopted inclusive language and a range of inclusive questioning approaches. Heathcote (Wagner, 1976) suggests that any expression we make that demands a response utterance which demands a response is a question. I interpret this to mean that, instead of using interrogatory and direct questioning, Heathcote (1997) would draw on the terms of 'we' and 'us', which lends itself to participating together as a community, in this case to create a way of honouring the life of RB for the local community.

This also interrupts the idea of hierarchy. Like feminist research (such as Oakley, 1981) the researcher's role, as is the Heathcote's teacher/practitioner role, is typically non-hierarchical, a more equal relationship based on trust that includes self-disclosure by the researcher and reciprocity, which can avoid a hierarchical pitfall (Reinhart, 1992). The research participants become co-creators of data on Burton's life, by selecting significant events to be shared via the film in collaboration with Greg, the professional film maker. The narratives of the young people illustrate my personal sharing of stories, for example, when my sister left home at 16, the trauma and change I tried to deal with at 12, which was in response to the group's interest in change in Burton's life, and whether it was beyond his control. The point here is that we were all looking out there at a life beyond ours, but through the sharing of our narratives, we found connections with Burton's stories. My openness about my own stories, coupled with our collegiate approach helped to build trust with my research participants. As we as an entire group, including me as the practitioner and researcher, are working together, interrogating the same material, to produce something of meaning for a client. I was listening to their stories with my stories. Osborne, and Grant-Smith (2021, p.5) who quote from Bissell (2010) state that 'The listening of the in-depth interview is not only attending to the words the participant is saying, but: "it also involves being attentive to non-verbal cues of listening and how we feel in our bodies and places of enquiry. For example, Carl, one of my research participants indicated through his body language, the first time I met

him, that he chose to sit outside the action, with his head down. Interviewing in his case, was really, informal within the context, as and when seemed to be the right moment. In an ideal unstructured interview, the interviewer follows the interviewees' narration and generates questions spontaneously based on his or her reflections on that narration. It is accepted, however, that the structure of the interview can be loosely guided by a list of questions, called an aide memoire or agenda (Minichiello *et al.*, 1990; Briggs, 2000; McCann and Clark, 2005). An aide memoire or agenda is a broad guide to topic issues that might be covered in the interview, rather than the actual questions to be asked. It is open-ended and flexible (Burgess, 1992).

As aide memoires, my conversations outside the classroom, in the dining hall or on the bus, would develop from the last thing we did together that day in our session, or on one of our field trips. Heathcote's work is intended to enable agency and shift the positioning of participants, so whatever we talked about would be relevant. For example, I might say to Assim, in the dining hall, 'You got home ok then last night?' (from our visit to the community film club) Assim responds, 'Yeah, I loved it, especially when we went to Trina's home and she lent me all those documents about Richard Burton's - actual documents from the time!'. This is all the prompt I need to know how to extend this conversation later, where Assim talks about how he felt trusted. This was clearly a new feeling for him within a school/college context. He was being positioned differently, and his narrative was leading our 'unstructured interview'. This reflects one way of interviewing, a view supported by Silverman (1997; 2014), where the interview is seen as a social event based on mutual participant observation, as a way of generating data, which avoids using fixed questions, and provides authentic insghts into people's experience. Even that snippet of a brief exchange gave me an insight into Assim's life. He was very surprised to be trusted by someone he had only just met, implied that this was rare in his life, and it was a conversation which developed between us over time.

In a more extended conversation with David, another research participant, I would share stills - images of moments of the group's work, and in particular the work he was engaged in, and just ask him, 'take a look at these and hold on to the one you'd like to talk about'. This was a useful aide memoir, as I was not dictating what I wanted us to discuss but offering him the control over that. Whatever he chose would be relevant to the study and how he felt about the pedagogy, and any shifts in his agency would become apparent as he reflected on the work with the group. He chose to talk about his work with Kenny, his peer who had worked with him on the levels of motivation, as he represented Burton outside the local co-op, and how he had helped him (David) really think through Burton's motivation as a young boy, and his confusion about the future. Even his choice of a moment to talk about, provided me with evidence that he was shifting his position. He was talking about his collaboration with a peer. Yet when we first met, he liked to work alone. There is no such thing as a worthless conversation, provided you know what to listen for (Miller, 1965). Minichiello *et al.* (1990) defined unstructured interviews as

interviews in which neither the question nor the answer categories are predetermined. Instead, they rely on social interaction between the researcher and the informant. Hamersley (2019, p.122) agreed with this, when he stated,' Ethnographers do not usually decide beforehand the exact questions they want to ask, and do not ask each interviewee the same questions', but Hammersley added: 'though they will usually enter an interview with a list of issues to be covered (written or mental). Fetterman (2019) asserted that informal interviews are the most common in ethnographic work. He claimed that they seem to be casual conversations, but whereas structured interviews have an explicit agenda, informal interviews have a specific but implicit research agenda. So, while questioning is much more open, and the interviews seemingly without specific direction, there is always and implicit agenda in the mind of the researcher. In this study, my implicit agenda was to note examples of any shifts research participants made in the way they were positioned by others, and by themselves, how much agency did they appear to be demonstrating? And were there any changes in the way they saw themselves?

The researcher's control over the conversation is intended to be minimal, but nevertheless the researcher will try to encourage the interviewees to relate experiences and perspectives that are relevant to the problems of interest to the researcher (Burgess, 1992). The merit of an unstructured interview lies in its conversational nature, which allows the interviewer to be highly responsive to individual differences and situational changes (Patton, 2014). I was able to draw on my long experience as a Heathcote practitioner to respond in the moment, to whatever the participants expressed an interest or curiosity about and decided to focus on.

The intention of an unstructured interview was to expose the researcher to unanticipated themes and to help him or her to develop a better understanding of the interviewee's social reality from their perspectives (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2016, p.239-247). There are always unanticipated themes, and the one I did not anticipate in this study is the way that the metaphor of Burton's life held a connection for each of the three research participants. One of my research participants, used metaphors to describe aspects of his life, which appeared to be a way of protecting him from disclosing personal details. The power of the 'other' (Heathcote, 1984) was a far more significant thread in the work than anticipated, for all three research participants, where the focus on the life of another, helped them make close connections with their own.

All four of Heathcote's models of pedagogy are social, which reflects the role of the ethnographer. Hammersley (2019, p.124) says of informal interviews 'Whatever the form… interviews must be a social event, in which the interviewer is a participant observer'. In Narrative inquiry 'unstructured interviews' 'become a means of celebrating the stories of those who have been marginalised' (Murray, 2018 p.20). This is reflective of this study where unstructured interviews did not feel like something that was being done to them, to serve the needs of the researcher, but a place for their thoughts and

narratives were central to the research. The social experiences of the Commission Model in this study, provides opportunities for stumbling across rich narratives and insightful comments, where, in a sense, participants are caught off guard. Embraced in my data is the richness of a holistic view of participants, gathered from a range of contexts and locations, including informal/unstructured interviews.

4.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

For the most part, the study focused on unstructured interviews. However, I also conducted interviews which could be defined as semi-structured. Minichello *et al.* (1990) provides a continuum of interviewing methods, based on the degree of structure involved. Whereas questions in the unstructured interview are not preplanned and standardised, in a semi-structured interview I was able to acquire in-depth information and evidence from interviewees while seriously considering the focus of the study. I was still able to respond flexibly to such interviews. Magaldi and Berler (2020) define the semi-structured interview as an exploratory interview. They further explain that the semi-structured interview is generally based on a guide and that it is typically focused on the main topic that provides a general pattern. In addition, Magaldi and Berler (2020) argue that the semi-structured interview, despite its topical trajectories provided prior to the interview, enables a researcher to go deep for a discovery. While the structured interview has a formalized, limited set of questions, the semi-structured interview on the other hand is flexible, allowing new questions to be brought forward during the interview because of what the interviewees have said. The interviewer and interviewee(s) engage in a face-to-face conversational discussion instead of the formal questions prescribed. Such conversation is called 'conversation with a purpose' (Burges, 1984). Mason (2002) and Kvale (1996) argue that the qualitative interview tends to involve the construction or reconstruction of knowledge instead of just its excavation.

Drever (2003) explained that in a semi-structured interview, a researcher creates a structure to map topics to be covered and controls the interview to ensure coverage and probe for reasons. In contrast, in an ethnographic interview, it is important to let an interviewee map out the topic; therefore, the main question can be very open. For example, when I interviewed Garry the film maker, it was my intention to focus on Carl, the research participant who was engaged primarily with the film making. I just started off by saying,' So, tell me about Carl' and this allowed him to share his experience of working with Carl, and I continued to respond to his reflections of the experience. Drever (2003) further argues that in ethnography, instead of probing for reasons of the interviewees, the ethnographer probes to ensure the understanding and very often repeats the respondent's own language, in Gary's interview for example, instead of saying, "what do you mean when you say Carl was really engaged? 'I said 'So tell us what he was doing that got you to think he was really engaged? When considering the kind of interviewing to be used I considered a range of factors, including my research questions, who I would be interviewing, and why, and the position of people involved.

4.5.2 Reflexivity

Reflexivity has been defined as:

> the capacity of any system of signification to turn back upon itself, to make itself its own object by referring to itself: subject and object fuse (Myerhoff and Ruby, 1982, p.2).

According to May and Perry (2018 p.5), 'an awareness of oneself is necessary for the exercise of any rule or sense of obligation of the expectations that are made and reside within us.' These are useful definitions of reflexivity for this study where I attempted to view myself and my own role as a research participant along with the students involved. It was not new to me to observe my own interactions with students via video and sound recordings, where I would promote the use of self-reflection to improve teaching (O'Connor and Diggins, 2002). Reflexivity is intended to bring awareness to oneself as a participant in the research (Ortlipp, 2008; Probst and Berenson, 2014, May and Perry, 2018). Involving myself as an 'insider' for a large part of the study, this was a natural development, particularly when transcribing recorded discussions, interviews and conversations.

I transcribed each interview from the audio recordings, which contributed hugely to my process of reflexivity, as it provided an invaluable process that demanded I relived every moment of the interview or classroom discussion, and my role within it. I aspired to Aron's (2000) model of self-reflexivity in which one experiences oneself, emotionally and intellectually, in the positions of both subject and object. In a sense I studied my role and position, my questioning, my use of silence and posed questions to myself, such as 'Who are we? How do we make sense of our lives with and through others? What are the bases and limits of our claims to know the social world? Questions that arose for me also included:

- How far did I allow the voices of participants to be foregrounded?
- Was I listening to their responses?
- Did I respond and develop their responses in a way that valued their contributions?
- How far did our relationships develop over time?
- How did my stories intersect with theirs?

Reflecting on my own role in the study is not easy, but important. I followed Heathcote's advice, when I observed my teaching in the project she inspired 'What's in Store?' (1997) where she would refer to me as 'The teacher at this moment is allowing for' or: 'Here the teacher has moved on to this subject, but the participants you can see are still engaged totally with this'. Heathcote taught me how to objectify myself. It was good advice as it distanced me from myself emotionally and I just focused on me as a teacher in relation to the group, and my contribution (or otherwise) to the productive interaction I was trying to create.

Reflexive analysis of each written transcript began after I had established a level of familiarity with the interview material that allowed me to hold in mind my overall experience of working together to fulfil the commission. Reflexive processes helped me to consider the possibility for deeper meanings within the narrative material, reflective of May and Perry's (2018 p.4) assertion that reflection is a fundamental part of social life, 'and that the social sciences are core to an understanding and explanation of ourselves and our potentialities in living together'.

The detail of the ethical research procedure I undertook is outlined in Table Six below

Research Procedure	Documents/ References	Events	Key People involved, in addition to me as the researcher.	Purpose
Ethical considerations	Birmingham Newman University's Research Ethics and Code of Practice UK-GDPR Data Protection and the Law (2025)			To ensure Informed Consent Confidentiality Anonymity
Phase One: Gaining Consent	BERA (2024) The Equality Act 2010 UKRI's expectations of researchers BERA, 2024 Consent forms	The purpose of the research was explained to the students. They were invited to make an informed choice regarding participation in the study, and their refusal would be totally respected. They were assured that they could withdraw from the research at any point, without judgement.	Head of Teaching and Learning at NPTC Teaching /Welfare Support Officer Individual teachers and support staff College Principal Newman Ethics Committee Director of First Choice and Burton @14 Sally Burton Director of Swansea University Archives Community Volunteers Head of Teaching and Learning at NPTC Potential Research participants (students at NPTC) Research participants' parents.	To ensure the correct guidelines were followed in gaining consent.
Phase Two: Introduction of the Work to the Staff		In service meeting with staff of Gateway Department	Staff within the Gateway Department	Duty of Care to recognise potential harm. Share purpose of research with all staff involved. Opportunity for staff to share students' needs with me.

				To gain support of the Gateway team and negotiate how the work would meet their curriculum, and ensure appropriate child protection and safeguarding measures were in place.
Phase Three: Selection		Meeting of Gateway Creative Group Staff	Teachers, teaching support staff of the Creative Gateway Group, and Teacher/Welfare Support Officer	To select the research participants which represent variations in gender, ethnicity and reasons for being identified as at risk of NEET.
Phase Four: Teaching the Students	Letter from Sally Burton (Richard Burton's widow)	Introduction of the Commission Informal interviews with all students present as a group, as part of a film club meeting. Informal interviews with staff. Unstructured interviews with my 4 selected research participants. Scheduled semi - structured interviews with the Teaching/ Welfare Officer, Eirwen Hopkins and head of Teaching and Learning. Contacted parents of the four research participants.	Eirwen Hopkins, Director of burton @14 project. Students of Creative Gateway group. Students including the four research participants	To identify with staff any needs and barriers to learning experienced by the students from their point of view. Elicit background information regarding the four research participants they deemed relevant for me to be aware of. To involve people who would contribute to the research process.
Phase Five: Practice	Photographs Field Notes Filmed events Recorded interviews Sally Burton's Commissioning Letter	Visits arranged to Pontrhydafen , Burton's birthplace, the local community centre, to share their draft film, and Swansea University Archive. Data was securely stored, using the college's facilities, and identity of research candidates kept confidential; their names were changed for the purpose of the research study.	Teaching and Support staff Eirwen Hopkins, Director of Burton @ 14 Students Teaching/Welfare Support Officer	To facilitate the process for the students to investigate the life of Burton To involve them in their investigation with members of the community Data stored to protect students' confidentiality
Phase Six: Anonymity	BERA 2024 Creswell and Creswell (2023) Schroeder and Webb 1997 (p.311 -326)	Photographs and filmed footage were only shared with the group, and adult team involved, as agreed by all participants. Participants agreed to allow me to share images on a power pint at a National	Eirwen Hopkins, Director of Burton@14 Teaching/Welfare Support Officer	Ensuring the need for anonymity to be reconsidered in the context of some visual methodologies. To involve research participants by sharing the data

		Conference and assisted me in creating the power point. Evidence of field notes, recordings shared with research participants Eirwen Hopkins, and staff involved, including the Teaching/Welfare Support Officer who shared their observations with me. Data stored using a locked filing cabinet in a locked office for paper-based personal data. For digital data, I used password - protected storage.		and agreeing to it. I provided interim reports for the team, including the research participants, in the form of memos and photographs They were a vulnerable group and it was important that I was open with them throughout to build trust in our relationship. To build trustworthiness of the evidence by cross referencing with others who were involved in observing the process with the students To ensure the data was secure.
Phase Eight: Disclosure	BERA 2024 NPTC Policy on Safeguarding (2025)	Event 1: On the bus returning from the theatre, Assim shares with me that he will be returning to an empty flat, as his mother is away. I tell with him that I will have to share this with the Teaching/Welfare Officer which he accepts. Event 2: Allan, another group member discloses to the group, in class, that his father is an alcoholic. This emerges from our discussion about Burton's own issues with alcohol. I ask him privately if he feels alright about his sharing and explain to him that I will have to pass on the information to the Teaching /Welfare officer. He is fine with that and says, 'She already knows anyway'. Both students have a very good relationship with the teaching/Welfare Officer.	One of my research participants Another member of the group Teaching/Welfare Officer Classroom teacher of Gateway Creative Group	To ensure I paid attention to safeguarding issues, and followed the college's procedures To be open with students about any procedures I must follow, to ensure their welfare and safeguarding

Table Six: research procedures

4.6 Qualitative research previously considered

Below, I outline the potential strengths each methodology I considered would bring to this study as well as the constraints they pose and were therefore rejected as methodologies for this study.

4.6.1 Readers' Theatre

Readers' Theatre which is a teaching/learning strategy has been used as a means of presenting and disseminating the research, rather than as an investigative tool. It is a strategy that combines reading practice and performing. It is another methodology I considered but is more usually used as a way of representing research data. Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1995) support Readers' Theatre as a way to present qualitative data, as do Finley (1998), Konzal and Diaz (1999), and Norris and McCarnmon (1996) who have all used Readers' Theatre as a means to present their research at AERA's annual meetings. While Readers' Theatre gives a purpose to the work, I decided that it was likely to have been a challenge for the participants of this study of a marginalised group of young people. Their engagement, in my view, needed to be less direct and less focused on the expressive intention of drama/theatre.

In the previous section I described how dramatic form is finding its way into the research community. Readers' Theatre, which is a drama/theatre approach to research, is one example of this. It is another methodology I considered but is more usually used as a way of representing research data. Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1995) support Readers' Theatre as a way to present qualitative data, as do Finley (1998), Konzal and Diaz (1999), and Norris and McCarnmon (1996) who have all used Readers' Theatre as a means to present their research at AERA's annual meetings.

The aim of Readers' Theatre is to bring the written word into life, thus allowing the audience to experience the text on a new basis, with the use of vocal expression, inflection, and pacing, as well as the use of facial expressions and body language. Readers' Theatre is a strategy that combines reading practice and performing. Its goal is to enhance students' reading skills and confidence by having them practice reading with a purpose.

While Readers' Theatre gives a purpose to the work, it is likely to have been a challenge for the participants of this study of a marginalised group of young people. Their engagement, in my view, needed to be less direct and less focused on the expressive intention of drama/theatre. Readers' Theatre is a highly motivational reading strategy that provides a context for authentic reading. Students read to convey meaning using their voice, and facial expression. Initially, Readers' Theatre; Probst and Berenson defined as, "an interpretive, voice-only performance" (Vasinda and McLeod, 2011, p. 487) which requires no additional props, costumes or even acting. This is because Readers'

Theatre mainly gives focus on expressive and meaningful reading performance of a literary text to an audience (Worthy and Prater, 2002; Young *et al*., 2019).

I was initially interested in Readers' Theatre through the work of Finley (1998) which appeared to resonate with my study and presented a Readers' Theatre piece based upon her research with street youth in New Orleans. In her data collection stage, she and her son spent considerable time interviewing youth who lived on the streets. She constructed characters that were composites of representative types/ groups of youth, identified in her study, and wrote her script with each character speaking in the first person. The actors took the stage and spoke to the audience telling stories and giving opinions about their lives and life on the streets in general. The stories shared were composite stories which reflected the voices of a general group, whereas this study follows the narratives of individual stories and the intention is for them to share their stories, rather than have them represented by a third party, or contribute to a composite narrative.

Norris felt that Finley's research provided some of the "lived experience" of the people involved. Konzal and Diaz (1999) presented a theatrical piece on school change. Scattered throughout the audience were designated readers who were assigned characters and given scripts to read. By this structuring, the entire assembly was transformed into a public meeting in which there were participants and spectators. The audience heard various perspectives on a curriculum change that were based on the data that was collected. Like Finley, Konzal and Diaz called their presentation Readers' Theatre, although Norris does question this Drama/Theatre as research has been employed in different ways, for example Readers Theatre which is a teaching/learning strategy has been used as a means of presenting and disseminating the research, rather than as an investigative tool.

4.6.2 Action Research

Action research (Vila i Tañà, Í., 2018; OToole *et al.,* 2015), like this study, is concerned with change but the focus of that change is different to the one I was looking for. This study does not focus on institutional structures or aims directly to improve their circumstances in terms of housing, prejudice and training, or raise their awareness of political influences. Improving the lives of the disadvantaged was a key focus according to Kurt Lewin, one of action research's founding fathers. There is no deliberate intention to focus on the political situation.

Action research, initially, appears to be a likely option for this study, because it is concerned with change, according to Kurt Lewin (1946). His own work was deliberately intended to change the life chances of disadvantaged groups, in terms of housing, prejudice, socialisation and training. Action research, according to Weiskopf and Laske (1996:123) is located, in the German tradition, known as

'critical social science', and draws in particular on the work of Habermas (1972,1974). Here the expressed interest is deliberately political, the emancipation of individuals and groups in society.

The focus in Action Research is often on teacher professional development. It brings about change in the definition of their professional skills and roles according to Noffte and Zeichner (1987). Hult and Lennung (1980) and Mckernan (1999, pp.32-3) suggest that action research 'enhances the competencies of participants' and 'seeks to understand the processes of change within social situations' and 'focus on those problems that are of immediate concern to practitioners'. This study does not focus on institutional structures or aims directly to improve their circumstances in terms of housing, prejudice and training, or raise their awareness of political influences.

4.6.3 Ethnodrama

According to Saldana (2005), most of the ethnodramas he has read have been written by researchers, sometimes in collaboration with their participants. In his view, he also found that there were no established or standardized criteria for what defines 'good' ethnodrama. The success of the work is jointly constructed and determined by the research participants, the artists they work with and the audience. The 'client' suggests a different relationship with the participants, than audience, which meant I steered away from ethnodrama for this study. The term 'audience' suggests people who come to watch a drama. In a sense I didn't want us to focus on drama to an audience, which is why making a film, which we focused on in this study, had a less direct live communication with people who came to watch it. The process of research and the examination of other people's stories provided the lure for a vulnerable group who overall were not totally confident with performing drama. Saldana (2005) selects several ethnodramas to illustrate to the reader 'selected playwriting concepts and staging techniques - fundamental "technical skills" critical to the arts (Eisner, 2001 p.144) which was very different to the focus of this study, where the need for developing skills emerged from the context, the narratives and the desire to record their own investigations into Burton's life, for example Gregory's support of Carl, one of the research participants, as a cameraman.

In this study, the young people negotiate with clients, to find out what matters to them, and use their own local knowledge (rather than mine which was minimal in comparison) to share the local stories of the past and make sense of them for themselves and others. In this study, it was important for me, that the research participants, had ownership of the stories, that it was their voices that were listened to and employed in the creation of the scenes they decided ought to be included in the final film. Ethnodrama tends to focus on a more direct approach, for example where participants may be interviewing people like them about their situation as young people living in Port Talbot. This study positions them differently as people who are helping others relate to the story of RB in their community. It does not

directly confront participants with their own lives in Port Talbot or views them as 'disadvantaged'. Narrative Inquiry 'becomes a means of celebrating the stories of those who have been marginalised' (Murray, 2018, p.20) so their stories intersect with the stories of others, including Richard Burton. 'Stories are also dialogical. In the process of telling stories, people reaffirm to their self who they are and confirm their ties to others (Frank, 1995). The Commission Model made it possible for them to re-story themselves using Narrative Inquiry.

Saldana (2005) selects several ethnodramas to illustrate to the reader 'selected playwriting concepts and staging techniques-fundamental "technical skills" critical to the arts (Eisner, 2001, p.144) which was very different to the focus of this study. For Carl and his peer working on the creation of the film, they did learn specific techniques from their mentor George. Assim also learned how to craft the script, but the focus was on the Narrative of Richard Burton's life and the events we wanted to share. The idea of performance would not have appealed to this group. The emphasis on performance is also made by Saldana (2005) where he describes the use of real fiction research as the preparatory fieldwork for a theatrical monologue. In this study, it was important for me, that the research participants, had ownership of the stories, that it was their voices that were listened to and employed in the creation of the scenes, they decided, ought to be included in the final film. The involvement of Graham, the documentary maker, was key as he was able to guide them, particularly Carl, who was only interested in working on the camera, and through his working on the camera, he engaged with the narratives, for example, he talked about the lack of money in his family, and in the community. Indirectly, Carl engaged with the narrative and opened up about his own perspective on it. In a sense he was illustrating Heathcote's use of the 'other' and the indirectness and tangential way in which we and they can tap into their own personal views. In this way they are protected from telling stories directly, as there is a distance between their own lives and that of Burton in their fictionalized narrative.

Ethnodrama tends to focus on a more direct approach, interviewing people like them about their situation as young people living in Port Talbot - it is more social. In the RB project the research participants are doing the interviewing, looking at the lives of others, selecting their data to be shared, constructing and selecting what is to be showed as they reflect on Sally Burton's request. To involve them in the work they were engaged in acting, researching, designing, scripting, sound and music and camera work according to their abilities.

4.7 An illustration from practice of the power of narrative in the work of Dorothy Heathcote

In sharing Heathcote's belief in the power of narrative, I turn to two examples, where I was guided by her in my planning of a curriculum with young people. In the first example (Towler-Evans, 1997), the 11 to 12-year-old children were framed as people running a radio station, who were asked by the 'Midway centre' (a fictional centre for young people who had suffered trauma) if they would consider creating a 'series of short radio programmes, as part of their programme entitled 'Matters of Concern'. The programmes would be designed for their 'clients', the young traumatized people, and would show them young people overcoming problems, which parallelled theirs, through 'fictional' narratives and 'which we feel would be very helpful as they may identify with the characters who successfully cope with problems' (extract from the commissioning letter for a class in a Dudley Primary school, who were framed as people running a radio station, June 1999). The letter stated that 'we find ourselves at something of a loss to help a particular group of young people who have already endured great difficulties and faced hazards which would defeat many adults'. The group agreed immediately, as Heathcote said, 'Children are rarely not compassionate' (What's in Store film, 1997, Dudley Education Authority). The 'confidential' case studies arrived along with a series of book summaries, and the children in the class, as the people running a radio station, cross-referenced the children's experience with the events in a fictional story. For example, how could Ralph, one of the case studies, realise his own bravery, when he rescued himself from a storm by feeding the pumas who might have attacked him? Do one of these summaries show the bravery of someone in a life-threatening situation and how they survived the experience? Many of the children brought to work, their own knowledge, some articulated their empathy and understanding, where they identified clearly with the feelings of the case studies, and through their responses, their own stories were often revealed.

In the second example (Edmiston and Towler-Evans, 2022, p.8), I asked for Dorothy's help again, when I was asked by the Headteacher of an inner-city primary school, to work with a class of 5–6-year-old immigrant children. All had arrived from Somali, fleeing the war in that country, or from refugee camps in the Mediterranean, with accompanying adults who were refugees seeking asylum status. Many had recently arrived, some without parents. Many children translated for one another. I wanted to create a story world with subject matter that would draw on all the children's cultural knowledge without privileging the dominant culture in the school. We would address every child as having cultural assets that would be needed in what-if events. All the Somali-speaking children had knowledge of the sea; many had lived by the Indian sea, and most had crossed the Mediterranean Sea. We planned, that all the children would collectively imagine that they were fisherfolk, who also went diving, living by the sea in a fictionalized world. Later they would look after sea creatures in a tank at a visitors' centre. Then they would find a trunk holding a baby whose mother had left an explanatory note along with artefacts. The story and letter, both created by me on large paper, were laid out as the children struggled to understand what might have happened and what they might do. Leaving on a boat was an event many of the Somali children have experienced or known about. This seems to reflect Clandinin's (2013, p.22)

assertion that, ‘I live in cultural temporal stories, stories that have shaped each of our cultures’. Parts of the letter were read repeatedly:

> ‘Please look after my baby. I have had to leave. Please keep her safe. I don’t know when I will be able to come for her. Sing this lullaby and think of home. My baby can’t eat solid food yet. He sleeps a lot. He will be hungry. His first teeth are now grown. He drinks milk and can eat from a spoon. He knows the word mother. He will cry and laugh and smile. Tell no one that you have found my baby. It is a secret. Please hide him if anyone comes. P.S Please look after everything very carefully. I have left my ring with him. When I come, I will ask for my ring’.

The implications of the letter were gradually comprehended as the children dramatized their responses. We sat in a circle to pass round the baby and show how we might soothe its crying. We all learned to sing the repetitive words of the lullaby which was in Greek (a language no one spoke but that we later discovered was the mother’s home language). We agreed that it would put the baby to sleep. The children became aware that a vulnerable child should not be handed over to anyone. Working collaboratively, children discovered for themselves how to know that they could reunite mother and child. Many of these children had experienced a traumatic disconnect between the cultural and familial ideals of stability in their home countries and the reality of experiencing dissonant cultural and linguistic change along with feelings of separation or even abandonment. They brought to work their own concerns for a baby lost and abandoned, which reflected their own feelings as strangers in a new land.

Chapter Five

Findings: Changes in Agency, Positioning and Identity from the RB Commission

5.1. Introduction

My findings are divided between Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

In this chapter, Chapter 5: Findings 1, I analyse data through the lens of the three concepts central to this thesis: positioning, agency and identity. I introduce these concepts in Chapter 3 and I illustrate in Chapter 5, how the research methods I employed generated the data that I analyse in Chapters 5 and 6 using narratives that capture how each of the three research participants changed over the time of this study. In Chapter 6: Findings 2, I continue to use these concepts but now as I analyse through the lens of the three research questions. As I answer my research questions and show the significance of elements of the Commission Model, I analyse for commonalities across the narratives of all three research participants.

Below I summarise my findings:

The three research participants (which I named using pseudonyms) shifted their positioning, agency and identity throughout the time of their engagement with the Commission Model, in significant ways:

1. Carl, my first research participant, shifted from being disconnected from the group to becoming central to it, from being passive to becoming a leader, significantly when he was positioned with responsibility, as a film maker
2. David, my second research participant, shifted from being highly monologic and isolated to becoming dialogic and social. For example, following the completion of the film and during the second year of the study he took on a mentoring role for new students
3. Assim, my third research participant, identified with Richard Burton's troubles. This seemed to act as a metaphor for changes in his life and his own struggles, for example, learning to trust. He learned ways to trust others as he became the writer for the group.

In the following chapter, Chapter Six, I analyse across all three research participants, to illustrate how these three concepts are foundational to my research questions:

> 1. In what ways do positioning, agency and the identity of young people, marginalised within the education system, change over the time of a project, in which Heathcote's Commission Model was the core pedagogy?

2. Which elements of Heathcote's pedagogy made a difference to the changing agency and identities of the young people as 'learners?

The following elements of Heathcote's pedagogy, essential to the Commission Model were central to this study. These will be expanded on in Chapter 6. They are integral to my analysis using the concepts of positioning, agency and identity:

a) An invitational approach which can afford the participants with more agency
b) The use of frame in relation to the positioning of participants
c) Heathcote's concept of the 'other' as a way of affording agency
d) Heathcote's use of role to reposition participants
e) Heathcote's concept of the self-spectator and how it aligns with agency and identity
f) Research participants' realisations that they 'know things' when invited to apply what they already know and care about
g) Working within a community including the classroom community and beyond
h) Taking responsibility for helping others

The three concepts positioning, agency and identity intersect. How each student is being positioned differently and how they are positioning themselves differently over time is connected to how they are using their agency in relationship to others, to me and to their peers. That is the change in positioning which intersects with their agency. Holland (1998) connected positioning over time as a way of thinking about identity. What Holland calls positional identity is the way in which individuals identify themselves as students, because of how they have been positioned, and how they position themselves, in relation to others within a community. This is illustrated in changes in how they talk about themselves and how they see themselves which connects with the idea of narrative. What is the story they are telling?

Many of the students have experienced not being taken seriously within their schools. Their views are not heard at all (Snow, 1998). Roosevelt (1998) described teaching as a 'form of attention' and that 'observation is a way one actually comes to truly like a student' (cited in Ballenger, 2025 p. 57). Paying close attention to another makes the relationship (Ballenger, 2025 p.57). I felt that participant observation over a period made that possible in this study. I will discuss the methods in different layers. In layer one, I will analyse what the methods reveal to me on one layer to begin with by describing what I am noticing. On the second layer I explore connections between research participants, between methods, and between situations and context. On a third layer, I explore the locations where these methods were employed, to see how this may have influenced the extent of and the kind of narratives they shared. I do not see the methods as being in isolation from each other. Each method did not stand alone but stood in relation to everything else that had gone on before. The questions I am asking myself

as I interrogate the data, in terms of methods employed is, 'What did this method give me to help me answer my research questions?' and 'How did these methods help me tell their stories?'

Layer 1: Participant observation and my own reflections

Using Participant Observation and my own reflections, (which I documented in my research diary) as the session unfolded, I analysed how this method enabled me to access data that helped me uncover and tell the stories of the three research participants. This was day 1, in September 2016; my first encounter with two of my research participants, Carl and David. Questions came to my mind, 'Would they accept me as their visiting teacher?' Would they engage in the tasks I had set up for them? Would they even be interested in the life of Richard Burton, a generation before them? (my reflective notes, September 2016). I knew the school officer, had had to visit Carl at home earlier that week to try and entice him out of bed. Now, here he was, seated outside the group of chairs and desks I had set up for the group in a semi-circle. He sat with his head in his hands faced down on his desk. I recalled Heathcote's advice to me, and to others, "You have to meet the students where they really are…and withhold judgement". I tried to withhold judgement. I felt the need to be tentative with the group, especially Carl. My first thought when I encountered Carl, positioned in this way, was that he had no agency. He was positioning himself apart, and he may not have seen himself as a student who had a contribution to make. But when I reflected on my notes, I realised that these assumptions were ones I might have made in my early teaching life, when you are encouraged to have certain expectation of students, one of them being they should sit where you had expected them to. When I looked again at my notes, I realised that he was exercising his agency to sit where he chose to, and to opt out of the session. I really had no evidence to suggest how he saw himself. I needed to focus on what he did, what he said, and where he sat, rather than make assumptions, especially at this early stage. Already participant observation was placing me in a position to pay close attention to detail, details as a teacher I may ordinarily overlook. As a teacher, early in my career, I may have encouraged him to join us in the circle, because I would be concerned that I was not addressing the issue of what I may have interpreted as his 'refusal to participate'. As Ballenger (2025 p.1) says of close observation and reflection, it 'leads us away from simply accepting our immediate view of a child or an event. Our assumptions about others, can be challenged.' When Eirwen my colleague, sat with him to support him, he avoided eye contact and 'he had his head down on the desk or looked up at his thumb nails which he positioned about three inches from his eyes' (Eirwen's field notes, September 2016). I noticed the doodles and drawings on his exercise book, which I assumed he had created.

When we as a group imagined what RB's studio in Switzerland was like and began to create the imagined space in the room, Eirwen offered him drawing paper to create something that might remind Burton of home. Carl drew a portrait of RB's father. We had discovered something he was prepared to

do, and which seemed to engage him. Carys, a group member comments, when she sees Carl's contribution, placed on the 'mantel piece' 'Richard (Burton) likes to remember the things he did as a child, and never forgets where he came from'. This is indirectly a statement which references Carl's drawing. I am noticing that from his very static position of separation, through identifying something he normally likes to do, he contributed something to the group's creation. This, in a sense indirectly, through what he can do connected him to the group and the work we were creating together, however tentatively. I noted my observations. Being a participant observer, as well as a teacher, meant I paid close attention to my research participants. I was watching and listening for their responses. I was less focused, on getting them to do what they were 'meant to be doing'. I wanted to go 'beyond whatever categories and preconceived notions we may have in order to see the individual child in real interaction with the world' (Ballenger, 2025, p.1).

I also observed David on this first day. On David's first day, I was struck by his willingness to be involved. He was the first person to get up and explore the objects and artefacts of RB's life. I also noticed that he positioned himself separately, at the opposite end of where the girls sat. I also noticed that he did not interact with any of his peers but was more than happy to represent Sally Burton in role. He was monologic (my field notes, and Eirwen's field notes which corresponded with mine).

David seemed to have clear opinions and thoughts around the items and life of Burton. He shared them only in so much as they were scribed where I invited the group to share their ideas on post-it notes and stick them on a large sheet of sugar paper, I had laid out on the floor, about what they saw and what this implied for them. Five minutes into the first day, David had noticed that Richard Burton was not wearing a wedding ring in the photographs of him. This raised questions for him about Burton's commitment and loyalty to his first wife, Sybil, and his subsequent wives.

David seemed willing and confident but not interactional with others, as he responded to the tasks he was invited to do. On reflection, I questioned whether David was used to responding to instruction. Was his lack of interaction with others a fear of being challenged? However, I reserved these thoughts at this stage as I did not know. I questioned myself, 'Why was it important for him to connect with others in the way I saw connecting with others, which was talking with them? We can connect in different ways. He should be allowed to work individually. However, I did have this nagging thought that he needed to feel a connection to the group, for example, if his ideas were commented on by a peer, or shown nonverbally. I was mindful of not having a preconceived idea about David at this stage. I noticed he was keen to perform, albeit on his own. My field notes which I reread gave me the opportunity to reflect following the session, to discuss with my colleague Eirwen and to talk through with her my reflective notes.

Assim's first day was four weeks later, the use of my voice recorder was at this time, a regular thing. The groups would use it also for recording their scenes, as potential scripts of the final filming. He arrived 45 minutes into the session. He had left the catering group, as he could not settle there. He came at a good time, as the groups were all working on scenes from Richard Burton's life, growing up in the area. In contrast to Carl, he seemed eager to enter the work and, unlike David, keen to join one of the groups. I wondered why he had been placed into a 'at risk of NEET category' but that revealed to me my own bias about what an 'at risk of NEET' student might be like. Assim seemed to fit my image of a 'good student' (my reflections October 2016). He was keen to look at the images and read through Richard Burton's published diaries. At one point we were all watching a scene shared by Alan's (one of the students in our Gateway group) group, when Richard Burton was a baby.

At this point, Alan's group seemed to have completed a scene and were keen to share their ideas and scene with others. They had selected to work on a scene from Richard Burton's home life, where one of the students, Carol (a pseudonym) was representing Richard Burton's mother dealing with her baby (RB as a baby), her husband's (RB's father) 'drinking' and lack of responsibility. They shared their scene:

> Carol: (as the mother) What is going to happen to our marriage? The stove is also broken. I am feeling tired. I just want to rest. How long are you going to sit in that chair? (Directed at Richard Burton's father, played by Alan)

The group were invited to respond to the scene. Assim volunteered to share his observation:

> Assim: His wife sounds like a mother. It is as if he, Richard Burton's father is the child, rather than her husband.

This comment was in danger of being lost in the hub of voices calling out, so I intervened:

> Iona: Listen, there is something I would like us all to hear. Assim, can you share that comment you just made?

Assim repeats his observation for others to hear

> Iona: That is really interesting what you said there, because Sally Burton actually says words like that in the foreword to Richard Burton's story he wrote.
>
> Assim: Does she really? You're kidding!
>
> Iona: No, she does. You have clearly picked up on this in your drama.

I got the book from one of the tables on the side, and read Sally Burton's words from the book to the entire group

> Iona: (reading from the book) After his death in 1984, I was asked if I ever regretted not having a child. I replied I had a little boy. He was 58 years old.

This prompted further discussion amongst the group about how Burton's life was influenced by his early childhood. Assim seemed to have settled well into his first days, but maybe I was in danger of interpreting this from my 'teacher' perspective, as Assim was doing everything I expected from a 'good

student' Listening again to the recording, I was pleased that Assim's observation had been celebrated in a sense in the group. At this early stage, I saw a boy who was eager to fit in and be accepted in the group. He was interested in the written diaries. I did not hesitate to draw attention to his observation, whereas this was something I was reluctant to do with Carl, and to an extent David. It was as if I was careful not to draw attention to them.

During first days, I focused on observations. I had a dual role that of a participant observer, and also that of a teacher. Paying attention to individual research participants, details possibly as an actual teacher, I may have overlooked, meant I opened up more possibilities for the participants to voice their views, and importantly gave me time and space to note what I observed. I had the advantage of having Eirwen with me in many of the sessions, and Alison in some of them, which meant Eirwen and I would on a weekly basis, reflect in our individual observations. My reflective notes helped me challenge myself and my interpretations. Despite all my values and beliefs, I had seen Assim as a 'good student'. Was I in danger of categorising students, just as the system did? I had been part of the system for a long time and unconsciously had embedded some of that categorisation. There are so many ways in which the system programmes your thinking, through labels such as 'bright ', 'gifted and 'low ability' and 'special needs' which fix students in a position. Bright at what? And don't we all have special needs of some kind? (my reflective notes, 2016). As Ballenger (2025) reminds us that in order to keep our curiosity strong we have to keep in mind, 'the difference between what you observe and what you believe or assume' (p.24) and to stay away from 'fixes' as long as you can, and from interpretations of why people behave in a particular way. Later that day on the visit to Richard Burton's birthplace, Assim referred to his comment about Burton's mother's relationship with his father as a co-incidence. I responded that his comment came from his insight, rather than it being a co-incidence. I was interested to find out more about his view of himself. My reflective notes helped me to avoid this danger of reverting to what I think I know about a student already, or the type of student they are (see Bertrand and Marsh, 2015; Evans *et al*., 2019; Olah *et al.*, 2010). Unknown to me, at the time Assim had been bullied in his previous group, which is why he had joined the Commission group, I had also begun to make assumptions about Carl, for example, but was aware as his story unfolded, that he was not a 'problem' student but a resilient one. Making assumptions was something I had to be very aware of as a participant observer, especially as I had this dual role of teacher and researcher. I was grappling with notions of emic and etic in the life world of the research (Taylor, 2011).

Layer 2: Participant Observation and Semi-structured Interviews

It became clear to me that while participant observation provided me with opportunities to observe closely; to gain tentative insights, it remained my perspective of what I saw. I was careful to check my assumptions and tried to focus on the detail of what was said and done. Participant observation was a

very useful method with the students, as it avoided them feeling singled out and stared at, as we were working as colleagues alongside them, responding to the needs of the commission. Eirwen and I were seen by the participants as colleagues but also as facilitators because of our adult status. They were preoccupied by their tasks of preparing ongoing work for the commission, as we all were. This was the focus. To check in with their viewpoints about the work, their individual responses, I decided to use semi structured and unstructured interviews. Participant observation provides a sense of continuity and provides us with the time to slow down moments and reflect on them. My superficial impressions of first days I was able to return to along with my reflective notes and connect with ongoing events so I could attend to 'the living out of these complex narratives of experience, narratives that are being composed over time, in a series of places and with personal and social interactions' (Clandinin, 2013, p.165).

My early observation of David on his first day, alerted me to the need to connect him to the group. In December 2016, I orchestrated an event whereby David would be supported by his peer Kenny, when David was working on a monologue as if he was Richard Burton, which explored Richard Burton's dilemma about his future. Until that point, David was comfortably working on his own. I used participant observer, as a method. As his teacher, I wanted to encourage a more dialogic approach from David in particular. When I introduced Dorothy Heathcote's list of motivation levels to apply to his performance, this provided something other than each other to look at. The authority for the work came from responding to the list, not from Kenny or from David. It acted as a mediator. The recorder was on within reach of their voices, as there were times when I was supporting other groups with their scenes for filming. I wanted them to work together without too much interference from me, and the levels provided focus. This reflected the purpose of participant observation as the 'most subtly intrusive' (Simpson and Tuson, 2003, p.14) form of observation. This was my attempt as a teacher to get David to connect with another and Kenny, a very positive peer, who was also interested in performance was a suitable choice. As a researcher, I wanted to capture a dialogue between the two, which would be a rare observation of David's interaction with a peer. I recorded the event in my methodology chart (see extract below in Table Eight)

Participant Observation	Focus on David (working with Kenny on Heathcote's motivation levels)	Classroom at College December 2016	In the classroom in the college. Small groups are spread across classroom and corridor working on their contributions to the film	David and Kenny collaborate on David's (as Burton) monologue drawing on Heathcote's levels of motivation	Voice recorded Field Notes December 2026

Table Eight: David and Kenny collaborate on David's (as Burton) monologue drawing on Heathcote's levels of motivation

This event provided me with significant moments of David and Kenny's negotiation, which I would not have got in any other way. It seemed to be a moment of significant change for David. When he represented Burton as someone conflicted by his dilemma of what to do in the future, it seemed a rare moment of David recognizing the situation as a dilemma, not insisting on a definite solution. When Kenny, his peer, suggests, 'Richard Burton may not be aware of what the future holds for him' David responds, 'I don't suppose any of us are, we just have to make the decision that is right at the time'. This is my interpretation from a participant observation perspective. I had yet to check in with David how he really felt about it. I wondered if this was a different way to doing drama than he was used to in his previous school, and it was a subject he enjoyed. Was I manipulating this connection between Kenny and David? Was I forcing a change on how he might connect with others? I needed to have an individual conversation with him, which was not easily possible through participant observation. In brief conversations and developing work, I noticed that his connections with others had changed, and he seemed to enjoy it, but I did not know. Was he just doing what was expected from me, as his teacher? Just as he had that first day, was he responding dutifully to the tasks that had been set for the group?

I decided that this was something he may reflect on later, during a semi structured interview with David, as I was curious to find out what he thought about the drama he had been engaged in for this project and the kind of drama he had experienced previously at his comprehensive school. It was only December, so it was still early in the programme. By June, I noticed that David had become more dialogic and connected with others.

Semi structured interview	Focus on David	June 2017	Alison's office	David talks about his view of drama, 'he didn't think it could be like this'	Field notes Voice recording Iona reflective notes	June 2017

Table Nine: David's changing view of Drama

In June 2017, I set up a semi -structured interview with David. I was interested to know whether his view of drama had changed. Clearly, he had been comfortable performing on his own, and I wanted to know how far he had ever seen drama as a collaborative activity, and whether his view had changed. He seemed to have been engaged in working collaboratively on several occasions. We met in Alison's office; the gala evening was over, and David volunteered to help the following academic year. It was an opportunity for David to reflect on the project without the presence of others. I wanted to explore more adequately the sense he was making of it all. I wanted to really engage with what he was saying, I wanted to engage with what he was saying as an individual, rather than rely on my observations of him in the situation. I wanted to listen better, to see anew. At this stage I felt our relationship was far more collegiate. I wanted his view of the difference if any between drama in his past experiences and this inquiry-based approach, so we could both reflect together on our different perspectives. Semi

structured interviews allowed me to read non-verbal signals, and verbal emphasis I asked David, 'So, isn't that the sort of thing you did at Comprehensive school?' (referring to the commission we had completed) and his response was:

> No! (emphatically) we used to be told, 'Get into pairs. I hated that, I thought, 'who shall we pair with? Oh no, here comes that get into pairs thing again!' The teacher usually decided on the pairs, and he would always decide what we were going to do a scene about. This is completely different. At school, I was just given a part and then told where to stand and how to deliver my lines. I have never done drama like this before. I didn't realise it could be like this. The project was a very different way of doing drama, it wasn't just acting…**we** directed each other. It's like, like **we**, (gestures with his arms and hands outstretched) **we** (emphasised) have decided what is important about Richard Burton's life, especially for the people round here.

Setting up a semi structured interview at this point seemed to be well placed. When I set up a semi structured interview, it would always reflect on something participants had engaged in - it was always in context. David seemed ready to share his views on it. Through brief conversations David had indicated his engagement of working with others. David's confidence had grown, his relationship with me was trusting. He knew I wanted to find out what it was about this project that made any difference, if any, to the participants and he shared without further prompting about his view of drama now. The drama was different in his view and from my perspective, he had changed; he was not waiting to be told what to think. He was confident in sharing his experience. As the preparation for the commission had developed, I became aware that semi structured and unstructured interviews developed our collegiate relationships with research participants, so that we were reflecting together. It felt like the development of a rich conversation. The interviews also meant I could read nonverbal signals, hear the emphasis in what was said which would not have been possible with questionnaires. They were also interactive, just as the participant observation was, as well as Heathcote's pedagogy. Dialogue is at the heart of Heathcote's work, and at the heart of the methods I employed. The purpose of the work was foregrounded, so that the interactions we engaged in made sense to achieve that. They were not methods which were added on but were integral to the work.

When David joined as a volunteer to support the new Gateway group the following academic year, in preparation for their promenade performance to mark the event of Richard Burton's birthday, he was interviewed by Katy a student from that group, outside the classroom. The new group were engaged in a range of activities within the classroom, such as making silhouette shapes of significant locations and buildings from Burton's time to be posted on one of the buildings for the Promenade performance in the town. David had joined them for part of it creating silhouette shapes and chatting to them about the Burton project. It provided an opportunity for an unstructured interview about that experience. It was June (2017). Others were milling about creating images for windows in the town, painting and cutting our silhouette forms, also outside the classroom, rehearsing their promenade performances, so there was

a real buzz. I asked David how he thought the interview went, as he was beaming from the experience. He told me:

> It made me feel like I had achieved something and that I knew things she didn't because they were just starting off. Me advising this new group? I would never have done that back in the day'.

This indicated to me that there was a shift in the way David was beginning to see himself. An unstructured interview provided me with the opportunity of capturing an event as it unravelled, and being able to engage in an informal conversation, when the participant is clearly keen to share the event. In both structured and unstructured interviews, participants had the opportunity to express their individual meaning-making about the work, free from interference of other viewpoints. They provided me with more depth about individual responses. In both kinds of interviews, I was able to reflect on the work they had been engaged in for the commission. I would sometimes lay out images of our experiences on the work, which prompted them, and which afforded them agency, in selecting images, or brief texts about themes in Richard Burton's life, that they wanted to talk about. For example, both Carl and David had selected to explore the theme of money, and especially the lack of it in his family, and in fact their family and community. Without participant observation, the semi structured and unstructured interviews would have felt empty and not connected to the work. Together they seemed to work together in a seamless way.

Participant observation was the main means I used to explore Carl's story, as he resisted interviews. On the field trip to Burton's birthplace, he accepted the offer of a camera from me. Again, through the images he makes, he is connected to the group, when Kenny, one of the students, asks to see the images. These are shared with others on the minibus. He remains silent, but hands them the camera and hears their positive verbal interest in the images he has created. His connection with the group seems to be developing through what he has created. Participant observation allowed me to engage with the process, while at the same time, sharpen my awareness of groupings, positions, including my own and interactions that occurred. As Stradley (1980) confirms, participant observation is 'to observe the activities, people and physical aspects of the situation' (p.54). On this occasion I was able to use my voice recorder, as I was along with them gathering research for our commission and wanted to record what they had discovered. In this way the recording had a dual purpose and was less obtrusive, and less obviously focused on them as individuals. The recording also meant that I had verbatim records of what was said, and silences that occurred. It allowed me to listen more objectively. I selected the methods used as and when it seemed appropriate. Participant observation was used throughout our time together. Unstructured interviews emerged when opportunities arose, often emerging from what we had worked on in class, or experienced on the field trips we made, and semi structured interviews were set up also when it seemed like a good time to clarify observations, and when I felt the research participants were keen to share. The only exception to this was Carl who resisted interviews with me, but was in dialogue

with Greg, the professional documentary maker, about the filming of locations and scenes for the film. I was able to conduct a semi structured interview with him and hold conversations with him about Carl. Greg (June 2017) said he never felt the responsibility was too much for Carl, 'He was always giving signals, nodding, responding and taking action with the camera. I was always actually asking for ideas from him, as well'. Interviewing Greg supported my view of Carl's shifting position which I had also observed. Working with Greg opened up a new world for Carl, which totally engaged him. Carl, in contrast to him on the first day with his head down, was now standing upright next to Greg, nodding, paying attention to the technicalities of filming, suggesting shots they could take. He was visually in a very different position. An unstructured interview did occur with Carl, at the end of one session, when he had become very interested in the theme of money. He and David had both decided that this was a theme worth exploring in Richard Burton's life, for a range of options I had made available to them, on card spread out on the floor. Unstructured interviews I felt were meaningful ways in supporting their agency in the work. They could talk about something significant to them without feeling that they were simply answering questions for 'my research'.

Layer 3a: Connections between research participants, situations and context

Heathcote's principles are always related to building a community, and this Commission Model was concerned with building a community within the group and with the community beyond the college. Narrative inquiry, and the methods I applied within that made it possible for me to share the journey of my three research participants. This thesis is about change, and the aspects of the Commission Model which make change possible. Belonging, dialogue and trust are three elements essential in building such communities. Using the methods I selected, made it possible to identify these elements, or lack of them in the research participants I focused on for this study. All three participants had been categorised in a deficit way at their mainstream school, Carl and David as special needs, and Assim as the boy who was always behind at school because he was never in one school long enough to catch up.

My first day with each participant provided me with impressions of the research participants. Carl, who positioned himself outside the group, David who worked individually, and Assim who was eager to be accepted in the group. They were all in need of a sense of belonging. For each of the participants, the need to form relationships was key and it was as I built relationships with them, and they with one another, did they begin to open up about their lives. The Commission Model was the pedagogy which brought them into connection with one another, as they all, in their different ways contributed to its success. David moved from being monologic to becoming dialogic, Assim began to find trust in others, and Carl moved from being outside of the group to being central to the filming for the Gala evening. While David and Assim engaged with the content of Richard Burton's story early on, Carl connected

with the story from behind the camera. His, was a more gradual involvement with the content of the work, as he was more interested in the technical aspects of filming and images. This need for connection with one another was realised through the process. For Carl, it came when he became interested in the theme of money in Burton's life.

Participant Observation and unstructured interview	Focus on Carl and David	April 2017	At the end of the lesson, lunch time. Carl and David have this conversation about money	During the lesson, Carl and David had selected the theme of money as important, and at this point Carl is more open about the content of the drama and how money affects 'people round here'	Voice recorded Field Notes My reflective notes	April 2017

Table Ten: Carl's conversation with David about the theme of money

Participant observation and unstructured interview

This event, involving Carl, occurred in April 2017, where the significance of money is highlighted as we prepare to meet with Michael Sheen. Michael Sheen has generously agreed to meet with students. As a professional actor, there are connections between his life and the life of Burton. The Gateway group and I wondered if there were connections between their two lives that were worth exploring and that would help us understand some of the complexity of Burton's journey. It is the apparent interest Carl showed in the effect of money on his community, which seems to prompt him to stay behind along with David at the end of the class, when others had left. David is also interested in the impact of money or lack of it on his own family. Again, it is the content of the work which has drawn Carl in to connect with a group member. He had agency over which theme he wanted to explore, and he along with David chose the theme of money in Burton's life (and in Michael Sheen's life whom we were preparing to interview). This event was the closest to an unstructured interview with Carl I got, as we were all engaged in a three-way conversation, but I positioned myself as a commentator, particularly on David's concern about money. It was Carl's first utterance that I witnessed first-hand, while he dialogued with David, where he said. 'That's why he went to Hollywood, it was big money, he knew what it was like to go without'. The opportunity for this unstructured interview meant that Carl chose to stay and wanted to talk about the 'money' theme. He took the initiative to join in with the conversation with David. Each participant changed their position, from a student needing help to a student who provided it.

In the final event I analyse, Carl is working on filming final scenes. He is on one camera, and his mentor Greg (the professional film maker) is on another. It is the moment when Carl takes a far more directing role in encouraging his peers to concentrate on the scene to be filmed. It is in the film studio at the college. Carl said: "Look, you were doing brilliantly there, just keep going. "This is the most obviously

relational way that Carl relates to his peers, to get the filming done. It seems that getting the job done becomes important to Carl, and so his cajoling of them, is a necessary part of that. He has the camera between them and him which deflects attention from him personally. I noticed Carl's growing relational approach to others as he helps significantly in fulfilling the commission. This was in May 2017. Jack, the amateur film maker was making a film about the making of the film, so captured these exchanges which I was able to access and support along with my field notes. As there was a lot going on in terms of preparing the final filming of scenes - students rehearsing in adjoining rooms, the pressure of time to get things done, Jack's filming did not detract from this as it was all part of the process. In this way, my participant observation was usefully recorded and captured aspects of the process as they occurred. It was not set up for the sole purpose of the research I was engaged in. Carl's narrative unravelled as time went on and the recording of it, was like an overheard conversation, which was less influenced by responding to direct questioning, which is something I never used with Carl and avoided using with all my participants, within the teaching and research context. The group, including Carl, were aware that Jack was making this documentary about the experience, but they were totally focused on completing their own film.

For Assim, confronting his trust issues occurred early in the year. We visited on the coach the nearby community centre in Cwmavon film club in October 2015. On this evening, Assim was one of the members of the Gateway Creative Group who volunteered to visit the local community centre and library, where community members were meeting for one of their film nights. The group had produced a short film of events based on Richard Burton's life, which they shared. People were invited to stay at the end to speak to the group who were investigating the life of Richard Burton. Around 15 people from the audience stayed at the end and a group of chairs were roughly formed so that Assim could join them. Assim was sitting on the end with a local woman, Trina Price (pseudonym) and her friend. Trina explained to Assim her connection to Burton, explaining that she had some original documents about Burton if he would like to see them as she only lived next door to the community centre. I intervened and spoke to Assim:

Iona: Thanks, I can come with you

Assim: Great, will the bus wait?'

Iona: Yes of course, I will let people know where we are

We visited Trina's house with her friend. Before we left, Trina handed the documents to Assim.

Trina: Here, you can borrow them as long as I have them back safely

When I spoke to Assim in December 2016 he highlighted this event as being significant to him:

Assim: I found it really nice that she trusted me, so glad you came with me. I have always had difficulty with trust. Someone who didn't know you could take you into her home? (he sounded

surprised) Trusting others is my problem. Never had male role models as my brothers moved away also. Maybe I have trust issues because of no stability.

As part of my participant observation, I became aware that this visit was the first time Assim had disclosed a personal issue. Earlier in the term he had taken an interest in Richard Burton's diaries and talked about his own constant changes, and this was juxtaposed with Richard Burton's changes he made in his life. The semi structured interview allowed Assim to open up as an individual, things he was unlikely to disclose in class. By the time of the interview, he had got to know Eirwen and myself and felt able to share.

For all three, the fictionalized story of Richard Burton had provided a metaphor for their own lives, issues and interests. For all three the protection of working with someone else's story allowed them to reveal and often share their own. It occurred to me that the entire process including Heathcote's concept of the 'other' meant that the attention was not on them as individuals, but on someone or something else. The camera was a clear 'other' for Carl and through that protective lens he engaged with the content. For Assim, the 'other' was the narrative of Richard Burton which he used to tell his own story and for David, the narrative of Richard burton's life encouraged him to shift from his binary approach to seeing multiple possibilities. These included his personal feeling of 'hating girls'. He had been bullied by girls at his previous school and assumed all girls would have been the same. He shared this with the group in May, where he openly told them of his reticence about working with them in class.

Layer 3b: Locations and research participants' unfolding narratives

My findings emerged from a range of locations, and I reflected on the impact these locations may have had on the stories my research participants revealed. For all three whose experience of school was in some ways problematic in terms of their sense of belonging, I questioned whether these locations created the freedom from the connotations of a schooling institution.

For Assim, the visit to Cwmavon community centre seemed significant, in terms of opening up about his lack of trust. He was invited into someone's home as a guest. Someone had trusted him with documents which were personally valuable to them. Trina, the community member positioned him as a researcher. This was a spontaneous situation. It was not planned as often school sessions are. It was not predictable, often as school routines are. It was also a genuine trusting gesture. Assim was also addressed as an individual, not a member of a class. It was a taste of a relationship with the outside world, where he was positioned with an important job to do.

On another occasion, in February 2017, as we were returning from the theatre on the coach, Assim told me the story of his part time job in a grocer's store and how he found it difficult sometimes juggling

everything, especially when his mum was away. I told him a story about when I was 16, just like him, working away from home in a hotel where some very dramatic events occurred. We laughed about the stories we shared, and I commented on all the experiences he could be writing about. Assim had become increasingly interested in writing and constructing scenes. The interview on the bus was totally unstructured, and initiated by Assim, and did not on the face of it seem to have anything to do with my research. I was struck, however, by the ease by which he shared stories, some of his anxieties and hopes for the future. He talked about the theatre manager's story, how she had worked her way up, had left school at 16. He said it made him think things were possible for him.

Participant Observation	Focus on Assim Unstructured interview with Assim during visit to St Fagans and on the return journey home on the coach	February 2016 Trip St Fagans and to Cardiff Theatre to watch performance	At St Fagan's On the coach returning from Cardiff	Assim commented on how 'we have entered each other's lives for a day' at St Fagans. He and I were walking together - the whole group wandering around. On the coach returning home we shared stories of our lives. The group on the bus chatting together

Table 11: Assim and I share stories of our lives on the return coach trip from the theatre

This, for me, was evidence that he was beginning to trust me with his stories from his life. As we sat side by side, Assim and I, not always needing to make eye contact in the darkness of the coach journey home from the theatre in February 2017, we both shared stories of our life, mine from when I was young and his as it was unravelling in the present time**.** Was the protection of not being face-to-face an opportunity for Assim to share his personal stories? We had on the way to the theatre visited St Fagan's where we saw replica houses from the 1930's representative of the ones Burton grew up in. Assim commented, 'It's like we have entered each other's lives for a whole day'. Did he feel that our lives only exist outside of schools and colleges and has little connection with our lives within them? Did relationships develop outside college more easily than inside college? Did these locations encourage a more collegiate and inclusive context?

When we were back in college (June 2017 Interview), he referred to the coach trip as one of the highlights of the project, because it was 'so great to share stories'. On that coach trip he talked about darker sides of his life, about how he missed his older brothers who now lived in Leeds and how he felt very alone at his house when his mum was away. During that journey, he was very open about his feelings, when we spoke side by side on the trip coming back from Oxford. When Carl took photographs on the field trip to Burton's birthplace, and his peers wanted to see them. I asked myself, would this have happened in class? I was outside the conversation his peers shared with him, but in ear shot. In class, would this incidental event happen in the same way? Was Carl's position as a cameraman rather than a student made possible by the location we were in?

The evening of the promenade performance, in which David performed along with others, in the street of Port Talbot, I talked with David's parents, who were beaming. His mother said, 'I never thought I would see that' as she watched David walking along the room flanked either side by two friends, he had met through the project. This was part of my participant observation on that evening, but the opportunity to develop an unstructured interview emerged as I chatted to his parents. This was not something that could be planned in advance but emerged as part of the evening event. Would this clarity of David's developing dialogic and interactive way of being have become this evident in class? To an extent, it was evident at college, particularly when he agreed to help me out with another class along with Richard Burton's niece. They worked as a collective role as Richard Burton following the tragic accident of his brother and fed off each other's responses. However, both locations were not his normal classroom, and in both situations, he was positioned as competent and capable. This feeling of being positioned in this way was also emphasised when he agreed to work with the A-Level Media Studies group in August of 2017, in preparation for the Promenade performance in November 2017.

It seems that the locations did encourage the participants' growing re-positioning, from students within a college to young responsible people contributing to something beyond the college. The sense of space, freedom and informality, built relationships, and the intimacy of spaces, like the minibus outing and coach bus trips home at night, built connections, and helped participants share and connect. The different locations also positioned the participants differently, as competent, capable and responsible as the visits were not just a regular outing but part of their research into Burton's life and contributed to the ways in which they would contribute. For Assim, the Oxford trip, to the Burton and Taylor theatre, inspired him as a writer. Carl, from the minute he accepted the camera from me on his visit to Pontrhydafen, he was becoming the film maker for the project, and for David his move from becoming a monologic actor to a person who could explore multiple perspectives. Table 12 illustrates the insights revealed by the methods I employed, and how they informed my findings.

Name	Event	Method	How Events were recorded	When Events Occurred	Where Events Occurred	Insights	Links to Findings
Carl	The group are invited to create Burton's study, using paper, objects and drawings.	P.O.	Voice recorder and field notes	The second week of the process 09/2016	In class Room	Carl's position had shifted slightly He had not yet physically entered the space with others. Carl's position had shifted slightly. He had not yet physically entered the space with others. I noted that he liked drawing. Others commented	He showed 'relational agency', moving towards a connection with someone (Eirwen) See pp.139-140 PO gave me the opportunity of observing his body language, his interaction with another -Spradley (1980) see p.99

						on the design set up of Burton's home, including Carl's contribution. Eirwen gave an invitation to draw. This was his first utterance where he refers to 'A portrait of Burton's father'.	
Carl	David had selected the theme of money in Burton's life, in preparation for an interview with Michael Sheen.	U.I.	Voice recorded Field Notes	Session 31 04/2017, after a session on themes in Burton's life	In the class Room. David, myself and Carl present	The idea of money and lack of it had drawn Carl in. The use of 'The other' the card with questions about money in RB's life, had attracted Carl. He identified with a community who knew what it was like to go without. He was interested in David's story about his family's lack of money. Carl connected with this. I invited them to tell me more. The dialogue below followed: David: That's an important one, that is Carl: Yes, that is important I think, because that is what changed his life. He could have things he never had before, and he could help his family. That is why he went to Hollywood. It was big money, he knew what it was like to go without	Carl was using his agency in a relational way. The content of the work had drawn Carl in. The 'lack of money' had tapped into issues in his own life and community The unstructured nature of the interview had made it possible to capture Carl's responses as they arose. He was acting dialogically. (See p. 115 in thesis). This event is a powerful illustration of Carl's shift to becoming dialogic and thinking deeper about the implications of Burton's narrative.
Carl	Carl was working on filming scenes for the final film. Gary (the film maker) was on one camera and Carl was on the other. His peers were performing a scene and losing concentration consistently.	P.O.	Film recorded Field Notes	Session 34 05/2017 Filming final scenes	College Film Studio	Carl encouraged them. Carl: This was alright until you got to that part. Come on, this camera is heavy' (Another two attempts were made): Carl: Look you were doing brilliantly there, just keep going, it doesn't matter if it seems wrong to you, nobody else knows, just keep going' (they did,	This reflected Carl's 'capacity To act upon the world' (Holland 1998). His investment. He was acting, 'purposively and reflectively' in 'complex Interrelationships with others' (Holland, 1998) He has developed a positional identity' Carl has taken on the authority of someone who is going to lead them

						and it was finally done) Carl: Brilliant! (Kenny jumped up and ran to Carl and shook his hands) Kenny: I thought we would never get there. This was a significant shift in Carl's position.	into completing the scene. His identity as a member of the team has shifted as he reallised that they cannot do the filming without him. P.O. made the observation and the recording in this context less intrusive. (See p.144)
2 David	Unlike Carl, David was a willing participant but was monologic. He performed the tasks he was asked to do willingly but very individually. Gradually, I set up situations where he would connect with others. I set up a task for him to role play with Kenny, David as RB. David, up until this point, took a very binary view of Burton. The final question Kenny asked David as RB , 'So what kind of person does that make you?' David: 'I am the sort of person who has a dream ...I could be that actor, rugby player…that writer but I am tied to people who matter to me' David raised the question :'What helped him make that decision to go?' Kenny pondered: 'He has such talent, he couldn't use it here and he may not have been aware of what the future holds for him' David responded: 'I don't suppose any of us are'.	P. O.	Voice recorded and field note	Session 19 02/2017	In the class room	In this event, David was straddling two worlds, the world of RB and the reality of his own world. David was always of the view that RB should have been remained in Port Talbot. This was one of the first extended connections based in dialogue that David made with another person in the group.	David had been very much a cause and effect' person, but here he is beginning to see things from a different perspective, in this case Kenny's point of view, as he questioned David's assumptions. This is a pivotal moment - he is thinking deeper about his own values through the role of Burton. P.O. makes it possible to pick up significant work without being intrusive. Recording had become a natural part of the lessons, especially as we wanted to document stuff for the final film. This event is a powerful illustration of David's shift to becoming dialogic and thinking deeper about the implications of Burton's narrative. (See p.154 thesis) Edmiston and Towler Eans (2022) Bakhtin (20**10)**
David	David talks about his view of drama, 'he didn't think it could be like this'. He continued:	S.S.I.	Voice Recorded Field Notes	06/2017	Alison's Office (the welfare officer)	David is redefining drama and how it has impacted on him.	His awareness of the purpose is clear, and the sense of responsibility apparent here, and

	"We used to be told: 'Get into pairs'. I hated that. I thought who shall I be paired with? Oh no –here comes that get into pairs thing again. The teacher usually decided on the pairs, and he would always decide what we were going to do a scene about. This project was very different … it was getting behind the story of Richard Burton, and we researched it ourselves so we could decide what to do, and what we had to do, for the film".(p.184 of thesis)					He has become more dialogic and having internal dialogues about how he likes to work and learn.	the agency it afforded him and others. His response to the dialogue with me as the researcher is evidence of him shifting from being monologic to becoming more dialogic (p.158).
David	At the end of the promenade evening, I was standing with David's parents. As they told me of how transformational the project had been for David, the boy who had kept to himself over a year earlier, walked past us down the hill with two male friends. Their arms were linked. 'That's something I never expected to see' said his beaming mum. (see page 148 of thesis)	U.I.	Field Notes	11/2017	A Street in Port Talbot	The changes noticed by his parents helped to confirm what my research was telling me. That he was much more of an isolated individual prior to participating in this work, and his parents seemed very moved by his growing relationships with others. The informal and joyful atmosphere created by the promenade performance, involving the community, provided a rich context for an unstructured interview. It allowed me to use the opportunity to meet with David's parents in an informal way.	This event supports the finding in this research, that David had become far more dialogic and sociable. His positioning had changed - here he was helping others. This is supported by David's own feelings when he was interviewed by Katy a member of the new Gate way group he was assisting. In a semi structured interview in June 2017, he said It made me feel like I had achieved something and that I knew things she didn't because they were just starting off. Me advising this new group? I would never have done that back in the day'. This supports the findings that David's position had shifted (see page 160 of thesis)
3. Assim	Assim was invited by a community member, Trina, to visit her home, next	P.O.	Field Notes part recorded	10/ 2016	Cwmavon Community Centre and	Trina saw Assim as a researcher for the film they were making, not a	This seemed to be a new experience for Assim, and indicated a change,

	door to Cwmavon Community Centre, so she could share some of the original documents she had about Richard Burton's life. It was a choice he made to visit her home. He checked that the coach would wait first and seemed a little reticent until I said I would come too. However, he was smiling and seemed eager to see the documents and hear more about Trina's connection to Richard Burton. Before we left Trina handed the documents to Assim, and said: 'here, you can borrow them as long as I have them back safely'.				Trina's home	marginalised student struggling in a group aimed at preparing him for future examinations, if he was good enough. He was surprised that 'someone you don't know can trust you?' He was positioned here as a researcher, not a NEET student, but as someone who would pay attention to the value of a local celebrity and what his legacy might mean to the local community.	and a widening of perspective (Heathcote1984) for him (p.212) He was looking beyond himself. Assim was finding a different story about trust (p.181)
	In an interview in December, Assim highlighted the significance of the event: Assim: I found it really nice that she trusted me, so glad you came with me. I have always had difficulty with trust. Someone who didn't know you could take you into her home.	S. S. I, where Assim reflected on event described in P.O. (above)	Recorded	Date of event 10/ 2016 as (above) Date of reflection in semi - structured interview 12/ 2016	Alison's office	It seemed a new experience for Assim related to trust. He said in this interview: 'I found it really nice that she trusted me, so glad you came with me. I have always had difficulty with trust. Someone who didn't know you could take you into her home. Trusting others is my problem. Never had male role models as my brothers moved away also. Maybe I have trust issues because of no stability' (p.191)	As part of my participant observation, I became aware that this visit was the first time Assim had disclosed a personal issue. Earlier in the term he had taken an interest in Richard Burton's diaries and talked about his own constant changes, and this was juxtaposed with Richard Burton's changes he made in his life. The semi structured interview allowed Assim to open up as an individual, things he was unlikely to disclose in class. By the time of the interview, he had got to know Eirwen and myself and felt able to share. The semi structured interview revealed the significance Assim placed on the event since he raised it two months after the event.

	Assim became very interested in the diaries of Richard Burton and discussions we had about his life as reflected in his diary, seemed to intersect with Assim's own experiences: 'I never felt needed at school, they never wanted me there'. *[Assim 2016 (age 16) written November 2016]* 'I am not wanted here' *[Richard Burton 1941 Page 16]*	U.I.	Field notes Audio recording	11/ 2016 07/2017 05/2018	Classroom lunch time	Assim, in these informal chats explained, 'Because I moved it unsettled me, haven't kept in touch with friends. It's life beyond control. My father wasn't in my life'. It seems that It seems that Assim's story and Richard Burton's story intersect in the way he talks about Burton's experience and his own. Assim moved schools about eight times, and he reflected what it felt like for Burton moving to his sister's house when his mother died, and then to Philip Burton, his adopted father, to Oxford and then to Hollywood. The instability of this was reflected in both Burton's diary and also in the diary of Assim who began to identify as a writer.' (Field notes and recordings - December 2016). Assim said: 'It made me think differently about him when I got to know he was from a troubled background. At first, I just thought of him as this big movie star. When we started to learn about him, there was more to him, he was torn, he wanted to do other things.'	Assim appeared to be looking at his own life through the lens of Burton's life. Burton's life seemed to serve as a metaphor for his own life. Assim often talked though the use of metaphors. Assim talked about his feelings using the metaphors of the green and red dragons: (July 2017) 'It's like there are two dragons, red and green and they are fighting, the one who survives is the one you decide to feed. This project is feeding me new insights, a new me, a new goal' (p.171 of thesis) The dragons represented the 'bullies' who had tormented him and also represented his moods. Assim identified differently with others in his comprehensive school – he was 'alone' vs. part of an 'extended family' in his current group, the Gateway Creative Group. Assim's agency changed. It was different, he was acting to 'deal with it yourself' vs. acting as 'an extended family' (May 2018), p.171 of thesis Unstructured interview (July 2017 and May 2018. (P.171)

Table 12: Connections between events, methods and findings
KEY
P.O. Participant Observation
U.I. Unstructured Interview
S.S.I. Semi Structured Interview

5.2 Analysis of Research Participant 1: Carl

The early signs of Carl's agency and how this intersects with his positioning and developing identity: 'The realized capacity of people to act upon their world. That capacity is the power of people to act purposively and reflectively, in more or less complex interrelationships with one another, to reiterate and remake the world, in circumstances where they may consider different courses of action' (Holland (1998, p.42) quotes Inden (1990, p.23).

I unpicked the implications of Holland's (1998) definition of agency and apply it in my analysis of three events in Carl's story, one of the research participants in this study. Alongside this, I also apply my analysis of these events through the lens of positioning an identity. The rationale for this approach is that all three concepts intersect and the relationship between them will be clearer. When I first encountered Carl in the classroom at the college in September 2016 on my first day with the group, he was sitting away from the group on his own with his head down.

Participant Observation	Entire group-focus on Carl and David (research participants)	September 2016 Morning Session	In the classroom at college	Iona, Eirwen, Alison the 17 students Creating RB's study using paper and materials. Carl has his head down. David works individually.	Field Notes from Iona Field Notes from Eirwen Iona reflective journal Purposeful conversation with Alison

Table 13: Focus on Carl, on our first day together, as we create our version of RB's study

5.2.1 An invitational approach with Carl

If I look back to that first day, September 16th, 2016, when Eirwen, my colleague sits with Carl and invites him tentatively to contribute to the work. Eirwen says, 'I attached myself to Carl, he had his head down on the desk or looked up at his thumb nails which he positioned about three inches from his eyes'.

Eirwen went to Carl and sits beside him, at his desk, which is positioned outside the circle of chairs I have set out for the group. She joins him to support him, and to engage him in fulfilling the task. She did not try to cajole him but simply tried to open up a dialogue about the work and provided him with time to respond. She offered him choices; he can respond or choose not to as she prefaces her implied invitation to do so by using inclusive language such as 'You wonder which of these objects might be found in his study'. Carl chose not to participate with others in the group on that first day. He used his agency to position himself apart from the group, with his head down on the table. His agency is not yet relational (Holland *et al.*, 1998) He is not in relationship with others in the classroom where the aim is to build a community. This suggests how he identifies with everyone else in the room, as someone who

has little to contribute. He does not appear to connect with other students in the room. Carl showed very little agency during that first session, but Eirwen, as the teacher is positioning him as competent, knowledgeable and capable. Eirwen uses her agency to position him as someone who does have a contribution to make and whatever he said was going to be accepted. She does not challenge his sitting out and she accepts how he is exercising his agency. He has the right to contribute, and he also has the right to sit out and be quiet.

I invited the group to create what Burton's study might have been like and the objects it contained, on that first day. As a participant observer, I recorded this session in my field notes, and my colleague's field notes. I made real objects, such as the top hat and the ring, as well as paper to represent objects, available to the group. The students in the class all explore Burton's life in different ways, and as the teacher I am encouraging them to have agency over how they explore it, what they choose to look at, what they decide to draw and what they are drawn to. Their response comes from being in dialogue with the world of Richard Burton through the objects that represent his life. They may be drawn to objects that have resonance with their own lived experience or with what attracts them to engage with, if anything. Carl's first utterance is a reference to a 'portrait of Richard Burton's father' which he draws. I discover that drawing is something Carl likes to do and here he uses his agency to choose how he will contribute to the creation of Richard Burton's study.

Eirwen suggested to Carl, 'I wonder if there is anything in that room that might remind him of being round here, that reminds him of home' 'A portrait of his father' Carl responds. 'Would you like to draw that?' Eirwen suggests as she offers him a range of paper sizes to select from. Carl begins to create a drawing of a family portrait of Richard Burton's father as a miner, sitting in his home near the hearth. Later he tells me, 'I like doing portraits'. Carl places his 'portrait' of Burton's father on the desk which Carys another group member had placed, but he only does this as the entire group are on their feet milling around chatting about where to place things. Carys looks at his drawing and comments 'he likes to remember the things he did as a child and never forgets where he came from'. Carl's agency is becoming relational. His drawing has prompted Carys to interpret his drawing and what it might mean to Burton. This was then shared with the group.

I set up a context to encourage students' agencies. They make decisions about what to include in the 'room'. They decide what is significant. Nothing is imposed. They are positioned as students who can research, make decisions and implement suggestions within this community. There was no script, everything was improvised, and the story Carl is part of making up is the story of this classroom, his emerging narrativized identity. At this point Carl might have been telling himself something like 'I am not sure; we are doing something to do with this guy and we are going to see where he lives…and we are making up where he lived in Italy, and I am drawing a picture of the father to put on the desk. I am

alright at drawing….' Young people can only improvise if they feel and think of themselves as subjects. Only as subjects do people have relational agency to initiate action and offer unique responses in dialogue about a topic. Addressed as subjects we invite young people to improvise in response (Biesta, 2017; Bakhtin, (2010).

The significant aspect of Carl's action is that on that first day he created a drawing which seems to indicate that he knows how to depict in his imagination a drawing of Burton's father as a miner. There is no correct or incorrect 'outcome' to this task, but an invitation to contribute an idea of how he might have been. This is a key idea as I offer him choice which positions him to act with agency The imagined world of Burton's father means Carl is relating to someone else, albeit in imagination. Dorothy Heathcote wanted us to recognise that as humans we have agency, including the universal ability to imagine, empathise and relate to others. He has little agency in this classroom community, until on that first day Eirwen shows she is offering to listen to him. He is not going to listen to anyone else until someone listens to him. On that first day, he has listened and answered, it is the beginning of dialogue. Eirwen began with, "I wonder if…" which is one of Heathcote's pondering questions, which does not demand a response, and does not imply one correct question, or that the teacher has the answer already in her head. The question implies a choice and invites agency. Carl can choose to respond or not. Eirwen is also inviting him to respond and engage - she is not imposing it. Attention was not drawn to Carl, who was positioned outside the group. This was then shared with the group, and they responded.

5.2.2 Carl drawing on what he already knows and cares about in a humanising community

'The realized capacity of people to act upon their world. That capacity is the power of people to act purposively and reflectively, in more or less complex interrelationships with one another, to reiterate and remake the world, in circumstances where they may consider different courses of action' (Holland (1998, p.42) quotes Inden (1990, p.23).

In this event, Carl's actions and connections with others seems to illustrate directly Holland's perspective on agency. Three weeks later (October 7th, 2016) the group, along with myself and Eirwen, were going on a field trip to visit Burton's birthplace, the house he lived in and the pub he frequented. It was on this field trip where I witnessed one of Carl's first significant moment of agency. It was when he first took the camera from me that I offered to him. 'Perhaps you would like to take some photographs of these places' I suggested, as I held out a camera he might use. He could have said 'No', but he took the camera I offered and that was one of his first significant moments of agency. As Holland (1998) puts it in the quote at the beginning of this section, this was a significant 'course of action' when he accepts the camera and decides on the photographs he will take. He is choosing to do this.

At that moment I am positioning Carl as someone who could take the camera. I am assuming he will be able to use it and contribute to the work. Once he takes on responsibility for the camera, from then on, it is his 'duty 'to show up and his commitment to seeing it through begins. Kenny, a peer, positions Carl as an equal and as a friend, asks to see Carl's photographs and says, 'That's great'. Kenny shares the images with others and their responses are positive. Carl is being positioned as a contributor, and the beginning of his identity as the camera man in the group has begun. His identities act as mediating tools for his agency. Carl's emerging identity is reflected in Holland's (1998) definition of identity:

People tell others who they are, but even more important they tell themselves who they are [these self-understandings are their identities] and then try to act [i.e. with agency] as though they are who they say they are' (Holland *et al.,* 1998, p. 3).

His 'realised capacity' to 'act upon his world' reflects a capability and knowing that this is something he can do. Carl knew he could have positive responses as a 'knowing, doing being' person (Stetsenko, 2008) and not only to know about or give personal or intersubjective significance to it as 'knowing beings', but have the capacity of 'the power of people to act purposively and reflectively,' reflecting what Stetsenko (2016) describes as a 'hopeful shared purpose'. When Kenny takes the initiative to share Carl's photographs with others, Carl is positioned as someone who can contribute to the collaborative teamwork. This is done 'reflectively, in more or less complex interrelationships with one another'. It was Kenny who did the reflection as Carl was more observational and was rarely verbal within the group.

On that first day of our field trip experience, returning in the minibus from Pontrhydafen, Burton's birthplace, Carl is building a relationship with Kenny over this brief but significant interaction in the minibus to 'reiterate and remake the world'. Carl says very little, which is his usual disposition, and I do not insist that he does. I am positioning him in this way as speaking I have observed is not something that Carl is comfortable with doing. Instead, I pay attention to his actions. He makes minimal contribution verbally. It is reiterated when he does contribute, as when he takes hold of the camera. Carl reiterates the way he often positions himself, quietly outside the group, mostly nonverbal and non-interactive. This day was the first day in which I had seen Carl act differently. He is making active choices. It is a key moment in Carl's journey as at this point, he is also 'remaking his world', he is taking photographs and filming. In this 'curriculum' Carl is not detached from it, it is not detached from what he is actually doing and seems able to do. He is contributing to his own learning and that of the group.

Kenny and the group discuss the photographs and make selections, and the process of selection and editing is one in which Carl becomes a key player. Holland's view of agency helps us to understand the significance of Carl's actions, as he actively uses his agency to select images and 'consider different courses of action'. He was making selections according to what would be useful for the group and for the commission. Simon, another student, is clarifying the purpose for Carl, 'he was always in the pub - we definitely want that in'. These decisions about the pictures were significant in developing agency and the 'hopeful future' of making a film for the community. The field trip was not just a field trip; it was a way of investigating the past life of a man who lived in their area. They were learning in a different way from being told by those who know. They were researching as the ones who already know things and have their own questions to explore. People, it might be argued, only use agency if they consider different courses of action, in this case, different possible angles from gwhich to take the photographs. Agency is the opposite of being acted upon. For Heathcote (1984), teaching is never done to students but is always responsive to who people are and how they approach the work… who students already are as 'whole people' are the 'roots of the 'tree of knowledge' (p.123)

How did Carl in dialogue with himself and with others transcend what he could do in a classroom in this world of fulfilling a commission to honour the life of RB? He took photographs, collaborated with the group, shared his work with others, he laughed, 'in circumstances where they may consider different courses of action' (Holland *et al.,* p.42). He made eye contact, sat with others, walked around.

On day 2, Carl turned up. On day 3, October 7th, 2016, during the trip to Pontrhydafen, he is listening to others, and he is sharing his work, he is experiencing being with others who like his pictures and therefore like him. We are building what we (Edmiston and Towler-Evans, 2022) refer to as a 'humanizing community', transcending what is created via improvisation (not replicated or scripted), using cultural resources; including dramatic imagination (Edmiston and Towler-Evans, 2022). Here, Carl creates a product as in photographs which are then used by the group. What Carl learns on that first day is that he will be listened to, things will not be imposed and that he is given permission to experiment with his ideas.

This means that from Carl's point of view, he can contribute again, and he will not be judged. If Carl had not been present taking pictures and filming, it would have been different for him and for the group. He would have had nothing to share, and the conversation that may have occurred would have relied on verbal exchanges, so it was unlikely to include Carl as he tended to be non-verbal. It is very significant that Carl did not have to actually say anything as his contribution was clearly visual.

On the field trip he does experiment with taking pictures, he is not judged but his work is appreciated by the others in the group. That first day and his first encounter with Eirwen was significant in Carl's

journey. The appropriation of these products as heuristics for the next moment of activity used as tools of agency are evident here in Carl's developing agency.

5.2.3 Carl acting with relational agency and responsibility

In May 2017, as the gala evening became closer, Carl was on one camera and Gary, the professional film maker, on another. They were set to film a scene which included Kenny, Kenny P and Allan. It was the scene about whether he ought to do rugby or acting, and Kenny P played the part of Richard Burton. The first time the scene was played the girls missed their cue and came in late and Kenny got the giggles, so they had to retake it. The second time, Allan was slow with his lines and Kenny got the giggles again as did the others:

> Carl: That was alright until you got to that part, come on, this camera is heavy
>
> (It took another two attempts before they got it right). After the third attempt Carl asserted:
>
> Carl: Look you were doing brilliantly there, just keep going, it doesn't matter if it seems wrong to you, nobody else knows so just keep going
>
> (They did and it was eventually done)
>
> Carl: Brilliant! (Kenny jumped up and ran to Carl and shook his hand)
>
> Kenny: I thought we would never get there

In this event Carl, who has been working with Gary, the professional film maker, is taking the responsibility for filming a scene for the film. This reflects Carl's 'capacity to act upon the world'. Carl has been addressed as capable and competent throughout the process and his growing agency has developed through continued participation, within a team, in the project. His investment in his role as film maker developed because of his visual eye, and he now cares about the final product he is working towards, namely the film about 'The boy from the valleys'. He is acting 'purposively and reflectively' in 'complex interrelationships' with others. He has grown a friendship with Kenny. He had other 'different courses of action' he may have taken here. He could have given up and joined in with the laughter and forgot about the filming. Instead, he used his agency intentionally and relationally and seemed to realise a power he had to 'act purposively'.

Carl is now positioned as someone responsible for filming the scene. He is applying all he has learned and is still learning from Gary, the professional film maker, to this event. He is competent and capable. He has developed a positional identity. His peers who are working on the scene, respond to his encouragement and advice. He speaks up and is the one who corals them. He has taken on the authority of someone who is going to lead them in to completing the scene without losing concentration. They know that the film cannot be made without him, and they know he cares about the outcome. His identity

as a member of this community has shifted. He is now seen as someone responsible for the filming, and someone who can direct others:

> The way children learn best the complex skills and dispositions of adulthood is through keeping real company with the kinds of expert they hope to become….and with the real things of the world …. (Mier, 2002, p.10).

This is reflected in Carl's apprenticeship to Gary, who worked as a professional documentary maker. Carl is becoming more intentional in his actions, more responsive to others, more responsible for his actions, and more open to taking shared responsibilities in the world. He is illustrating what Biesta describes as being grown-up who expect to be in dialogue with others and with the world (Biesta, 2017, p.4). Regardless of chronological age, anyone is growing as they develop more awareness of always needing to act in relation to how other people act or might respond. This is developing relational agency in the sense that one is not only making personal or shared choice but also considering others more often in the making of decisions and in assessing the consequences of our own and other people's actions. Acting with more authority, they may create more knowledge and over time may become changed as people. When acting with relational agency becomes normalised, they are becoming more grown up. Part of the process of how we create a community that we all desire is when people are answerable to one another for the consequences of their action, and this example illustrates that Carl's peers were answerable to him. This is in contrast to the Carl we met on the first day, with his head in his hands, separate from the group, where he chose to opt out. Here, he is managing the actors, so that he can get the film done. He is using his agency in a relational way.

Carl became committed to his developing professional relationship with Gary much more than to a complex understanding of the world of Richard Burton. He became deeply committed to what in effect was an apprenticeship with Gary who gradually inducted him into the professional world of documentary filmmaking. Carl became passionate in Fried's (2002) sense of developing "the desire to learn, to discover, to figure something out, to be able to do something well enough to proclaim it as one's own" (p. 7). He was able to transform his disposition to observe into an increasingly skilled professional relationship with the project as a whole. Carl does not remain in a restricted student space of what is assumed to be his abilities, but this extends into what-if spaces. What if we had the grown-up authority needed to complete a grown-up project? Carl worked with conviction to complete the filming for the community and to meet the request of Sally Burton.

5.3 Analysis of research participant 2: David

As in my analysis of my first research participant, Carl's involvement, I unpick the implications of Holland's (1998) definition of agency and apply it in my analysis of four events in David's story, my

second research participant in this study. Following this I also apply my analysis of these events through the lens of positioning and identity. When I first encountered David in the classroom, he was sitting on his own, but was positioned as part of the group, unlike Carl, who had positioned himself outside the group.

Central to David's 'journey' was his movement from being monologic to becoming more dialogic in his agency. He learned to become more ready and able to answer and address others and thus work more collaboratively, reflective of Bakhtin's (1981) notion of 'people authoring selves' as they 'respond' and 'answer' how they are 'addressed'.

By November 2017, David had become a more thinking, feeling, inquiring, improvising, collaborative actor. A year earlier, he had mostly looked to others to direct him. In Autumn 2017 he mentored peers as he joined a new group preparing for a promenade to be held in the town on Richard Burton's birthday. David's acting became more improvisational as he was more open to standing in, and speaking, for any character in interactions proposed by others. He became more of a director as he offered and showed his peers ideas, some of which he had discovered at home on the internet. He also tried incorporating other arts into his contributions to the project, including creating paintings and paper sculptures to be used on the promenade.

5.3.1 David's developing agency

The analysis of David's agency came from what he did, what he said to me, what he shared verbally with his peers, or chose not to share. His identity was how these aspects of David's observable behaviour changed gradually over time, how he positioned himself and how he was positioned, and how he positioned others, as the concepts of agency, identity and positioning intersected unlike Carl, who tended not to verbalise his reflections, David did so extensively in conversations and interviews with me, and in conversations with peers gradually, as I structured events to accommodate this, and eventually he chose to work with others in a dialogic way.

At school he was positioned as somebody who required support in a class for people who had 'special' needs. He recognised Carl from that same class, yet they had never shared a conversation. The story of his school life seemed to illustrate what he was not allowed to do, rather than what he was allowed to do. His agency was limited. According to David, he chose to do French and History, but he was denied this, as he was considered not good enough. His own perception of himself as being a member of a class for 'kids with disabilities' positioned him as someone who was not as good as his peers in other 'higher' groups, and as someone who needed help. In the Richard Burton commission, he, along with others in the class, were being asked to help others, so this repositioned them and him, despite the fact that he

was in a bridging non-examination class, designed to prepare him for the next steps of entering an examination group, when and if he was ready to do so.

In this non-examination group, we were guided by the following inquiry questions:

- Who was the man behind the media mask?
- How can we create movies and public events to connect local people with his life story?

I have selected events from David's journey to illustrate and analyse them through the lens of the concepts of agency, identity and positioning, as well as to identify significant moments of change. I will begin with an event following the end of David's group's Richard Burton commission (2016 to 2017) and then compare this to the first couple of days I worked with David, in order to illustrate significant shifts in his agency. I will also analyse events in between these two contrasting events to illustrate the process of David's shifting relational positions, growing relational agency and shifting positional and relational identity. I will then analyse the same events through the lens of positioning and identity.

5.3.2 David framed as someone with expertise: Day 40 and beyond (2017-2018)

David's commitment to the project extended beyond the gala which in June 2017 was a culmination of a year's work for the students. He wanted to continue. David eagerly accepted when I offered that he could assist me with two groups that I worked with that summer, in August 2017, and into the autumn up until November 2017, when the promenade performance would take place. Now he was positioned by peers as someone with expertise. He seemed to relish this new way of being seen.

Participant Observation	Focus on David	In a room in the local library	David joined Kenny and Sheila to work with a group of 8 'A' level media studies students to help with forthcoming Promenade performance to celebrate RB's 92nd birthday	August 2017

Table 14: David helps the 'A' level Media students prepare for a promenade performance in honour of RB's 92nd birthday

In the summer, he chose to come into college, though he was not taking classes, to work with new students beginning a course that would culminate in advanced level (A-Level) examinations. The A-Level students had communicated their respect for the work on the film to David's class, a film they had watched and analysed from a media perspective. In a jointly composed letter, the A-Level media students wrote to the students in the Gateway Creative Group asking to learn from them about Richard Burton and the making of the movies as they intended to participate in the promenade performance to mark the event of Richard Burton's 92nd birthday. David had come to realize his capacity to 'act purposively and reflectively'. At this stage David had successfully contributed to the film and the Gala

evening. He readily took up the opportunity to participate in the promenade evening in the town. This meant he would be working with new students, with whom he was unfamiliar, but he was committed to 'reiterate and remake the world' by extending what he had come to understand about the impact of the Richard Burton project in the community at the gala evening. He did this in circumstances where he may have 'considered different courses of action'. This extended opportunity for David was completely voluntary. He worked with the new Gateway creative group in his free time, while he was studying his GCSE subjects at the college and joined the A-Level students during the summer vacation of 2017. He used his agency to make that choice. David's focus on Richard Burton's relationship with his hometown (he believed that "his heart was always in Wales") still fuelled his enthusiasm which had become more critical as he recognized how the local media unfairly focused on sensational aspects of his life. During August 2017, David had explored, along with the A-level students, the multiple perspectives on events reported in the Media during sessions we planned in Neath/Port Talbot library in the summer holidays. Focusing on the role of the media on the life of Richard Burton had been David's suggestion, and his peers from the A-level media group were keen to support the idea. In this circumstance David was not waiting to be directed but realized his capacity to 'act purposively'.

In both the new examination and non-examination groups, peers valued the knowledge and experience that David had which they did not yet have. He was excited to share, try out ideas, and grapple with the challenges of planning the promenade evening. He did whatever was needed to be done and offered more. He was resilient. He kept returning of his own volition, yet he neither pushed his ideas nor basked in praise. His valuing of the local community seemed to drive his commitment to the project. Though David drew on his noble values of loyalty, integrity, and friendship to critique the life of Richard Burton, in the project he had opportunities to live out and experience those values with others beyond his family. His 'interrelationships 'had become more 'complex', involving two different and contrasting groups of students; the gateway group who were in the process of building their confidence to enter mainstream, just as David had done the previous year and the A-Level students who were excited about applying their expertise at filming, projection, image making and construction as part of their media course. Both groups participated in the promenade event on the evening in November 2017.

5.3.3 David's transformation from highly monologic to more dialogic

At the end of the promenade evening, I was standing with David's parents. As they told me of how transformational the project had been for him, the boy who had kept to himself over a year earlier walked past us down the hill with two new male friends. Their arms were linked. "That's something I'd never expected to see," said his beaming mum.

Unstructured interview	Focus on David	November 2017	In a street in Port Talbot	'I never thought I would see that' as they watched David	Field Notes

				walking along the road flanked either side by two friends, he had met though the project	Iona Reflective Notes

Table 15: David's parents view of his changing relationships with others

Like his parents, David, too, recognised the shifts he had made. I asked David if he would be prepared to be interviewed by Kathy, a student from the new Gateway group in an interview in October 2017 and he chose to accept. I referred to Kathy's interview and shared it with him on film in July 2018. I asked him how it made him feel:

> David: It made me feel like I was able to advise her. She seemed keen to know about the project we had started which her group were continuing with. It made me feel like I had achieved something and that I knew things she didn't because they were just starting off. Me advising this new group? I would never have done that back in the day'.

David used his agency to accept the invitation to be interviewed, to collaborate with another and to respond through dialogue with her. He had moved from being monologic to being dialogic. 'Back in the day' was September 2016 and earlier in his mainstream school. David entered on that first day and sat a few seats away from the girls. He was the first student to get up on the first day when students were invited to take a look at the resources, images, and objects. No-one, including David questioned the purpose of doing this task but responded willingly. I notice 'family' is an important feature in his life.

On that first day, as the class were investigating objects and images from Burton's life, he did not interact with anyone else. Others moved around and chatted with friends, but David attended to the task individually. He chose to do this unless he had interpreted my invitation as an instruction and presumed that being in a classroom would be an instructive culture. He found a photograph of Burton and seemed keen to scribe his insights on to post-it notes as I had suggested to all the students. He scribed 'In this photograph, he looks angry, tired or bored. He is not wearing a wedding ring, but his wife is. It is later in his life. How committed is he to this relationship?' He questioned loyalty and this is a theme which re-occurs in David's responses and work. However, he chose not to interact with others or work with a partner but responded willingly to my invitation to engage with the suggested tasks. He was willing but positioned himself separately from the group. He expressed a judgemental attitude to Burton, who was not wearing a wedding ring, referring to him as a philanderer. 'He was a philanderer' he wrote without question, as if this was not open to negotiation. He did not negotiate his comments with others, and questioned Burton's commitment to the relationship. He was clearly comfortable getting up and performing. He responded to my invitation for anyone to stand up and represent Sally Burton on our second day. This was something he did individually. We had witnessed Eirwen in role as Sally Burton collecting her husband's belonging a year after his death. While the others seem to laugh and giggle together and share ideas (apart from Carl who remained seated outside of the action, supported by

Eirwen), David attended to the task individually. David did respond to my suggestion, 'I wonder what Sally may have been thinking as she looks maybe at a particular page in the diary' as he embodied that moment. His agency was very limited on that first day. He was a compliant student who did all he was asked to do, but very much as an individual who resisted collaboration.

At this point the group are focused on the documents related to the life of RB, they are not focused on each other. However, the materials, artefact documents, and notes they have scribed, draw them in to the world of RB. In this way David is witnessing his peers' comments on his written contribution. We look at what we have and see how far we can agree on what we think we know. Sheila says of David's comment. 'He does look a bit distant. You can't really say he isn't committed from the picture. This was a long time ago – men didn't often wear wedding rings then' 'but you (addressing David) are right about the media, because we found this one about his affair with Elizabeth Taylor.' Kenny adds, 'So he probably didn't have much commitment if he was having affairs' Sheila adds, 'Yes but this is when he was younger though'. David remains silent throughout this, as others discuss his ideas. This collective task provides them with the opportunity of looking at other people's comments and commenting on them. Here although David is not engaging in discussion with the others they are talking about his comments and what they have observed. David is seen as someone with something of value to bring to the group, they position him as someone who has a contribution to make, even though he does not at this stage make a verbal contribution (but he appears to be listening to what they say). I ask David and the group what a wedding ring symbolises to them, what does it stand for? David says 'It stands for a promise, and one to keep. 'Maybe he wasn't good at keeping promises to women!' Kenny responds. While David is not engaging verbally with his peers, they are engaging with his comments. They are modelling for him, unintentionally, that there are different viewpoints, different explanations for Burton's life. Sheila cites the fact that the symbol of the wedding ring may not have carried as much meaning for males in the past and Kenny suggests his lack of commitment may only apply to his relationships with women. The 'complexity' of relationships is touched upon by his peers, whereas David's view tends to be binary, but he appears to hear them. He is being exposed to different viewpoints on the same image.

At school, David had chosen to follow drama from the very limited choice available to him. The drama he did at school seemed to encourage this more individualised and dependent approach to the way he learned. In a later interview in June 2017, I had asked him about his drama experience, and he said: 'At school, I was just given a part and then told where to stand and how to deliver my lines, and then I would rehearse that as directed' (June 2017). The drama he experienced at school seemed instructive, rather than invitational.

Semi structured interview	Focus on David	June 2017	Alison's office	David talks about his view of drama, 'he didn't think it could be like this'	Field notes Voice recording Iona reflective notes	June 2017

Table 16: David's shifting view of drama

David also recalls his previous class, as the place 'where all the students with disabilities go'. David surprised me when he said that he knew Carl when they were in the same class in comprehensive school. He said, in an unstructured interview (July 2017):

> He was in this group where all the students with disabilities go, but in all that time he never spoke, and we never spoke to each other. We were not a very big group, but we were helped with our work individually, so we could catch up. When Carl came to this group, I wasn't sure it was him, because he had put so much weight on. He seemed to have grown up. I said to him in our group 'Did you go to Sandman's comp? Are you the Carl that was in my group I couldn't believe it?

What was most surprising to me is that they were in the same group and never exchanged words in all that time. It appeared that opportunities to act with agency in his previous class were minimal. In this exchange with me, he was enthusiastically describing the 'Carl' he knew of from school, it was an indication that David was developing 'interrelationships with another'.

That first day he was probably waiting for direction and instruction, and when I invited them to look at the objects and photographs on that first day, David took the initiative to 'be the first to come out' once it was clear that he was invited to do so. He perhaps was not expecting to initiate dialogue or raise a question/s but only to answer them.

Finally, the group raised a number of questions, and the following are questions raised by David as he recorded them on post it notes:

> 'How many wives did Richard Burton have and was he ever **loyal** to them?' David
>
> 'How did he cope in the world of Hollywood?'

Loyalty is a theme that occurred here again, and the challenge of no longer being at home.

I verbally articulated what I understood to be their curiosity about Burton in the session,'' 'These questions suggest that Richard Burton encountered lots of changes in his life, and maybe lots of challenges. And what you are saying is that you are interested in how these changes came about, how he felt about them, the decisions he had to make and how he coped with the different worlds he inhabited, Pontrhydyfen and Hollywood'. David adds 'And how loyal he was to his wives' 'Yes of course' I respond. The theme of loyalty is repeated by David again. I am also drawn to David who readily does what he is invited to do but very much as an individual without collaboration.

5.3.4 Heathcote's concept of the 'other' on David's first day: sowing the seeds of relational agency

The beginning of David's journey was supported by a focus on what Heathcote refers to as the 'other' which affects how students are likely to feel addressed by activities and the presence of an adult. Heathcote (1980) stresses the significance of shifting attention onto something **other** than the actual people in the room. Heathcote does not use the term in a sociologically 'othering' sense but in a relational sense between young people and anything that is not them. For example, during this commission, objects, images, laid out on tables placed in a rectangle with an invitation to 'have a look and see what interests you' and agreeing to collectively talk with someone standing in for a person in a fictional world, affects the mode of address. Heathcote emphasises that carefully selecting what is 'other' than them "gives students someone, or something, to stare at instead of themselves feeling stared at" by teachers or peers. Rather than addressing young people, leaving them feeling self-conscious or 'on the spot' they can experience "consciousness of self in relation to the other" (Heathcote, 2009, p.17). I invite, but do not require participation in relational activities, intending that young people will choose to contribute. I do not want them to feel that they must comply. Unlike Carl, who chooses not to contribute initially, David does so, but in a detached way from his peers. The use of Heathcote's 'other' is significant in its effect on relational agency. While students were all looking at the materials their exchanges about how they began to interpret them were voiced while they were looking at or handling the various objects collectively. Furthermore, their agency was not focused on their own lives or what they would like to do in a classroom, which would have been very exposing. Instead, they were focused on the fictionalized life of Richard Burton. Palmer (2017 p. 85) agrees that as educators we should create opportunities for people of all ages to live in dialogic tension with what is other than us because 'of the transcendent possibilities for extending our view of the world'.

In the next section, a few weeks later, I also applied the concept of the 'other', and it is the pedagogy and the use of one of Heathcote's protective role conventions, which shifts David closer to a connection with a peer.

5.3.5 Day 10: David becoming more dialogic

A few weeks later, the work brought David into more direct contact with Sheila, another member of our group, who had been there from the beginning, but whom David had not worked with before. I invited the group to select one of the images to personify, exploring what they might say if they could speak (November 2016). Here, David and the group are protected by the 'other' the images related to locations in Burton's life which they have been mapping out on a pictorial map. David and Sheila both decide to represent the voice of the bar in Burton's local pub in Pontrhydafen in Wales. This is a significant moment in David's journey as, while he continues to be monologic, because Sheila is also representing

the ‘bar’ their monologues connect. They both agree to speak together as if they are the bar in the pub where Burton’s father frequented. The following lines show an agreement that Burton’s father needed to look after his family:

> Sheila: He wasn’t a nice person
>
> David: He needs to look after his family
>
> Sheila: He should have looked after his family

This connection is also significant because David had been bullied at his previous school, particularly by girls, and here he is being positioned as someone who can collaborate and with a girl.

During the filming of the events in Burton’s life later in the academic year (May 2017), there was an opportunity to reflect on the experiences we had shared. A number of the students were present in the classroom, while others were still in the studio. Students who were present included Sheila, Sian, Kenny F, Kenny P, Lee, Carl and David. I invited reflections. Quite surprisingly, David immediately shared his feelings with the others in the group:

> When I saw you Sheila first, I didn’t like you and she said, ‘Thanks Dave’, a bit sarcastically and he said, ‘No, I like you now, it’s just that I didn’t like girls before’.

In a reflective interview in June 2017, I asked David about this moment

> Iona: So, I was just wondering, what was it that helped you trust these people, it seemed a change for you, that. It seemed like a very important moment for you. Was it? It seemed you changed the way you felt about things
>
> David: I think it is just that - it is the first, the very first time (David emphasises this) where I genuinely got on with everyone in the class, because I said before I had a really bad class before, and with not very likeable people, boys and girls alike, apart from my mates. My mates were the only likeable people’.
>
> Iona: So, what do you think happened? What was it in this class that made this happen?
>
> David: This is the best group I have ever been in. It’s like a family. It was the very first time when I genuinely got on with everyone in the class. Everyone wanted to be there. We had good chemistry. We could talk, have fun, have a laugh together, and get things done … Everyone was properly prepared in trying to show their emotions … and be open with others. No one was made to do anything they felt uncomfortable about. We all had ideas and we used them. We could work things out together (David, interview June 2017).

His responses indicate the way he built more ‘complex interrelationships’ with others in the group and felt able to trust them enough to share his thoughts. He was also positioned as someone along with his peers, who was carrying the responsibility for ‘getting things done’.

His prior experience had been about getting things done, as an individual in the classroom, for the teacher. Here, his responsibility was to the late wife of Richard Burton and the community in Port Talbot

and Pontrhydafen. He is beginning to see himself as someone who has a significant contribution to make in his role as actor. This is an illustration of relational agency where, ‘no one was made to do anything’. It was always invitational. When he says, ‘we all had ideas, and we used them’ and could ‘work things out together’ it suggests a confidence that as a team they can take that responsibility. He is realizing that he within the group has the capacity to act ‘purposefully and reflectively’ This is in marked contrast to his schooling, where he felt he was teacher directed.

Earlier in the year, I was aware that I needed to set up a task which enabled David to work with one other student, so that he could be given an opportunity to interact and relate to another. I also knew that I would need to protect him into this interaction and draw on what he was already comfortably engaged in. I decided to ask Kenny and David to work together on a monologue which David had been working on, on his own. In the next section I analyse the effect of that, in terms of David ’s agency.

5.3.6 David’s growing dialogue, shifting positioning, agency and identity

The dramatic tension inherent in events we dramatize to inquire into those events creates space-times for transcendent dialogue. In dialogue contextualized in the interactions of fictionalized people, every young person may encounter, critique, and experience living values and ideals beyond those they would usually encounter in school.

Though David was ready to take parts and act in scenes, he began the 2016/17 year emotionally guarded in terms of everyday social interactions: he tended to sit on his own. He had been bullied in his previous school and would sometimes stutter. In December, I asked Kenny to work with David in a brief carefully planned activity. David had been working alone on a scene when Richard Burton, aged 16, is standing outside the Co-op on break deciding whether to return to a job that he hated. Though he had wanted to stay on at school Richard had agreed to leave and work at the shop because, especially after his stepfather had lost his job, his family needed the money.

I introduced a series of questions based on Heathcote’s “levels of motivation” (Heathcote and Bolton, 1995, p.20):

1. What are you doing?
2. Why are you doing that – what’s your immediate objective?
3. What are you invested in – what’s your long-term goal?
4. Who has acted like this in the past that you are drawing on as a model?
5. How do your actions show what you value and believe in? What kind of person does that make you?

The pedagogical purpose of the list of questions is to guide young people in trying out actions so that in responding young people may reflect more deeply and across past times and places on why the person being embodied and represented might be acting and thinking/feeling as s/he does. This was an attempt to steer David away from his binary views, which seemed to be the result of his monologic stance. I wanted him to be exposed to the alternative views, and to consider other dimensions of Burton's motivation and to work in a collaborative way with a peer. I wrote the questions down on cards and gave them to Kenny. David and Kenny were soon collaborating as they responded to the questions together. The analytical interpretative questions provided a "boundary and guidelines" for the activity. Neither boy was judging the other. They were in dialogue.

I had been careful in setting up the activity as a guided dialogue. I did not want to use the term "performance" but rather talked about "interpretation." Rather than just speak and move as David tended to do when playing a part, I wanted him to reflect on the meaning of the words and actions he imagined for Richard Burton. I neither wanted Kenny to tell David what to do, which he would easily have done, nor did I want to give Kenny the freedom to ask whatever questions he wanted as that could have felt intimidating to David who would likely have repeated superficial ideas. I wanted Kenny to listen carefully and David to think more deeply. Knowing all this I publicly gave direction: "David, these questions might help you interpret Richard Burton for yourself and better understand his dilemma. Kenny, you can help by asking the questions and observing the responses. You can both talk about whatever David says and does and see how it feels for both of you about what Richard might have been feeling."
Because of the "doubled" nature of the dramatic fictionalized space the questions were directed by Kenny not at David in the *'as-is'* classroom world' (Edmiston and Towler-Evans, 2022) but rather at David "standing in for Richard Burton" outside the Co-op in the *'as-if'* world (Edmiston and Towler-Evans 2022). They are not just random questions but rather questions sequenced to open up inquiry contextualized within the particular scene.

In this event, Kenny was guided by the questions from Heathcote's levels of motivation, a strategy which brings more depth to the process. In response to the first question, 'What are you doing?' David was imagining the possible actions that Richard Burton could take as he stood at the store door (e.g., stand there, leave, or return to work) and he could interpret why Richard might have done so as he responded to the questions posed by Kenny.

When David said he was standing there "because I'm fed up", Kenny valued what he said and pressed for more action: "That's good. So, what are you doing?" that is where David decided to throw his cap down as Burton and kick it. When he asked David about Richard's beliefs, and pressed for more analysis, David said he believed in making money for his family and that he felt he had no choice and

Kenny was enlightened. “Oh right. Now I can see why you feel you have to go back to work even when you feel fed up.” David must have felt “seen, heard, and valued.” He was literally being looked at and listened to, and Kenny was appreciating his interpretation of why Richard Burton stayed in the job he hated.

They were in dialogue. There was no monologic act, direction, imposition of ideas, or judgment by either of them. Rather, the questions themselves provided an open-ended boundary and a sequenced guideline. With minimal support from me, Kenny worked down the list asking a question, hearing and responding to David’s answer, and then moving on the next. The questions gradually demanded more abstract interpretations of Richard Burton’s possible motivation. For example, ‘What are you invested in, what is your long-term goal?’ David responded with ‘I don’t know I have one. Other people seem to have one for me. I know it’s not here in the co-op’. Kenny repeats the question and says, ’What do you want your long- term goal to be. What are you invested in?’ David says. ‘I want to do something, write, act or play rugby. I am invested in all that. I am also invested in my life here with Cis. I think I will have to leave Port Talbot if I follow my goal.’ David paces between right and left and finally looks up as if searching for answers. Kenny poses ‘Who has acted like this in the past that you are drawing on as a model?’ ‘No one in my family, we have all been destined for a job in the pit.’ ‘So, who has influenced you?’ ‘Mr Burton has influenced me. He writes, he reads poetry, he takes me up the mountain and gets me to project my voice as if I am someone else’. David stands as if giving a speech to a large crowd. Kenny asks, so what do you think it felt like being someone else?’ ‘Different, like a different world’ Kenny responds, ‘So Mr Burton must believe in you, he must know you have the talent to make something of yourself’ ‘Yes, he does’ replies David ‘but none of this was possible without Cis and it means leaving her’. So, what kind of person does that make you? ‘Kenny asks. ‘I am the sort of person who has a dream that I could be that actor, that rugby player, that writer but I am tied to people who matter to me’. He shows his dilemma with his head in his hands, followed by his arms showing his confusion. And he concludes; ‘But home with Cis, this may not be possible’. Kenny continues, ‘So you as Richard Burton are not sure which way to go at this stage in your life’. ‘I am torn’ said David as Burton.

While they rehearse this event for the film, they reflect on it. Kieran says, ‘I suppose if Richard Burton leaves home, it is a long way back’ ‘Yes’ says David ‘His troubles will begin if he chases fame instead of family’, ‘But Cis wants what is best for him, she wants him back in school, she wants what is best for him’’ Yes, that’s right, but is leaving the best for him? As they close this event and discuss the filming, the dilemma still hangs in the air. David was always of the view that leaving Port talbot was what caused his troubles. ‘It makes you wonder, what helped him make that decision to go?’ Kenny ponders. ‘He had such talent, he couldn’t use it here and he may not have been aware of what the future holds for him’ David says, ‘I don’t suppose any of us are’, we just have to make the decision that feels

right at the time'. In this event, David was straddling two worlds, the world of Richard Burton and the reality of his own world in the classroom.

The power of the way we straddle two worlds in drama is indicated by Heathcote:

> People have to be able to live in two worlds at once … drama uses fiction and fantasy but makes people more aware of reality (Heathcote, 1984, p.2).

This was one of the first extended "connections" based on dialogue that David made with another person in the group. Though he tended to be a loner and had to miss several of the field trips he did begin to relate more to others and must have felt supported by them. David responded and before depicting the scene again, he and Kenny dialogued about how Richard Burton must have felt responsible for contributing money to his family. David explained that his family were struggling financially, similar to how Richard's had been back then. He and Carl had had a conversation about money, and he knew his parents had no money to support his special needs or to go through legal channels to fight for financial support for his support at college. For the first time that I had seen, David was listening and responding in an increasingly poignant dialogue. This interaction with Kenny was a turning point for David. David tended to see things as a clear action and consequence. Here, Kenny is interpreting things more openly and more subtly when he says, 'We can't always predict what happens to us as result of the action we take' The implications of this are that none of us know what is ahead of us. Going down Heathcote's levels of motivation pushed David into considering questions of what is the value system? What are the cultural norms? Using the motivation levels, you become more humanising in relationship to other people. We are going deeper, not just remaining on the surface, which David tended to do.

He has gone from being on his own to collaborating with Kenny, (not being instructed to get into pairs as in his previous drama classes at mainstream school), through selecting someone who I knew would be sensitive in helping David explore these levels. For David it was about making his performance better but implied in this is that he would be thinking deeper about his own values through the role of Richard Burton. This moment is pivotal. Palmer (2017) agreed that as educators we should create opportunities for people of all ages to live in 'dialogic tension with what is other than us because of the possibilities it offers us in transcending our view of the world (p.85). David and Kenny were 'acting purposively and reflectively, in more or less complex interrelationships' with one another. As Heathcote said, 'It's not what I want them to learn, it's the task I set them that enable them to learn what I want them to learn' (1996 in conversation with me). The task built in protection; the questions did not have to be invented by Kenny and the questions acted as a mediator to the process of experimenting with Burton's motivation at the time. David had been very much 'a cause and effect' person, but there were subtle hints that he was beginning to see other points of view, in this case Kenny's as he questioned David's assumptions.

5.3.7 David's changing positioning, agency and identity

In an interview at the end of May 2017, David reflected on his recent visit to Swansea University Archive. He also reflected on the trips he had attended, like Burton's birthplace at Pontrhydafen. He said:

> And the trips to Ponrhydafen. When we were at school, the trips. I never found a trip that made much sense, but this time it was different, because we were following the path of this man Richard Burton, we had to find out about him for the film.'

In this interview, it is clear that David is noticing the difference between drama at school and the Heathcote inspired drama he has participated in since coming to college.

> Iona: 'So were there drama trips at Comprehensive School?'

David continued:

> 'The best thing doing drama at school was one of the trips. When I went to see blood brothers, I loved it. Mickey in a way reminds me of Richard Burton - he went downhill I think because Linda was unfaithful to him as well and he just started on a downward spiral. Richard Burton in a way was cheated by fame'.

David's view had always been that once you leave Port Talbot, your home, your wife, then troubles happen. He had quite a fixed view of this. He referred to fame always as a double-edged sword. Now, he was standing in, representing Richard Burton but there were strands that came from his own embedded views. As he went down the levels he said, for example, 'but I am tied to people who matter to me'.

The collaboration with Kenny opened up the possibility that things are not necessarily that clear cut, that Cis wanted him to pursue a future that made sense to him. It was the beginning of something for David, actually collaborating with a peer, a new viewpoint subtly suggested, and in a later interview he talked about that difference, between drama as he knew it at school, where you just get directed by the teacher or 'make up a play in groups', and drama where you 'bring a lot of yourself to it'.

David was very keen to do drama but clearly, up to this point he had not seen drama as a social and collaborative act. His view of drama was illustrated in an interview with me in June 2017:

> "We used to be told, "Get into pairs." I hated that. I thought who shall I be paired with? Oh no –here comes that get into pairs thing again. The teacher usually decided on the pairs, and he would always decide what we were going to do a scene about. This project was very different … it was getting behind the story of Richard Burton, and we researched it ourselves so we could decide what to do, and what we had to do, for the film".

This event was significant in David's journey as it encouraged him to see things beyond his usual binary view of things and the questions which guided their experimentation of the monologue demanded that

they both collaborated which avoided David's tendency to work individually or more superficially. These questions demanded deep responses which meant both David and Kenny acted 'purposively and reflectively', and this task would support them both, and David in particularly, to realize his 'capacity' to do so. Throughout this process David was 'reiterating and remaking the world'.

There was also an equality in this 'interrelationship' between them, the questions drove the analysis. David did not feel interrogated by Kenny, but they both negotiated their own understanding of the responses to the questions. They were exploring 'what if?' Richard Burton considered those questions at the time. The questions also helped them to consider the different possible responses and the different 'courses of action'. This was not a search for the 'right answer' but an exploration of a range of possible answers.

In March 2017, day 33 of the sessions we had shared, David agreed at very short notice to help me out. There was a mix up in the scheduling. He could easily have 'considered another course of action' and said it was not possible to join me, as it was a college day, and he was on another course. However, he said he had a free lesson and so joined. Richard Burton's niece had arrived to support the other Gateway group, who were planning a workshop for primary schools on his life, which they were currently researching. The students wanted RB's niece to share with them what she considered to be the hardest moment in the life of her Uncle Rich (Burton). She selected to share the story of the time his brother, Ivor whom he was very close to, fell and broke his neck. David knew the story well, so I suggested they responded as a composite role. In this convention of using collective role, it meant that as David and RB's niece were representing Richard Burton, they would be able to build on each other's responses but not contradict each other. David nearly always, saw things as a 'cause and effect' and in this event saw Burton as the one responsible for taking Ivor out drinking and leaving the pub before him. RB's niece's responses alongside David, brought a new perspective. David as Burton blamed himself, while RB's niece repeated 'It was an accident'

RB's niece: He'd broken his neck. I felt really bad.

David: I've never forgiven myself

RB's niece: But it was an accident.

David: I'd always looked up to him. If only I hadn't got so drunk ...

RB's niece: It was an accident.

This was a significant event in David's journey. Here he was being exposed yet again to an alternative response, and this was from Burton's family member who knew him and his brother well. It was also evidence of his growing ability and confidence to improvise responses to the unpredicted questions he would be asked. He had been invited to join me, and he could have refused, but he chose not to.

5.3.8 David's journey analysed through the lens of positioning

In this section I will analyse the events in David's journey through the lens of positioning. I will apply Harrés's definition of positioning to the key events. Positioning is connected to what you do in relationship to other people and how other people position you. After the end of the project, David's peers positioned David as someone who could guide them as they participated along with him in preparing for the November Promenade event in 2017.

Previously, in his mainstream school his own perception of himself as being a member of a class for 'students with disabilities' positioned him as someone who was not as good as his peers in other 'higher' groups, and as someone who needed help. David's view of learning in a school situation must have influenced the way he positioned himself in this group, when he first arrived. By the end of the Gala evening, June 2017, and moving on to mentoring another group, his position as a student had been reversed. He was now teaching and mentoring them as opposed to be waiting for direction and assistance. Now he was positioned by peers as someone with expertise. He seemed to relish this new way of being seen. The label of NEET did not seem to apply to him, as A-Level media students looked to him to gain further knowledge about Richard Burton's life. He was positioned as someone with authority and a useful contribution to make to the project that they were just beginning in September 2017. It seemed like all labels, whether students belonged to A-Level groups or NEET groups, melted away, as the real word challenges of creating a Promenade event took over.

The 'rights and duties' (Harre, 2012, p.193) in David's life as a student had shifted. From experiencing himself as someone to be taught in an instructive way by those who knew better, his teachers, to becoming the proactive mentor himself of others. He was able to 'perform particular kinds of meaningful actions' with others, and perhaps most importantly for others. For example, when he was interviewed by Kathy in the new Gateway group where he acted as mentor to them and joined in with the promenade performance, he was positioned as someone with expertise. As he said,

> 'It made me feel like I was able to advise her. She seemed keen to know about the project we had started which her group were continuing with'.
>
> Me advising this new group? I would never have done that back in the day'.

David had moved from being monologic to dialogic because the context of learning for him had changed. Through this pedagogy, he was afforded rights, encouraged to bring to the work his developing ability to use his interest and experience in drama in a far more collaborative way than he had done in his previous mainstream schooling. There might have been a danger that teachers adopted a belief in his individual history. What if we had assumed his individual attribute in a deficit way as the label, he was assigned suggested? We may have assumed that he could not do much so would have avoided assigning him or his peers in that group any duties.

Harré (2015, p. 45) sees a 'categorisation also as a matter of rights and duties' referring to 'disability as a category or disability as an attribute'. The commission model had also demanded a commitment from the group, once they had agreed to do it, and that commitment was not to do with mainstream schooling or being NEET but was to do with the needs of the client, beyond the college, Sally Burton. Through drama David, along with the others had explored her feelings, as he, as the others was positioned as an investigator at that point, an investigator of Richard Burton's story. This was very different to how he was positioned at school. Using Heathcote's Commission Model students were framed from a different position. Heathcote borrowed the notion of framing from Goffman (1975) and made it her own, using it to re-frame students in the fictionalized world of drama, in addition to framing them in 'real life'. She says (Heathcote, 2003, p.8):

> "I am concerned, in my teaching, with the difference in reality between the real world where we seem to 'really exist' and the 'as if' world where we can exist at will'. In the 'as if 'world participants have the freedom to experiment without the burden of future repercussions, and this creates reflective elements within the existence of reality".

Framing re-positions the students, so they carry the 'power to influence'. Of Frame, Heathcote (1980) says:

> 'There are many ways of providing frames, but the most important factor is that the participants have to be framed into a position of influence' (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.168).

They have the right to influence the work and a duty to meet the needs of their clients. Once they have made the commitment that this is worth doing, they also have an 'obligation' to see it through as well as they can. As Harré (2015) states:

> 'Why you have the duty because the other person has some kind of vulnerability and you have got a power that will enable them to resolve that vulnerability' (Harré, 2015).

The group took up a duty as a result of Sally Burton's vulnerability as Eirwen in role as Sally Burton gathered her late husband's items in his study. David volunteered to stand in as Sally and speak her thoughts in a poignant moment as she looked at his childhood photographs.

At the beginning of working with a new group, the new Gateway students (2017 to 2018) positioned David as someone who could guide them as they participated along with him in preparing for the November Promenade event. He was happy to work with, help, and mentor others with any task. Feeling valued he felt he belonged in both groups that expanded the community of people committed to educating themselves and others about the life of Richard Burton that he had been instrumental in beginning to create the previous year.

When we look back to that first day, David carried his previous experiences of schooling with him. There he was positioned as a student with few rights. He chose to do French and History, but this had

been denied him, (semi structured interview, May 2017) as he was not considered good enough, but he had the duty to turn up to classes, and to learn and take direction from others. He was seen in a deficit way as a student who needed help. David referred to his previous classroom as the place 'where all the kids with disabilities go' and 'we were helped' (David's interview). His drama at school was also highly directed. He was told 'where to stand'. He was someone to be directed, not someone, invited to consider the implications of, for example, RB story. This is in complete contrast to David's reflections of working together on the RB project where he was positioned as a researcher and an improvisational actor. David pointed out the difference and referring to it said, 'we researched it ourselves'. He was positioned as someone who had responsibility to 'get things done' (David's interview) for a client/s beyond the college.

At the very beginning, students were invited to investigate Richard Burton's story from the range of objects. The task itself positioned him and his peers as researchers of Burton's story. There were no right or wrong answers, only tentative implications to review. When David got up that day, he did not question the purpose of the task but was fulfilling what he may have considered his duty to comply. In his collaboration with Kenny, when David represented Richard Burton, he was positioned as a colleague. He was positioned 'inside' Burton's world, as someone who had to make an important life decision. In the doubled nature of the dramatic space, he was grappling with a dilemma. When in the world of 'real life', he reflected on his own feelings about what it might mean to leave or stay in Port Talbot. As himself, he was positioned as someone who was able to openly share his thoughts and concerns, with Kenny, in this case. As himself, in the real world of the classroom, they continued to reflect on Burton's decision. David commented:

"We just have to make the decision that feels right at the time"

This indicates a slight shift in David's position through this collaboration with Kenny. Up until this point, he had very fixed views, particularly about Burton's decision to leave Port Talbot. In the scene he worked on with Kenny he was positioned as an equal colleague as they both paid attention to Heathcote's levels of motivation. They were both positioned as interrogators of meaning. Later, when David and Carl were genuinely interested in the role of money in Burton's life, he was positioned as someone who had a life experience related to the issues of money, and he was able to bring that to this inquiry and to the construction of the scene. Here he was provided with equal access to rights and duties to perform 'particular kinds of meaningful actions at that moment and with those people'. (Harré, 2012, p.193)

David and Carl both felt an obligation to create a scene which 'people round here' (as Carl referred to the community) could relate to and identify with. The purpose of the commission positioned them differently as people helping others, rather than people who were waiting for direction and being helped themselves.

5.3.9 Doubling participants' positioning through Heathcote's pedagogy

Heathcote's pedagogy arguably creates the opportunity for participants' positioning to be "doubled" as they play with how they might position one another in invented and everyday interrelated worlds. Heathcote's Pedagogy introduces fictional storylines with multiple possible subject positions in imagined worlds, as well as the possibility for participants to act, interact, and position one another using discourse in ways they could if they were other people living in a different time and place. Participants in Heathcote's work are shifting in dramatic imagination between the everyday world of the classroom and a fictional world. In doing so they are always experiencing a doubled gaze as they double how they are able to position one another, not only as "students" and '" teachers" in a classroom but also as if they are other people elsewhere.

When David worked with Richard Burton's niece, who was also a professional actress and script writer, he was positioned alongside her as an actor, an equal, who was able to improvise, collaborate and respond to questions from the students. Asking David to help me was certainly a sign that we were both being repositioned by the work. This was in such contrast to David's schooling where he was clearly seen as the student who needed help.

Positioning theory considers, 'What kind of student am I?' and on this day we saw David in yet another context clearly as the student who not only wants to help me, the students and the visitor, out in a 'colleague' - like relationship, but also as a student who is resourceful and confident and ready to improvise in an unpredictable scene.

This was a moment of transcendence as he began to question his own assumptions of right and wrong, of blame and of compassion. RB's niece in response to students' questions about the death of Richard Burton's brother repeated 'it was an accident'. David also added, 'it was an accident' following his initial response of feeling responsible as Burton. He was being exposed to RB's niece's alternative view and witnessing a different viewpoint and reconsidering his own. The way the students were positioned, positioned each other and were positioned by others along with affordances of agency, contributed to what Holland refers to as 'identity making processes' (Holland, 1998, p.3). His identity was how these aspects of David's observable behaviour changed gradually over time, how he positioned himself and how he was positioned, and how he positioned others, as the concepts of agency, identity and positioning intersected. Using Holland's (1998) term, we are also narrativizing our identities as we become the stories, we tell ourselves and others, as we identify with people in communities. Our stories can make us who we are in the world. There was a transcendent change in who David was becoming.

He was beginning to tell himself a different story. Storying can change who we are becoming. Our personal stories orient us toward a desired future and our present experiences as well as our understanding of our past. David did not need to be stuck with the stories he told about himself as he began to relish a different way of being in the world. It seemed to me that David did not get stuck with his story of being seen as deficit, who had to attend a mainstream school and go into a room where the 'students with disabilities go'. Neither did he need to remain detached from his peers, avoiding collaboration with others, and adopting a monologic stance.

Using his agency, he began to tell himself a new story about himself. In his new story, David made new connections and patterns to create a different sense of himself in relation to other people. His re-storying transcended his earlier story of himself, and he imagined a different future in relationship with others, through collaborating with the A-Level media group, mentoring a student from the new Gateway group, and working in role with Burton's niece. He mentored new students, collaborated with the A-Level group, and worked in role for the new group, alongside RB's niece. He was telling himself a new story, one which, Brene Brown says "transforms who we are and how we engage with the world" (p. 41).

Our classroom community story had been created with a pedagogy that addressed everyone as knowledgeable, competent, capable, and ethical. Our classroom story included everyone in the creation of a movie filled with stories of Richard Burton with which they could connect as each created their own personal stories. Following the Gala evening, David became a mentor for the new Gateway group and a collaborator with the A-level media students.

People saw him as someone with expertise and experience of constructing drama about the world of Richard Burton. At this point in David's journey, other people were telling him who he was. He, along with his group, had received a letter from the A-level group, containing positive feedback about the film and asking him to be involved in the next stage of the commission, the promenade evening. When David volunteered to work with both groups on the promenade evening, and started to work with the new Gateway group, he was seen as someone whose views were needed and important for their understanding of the life of Richard Burton. He was seen as someone who had knowledge to share about the life of Richard Burton and an ability to use his drama to contribute to the group. When Kathy, a member of the new group, asked to interview him, he readily accepted. In his own words, there seemed to be a clear shift in identity. In the story, he was now telling himself, and being told by others who he was, and in that moment, he saw himself differently. Our storying can make us who we are in the world. David provides an example, 'It made me feel like I was able to advise. She seemed keen to know about the project. It made me feel like I had achieved something and that I knew things. Me advising this new group? I would never have done that back in the day'.

David now saw himself as someone who could achieve. Importantly he was telling himself, 'I am someone who can advise others' and 'I am someone who has knowledge which others need'. He was telling himself a new story and this was being confirmed by his peers. When he met to work with the A-level students in the summer vacation, he suggested they look at the influence of the media on Richard Burton's life. He was seeing himself as someone who was able to make suggestions within a group and contribute ideas, and furthermore as someone whose suggestions would be listened to, considered and often taken up, which they were on this occasion. He was also very aware of the changes he had made. 'Me Advising others? I would never have done that back in the day'

From the boy who saw himself as someone who could perform in role, but very individually to the boy who readily volunteered to collaborate on a future project with two other groups, illustrated a shift in the way he saw himself.

Using Holland's term David was narrativizing his identity as he became the stories; he told himself and others, as he identified with his peers in the classroom community. One of the stories he was now telling himself was 'I am someone who can advise others'. This contrasted with his first day where David, a willing participant engaged with the task of exploring Richard Burton's life via objects and images. He may well have been carrying the story of his past life from mainstream school, where he was seen as deficit. That first day he was addressed as competent and capable, and the possibilities of a new story emerged. In between these two contrasting events in David's journey, we worked collaboratively on several dimensions of Burton's life.

The development of David's Positional / Relational and Narrativized Identity became apparent during one event which was significant in terms of David's connection with a peer. Sheila and David represented the bar where Dick Bach, Richard Burton's father used to drink at. Their interaction was quite minimal, as they both spoke separately, as the 'bar.' The reason this event was significant was that David was connecting with another person but there was another reason for its significance which was revealed in May 2017, the following year.

Following one of the final rehearsals for the gala evening David caused a stir in one of our final sessions. He revealed to the group that he had "hated" the girls when they had all first met. It had been months until he had told me that he had been mercilessly teased and felt bullied in his previous school especially by a clique of girls. On the day of the revelation, he quickly added with a laugh, "But not now. I get on well with you. I really like you all now." This was a very different story for David, as he was communicating to a number of his peers, his feelings about being bullied by girls. He clearly felt able to do this and he referred to the group as a 'family'. Over time, our social practices had established a

‘new normal’ that included a collaborative position of shared critical inquiry that may be dramatized, and a shared value of embracing the full diversity of viewpoints in the room.

The classroom reality by this time had been transformed by dialogue, inquiry, and dramatization of ‘what-if?’ events in story worlds. David had become someone who could work with girls, who could share these details with others, who could be open about his feelings and could trust, connect and collaborate with others. Here, in May 2017, he was telling others who he was and more importantly telling himself who he was and then tried to act ‘as though they are who they say they are’ (Holland *et al*., 1998, p.3).

Holland (1998) too, asserts that people’s identities and agency are formed in ‘as if’ worlds. ‘Identities are a key means through which people care for what is going on around them’ Holland (1998). She continues: ‘They are important bases from which people create new activities, new worlds, and new ways of being’ Holland (1998, p.5).

The ‘as if ‘world was significant for David, as from the start he was comfortable playing the role of someone else. The event where David worked with Kenny, applying Heathcote’s motivation levels as he worked in role ‘as if’ he was Richard Burton, was significant in terms of David’s identity. He was more than simply connecting to another; he was in dialogue with him and with the world of Richard Burton. He was also beginning to shift from his monologic position. He was grappling with the values Richard Burton held, about family, his future and his dilemmas in response to the question, ‘How do your actions show what you value and believe in?’. It seemed that the dimension of being in role ‘as if’ he was Richard Burton grappling with these issues, meant he was also grappling with his own values, and being challenged to consider Burton’s actions, with an increased understanding of the rationale behind them. When he says, ‘I think I will have to leave Port Talbot if I follow my goal’ as if he is Richard Burton, he introduces another point of view, which contrasts with his usual fixed judgemental position of feeling Richard Burton should never have left Port Talbot. He became a person who could now consider different courses of action and why they might be taken.

Holland (1998) too, asserts that people’s identities and agency are formed in ‘as if’ worlds. At this point David is someone who is negotiating his own understanding about dilemmas in Burton’s life and also in his own. His fixed position of feeling that he should never have left his hometown, seeing his problems arising from that move, in a ‘cause and effect’ position, was subtly changing. He now says, ‘We consider as we work in the ‘as if’ world of drama, what if we were people in the story world of drama? There is no ‘student at risk of NEET’ position in that world. Rather, there are the multiple fictionalized positions of Richard Burton in events throughout his life in relation to the shifting positions of all the people he knew or who knew him or know about him now. With Heathcote pedagogy, using

drama, we may inhabit social relations between people (with their relative power) very different from the normal power relations in a classroom community. I would argue that experiencing positions and identities of other people in a fictional world, helps people to find different ways of being. Through his dialogue with Kenny, David was beginning to consider alternative viewpoints and was less binary in his own view. Holland illustrates this when she says: 'They do not remain in a restricted student space of what is assumed to be their abilities, but they extend into what if spaces' (Holland, 1998, p.105).

When David explored the theme of money in Burton's life, this connected him to Carl, who also saw a connection between the lack of money in the community for 'people round here'. They both found a common concern and were interested in the story about Burton's gifting of money to his family. They decided to create a scene around this theme. This was a very different way of doing drama than he had experienced at mainstream school. Here he was making sense of Burton's story, helping to construct the scene, thinking about the community, as opposed to being directed on how to move in a scene. This is a change in activity and therefore a change in becoming. This kind of shift is reflected by Holland:
'The social practice of 'acting otherwise' becomes the ground for us thinking otherwise' (Holland, 1998, p. 236).

It is also significant as David was being positioned as an actor, alongside a professional actor, as knowledgeable about Burton, which he was and as someone who could improvise and pay attention to the students' questions about Burton's life. There were clear signs that his identity as a student was changing from the individually focused individual to someone who was keen to collaborate. Both David and RB's niece were positioned as knowing about her uncle, Richard Burton. This is a transcendent moment for David as he is going beyond how he is humanising Richard Burton. As he is working with RB's niece, he is questioning his own assumptions of right or wrong, of blame or compassion. If he was to describe himself at his point, he might say, 'I am a person who can collaborate with a wide range of people' and 'I am a person who can use drama in an improvisational way' and to reflect Holland's definition of identity he is now one of those people who 'then try to act [i.e., with agency] as though they are who they say they are' (Holland *et al.,* 1998, p. 3).

5.4 Analysis of research participant 3: Assim

In my analysis of Assim I will apply the three concepts, of positioning, agency and identity, which I introduce in Chapter 3, together, rather than separately. I found that the concepts overlap and are often happening together. This is particularly the case in my analysis of Assim's journey as a student.

As in the previous two research participants' narratives, I unpick the implications of Holland's (1998) definition of agency and identity, and Harré's definition of positioning and apply it in my analysis of

six events in Assim's story, one of the research participants in this study. All three definitions intersect and in Assim's case they are particularly interrelated. For example, his agency, identity and positioning seem to be happening simultaneously. On the Oxford trip (February 2017) for example, he positions himself as a researcher, acts with agency in interviewing people at Oxford and identifies himself as a writer. I will therefore analyse them together.

Assim arrived at the class on the fourth week of the project. Unlike Carl, Assim seemed willing and ready to participate in the work the group were engaged in. He had heard of Richard Burton and responded enthusiastically to the prospect of exploring his agency and working towards creating something which would honour Burton's life in the town. Unlike David, Assim was more dialogic, as he entered into working with a group of girls to create a scene about Richard Burton's life. Like David, he appeared compliant.

I have selected events from Assim's journey to illustrate and analyse them through the lens of the concepts of agency, identity and positioning, and to identify significant moments of change.

I will begin with an event following the end of Assim's group's Richard Burton commission (2016 to 2017) and then compare this to the first couple of days I worked with Assim to illustrate significant shifts in his agency, positioning and identity. I will also analyse events in between these two contrasting events to illustrate the process of Assim's shifting relational positions, growing relational agency and shifting positional/ relational and narrativized identity.

Assim, my third research participant seemed ready to get positively involved with others and entered into the work, despite arriving a few weeks late to the group. Assim identified with the content world of Richard Burton. He saw himself through the lens of Richard Burton and seemed to identify with many of the challenges that Richard Burton faced. He reflected on issues in Burton's life and was keen to explore the questions we all raised about Burton's life:
What were the decisions he struggled with in his life? Was it leaving his beloved Cis, his sister who brought him up to move in with his mentor, teacher Philip Burton, who recognised his ability? Was it the loss of his mother at an early age? Or his move to Oxford and Hollywood? He recognised the number of changes Richard Burton encountered in his life, just as he had, and identified with Burton's struggle of growing up in the area as a teenager.

He immersed himself in the life of RB from the 'inside' negotiating the meanings of his life from written and other documentary evidence. He seemed to make connections between Richard Burton's story and his own. Assim commented towards the conclusion of the commission that it made him realise what

you can achieve, wherever you are from, and often because of where you are from. ‘Burton’s feet trod where ours do’, he said on a trip we took to Pontrhydyfen, the birthplace of RB.

Assim joined our group a few weeks late, in October 2016, having left the catering group, because he could not settle. I did not know then that he had suffered bullying at his previous comprehensive school, and also within the catering group. I came to realise that he had attended at least 8 different schools, as his mother was constantly moving. Assim liked words, spoken and written and shared his journey through conversations and words. Assim’s journey showed him opening up to others, particularly with myself and Eirwen. From his first day, where he seemed to fit in so well, he gradually shared more of his story with me. His identity, of what it meant to be a student changed from being bullied to being part of a family. At the beginning I was not aware of any of his challenges or experiences but by the end I became aware, as he shared his stories with me. Assim, by the end, saw possibilities for his future. He had created new stories in which he saw himself differently.

From working with Assim and hearing his stories, it seemed that a significant part of his journey was learning how to trust. It was not about learning to be positive or learning to participate in a group or learning to be interested. He already demonstrated all of this when we first met. His interviews and our conversations and informal chats seem to highlight something different, and this was to do with trust. It was not until he showed his vulnerability and recognised mine, that he began to shift his identity: ‘a refusal to be vulnerable tends to undermine trust or prevents it from occurring at all’ (McLeod, 2011, p.12). McLeod argues that to trust others provides ‘opportunities for cooperative activity, knowledge, autonomy, self-respect, and overall moral maturity.’ These opportunities seem akin to the values and overall commission the young people agreed to take on.

A question that permeates all the narratives of the research participants in this study is; How does the pedagogy address him/ them? It addresses them as people not at risk of ‘failure’ and people who are interested in the life of Burton and in making a film together for the community. It seems that this pedagogy provided a fertile ground for the possibility of building trust.

Each person has agency in a different way, depending on what they are doing, where they are and who they are with. This is relational agency. Over time they develop relational identities. How Assim, as others, identify as a student, depends on how he relates to other people, and how that helps him to see himself differently. It is only with relational agency that trust can be built. Assim opens up as he develops his relationship with me and with his peers, and significantly his story unravels as he explores the life of Burton, which he feels a powerful connection to.

Schools may be oriented toward a particular way of being a student, one who picks up the content, can revise it and effectively pass examinations. For someone like Assim, it may have been difficult to settle into a new school, so many new schools, not just socially, but academically. Did he feel he had no chance of catching up? Did he feel constantly left behind? In contrast, the Burton commission assumed he and others already had things to bring, not necessarily from their schooling but from beyond that, from their own lives with the community they knew far better than I, and for whom they would try to make Burton's life significant to the community, in the form of a film. Accessing the community and their knowledge of Burton formed part of their work for the job they were set to do.

Assim became very comfortable talking to myself and Eirwen, and he looked forward to our conversations and often sought us out to chat. In this analysis, I have drawn from the threads of his time as a student with us, which seem to connect to his story from a range of events, to demonstrate how he engaged with the Richard Burton story. In this way these threads will shed light on their significance through the lens of agency, identity and positioning, which indicate shifts in the way he began to see himself and envision his future.

I will begin the analysis of Assim's story at the end, following the year of the project (2016 - 2017), through the lens of agency, identity and positioning. In this way, the contrast between Assim at the beginning and Assim at the end will be clearer. I begin with details of two interviews with him following the Richard Burton programme.

5.4.1 Reflective interviews with Assim showing the significance of the group

Assim was keen to share his insights with me in July 2017, following the Gala evening, and again several months later. Assim had identified as a writer in this process and had reflected his involvement particularly on how he felt a greater sense of belonging and support from being part of a group commission. These interviews or chats were completely voluntary, so Assim chose to attend, and looked forward to meeting.

In a reflective unstructured interview, Assim had reflected in discussion with me how he felt the process was working from his perspective, and more importantly how it was working on him. Ellsworth (1997) points to how a pedagogy poses fundamental implicit relational questions. From Assim's point of view (as well as from each student's point of view), it is as if he felt he was asking himself, 'Who does this pedagogy think I am?' and 'What am I able to do (or not do)?' Put another way, 'Am I a subject equal to the teacher and my peers in terms of my interests and ideas about the world of Richard Burton?'

How young people and teachers respond to such implicit questions over time is, 'shaping, anticipating, meeting or changing who a student thinks he is' (Ellsworth, 1997, p.7).

Assim liked to reflect on the work, and his life, with myself and Eirwen. He tended to talk through metaphors which was a protective way for him to share his feelings. The use of metaphors in Narrative Inquiry reflects the work of Paley (1992) in her Narrative Inquiry research, where she encouraged her class, to enter an imagined 'as if' world and consider what it means to be lonely. In a similar way, Assim talked about his feelings using the metaphors of the green and red dragons:

> 'It's like there are two dragons, red and green and they are fighting, the one who survives is the one you decide to feed. This project is feeding me new insights, a new me, a new goal'

The dragons represented the 'bullies' who had tormented him and also represented his moods. Assim identified differently with others in his comprehensive school – he was 'alone' vs. part of an 'extended family' in his current group, the Gateway Creative Group. Assim's agency changed. It was different, he was acting to 'deal with it yourself' vs. acting as 'an extended family'.

I asked him, 'So what version of yourself has emerged through this project?'
Assim replied 'Probably the more creative and more encouraging, more outgoing – like the braver kind of me'.
I questioned, 'The braver you, so that is the new you?'
We continued.
Assim: Yes. Not to do with the project but our talks, getting closer to others in the group has made it easier for me to open up just to talk.
Iona: What about the group? The group thing is important to you?
Assim: Yeah, I also think that talking to people when we have had our chats and as a writer it does help give you ideas, it gives you images of potential characters for a book.

Here Assim was 'telling me who he was', that he was braver and that he was more outgoing and he also referred to himself as a writer, so he is 'telling himself Who he is'.
Assim: 'The more you talk to people, the easier it is to think about characters just like that. Things we talked about, like when you talked about your story and when I talked about mine, it connected us'.

In terms of his identity, Assim was demonstrating 'self-understanding', a realisation that he needed the support that a cohesive group could bring. He was often alone in his home, so I imagined he yearned for consistent and positive relationships.

While Assim said, 'it's not to do with the project,' he was probably separating the 'what we learned', that is content of the work, exploring the life of Richard Burton, with the way we learned, which was

always collaboratively, a key feature of Heathcote pedagogy. He felt braver within this collaborative context, and this confidence was evident particularly in his directing of the scene where Burton sent a cheque home to his family. He was also developing his identity as a writer.

5.4.2 Assim's sense of agency as he talks about 'trust'

Assim: 'I want to stay and build up my home here now.'

At this point Assim demonstrated 'the realized capacity of people to act purposively and reflectively.' In this interview, Assim shared his concerns with me, drawing on the metaphor of a film he had seen to do so. He was, I believe, sharing something sensitive about his personal life and he had learned to use fiction possibly to protect himself, and to provide a distance between his own life and the boy who was the subject of the film. While he did not talk about the Richard Burton project directly, the power of working collaboratively within a group on a shared purpose, had bult connections for him. His 'interrelationships' had become more complex, and he was in the process of 'remaking' his world.

I began our conversation:

> Iona: How are things?
>
> Assim: Ok, but I have to think about what is next?
>
> Iona: Do you mean in terms of what you might do in your future?
>
> Assim: Sort of, but I have more personal issues I want to deal with. My mum is going to America to live. She expects me to go with her.
>
> Iona: And how do you feel about that?
>
> Assim: I don't want to go. I have moved around a lot. I want to stay and build up my home here now. I have to tell her. I will tell her.

In this moment Assim is intent on taking control of his life. Earlier in the year, he talked about 'making the wrong decisions can lead you down the wrong path' and talked about how he had no stability because he moved a lot. He seemed at that time to see himself in a fixed position, the victim of the several moves of home and school imposed on him by his mother. Now, he seemed to be taking action to change all that for himself.

> Iona: You seem hesitant
>
> Assim: She won't like it, but I have to deal with it.
>
> Iona: It's often a brave move doing something you may have resisted in the past.
>
> Assim: I know, but sometimes you have to make your own decisions.

This seemed to be a time when Assim had a realisation that he wanted to take control of his life and make his own decisions. It seemed he was in the process of trying to act with agency to make this

possible, which reflected Holland's (Holland *et al.,*1998, p.3) definition of identity, particularly 'try to act with agency as though they are who they say they are.'

Assim: I was planning on taking action.

Iona: Sounds pretty grown up to me.

Assim: Yes, I am trying to be grown up and make my own decisions. Have you seen this film that's out 'Love Simon?'

Iona: No, never heard of it. Tell us about it.

Assim: Well, it's about this boy, Simon, and he has a big secret, from his family.

Iona: Oh yeah

Assim: Well, he is gay and he decides to tell someone about it, but it's hard because he knows people are going to judge him.

Iona: And do they, I mean judge him?

Assim: Not really, not as much as he thinks. It's about his journey and how he experiences coming out.

Iona: That sounds interesting.

Assim: He had to choose who he tells at first.

Iona: Ok, so that makes a difference, like who he tells?

Assim: Well, he has to trust them, doesn't he? It's like you, in these chats I can tell you anything. It's good. You are like the gran I never knew. You are like Red Riding Hood's grandmother.

He is negotiating with himself this notion of trust, recognising that he trusts me, and taking that step to trust someone else.

Iona: So, I am not real then. I exist in a fairy story?

Assim: No, you are real, but it's like you are a person who doesn't judge me and gets me to look at life differently. I can bounce ideas off you and you don't dictate what I should do with them, like a caring grandmother.

Iona: Hang on, I am not that old! Actually, I am (we laugh).

Assim: Anyway, I have this big decision to make.

Iona: Oh yeah?

Assim: Well, I have decided to tell my mum.

Iona: To tell her you are not going to America?

Assim: And more. It's a big decision to tell her things about me that I have not shared with her.

Iona: Ok, and you think it is important to share this with your mum?

Assim: Yes, because I think she needs to accept me for what and who I am.

Iona: OK.

Assim: I have talked to my brother in Leeds about it. He has been very supportive and says he is there for me and has encouraged me to open up to my mum.

Iona: That sounds like a good move, building a supportive network around you. Sounds like you are taking responsibility for your life, Assim. Sounds pretty grown up to me.

Assim: Thanks.

Iona: And you know, there are support networks in the college if you need them. You only have to talk to Alison.

Assim: Yes, I know.

Iona: You don't have to deal with everything on your own.

Assim: I know that now.

Iona: Good.

The theme of trust emerged again for Assim, and he chose to use a metaphor to share something of his personal life. I believe he used it to protect himself and to distance us both from his personal issue, so that he could feel safe to share his dilemma. He identified himself through the life of Richard Burton. Richard Burton's story acted as a metaphor for the disruption in Assim's own life, and here, again he used metaphor to negotiate his own understanding of his current situation.

I continued the theme of metaphors by referring to ones he talked about frequently in our discussions, so when we met up informally later, when we were sharing the completed film with the group, I asked him how he was:

Iona: How are the dragons?

Assim: The red dragon hasn't gone, I have had to learn to live with him and deal with him, but I am feeding the green dragon, and he is spending more time with me.

Iona: That's great.

Assim: This past year has given me a chance to think about my life and made me believe that things are possible.

Iona: Yes, they are.

As Assim left, I felt that the commission had taught him more than just the content world of Richard Burton, but enabled him to reflect on his own life, as he grappled with his own decisions he was making as he was growing up. Throughout the project, Assim, seemed to identify with Richard Burton's life, often referring to his life as 'troubled' as he felt his own life had been.

5.4.3 The beginning as an invitation to exercise agency

From the start the group were afforded agency. They could select the materials from those available to them. They could work alone, with a partner, with several people, or choose not to. There were 'different courses of action 'available to them. Assim was able to bring what he knew about Richard Burton. He had heard of him and his mother had watched his films. He was invited to join a group if he wished to, which he did. He was afforded agency. Agency was afforded to Assim in the language I used as his teacher to invite him to look at the objects and texts, e.g. 'You might like to….' implied a choice. It was a real choice because if he had said he would have liked to join a different group or observe that would have been fine too. The language I used was invitational. He was welcomed into the group, not challenged for his lateness, or interrogated as to why he had not joined the group from the beginning, an approach I had witnessed myself several times, as a pupil, as well as a teacher from an instructive teacher. Instead, I updated him on what we had done, so he along with others could move forward with the work together. He chose the diary and written materials. He seemed drawn to words.

Heathcote's concept of the 'no penalty zone' (Heathcote, 1984 in Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.197) was in operation here. Heathcote's No-Penalty Area offered Assim and his peers the opportunity of exploring without judgement, 'to act purposefully and reflectively' (Holland, 1998, p.42).

Heathcote's concept of the 'no-penalty area' provides this level of protection for the participants who 'will be able to test out their ideas, try them over again, and generally examine them without necessarily having to fulfil, in actual life situations, the promise they have tried out in the depicted one'. Heathcote saw the materials of drama as consisting of our ability to create another room for ourselves to examine something and wanted to ensure that it took the burden of future responsibility out of the picture. This is true of all her models, including the Commission Model, as Assim is negotiating the meaning of these items which represented the life of Richard Burton. At this early stage, the future responsibility of meeting the needs of the commission is kept out of the picture.

I am concerned that the group consider at some point how they are doing as themselves within the group, beyond what we might do in the fictional world of drama. I want to encourage them to address 'How can we help each other and mentor each other?' so they can 'act with agency' in 'interrelationships ...with one another' (Inden 1990, p.23 in Holland, 1998, p.42). As the work develops, Richard Burton too becomes the 'other' (Heathcote, 1980 cited in Johnson and O'Neill, p.66) outside himself that Assim becomes intrigued by and whose life intersects in some instances with his own.

When Assim shared an insightful comment about the relationship between Richard Burton's parents, 'his wife seemed more like his mother' (October 2016) I ensured that this was heard by the group. I

drew his attention to Sally Burton's words where she reflected the very insight Assim had made. Assim saw his insight as a coincidence. I was trying to alert his 'self-spectator' (Heathcote in O'Neill, 2015). What he had done had made a difference to the direction of the drama. I wanted him to see that, which is why I said, 'It wasn't a coincidence, it was insight, your insight.'

On his first day, I positioned Assim as part of our research team, me included, and that 'we are trying to find something out'. I positioned myself as the enquiring teacher who also wants to find out, not as the teacher who already knows and by picking up the objects and artefacts related to Burton's life, I suggested that these were some of the sources from which we would find out more. I wanted to avoid a situation where they would learn from me as a visiting teacher with authority on the content knowledge, they 'needed to know'. Instead, I wanted to tap into their knowledge and build on their authority.

> It's not what I tell them that enables them to learn, but the tasks I set them which enable them to learn what I want them to learn' (Heathcote in a planning conversation with me, 1997).

This implies that they learn in ways other than simply by direct teacher instruction. This task, a huge task, had to be negotiated, but the authority came from the 'real world' their community, and Sally Burton, Burton's surviving wife. That was the authority, not the teacher. The teacher was positioned as a 'colleague' (Heathcote in O'Neill, 2015) in the process of inquiry. In fictionalising stories from Burton's life, for example exploring his dilemmas of becoming a rugby player, a writer or an actor, this resonated with dilemmas in their own lives. In this session, the task for Assim, was an investigative one, to explore the images and artefacts, to raise questions he may have about Burton, and to identify threads in Burton's life which would resonate with the local community. It was always an invitation, not an instruction. I suggested, for example, 'You might like to spend a bit of time having a look at the objects and diary extracts just to see what may be interesting about his life'. Here, Assim was positioned with agency – he could choose what to do and then choose to join the group.

As part of my duty (Harré, 2012) as a teacher I was bringing him up to date with where we were at with the project, acknowledging what he already knew about Richard Burton, but at this stage avoiding putting him on the spot to explain more. I was building on the unifying and dignifying community we were starting to build, so that people would respect the viewpoints of others and demonstrate sensitivity towards them. I wanted them to feel they had equal authority, so I addressed them, and positioned them as competent and capable and as 'colleagues'.

5.4.4 Heathcote's concept of 'The Other' and the 'No Penalty' zone

This event relied too on Heathcote's (1984) use of the 'other' (p.163). According to Heathcote (1980) 'Everything else in the world except oneself is an other' and that 'the other be the gateway to

all the full depth of exploration which will follow as the class get involved with the issues' (p.163). With this focus we thought about 'What is other than us? What is the group doing when they focus on what is other?'

In this case, Assim along with myself were looking at the objects and artefacts. Our positioning was alongside each other, looking and wondering. It contrasts with the view of the teacher instructing at the front. We were positioned in alignment with each other, physically and through our wondering about what it all meant. I wanted Assim to create meaning and negotiate his own understanding of what it meant to him. While as the teacher I was looking at the objects with him, I was not looking at him. He was protected. In the long term I wanted him and his peers to take over the learning, not just what but how they were learning and how they could teach each other.

Heathcote's concept of the 'no-penalty area' (Johnson and O'Neill 1984, p.128) also provided this level of protection for the participants who 'will be able to test out their ideas, try them over again, and generally examine them without necessarily having to fulfil, in actual life situations, the promise they have tried out in the depicted one'. Heathcote (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.129) explains that 'the material of drama then consists of first, our ability to make another room for ourselves in order to examine something' and 'so long as it takes the burden of future responsibility out of the picture'. This is true of all her models, including the Commission Model. Assim is negotiating the meaning of these items which represent the life of Richard Burton. At this early stage, the future responsibility of meeting the needs of the commission is kept out of the picture.

I was concerned that the group considered at some point how they were doing as themselves within the group, beyond what we might do in the fictional world of drama. I wanted to encourage them to address 'How can we help each other and mentor each other?'. As the work developed, Richard Burton too becomes the 'other' outside himself that Assim becomes intrigued by and whose life intersected in some instances with his own.

On Day 2, Assim mentioned Burton's 'troubles' and seemed to identify with them, pointing out 'he was just an ordinary schoolboy' He may have been indicating that 'Burton was just like me, an ordinary schoolboy'. While this commission positioned the students differently, in Assim's case as Holland shows us, personal stories affect how they act in the world. Similarly, stories we tell and evaluate about other people are how we make sense, not only of their actions, but also of our lives when in dialogue with the lives of others. They help us understand our own ways of doing-knowing-being (Stetesenko, 2016) in the world.

5.4.5 Assim's journey analysed through the lens of positioning.

Moghaddam and Harré (2010) claim that positioning has direct moral implications, such as some person or group being located as 'trusted' or 'distrusted', 'with us' or 'against us', 'to be saved' or 'to be wiped out' " (Moghaddam and Harré, 2010, p. 2).

This pedagogy aimed to build a trusting community where students worked 'with us' and we worked with them. As part of my duty as a teacher, I was preparing a group he might join to receive him. Assim, as a student had a right to be integrated into the group in a way which helped him become a member, to be helped to be part of it and be enabled to contribute when he was ready. It was part of his right to be guided by me as the teacher towards the work he was to be doing as a student. As a teacher I was aware of the need for Assim to make some sense, some meaning from the work in progress. It was signed from the beginning that his ideas or knowledge would be important to the work as I asked him if he had heard of Richard Burton.

When he joined the group of girls who were imagining that they were girls in the same class in which Richard Burton was a student, they were improvising what they might have said to each other. Sheila, one of the girls, invited Assim to take up the position of Richard Burton. Here, Sheila was building a relationship Assim, which had some indications of peer mentoring, and he was responding to it. Sian, one of the other girls was unsure of how to respond. Assim made a suggestion, and she accepted it and tried it out. In this way he was supporting her.

When Assim made an insightful comment about another group's work, when they performed for us, a scene depicting Burton's father in the chair, while his mother was ironing, I wanted to highlight the significance of his contribution for the others in the group. He said, 'She sounds just like his mother, like he is her child'. Assim was surprised that his insight was reflected in the words of Burton's surviving wife who says, in the foreword to his book, 'A Christmas Story', 'After his death in 1984, I was asked if I ever regretted not having a child. I replied I had a little boy. He was 58 years old'

In this contribution, Assim was being positioned, as someone who had insights to bring to the group, as someone who knew something. His ideas were being affirmed, not simply by me as teacher, but by Richard Burton's surviving wife from her written foreword to her late husband's book. It also illustrated that his ideas were emerging as a result of the work of another group, and through collaboration. The group who performed would have been given validation when he responded to their work. It showed how he made meaning from their work. As Assim's rights were met, he fulfilled a duty to respond and an obligation to contribute to the work in progress.

I intervened in that moment, for several reasons; firstly, what Assim had said was significant in terms of the published words of Burton's wife, Sally Burton. It resonated with that, and it meant that his contribution could be valued from Sally Burton's words rather than mine as the teacher. He gained affirmation which was authentic. I also wanted Assim as the 'new boy' to feel valued and accepted by the group through his contributions to the work and clearly they built on what he brought to it, and I was also intrigued by what Assim referred to as a 'coincidence' when we met later that day. It seemed he did not see himself as someone who could bring an insightful comment to the group, seeing it as a 'coincidence'.

My intention was to consistently position young people with agency as powerful, competent, responsible, and in dialogue with other people's positions in the everyday contexts of the classroom cultural world in relationship with the fictionalized contexts of the cultural world of the Richard Burton project. This meant that I would reposition myself in order to create the conditions necessary for the students to use their agency, adapt their positions as students and begin to see themselves (and be seen) differently.

5.4.6 How Assim felt intersections between his life and Burton's

Eirwen and I suggested to the group that they may like to keep reflective notes themselves. Assim became very interested in the diaries of Richard Burton and discussions we had about his life as reflected in his diary, seemed to intersect with Assim's own experiences:

> 'I never felt needed at school; they never wanted me there'.
> *[Assim 2016 (age 16) written November 2016]*
> 'I am not wanted here'
> *[Richard Burton 1941 Page 16]*

This reflected a diary entry that Assim selected as being significant from the Burton diaries where Burton had written, 'I am not wanted anywhere'. Assim, in one of our informal chats explained, 'Because I moved it unsettled me, haven't kept in touch with friends. It's life beyond control. My father wasn't in my life'. It seems that Assim's story and Richard Burton's story intersect in the way he talks about Burton's experience and his own.

Assim moved schools about eight times, and he reflected what it felt like for Burton moving to his sister's house when his mother died, and then to Philip Burton, his adopted father, to Oxford and then to Hollywood. The instability of this was reflected in both Burton's diary and also in the diary of Assim who began to identify as a writer.' (Field notes and recordings - December 2016):

> It made me think differently about him when I got to know he was from a troubled background. At first, I just thought of him as this big movie star. When we started to learn about him, there was more to him, he was torn, he wanted to do other things.

Assim continued to expand on being troubled and the story of Burton seemed to resonate with his own story. It moved from 'he' to 'we' and later to 'I'. He continued, 'I sometimes think if he went down a different path, he may have been less troubled. We are troubled when we make the wrong decisions. We make a decision, and we may regret it'. I asked Assim if he felt a connection to the story of Burton, but as I raise this, I feel as if I am intruding into his story. He responds, 'We all feel a connection, we were all born in Wales'. He talked about this constant change of schools and the effect of that on him in the first person:

> I hated Birchgreen, I always felt left out at school. I wanted to be back in Bridgend, I lived there for 6 years, the longest I have been anywhere. Because I moved it unsettled me', and he returned to Burton's story.

He said, 'I do feel a connection to Burton. It's life, it's beyond control.' Assim's father was not in his life. He had much older siblings who all live away in Leicester. It was just Assim and his mum. His mum was away at times, and her presence unpredictable, so at 16, he took care of himself for several weeks at a time. He continued, 'Came to primary school when I was 6 and made a friend, Katy, it was 8 years before I met up with her again'

Assim identified with the challenges Burton faced, in particular, the several changes he encountered in his family life. The theme of Burton's 'troubled' family background was one which Assim brought up on several occasions. Assim had positioned himself as deficit in terms of his ability to trust. He put this down to having 'no stability'. He wanted to 'feed the good dragon'.

His reflection focused on the things that had happened to him, such as the several moves, he made from school to school, the bullies, events that resulted in his inability to trust others. Assim seemed to be 'caught in the tensions between past histories and present discourses and images that attract them or somehow impinge on them' (Holland *et al*, 1998, p.4).

He seemed to wear this deficit view of himself. He interpreted his contribution as a coincidence, rather than recognize that he had made an insightful connection. In his interview in December 2016, he said 'we get troubled when we make the wrong decision' as if, the things that happened in his life, were down to him and his poor decision making. As a child, the different moves were beyond his control. However, he implied that the 'wrong decision' was being made by him. Assim's movement from school to school several times was not his responsibility but as he said, he felt that having no stability made trusting people difficult. He continued to say, 'when we make a decision, we regret it.' He may have been tentative about his decision to go to Trina's house following the visit to the Cwmavon Film Club because when his mother was at home, she monitored closely his times for coming home.

I wanted Assim, through this pedagogy, to look for a 'hopeful future' (Stetsenko, 2017) and see that things were possible for him. I wanted him to accept events which could not be changed in his life, but to realize that his own experiences would inform his understanding of Burton's life. His visit to Trina's house offered him a different story of trust, and in the next section I analyze that event.

5.4.7 Different possible identities

People are 'caught in the tensions between past histories that have settled in them [i.e., dispositions and the narrative dimension of identities] and the present discourses and images that attract them or somehow impinge on them [and position them with different possible subject positions and identities]. In this continuous self-fashioning, identities are hard-won standpoints that … make at least a modicum of self-direction possible. They are possibilities for mediating agencies (Holland *et al.,* 1998, p.4).

In this interview Assim, in December 2016, said, 'It's like there are two dragons, red and green and they are fighting, the one who survives is the one you decide to feed. This project is feeding me new insights, a new me, a new goal'.

Here he expresses a doubled consciousness of his agency and parallel identities, suggestive of his 'tensions between past histories' and the 'present discourses and images that attract' him. His investment, and obsession with the story of Burton provided Assim with new insights into Burton's life and the 'new you' emerged during a visit to the performance of a one man show entitled 'Burton' performed by a professional actor, Rhodri Miles, when he realized what he brought to his understanding as an audience member, having researched Burton's life.

An event that seemed to have made an impact on Assim took place on an evening in October 2016 when we attended a local community film club. He was invited by a community member, Trina, to visit her home, next door to Cwmavon hall, so she could share some of the original documents she had about Richard Burton's life. It was a choice he made to visit her home. It was not imposed. He checked that the coach would wait first and seemed a little reticent until I said I would come too. However, he was smiling and seemed eager to see the documents and hear more about Trina's connection to Richard Burton. Before we left Trina handed the documents to Assim, and said, 'here, you can borrow them as long as I have them back safely'. See Table 16 for the details of my field notes from this event.

Visit to Community Centre Film Club A group of 8 students joined the local film group in the evening (consisting of around 30 adult members). They wanted to share very draft footage of their work. Following this, Assim was invited to Trina's home. She entrusted him with documents valuable to her. He was surprised to be 'trusted'	Field notes October 2016

Table 17 field notes after visit to Trina's house.

In an interview in December, Assim highlighted the significance of the event:

> I found it really nice that she trusted me, so glad you came with me. I have always had difficulty with trust. Someone who didn't know you could take you into her home. Trusting others is my problem. Never had male role models as my brothers moved away also. Maybe I have trust issues because of no stability.

In this event Assim was being positioned as someone who could be trusted by someone he had never met before. Trina shared her memory of Richard Burton's memorial service with Assim, whom she positioned as a researcher, which he was in this process. She showed him the order of service. This seemed to be a new experience for Assim, and indicated a change, and a widening of perspective (Heathcote 1984) for him. In this encounter Trina saw Assim as a researcher for the film they were making, not a marginalised student struggling in a group aimed at preparing him for future examinations, if he was good enough. He was surprised that 'someone you don't know can trust you?' He was positioned here as a researcher, not a NEET student, but as someone who would pay attention to the value of a local celebrity and what his legacy might mean to the local community. He was looking beyond himself. He was finding a different story about trust.

Assim talked about the strength of the group on an interview on June 29th (2017):

> In comprehensive school if you had a bad day and your best friend is not there you just deal with it yourself. Everyone in the project team is like an extended family. I noticed at half term [May 2017] I couldn't wait to come back and join them.

The cultural shifts in the classroom as a community, like a 'family' had made it possible for Assim to act with agency.

Here he uses his agency to continue to be part of the group, to choose to attend. He couldn't wait to get back after the holidays; he wanted to be there, rather than tolerating it as he had done in his previous schools. Assim identified differently with others in his comprehensive school where he was 'alone' versus part of an 'extended family' of the college Gateway Creative Group.

Assim's agency was different from acting to 'deal with it yourself' versus acting as 'an extended family'. There was always someone to turn to if he had had a bad day. He was no longer wearing this label of being 'marginalized', but he was central to the process of the work in a collaborative group, which he referred to as the 'project team'. He felt as if he belonged here and was seeing himself differently as part of a group all working towards a common purpose.

5.4.8 Assim, trust, and sharing stories on coach trips

Assim, on the coach trip to Oxford told me the story of his part time job in a grocer's store and how he found it difficult sometimes juggling everything, especially when his mum was away. I told him a story

about when I was 16, just like him, working away from home in a hotel where some very dramatic events occurred. We laughed about the stories we shared, and I commented on all the experiences he could be writing about. When we were back in college (June 2017 Interview), he referred to the coach trip as one of the highlights of the project, because it was so great to share stories. On that coach trip he talked about darker sides of his life, about how he missed his older brothers who now lived in Leeds and how he felt very alone at his house when his mum was away. During that journey, he was very open about his feelings, when we spoke side by side on the trip coming back from Oxford.

This, for me, was evidence that he was beginning to trust me with his stories from his life. It was a rare moment when he was not speaking in metaphors which he tended to do. As we sat side by side, not always needing to make eye contact in the darkness of the coach journey home, we both shared stories of our life, mine from when I was young and his as it was unravelling in the present time. In this event, I was sharing stories of my youth, which intersected with his stories of his current youth, so there was a distance built into our conversation. My stories were in the past, emotionally distanced from the present time. There was a 'no penalty zone' (Heathcote 1984 in O'Neill 2015, p.106). We could laugh at my youthful follies as they were in the past, which may have given him permission to share his stories which related to his life today. The 'no penalty zone' applies whenever you have a fictional or fictionalized world. The stories we shared had become somewhat fictionalized, as distant and location had distorted them. Students can do or say anything as if they are elsewhere. That applies in all of Heathcote's four approaches.

With the Commission Model we were creating the fictionalized world of Richard Burton so that provided emotional distance to explore questions that came up. The young people acted with agency to bring in ideas that were important to them. They were protected in doing that. In the same way Assim was protected by not having to make eye contact, the darkness of the coach journey may have also meant he felt less exposed as he shared his stories. My stories of the past, to a degree were fictionalized as they had been changed over time and told through my lens as a mature adult looking back. This protective 'no penalty zone' meant that Assim could use his agency to choose the stories he wanted to share.

On that Oxford trip to visit the Taylor and Burton theatre, it seemed that Assim's identity was growing as a writer. Assim sat with me and said he wished he could become a writer. I responded with, 'well you must write then, that is the only way to become a writer, is to write, surely?'
'Ok, what shall I write then?' he said, 'What would you like to write?' I say,'Well, we are in Oxford researching – perhaps I could make notes on our research' 'Yes, you could. Where will you start your research?' I inquired:

> I would like to know how aware people are of him beyond Port Talbot, beyond Wales'. 'Ok, ask them then. 'What do you mean?' 'You can go up to people and ask them why they are in Oxford. Explain about the commission you are working on' 'Oh, I don't know' he says. 'It would be great research for the group I think, and you are great with people.

Assim went ahead, asking people in Oxford around the university. He got a positive response and wrote them up. He then continued to ask others in the group for their impressions of Oxford. I would say that Assim was 'wobbling' at first and feeling uncertain. I assured him that the way we worked allowed for that, and before you could ever feel more certain you had to start off with feelings of uncertainty – that was quite normal. Themes which struck me about Assim's story were his great desire to contribute to the process, his continuous attempts and success at collaborating and contributing, and on the day of the Oxford trip he had clearly experienced 'wobbling' which had been transformed into a great contribution to this particular commission. On the way home, Assim was very proud of his interviewing of complete strangers in Oxford and referred to himself as a writer. He said, 'As a writer the visit was very stimulating to me, and I gathered a number of people's stories.' I commented on the fact that he now had something to write about, and we talked about experiences which fuelled writing.

Assim was being exposed to different experience and different people. Another event that happened on the Oxford trip which seemed significant to Assim was the director's talk to the group about how she came to be involved in theatre. The first thing she said was, 'I left school at 16', and she went on to explain that she had worked in stores but always had this burning desire to be involved in theatre, and began working in repertory theatres, in front of house. Assim commented on the way back to the bus that evening: 'That was inspiring. She made me feel that things are possible for me. It was so good to hear her journey.'

This resonated with an earlier remark Assim had made where he had said that Richard Burton's life and work had made him feel that 'things were possible for him.'

Earlier in the year, we visited Cardiff on the coach. Assim attached himself to me and Eirwen on this outing. He seemed to open up in dialogue with me at locations outside of the college classroom, including film club, meeting in Alison's office, and while travelling together on the minibus or coach. When we visited St Fagan's on February 16th 2017, prior to a one-man performance by Rhodri Miles as Richard Burton in Cardiff, I chatted with Assim as we walked around the museum. On the bus to Cardiff, Assim reflected:

> We have entered each other's lives for a whole day (referring to the group, himself, Eirwen and I).

For Assim, being part of this supportive group, seemed to provide him with a sense of family. He had referred to the group previously as being 'like a family' (Interview, December 2016).

On the way home we chat on the bus again, this conversation happened:

> Assim: You and Eirwen are the only reason I come in on Thursdays otherwise I wouldn't bother.
>
> Iona: So, what do you think it is about the project that encourages you to turn up?
>
> Assim: (reflecting on the project) It's not just learning about the project its learning about life as well. It's taught me how to think deeply - how to relate to different aspects of life. You have literally taught me how to grow up. Being a grown up is about empathy, trusting people, helping people, and if you're not doing that it's pointless, you haven't grown up'.

Here, Assim is illustrating what Biesta describes as being grown-up who expect to be in dialogue with others and with the world (Biesta, 2017a, p.4.):

> Regardless of chronological age, anyone is growing as they develop more awareness of always needing to act in relation to how other people act or might respond. This is developing relational agency in the sense that one is not only making personal or shared choice but also considering others more often in the making of decisions and in assessing the consequences of our own and other people's actions.

'As the one who is able to live in the world, without occupying the centre of the world' (Biesta, 2017a, p.4) which is reflective of the commission model which increases responsibility, rigour and realization', (O'Neill, 2015, p.140) the attention in this pedagogy is focused on our relationships with the world beyond the classroom.

Assim reflected in an interview in July 2017, and recalls the event of his visit to Cardiff:

> What he has done makes me think that things are more possible for me

5.4.9 Assim sees writing as a collaborative activity

In the following event (April 2017) Assim was seeing writing as a collaborative process. Assim was directing the scene and writing it as it evolved through improvising ideas, he suggested and which the group engaged with.

Carl was with Graham setting up his camera. Other students were working on other events related to Burton's life, while some were in the green Room with Eirwen rehearsing scenes to be filmed, including Sheila, Alan, Sian, Kenny F and Kenny P, so it was a small group, and a rare occasion when Assim, David, Carl and Sian were collaborating on this. Simon was working on the music to use in the film

and Lee was in the green Room. Jo flitted between the two spaces and worked on images for the programme on the computer.

Assim: Maybe we could have the two parts of Burton's life, like the one at home and the other in Hollywood, like he is all rich in Hollywood and Sian Owen's mother is desperate at home?

Carys: Yeah

Assim: Like we can show the contrast between where he came from and where he is now.

Carys: Like showing the journey, he has made.

David just watched and waited, Carl was still with Graham pressing different buttons, seeking his advice. He was outside the conversation but preparing to be a part of the filming of it.

Iona: So, ok. You have this world where Burton is and then we have his sister at home in Pontrhydafen. What is Richard Burton doing?

Assim: He might be rehearsing or looking through a script. He is under pressure. He is in a completely different world to the one in Pontrhydafen.

Iona: So, he is under a different kind of pressure. I wonder how we would show that? How can we show he is under a different kind of pressure?

Assim: He signs the cheque, pauses and thinks just for a moment and the phone rings – it's his agent. Can you try that, David?

David sets it up and places papers on table. He tries out Assim's suggestion and pauses when he signs the cheque.

Assim: Maybe we could hear his thoughts so that we know it's about back home.

David: Oh Pontrhydafen, or shall I say 'Pont rhyd aheaven because that was what Elizabeth Taylor called it.

Assim: That's good (he makes a note).

Carl: (looking through camera) How will they know he is signing the cheque?

(Up until this point Carl has been physically outside the action, but close to it with his camera)

Assim: Have a close up of her hands through the letterbox. Carl, can you zoom in on the hands clutching the cheque?

We should hear RB's thoughts when you do the close up. Could he have written something with the cheque?

Iona: So, what is he thinking?

David: Probably about learning lines or something or maybe pouring himself a drink

Assim: (responding to what David is saying) Could he be writing the cheque and signing it without thinking? And then he starts looking for his script and he can't find it amongst the piles of paper. And he reaches for a drink.

(Carys gets a bottle and plastic gin glass from the box of props available)

Carys: He could reach for the drink at the same time as Sian's mother reaches for the cheque.

Assim: That's good. Shall we try that then? So, when he places it through the letterbox, there is a pause and then Sian's mother grabs it, and she could say,

'Good old Rich, he never forgets his family'

Assim: Must have been hard for him being so far away. So, the money he sent made links with them – he was trying to give them something they had never had. It must have been difficult for him to go back.

They are discussing this as an option when the lesson comes to a close. Assim talks about how torn Burton must have felt, being in a different world in Hollywood, and David adds that he can never forget where he comes from. Carys wonders if he felt he betrayed his roots by leaving.

In this event Assim recognised that Richard Burton identified differently as the actor in Hollywood than the man from Ponthrydafen, and how he carried his family from back home, around in his head. He suggested they show the contrast and the different worlds of Hollywood and Pontrhydafen. He seemed to be recognizing change in Burton's life and wanted this to be a focus of this scene. Throughout the work Assim seemed to have seen his life through the lens of Richard Burton's life, particularly the changes he encountered as he had himself experienced.

Assim was taking responsibility for the scene as a whole but worked relationally with others, building on what they brought and implementing their suggestions. He was less reliant on our chats, and engaged with his peers, with confidence. He was using his agency to construct the scene with others, but also writing the scene as it evolved 'It must have been difficult for him to go back' may resonate with his own experiences of change, and the difficulty of maintaining relationships in his own life as he moved on to another area, and yet another school. It seemed like Assim's 'self-spectator' was activated in this event. He was aware of what he was doing and how this was making a difference to the work. This informed his capacity for agency. He was confident in making choices and his choices were being affirmed, extended and supported by his peers.

In this chapter I have analysed each research participants' journey through the lens of the concepts of positioning, agency and identity. I have also illustrated and analysed the research methods I used to generate the data. In the next chapter, I will analyse my data through the lens of the two research questions.

Chapter Six
Findings 2

In Chapter Five, I used the concepts of positioning, agency and identity to analyse the narratives of the three research participants individually. In this chapter, I am still looking at those concepts, but I am analysing them through the lens of the two research questions. In this chapter I am looking across all three research participants, to observe commonalities, to answer my research questions.

The concepts of positioning, agency and identity are fundamental to my research questions. There were several events where the students' agency seemed to shift, and they began to see themselves differently as they worked towards fulfilling this commission. In this chapter, using the three research questions, I summarise the key research findings. In response to my first research question, I will focus on the changes I have documented in the narratives of each individual research participant. In response to question two, I will address my findings across all three research participants, to identify significant elements in Heathcote's pedagogy which seem to contribute to shifts in their agency, identity and positioning. I will also share my findings collectively focusing on the concept of positioning. I will therefore set out to illustrate these changes, by drawing on my data. The concepts of agency, positioning and identity overlap and intersect, and this is reflected in my summary.

Heathcote said, of her own Commission on the Hexham Garden (2003, p. 17): 'They may not have developed a sense of their worth as contributors of ideas. They may not have spoken freely in classroom lessons.' Here, I presume Heathcote was referring to the official curriculum they followed, where they may not have been asked to take on such responsibilities connected to life beyond the classroom.

Heathcote's statement applied to all the three research participants; Carl and David carried with them the label of their past schooling, that of students with 'disabilities', and Assim, had moved schools so many times that he had had difficulty forming sustained relationships. He, like David had experienced bullying at their previous school/s. These labels and experiences told them 'Who they are' (Holland *et al.,* 1998). In other words, these were their identities, as students, when we first met. During the process of working towards fulfilling this commission, I identified changes in their agency and shifting identity. Their agency shifted in different ways, as we built on the unique contributions, they felt able to make and which they desired to make.

RQ1 **:** In what ways do positioning, agency and the identity of young people, marginalised within the education system, change over the time of a Commission Model project?

In this section I will draw on my data to illustrate the shifts each research participant seems to have made over the time of the commission process. I will share my findings, related to my first research

question, based on observational and interview documentation of the three research participants, which I will discuss individually.

Carl: Research participant 1

Carl, my first research participant changed from being outside the group to becoming an integral part of it, as the film maker. He gradually invested in the narrative of Richard Burton's life, looking in at it through the lens of the camera. From his first day, with his head in his hands, suggested he was identifying as someone who may not have wanted to even be there. I knew from Alison, the college welfare officer, that she had to visit his home to persuade him out of bed to attend. I noticed that first day he attended, he liked to draw.

When he accepted my offer of a camera on a field trip to Burton's birthplace, he continued his journey to becoming the film maker for the film they made for the commission. By the end, his agency is apparent. He is filming, recording, editing and presenting to some members of the group. By April 2017, Carl became interested in the story of Richard Burton and connected with David when they both felt strongly about the role of money in his life, and the role of money in the life of the community. At the end he is encouraging his peers, when he is filming them in the film studio, 'Look you were doing brilliantly there, just keep going, it doesn't matter if it seems wrong to you, nobody else knows so just keep going'. He is identifying as the film maker, someone who can contribute, and make a difference to the development of the commission. For his contribution to the commission, Carl was awarded 'Student of the Year' by the College Principal, for the significant progress he had made. Carl enrolled the following year at the college to study Media.

David: Research participant 2

David, my second research participant, moved from being monologic to becoming dialogic. He began the year, willing to participate and perform, but very much as an individual. He was very fixed in his views, for example, he felt that if Richard Burton had not left Port Talbot, his life would have been less troubled. I set up the practice to be as collegiate as possible, and through this David began to collaborate with others. It was December 2016 when I invited David and Kenny, one of his peers, to work together to address Heathcote's levels of motivation, as David worked on his monologue as if he was RB. I wanted him to reflect on the meaning of the words and actions he imagined for Richard Burton, struggling with the dilemma of staying or leaving his job at the co-op which he hated. This event was pivotal in David's growing sense of agency, where he was negotiating his own interpretation of the event.

David, up until that point, although he liked drama had not seen it as a collaborative activity. He felt he had had no agency in his previous school where he was 'told what to do, where to stand and where he was teacher directed in a very instructive way' (interview, May 2017). This experience of collaboration was built on, when he worked with Richard Burton's (RB) niece in collective role as RB, for the parallel Gateway group (March 2017).The following year (2017-2018), I noticed that he gradually began to initiate conversations with his peers and myself. On one occasion he developed a long conversation with Carl when they were considering the role of 'money' in Burton's life. He took on the role of actor in the scene the following week about Burton's gifting of money to his family back home, but in a much more collaborative and improvisational way (April 2017). David accepted my invitation to support the new Gateway group during the Autumn term. He had already joined the A-level Media students during his summer holidays of August 2017 where they valued his contribution and knowledge of Burton's life. They all looked to him for guidance. He was seen by them as a mentor, as a strong source of guidance and expertise on the life of Burton, as they planned their promenade performance in the town for November 2017, as a celebration of Burton's 92nd birthday. David's identity had shifted from the individual performer to a collaborative facilitator and performer. He enrolled the following year at the college to study ICT.

If David was to describe himself at the end of the project, he would probably say, 'I am someone who can mentor others' and 'I am someone who has useful experience and advice to offer others'. This was in contrast to the David I first encountered, very individual and monologic.

Assim: Research participant 3

Assim learned to trust others and developed a belief in himself to become a writer. At the beginning Assim, arriving late, four weeks into the start, was eager to make a good impression (interview, December 2016). He did. I observed and learned from talking to him that he wanted to be accepted, to belong and contribute in a positive way (December 2016). He worked collaboratively with the girls including Sheila and Sian, was very interested in exploring the materials laid out, especially the diary extracts of RB as he was growing up. His comments about his schooling where he wrote 'I never felt needed at school; they never wanted me there'. Assim 2016 (age 16) written November 2016, connected to Burton's diary entry 'I am not wanted here' (Richard Burton, 1941. Page 16). He seemed uncertain about where he belonged and what his future would hold, changing from being in the catering course and then joining the Gateway Creative Group, four weeks later.

His attraction to words was evident on that first day when he explored the life of Richard Burton through reading the extracts of his diary and Burton's only written narrative, ('A Christmas Story' 1965). Assim's use of language also indicated how he used language to express his feelings, when he talked to

me about his changing moods. He referred to them as the red and green dragons. He used metaphors quite often to share his stories (December 2016, July 2018). On the surface, there was no indication that Assim experienced any difficulties as a student; he immersed himself into the work. It was only later I learned he had been bullied previously, he had changed schools eight times, and his mother was often away, so he managed alone (interview December 2016).

His difficulty with trust came to the surface when we visited the local community film group at Cwmavon Community Centre (October 2016). It was at the end of our sharing of our draft version of the film, and Assim was invited to the home of Trina, one of the members of the community film group. I accompanied him. She offered him the loan of original materials and documents related to the life of Richard Burton and was happy for him to take them away for his research provided they were returned. Assim found it unbelievable that someone would trust him with documents which were of personal; value to her. 'I found it really nice that she trusted me, so glad you came with me. I have always had difficulty with trust. Someone who didn't know you could take you into her home. Trusting others is my problem. Never had male role models as my brothers moved away also. Maybe I have trust issues because of no stability' (Interview, December 2016).

Assim became the writer of the group; unafraid to assert his views, working with others, including David as the actor and Carl as the film maker. He helped them to construct a scene around the theme of money (April 2017). The group trusted Assim's ideas, and Assim began to see writing as a collaborative activity. Assim valued being a part of this group. He said, 'our talks, getting closer to others in the group has made it easier for me to open up just to talk'. He described the group as 'like a family'.
In an interview on June 29th, 2017, he said,

> 'In comprehensive school if you had a bad day and your best friend is not there you just deal with it yourself. Everyone in the project team is like an extended family. I noticed at half term [May 2017] I couldn't wait to come back and join them'.

The cultural shifts in the classroom as a community, like a 'family', seemed to have made it possible for Assim to act with agency, and to trust others. At the end of the commission programme, Assim identified the group as being one of the most powerful aspects for him (July 2018).

Assim enrolled the following year at the college to study photography. He had become part of a learning community, and one he had learned to trust. The relational agency of all three research participants had been collaborative and always in relation to others. All seemed to have shifted their identities as students.

RQ 2: Which elements of The Commission Model made a difference to the changing positioning, agency and identities of the young people as 'learners'?

My thesis explores the concepts of positioning, agency and identity in relation to the work of Dorothy Heathcote, particularly her Commission Model. These three concepts, agency, identity and positioning are evident within using Heathcote's Commission Model. Heathcote wanted to bring about change in her participants through her practice. 'I try to bring about a change, a widening of perspective, in the life of the real person' (Heathcote, 2009, n.p. unpublished keynote address). The concepts of positioning, agency and shifting identity are right there in her work from the very beginning. Heathcote wanted to bring about change, in the way young people saw themselves. Changes in how the students began to see themselves was evident in this study.

This study followed the stories of three young people, Carl, David and Assim. The 'realization' of what they had learned came from serving the needs of others, beyond the school, namely the wife of the late Richard Burton who wished to honour her husband's legacy and the community with whom they interacted and shared their film to fulfil this commission. The young people in this study had not previously recognized, understood, and put to use in their own lives, their own potential for making a difference in the lives of others, but perhaps more importantly making a difference in their own lives as students.

These three concepts, relational agency, relational identity and positioning, relate to several elements of Heathcote's pedagogical approach. They are:

a) An Invitational Approach which affords the participants with agency
b) The use of Frame and how it positions participants
c) Heathcote's concept of the 'other' as a way of affording agency
d) Heathcote's use of role, and how it repositions the participants
e) Heathcote's concept of the self-spectator, and how it aligns with the concepts of agency and identity
f) Research Participants realisation that they 'know things' which influences identity
g) Working in a community within the classroom and beyond, repositions them
h) Taking responsibility for helping others, positions them differently.

a) An Invitational Approach which affords the participants with agency

One of the questions I asked myself in analysing the data was, 'How is the teacher/s positioning the student? When I refer to teachers, this includes myself as the PI (Principal investigator), Greg, the film maker, Eirwen, Alison and anyone else involved in the process. Kenny, who worked with David on Heathcote's levels of motivation could also be seen as the teacher in that context. They were teaching each other.

Throughout this process, I and others consistently positioned the students with an invitational approach, which means we are open to how the students respond and accept everything they offer and work with that. Positioning is not just one way; it is two ways. The other side of positioning is to look at 'how did they position themselves in response?' When I invite the students, any way they respond I have to accept and say 'Yes'. 'Yes, Carl you can sit out with your head in your hands' (because that is where you are) That first day when I encountered Carl, Eirwen sat with him, and she positioned him invitationally, and invites him to connect with the work, and I take whatever he offers.

b) The use of Frame and how it positions participants

Framing is social, not individual. They were framed as young people, as the group who would meet the demands of the commission. Assim was more than a writer. David more than an actor and Carl, more than a film maker. The students were framed as people taking on a big job.

We create fictionalised worlds, and we can open these worlds, through our framing, our perspective. The students were continually framed as having responsibility and authority. This appeared to shift their identities.

c) Heathcote's concept of the 'other' as a way of affording agency

Heathcote wrote, 'I spend a lot of time preventing people feeling stared at. Everything else in the world except oneself is an 'other'' (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.162). To avoid children feeling stared at, the obvious way, according to Heathcote (1980) is to give them something so attractive in the room that they feel they are staring at it. The first session with the group applied this principle where we all looked together at the items representing the life of Richard Burton. The use of the 'other' affords the students agency. Not being stared at, is a step into enabling student agency. When we have the 'other' we are all looking into the world of the 'other', together, in this case the world of Richard Burton.

d) Heathcote's use of role, and how it repositions the participants.

Heathcote reflected: 'By taking up a role one offers not only a point of view to the others, but places them in a position from where it is assumed that they will also find a point of view' She continues, 'often by placing them (the participants) in the response position, they begin to hold a point of view, because they can see the power' (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.164). When Eirwen represented the role of Sally Burton in this Commission Model process, it served to shift the position of the class. The students were positioned as investigators of Burton's life. It was their subtle questioning and dialogue with the role of Sally Burton, that elicited many threads in Burton's life. They responded to her in the moment as if it was happening 'now', reflective of Heathcote's 'now time' showed compassion for her as a bereaved wife and subtly drew from her issues which they weaved into the creation of their film about Burton's life for the community. They were developing their point of view as people researching his life to honour it in the film they would eventually make together.

e) Heathcote's concept of the self-spectator, and how it aligns with the concepts of agency and identity

'The 'spectator' in (the students) must be awakened so that they perceive and enjoy the world of action and responsibility even as they function it' (Heathcote in O'Neill, 2015, p.39). One way in which students had enabled them to 'see themselves' was through, what Heathcote called the 'self-spectator', where young people are aware of what they are creating. Young people's experience of the world is doubled so that they're not only creating events but are aware of *making* meaning whereas they usually don't realize that the meaning of events has been constructed largely by others.

f) Research Participants realisation that they 'know things' which influenced identity

Heathcote's pedagogy is about teaching young people to know things, but more significantly to 'realise they know things' (Armstrong -Mills, 1994). Each research participant's realisation of what they knew grew as they worked on the commission for other people. They all realised that they knew things which they could bring to the inquiry about Richard Burton. Carl knew how to represent things visually, David knew he could work in role, and Assim knew that he could use words well. As they worked through the commission, they realised that they knew things as they continued to make a difference to the film they were making. Carl realised that he knew things when he intervened in the direction of the final stages of filming in May. David realised that he knew things when he mentored the new Gateway group, and Assim realised that he knew things when he took the brave step of making decisions concerning his personal plans. Heathcote suggests that realization is very significant 'because it embodies a factor often omitted from schooling - realizing what we have learned, can understand, and put to use in our lives, which previously we had not recognized' (Heathcote in O'Neill, 2015, p.141).

g) Working within a community including the classroom community and beyond

All Heathcote's models work through social collaboration. It must involve participants considering 'the anthropological drives of the community' (Heathcote in O'Neill, 2015, p.134). The Commission Model carries the social element out into the community beyond the school. Heathcote suggests that there are many examples where someone sees a need and 'facilitates change based upon local ideas and energy' (Heathcote in O'Neill, 2015, p.143). People from beyond the college contributed to the work and the research participants met them because they needed their input for the film they were making, for the community. This positioned them in a proactive, rather than a passive way.

h) Taking responsibility for helping others positions them differently.

Responsibility, according to Heathcote is one of the teaching values that will be built in from the very start when working on a commission (Heathcote in O'Neill, 2015), but Heathcote, in her experience never found children to reject the idea of community, and once they 'will work to their limits to 'get things right' once they care about the people whose lives they facilitate. The role of Sally Burton which

seemed to generate care from the young people, and the troubled life of Richard Burton, which stimulated a desire in them to get the film 'right' for Sally Burton, who commissioned them and the people in their community.

Conclusion

'Stories-as-theories about the world hang on the bottom rung of the hierarchy of research methods in the Western world' according to Christian (1987, cited by Neelands, 2004) 'Miracles can and do happen'. Christian clarified his use of the term 'miracles:

> I use the term 'miracles' here to describe accounts of events which claim some profound and new change in a student. Such miracles can also function as symbols of hope and faith within the struggles of everyday classroom life

Christian asserted that these stories …become the 'proof' of drama's efficacy in a resolving a range of 'problems' which might include various forms of student dysfunctionality' (Neelands, 2004, p.5).

This study has not attempted to 'prove' anything but to share and analyse the narratives of three young people in the hope that readers may identify with them, from their own experience of working in similar contexts. 'Proof 'is not the language of Narrative Inquirers. As the researcher, I have shared my stories and have avoided adopting the position of the 'researcher as discoverer/finder' but rather as constructor/maker (Smith and Deemer 2000, cited in Neelands, 2004, p.48). As Neelands (2004) stated: 'It is what we do, through our own human agency, WITH drama that determines the specific pedagogy and specific powers…. of drama itself' (p.48).

Heathcote's Commission Model draws on drama to explore and imagine possibilities, for the community beyond the school, and throughout this process participants come to realize what they know, and can do, and begin to change the way they see themselves. For Heathcote (cited in Johnson and O'Neill, 1984) education is a process of change, and she maintained that, 'in drama activity, change must be seen to happen' (p.115). Neelands (2004) supported this intention that our work will bring about change in participants. He says, 'What I'm suggesting is that 'transformations' are more likely to occur in artistic and pedagogic positions that are intended to produce change' (p.11). Neelands reflects Heathcote's humanising concern for what students 'are in the process of becoming' (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p.18). He stated:

> 'It comes to the suggestion here that in a pedagogic context that stresses 'becoming'; that sees students as human 'becomings' rather than human 'beings'; that views human potentiality as a project rather than as an essentialised and contained given, 'miracles' are not the exception but the rule' (Neelands, 2004, p.53).

I contribute to learning through theorising and reconceptualising the work of Dorothy Heathcote, by drawing on the concepts of agency, identity and positioning. I have theorised these ideas when examining the second research question, looking at her concepts of Frame, Role, the other and self - spectator, giving another worked example of the use of the commissioning model, evaluating and expanding on its remit. In this study I have applied Heathcote's pedagogy to an extended Commission. I have explored in depth the perspectives of the 3 research participants. To my knowledge, this is the first extended version of the Commission Model applied with vulnerable students. I followed the principles and practice of Heathcote's pedagogy. However, as in the poem Heathcote gifted to a student, 'may your paths be always of your making, not copies of others' in that spirit, I have outlined what I consider to be the key differences in this example of the Commission Model. In this thesis I contribute to learning through theorising and reconceptualising the work of Dorothy Heathcote, by drawing on the concepts of agency, identity and positioning. This forms my theoretical framework which I applied to Heathcote pedagogy, in particular her Commission Model. In Chapter Seven I will outline my contribution to knowledge and give consequent recommendations for practitioners, for further research, and policy makers on operationalising and furthering the thesis's work

Chapter Seven

Conclusions

7.1 Limitations of this research study

This is an in-depth piece of research focused on three participants resulting in the gathering of rich data. The research participants originally included a girl, but she left for personal reasons. Carol, one of my selected research participants, left the group and the college for personal reasons. She began the process as an elective mute. Some weeks into the process, she began to utter a response. This started with some initial shared responses as we both engaged with Artwork related to RB's life. Carol seemed to be engaged with experimenting with materials to depict the background where Burton came from. 'I love feeling the different textures' I said as I handled some piece of woollen cloth 'I like the feel of this' she said as she handled some shiny foil paper. We were sitting side by side.

In a future session some days later, she participated in a group containing two boys, including Allan, who was her friend, and she took on the role of RB's mother:

> Carol: (as the mother) What is going to happen to our marriage? The stove is also broken. I am feeling tired. I just want to rest. How long are you going to sit in that chair? (Directed at Richard Burton's father, played by Allan, her friend)

Given that Carol had started to participate in the creation of scenes, it was disappointing not to have been able to follow her narrative. She was the only female amongst my research participants, and she had begun to find her voice. The aim of this study was not to look specifically at gender, as in the work, for example of Butler (1990), Harris (2004) and McRobbie (2007). However, on reflection it would have provided this Narrative Inquiry with a broader perspective on the work, and brought to it, what Hatton describes as 'the girls' own gendered and relational knowledge' (p.158). Hatton (2007) researched female 'sense making' at a multi-cultural Catholic girls' school and explored a connection between the context in the drama and the girl in the book, through exploring Shaun Tan's book 'The Red Tree' (2001). In interviews the female students also made connections between the drama and their own lives. Hatton had deliberately selected a book which addressed female concerns. The material I was exploring about the life of Richard Burton, involved several males who played a significant role in his life, including his teacher who had inspired and eventually adopted him, his stepfather Ivor, and his youth work leader Meredith Jones. This raised questions for me about identity. The females in this material included Cis, who brought him up, and the females he met, married and left. Having Carol as one of my research participants would have possibly yielded different insights into how she identified with the material, and how far she would have shifted her position as a student, developed her agency and shifted her identity.

7.2 Recommendations for further research

While this exact study cannot be replicated, a similar study may be applied in similar contexts, for example with younger children. I suggest, should this happen, the following:

1. Research on the Commission Model could be conducted in national and international contexts, and since the conception of this thesis, The Commission Model network through Erasmus funding has conducted shorter term commission projects locally, nationally and internationally, and findings have been shared via the network, and via the NATD (National Association of Teachers of Drama) journal.
2. Future research could further explore how the Commission Model intersects with the curriculum for Wales and how it contributes to the dimensions of their new curriculum. This is something I trialled in Wales as part of my work for the Creative Partnerships programme in Wales.
3. This study explored how the research participants saw themselves as students. Given that they are no longer in the group, further research may explore how they see themselves in the world today.

4. Investigating the way that the Commission Model can meet the aims of the New Curriculum for Wales, possibly with younger children and those in secondary mainstream education.
5. Further research may investigate the role of 'teaching' and 'teacher' in the work of Heathcote.
6. A similar study may pay attention to the role of location and physical environment on the agency, positioning and identity of participants.

7.3 Impact on research

I have been a member of the board of the Midland Actors theatre for approximately twenty-five years. As a result of my connection with the company and with The First School in Redditch, the director of the company, along with myself and the governing body are currently engaged in classroom research (April 2025 ongoing) investigating the impact of Heathcote's pedagogy on teachers and children. In 2022, because of research on Heathcote practice in Shropshire primary schools, along with my colleague Eirwen Hopkins we produced a report for the Paul Hamlyn association, which reflected our research and evaluation over a three-year period.

I have contributed articles to NATD (National Association of Teachers of Drama) on Heathcote pedagogy. In collaboration with Midland Actors theatre, we have been engaged in sharing Heathcote pedagogy internationally and engaging in research and sharing our resultant practice. The Commission Model website has been running since, and we continue to hold monthly online sessions. Each year we celebrate the life and work of Dorothy Heathcote, where research findings are shared and practical workshops are conducted, with children in schools local to the conference. Delegates who attend represent several countries, including Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Poland, Portugal, and the USA.

7.4 NEETs nationally and internationally

I recommend, from my study, that drama and the pedagogy of Heathcote is taken seriously as a way to exact change in students who are defined as NEET or 'at risk of NEET. NEETs as a term has been adopted nationally and internationally, so the focus has been on the school to work transition (SWT). It seems that the label NEET encourages this notion of people in need of help and support, and Heathcote's pedagogy challenges this notion. That is not to say, young people do not need help and support. We all, as human beings need help and support and building a culture of community provides that for everyone. In 2012, no less than 15% of young people aged 15–29 in OECD countries were Not in Education, Employment, or Training (so-called NEETs). These NEETs were regularly portrayed as an essential challenge for many Western countries (European Commission, 2010a, 2010b, 2011; 2012). The diversity of being NEET is considerable (see OECD, 2025).

Rahmani, Groot, and Rahmani (2024) found that education has a greater impact than employment on the likelihood of young people being NEET. This finding of functionally connecting the labour market with vocational and professional schools is relevant to this study. While internationally there is a consensus about the definition of NEET, the diversity is considerable. However, this study advocates that making work meaningful to all students, including those who are designated as NEET, re positioning them as young people who are capable, competent and act with responsibility when they care about something, is an approach that can be universally applied. There were limited research papers focusing on youth cocreation, including community-based service creation, although, for service creation related to more complex target groups, the need for community level and young people as co-producers of the services is proven (Voorberg *et al.*, 2013; Windsor, 2017; Osborne, 2018; Erdogan *et al.*, 2021 (cited as Eruyar *et al., (2021)*; Jonsson *et al*., 2022).

Amongst the finding of Paabort *et al.* (2023)…they found that a brief period as NEET is in most cases a part of the normal STW (school to work transition) transition, and only a relatively small subgroup of those that experience a period as NEET, remain NEET for a long time. This further supports the need to be aware of change, and the possibility of the damaging effect of being labelled as NEET. If Education is about change, and certainly Heathcote's pedagogy is about the possibilities of change, then her pedagogy would be a useful provision for young people 'at risk of NEET' or NEET.

The conclusion of Froyland, (2024) provides support for a more personalised approach to working with marginalised young people, where they recommend a more holistic approach in schools, where listening, building trust and relationships were seen as important by the marginalised young people and adults who worked with them. This is supported by the research of Paabort *et al.* (2023) who remind us of the need to apply a holistic principle, where the young person is a unique person to contribute to support services, the actual needs of young people. Paabort *et al.* (2023) advocate for an improved provision of continued communication, collaboration, of different services to address the multiple needs of young people at risk

7.5 Dissemination

This work has since been disseminated through practice at schools and colleges, through publication, online seminars nationally and internationally, Erasmus exchanges and conferences, particularly Heathcote Now conferences. For example, in my role as vice chair of governors. I have supported training of their use of The Commission Model. I have presented my ongoing research on the RB commission at countries involved in the Erasmus project, and nationally at schools, universities and local education authority conferences and research events.

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Appendix A: ID Cards for each Research Participant

Identity Card Research Participant 1 Carl

How I came to know Carl

Carl, like my research participant 2, David, had been categorized as someone with special needs. He had been in the same class as David in his previous school, but as David said, he had never shared a conversation with him, as they were supported individually, and were designated individual seats. It was not a culture of interaction between students.

The first time I met Carl, in September 2016, he positioned himself outside the group, with his head down. He didn't respond verbally, but gradually, produced a drawing which represented a portrait of Burton's father, sitting in his home near the hearth for Burton's study in Switzerland, which we fictionally created as a group.

During a field trip on October 7th, 2016, he accepted my offer of a camera to take images of Burton's birthplace. It was always an invitation, never an imposition. He accepted. This action connected hm to others in the group who wanted to see the shots he had taken, as we travelled back to college in the minibus. It was an example of Heathcote's (1984, P.) use of the 'other' where we all looked together at the images Carl had taken. He was gradually connecting with others, who were collaborating on the project. It was not direct encouragement from me, or any kind of instruction to get involved that created this connection with others, but the curiosity and interest of his peers.

How it shaped my research

I noticed how Carl's story was shifting from the boy outside the group to the boy who became integral to it, as the lead cameraman for filming events in the life of Richard Burton. From seemingly outside the action, looking in, paying attention to the technical acts of filming, he began mid-way through the process, paying attention to the context of Burton's life, verbally articulating how the lack of money in Burton's family, reflected the struggles facing his own community. This was another example of the use of the 'other', where Carl engaged in the context of Burton's life, almost inadvertently, while focusing on the filming of the events his peers were dramatizing. This was in dialogue with David, who shared his views. Again, Heathcote's use of the 'other' was reflected, where, by looking at someone else's life, by focusing on filming events, he began to reflect on issues closer to his own community, and possibly his own life. Carl's engagement in dialogue with his own peers grew, and so observations of this involvement provided richer data than an interview, which Carl resisted and which I did not impose. It was a tangential approach, which allowed him the time and agency to reflect on it. It was not imposed.

By May 2017, Carl was taking the lead in filming a scene played out by his peers in the studio at the college. His peers kept breaking concentration by giggling. Carl at this point decides to intervene and encourages them to get it right, 'Look you were doing brilliantly there. Just keep going…' He is taking responsibility for filming the scene. He could have given up and joined in with their laughter. Instead, he used his agency intentionally and seemed to realize the power he had to 'act purposively' .

As a researcher, I realized the need to interpret his body language, his positioning with others, particularly with Gary, the film maker. Carl was awarded 'student of the year' by the college staff, and the principal, who recognized his shifting involvement and growing responsibility within the project. He was positioned by others as the 'cameraman', and this experience contributed to a new perception of him by others, and a new way of seeing himself in relation to them, his relational identity.

Identity Card Research Participant 2 David

How I came to know David

In his previous school, David was categorized, in his own words, ‘as a member of a class for kids with disabilities’. However, he had loved drama. Performing, which was the focus of his previous drama course. When I first met David in class, he sat on his own, but unlike Carl, he sat within the group, but separately, to the far end of the girls in the group. He loved acting and was the first to volunteer to get up, and represent a role, or to place an idea in Burton’s fictional study we had begun to create. He waited to be directed and tended to be monologic.

How it shaped my research

As with all the individuals I taught, David shaped my teaching and my research. I wanted to create a circumstance through which David had an opportunity to become dialogic, in order to shift him from his monologic stance. It was evident through talking with David, that he had never seen drama as a social and collaborative act and was used to being directed as an individual in a play or performed scene. When he was working on performing his monologue as Richard Burton outside the co-op, as Burton grappled with the dilemmas in his life, I encouraged Kenny, another student to work with him to interpret his lines and his gestures, applying Heathcote’s levels of motivation. This resulted in a dialogue between the two, as they both went through each level in turn. This was one of the first extended ‘connections’ based in dialogue that David made with another person in the group. This was a significant moment as David was listening and responding in an increasingly poignant dialogue.
David, like Asim, my third research participant, had also experienced bullying in his comprehensive school, particularly from girls. By May 2017, having been part of the group since September, he revealed to others in the group how he had hated girls .and his anticipation about working with them, but how working together on the commission had changed all that. David was not stuck with the story of a boy from ‘the class for kids with disabilities. He created a new story for himself. He changed how he connected with the past and imagined new possibilities with others. This was evident from the way David acted with agency to volunteer to join the ‘A’ level group to collaborate with them and the new Gateway group the following academic year. When the original Burton film was completed, David volunteered to support the new Gateway group, who were interpreting Burton’s story for a promenade performance in the town to celebrate Burton’s 92nd birthday. This experience positioned David differently. He was no longer waiting to be directed but offered direction to others. He was no longer a ‘student with disabilities ‘but a student with expertise who became a pro-active mentor to others. he was developing his relational identity. He was now re -positioned through this new framing, ‘into a position of influence’ (Heathcote, cited in Johnson and O’Neill, 1984, p.168).

Identity Card Research Participant 3 Assim

How I came to know Assim

Assim was a mixed-race student, who had moved schools several times. He was late arrival to the group, as he had not settled in the catering group. Unlike Carl and David, Assim seemed willing and ready to participate in the work, by interacting with his peers. Unknown to me at the time, Assim had suffered from being bullied at his previous comprehensive school.
Assim liked words, written and spoken, and shared his journey through several conversations with me. Part of Assim’s journey was learning how to trust. As he built relationships within the group, me and Anwen, his story unraveled as he explored Richard Burton’s life, someone he felt a powerful connection to.

How it shaped my research

On an evening in October 2016 , a group of us, including Assim, shared a draft version of the group’s film, to honor the life of Richard Burton, in the local community centre film club evening. At the end of the viewing of our film, people were invited to stay to reflect on it with the students involved. Trina, one of the locals, sat with Assim and I in one group. She invited Assim, along with me, to visit her home which was just next door to the community centre, so she could share significant and original documents related to Burton’s life and share her memories of Burton’s memorial service in Pontrhydafen. She offered to loan these documents to Assim, provided; she said he would protect

them carefully and return them to her. This event was significant in Assim's journey, as here was someone he had never met before, trusting him with valuable documents. Assim said, 'I found it really nice that she (Trina) trusted me. I have always had difficulty with trust. Maybe I have trust issues because Iof no stability. His perception of being at school echoed Burton's feeling of not belonging or being wanted. Assim said, 'I never felt needed at school; they never wanted me there. Burton in his diary, noted, 'I am not wanted here' (Williams, 2013) referring to his relationship with his sister's husband, Ivor where he lived with him and his sister Cis, following the death of his mother. This may have been an example of Assim drawing on Richard Burton's story as a 'cover' story in an attempt to keep him' safe from being too vulnerable, too exposed' (Caine, Murphy, Estefan, Clandinin, Steeves and Huber (2016). The theme of Burton's 'troubled' family life was one which Assim brought up on several occasions. Assim expresses a doubled consciousness of his agency and parallel identities, suggestive of his 'tensions between past histories' and the 'present discourses and images that attract' him (Holland, 1998, p.).In the same way that Paley (1992) in her Narrative Inquiry research, composed a story of Magpie for the kindergarten children in her class, to enter into an imagined 'as if " world and consider what it means to be lonely , Assim was making meaning about his own challenges of change and feelings of not being wanted through the life of Richard Burton , as reflected in his published diaries. Assim often used metaphors to express his innermost feelings. He said, 'It's like there are two dragons, red and green and they are fighting, the one who survives is the one you decide to feed. The project is feeding me new insights, a new me, a new goal', He identified as the writer in the group.

Appendix B: My publications and contributions over time using Heathcote's pedagogy

Videos

Dorothy Heathcote's Legacy: https://www.mantlenetwork.com/dorothy-heathcote-s-legacy
Tim Taylor and Iona Towler Evans: Developing Mantle in Schools: https://studio.youtube.com/video/FhSgb1O3jrA/edit
Brian Edmiston & Iona Towler-Evans: Humanizing Teaching with Dramatic Inquiry: https://youtu.be/CQcTlsBLfjY
Brian Edmiston & Iona Towler Evans: Humanizing Education with Dramatic Inquiry: https://youtu.be/2khW0FFdV-U
Iona Towler-Evans: "Starting a few steps back" in drama work: https://youtu.be/n14SCYhyEpM
Iona Towler-Evans: First Steps into Mantle ("The Office of Lost Things," Part 1): https://youtu.be/ifyrnbOBCZA
Iona Towler-Evans: Paper Location in Mantle ("The Office of Lost Things," Part 2): https://youtu.be/9DdOGE1sYJ8
Rolling Role at Woodrow First School: The "Needle Factory" project: https://youtu.be/mxJ2AXy8guA
Interview with Dorothy Heathcote, "What's in Store" (Dudley LEA 1997): https://youtu.be/ZD2BjDH_XiU
Link for recordings on trail regarding the Copper works history Commission https://www.facebook.com/CopperworksHM/

Journals etc.

Editorial (Round Table Discussion), "Drama Conventions in Educational and Applied Sciences," in *Education in the North*, ed. D. Allen, W. Barlow, S.A. Eriksson, 31:2 (2024), pp.1-12.
https://aura.abdn.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/2164/24178/Allen_etal_EITN_Drama_Comventions_Educational_VOR.pdf?sequence=3
"Epilogue: Roundtable on Drama Conventions – creative practices," in ed. D. Allen, W. Barlow, S.A. Eriksson, 31:2 (2024), pp.204-212.
Brian Edmiston and Iona Towler-Evans: *What sort of society do we want?– Introducing: Humanising education with dramatic inquiry: In dialogue with Dorothy Heathcote's transformative pedagogy.* NATD Journal 36:1 https://www.mantleoftheexpert.com/news-post/issue-36-1-of-the-journal-for-drama-in-education/
"Sea life through other eyes," *Times Educational Supplement*, 18th January 2008 https://www.tes.com/magazine/archive/sea-life-through-other-eyes
"Players take the lead" (with Claire Armstrong Mills), *Times Educational Supplement*, 22nd November 2002.

Chapters in books:

""It's Not Your Every Day Lesson Is It?' In Search of the Quality of Learning Operating in Mantle of the Expert," in *Interactive Research in Drama in Education*, ed. David Davis (Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books, 1997.

Teachers Pack:

Iona Towler Evans and David Allen, *What's In Store?* (Dudley LEA, 1997).
Iona Towler Evans and David Allen 'Harlow What's in Store?' (Essex LEA, 2000)

Iona Towler Evans and Eirwen Hopkins Paul Hamlin research report (2022) Paul Hamlin
Iona Towler Evans (2025) Teachers Pack for Calon Afan 'Protecting Our Mountain' published by Calon Afan Community Interest Company , funded by UK Government. I shared with local teachers and ran in local schools, Port Talbot, South Wales, 2025.

Publications

Edmiston, B. and Towler -Evans, I. M (2022) Humanizing Education with Dramatic Inquiry Routledge , London

Iona Towler Evans, I. M. 'Routes to Revision' An approach to revising the play DNA by Dennis Kelly, using Heathcote approaches , for AQA GCSE English , Bloomsbury, London.

Allen, D and Towler-Evans (November 2008) 'Thinking skills and Mantle of the Expert' Gifted and Talented publications (includes the Mantle of the Expert , 'How do People learn' referred to in this thesis,p. 45

Towler-Evans I.M.(2009) An approach to pre twentieth century text using Mantle of the Expert The English Magazine

Report on a long-term three-year programme in schools in Shropshire on the impact on teachers learning to teach though Mantle of the Expert (2022) Paul Hamlyn

Other experience of Heathcote's Pedagogy

Commission Model the Essex Flood Team, to raise people's awareness of issued within their environment (2009)

Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation (NIF) on creative approaches to Citizenship in schools (2009)

Dudley Health Promoting Schools initiative, involving alcohol and substance abuse (2005 to 2011)

The Welsh Arts Council, creative partnerships initiative, 2016 to 2020, including Mantle of the Expert and The Commission Model in collaboration with the Maritime Museum, Swansea

Teaching Mantle of the Expert to Birmingham Newman undergraduates in collaboration with Woodrow First school (2014 to 2017)

Teaching Heathcote Pedagogy to Early Years practitioner trainees, Birmingham City University 2016 to 2020

Teaching on a Mantle of the Expert programme across LEA's , including Stafford and Barnsley 2009 to 2014

Taught Mantle of the Expert in Jordan, as part of a teachers' summer school (2015)

Completed a three-year research project for Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Teacher development initiative, using Narrative inquiry to track teachers developing understanding and application of Mantle of the Expert in Shropshire schools, which resulted in a report, published 2022

More recently, worked with Eirwen Hopkins (Calon Afan) on a commission project to explore the recently uncovered history related to the Welsh defeat of the Normans in the Middle Ages (2025). The teachers' pack is entitled 'Protecting Our Mountain', funded by UK government and published by Calon Afan Community Interest Company.

Appendix C: Sample transcripts from this study

Transcripts and Field notes for participant 1: Carl
Session 2 Creating the study of Richard Burton
On the second day, a week later, I met Carl again. He was still sitting outside the group with his head in his hands which leaned on the table in front of him. He seemed to be outside the group who were seated in a rectangle on chairs. I had arranged the chairs and tables in a rectangular with a space at the front. Carl had placed his chair near a computer outside the rectangular shape. His head was down. I invited the group to help me build the study which Richard Burton spent a fair bit of time in and asked them to imagine what it might have been like a year after his death, when his widow, Sally was going through his things. I didn't want them to see the study as it was. I avoided giving them a picture of the study, which was available, because I wanted us to imagine together how it might have been. I felt it was important that their decision built that study and it became the study they imagined it to be, rather than the one from a photograph or my version of it.

Eirwen was present. She sat with Carl. She explained that it was very difficult to hear him as he mumbled when spoken to and he didn't raise his head, so she had to listen very closely and carefully, as others in the group sat around the tables. She invited him to consider the sorts of things he might have kept in his study. Catherine, one of the other students, was opposite where Carl sat along with Allan, another girl, Sian, then David a few seats away and Kevin. Across the back wall sat Kenny, Jamie, Sian, Carys and Sheila. I placed some of the objects associated with Richard Burton, around the room including a diary, a ring in a box, books, a film poster, his rugby socks etc as well as photographs of his family, his story, 'A Child's Christmas'. I also made available the group diary extracts appropriate to his childhood and past:

Iona: Of course, you can place these, but you might imagine other things too. We know it was a place he liked to read and write.
Kenny: He would have had bookshelves
Iona: Perhaps you could create the bookshelves?

Others suggested a clock, a desk with a drawer that would be locked. We thought of things which may be kept in there. Sian suggested the diary. They were all provided with drawing paper and different sizes were available to them. Carl lifted his head as the group collected the paper and started to draw various objects, often in discussion with others. Eirwen offered Carl the drawing paper. There was no script, everything was improvised and the story he was part of making up was the story of this classroom. While Carl was contributing a drawing to the story of Richard Burton's life, my intention was that he would also become part of a changing classroom story, one where people's contributions were made significant in a culture of community.

I then asked the group to place their drawings of items along with any objects provided in relation to the book shelves which Kenny had placed in the corner of the attic room, which I had marked out with masking tape on the floor. Catherine placed a sign for the desk fairly centrally. Carl placed his portrait there as if on the desk, but only as the group were up and milling round chatting about where to place things. He also took the child's Christmas book and put it next to the portrait. Catherine placed the rugby socks as if in the drawer:

Catherine: He likes to remember something he did as a child Iona: It looks like there are quite a few memories of his past life around this desk.
Kenny: Maybe he has kept something personal too in the locked drawer
Iona: I wonder what he might have kept in the locked drawer.

By this time the group had created their version of the study, including their drawings to represent items in the space, as well as some of the objects they had examined in the f irst session. The group, initiated by Sheila, decided that Sally Burton might have to look for the key and thought of a place it might be kept. Carl looked around the study they had created, looking at the drawings but only while everyone was milling around. He then sat back down, his head down. I summed up by commenting, "there are quite a few memories of his past life around the desk". While he still worked individually, Carl's drawing contributed to the group's construction of the study. He was slowly edging in. 22 During session 3 we met Eirwen in role as Sally Burton. The group decided where she would be positioned, what she would be doing and what she may have been thinking. Carl was surrounded by lots of talk about possibilities. Kenny suggested that there would be things in the study, private to her husband, like his diary, which was locked, and they spent time deciding where the key may have been kept and whether Sally would find it. As Eirwen represented Sally in the attic studio, there was a moment of stillness in the room. I sat next to Carl who said, 'It's private' 'it's a diary, diaries are private (he paused) but she is his wife'. He seemed undecided. It was the first Carl initiated a comment which the entire group heard.

Carl from outside-observer to insider - April 2017
Interestingly, for Carl, he began to identify some of the issues in the Burton story. Up until April 2017, I observed Carl to be an observer who liked being outside watching and not participating 'inside' the work. In a session (session 23) where Kenny, Craig and Allan were working on his dilemma over choosing to play rugby or acting, Carl was always focused on the technical aspects of filming the scene, wanting to get the shots right for Allan's entry into the scene. However, I noticed gradually as the group became more immersed in the world of Richard Burton, even when he didn't have the camera in his hand, Carl began to engage with the content. This became particularly clear during Session 31 when, as a group we were preparing to speak with a modern-day celebrity who was also brought up in the area, Michael Sheen. I had laid out a number of statements related to Burton which might stimulate questions they might ask Michael Sheen who had agreed to be interviewed by one of the students. David, one of the members of the group and one of the research participants, had selected the theme of money and the lack of it as being significant to the life of Richard Burton and wondered if Michael Sheen had experienced issues concerning money in his developing career. Carl immediately connected with this theme:

David: That's an important one, that is
Carl: Yes, that is important I think, because that is what changed his life. He could have things he never had before, and he could help his family. That's why he went to Hollywood, it was big money, he knew what it was like to go without

Transcript sample Participant 2: David
Conversation about money between Carl (Research Participant 1) and David (Research Participant 2) which grew out of the Richard Burton story

When the group worked on questions Michael Sheen might be asked about his life, and how much it may have paralleled the life of Burton, I invited them to prioritise areas of his life

they were concerned about and curious about. This was in April 2017, a couple of weeks before members of the team would meet Michael Sheen. David had placed the 'lack of money' as being significant in the life of Burton and wondered if Michael Sheen had experienced a similar background to that of Burton .'That's an important one that is' David said and Carl said , 'Yes that is important I think, because that is what changed his life. He could have things he never had before, and he could help his family. That's why he went to Hollywood , it was big money, he knew what it was like to go 23 without'. This was a rare moment where I had heard Carl make a verbal contribution within the whole group. Both David and Carl were interested in the extent to which money was the driving force behind Burton's career. David said, 'Money made a difference to his life' I said, 'In what way?' 'Well, he could get anything he needed , but he probably got more than he needed, it's a double-edged sword' 'That's interesting , tell us more' 'Well, you can have too much , it can change you. Coming from round here, maybe he couldn't handle it. But the trouble is money gives you power and if you haven't got any then you don't have a choice'. The lesson is coming to a close. The students leave and Carl hangs about while David continues this conversation about money. Carl says, 'that's right that is about the money, because if you haven't got any your struggling' David continues 'Yes we are struggling now , because the authorities are stopping support for my apercus, and if we had money, we could get a solicitor ' Carl continues to listen, 'But is it just the money. Where do you get the support from?' I ask, 'At college?' 'Maybe your mum could speak to the person in charge of Student support and ask them to write a letter to support you and explain how much this provision is needed' 'Yes, maybe' David responds. 'So do you think we should look at an event from the life of Burton and what money means to him and his family' 'Yes' says Carl 'I think we should show how it affects people round here' 'So we bring the family back home into the scene?'' I suggest 'Yes' Carl responds 'Could you film bits then and we can ask Abdul to write it or make notes from what we come up with, because Greg (the professional documentary maker)will be in next week and he can support this filming or maybe taking photographs of moments so we can think about including it '.Carl nods. The notion of 'money ' and the role it plays in people's lives is instigated by David and through this Carl connects with the discussion, they both stay on into break to discuss further. David here is connecting with another , and in his interview 2 years later he says Carl is his best mate from this group. 'Family' and 'Round here' is integral to the consideration of money and its influence. Both Carl and David share this view of 'round here' where as Carl says 'they know what it is like to go without' and David shares the dilemma of it being too much to handle a great deal of money 'coming from round here' He then moves on to his personal circumstances, how his family cannot get the support for his apercus because of lack of money in his view , for getting much needed legal support. I challenge him about this and suggest other ways they can get support. He takes me up on this and his support is granted (he gives me the news 3 months on). It occurs to me that the scene we will work on with this group has grown out of what matters to them as people living in the area today, and the 'lack of money' which they seem to see as being part of living 'round here'. It's as if people 'round here' do not have a lot of money and in David's view wouldn't know how to handle it if they had it-maybe this is how he sees RB as someone who couldn't handle it.

I suggested that the next time we might work on the 'giving of money' by Burton to his family. David suggested the time when Sian Owen's (whom we, as a group had interviewed) mother (who was Richard Burton's sister) waited monthly for that cheque to come through the door from her brother , and we agreed we would try this out next time. This time Carl would work alongside David , Sheila and Assim (who supported the construction of the scene).

In the next session, Assim, David, Carys and Carl focus on the money theme. Assim says, ‘Remember when Sian Owen came in and she told us the story about the ring she was wearing – that diamond ring worth millions. David said, ‘And she told us about her 24 mother getting the cheques through the door, every month’ (the link with family again he sends the money home to help the family).

Appendix D: Dorothy Heathcote's original notes about the Hexham Garden Commission 2003

Dorothy Heathcote's original notes shared with teachers involved in the original Garden commission (2003) kindly provided by Kathy White Webster, the drama teacher who coordinated the work.

The Garden Commission Model

From DH Notes

1 An authority outside that of the teacher presents problem/parameters

2 An authority … dominates acceptance by leader and commissioners

3 An authority … causes focus on area of research
An authority … causes relevant focus on areas of research
An authority … form of product

4 From now time, form of product, commission, context create tension affect each other and constantly interact productively

5 Vocabulary becomes highly selective of necessity

6 Vygotsky's zones of proximal development come into operation as people create systems of work or explore models found suitable and reach for information and systems.

7 The authority dictates standards and productive bias

8 All learning systems can operate: consultation, explaining, listening , searching relevant fields, browsing syndrome, public voice, note taking, asking, responding , all forms of communication, recording, forming questions, testing, copying selectively, shaping, presenting.

9 Commission sustains focus and context.

- Commissions develop sequencing as necessity drives works and causes innovative 'solutions'
- Teams/individuals from and separate as necessity drives work
- All work breeds its own future maintained and focussed by nature of the commission which controls, paces and finally influences the forming of the commissioned product
- Type and scope of commission dominates handing over sequence
- Product exists now outside of commissioners
- Learning results work upon commissioners as a complex web of experiences, realisations, skills and understanding of other horizons possible and foreseeable. Individual and social interactions bring scope for future citizenships of the world

Leader and commissioners share all the growth potential

DH Commission Notes from her planning and thinking

Quote A ‘out of the old garden, a growing future….begun in Queen Elizabeth High School, Hexham, to serve all who may use it ……..’
(This I think demonstrates the client and the community that we are all working for)

Quote B She quotes from Dunelm ‘A risky commitment to a glimpsed possibility, in the face of reasonable human hesitation about whether it is really possible.’
(This demonstrates some of the tension)

Both the above quotes are presented on the cover (quote A) and the inside cover (quote B) which contained the contents of the various writing done by students and including DH’s written preparation/s. (2002)

Commission references from DH. The hospital garden. DH notes to the Queen Elizabeth Teachers, 2002 to Diane (Deputy Head) and Kathy (Drama teacher)

The working model

The enterprise model relating with helping architects

(1) to design appropriately for children’s care (2) in hospital opens up 3 distinct areas which teachers will exploit appropriately to their teaching goals (3) at any particular time

(For us at the college what was appropriate was to tap into what they already knew and develop that, regardless of a particular subject, although they were a creative group, so we used a drama approach including Visual Art and Media)

1 The architects became the commissioning client.
2 The children’s needs became the central anchor for all the selective learning experiences. The field can range widely between ‘what they need, how they may feel, and what is appropriate for the circumstances.
3 The teaching goals and standards are the responsibility of the teachers in the team as with the national curriculum

Records of Communication with Dorothy Heathcote and Advice for my on on-going work, using her pedagogy Below I include copies of communication with Dorothy Heathcote, which illustrates her meticulous attention to my planning. This includes:

- A communication thanking delegates for their support following a conference on Mantle of the Expert in 1999
- This is dated July 9th and was in 2011 (the year she sadly died) and were ideas we had shared for a Commission Model I was hoping to run in Wales
- Her comments on initial planning for ‘What’s in Store’ Mantle of the Expert context, which was set up to address drug issues. Heathcote’s idea of creating a community store illustrates her tangential approach to the topic and her emphasis on an invitational approach (this was in 1996)

Appendix E: Communications with Dorothy Heathcote

Wyngate,
52, Bordesley
Rd.
Fairfield
Bromsgrove
B61 9HN

Dear Dorothy,

Thank you so much for responding so quickly to the write up I sent to you. Your comments were really useful. We now enclose some more sections of the path and would be grateful for your comments if you have time. We intend to shift things about

When it is all written and to have sections on Non-Negotiables ✓

and what the teacher has to be prepared to deal with and so on ✓

We will also work on diagrams to illustrate ✓ how the Steve Carries the 'dang' curriculum ✓

Hope you are well. Looking forward to seeing you soon. Take care D.

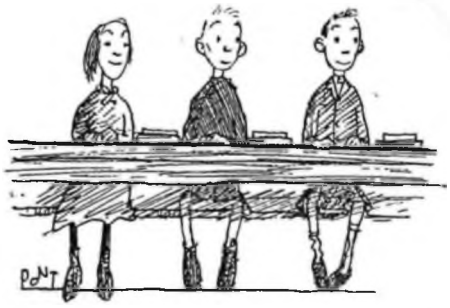
Iona

Iona - I've annotated your bit - feel free to ignore all of it! Don't be too humble!

D.

I thought the irony might appeal! →

D.



"Now, children, I wonder if you all realise that you have inherited the largest and richest Empire the world has ever known."

Dorothy Heathcote
Highburn House
High Heworth Lane
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear NE10 9XE
Tel. (0191) 4692762

14.7.99.

Dear Delegate – do please excuse the formality but it seems right to send a note to all you "slaves" who worked so hard over the past few days, and I don't have the technology to put separate names on each of these notes of genuine appreciation which Sophie will oversee being copied for each of you, and forwarded to you.

I know the cost of time, money and effort when teachers, towards the end of a year's teaching, have to lay out to join a conference so I doubly appreciate that you bothered to come, and I sincerely hope the efforts will prove to have been useful. Even if you weren't enamoured of me or "Mantle of the Expert" curriculum based work, it can sometimes prove useful in that you know at least what you don't want to include in your teaching repertoire. I've hinted to the committee a possible format for a follow-up course, but that is only me thinking forward.

I wish you good happy years of teaching – as I have had – even off days are often a gift on reflection. Wherever you are there is "ribbon of thought" shared memories" between us. Thank you for your indulgence and amiable responses – even under pressure.

Sincerely, Dorothy

Saturday 9th July West House.

Dear Jonn-

It was nice seeing you again yesterday - thanks for the trouble. I didn't ask about Kari or the children + the paddock! We seemed to get swamped in the shoe enterprise - I haven't come up with any fancy name but "shoe-wrack - if you have need we supply - no job too small - all theatre enterprises carried out to high standards". It's a bit long but good layout + colour can help + could provide 4 separate focuses for the 4 weeks. Medieval - the ministrel times, Jacobean the gloomy formal times, Cromwell the "plain" times and Elizabethan (or Victorian times,) Medieval could be 'Gammer Gurton's Needle' - I can't think of play titles without a look at the published plays. Medieval is the pageants + the Guilds (vying to impress) + moving from station to station around a village or town centre, "G. G. Needle" is 100 years as travel develops. Cromwell banned theatre but then it opened up to the Actors + the buildings + playwrights Johnson/Shakespeare etc. plays on the S. Bank and the fixed locations and then upon (and of course it continues then into the Victorian theatres - we still use) e.g. Open stages are back in again even in our 1836 models we enjoy sitting inside - the magic of the curtain rising -

usually towing canapies – a sort of rep. & people like the variety. Think in detail of tasks done/doing - not vague ideas - these are useless. Your groups need focus each week. Get some good sketches to give line & style.

I snitched your notes & the card without meaning to, so this is coming with them.

Good luck –

Dorothy

And of course in Vic Times you get the Oscar Wilde tragedies - breaking strict codes & prudish plays a bit. Then the 20th century produced lots of playwrights. You can find precise examples in the compendiums of titles & synopsis.

D.

Thanks for all those cakes! I can entertain trouble free for a long time!

D.

0115 9220361

Monday

DUDLEY ADVISORY SERVICE

'Developing Quality Through Partnership'

Our ref : ITE/jah

20th June 1996

Iona - I keep trying to phone you but I keep wasting money trying to find you. Your letter arrived this am.

The talk seems fine - use 15 mins only - but you'll have lots of time when working with groups or responding →

Mrs D. Heathcote
Highburn House
High Heworth Lane
Felling
Gateshead
Tyne & Wear
NE10 9XE

Dear Dorothy,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity of observing you working with Claire's students. It was really nice to meet you properly before the conference. Yet again, it was very inspiring and I learnt so much during that week.

I would like to share with you a brief synopsis of my 'slot' in the conference at Birmingham and would value any feedback.

→ 15 mins

I will ring you next week in the evening if that is alright with you.

- Introduce myself and context within which I work.
- How I became interested in Mantle of the Expert and particularly my interest in 'giving pupils the power in school to work carefully.' I want to say something about teachers linguistic style, how Mantle of the Expert can not permit teacher-telling and generally about authenticity.
- What I believe is unique about Mantle of the Expert - how I'm searching for what is unique.
- What it is - see leaflet.
- How it works - see leaflet.
- Dimensions of learning - see leaflet.
- My own attempt at a Mantle of the Expert T.I.E. approach.

Saltwells Education Development Centre Bowling Green Road Netherton Dudley West Midlands DY2 9LY
Tel: 01384 634155 Fax: 01384 410436

8/3790

to the work groups "showings" to explain further!

If I were you I'd do a handout of the 3 sheets of charts – they seem excellent.

I'm holding on to them till I come to B'ham.

If you want to speak to me!

I'll be at Marianne's in Nottingham on Thursday all day – 0115. 9220361.

Looking forward! Dorothy

Jane - I've scribbled over this somewhat. Very useful to see - we can discuss detailed changes if you wish.

Notes for Guidance for Teachers Preparing Children for the Theatre-in-Schools Mantle of the Expert Drama Programme

This drama will involve the children in running an enterprise, in this case a Community Service Store.

Session 1

Explain to the children that the Dudley Theatre in Schools team will work with them for a day on their drama. Make it clear to the children that the team and themselves will all be involved in the same drama. They will not be watching a play but creating a drama/enterprise.

The video provided should be the first stimulus material pupils are presented with. Make it clear to the pupils that the people on the screen are in role, one as a T.V. presenter and the other as an interviewee. The children may need to watch the video more than once as it contans a lot of important information (the video is 4 minutes long). Stress to the children how carefully they will need to listen as this information will be crucial to their own drama.

The following are suggested questions you may like to use as part of developing the pupils response to the video.

What did you make of this person, Janette Simpson?
Did she seem to you the sort of person who'd been on television before or do you think this was her first time?
What did she do that made you think that?
Shall we watch that again?
(A good opportunity for
- watching aspects of the video.
- children can be engaged in interpreting body language, speech and facial expression)

This must be a very special project since its made the local news. What do you think that makes it so special? You may wish to make a list with the children of what they consider to be special about this project, e.g. Young people will run a store themselves. Lots of stores are willing to be involved etc.

Finally negotiate with the children along these lines. "Do you think it would be reasonable that a group of successful people (Managers of stores like Boots etc) could get together and decide to do something for young people in their local community. They may have noticed young people

hanging about and coming in to their stores from the cold but not buying anything. They might think these youngsters need something to do."

"At the same time, Janette Simpson had been left this money to encourage young people to develop new skills and gets in touch with Marks and Spencers."

This may develop into a conversation with the children about the motivations of the people involved so that you can build belief in the context and they can agree to accept it for their drama.

(This is a suggested way in, following your video observation and discussion).

"Shall we look at some of the applications that Jeanette Simpson mentioned she had received? What if we were the people who had to advise her about these 3 applications? (Keep the application in your hand while explaining as this will create tension and they will want to see them) Do you think we could see if these people could be any use to her 'running at store' idea and to see if the "running a store" would do them any good? There are copies of the advertisements/leaflets and newspaper article available to you for information about what the Enterprise Committee are looking for. (These may be spread out amongst the children for reference). Distribute enough copies of applications so that children can study them in pairs or groups. They could feed back their findings. You may wish to record this in some way

e.g. Mark Rogers.

Skills Offered	Personal Development
Used to selling	e.g. Practise at dealing with people - feeling needed
Worked with people	
Interests in sport - could run a sports stall.	

When these tasks are complete and the children have arrived at same consensus and shared their observations they should be ready to consider their own applications.

It may well be appropriate to do this in a separate session.

Session 2

This session may be introduced by using teacher in role. If you choose to do this you will ask the children to agree to believe that they are attending a meeting in their local library with you as the librarian.

and a notice " --- Library (opening hrs. etc)

Before you begin your role (which you may like to indicate by picking up a prop such as a book or an advertisement) Ask the children to agree to be people wanting to know more about the project. They may invent a name and other details and make up reasons why they wish to apply. The drama can begin with them looking at the materials (the advertisement, leaflet and newspaper article).

You may then enter in to role and introduce yourself as the librarian, "I'm so glad you've all come. We are very pleased that all these people have got together to make this idea possible. If we can make it work it will be marvellous."

You get the language right here

Invite them to complete the application forms and invite any questions from them. List any you can't answer. Explain, in role, that you will forward these questions to the Chamber of Commerce Committee. This will give you time to think of appropriate answers which you can feedback later. If you do not wish to introduce this in role simply get them to look at the materials (advertisement, leaflet and newspaper article) and ask them to complete the application forms as if they were a person who would like to participate in this project. They may invent suitable details for their role. Then group the children appropriately and get them to "hot seat" each other "in role" about why they would like to participate in the enterprise. Within their groups get them to look at the list of participating stores and decide on the kind of products they think would be useful to sell or what service they wish to provide (e.g. hairdressing). What sorts of things do people really need?

Nice alternative offered here.

These may include basic necessities but also special things they think people do need in their life sometime. The groups will now need to prepare for their presentation to members of the Chamber of Commerce Committee and Jeanette Simpson. As part of the process invite the children to fill in the details on a small I.D. card (master provided) using their invented name. Each group may choose the number of an island between 1 and 7. They can present this in the form of a diagram of their counter accompanied by a brief description and reasons for their choice. When we visit "in role" as members of the Chamber of Commerce we will be interested in the reason for the choice of product/service, how this product/service will be useful to the community. What qualities they think they can bring to the tasks of running a community centre store. Our days visit will begin with the presentation of childrens ideas. It would be very useful to us if the children presented their ideas within the security of their classroom where possible.

Must not interrogate. You're no right - they're volunteers!

These seem very interrogative in the wording —

Can you have time to teach your teachers to not interrogate but create talk around ideas?

I can help.

Appendix F: Resource to help teachers implement Heathcote's pedagogy

(a) Using Mantle of the Expert
(b) Using the Commission Model

Commission Model compared with Mantle of the Expert

The following is a chart I devised for members of the Erasmus Team 2020, to illustrate the differences between Mantle of the Expert ND the Commission Model. I drew on the example of the Richard Burton Commission, as they were beginning to trial the Commission Model at this stage having gained significant experience at using Mantle of the Expert. I have highlighted the Commission in turquoise and the Mantle in purple, for clarity.

	COMMISSION MODEL	Examples	MANTLE OF THE EXPERT	Examples
Who are the young people working for?	Actual people in the everyday world outside the classroom need the young people to help them complete a project. The young people engage because they care about the project. This is a commission from an actual client.	Swansea library commission students to create a movie about the life of Richard Burton Sally Burton ultimately is the client who wants her husband's life to be honoured, and would like the young people to fulfil this commission	Young people and teachers imagine people in an imagined world who need people to help them resolve a big problem within a larger imagined project. Confusingly this may be called a commission from an imagined client	In 'The Thin Screen' participants are framed as consultants/advisers to tarpaulin manufacturers
What are the young people doing and making?	Young people actually create artifacts for the client as outcomes	An actual movie was created and was first shown at a gala evening to which community members were invited. Additional to this, they shared a power point and sculptures and Artwork they had created around the life of Richard Burton	Young people create outcomes but don't create artifacts for the imagined people who need our help Heathcote said that 'if we actually produce something, it may expose our in expertise', for example in her 'shoe factory' they created designs and templates, but never the actual shoes.	
How are the young people framed? Why are the young people motivated to engage?	Young people are framed collectively as people with expertise: the expertise that is needed to begin the project and addressed as having the responsibility to learn what is needed to complete the project. In carefully constructing the letter requesting the group's help, the rationale behind it, ie selecting this particular group had to	The young people were framed collectively as local people who would be interested in making a movie focused on the teenage life of Richard Burton. In commission the framing is not fictionalized. They are not pretending to be movie makers they are not pretending to be	A dramatic framing collectively positions the young people as if they are a team of people with expertise in an imagined world beyond what they actually have in everyday life	In the Thin Screen Heathcote framed the participants as consultants to a firm of tarpaulin manufacturers seeking advice on restructuring their organization which, Dorothy said, 'was just "a thin screen "away from the "real"car company'

.

	carry integrity for who they are and what they could bring.	anyone other than themselves.		
Whose viewpoints and positions are considered as the project unfolds?	The paramount position is that of the client. Additionally, the relevant perspectives of all other people may be considered and dramatized	Different points of view are welcomed and embraced throughout the commission journey. Because it is responsive to the actual needs of actual people, a point of view may come up which you didn't predict, as it comes from outside rather than from you as a teacher or teacher in role. When we were given the opportunity of meeting Sian Owen's niece, we embraced it -we couldn't predict her response, so we were open to her point/s of view. I only briefed her by saying, 'make them work for what they are looking for - respond to their questioning'. The commission is done in the service of actual people beyond the classroom who need our help -a need we may not have anticipated.	Any people's viewpoints on the topic can be dramatized from the positions of imagined people in dramatic roles	The viewpoint of the team of people within the enterprise and their client, The Tarpaulin manufacturer
Where does productive tension come from?	The primary tension is fulfilling the commission to the professional standards set by the client	There is tension created in anticipating the visit by Burton's niece, in anticipation of handling the artefacts related to Burton's life, and these are all 'real' tensions. However, we draw on fictionalized events, such as 'meeting Sally Burton a year after his death in RB's library'. As the facilitator I can engineer productive dramatic tension by introducing the idea of a 'locked drawer' where they negotiate what RB may have wanted to keep secret. As in Heathcote's hospital garden we can	Engaging dramatic tensions can be constructed with the young people	

What and how are the young people learning?	As in professional life, the 'curriculum' is whatever is **needed to be learned** to complete the project; learned in the ways that professionals learn.	**In Commission we are shifting our 'gaze' from our world inside the classroom to the actual world outside the classroom to the actual people and making an actual difference to the world.** Their film is shared, and accessed in the local library, and shared with the community whose views they have sought. As a result of their work an adult community group named 'The Rich History Group' (a name created by the original commissioners) has formed and continues to expand the legacy of Port Talbot , including the life of Richard Burton and the original commissioners are contributing to this group , four years on.	The work can be tailored to learn particular aspects of the given **academic and social curriculum**	**The purpose of Mantle is to make a difference to the world inside the classroom**, to the way young people learn and to provide them with purpose for their work. In the Thin Line , it is to help actual Volkswagen middle managers manage change in their workplace
		practice meeting the actual community by setting up people they meet and how they may approach them about their commission, and this carries the productive tension of unpredictability and how well we manage it.		

NOTES about the Commission Model:

- The commission has to be very carefully negotiated with the client. The students must care about the needs of the client and the project they're being asked to do.
- The young people are consistently addressed as competent, capable, and knowledgeable collaborators relative to the actual commission including their professional relationship with clients
- The perspectives and positions of other people to be considered can't be planned

7 key questions

Appendix G: Informed consent

Informed Consent Page
Information Sheet for students
Commissioning Letter

NEWMAN UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Name of investigator: Iona Towler-Evans

Title of research project: **A Narrative Inquiry into the experience of using Dorothy Heathcote's Commission Model with young people in a college in Port Talbot.**

The purpose and details of the study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further educational knowledge and that all procedures have been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Newman University.

I have read and understood the participant information sheet and this consent form.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.

I understand that all information I provide will be treated in strict confidence.

I agree to participate in this study.

Name of participant

Signature of participant

Signature of investigator

Date

Contact details of people involved in the study are provided on the information sheet, which you can keep.

Information Sheet for Students/Parents/Guardians

Newman University Research and Interviews

Here is a sheet with a bit more information about the study. You are free to ask questions about anything here either on the phone, by e mail or when you meet with Iona. You can choose not to answer any question asked. You are also free to pull out of the study if you change your mind. This, of course, does not mean that you have to pull out of the Burton @14 project.

What is the study about?

Iona is researching the way we are working on the Burton @14 project and understand better how you learn things through this approach, about Burton's life and about how you apply this learning to different situations eg visiting at the fire for the community, and how it affects you as a learner.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because the college wants to give you the best opportunities for learning, and some of you might not have found your school contexts the best places for your learning. For the research, Iona is trying to find out what it is that supports your learning and why, and anything that you may have found less helpful within the project. Apart from that, it is up to you to decide if you want to take part.

Who is involved in the study?

Iona Towler-Evans is the researcher-she is a part time student at Newman University College, Birmingham. Neath and Port Talbot College have agreed for Iona to work with you, and she will interview people involved in the project, such as Andrea Houlihan, Julia Warner, Amy, your teacher and Erwan Hopkins (Director of the project). No-one from the team will be told what you or your family say, but the general things found out will be shared with them and written up in Iona's PhD project. One important exception is if you tell Iona anything that makes her think any young person is at risk of harm. If this happens she must tell someone at Neath/Port Talbot College, in order to protect you.

Do I have to take part?

No-Iona is wanting willing volunteers only-if you change your mind at any time you are free to pull out-you don't have to give a reason.

What is involved?

Iona will make notes on her observations and teaching during the project and your involvement in it. She will talk to you from time to time, as she has been doing, about how you feel about being part of it, and what and how you think you are learning. Some parts of the sessions will be recorded, and she will take photographs for the project (if she has your permission to do so) and to prompt conversations with you. You can make an appointment to speak to her separately or just have conversations during the session or during the club in the afternoon. You can decide what you want to share anything about your involvement in the project, and share with Iona along with your friends or on your own. Andrea and/or Amy or Erwan will be present during these conversations (you can decide who you would like to be present) and you can chat to any of us at any point about the research and any questions you have about it. Iona will share any of her notes, photographs at any point during the process should you wish to see them, and will provide you with copies of any informal conversations she records, if you wish. When typing up the [illegible] and informal conversations, all names and places will be removed and the documents will be kept securely. No photographs or filmed extracts will be reproduced for the final writing up. After the research is finished, the recording used for the research, will be erased.

What if I want to complain?

If possible, please ask Iona any questions or talk about complaints with her. But you are also free to talk to someone on the team including Julia Marcar, Head of Teaching and Learning, or Iona's supervisor Dr Kate Reid-Lucas at Newman University if you need to complain. Their contact details are below.

What will happen to the results of the study?

Iona will write up all her research for her PhD which will be marked in 2020. She also wants to publish papers about the research and give presentations at conferences to other teaching staff. No individual will be able to be identified at any point but quotes from conversations may be used.

More questions? speak to Iona at any point during the days of her visits, or e mail her at any time, and she will respond.

Appendix H: The Commission Letter which the students received from Swansea University on behalf of Sally Burton, Richard Burton's wife

Ms E. Hopkins & Mrs. I. Towler-Evans Choice Project
Swansea University
21 September 2016

Dear Eirwen and lona,

I have been approached by Sally Burton, requesting our help, at Swansea University for a project in Port Talbot. I believe the reason I have been approached is because I am the Archivist in the Richard Burton Archives which holds her husband's personal dianes.

Sally Burton is the widow of Richard Burton, an actor who was brought up in the area and who was quite a celebrity in his day. Of course you may already have heard of him.

Sally Burton feels that her late husband has at times been judged unfairly and people have accepted only the stories which appear in the press. However, she wondered if there was a group of young people in the area, that you might know, who might take the time to investigate more closely how life circumstances shaped him. She would very much like young people to honour his life and work, in their community.

We were somewhat at a loss as to who to turn to for this project and have contacted several people who work with young people in the area.

We know that you often work with young people who engage with community groups. either as performers or people who run various activities, and so we thought you might be able to identify the people we are looking for to examine Richard's legacy, and through the work you might do together, to make a lasting impact on the community of Port Talbot The young people will be far more aware than I am of how their community, of which they are a part, would value as a way of honouring his life. We are hoping that you and the young people can help us find a way of revealing the unanswered questions and hidden truths of his life, and of sharing them with others, in a productive and positive way.

We do hope you will give this your thoughtful consideration, and consult with young people that you might know of. I am sure there will be many questions you and they may wish to raise. We will do our very best to answer your questions, and to introduce some of the elements of the life of Richard Burton as far as we know them at this stage.

We look forward to hearing from you and hopefully meeting you very soon Yours sincerely

Elisabeth Bennett
Archivist
Richard Burton Archives

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Appendix I: Photographs and Press releases from the Richard Burton Commission

MORNING SERIAL

Farewell Innocence by William Glynne-Jones

"HOW do you feel tonight, Jack?" "Rotten, Bill ... rotten." The young man tapped his chest. "The other day I coughed up some blood. Doctor James said 'chronic bronchitis.' ... Gave me some medicine. ... All right for a couple of months. Then same thing happened again ... Came back here, but Doctor James was away ... His assistant, an Austrian chap ... very clever boy, too ... Said he could give me more medicine ... but he wants to give me a good overhaul ... Sounds like an X-ray ..." Time dragged by. The bells rang shrilly, and the procession of patients dwindled. Then Sally's turn came.

She smiled nervously. "I—I hope it's nothing serious, Ieuan." "Don't be silly," he tried to joke. "A bottle of medicine and you'll be right as rain in no time." He waited anxiously. The woman with the baby in the shawl was engaged in bitter argument with the dispenser.

"You must bring your own bottle," the dispenser reprimanded. "The notice says so, plainly." The woman was almost in tears. "But I didn't know, Miss Barratt," she pleaded. "I—I'll pay you for it." "I'm sorry ... but rules are rules," the dispenser insisted. "Besides, I have no bottles to spare.

You'd better come back tomorrow morning." With that, she slammed the door, and the woman tearfully made her way out from the surgery.

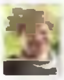
[illegible]dly. How dare they treat patients in this manner, he thought. Like so many cattle. Poor patients in search of comfort, solace, and ease from pain. Did they deserve anger and derision? To be treated with contempt? "Bring your own Bottle" ... "No Smoking" ... "Please refrain from Talking Loudly." Why not more notices? "Please do not Laugh". "Please do not Smile" ... "Please do not Cough".

"Please do not BREATHE." What kind of a place was this so-called sanctuary for the sick in mind and body? A cold, bare room where the living dead sat and waited as they would wait for the resurrection morn, their life record cards in their hands. And the dispenser in her trim white smock. Po-cor-eyed, ungraceful of manner and carriage. Her white smock, symbol of authority. "Give a man a uniform, and he ceases to be a man."

> Farewell Innocence by William Glynne-Jones is published by Parthian, Library of Wales, at £8.99 www.parthianbooks.com

CONTINUES TOMORROW

Bringing our history to life for a new generation



Eirwen Hopkins of Swansea University has led a troupe of young people from Port Talbot in a creative journey in history, film making and imagination, as part of a National Lottery-funded project using Hollywood star Richard Burton's diaries to uncover the social history of the town and its inhabitants. The fruits of their work will be premiered tonight. Here Eirwen herself considers the lessons she has learned along the way...

I HAVE to admit that I struggled with history at school.

Remembering all those dates and battles, and generals, kings and queens who seemed to bear no relation to my life turned me off the notion of remembering our past for a good few years.

However, after I started working with children through drama, I realised what a potent and exciting field history can be.

It is so obviously about people – their problems, joys, sorrows, choices, successes and tragedies.

In Wales our history is all around us; in the empty factory buildings, the local castle ruins, the remains of fish traps on the sea shore, the slag heaps, and the oddly-shaped humps of earth on hilltops.

It is in our languages, our memories, in treasured objects in our attics, and in the stories we hear from our parents and grandparents. It runs through our lives like golden thread, binding us together as families, as communities, and as a nation with a shared past.

When my colleagues and I were invited by the Richard Burton Archives in Swansea University to use the Burton diaries, which he began aged 11 – and now lodged there by his widow Sally who wished them to be used to inspire young people – I still felt doubtful.

How could these private documents throw light on young people's lives and environments, especially at a time of industrial crisis in Port Talbot, to the extent that they could feel that more was possible for them than they had dared to expect of life?

I couldn't have been more wrong.

Once we got started, and with the exceptional drama skills of my colleague, Iona Towler Evans, it took a very short time for the young people to empathise intensely with Richard Burton, with his widow, and with the needs of the community.

We began by visiting Pontrhydyfen, where he was born and then continued to visit throughout his life; and Taibach, where he grew up, went to school, and was trained on the hillside above the town by his teacher, mentor, and adopted father Philip Burton.

After seeing the original diaries during a visit to the archives, along with a host of objects that Burton used, we met his niece, Sian Owen.

She gave us massive insights into his character and to the life of his family at the time, as well as the local people who remembered him or his relatives, and who explained about the mining and steel culture of the area.

The young people began saying things such as: "We are walking on the stones he may have walked on. It's mind-blowing"... "Richard Burton was more than he appeared. We got beneath the surface and found the man behind the mask"... "I have learned more about the place I live, its past, the present and a future we have the potential to create."

This kind of response was inspirational for us as tutors and adults.

We saw theatre pieces – including a one-man piece called Burton by the Swansea actor Rhodri Miles, and a play set in the 1930s about a person trying to find their true role in life through writing a diary.

This was on a mind-changing visit to Oxford, where Burton had spent time studying in Exeter College: the contrast with Taibach was unavoidable, as was the dignity and heritage of the city and the university.

We also got to speak to the Port Talbot-raised actor Michael Sheen, who offered us some amazing insights into the power and problems of fame. Having decided to make a film about Burton's early life, the young people considered living conditions, house interiors, clothes and life in a colliery.

They visited the Big Pit and St Fagans Folk Museum to learn more so that they could design costumes for the film and find authentic ways of interpreting Burton's childhood.

Financial support from the National Lottery via the Heritage Lottery Fund enabled all this along with some inspirational tuition in drama, film-making, art and music – and of course the young people's own drive to realise their ambition of making a film.

Partner organisations Swansea University, including the Taliesin Theatre, Neath Port Talbot College Group and the Port Talbot Library Services, all pitched in to support the young people, who achieved more – much more – than they had expected.

If I didn't know it before, I have now fully realised that history is so much more than names and dates; if we use research, along with our imagination, it opens our minds to individuals' joys and challenges, and to those of communities.

Perhaps most important of all it allows us to look inward and to understand our own depths and potential.

As one of our students remarked: "I thought I wouldn't make it because I am a boy from the valleys – now I know I can."

> [illegible] Richard Burton

> Some of the young people involved in the project

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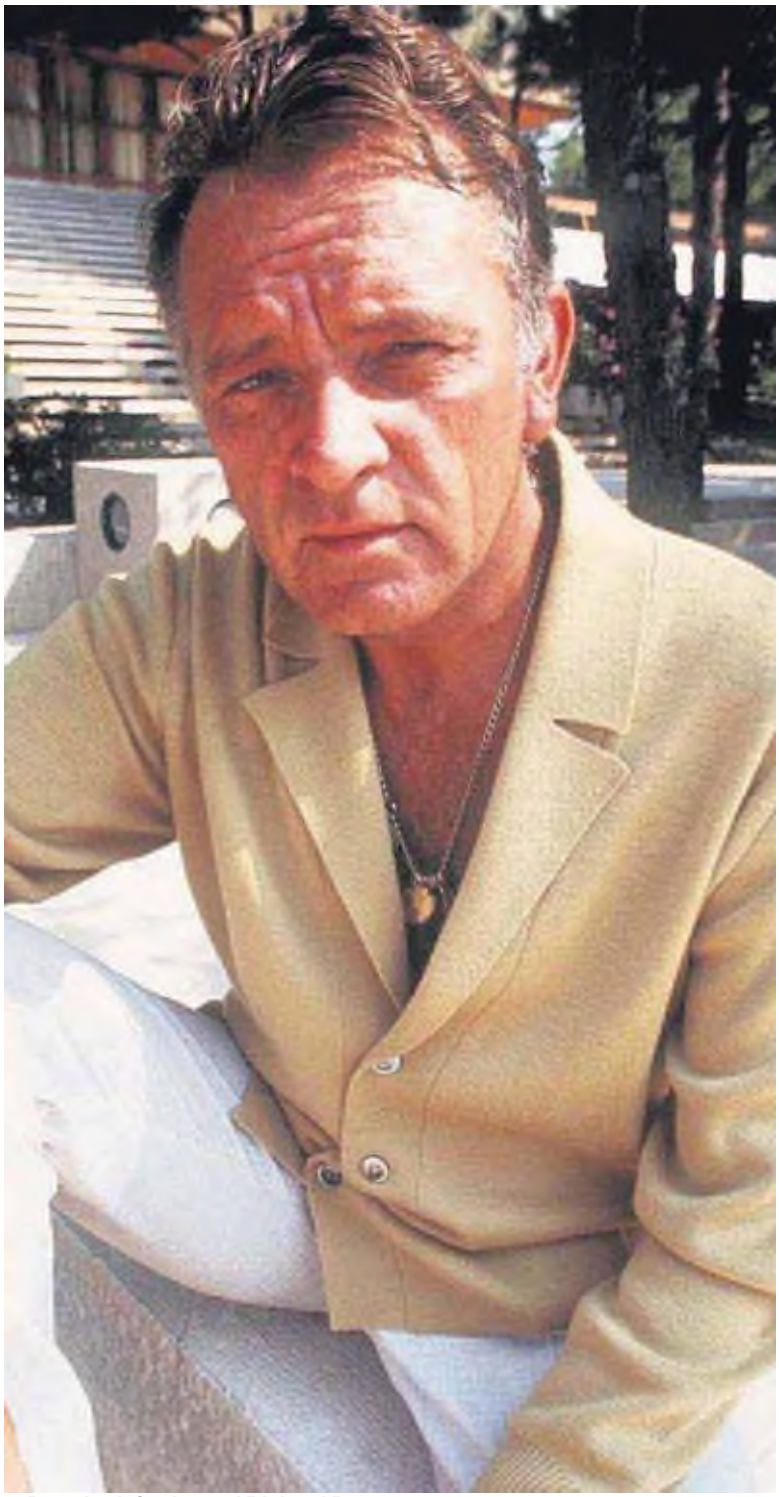

Pontrhydyfen legend Richard Burton

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Burton@14 - Exploring Identity and Community

Richard Burton, the international star of stage and screen, was born and grew up in the Port Talbot area. What was his experience of childhood and youth, and how different were the issues he faced from those young people growing up there today? These were the questions put to a group of young people from Neath Port Talbot by a Heritage Lottery funded project inspired by the diaries of the actor, held at Swansea University.

Before this project, the Richard Burton Archives have used various approaches to promote the collection and to enable access including:

- Cataloguing, including the dissemination of catalogues, such as via the Archives Hub;
- Publication of the diaries 'The Richard Burton Diaries', edited by Chris Williams;
- Replica made of the first diary written by the teenage Richard Burton (then Richard Jenkins).

Although these measures have been successful in raising the profile of the collection it was always hoped that other ways could be developed to reach out to the local community and open up ways in which the collection is used.

Elisabeth Bennett, then University Archivist, contacted Eirwen Hopkins, head of Choice Project, an organisation that works through drama and the other arts to enable young people to deepen their engagement with education and training, based in the Geography Department at Swansea University, about the possibility of doing something creative based on the replica diary. Conversations took place looking at how it could be used to spark discussions about how people cope

Burton@14 visit to the Richard Burton Archives, 2017

Exploring Richard Burton's book bag during Burton@14 visit to the Richard Burton Archives, 2017

with change and decision making, as well as giving individuals a sense of place and connection to their locality and beyond. From these early discussions, the Burton@14 project was born.

Working with Elisabeth and others, Eirwen brought together a group of collaborative partners from the region: Neath Port Talbot College, Neath Port Talbot Library Services, and the Richard Burton Archives, the Choice Project and Taliesin Arts Centre at Swansea University. Neath Port Talbot is one of the Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) priority areas in Wales and Eirwen led the HLF application that set out to enable young people in Port Talbot to compare their experiences to that of possibly one of the most famous men to come out of their home town, Richard Burton. Through researching the diaries and other resources, and using in-the-moment drama to explore the issues that arose, the students uncovered the social history of the town and its inhabitants from the 1930s to the present day, and discovered how they felt about Burton, their, and his, environment, and themselves.

A wide range of activities were organised for the groups including visiting places that were important to the young Burton, such as Oxford University, watching films, and training in video recording, digital skills and oral history. The project culminated in a red carpet gala event in June 2017 which included the launch of two films ('Richard Burton: The Boy from Pontrhydyfen' - by Foundation Studies students, and 'Rich History: Making of 'The Boy from Pontrhydyfen' - by a volunteer, Julian James), and 'The Child Who Had a Dream', a new game for primary schools created by the Health & Social Care Group. The film included an interview by one of the young people of Michael Sheen, another of Port Talbot's famous faces, who also sent a video message of good wishes for the evening.

The retention rate into further education for the young people who took part was much higher than is usual for such students in the college. The project was well received by the press, HLF Wales and the local Member of Parliament. Richard Bellamy, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Wales, expressed that, "For today's local young people, seeing life in the town through the eyes of an adolescent Burton in the 1930s and 40s will prove an interesting journey. It is a unique opportunity to view a community's historic development but to do so through the eyes of a global icon." Stephen Kinnock, MP for Aberavon, added: "Connecting young people with the history of their local area is important and taking advantage of as rich a local resource as the Richard Burton Archives should provide a wealth of material with which Port Talbot can be better understood, from such a unique viewpoint."

The Archives often run academic sessions for university students, but have been delighted that through this project we have been able to welcome young people of a different age and background. It was interesting to see how these students responded to certain items and ideas, and questioned the documents (both the content and the physical nature of the material). Most rewarding was to see them use the collection as a springboard to develop understanding of their home town, Richard Burton, and themselves, and create such impressive and moving outputs.

Dr Katrina Legg
Richard Burton Archives, Swansea University
Eirwen Hopkins
Choice Project / Burton@14, Swansea University

All images courtesy of Burton@14, Swansea University