The adventures of an inkling: unfolding the enfolded, unblocking the creative block and experiencing flow

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THE ADVENTURES OF AN INKLING

Unfolding the enfolded, unblocking the creative block and experiencing flow

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Southern Cross University

March, 2009
I certify that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University’s rules, requirements, procedures and policy relating to my higher degree research award and to my thesis. I certify that I have complied with the rules, requirements, procedures and policy of the University (as they may be from time to time).

Melanie McDonald

1 March 2009
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with making sense of the experiences of adult art students enrolled in an accredited fine arts course at a vocational education and training organisation in Australia. The three main purposes of the study are to: (i) explore the efficacy of using philosophical concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality to understand emancipation from a specific point of view, namely the removal of inhibitions on the enjoyment and fulfilment of art students whilst learning to draw; (ii) consider the ontological structures at play whilst learning to make art, and also during flow experience; and (iii) examine the possibility of using various philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality to inform decisions about data collection and interpretation in an empirical study.

Case study, grounded-theory and action research approaches were combined, together with non-participant observation, in-depth interviews and group discussions for collecting data, and a two-way interrogation of theoretical concepts and empirical data for the analysis.

The research indicated empirical support for the philosophy of critical realism and meta-Reality, whilst at the same time identifying and reconciling potential inconsistencies. In particular, it is argued that the realist concepts of: (i) a stratified model of reality, (ii) intentional human agency, (iii) the stratified nature of the self, (iv) the ontological status of absence, (v) the theory of co-presence, and (vi) the model of unfolding the enfolded prove valuable in developing a theory for ‘unblocking the creative block’. Whilst the study draws extensively on Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience to complement Roy Bhaskar’s account of the ground state and of the nature of free-flowing activity, flow theory also proved limited in explaining some of the art students’ comments about their enjoyable experiences whilst learning to make art. Roy Bhaskar’s stratified analysis of the self was useful in this respect. The findings suggest that the philosophy of critical realism and meta-Reality provide new ways of understanding the process of learning in general, and further, these theories have implications for teaching and learning in the field of art education.
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Chapter One – Introduction

§1  Area and topic

Performance often waxes and wanes systematically. Artists or athletes may enter the Zone one day, only to be expelled like Adam and Eve the next.

(Flaherty, 2004 p.125)

At its most general level, this thesis is concerned with the experience of learning to make art within a formal art school environment. In a more particular way, it is concerned with adult art students’ experience of being in ‘the Zone’ or experiencing ‘flow’ whilst learning to draw. Alice Flaherty’s statement highlights the fluctuating nature of these types of experiences; and alludes to an underlying system beneath such fluctuations. This thesis is concerned with exploring what can be known about such experiences, their fluctuations and the possible structures or systems underpinning them. It also explores some considerations associated with developing these knowledge claims.

This thesis is also concerned with the related, but slightly different topic of human self-fulfilment and flourishing. Whilst the Christian story of creation is not a theme of the thesis, Flaherty’s reference to Adam and Eve is an indication of the importance of this particular topic within the study. Many world religions and metaphysical thought systems include the idea that humans are born with the capacity to be in life in a way that is consistent with their true essential nature. The particulars of how this essential nature is either occluded or alienated from individuals can vary between religions and philosophies. However it happens, when this capacity for inconsistency is actualised, it might translate as a sense of separation from one’s true essential self. It might also translate into a related experience of being expelled from ‘the Zone’.

In the unfolding discussion on the pages that follow, these two topics, including their overlapping areas and many intricacies, are contemplated and considered from a critical realist perspective: these topics of interest are situated within an objective reality that can become known to the human mind.

§2  Background to the study

The background for this study is grounded in my own experience as an art student in various educational environments. My early experiences of art education were in primary and
C1 – INTRODUCTION

secondary school. When I was doing art, I was focused, solving problems, and making decisions. I was also learning the nuances of a visual language to express myself, and felt I was able to communicate in this visual language efficiently. It was a bonus if the end product looked good, as it was really just the process of ‘doing art’ that I enjoyed.

As an adult, I have sought out opportunities to continue to ‘do art’. In my search I have found that art school makes it much easier. The art school, whether it is in a private college, at university, at a vocational education and training organisation, or in a community education centre, provides a situation with varying degrees of direction, inspiration, time and space.

I had a particularly inspiring art teacher for Interdisciplinary Drawing and Painting which were part of a Diploma of Fine Arts degree. While the learning environment that he provided was primarily self-directed (complemented by teacher intervention), he sometimes set challenges with very tight boundaries. Ostensibly there was no difference between who I was before I met this teacher, and who I was after. However, his intuitive and seemingly unconventional approach to art and teaching gently woke my imagination from its sleep.

At last! My emerging artist was wide-awake in a dreamy landscape.

For many years I have been aware of the meditative nature of my own artistic practice. I have been aware of a tendency to ‘lose myself’ when I ‘do art’, not all the time, but often enough to warrant espousing a relationship between ‘doing art’ and an altered state of consciousness. This ‘altered state’, usually experienced as something that happens to me, is difficult to evoke and difficult to sustain. Finding a teacher, a mentor, and I would venture so far as to suggest, a ‘mystic’, who speaks the same language, who values the creative process, sees the world in a very similar way, and is able to express all of this in their role as a ‘teacher’ has allowed me to slip in and out of this ‘altered state’ with relative ease. I will never be the same again. Liken it if you will to Plato’s ‘allegory of the cave’,¹ [this teacher] has helped me to liberate myself from my bondage, and has inspired me to do the same for others. THIS is the purpose of this inquiry.²

The above sketch of the creative process and my inspirational art teacher’s contribution to my learning, which was written in the first few months of my Ph.D. candidature, is necessarily relative to my own experience of ‘doing visual art’. It is also informed by my attitudes and beliefs regarding art. Writers, recording artists, dancers, actors and athletes may contribute other perspectives. Given the relative nature of experience, there is likely to be considerable

¹ In his dialogue The Republic, Plato likened the ordinary person to a man [sic] sitting in a cave looking at a wall on which he sees nothing but the shadows of the real things that are behind his back, and likened the philosopher to a person who has left the cave and seen the real world. Plato suggests that the philosopher’s responsibility is to return to the cave of darkness and share their knowledge to liberate everyone else from their bondage (Chipman, 1998; Plotkin, 1994 pp. 13-14; Trigg, 1988 pp. 10-11). ² Research journal: 15 March 2005.
difference between each individual’s account of the creative process, and the role that a teacher can play.

Despite the seemingly elusive nature of social reality, and the particular corner of social reality that my inspirational art teacher, and his contribution to art education, reside, preliminary pilot studies afforded the opportunity for a few inklings to develop. These formed the official beginning of the present study. To begin with, my inspirational art teacher’s teaching practice appeared to be grounded in his own experience with painting and drawing. He is very experienced with oil paint. He knows its possibilities, and is able to draw on this when he teaches. He models a sensitivity to and awareness of life and poses the challenge of translating this awareness into paint. He suggests ways of applying paint. He models ways of thinking about the challenge of painting. Inherent in my inspirational art teacher’s art practice and pedagogical approaches are his and his students’ attitudes and beliefs regarding art, particularly painting and drawing. This research was initially concerned with understanding these attitudes and beliefs, whether they could change, and if so, how? However, what actually took place was quite different indeed.

§3 Context of the study

The development of the ideas that have informed this study commenced in an informal way in late 2004, and began to be formalised in January 2005. The final thesis was completed in February 2009. Data collection, in the form of interviews, group discussions and classroom observations, took place in a fine arts course within the Australian vocational education and training (VET) sector for a period of five months from February through to June 2006.

In 2006, 44,400 students were enrolled in creative arts courses at various VET organisations across Australia (Australian Government, 2007). Of these students, 1,591 were enrolled in the Arts and Media Faculty at the NSW North Coast Institute of Technical and Further Education (TAFE NSW, 2006 p.4). The process of collecting data for this study involved participation by ten of those students who were enrolled in a Certificate III in Fine Arts. Data analysis was narrowed to five students from the initial sample of ten.

3 I have recorded several conversational interviews with my inspirational art teacher. These were later transcribed. I also attended a 3-day oil painting workshop at Byron Bay Art Workshops tutored by my inspirational art teacher in May 2005. Parts of the workshop were video recorded. This enabled subsequent transcription and informal analysis. These played an integral role in ‘unpacking’ my inspirational art teacher’s pedagogical approaches enabling the initial research questions for this thesis to be determined.

4 Howard Gardner suggests, ‘superior art education is most likely to emerge as a result of accumulated knowledge about what works and what does not work under a variety of settings’ (Gardner, 1990 p. 48).

5 See C3 (chapter three), §§5-§5.2 (section 5 to section 5.2).

6 The discussion in C2 §4 provides background information that relates to the field of art education in general and to the particular level of course that these students were enrolled in.
By focusing on a small number of students to collect and analyse data for my study allowed me to probe deeply into the meanings that these students gave to the experiences they had whilst learning how to draw. This study does not intend to claim that the insights gained from this small sample can be generalised unproblematically to the remaining 1,581 students. Nevertheless, the findings and discussion associated with data analysis have much to contribute towards a general understanding of what it means to experience enjoyment and satisfaction whilst learning how to draw. Further to this, participation in the data collection activities associated with the study appeared to contribute to the quality of the ten participating students’ experience of being at art school.

Recently there have been developments in the accreditation of fine art courses within the VET sector. As a result of these developments, as of June 2009, there will be no accredited Fine Art qualifications below the level of Certificate IV. This means that the Certificate III in Fine Arts course, (that the students who were involved in data collection for this study were enrolled in), will not be continued. Briefly, the significance of this change appears to lie in the new emphasis on students being expected to produce drawings to represent and communicate a pre-determined concept. This is significant because at the time of data collection, the art school environment that was involved in this study appeared to prioritise the teaching of practical skills, rather than promoting the development of the conceptual component of artworks. With the newly imposed changes, it appears that teaching of practical skills might become secondary to the conceptual development of artworks. It is anticipated that such a move might also serve to constrain the possibility for art students to fulfil their personal sense of purpose in their art-making practice. The significance of these changes is discussed further in C2 §4.1 and §4.2.1.1.

§4 Statement of the problem

Existing research suggests that there are dominant social norms and expectations present in society that serve to constrain people from pursuing art-related study and careers (Pitt, 2008). Within the Australian context, this might be due to a generally low-level of regard for the arts by Australian society (Timms, 2004 p.43), or possibly because most visual artists in Australia cannot make a living from their profession (Bott, 2003; Throsby & Hollister, 2003). However, even if aspiring artists manage to resist these dominant norms and expectations, they might also find that their efforts at fulfilling their personal sense of purpose in their art-making practice are further constrained by forces within the art school environment (John-Steiner, 1997 p.53; Timms, 2004 pp.30-33). These forces might also serve to mislead inexperienced art students from fulfilling their personal sense of purpose in their art-making practice, and might therefore need resisting as well.
Given this state of affairs, at its most general level, this thesis is concerned with accurately describing and/or explaining the reality of emancipation of adult art students within a formal art school learning environment. This thesis is also concerned with demonstrating how Roy Bhaskar’s philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality could be applied to the particular field of adult visual art education. For Bhaskar, the project of emancipation involves shedding the unnecessary and unwanted structures and determinations that prevent human beings from realising their true potential (Bhaskar, 2002a p.219). This thesis is therefore concerned with making sense of the emancipation of art students from those things that inhibited or constrained their experience of enjoyment, satisfaction and fulfilment whilst learning to draw. Whilst acknowledging that there might be external determinations and structures that block and constrain the free development and flourishing of art students in general, this study is particularly interested in looking at those constraints that also exist, internalised, within particular art students.

One specific ‘problem’ that this thesis sought to investigate involved determining whether there might be a relationship between (i) the process involved in realising one’s true potential and/or fulfilling one’s personal sense of purpose and (ii) an experience of ‘flow’ or enjoyment whilst learning to draw.

At a secondary level, there were two further, ‘methodological’ problems that this thesis also sought to address:

- How might this specific investigation proceed from the perspective of critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality?
- What might emancipation itself look like in a research project about the experience of art students as they grapple with being at art school? In particular, what are the implications for data collection of emancipation from the perspective of critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality?

§5 Purpose of the study

Given the diverse range of ‘problems’ underpinning this thesis, the purpose of the study changed form throughout its four-year duration.7

Prior to data collection it was anticipated that the purpose of the study might be (i) to investigate the attitudes and beliefs of individual students, identifying those which constrain or enable participation in the artistic creative process. However, as the data analysis progressed, the purpose of this study took on a different form. The purpose of the study then became (ii) to explore the efficacy of using philosophical concepts from critical realism and

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7 These changes are outlined in C3 §5–§5.2.
the philosophy of meta-Reality to understand emancipation from a specific point of view: the removal of inhibitions on the enjoyment of flow experience by art students.\(^8\) I was particularly interested in making propositions about things that might have been constraining or enabling flow experience for each of the student-participants involved in the study. It was anticipated that the findings from my research might be able to inspire other aspiring artists and/or art students to identify the things that may be inhibiting their own creative expression and empower them to eliminate these constraints, thereby unlocking their own creative potential.

During the data analysis process (see C6), I began to notice that whilst Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience was able to account for some of the students comments about their enjoyable experiences whilst learning to make art, there were other comments that flow theory could not account for. Having identified the inadequacy of flow theory for making sense of some of the students’ comments about their enjoyable experiences whilst making art, an additional purpose of the study then became (iii) to consider the ontological structures that might be in play whilst learning to make art, and also during flow experience.\(^9\) In this way, the subjective experiences of each of the art students involved in this study has enabled me to develop and refine a theory about the relationship between Bhaskar’s theory of the stratified self and Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience.\(^10\) As the data collected could be interpreted using various philosophical concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality,\(^11\) this study lends some empirical support, albeit not direct, to both of these philosophies.

Another purpose of this study was (iv) to examine the possibility of using various philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality to inform decisions about data collection and interpretation in an empirical study. The concepts relate to:

Critical realism:
- the transitive and intransitive dimensions of science
- referential detachment
- the epistemic fallacy
- the stratified model of reality
- the ontological primacy of absence
- truth tetrapolity and intentional human agency
- four planar social being

\(^8\) See C4, C5, C6.
\(^9\) See C6, C7.
\(^10\) These are first discussed in C4, and extended in C7.
The philosophy of meta-Reality:
- non-duality
- transcendental identification
- transcendental agency
- co-presence and the theory of fine structure
- unfolding the enfolded
- the stratified nature of the self
- human emancipation
- intentional human agency

These concepts are first introduced in the literature review (C2), where they are compared and contrasted with each other, and also discussed with reference to existing literature on related topics. In the methods for exploration chapter (C3), these concepts are drawn upon to justify and explain the reasons why the empirical component of the study progressed as it did. Thus, it can be understood that in addition to the discussion chapters (C4, C5, C6 and C7), both the literature review (C2) and methods for exploration chapter (C3) provide a contribution to the advancement of knowledge in many respects.¹²

§6 Significance of the study

The literature review suggests that the application of concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality to an empirical study with emancipatory intent within the particular field of visual art education has not been done before, and thus the present thesis can be seen as filling a gap in the existing knowledge base. Further to this, despite the extensive field of literature relating to art education, a coherent compendium of human self-fulfilment and flourishing within the context of art education is still lacking. This is arguably due to a lack of an ontological framework, as there is a growing trend within visual art institutions, visual art education, and research concerning art education, to deny the existence of a mind-independent reality (Ashton, 1999a; Bamford, 2002; Dissanayake, 1995; Timms, 2004). Such irrealist positions matter because they problematise attempts at art education reform, which would have to be understood as implicitly doomed to failure when there is uncertainty regarding the very existence of the things that need to be changed. In response to this state of affairs, this thesis considers the alternative views of reality and knowledge from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality within the context of adult art education. It is an attempt to promote solidarity and strength in the way that art education research can contribute to human emancipation.
§7 Thesis overview

This introductory chapter provides insight into the thoughts and issues that led me to formally attempt to make sense of the emancipation of fine art students from those things that inhibit or constrain their experience of enjoyment, satisfaction and fulfilment whilst learning to draw.

Chapter Two presents a review of a diverse range of literature pertaining to this topic. It begins by reviewing literature about critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality in order to outline the assumptions about reality and knowledge that underpin this study. This section of the chapter also explicates some of the possible relationships between various concepts from both critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality. The significance of these concepts for the discipline of education, and in particular, the field of adult art education are then identified. The literature pertaining to Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience is discussed and compared with various concepts from the philosophy of meta-Reality.

Chapter Three draws upon the various concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality that were first introduced in Chapter Two in order to justify the processes that were involved in collecting, analysing and interpreting the empirical data. In this way, Chapter Three also provides concrete examples of how theoretical concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality can directly inform the practical task of ‘doing’ educational research.

Chapters 4 to 7 provide interpretations of the empirical data by drawing on a diverse range of literature, some of which was previously reviewed in Chapter Two.

Chapter Four explores the possibility of using concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality to help to analyse interview and group discussion data and classroom observations in order to promote an understanding of human emancipation within the context of learning to draw. The relationship between Bhaskar’s theory of the stratified self and Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience that is first considered in Chapter Two is drawn upon to provide an interpretation of the art students’ comments. Chapter Four offers some suggestions for ways in which adult art students might come to enjoy a more emancipated way of practising art making.

The topic of Chapter Five centres on the dialectical relationship between human agency and social structures that might contribute towards an art student’s enjoyment of flow experience whilst learning to draw. Three different features of intentional human agency from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality, which were first introduced in Chapter Two, are drawn upon in Chapter Five to provide an interpretation of the art students’ comments. The

12 This is outlined further in the ‘thesis overview’ (§7).
interplay of structure and agency during flow experience are considered with reference to Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of *habitus* to aid further interpretation of the empirical data. Chapter Five also provides an overview of the various elements in play when an adult art student experiences flow whilst learning to draw.

In Chapter Six, the model of unfolding the enfolded, which is based on the logic of Bhaskar’s theory of fine structure and co-presence, is outlined. This is followed by a discussion about the ontological structures involved in unfolding the enfolded. The role which social interactions play in the model of unfolding the enfolded, and the implications of this for art students to experience flow whilst making art are also explored. A case study from the empirical data highlights the particular phases of transition during the process of unfolding the enfolded which might not be conducive to experiencing flow whilst learning to draw. Chapter Six also provides an overview of the educational implications of the theory of fine structure and co-presence, and the model of unfolding the enfolded for experiencing flow whilst making art.

In Chapter Seven some of the limitations for using Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory to make sense of the art students’ comments about their enjoyable experiences whilst learning to draw are outlined. Chapter Seven extends the discussion of Bhaskar’s concepts relating to the stratified self in order to identify the ontological structures that might enable an experience of flow to occur, and to also consider the nature of this ontological terrain on the fringe of flow experience. A revised and more complete account of the possible relationship between flow experience and the consciousness and intentionality of the stratified self is presented. The revised model is then used to inform the interpretation of empirical interview data.

Chapter Eight provides a summary and conclusion of the whole thesis. It also identifies the areas of originality and significance of the thesis and suggests directions and issues for future research.
Chapter Two – Literature review

§1 Overview of chapter two

This chapter discusses the various assumptions about the nature of reality and knowledge that underpin this study, including the following concepts from the philosophy of critical realism:

- the transitive and intransitive dimensions of science;
- referential detachment;
- the epistemic fallacy;
- the stratified model of reality;
- the ontological primacy of absence;
- truth tetrapolity and intentional human agency; and
- four-planar social being.

Section two of this chapter also outlines the following concepts from the philosophy of meta-Reality:

- non-duality;
- transcendental identification (and referential detachment);
- transcendental agency;
- co-presence and the theory of fine structure;
- unfolding the enfolded;
- the stratified nature of the self;
- human emancipation; and
- intentional human agency.

The implications of these particular concepts are then considered within the context of a research project concerned with understanding the emancipation of fine art students from the content of their consciousness that is incongruent with flow experience.

Section three provides an outline of the conceptual framework, including a graphic representation of the overlapping relationship between the main concepts that have informed this study. This provides the conceptual basis for the remaining sections of the literature review.
In section four, the literature pertaining to art education within the context of a formal art school environment and the process of learning to make art is discussed.

In section five, the main elements of Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience are discussed, drawing upon the work of Dewey, Bhaskar, and Csikszentmihalyi’s previous work with Getzels.

Having considered the existing literature pertaining to these topics, section six re-states and provides a rationale for the problem being investigated.

§2 Underpinning assumptions

The long journey we are embarking upon arises out of an awareness on our part that, at every point in our research – in our observing, our interpreting, our reporting, and everything else we do as researchers – we inject a host of assumptions. These are assumptions about human knowledge and assumptions about realities [sic] encountered in our human world. Such assumptions shape for us the meaning of research questions, the purposiveness of research methodology, and the interpretability of research findings. Without unpacking these assumptions and clarifying them, no one (including ourselves!) can really divine what our research has been or what it is now saying.

(Crotty, 1998 p.17)

In this section, the particular assumptions about reality and knowledge that underpin the knowledge claims made in this thesis are outlined.

The research questions, and my justification of their importance and my methods for answering them, are clearly underpinned by certain assumptions about reality and knowledge. The interpretations that I make from the data that were collected are also underpinned by certain assumptions about reality and knowledge. It is important to make these assumptions explicit, not only to ensure my own awareness of what they are, but also so that readers can know the general terrain of the theoretical constructs pertaining to reality and knowledge that underpin the research design.

§2.1 Critical realism

Critical realism is a philosophy of science based on three premises of reality and knowledge: ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgmental rationalism. Ontological realism accepts the existence of a reality that does not depend on our subjective interpretations of it.
Epistemological relativism accepts that beliefs about the world are socially produced, therefore knowledge can be seen to be transient, relative, pluralistic, diverse and indeed fallible (Bhaskar, 2002a p.12). Judgmental rationalism accepts that since the natural and social world exist independent of our thinking, there can be rational grounds for preferring one theory over another (Porpora, 2005 p.150; Shipway, 2002 p.92).

§2.1.1 Transitive and intransitive dimensions of science

Critical realism makes a distinction between two different sides of ‘knowledge’ or dimensions of science, the transitive and the intransitive (Bhaskar, 1978, 1998b; 2008b pp.16-17; Shipway, 2002 p.89). The intransitive dimension is the realm of the actual objects of science, where things that scientific theories refer to reside. In this realm, objects and events exist independently of our understanding of them. However, since knowledge is seen to be a social product (Bhaskar, 1978; 2008b p.16), the transitive dimension of science is said to be the realm where ‘intersubjective agreement and debate takes place, and where scientific theories themselves reside’ (Shipway, 2002 p.89).

Scientific knowledge can be understood as referring to intransitive objects, which exist and act independently of it, as well as having a transitive dimension that determines the conditions through which the intransitive dimension is accessed and knowledge is developed (Bhaskar, 2008b pp.61-62). Thus, the intransitive dimension can be understood to be ‘what is’, whereas the transitive dimension may be understood to be the way that one comes to interact with, in order to understand, ‘what is’. Further, it is also possible to switch perspective from the transitive dimension to the intransitive dimension (and vice versa) at any moment. Mervyn Hartwig demonstrates: ‘As I type this sentence, I am engaging in a transitive process of production of a dictionary, but at any given moment I can referentially detach what I have written, regarding it in its (existential) intransitivity’ (Hartwig, 2007 p.265). This example can also be applied to an art student’s experience whilst making art.

An art student could engage in a transitive process of producing a drawing, but at any given moment could referentially detach what they have drawn, and regard its existential intransitivity. Further, an art student’s beliefs about art, as well as their prior experiences, constitute an example of the socially produced knowledge base that exist in the transitive dimension. An art student’s beliefs about art can also be seen to influence the transitive process of producing a drawing; however, if an art student referentially detaches their beliefs, the perspective shifts from the transitive to the intransitive dimension. The ability to make the
distinction and switch between these two different sides of knowledge is conferred by the emergent power of referential detachment.\textsuperscript{13}

An understanding of the distinction between the intransitive and transitive dimension was quite significant for the present study because during data collection the object of knowledge was the art student’s attitudes and beliefs about art.\textsuperscript{14} Finding out about this required that I capitalise on the capacity for students to experience their art-making practice in the transitive dimension and to be conscious of their experience, then switch their perspective of their experience of making art to the intransitive dimension, by referentially detaching from it and talking about it (once again using the medium of the transitive dimension). The distinction between the intransitive and transitive dimension influenced the data analysis\textsuperscript{15} part of the study in the following way. In the moment of an authentic, lived experience, the process of making art can be seen to exist in the transitive dimension of science. However, if an individual stops to think about their experience, the perspective changes, and the individual referentially detaches from it. In this way, an experience of flow whilst making art can be understood as also existing in the intransitive dimension of science. The consensus amongst students’ accounts of flow experience, together with existing theories about flow, meant that the purpose of this study was not to convince others that an experience like flow could occur, but rather, attempt to understand the possible reasons for flow experience.\textsuperscript{16} Bhaskar’s stratified analysis of the self has contributed much in this respect.\textsuperscript{17}

Distinguishing between the transitive and intransitive dimensions of science alerts us to philosophical problems that arise if knowledge claims conflate these dimensions. In order to avoid these problems, Bhaskar offers two acid tests for a philosophy of science:

(1) is knowledge regarded as socially produced, i.e. as having a material cause of its own kind? or is it read straight onto the natural world or out of the human mind?

\textsuperscript{13} Bhaskar defines referential detachment as ‘the ontological dislocation of referent from the act of reference’ (2008a p.130). Brad Shipway relates it to a mind-independent reality: when a thing is perceived or talked about, and exists independently of the mind of the person who perceives it, enabling another person to also perceive it, but possibly refer to it differently (Shipway, 2002 p.157). Bhaskar states that referential detachment occurs when there is consensus among scientists that a thing exists, more specifically, that they are talking about the same thing (Bhaskar, 2008a p.218). This allows the focus of research to change from trying to convince others that the thing exists, to understanding the reason for the existence of the thing. Similarly, this can be applied to art making as well. The process of making an artwork is transitive, but at any moment the agent can referentially detach it and think about it, thereby constituting it as intransitive. Referential detachment is explored further in §2.1.5 and §2.2.2.

\textsuperscript{14} At the beginning of the study it would have been more appropriate to have asked only one question, but the purpose of the study was to try and understand why students do or do not achieve flow. An insight into this required me to ask the second question.\textsuperscript{15} The process of trying to make sense of the data that was collected, the object of knowledge changed from the attitudes and beliefs about art, to the flow or non-flow character of a student’s experience whilst making art (see C3 §5).

\textsuperscript{16} See C3 §5 to §5.2.

\textsuperscript{17} See §2.2.5.
(2) are the objects of knowledge regarded as existing and acting independently of men [sic] or do they depend implicitly or explicitly upon men [sic] for their existence and/or activity?

(Bhaskar, 1978; 2008b p.62)

The problem of conflating these dimensions is referred to as the epistemic fallacy. This will be discussed in the following section.

§2.1.2  The epistemic fallacy

The epistemic fallacy first projects the external world onto a subjective phenomenal map, then the ontic fallacy\(^{18}\) projects the phenomenal entities of that subjective map back out onto the world as objective sense data, of which we have direct perceptual knowledge. So reality independent of thought is first subjectified, then the subjectified elements are objectified to explain and justify our knowledge.

(Irwin, 1997)

Bhaskar defines the epistemic fallacy as ‘the analysis or definition of statements about being in terms of statements about our knowledge (of being)’ (Bhaskar, 1993; 2008a p.397). In other words, the epistemic fallacy involves transposing ontological questions into epistemological terms (Bhaskar, 1978; 2008b p.36). The problem or mistake with this position is that it conflates two different modes or categories of being: ‘things and thoughts’ (Hartwig, 2007 p.173). Bhaskar suggests that ‘a statement of a causal law cannot […] be reduced to or analysed in terms of a statement about anyone’s knowledge of it or knowledge in general’ (Bhaskar, 1978; 2008b p.37). This is because ‘a causal law would operate even if unknown, and even if there were no-one to know it’ (Bhaskar, 1978; 2008b p.37).

\(^{18}\) The ontic fallacy will not be discussed here. Briefly put, the ontic fallacy views knowledge as a ‘direct, unmediated relation between subject and being’ (Irwin, 1997), and ‘ignores the social aspects of knowledge, and thus does not account for the fact that knowledge is socially produced by pre-existing social products’ (Shipway, 2002 pp.93-94). See entry on ‘epistemic-ontic fallacy’ in the Dictionary of Critical Realism (Hartwig, 2007 pp.173-175).
Andrew Collier has identified four forms of the epistemic fallacy:

1. the question of whether something exists gets reduced to the question of whether we can know that it exists;
2. the question of what sort of thing something is gets reduced to the question of how we know about it;
3. the question of whether A has causal/ontological primacy over B gets reduced to the question of whether knowledge of A is presupposed by knowledge of B;
4. the question of whether our way of knowing A is identical to our way of knowing B.

(Collier, 1994 pp.76-77)

Shipway (2002) extends the discussion of the epistemic fallacy further, applying it specifically to the context of educational theory and practice. Shipway suggests that by understanding the nature of the epistemic fallacy we can begin to make sense of some of the roots of some of the problems inherent in post-modern curriculum theory, namely, the reduction of real people and cultures to what can be known about them (Shipway, 2002 p.194). Further, an understanding of the epistemic fallacy also enables us to identify the inherent problems of data gained through positivistic forms of testing and evaluation as well:

The data gained through positivistic forms of testing and evaluation are treated as though they constitute all that actually goes on in schools. As a result, such positivist conceptions in education ignore vital information provided by the nuances of what takes place in the classroom […] These nuances play a pivotal role in the many pedagogical decisions made by everyday teachers. By reducing the reality of diverse backgrounds and educational needs to the backgrounds and needs of a dominant group, a priori conceptions of curriculum commit the epistemic fallacy. The dominant group’s definition of education, or what education should be, is reified and then implemented through curriculum, teacher training, and institutional (both intra, and inter-school) structures.

(Shipway, 2002 pp.199-200)

Nowadays, the epistemic fallacy most usually takes the form of the linguistic fallacy: ‘the analysis of being as our discourse about being’ (Bhaskar, 1993; 2008a pp.206, 397; Hartwig, 2007 p.174), that is, conflating the totality of our object of knowledge with what can be said about it. The linguistic form of the epistemic fallacy was important to bear in mind for this study because data collection drew extensively on what art students were able to talk about during the interviews and group discussions.19 Although this has enabled me to develop a theory about the nature of free-flowing art-making activity, the understanding that I developed from the students’ comments was necessarily constrained to those topics that the students were not only conscious of, but were also able to translate into words. However, Bhaskar also reminds us that discourse ‘must also be about something other than itself or else it cannot talk

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19 See C3 §7.
about itself at all’ (Bhaskar, 1993; 2008a p.230). Thus, the students in this study were not simply speaking from their subjective experience, but they were also speaking about something, something that was both real and meaningful. Conflating the students’ comments about their experience with the totality of reality underpinning their experience constitutes a very clear example of the linguistic-epistemic fallacy, and I wanted to avoid this. Thus, I also drew on philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality to develop a theory that could extend beyond the realm of subjective experience, and to make a proposition about the alethic\textsuperscript{20} ground that might be underpinning the types of subjective experiences that the student-participants were referring to.

In Brad Shipway’s doctoral thesis, *Implications of a critical realist perspective in education* (2002), the critical realist notion of epistemic fallacy is compared with theological critical realism’s (ThCR) insistence to ‘allow the object itself determine how it will be known’ (Shipway, 2002 p.104). According to Shipway, ‘ThCR argues against the observer defining which aspects of the object will constitute how it is known, and then subsequently claiming that these aspects constitute the whole ontology of the object’ (Shipway, 2002 p.104). The relationship that Shipway established between critical realism’s notion of avoiding the epistemic fallacy and theological critical realism’s notion of letting the object of knowledge determine how it will be known also contributed in a significant way to the research design and data collection methods of the present study.\textsuperscript{21}

§2.1.3 Stratified nature of reality

Distinguishing between the transitive and intransitive dimensions of knowledge helps us to appreciate that the real objects of scientific knowledge exist and act independently of our knowledge, our experience and the conditions which allow access to them (Bhaskar, 1998b p.19; 2008b p.56). The key point here is that it must be possible for events to occur independently of the experiences that allow their perception. To account for the fact that events can and do occur without being perceived, the ontology of critical realism is stratified (Shipway, 2002 p.109). This involves the conceptualisation of reality in terms of three distinct, yet overlapping, domains: the empirical, the actual, and the real (Bhaskar, 1978 p.13).

The domain of the empirical contains:
- our experiences of what happens in the world.

The domain of the actual contains:
- our experiences of what happens in the world, as well as

\textsuperscript{20} ‘Alethic ground’ refers to what lies behind a well-established proposition. It is also known as ‘alethic truth’. See ‘truth tetrapolity’ §2.1.5.
the events which occur in the world whether we experience them or not.

The domain of the real contains:

- our experiences of what happens in the world, as well as
- the events which occur in the world whether we experience them or not, as well as
- the mechanisms that exist in the world, independently of the events they sometimes generate (Bhaskar, 1978 p.56; Shipway, 2002 pp.109-110).

Bhaskar suggests 'the domains of the real, the actual, and the empirical are categorically distinct and ontologically irreducible; they are normally disjoint or out of phase with one another; the activity necessary to align them for epistemic purposes normally involves practical and conceptual distanciation [...] they may possess radically different properties' (Bhaskar, 2008a p.234).

What this means for data analysis is that it may be possible to identify, and distinguish between experiences, events and mechanisms. However, it also implies that empirical data will always represent an incomplete part of reality. Indeed this is one of the limitations of this particular study. Unlike other types of phenomena, it is difficult to distinguish between the content of an art student’s consciousness, that is, their experience of making art and being at art school, and the conditions which allow that same art student access to their experience.

Bhaskar’s stratified model of reality can be drawn on to make sense of many of the different aspects of reality pertaining to the topic of the present study, e.g. the stratification of intentional human agency, the stratification of the self, and the stratification of human consciousness.

According to MacLennan (2000), the distinction between these three domains of reality allows one to employ a transcendental argument, that is, to argue that events could take place whether they are observed or not. Thus, by asking the question, what must be the case in order for a student to experience flow whilst making art?, it can be argued that there must be latent dispositions to (a) make art and (b) to experience flow, which exist independently of whether they are actualised or consciously experienced. An art student’s experience of making art exists in the empirical; however, the real reasons for the particular marks they make and the developing content of their artwork might not be conscious. The actual behaviour and processes involved in making the artwork exist in the domain of the actual. The proclivity or latent disposition to experience flow whilst learning how to make art is a mechanism that exists in the domain of the real. Further, ethnological theories suggest that

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21 See C3 §3.
22 See C2 §2.1.5.
23 See C2 §2.2.5.
24 See C4 §2.
art is a behaviour that was central to human evolutionary adaptation and the aesthetic faculty is a basic psychological component of every human being (Dissanayake, 1995). Thus, the proclivity or latent disposition to make art or engage in art-making behaviours has been essential to evolutionary survival. The potential for a human being to engage in an art-making behaviour exists in the domain of the real.

§2.1.4 Absence

I am not primarily concerned with nothing or nothingness, but with real determinate non-being.

(Bhaskar, 2008a p.239)

Bhaskar’s philosophy of critical realism took its dialectical turn with the critique of ontological monovalence (Bhaskar, 2008a p.5). Ontological monovalence is the term that Bhaskar uses to refer to ‘the doctrine that being is purely positive and present’, which he refutes by ‘the transcendental deduction of the category of absence or real negation’ (Hartwig, 2007 p.497).

Three key features of Bhaskar’s account of absence are:

• it is real;
• it causes things to happen;
• it can emancipate (Bhaskar, 1994 p.135; 2008a p.238; Hartwig, 2007 p.13).

These three features will be discussed in the sections that follow.

§2.1.4.1 Absence is real

From the perspective of dialectical critical realism, absence, that is, real determinate non-being, is seen to be a real feature of life (Bhaskar, 2002a p.59; 2008a p.239). Not only is absence real, it can also be referred to (Bhaskar, 2008a p.39). Absence, or what Bhaskar also refers to as real negation, ‘may denote an absence, for example, from consciousness (e.g. the unknown, the tacit, the unconscious), and/or of an entity, property or attribute (e.g. the spaces in a text) in some determinate space-time region’ (Bhaskar, 2008a p.5).

For example, in terms of making art, an absence from conscious awareness of the intentions that are guiding one’s art-making practice is significantly different to one’s art-making practice being guided by conscious intentions. In other words, the absence of deliberate control of
one’s actions differs from deliberate control of one’s actions. In this instance, the absence of deliberate control is real, as are the differences in one’s practice.25

Another example relates to beliefs. Tacit beliefs regarding one’s art-making practice are considerably different, to espoused beliefs. It is the absence from conscious awareness together with the presence in one’s actions that defines tacit beliefs. Similarly, it is the presence of conscious awareness that defines espoused beliefs, but such a presence in consciousness does not always translate to one’s actual behaviour.

\[\text{§2.1.4.2 Absence causes things to happen}\]

Not only is absence a real feature of life, Bhaskar also argues that it has ontological priority over presence (Bhaskar, 2008a pp.39, 239). ‘Non-being is a condition of possibility of being. No non-being is a sufficient condition of impossibility of being’ (Bhaskar, 2008a p.46). In other words, there has to be an absence of a thing prior to that thing manifesting. For example, osmosis, the movement of water molecules from an area of high concentration to an area of low concentration (Jefferies, 1988 pp.137-138), occurs because of an absence.

Bhaskar refers to this aspect of absence as \textit{transformative negation}, and suggests that it relates to the transformation of some thing, property or state of affairs (Bhaskar, 2008a p.5). Bhaskar demonstrates the idea that absence is central to transformation using the example of a unique or Absolute beginning to the universe:

\hspace{2cm} not only is a total void possible, but if there was a \textit{unique} beginning to everything it could only be from nothing by an act of radical autogenesis. So that if there was an originating Absolute, nothing would be its schema or form, constituted at the moment of initiation by the spontaneous disposition to become something other than itself.

(Bhaskar, 2008a p.46)

However, Lee Martin (2008 p.6), takes issue with this particular part of Bhaskar’s argument, pointing out that although Bhaskar claims that creation out of nothing is possible, he also suggests that it comes from a potential in the form of a spontaneous disposition. Martin employs a transcendental argument to resolve this apparent conflict: \textit{What are the necessary conditions for [the universe to come out of nothing] to occur?} His answer: ‘the potential for a universe to come into being from absolute nothing must have […] [pre-existed] the coming into being of the universe’ (Martin, 2008 p.6). In other words, the potential for a spontaneous disposition for that creation to actualise must have pre-existed its actualisation. This is an important critique of the priority of absence over presence, particularly for the study of

25 This will be explored further in C7.
creativity and novelty, its definition, cause and recognition (Martin, 2008). However, in the introduction to the 2008 edition of *Dialectic*, Hartwig specifically states:

> If the question of the coming to be and ceasing to exist of any world containing presence is posed in the context of current cosmological theory, it could only be from absence to absence. This does not entail that there was ever absolutely nothing: there may be degrees and modes of absence we do not fully comprehend.

(Hartwig, 2008 p.xxviii footnote22)

In the subsequent development of Bhaskar’s ideas, particularly those pertaining to the theory of co-presence, Bhaskar considers the ‘degrees and modes of absence we do not fully comprehend’ that Hartwig refers to, suggesting that some instances of absence may contain the presence of enfolded potentials (Bhaskar, 2002e p.214). This will be explored further in §2.2.4 to §2.2.4.1.

Despite the possible uncertainty of whether absolute absence is possible, or whether absence might be better conceived of as the *presence* of a potential for something to occur, his theory of absence as transformative negation contributes much to understanding what goes on within an art school environment. He particularly states: ‘The kind of absence I am arguing for is not indeterminate absence; it is *determinate absence*, absence as experienced as lack, as need, as want. It is the absence which prompts a hungry man to search for his dinner’ (Bhaskar, 2002a p.38). In this way, absence has a compelling force, more powerful than presence itself. Thus, what is lacking in a situation is the driving force behind any action or change (Bhaskar, 2008a p.41).

This notion of absence being a compelling force helps to make sense of possible reasons why novice artists might choose to place themselves within an art school environment: the absence of skills, knowledge or self-discipline might compel them to consider studying in a formal learning environment. Further, the absence of a sense of satisfaction with the existing state of a developing art work might also compel an artist to continue the process of drawing or painting in the view that on-going participation in this process might lead to achieving such satisfaction. Similarly, the absence of a teacher’s sense of satisfaction with the particular pencil marks that their drawing student makes might compel them to provide additional guidance (with the view that such guidance might enable the student to make the types and combinations of marks that might lead to the teacher, and also the student, experiencing a sense of satisfaction).
§2.1.4.3 Absence can emancipate

Constraints upon humans can be seen as an absence of some thing (Shipway, 2002 p.142). It follows that absenting constraints upon humans can be seen as emancipation; for example, the constraint of someone being held captive in a room without a door can be conceived of as the absence of a way out. However, removing the absence of the door enables the person to leave the room; in this respect they are free. Thus, social change can therefore be seen as a process of absenting constraints (absenting the absence of some thing).

This notion of absence being central to emancipation helps to make sense of an art student’s flow experience whilst learning to make art. It is particularly relevant to Bhaskar’s notion of human emancipation within the stratified model of the self. It is also relevant to understanding Csikszentmihalyi’s (1988a p.30) theory of flow experience. This is discussed further in §5, however I mention it here to demonstrate how Bhaskar’s notion of absence relates to student emancipation.

Flow theory suggests that enjoyable experiences are enabled by a particular relationship between an individual’s perceived skill level and the perceived challenges that they negotiate. From this perspective, an experience of flow is likely to occur when the perceived challenges require skills that are just beyond an individual’s perceived skill level, so that all of their conscious awareness is utilised to negotiate the particular task at hand (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 pp.74-75). An art student might not be experiencing flow whilst engaging in a particular art-making activity because they are constrained by a lack of knowledge or skills. Absenting the lack of knowledge or skill (e.g., by providing tuition) might empower them to experience flow. Alternatively, the particular art-making activity might be too complex, and this complexity might constrain their ability to experience flow. Absenting the constraining complexity (e.g., helping the art student to simplify the task), might also enable an art student to experience flow whilst learning to draw.

§2.1.5 Truth tetrapolity and the stratification of intentional human agency

Bhaskar argues for the need for a theory of truth that takes into account the ontologically real referent as well as the socially produced character of judgements about it (Bhaskar, 2008a p.217). He suggests that such a theory is necessary because talking about truth ‘satisfies a transcendent-axiological need,’ acting as a steering mechanism for language users to find their way about the world’ (Bhaskar, 2008a p.214). He presents a theory of truth that outlines

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26 See §2.2.5 to §2.2.5.2.
27 Transcendent-axiological need = ‘the agent’s own basic human needs, i.e. any need the satisfaction of which is transcendentally necessary for agentive agency (such as the need for truth, autonomy or non-alienation)’ (Hartwig, 2007 pp.47-48).
four basic components that he views as being essential to an understanding and analysis of truth. This set of components for analysing truth is called the truth tetrapolity, consisting of:

1. (α) truth as normative-fiduciary, truth in the ‘trust me – act on it’ sense, in the communicative sub-dimension of the social cube;\(^2\)
2. (β) truth as adequating, as ‘warrantedly assertable’, as epistemological, as relative in the transitive dimension;
3. (γ) truth as referential-expressive, as bipolar ontic-epistemic dual and in this sense as absolute; and
4. (δ) truth as alethic,\(^2\) as the truth of or reason for things and phenomena, not propositions, as genuinely ontological, and in this sense as objective in the intransitive dimension.

(Bhaskar, 2008a p.217)

According to Shipway, the first aspect of truth, its normative-fiduciary aspect, ‘accounts for how it is that humans can survive in and interact with a world of which they have only a limited grasp’ (Shipway, 2002 p.155). The second aspect of truth, as adequating, accounts for the fact that ‘there is no getting around the notion of best possible grounds for acting one way rather than another’ (Norris, in Shipway, 2002 p.155). The third aspect of truth as expressive-referential underpins the first two – namely that there is an absolute truth. To make a truth claim is to claim regarding the way reality actually is. Our commitment to our beliefs are a function of what we believe reality to be like. The fourth aspect of truth relates to what lies behind a well-established proposition. This is alethic truth. Bhaskar argues: ‘to speak of the “ontic content” of a proposition is merely to indicate the ontic or referential aspect of the referential expressive duality of function which is a necessary component […] of an adequate theory of truth’ (Bhaskar, 1993; 2008a p.40).

The category of alethic truth also appears to relate to ubiquity determinism: ‘that every event has a real cause’ (Bhaskar, 2008b p.70). Bhaskar contrasts ubiquity determinism with two other forms of determinism: intelligibility and regularity determinism. Whereas intelligibility determinism asserts that every event has an intelligible cause, regularity determinism asserts that the same type of event has the same type of cause (Bhaskar, 2008b p.70). The distinction that Bhaskar makes between ubiquity determinism and intelligibility determinism relates to the potentially imperfect relationship between alethic truth and referential-expressive truth-claims: ‘ubiquity determinism is more general than intelligibility determinism.

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\(^2\) The social cube is comprised of two sub-dimensions from the four-planar social being (see §2.1.6). Combining the plane of social relations and inter-personal intra- or inter-action, ‘the social cube comprises (1) power, (2) discursive / communicative, and (3) normative / moral relations, intersecting in (4) ideology’ (Bob Jessop in Hartwig, 2007 p.421). See entry on ‘social cube’ in the Dictionary of Critical Realism (Bob Jessop in Hartwig, 2007 pp.420-422) for more information.

\(^2\) Mervyn Hartwig suggests that alethic truth is the stratified form of referential detachment (Hartwig, 2007 p.407).
because it licences no presumption that the real cause of an event will always be intelligible to man [sic] (Bhaskar, 2008b p.71).

Bhaskar’s truth tetrapolity provides a rational basis on which to suggest that there are real reasons that guide an art student’s behaviour and also for having particular types of experiences, and that these real reasons exist in the realm of *alethic* truth. Although we may never really know what these reasons are, this is not particularly important because we can still act, and have particular types of experiences, like flow for instance, (at the level of *normative-fiduciary* truth), regardless of whether we know the reason for it or not. However, given that there are real reasons for our actions and experiences (*alethic* truth), there are also real reasons why one way of making art might be better than another in order for an art student to experience flow (*adequating* truth), and we can make propositions about this (*referential-expressive* truth-claims).

Drawing upon the logic of Bhaskar’s truth tetrapolity, we can understand that in the process of making art, art students must act anyway (*normative-fiduciary* truth), regardless of whether they know the real reasons for their actions, their experiences, or how effective their actions are for creating particular types of experiences. However, one way of manipulating drawing materials in order to create marks on a two-dimensional surface may be more effective for experiencing flow whilst making art, than another way, therefore, there are rational grounds for choosing to act one way rather than another way (*adequating* truth).

Further, it is possible to make propositions about what might enable an experience of flow to occur (*referential-expressive* truth-claims). It is also possible, as stated above, to make judgements about the effectiveness of how we currently manipulate drawing materials in order to create marks on a two-dimensional surface for experiencing flow whilst making art (*adequating* truth). Underpinning all of this is the truth that underpins our art-making behaviour, including the real reasons for experiencing flow and also for making particular marks whilst engaged in a process of making art (*alethic* truth). In C7, I make *referential-expressive* truth-claims about the *alethic* truth underpinning fulfilment and satisfaction whilst learning to make art.

By combining the truth tetrapolity with Bhaskar’s notion of intentional human agency, it is possible to develop an understanding of particular truth-claims that pertain to human behaviour, as well as subjective human experience.

Bhaskar suggests that intentional human agency is stratified; this means that our actions can be motivated by instinctual, unconscious, preconscious and conscious drives (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.164-167). He also argues for the principle of the irreducibility of intentionality, suggesting that we cannot avoid reference to intentionality in the genesis of human actions (Bhaskar,
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2002e p.236). This means that every action has an intention (or reason) behind it. However, if we consider this, together with the insights from both the truth tetrapolity and ubiquity determinism, the real reason for a particular action or practice, may not be what we believe it to be at the level of our conscious awareness (Bhaskar, 1993 p.164). As Brad Shipway states:

> It is entirely possible that the agent sincerely believes he or she is acting on a particular reason, but is sincerely mistaken. Bhaskar argues that the distinction between the real, or causally efficacious reason, and the “possible reason” (the one the agent thinks is the cause) is absolutely vital to our conception of what it means to be rational and self-reflective. Any form of self-critical thinking requires the agent to acknowledge the possibility that he or she might be wrong.

(Shipway, 2002 p.118)

The truth tetrapolity can be used to differentiate between the real reason (the *alethic* truth) and the proposed reason (*referential-expressive* truth-claims) for an individual’s behaviour (Bhaskar, 1993 p.217). Clearly there is no certainty that what an agent believes or proposes to be the reason for their actions is necessarily the real reason for their actions. Nevertheless, at the level of *adequating* truth, there are real reasons why acting one way might be better than another way (Norris in Shipway, 2002 p.155). However, whether the real reason for a particular behaviour is known to the conscious mind of a human agent is not important, for at the level of *normative-fiduciary* truth, human agents must act anyway (Bhaskar, 1993 p.217).

§2.1.6 Four-planar social being

Bhaskar identifies four different aspects of human social being, which he refers to as ‘four-planar social being’ (see Figure 2.1). These four planes of social being include:

(a) material transactions with nature (physical plane);
(b) inter-personal intra- or inter-action;
(c) social relations (social plane); and
In relation to the context of art education, these four planes can be understood in the following ways:

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30 This figure is returned to again in C5.
31 This figure, and the stratified nature of the self, is discussed in further detail in §2.2.5 to §2.2.5.2.
(a) *material transactions with nature* relates to an art student’s interactions with her physical environment, including the physical classroom environment, desk, chair, easel, drawing materials and surface, and the process of manipulating drawing materials as she creates marks on the drawing surface;

(b) *inter-personal intra- or inter-action* relates to an art student’s interactions with her teachers, peers and her self;

(c) *social relations* relates to the art student’s relationship with the social structures that exist within the classroom and art school environment; and

(d) *intra-subjectivity* relates to the stratification of the art student herself.\(^{32}\)

Bhaskar suggests that we are ‘profoundly alienated at all four levels of our social being’ (Bhaskar, 2002a p.22). We are alienated from our selves, from each other, from social structures and the material world. Bhaskar suggests that de-alienation therefore depends on reunion at all four planes of social being (Bhaskar, 2000 p.57). However, the first step is to ensure that we are not alienated from our transcendentally real Self (Bhaskar, 2000 p.57; 2002c pp.56-58), for Bhaskar suggests that self-alienation is the root cause of all other ills (Bhaskar, 2002a p.22).

In C4 §4, I discuss the opportunities that making art offered for the students in this study to experience the consciousness of their true, essential self. Also in C5 §4, I go onto discuss Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* and accompanying ideas that shed light on how the physical, social and action planes of social reality might contribute to an art student’s alienation or de-alienation as well.

§2.1.7 Summary conclusion for the critical realism section

Critical realism can be seen as being an emancipatory philosophy insofar as it helps to isolate the deeper structures of relative reality (Bhaskar, 2002c p.xxiii). By situating the deep structures of relative reality, and showing how it may be transformed, critical realism can be understood as being truer of the world of relative reality than the philosophies of demi-reality.\(^{33}\) Thus, critical realism is a way forward to help the advancement of art education as it can provide more insight than other theories to make sense of the emancipation of fine art students from the content of their consciousness which is incongruent with flow experience whilst making art. Bhaskar argues, however, that ‘such a description is still grounded in duality, and the liberatory potential it affords will always be circumscribed until its deep

\(^{32}\) See §2.2.5 to §2.2.5.2.

\(^{33}\) ‘Relative reality is the world of becoming, and as such encompasses change and process, evolution and development, structured by difference, constituting difference, grounded in non-identity, differences which can be attractive or repulsive. Within relative reality is of course the world of dualism, of demi-reality, characterised and indeed dominated by hate, split, fear, divisiveness and above all alienation which the dominant irrealist philosophies merely reflect’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.xxiii).
essential, alethic, non-dual grounds, mode of constitution and deep interior are fully displayed, cognised and lived self-consciously in the experience of agents who are intelligent, creative, loving, right acting and capable of fulfilment of their intentionality’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.xxiii). Bhaskar offers the philosophy of meta-Reality in an attempt at overcoming the limitations in the emancipatory power of his previous thoughts.

In the next section, the philosophy of meta-Reality is introduced as a complementary pathway to that of critical realism, that might enable deeper understanding of the underpinning structures of reality which enable an experience of flow whilst learning to make art.

§2.2 The philosophy of meta-Reality

The philosophy of meta-Reality is an attempt at describing the fundamental nature of existence, including emancipation, in non-dual terms. Bhaskar suggests that if people can see reality from this perspective, they might come to realise that they are ‘free to fulfil their basic innermost intentionality’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.xxvi). Ensuring that this way of viewing the world is shared with other people is an important mission for the philosophy of meta-Reality, for unified existence means that one cannot truly realise freedom in one’s concretely singular being until all other beings realise their freedom too (Bhaskar, 2002c p.xxvi). As such, Bhaskar is dedicated to the project of universal self-realisation.  

In the philosophy of meta-Reality Bhaskar argues that non-duality sustains and underpins the world of duality, which inevitably proliferates, splits, ruptures and alienates. The world of duality, however, dominates and occludes the non-dual basis or ground which underpins it (Bhaskar, 2002e p.10). It is from the understanding of a sustaining and underpinning ‘fine structure’ which is co-present in all existence, that the philosophy of meta-Reality, more specifically, a philosophy of non-duality, emerges.

The philosophy of meta-Reality is quite contentious, however, with the very existence of a fine structure connecting all things, being under question (J. Morgan, 2005). One weakness which Jamie Morgan has recognised is the way that Bhaskar unproblematically assumes that an experience of non-duality presupposes a non-dual element (J. Morgan, 2005 p.139). Morgan points out that arguing for the ‘reality’ of common non-duality is not the same as arguing that non-duality can be experienced. Morgan’s point is subtle, and is clearly consistent with the logic of critical realism’s stratified model of reality, which suggests that there might be aspects of reality existing in the domains of the real and the actual that we might not experience. Thus, with the philosophy of meta-Reality, Bhaskar appears to be collapsing the distinction

34 Self-realisation, according to Bhaskar, is the realisation of the divine ingredient within him self (Bhaskar, 2002e p.262). See §2.2.5.2.
between epistemology and ontology, which were fundamental theorems of his earlier work (Bhaskar, 2002a p.3). In this way, meta-Reality can be seen to be a critique of critical realism attempting to reconcile the duality and separateness so as to develop a more accurate account of existence (Bhaskar, 2002e p.12). However, such a radical departure from the critical realist foundations have left some members of the international community of critical realists perplexed. Conflating epistemology and ontology in meta-Reality is indeed questionable from a critical realist perspective.

Bearing in mind, however, that a theory about emancipation is only as good as the emancipation it can actually explain and, potentially enable, the data analysis in this project was concerned with exploring the aspects of Bhaskar’s espoused emancipatory philosophy of meta-Reality which actually helped to explain the emancipation of art students from the contents of their consciousness that inhibited their experience of flow whilst learning to draw. In the spirit of epistemic humility, it is important to keep Morgan’s critique of Bhaskar’s argument for fine structure in mind. However, this does not pose a significant problem for the present study. As an emancipatory theory, fine structure and co-presence might still offer an explanation of ‘how learning to draw happens’ in a way that helps students to learn to draw (and experience flow whilst they are doing it). Thus, despite its apparent weakness against Morgan’s particular form of logic, these theories still have explanatory power.

§2.2.1  Non-duality

The ideas about non-duality which underpin the philosophy of meta-Reality have been evolving throughout humanity, particularly in Eastern traditions, for many years. According to Capra (1975 p.45), the most important characteristic of Eastern worldviews is an awareness of the unity and mutual interrelation of all things and events. In ordinary life, we may not be aware of the unity of all things, but rather, divide the world into separate objects and events. This division may, of course, be useful and necessary for coping with everyday life. According to Capra (1975 p.45), Eastern philosophical traditions propose that these divisions are not a fundamental feature of reality, but rather, an abstraction devised by our discriminating and categorising intellect.

The philosophy of meta-Reality also emphasises unity and interrelation of all things and events, and provides a line of argument that outlines the way that non-duality underpins any form of apparent separation and duality. Bhaskar specifically argues that non-dual experiences are essential for (a) any form of communication between human beings, and, (b) any perception, and also, (c) for any act at all (Bhaskar, 2002a p.xi).
Bhaskar attempts to describe his understanding of the non-dual nature of existence in terms of mechanisms and modalities.

The three main mechanisms of non-duality include:
- transcendental identification,
- reciprocity and
- co-presence (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.xvii-xviii).

The three modalities of non-duality include:
- non-duality as the non-dual being of ground state (and cosmic envelope);
- non-duality as the way in which we communicate, perceive, see, read, follow, understand things in the world; and
- non-duality as the deep interior or fine structure of being (Bhaskar, 2002c p.1).

Each of these modalities and mechanisms are clearly interconnected, with a discussion of one necessarily involving some reference to the others. However, it is beyond the scope of the literature in this thesis to outline each of these modalities and mechanisms in detail.35

Before venturing too far, I will first locate some of these ideas within the framework of critical realism. If we recall from the stratified model of reality, a mechanism can be understood as existing in the domain of the real. Thus, transcendental identification, reciprocity and co-presence can be understood as being real powers and tendencies, which exist regardless of whether they are actualised or experienced. The mechanism of transcendental identification enables perception and understanding of all things, and also enables the internal relations between distinct elements of a unified field of existence. From another perspective, the internal relations between distinct elements of a unified field of existence might appear separate from the particular body and mind that is associated with a sense of self. The mechanism of co-presence enables growth and development of all aspects of this unified field of existence. Both transcendental identification and co-presence appear to be particularly significant for understanding the emancipation of fine art students from content of their consciousness that is incongruent with flow experience whilst making art. These topics will be explored in §2.2.2 and §2.2.4 respectively.

The non-dual mechanism of transcendental identification and the second mode of non-duality, (that is, the way in which we communicate, perceive, see, read, follow, understand things in the world), appear to be very much related and will be discussed together. Similarly, the non-dual mechanism of co-presence and the third modality of non-duality, (that is, the deep

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35 For a more comprehensive account of the modalities and mechanisms of non-duality please consult the first chapter of The philosophy of meta-reality: Creativity, love and freedom (Bhaskar, 2002c).
interior or fine structure of being appear to be interrelated) and these will also be discussed together in the following sections.

§2.2.2 Transcendental identification (and referential detachment)

According to the philosophy of meta-Reality, when an individual focuses their attention on something or attempts to understand it, or even takes action in relation to it, in the moment of attending, the content of their consciousness merges with the object of their perception. Bhaskar refers to this as transcendental identification. However, being one with the object under perception is almost automatic, and so these experiences of non-duality are usually taken for granted, with the details of the particular context and content appearing to be more significant, on a moment-to-moment basis, than the underlying mechanism of non-duality enabling their reception.

From the perspective of the philosophy of meta-Reality, it is only through transcendental identification with our object of knowledge, or at least, an aspect of it, that we can ‘know’ it, however subjective our interpretation of it may be. In order to know anything we have to step outside of our own ideas and thoughts and into the field of the thing we wish to know. The less encumbered we are by things which interfere with clear perception, the more of ‘the other’ we can truly know. Thus, knowing anything at all necessarily involves being. To be is to know the immediate moment.

The idea that both subject and object might exist in a unified relationship, appears to relate to something that Bhaskar has previously called the ontic fallacy (Bhaskar, 2008a p.111). This view of knowledge as a ‘direct, unmediated relation between subject and being’ (Irwin, 1997), effectively denies the transitive dimension of science,\footnote{See §2.1.2, footnote 18.} by ignoring the possibility that knowledge might be socially produced by pre-existing social products (Shipway, 2002 p.94). However, it seems that what Bhaskar is arguing for with transcendental identification, is that unless we are completely present with our object of knowledge, that is, fully attending to it and being in a completed state of identity with it, then we cannot know it. Morgan also raises concerns about whether a basic-level unity or identity is necessary to effective identification (J. Morgan, 2003 p.138): ‘Does an active process (identifying) imply a basic sustaining state (identity/unity) and does that state necessarily encompass commonality?’ (J. Morgan, 2005 p.140). This will be explored further in §2.2.4.

Transcendental identification appears to be closely related to the second modality of non-duality: non-duality as the way in which we communicate, perceive, see, read, follow, understand things in the world. Thus, the mechanism of transcendental identification and the
second mode of non-duality relate to the way that we can know reality. According to this perspective, the reason we can know or recognise or engage with anything in the world, is because we exist in a unified relationship with it (Bhaskar, 2002c p.1): ‘when you understand or even listen to what I am saying, then in that moment of understanding or listening you are in a non-dual state of transcendental identification with me’ (Bhaskar, 2002a p.xi). Bhaskar suggests that it is the fundamental connectivity of all existence which enables this to happen (Bhaskar, 2002e p.12). This is an important point to clarify. It isn’t by becoming one with something that we can perceive it; rather, it is because the object of our perception and who we are ultimately exist in a unified relationship together that perception of the object is possible. If the foundation of reality was dualistic, separate and fragmented, we would not actually be able to perceive or understand anything. It is only because reality is fundamentally unified that we can. According to the philosophy of meta-Reality, it is the unity of reality, in which we are embedded, that enables us to recognise and relate with other things. However, this perspective poses a problem for Bhaskar’s analysis of perception in his earlier work: A Realist Theory of Science (1978; 2008b).

In A Realist Theory of Science (1978; 2008b), Bhaskar suggests ‘the intelligibility of sense-perception presupposes the intransitivity of the object perceived. For it is in the independent occurrence or existence of such objects that the meaning of “perception”, and the epistemic significance of perception, lies’ (Bhaskar, 2008b p.31). On the one hand, Bhaskar suggests that the object of our perception exists independently of the act of perception, and on the other hand, he explains our ability to perceive an object in terms of the fundamental unity underpinning both the object and subject. In terms of Bhaskar’s earlier thesis, it seems significant to note that although he suggests that the object of our perception exists independently of the act of perception, he does not specify that the object of our perception and our self are separate, only that the object and the act of perception are separate. Similarly, in terms of transcendental identification, although Bhaskar explains our ability to perceive an object in terms of the fundamental unity between the object and subject, he does not specify that the mechanism of observing (transcendental identification) and the object being observed are unified.

Nevertheless, the idea of collapsing the subject-object duality into a non-dual relationship poses further problems for the basic critical realist tenet of epistemological relativism, that all human knowledge is subjective (Bhaskar, 2002a p.12; 2008b p.249; Shipway, 2002 p.92). How do we reconcile this collapse of the transitive and intransitive with Bhaskar’s previous suggestion that ‘referential detachment’, that is, ‘the ontological dislocation of referent from the act of reference’ (2008a p.130), is vital to the concept of truth and judgmental rationality?
A (positive or negative) affirmative factual claim typically occurs at the moment at which ‘referential detachment’ – informally the ontological detachment of the referent from the (inter-subjective/social) referential act (reference), initially justified by the axiological need to refer to something other than ourselves – becomes legitimate and necessary.

(Bhaskar, 2008a p.40)

From the perspective of the philosophy of meta-Reality, it would be the non-dual mechanism of transcendental identification that enables referential detachment.\(^{37}\) It is the very absence of a subject-object duality that enables transcendental identification to occur, and it is this same absence of subject-object duality that makes the act of detaching the referent from the act of perception possible at all. It involves detaching or absenting ‘oneself or one’s discursive act or one’s pre-linguistic intuitive acts from what they are about’ (Bhaskar, 1993; 2008a p.230).

Thus, Bhaskar’s earlier suggestion, that the referent needs to be detached from ‘the human act which picks it out’ is quite consistent with the notion of transcendental identification (Bhaskar, 1993; 2008a p.223). From this perspective, recognition of (or reference to), anything ‘external’ to (or other than), our self might actually be a case of an internal relation within a unified whole. Our capacity to understand this would depend on the boundaries that we use to define our ‘self’.\(^{38}\) It involves transcending the narrowly defined conception of an individual being confined to one’s body and mind, and merging one’s ‘self’ with the ‘thing’ being recognised.

John Dewey appears to be speaking of something similar to transcendental identification when he refers to aesthetic experience as being the fullness or completeness of our experience, particularly in regards to our perception and enjoyment (Dewey, 1958 p.47). He also states that ‘experience in the degree in which it is experience is heightened vitality […] it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events’ (Dewey, 1958 p.19). One might ask what Dewey means by ‘experience in the degree in which it is experience’? One possible interpretation is that he might be speaking of what someone might experience if they were to focus the totality of their attention on the object of their perception. ‘Experience in the degree in which it is experience’, appears to differ from experience per se, in that the former relates to total immersion of one’s attention in the present moment, whereas the latter might relate to a split in one’s attention. Dewey’s definition of aesthetic experience also relates to the Romantic notion of ‘inspiration’ which emphasises the sublime: ‘the experience of transcendence in the presence of a phenomenon – frequently a natural object – with grandeur too great to be expressed’ (Flaherty, 2004 p.104). Dewey also argues that works of art can elicit and accentuate such transcendence:

\(^{37}\) It should also be noted that this is a rather huge claim to make; further, in the spirit of epistemic humility, one must also acknowledge it is quite possible that it might not be true.

\(^{38}\) See §2.2.5.
A work of art elicits and accentuates this quality of being a whole and of belonging to the larger, all-inclusive, whole which is the universe in which we live. [...] We are, as it were, introduced into a world beyond this world, which is nevertheless the deeper reality of the world in which we live in our ordinary experiences. We are carried out beyond ourselves to find ourselves. I can see no psychological ground for such properties of an experience save that, somehow, the work of art operates to deepen and raise great clarity that sense of an enveloping undefined whole that accompanies every normal experience. This whole is then felt as an expansion of ourselves.

(Dewey, 1958 p.195)

Dewey’s suggestion that a relationship with a larger, all-inclusive whole might accompany every normal experience, is echoed in Bhaskar’s suggestion that transcendence is not simply limited to our conscious experience of transcendence or the sublime, but rather, happens all the time, whether we are aware of the transcendental nature of our experience or not (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.4-7).

Although transcendental identification might be ontologically prior to referential detachment, referential detachment also serves an important function in enabling human discourse ‘to talk about something other than itself’ (Bhaskar, 2008a p.45). At the same time, it is a person’s transcendental identification with the discourse that enables them to understand it. In this respect, scientific knowledge and truth claims can be understood as being sustained by the dialectical relationship between transcendental identification and referential detachment.

Bhaskar also suggests the non-dual mechanism of transcendental identification is not only essential for perceiving and understanding things in our environment, but also underpins human action. Bhaskar refers to the transcendence involved in our action as transcendental agency. This is the topic of the following section.

§2.2.3 Transcendental agency

Transcendental agency is transcendental identification with the activity that an individual is engaged in. Bhaskar suggests,

in order to act at all there must be something, at some level, which you do not do by thinking about how to do it, but which you just do, spontaneously, unconditionally, normally pretty effortlessly, and unless you acted in that non-dual way, you could never do anything at all.

(Bhaskar, 2002a p.xi)
Thus, to do or act involves losing our sense of separateness from the things we do. We become one with the action. We can not do anything at all without this happening. We may think about what to do and the way we should do it, but ultimately we just have to do it and in that moment of doing, we become one with our action. Another side to this is the idea of doing one thing and thinking about another. It is possible to be driving a car and thinking about what to have for dinner. In this instance our attention may be split at different moments during the activity of driving home from work, however, when we actually use our hand to turn the indicator on, for example, or lift our foot to release the clutch when changing gears, we are, even if for a brief moment, 'at one' with a specific action involved in the complex activity of driving a car. Thus, the transcendental identification involved in both perceiving and understanding an action is made possible by the connectivity of all things, that is, the unified nature of existence.

Bhaskar suggests that transcendental agency involves either total focus or attention on an act (mindfulness), or an act which is spontaneously performed (mindlessness) (Bhaskar, 2002c p.4). From this perspective, participation in the process of making art would consist of a series of non-dual moments in which the ‘artist’ or ‘art student’ is engaging in either mindful or spontaneous transcendental agency (Bhaskar, 2002c p.4). Bhaskar argues that both mindfulness and mindlessness are positions of transcendence or non-duality. However, mindfulness, that is, the total focus and attentiveness of consciousness on its activity, eventually passes over into spontaneity (Bhaskar, 2002e p.212). This relates to the context of the present study in that the practical approach to learning to draw provided by the Core Drawing module meant that students were provided with opportunities to mindfully engage in activities which were designed to enable them to acquire specific skills.

Bhaskar suggests that as activities become practised, the skills involved in doing them may become part of, or be one with, the innermost being of the agent (Bhaskar, 2002e p.212). Thus, as art students practise particular drawing activities, particular skills like hand-eye co-ordination, become one with the innermost being of the art student. Bhaskar suggests that as the mind empties itself of other thoughts through the total focus on the activity, the activity is no longer controlled by the focused, undivided attentive mind, but rather, performs itself, effortlessly, efficiently, without strain (Bhaskar, 2002e p.212). Thus, the activity of drawing may then act like a mantra in meditation, with the undivided mind losing itself and passing into the activity (Bhaskar, 2002e p.212). This effortless efficiency in activity is, according to Bhaskar, activity in the ground state. Such effortless, spontaneous activity, however, must be acquired and learnt, but once it is learnt there is no mind and no thought, but rather, free unconditional spontaneous activity (Bhaskar, 2002e p.212). This aspect of transcendental agency appears to relate to a condition which Csikszentmihalyi calls optimal experience or flow (1988a p.24). A review of the literature pertaining to flow theory is included in §5.
In the next section, Bhaskar's theory of co-presence and fine structure will be discussed.

§2.2.4 Co-presence and fine structure

Before venturing too far into a discussion of co-presence and fine structure, let us first revisit Bhaskar's description of his understanding of the non-dual nature of existence in terms of mechanisms and modalities.

The three main mechanisms of non-duality include:
- transcendental identification,
- reciprocity and
- co-presence (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.xvii-xviii).

The three modalities of non-duality include:
- non-duality as the non-dual being of ground state (and cosmic envelope);
- non-duality as the way in which we communicate, perceive, see, read, follow, understand things in the world; and
- non-duality as the deep interior or fine structure of being (Bhaskar, 2002c p.1).

The mechanism of co-presence is related to the third modality of non-duality: non-duality as the deep interior or fine structure of being (Bhaskar, 2002c p.1). Bhaskar's theory of fine structure and co-presence offer an interesting perspective on the inter-penetrating nature of being and also has implications for understanding the process of learning to draw.

The theory of fine structure and co-presence suggests that everything that exists is present in everything else (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.71, 123). It is based on the idea of there being a common beginning for all of creation from which all forms of diversity have evolved (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.45-46; 2002c pp.109-110). It is the idea that the potential for all forms of diversity that are in existence today must have been present in this common beginning. Due to the diversity of space-time circumstances, different trajectories were taken, resulting in the unfolding of diverse forms of life. However, what was necessary for this diversity must have been present in the common beginning. Everything that is manifest today was enfolded in being back then. Morgan (2003 p.125) describes this as ‘emergent and stratified being’ having a ‘connecting commonality’. From this perspective, everything in existence now has the ‘seed’ of everything that has ever manifested (and will ever manifest) enfolded within its being. This includes consciousness. Reason and Bradbury (2004), from the field of action research, appear to be referring to a similar thing: ‘Human persons do not stand separate from the cosmos; we evolved with it and are an expression of its intelligent and creative force’ (Reason & Bradbury, 2004 p.8). According to the theory of fine structure and co-presence, it is this connecting
commonality or inter-penetration of being which enables the human capacity for
transcendental identification, that is, experiencing a fundamental connection with aspects of
existence which might otherwise be perceived dualistically as objects in a discrete external
interpretation, the fine structure of being to which Bhaskar refers is the ‘basic constituent’ of
the ‘concretely singularized and differentiated complexity’ occurring within the universe, and
co-presence refers to the fundamental way in which ‘everything is within everything’ (J.

Morgan summarises the relationship between fine structure and co-presence in the following
way:

- Co-presence is understood as a characteristic of the fine structure of reality
- That fine structure itself is conceived as a unity (the cosmic envelope)
- Co-presence makes possible the ‘ordinary’ activity of transcendental identification (the
  experience of which, understood as non-duality, is precisely what is used to infer the
  reality of the cosmic envelope and co-presence)

(J. Morgan, 2003 p.126)

However, Morgan (2005) also takes issue with this third point, suggesting that ‘even if a
human is capable of a completed state of identification (rather than a singularised attempt at
identifying) with some other thing, that completed state need not imply a common non-duality
constituting a fine structure’ (J. Morgan, 2005 p.140). In other words, although an embodied
personality might have a capacity to identify with other things it does not follow that fine
structure and co-presence must be the case. Thus, Bhaskar’s argument for establishing the
theory of non-duality, fine structure and co-presence is not as convincing as Morgan would
like. However, by tracing evolution back to a common beginning, Bhaskar does explain how a
completed state of transcendental identification, that is, the perception of an element within a
unified whole, might indeed be possible. ‘[B]ecause our cosmos has given rise to
consciousness, then the ultimate essential ingredients within it must implicitly contain or have
the potentiality for consciousness’ (Bhaskar, 2002e p.214). This is an important point to
clarify. Human consciousness is based on the biological evolution of the central nervous
system (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a p.17). However, in order for the central nervous system to
give rise to human consciousness there must have been something implicitly enfolded in the
matter from which the central nervous system itself evolved that made consciousness
possible. If this were not the case then human consciousness would not have occurred.

39 See §2.2.2.
40 The term ‘embodied personality’ is basically used to refer to the physical form, thoughts, emotions
and feelings of a human being. The embodied personality is one aspect which Bhaskar describes in the
stratified model of the self. Both the embodied personality and the stratified model of the self will be
outlined in more detail in §2.2.5.
Bhaskar argues that ‘consciousness is an emergent power of matter, which has historically evolved from matter’ (Bhaskar, 2002e p.214), and in the sense in which consciousness is a latent potentiality of matter, matter can be seen to be a synchronic emergent power of consciousness. In other words,

consciousness is involved or implicit or enfolded within matter; and at the same time evolves, or is unfolded or explicated out of matter as a diachronically emergent power of it, a power which must have been implicit within it for that emergence and in virtue of which we can identify with inanimate and animate but non-conscious being now.

(Bhaskar, 2002e p.214)

What this means is that we can identify with apparently separate ‘things’, even if they are non-conscious, because both human consciousness and the apparently non-conscious object have evolved from the same ancestral moment of evolution. According to this perspective, if we were to trace back the origins of human evolution on earth, and the evolution of another form of being, we would get to a common ground, from where the two evolutionary journeys split and went their respective ways. Thus, although consciousness may be an emergent power of the human nervous system, in order for the human nervous system to develop consciousness, the power to be conscious must have been implicit in matter. It is this shared latent potential, regardless of whether it is actualised and realised, which unites human consciousness with everything that exists (Bhaskar, 2002e p.214). This is an important point for it allows us to appreciate that a theory about the existence of a fine structure which connects our consciousness with a common reality is quite compatible with ontological realism, the belief in a common reality which exists independent of our consciousness of it.

The philosophy of meta-Reality is an attempt at making sense of reality in non-dual terms, that is, as a unified totality, comprised of internal relations between elements of a unified whole. Using such non-dual terms, the philosophy of meta-Reality attempts to describe aspects that might appear to be separate.

However, the philosophy of meta-Reality is concerned with human emancipation, and Bhaskar suggests that it isn’t really a system of thought, but rather, ‘an intervention in the discursive process’ designed to enable agents to reflexively situate their being (including their growth and development) within a larger (non-dual) totality (Bhaskar, 2002c p.xxiv). In this way, we can appreciate that because our ideas, even our false ideas, are causally efficacious (Bhaskar, 1997; 2002a pp.167-168), then even if the theory of co-presence isn’t completely accurate, it offers an explanation of ‘how learning to draw happens’ in a way that helps

41 In striving for a ‘completely accurate’ theory, we must also bear in mind that there is an ontological distinction between Bhaskar’s theory about co-presence, and the co-presence that his theory refers to,
students to learn to draw, then it can be understood as being emancipatory. Further, if the theory of co-presence helps to offer an explanation of how an experience of learning to draw can flow, in a way that empowers art students to actually experience flow whilst they are drawing, then, as an intervention in the discursive thought process, it is enabling art students to reflexively situate their practice of learning to make art within a larger (non-dual) totality.

In summary, the theory of fine structure and co-presence outlines a system of logic by which one can appreciate that everything that has ever manifested, or will ever manifest in the future, was enfolded in a common beginning for all of creation from which all forms of diversity have evolved. From this perspective, everything that is manifest now has the seed of everything that has ever manifested (and will ever manifest) enfolded within its being, including consciousness. Bhaskar offers the theory of fine structure and co-presence to account for why it is possible for a person to perceive things outside of the field of their consciousness but within the field of their conscious experience, that is, achieve transcendental identification with other things. Although Morgan has questioned the conclusiveness of Bhaskar’s logic, this is not within the ambit of the present study for, it is understood that the theory of co-presence is a theory about what might be true, rather than being the truth that it refers to. However, as an emancipatory theory, the theory of co-presence and subsequent model of unfolding the enfolded might still offer an explanation of ‘how learning to draw happens’ in a way that helps students to learn to draw (and experience flow whilst they are doing it).

In the next section, the implications of the theory of co-presence for creativity and learning something new are explored.

§2.2.4.1 Unfolding the enfolded: circles of creation and learning something new

In this section, Bhaskar’s theories about the ontological structures that enable both creativity and learning are introduced (Bhaskar, 2002c p.108). These ontological structures are based on the logic of the theory of co-presence, thereby serving to demonstrate one way in which this theory can contribute to the field of art education, and art education research.

From the perspective of the theory of co-presence, creativity, which is the production of something new, is both a synthesis of the old and the new, made possible by the existence of a potential for the ‘new’ already existing in an implicit or enfolded state. However, what unfolds or emerges from the old also transcends, surpasses, negates (that is, absents and transforms) what was already there (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.105-106). This idea of creativity being that is, the distinction between referential-expressive truth claims and alethic truth (Bhaskar, 2008a p.217).
a synthesis of the old and the new, is consistent with Martin’s definition of creativity as: ‘the human potential to make discoveries about the pre-existing potentials and powers of the world and to bring those discoveries into being through the actualising of a potential or the revealing of a power, or a combination of both’ (Martin, 2008 p.6).

For both Bhaskar and Martin, although the ‘new’ element might relate to something novel, the ‘old’ element relates to the new element pre-existing its manifestation in the form of a potential or power. This area of common ground between both Bhaskar’s and Martin’s theories of creativity is important to note. In the previous discussion on the primacy of absence, Martin’s concerns regarding Bhaskar’s argument for the ontological priority of absence over presence were raised. Martin suggests that the potential for a universe to come into being from absolute nothing must have pre-existed the coming into being of the universe (Martin, 2008 p.6). The key point to note in Martin’s critique is that it is a potential for something to exist, rather than its total absence, which must pre-exist its manifestation. Whilst this particular area of Bhaskar’s argument might not have been completely resolved in *Dialectic* (1993), in the subsequent development of his ideas, pertaining to the theory of co-presence, this apparent discrepancy was reconciled.

Bhaskar suggests that one’s ability to learn anything new is made possible by the knowledge, skill or values that are learnt, already existing in an enfolded state within each human being at the level of the ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c p.109). Although he suggests that incompleteness or determinate absence is the motor that drives the learning process (Bhaskar, 2000 p.3), he also claims that it is the potential, for growth and transformation, which is enabled by fine structure and co-presence, that enables learning to occur. Thus, it is the underpinning level of reality, that is, fine structure and co-presence, which sustains the emancipatory power of absence. Martin suggests: ‘to say there was nothing before the universe would in fact be to say that there was no actualised universe, merely the possibility or potential for an actualised universe to come into being from absolute nothing’ (Martin, 2008 p.6). In this way, absence might be best understood as a potential for the actualisation, or unfolding, of that, which exists in an enfolded state.

Bhaskar describes the process of unfolding the enfolded in relation to creativity, in terms of five circles of creation: calling, creation, formation, making and reflexivity (Bhaskar, 2002c p.112). These circles of creation correspond to the first five moments in the MELDARA schema, that is, the successive refinements of ontology associated with the development of critical realism and meta-Reality (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.112-113). They also correspond to five

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42 See §2.1.4.2.
43 This will be discussed further in §2.2.5.
44 Including the first moment (1M) of being, the second edge (2E) of absence / negativity, the third level (3L) of totality, the fourth dimension (4D) of transformative praxis, the fifth aspect (5A) of reflexivity / spirituality, the sixth realm (6R) of re-enchantment, and the seventh zone / awakening (7A/Z) of non-duality (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.xviii-xxi; Hartwig, 2008 pp.xiii-xvii).
phases of unfolding the enfolded in the process of learning something new: being, becoming, binding, applying and reflecting (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.115-116).

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the corresponding terms used in the MELDARA schema, the circles of creation, and the phases involved in the process of unfolding the enfolded. Bhaskar argues that from the point of view of understanding creativity and the cycles of creativity, there is no need to independently discuss the sixth and seventh levels of ontology, as they can be treated as a refinement of the other five (Bhaskar, 2002c p.113). Thus, Table 2.1 does not elaborate on aspects of creativity corresponding to the sixth realm of re-enchantment and seventh zone of awakening. Further, whether there are corresponding phases in the model of unfolding the enfolded is still to be determined.

In the same way that the MELDARA schema identifies the successive refinements of ontology in which each emerging category presupposes the previous (Bhaskar, 1993 p.9), each of the circles of creativity and phases in unfolding the enfolded are preservative. Thus, reflexivity and reflection presuppose making and applying, which presuppose formation and binding, which presuppose creation and becoming, which presuppose calling and being. In other words, each phase is dependent upon, emerges out of, but is irreducible to the previous phase, whilst not being inconsistent with it.

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45 Suzi Gablik’s *The Re-enchantment of Art* (1991) appears to have something to contribute here, however, due to word restrictions, this topic will not be considered in this thesis.
Table 2.1: Corresponding terms used in the MELDARA schema, circles of creation and unfolding the enfolded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MELDARA schema</th>
<th>Circles of creation</th>
<th>Unfolding the enfolded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1M First Moment</td>
<td>Being</td>
<td>Calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2E Second Edge</td>
<td>Absence or process</td>
<td>Creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3L Third Level</td>
<td>Totality</td>
<td>Formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4D Fourth Dimension</td>
<td>Transformative agency or praxis</td>
<td>Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5A Fifth Aspect</td>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6R Sixth Realm</td>
<td>Re-enchantment</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7A/Z Seventh Zone</td>
<td>Awakening or non-duality</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of these phases in the process of unfolding the enfolded are discussed in finer detail in C6 of this thesis.

§2.2.5 The stratified nature of the self

Bhaskar’s stratified model of reality from the philosophy of critical realism is applied to his model of the self in the philosophy of meta-Reality. In the philosophy of meta-Reality, Bhaskar conceptualises the nature of the self as being comprised of three nested levels: (i) an illusory but real ego, (ii) a limited or finite embodied personality, and (iii) an absolute, unlimited, transcendentally real Self or ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c p.38). See Figure 2.3 (below).

Bhaskar argues that ‘the self in the sense of the ego, separated from other selves and a world of objects (including emotional states) to which it is attached is a “causally efficacious” illusion’. This self, which sees itself as existing separately from all other selves, has no real object, and it is in this respect that the ego is an illusion. Although it is an illusion, it can still cause things to happen, and as such is real (that is, the illusion is real despite having no real object) (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.37-38). The ego, however, is a property of the embodied
personality under certain geo-historical conditions, and the embodied personality, albeit
dependent and limited, is not itself an illusion (Bhaskar, 2002a p.239; 2002c pp.37-38).

According to Bhaskar, ‘the sense of self as embodied personality has a transient and slightly
fuzzy character to it’. However, it ‘definitely has a mind, emotions, feelings and it definitely has
a physical being’. Embodied personalities are clearly differentiated in time and space, and in
terms of physicality, they are, though related, distinct from each other. This physical
distinction between embodied personalities promotes a sense of separateness and gives a
degree of validity to the sense of the ego (Bhaskar, 2002a pp.239-240). Thus, we can begin
to understand that the form our embodied personality takes includes our physical form, and
encompasses our thoughts, emotions and feelings.

Underpinning the embodied personality is our transcendentally real Self or ground state. This
is the ultimate source of our causal agency in the world (Bhaskar, 2002c p.37). However, the
ground state does not speak or act as such; it is rather a deep potential (or tendency)
inscribed in and informing the speech and action of our embodied personality (Bhaskar,
2002a pp.240-241). According to Bhaskar, our ground state is connected to the ground states
of all other beings through the all-encompassing cosmic envelope (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.54-55).
Bhaskar suggests that our ground state qualities generally include: energy, intelligence,
consciousness, creativity, love, the capacity for right-action and therefore the fulfilment of our
intentionality. He also suggests that the consciousness of our ground state is ‘supramental’ or
beyond thought, manifesting in the suspension of thought. The ground state is prior to our
embodied personality; in this way, the consciousness, intentionality and energy of our ground
state is always present and a part of any state of being or act of our embodied personality,
and anything that it experiences or does in the world (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55). Thus, our ground
state finds expression through the embodied personality, as thoughts and actions. Some of
these expressions are consistent with the ground state nature, some are not. Bhaskar refers
to this inconsistency, or the split between the embodied personality and ground state, as self-
alienation and suggests that the process of liberation consists in shedding the aspects of our
embodied personality that are inconsistent with our true essential nature (Bhaskar, 2002c

\[46\] This was previously discussed in §2.1.3.
In relation to the model of unfolding the enfolded, the potential for learning and growth exists in an enfolded state at the level of the ground state, when this potential is exercised and actualised, that is, unfolded, it does so at the level of the embodied personality.

§2.2.5.1 Sourcing the self

In this section, I discuss Kathy Pitt’s interpretation of Bhaskar’s stratified model of the self and her use of Bhaskar’s theoretical explanations in a research project that was concerned with understanding why some people pursue life paths that run counter to powerful dominant social norms and expectations.

In Sourcing the self: debating the relations between language and consciousness (2008), Pitt explores theories of self and agency through a critical discourse analysis of the accounts of five British artists talking about their motivations, their creative processes and their experiences of the practices and institutions of visual art (Pitt, 2008 pp.17-20). Data collection for Pitt’s study involved interviewing each artist on two separate occasions, six months apart. Pitt’s critical discourse analysis of each artist’s comments, together with her surrounding discussion, indicates that Bhaskar’s notion of the ground state, or transcendentally real Self, was quite useful for understanding the reasons that the visual artists in her study gave for

47 This was previously discussed in §2.2.4.1 and will be discussed in more detail in C6.
pursuing a career path for which there is only intermittent, social support, and no guarantee of financial or personal success. Her analysis of the artists’ comments, together with her interpretation of Bhaskar’s ideas, has made an important contribution to my attempts at making sense of the experience of enjoyment, satisfaction and fulfilment that an art student might have whilst learning to make art.

Pitt refers to Bhaskar's distinction between the consciousness of the embodied personality and the consciousness of the ground state to make sense of the artists' disclosures about their experience of their self, their beliefs about their art-making practices, and their experiences whilst making art (Pitt, 2008 pp.53-65). Pitt suggests that by getting in touch with the consciousness of our real Self, we might be able to work towards realising our unique potential and might also be able to still the chattering voices of society that tell us what we ‘should’ be doing (Pitt, 2008 p.63). Pitt suggests that it is our experience of the consciousness of our ground state, or rather, when the experience of the embodied personality is congruent with the consciousness of the ground state and is aware of the intentionality of our ground state, that we are empowered to pursue paths that are deeply satisfying, and resist those that are not.

The results and discussion from Pitt's research indicates that people whose life path deviates from dominant social norms and expectations are guided by a sense of purpose or direction that emerges from within. Vera John-Steiner’s research into the minds of a wide range of creative people from various disciplines speaks of a similar idea: ‘the processes of growth require resolution of the contradictory tensions between the social embeddedness of learning and the creative individual’s drive toward a personal voice’ (John-Steiner, 1997 p.208). Further, ‘part of the despair and the excitement that characterizes the early years of creative individuals is linked to their efforts to bridge the gap between their sense of purpose and its fulfilment’ (John-Steiner, 1997 p.60).

The insights gained from both Pitt’s and John-Steiner’s research have implications for understanding an art student’s experience of learning to make art. To begin with, there might be dominant social norms and expectations that are external to the art school environment that people might have to resist in order to pursue the study of art. This was referred to by the art students in Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi’s research who indicated that their parents were quite concerned about their choice of career (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976). However, having resisted social norms and expectations external to the art school, art students might also find that there are further dominant trends within the art school that might also serve to mislead them from fulfilling their personal sense of purpose in their art-making practice, and might also need resisting (John-Steiner, 1997 p.53). This points towards an area of much controversy in the field of visual art education theory and practice (Carroll, 2006 pp.2-3), and will be explored further in §4.
It is intended that the findings from the present study, which emerged from the comments that five adult art students shared in relation to their first semester at art school, will complement Pitt’s analysis of the comments of more established artists. Of particular interest is the emphasis that Pitt places on the consciousness and intentionality of the ground state. This has much to contribute to the concern of the present study to make sense of an art student’s experience of enjoyment, satisfaction and fulfilment whilst learning to make art.48

§2.2.5.2 The stratified nature of the self and human emancipation

Bhaskar’s theory of human emancipation is interwoven with his analysis of the nature of the self. As previously noted in §2.2.5, Bhaskar’s theory of the self comprises three nested levels of being: an illusory but real ego, a limited or finite embodied personality, and an absolute, unlimited, transcendentally real Self or ground state. Whilst the ego and embodied personality are unilaterally dependent on (sustained by) the transcendentally real Self, that self is overlain and occluded by the ego and other heteronomous elements of the embodied personality (Bhaskar, 2002c p.38). Bhaskar accordingly suggests that human emancipation occurs at the level of the embodied personality, rather than the ground state, which is already free, and that the process of liberation consists of shedding those aspects of our embodied personality, epitomised in the illusory ego, that are inconsistent with our true, essential nature (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.17, 46, 52-53; 2002e p.103). This is illustrated in Figure 2.4 (below).

48 This is discussed further in C7.
However, in an interconnected world, emancipation is never a purely individual matter. According to Bhaskar, emancipation requires every human to shed the elements of their embodied personality that block or constrain their free development and flourishing, that is, that are inconsistent with their ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.52-53). This includes the products of human actions, including social structures, that are inconsistent with their ground states (Bhaskar, 2002c p.142). Bhaskar offers the ontological category of real, determinate absence, as well as the idea of absenting absences conceived of as constraints or ills, to contribute to a theory of human emancipation and actualisation of freedom (Bhaskar, 1993 pp. 174, 176, 239). However, he strongly recommends that we do not exclusively focus our efforts on absenting absence in others or in social structures, for the principle of the primacy of self-referentiality suggests that our only point of agency is from our self, and thus emancipatory efforts must first begin with our own embodied personality (Bhaskar, 2002e pp.21, 148, 224). This is based on the logic that when our embodied personality is consistent with our ground state, we will be ‘a maximally efficacious agent in unblocking the constraints on the realisation of beings everywhere’ and this will also lead to the greater fulfilment of our own potential (Bhaskar, 2002c p.58).

According to Bhaskar, we can witness our ground state ‘at rest and gradually in everyday life in activity in an expanding holistic field of consciousness, awareness and perception’
49 Arjuna Ardagh’s research into the Oneness Blessing phenomenon, which first originated in India and is now spreading throughout the world, contributes further to the topic of human emancipation. It is worth noting that these findings have not been published in a peer-reviewed journal, but were rather, published by an independent multimedia publishing company that seeks to to inspire, support, and serve continuous spiritual awakening and its expression in the world. Nevertheless, the findings from Ardagh’s research into the Oneness University in India have much to contribute to the present topic, and his efforts at researching a topic that can easily belie the spoken and written word can be applauded. The findings from Ardagh’s research into the Oneness Blessing phenomenon suggest that there might be a relationship between the neurological activity in the parietal and frontal lobes and an experience of deep awareness of unity and the dissolution of a sense of a separate self. ‘They claim that when the parietal-lobe activity comes to below 25 on the right side and 30 on the left (using their own system of intuitive assessment) and when there is a differential of at least 20 of the left frontal lobe over the right, the brain has been healed’ (Ardagh, 2007 p.150). The ‘they’ to which Ardagh refers, is ‘Bhagavan and the dasas in India’ (Ardagh, 2007 p.150). What they appear to mean by the brain being ‘healed’ is the irreversible dissolving of the sense of a separate self (Ardagh, 2007 p.155). This apparently permanent change in perception is referred to as ‘enlightenment’, and is contrasted to an ‘enlightened state’, that is, a temporary experience of being aware of the underpinning unity of existence, which some people might also experience. However, instead of using the words enlightenment and enlightened state, which have been used so widely that they have lost an absolute meaning, the process of healing the human sense of a separate self, is referred to as ‘Awakening into Oneness’ (Ardagh, 2007 p.158). The Oneness Blessing, or deeksha, as it is still called in India, is one of the primary means of precipitating a shift toward a completely different state of consciousness, where the sense of ‘me’ as a separate entity dissolves (Ardagh, 2007 p.149). There is clearly a relationship between the phrase ‘Awakening into Oneness’, which Ardagh uses, and Mervyn Hartwig’s definition of the seventh dimension of being in Bhaskar’s MELDARA schema: ‘Awakening is to [understand] non-duality and the experience of being being, rather than thinking being, when, as the saying goes, we are “in the Zone”’ (Hartwig, 2008 p.xiv). The similarity in Ardagh’s and Hartwig’s choice of words, suggests that perhaps the referent that these words point towards might also be related, if not the same. By recognising that these accounts might be referring to the same phenomenon, marks a point of referential detachment (see §2.2.2). As Brad Shipway states: ‘we can tell when referential detachment has occurred (in this case) when scientists agree amongst themselves enough that they are talking about the same thing, such that the focus of their research automatically changes from trying to convince their colleagues about the existences of an object, and swings over to trying to discover the reason for the object, which is the next “layer” of research’ (Shipway, 2002). Indeed, developing an explanation for an art student’s experience of flow or being ‘in the Zone’, was the one of the functions of the present thesis. By noting the points where various theories and research findings pertaining to human emancipation agreed, I was able to
of universal Consciousness’ throughout all daily activities (Muktananda, 1995 p.53). From the perspective of the Siddha Yoga tradition, the process of achieving a permanent state of transcendental awareness is called Shaktipat (Muktananda, 1995 p.xx).

According to the logic of the stratified model of the self, self-realisation involves eliminating elements of our embodied personality which are inconsistent with our ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c p.17). However, given the underpinning unity of all existence, ‘individual self-realisation is impossible, in the sense that it can only be attained if all other human beings on the planet, and other species too, are liberated from the systems, which human kind has created, which oppresses them’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.26). In other words, universal self-realisation is essential to personal self-realisation. This explains why many people for whom an experience of the sense of a separate self has dissolved into an awareness of unity are so committed to sharing their experience with other people. Although self-realisation might involve experiencing a collapse between the separate categories of ‘you’, ‘me’, and ‘the ultimate source of creation’, Bhaskar suggests that universal self-realisation also ‘preserves the concrete singularity of each being realised and their notional distinctiveness from god or the totality which over-reaches them all’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.144). On the one hand, there is concrete singularity, and on the other, there is total unity, and thus dissolution of the sense of a separate self. This relates to Ullman and Reichenberg-Ullman’s suggestion that ‘the individual, ego and personality all continue to exist [during an enlightened experience], but the identification with them is eliminated’ (Ullman & Reichenberg-Ullman, 2001 p.xvii).

It is worth noting, however, that ideas pertaining to non-duality have not been without critique. Morgan (2005) raises the following concern:

Practices seeking identity or non-duality may themselves be simply falsely premised. My sense of non-duality may itself be illusion brought on by the state induced by the practice (meditation as false consciousness). Equally, of course, it may not be. The point is that Bhaskar’s argument as is cannot persuade us either way.

(J. Morgan, 2005 p.140)

Morgan raises an important point that relates to another purpose of the present study: to test the fecundity of Bhaskar’s ideas by attempting to make sense of the comments that five adult art students made about their experience of being at art school and making art. In the process focus my attention on explaining the emancipation of art students from content of their consciousness that inhibits or constrains flow experience in a deeper way.

50 Sri Bhagavan indicates that from his experience of self-realisation, ‘there is no sense of separateness at all. When I see you, you are not different from me. You could be some stranger who has just arrived from some part of the world, but to me you are no stranger. I feel completely connected with you. It’s like me talking to myself. Whoever you are, does not matter’ (Bhagavan, 2007 p.64). From such a perspective, there is also no such thing as ‘your pain’ and ‘my pain’, there is just pain, and while ever you might have reason to feel pain, I will feel it as well.
of doing this, the finer points of Bhaskar’s argument become significant, not only for scrutiny as Morgan has done, but also to make a contribution by reconciling apparent discrepancies.

§2.2.6 Intentional human agency

There are three aspects of Bhaskar’s theory of intentional human agency, which have informed data analysis in this study.

In Dialectic, Bhaskar outlines the stratified nature of intentional human agency (Bhaskar, 1993; 2008a pp.164-167). This was discussed in §2.1.5. In the philosophy of meta-Reality Bhaskar extends the model of stratified intentional human agency to promote an understanding of the ways in which non-duality underpins all existence, suggesting that any successful activity necessarily involves a merging of consciousness with action (Bhaskar, 2002c p.4). He also argues that fulfilment of the intentions of the embodied personality requires consistency with the intentions of the ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.243, 235). These two further aspects of intentional human agency will be discussed in the sections that follow.

§2.2.6.1 Transcendence and intentional human agency

In the philosophy of meta-Reality Bhaskar extends the model of stratified intentional human agency to promote an understanding of the ways in which non-duality underpins all existence, suggesting that any successful activity necessarily involves a merging of consciousness with action (Bhaskar, 2002c p.4). This is consistent with Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory, which suggests that action and awareness merge during flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 pp.111-112). However, such merging of action and awareness implies a coming together of two otherwise separate parts; Bhaskar’s theory suggests that it might be more a case of losing our sense of separateness from the things we do. We are already one with our actions. We can not do anything at all without this happening. We may think about what to do and the way we should do it, but ultimately we just have to do it and in that moment of doing, we are one with our action. As previously noted in §2.2.3, Bhaskar refers to this as transcendental agency and suggests that transcendence occurs in every action. For Bhaskar, transcendental agency involves either total focus or attention on an act, which he calls mindfulness, or an act that is spontaneously performed, which he calls mindlessness (Bhaskar, 2002c p.4).

Mindfulness is a conscious state whereby ‘attention is necessary because the activity does not (yet) flow from one’s innermost being’ (Bhaskar, 2002e p.239). This idea is consistent with

51 The theory of flow experience is discussed further in §5.
empirical findings from the field of neurophysiology, which suggest that acquisition of a motor skill involves establishing an internal model (in the brain) of the dynamics of the task (Shadmehr, 1997 pp.821-825) and further, that different parts of the brain are active when learning new skills compared to those involved in practising established skills (Petersen, van Mier, Fiez, & Raichle, 1998). Although these studies were not specifically related to art-making behaviour, they do suggest that when students are learning to control the fine motor skills in their hand in order to manipulate a drawing implement to create a representation of a particular object, the prefrontal regions of their brain are most active.

Mindfulness pertains to where conscious effort is required to carry out a specific skilful activity. Observational data from the drawing classes indicate that teachers provided opportunities for students to mindfully engage in drawing activities. Further, the drawing module outline suggests that these drawing activities were chosen because they provided opportunities for students to acquire specific skills and new knowledge. Data indicates that once these skills became part of the students’ repertoire, they were then able to utilise them in spontaneous ways. This relates to what Bhaskar calls mindlessness. Mindlessness pertains to ‘when the action flows so normally and spontaneously from one’s essential nature […], when one is so totally absorbed that nothing passes through one’s mind, not even thoughts’ (Bhaskar, 2002e p.239).

Whilst mindfulness involves consciousness bracketing or suspending the form of an activity (that is, when the conscious content of an activity becomes paramount), mindlessness involves consciousness bracketing or suspending the content (that is, when the structural form of an activity becomes paramount) (Bhaskar, 2002e pp.211-212). In this respect, mindfulness can be understood as the polar opposite of mindlessness.

Relating this to the stratification of intentional human agency adds further complexity to this matter. I have previously suggested that ‘mindfulness might occur when intentions that are motivated by conscious drives are being fulfilled, whilst mindlessness might occur when intentions that are motivated by instinctual, unconscious or preconscious drives are being fulfilled’ (McDonald, 2008 p.49). Whilst this interpretation of mindlessness is consistent with the line of argument in some parts of this thesis (C4, C5), in other parts it differs (C7). This is primarily due to my evolving understanding of the possible relationship between: (i) the mindful and mindless positions of transcendental agency, (ii) Bhaskar’s notion of stratified intentional human agency, and (iii), Bhaskar’s notion of the stratified self, over the past four years.
§2.2.6.2 The stratified self and the fulfillment of intentions

Bhaskar’s law of coherence suggests that there must be coherence or clarity between our intentions, thoughts, feelings and physical action (Bhaskar, 2002c p.239). Thus, focused, concentrated and engaged action is a necessary condition for the intentions of the embodied personality to be fulfilled (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.235, 254). Bhaskar also argues that in order to be fulfilled, the intentions of an embodied personality need to be consistent with its ground state. This is the ‘purpose, project, destiny, function of our essential natures’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55).

In the same way that the consciousness of our ground state is necessary for every other state of our consciousness, the intentionality of our ground state is always present too, manifesting in all of the active states of our embodied personality (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55). This is the case even though the actions of our embodied personality might also be incongruent with the intentionality of our essential nature. If the intention of the embodied personality is inconsistent with its ground state, the intentionality will be split, thereby limiting or inhibiting the efficacy of the embodied personality (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.243, 235). The task then, for each of us, is to use our moments of agency to become what we essentially are (Bhaskar, 2002c p.222).

When Bhaskar’s notion of the stratified self is combined with (i) transcendental agency and (ii) the stratification of intentional human agency, our understanding of intentional human agency becomes more complex. We also extend our capacity for explaining more variations of intentional human agency. From this perspective, it appears that the mindful position of transcendental agency might occur when intentions that are motivated by our conscious drives are being fulfilled, whilst mindless position of transcendental agency might occur when the intentions that drive our action are not mediated by our mind at all. For Bhaskar, supramental mindlessness is characterised by ‘blissful consciousness of existence (or being or truth)’ and involves an absence of thought or mental (or emotional) content, which underpins all other levels of consciousness (Bhaskar, 2002e p.212). Bhaskar suggests that we can act from this level of consciousness, and when we do, we are acting in consistency with our ground state (Bhaskar, 2002e p.213). In these instances, the intentions of our embodied personality might stem directly from the intentionality of the most essential part of our self, that is, our ground state, without any interference from our conscious, unconscious or preconscious mind. This suggests that a further category of transcendental agency might be necessary: one that includes actions that are driven by the unconscious and preconscious mind, but not the conscious mind. This will be considered in further detail in C7.

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52 See §2.2.6.1.
§2.3 Summary of the underpinning assumptions

To this point, we have encountered philosophical concepts pertaining to:

- the transitive and intransitive dimensions of science;
- the epistemic fallacy;
- the stratified model of reality;
- the ontological primacy of absence;
- truth tetrapolity;
- four planar social being;
- non-duality;
- transcendental identification;
- referential detachment;
- transcendental agency;
- co-presence and fine structure;
- unfolding the enfolded;
- the stratified nature of the self;
- human emancipation; and
- intentional human agency.

These concepts have clearly influenced the research questions and my justifications for their importance as well as my methods for answering them. They have also influenced the interpretations that I have made from the data that were collected.⁵³ Making these assumptions explicit not only ensures my own awareness of what they are, but also provides the reader with a map of the general terrain of the theoretical constructs pertaining to reality and knowledge that underpin the research design.

The following section provides a graphic representation of the overlapping relationship between the main concepts that have informed this study. Several of these concepts stem directly from the philosophy of critical realism and meta-Reality. The remaining sections of this chapter provide a review of literature pertaining to each of the topics in the overview, and the discussion draws on many of the concepts from the philosophy of critical realism and meta-Reality.

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⁵³ This will be outlined in C3.
§3 The conceptual framework

Rossman and Rallis (2003 p.120) suggest that the conceptual framework covers ‘the what’ of the study:

- What do I want to learn about?
- What is already known about this topic?
- What questions remain unanswered?
- What assumptions are you making when you ask these questions?

Figure 2.5 (below) represents the overlapping relationships between the main concepts that have informed this study. It represents the existing ideas about the particular aspect of reality that I sought to explore; the existing literature pertaining to these ideas are discussed in the remaining sections of this chapter.

As can be seen from Figure 2.5, this research was concerned with learning about:

1. what goes on in art school environments (as represented by the large, encompassing, dark grey ellipse).

More specifically, this study was concerned with learning about:

2. the experiences of a small group of embodied personalities within an art school environment (as represented by the smaller, light grey ellipse). 54

There were three further concerns (these are represented by the three overlapping grey circles):

3. the process of learning something new; 55
4. the process of making art; 56 and
5. the stratified self. 57

Of particular concern was where these areas overlapped (these are represented by the light grey text boxes):

6. the process of learning to make art; 58

54 Relevant literature pertaining to this area of interest will be discussed in §4 and §5.
55 Relevant literature pertaining to this area of interest has already been discussed in §2.2.4.1 to §2.2.4.2.
56 Will be discussed in §4.3.1.
57 Has already been discussed in §2.2.5 to §2.2.5.2.
58 Will be discussed in §4.
7. developing a personally structured framework to guide one’s art-making process; \(^{59}\)
8. expressing and experiencing the self whilst making art; \(^{60}\)
9. learning something new involves unfolding in the embodied personality knowledge and skills that already exist in an enfolded state at the level of the ground state. \(^{61}\)

I looked to existing research literature to find out what was already known about each of these topics. Whilst most of these have previously been discussed in this chapter, other areas will be discussed in the remaining sections of this chapter. By combining these overlapping areas, I was able to identify three particular areas of interest that still remained unanswered:

10. to make sense of an art student’s experience whilst learning to make art;
11. to develop a model to help make sense of when the actions and experience of an art student’s embodied personality are either congruent or incongruent with the consciousness and intentionality of their underpinning ground state; and also
12. to make sense of when an art student unfolds in their embodied personality knowledge and skills that are either congruent or incongruent with the intentionality of their ground state.

The concepts that are referred to in Figure 2.5 are influenced by various assumptions about the nature of reality and knowledge. These assumptions stem from Bhaskar’s philosophy of critical realism, as well as the philosophy of meta-Reality, and have informed the process of defining the object of my knowledge, and also the process of gaining access to information about it. In §2 the philosophical concepts from both the philosophy of critical realism, and that of meta-Reality, were discussed in detail. The concepts that are referred to in Figure 2.5 are also informed by existing literature from a diverse range of discipline areas. This literature will be discussed in §4 and §5.

\(^{59}\) Will be discussed in §4.3.1.
\(^{60}\) Will be discussed in §5.
\(^{61}\) Has already been discussed in §2.2.4.1 to §2.2.4.2.
Figure 2.5: Conceptual Framework

(1) The art school environment

(2) The experience of an embodied personality

(3) The process of learning something new

(4) The process of making art

(5) The stratified self

(6) The process of learning to make art

(7) Developing a personally structured framework to guide one's art-making process.

(8) Expressing and experiencing the self whilst making art.

(9) Learning something new involves unfolding in the embodied personality knowledge and skills that already exist in an enfolded state at the level of the ground state.

(10) This study is concerned with making sense of an art student's experience whilst learning to make art.

(11) This study is concerned with developing a model to help make sense of when the actions and experience of an art student's embodied personality are either congruent or incongruent with the consciousness and intentionality of their underpinning ground state.

(12) This study is concerned with making sense of when an art student unfolds in their embodied personality knowledge and skills that are either congruent or incongruent with the intentionality of their ground state.

The embodied personality

The ground state

The illusory ego

The stratified self

The process of making art

The experience of an embodied personality

Learning something new involves unfolding in the embodied personality knowledge and skills that already exist in an enfolded state at the level of the ground state.

This study is concerned with making sense of an art student's experience whilst learning to make art.

This study is concerned with developing a model to help make sense of when the actions and experience of an art student's embodied personality are either congruent or incongruent with the consciousness and intentionality of their underpinning ground state.
§4 Art education and the art school environment

One of the dominant political trends in regards to formalised education is the reduction of education to training. Educational opportunities to participate in or learn about ‘the arts’ (whether it be dance, drama, music, computer-graphics, filmmaking, visual arts, or literature) tend to be rationalised by their work place viability, economic return, or contribution to the academy. However, as Regent (2002) points out, all available research into arts education indicates that society should recognise art as being of great value to humanity, that educational experiences in art need to be given equal status with other disciplines, and that this requires a structure that accommodates all aspects of artistic activity, including history, aesthetics and criticism, learned alongside or through art making. Despite this, there has been a recent concern with securing the place of ‘the arts’ in the primary and secondary school curriculum by coupling it with other discipline areas. For example, there is a growing trend to use the visual arts to expose cultural, social and historical bias and to promote critical thinking in students (Duncum, 2001; Eisner, 1998, 2001; Mason, 2004; Yokley, 1999). While these are important aspects to develop in students, the educational outcomes are more immediately related to social studies rather than art. Further, art education already has to contend with constraints on learning time; thus while it may appear arbitrary to impose divisions between subjects such as social studies and art, it is vital to ensure that learning time allocated for ‘the arts’ is not compromised by the hidden agenda of other subjects.

If afforded the opportunity to study art within the Higher Education sector, students are likely to find themselves indoctrinated into the assumptions about art subscribed to by the institution that they find themselves. The most prevalent of these assumptions today appears to be ontological relativism. Relativist assumptions about being are based on the understanding of the socially produced nature of knowledge. In relation to art, relativism illuminated the cultural, social and political bias underlying judgements about artistic quality and aesthetic value, thereby proclaiming a multiplicity of individual realities that are infinitely interpretable and equally worthy of aesthetic presentation and regard (Dissanayake, 1995 p.xvi). ‘When it comes to the contemporary art scene’ Howard Gardner writes, ‘most individuals find themselves incapable of rendering satisfactory evaluations and become skeptical that such

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62 According to Abbs (1994), ‘training’ invariably involves a narrowing down of the consciousness to master certain techniques or skills, whereas ‘education’ is to do with educing, with releasing, with liberating (Abbs, 1994 p. 15).
63 According to Davis (2008 pp.98-99), calculations based on the recommended allocation of teaching time for each subject, suggest that the average amount of time dedicated to teaching visual arts in NSW primary schools is between 22.5 and 37.5 minutes per week.
64 This is alarming considering Usher, Byrant and Johnson’s (1996) suggestion that adults in contemporary society participate in learning to construct an understanding, and create an image, of themselves.
valuations can ever be performed’ (Gardner, 1990 p.15). Although it is true that reality can be infinitely interpreted, this does not automatically equate to there being multiple realities. While embracing the notion that anything can be an occasion for art is liberating, it is perplexing to observe the contemporary art scene’s reliance on conceptual analysis and justification of art to fill the gap that judgements about artistic quality and aesthetic value may have once occupied. According to Peter Hill (1995), membership as a visual artist in the Higher Education sector is secured by one’s ability to articulate the conceptual background of their art. This is a growing trend within the VET sector as well. Although its expression may have changed, it would appear that ‘contemporary’ art may still be clinging to modernist certainties of rationalism, instrumentalism and materialism (Timms, 2004). Perhaps the dependence on rationalism is due to the ontological assumptions that deny the existence of a mind-independent reality. Despite the post-modern rhetoric which suggests that it is addressing the power-base inherent in judgements about artistic quality and aesthetic value, and the resulting isolation of art products to galleries and museums, there is still room for improvement. There are many characters participating in the art world’s post-modern ‘narrative’: artists, curators, gallery owners, patrons, critics, teachers and students in educational institutions. Indeed, as Singerman suggests: ‘one task of a degree-granting art school is to define for its constituents and institutions who is an artist, to separate its graduates from cowboy artists or community center artists or shopping mall or state fair artists or portrait painters, landscapists, watercolorists, maritime painters, and so on’ (Singerman, 1999 p.204). Bearing this in mind, it would be naïve to suggest that power-relations and judgements over artistic quality and aesthetic value didn’t exist in the post-modern art world.

On a related note, Bourdieu argues that ‘there is no room for naivety’ in the present stage of the artistic field: ‘never has the very structure of the field been present so practically in every act of production’ (Bourdieu, 1980 p.291). Here, Bourdieu suggests that contemporary art-making practices are self-conscious at every turn: ‘self-conscious’ in the sense that artworks are produced with conscious reference to the history and present practices of the art world. Singerman extends Bourdieu’s argument, suggesting that the artist’s awareness of ‘the [artistic] field is what is now taught as art, and that this teaching has allowed for the production of a critical and self-aware art practice’ (Singerman, 1999 p.212). Whilst a critical and self-aware art practice might be a desirable goal for academic-artists, it also has unintended consequences. As Bourdieu suggests (1980), by making constant reference to the structure of the field of art itself, it ‘excludes the layman’ (Bourdieu, 1980 p.291). Another unintended consequence of critical and self-aware art practice involves the inhibition of free-

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65 According to Bhaskar, relativists have wrongly inferred that because all beliefs are socially produced (epistemic relativity) all beliefs are equally valid (judgmental relativism), in the sense that there can be no rational grounds for preferring one to another (Bhaskar cited in Shipway, 2002 p.92).

66 See §4.2.1.1.
flowing art-making activity.\textsuperscript{67} The hidden price of lifting the status of 'the arts' from the realm of craft and skilful representation or mere self-expression, to its position in the academy involves the exclusion of those people who do not possess the cultural capital to participate in the hidden meanings, as well as stifling the artist's own enjoyment of free-flowing art-making experiences. To be critical and aware of one's self in activity involves splitting the focus of one's attention from the activity, to considering how it might be located within the current structure of the field of art.

\section{Approaches to art education}

Approaches to teaching art can be classified according to the extent to which they intervene into each student's development as an artist. These are referred to as interventionist and non-interventionist approaches to art education, and can be seen to be located along a continuum with interventionist approaches at one end and non-interventionist approaches at the other. Interventionist approaches intervene into students' development as artists, whereas non-interventionist approaches do not. This system of classification can also be applied to three main schools of thought within the field of art education. These three schools of thought can be distinguished according to the priority they place on: (i) teaching practical skills; (ii) encouraging creative self-expression, and (iii) promoting conceptual analysis and critique. As can be seen from Figure 2.6 (below), teaching practical skills and promoting conceptual analysis and critique are located towards the interventionist end of the art education continuum, whilst encouraging creative self-expression can be seen as being located towards the non-interventionist end.

\textsuperscript{67} This is discussed further in §5.6.
§4.1.1 Interventionist

§4.1.1.1 Teaching practical skills

Teaching practical skills associated with creating works of art is located towards the interventionist end of the continuum. In this approach to teaching art, each studio area, for example, drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, sculpture, ceramics, is taught in a way that makes explicit to the art student what is required to become proficient in using it to either make representations of the world, communicate ideas or express one’s self. In the particular studio area of drawing, for example, students might be taught about how to use line and tone in purposeful ways to convey a sense of perspective, texture, or movement, in order to make realistic representations of various subject matter. They might also be provided opportunities to represent subject matter in subjective or abstract ways. Gardner likens this to the process of learning to read and write:

Individuals who wish to participate in artistic perception must learn to decode, to “read,” the various symbolic vehicles in their culture; individuals who wish to participate in artistic creation must learn how to manipulate, how to “write with” the various symbolic forms present in their culture; and finally, individuals who wish to engage fully in the artistic realm must also gain mastery of certain central artistic concepts. Just as one cannot assume that individuals will – in the absence of support – learn to read and write in their
natural languages, so, too, it seems reasonable to assume that individuals can benefit from assistance in learning to “read” and “write” in the various languages of the arts.

(Gardner, 1990 p.9)

Here, Gardner emphasises the importance for art education to support students to learn how to draw. Teaching practical skills is an interventionist approach to art education that provides opportunities for students to develop new understandings and skills that are directly related to the task of creating artworks.

§4.1.1.2 Promoting conceptual analysis and critique

Promoting conceptual analysis and critique is also located towards the interventionist end of the continuum. In this approach to teaching art, students might first be taught the various principles associated with analysing art works, for example, their formal or conceptual qualities, and be provided with opportunities to apply this knowledge to a variety of past and present artworks.

Alternatively, hierarchical discourses which frame talent, creativity and criticism within the fine arts might be questioned and critiqued, on the grounds that there can be no certainty regarding what is valuable within the discipline of fine arts and what is not. In particular, the privilege held by pictorial realism and its powerful status as the conventional indicator of artistic talent might be made visible (Ashton, 1999a). Students might therefore be encouraged to push and stretch the boundaries of each studio area, as a reaction to the social and political positions that they privilege. This might be done without first providing students with opportunities to become fluent in the practical skills associated with their traditional use (Singerman, 1999 p.207).

From this perspective, ‘the conceptual framework that underpins an artwork is of primary importance in the realisation of a work, and [...] one learns skills and techniques only when they are required, not for their own sake’ (Carroll, 2006 p.2). Thus, artworks might be created first as concepts, and also through discourse, with mountains of words accompanying each artwork, in order to explain its meaning and intention, and justify its existence (Hill, 1995; Timms, 2004 pp.30-33). Although the practice of privileging words over technical skill and visual expression is a common trend within the Higher Education sector, Peter Timms is not convinced that it actually benefits the discipline of fine art, it’s communities, and Australian culture as a whole,

by privileging words over visual expression, the university’s rewards system, while it might suit the bureaucracy, encourages a narrowly didactic approach to art making. And, by
implication, it demands that art be constructed from a blueprint, discouraging whatever
springs from the unconscious: metonymy, in other words, rather than metaphor. No room
for healthy anarchy or freewheeling experimentation here!

(Timms, 2004 p.31)

As will be discussed further in §4.2.1.1, the new accreditation guidelines for art-related
courses in Australia means that this approach to art education is not exclusive to higher
education in Australia, as it is now being enforced on art education practices within the VET
sector as well.

§4.1.2 Non-interventionist

§4.1.2.1 Encouraging creative self-expression

Encouraging creative self-expression is located towards the non-interventionist end of the
continuum. In this approach to teaching art, students are provided with art materials and the
time and space to create art works and are encouraged to play around freely, expressing
themselves, setting their own agenda, to be creative and express themselves. The teaching
of practical skills, rules, and formulas or offering guidance or suggestions about a developing
artwork are seen to inhibit or taint free-flowing creative self-expression, and emphasise
instead, the importance of learning through finding out for one self (Carroll, 2006 pp.2-3).
From this perspective, ‘the role of the individual student in expressing her or himself through
individual art making activities becomes paramount, at the expense of the knowledge that
defines the discipline of the visual arts or crafts’ (Carroll, 2006 p.2). Non-interventionist
approaches to art education stem from a philosophical perspective similar to the conceptual
analysis and critique school of thought discussed in the previous section in that they
question the values of the so-called academy as well.

§4.1.3 General discussion

In art education practice, the three areas: teaching practical skills, promoting conceptual
analysis and critique, and encouraging creative self-expression often overlap. Art educators
tend to combine aspects from each in order to provide quality learning experiences for their
students; however, it is important to note their distinguishing features because the practice of
art teaching often involves prioritising one of these areas over the others. For example, at the
time of data collection, the particular art school that was involved in the present study
appeared to prioritise the teaching of practical skills. Although learning practical skills was
considered a means to an end (being able to express oneself and to communicate ideas), it was placed at the centre of the curriculum. Students were also provided with opportunities to discuss and analyse the works of past and present artists, in terms of their formal properties and how they might reflect or respond to trends in art-making, or the social or political climate of the times in which they were created. This can be contrasted to art schools in the Higher Education sector, which generally prioritise conceptual analysis and critique of art works, at the expense of learning the practical skills associated with creating works of art within each of the studio areas, for example, drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, sculpture and ceramics. Within this environment, particular studio areas and techniques for creating artworks are chosen because they suit the concept that is being communicated. Proficiency in the skills associated with the particular studio area, like the ability to create representational imagery, for example, are not valued nor promoted. As Singerman (1999) notes, ‘representational drawing’ is no longer considered to be central to an artist’s training in university-based art schools, rather, ‘it is now a particular and optional skill, something one might like to use, like the ability to cast fiberglass resin or to weld’ (Singerman, 1999 p.206). However, Singerman also highlights a problem with art education approaches that neglect skill development: ‘the teaching of and about the current art practice in lieu of traditional studio art training, enforces professional membership by depriving the student, not so much of traditional skills, but of useable ones – the skills that might be put to work by a public artist’ (Singerman, 1999 p.207).

Paul Duncum (2001) observes that there has been a discernible shift in school-based art education in the USA from studying art of the institutionalised art world to studying the more inclusive category of visual culture. Carroll (2006) makes a similar observation about the state of art education in Australian universities. One of the respondents in Carroll’s study reportedly commented on: ‘the debate that “raged” in the art school where he taught concerning the content of the “core curriculum” and the place of so-called “visual culture”, understood in this context as the cultural milieu of the art student’ (Carroll, 2006 p.3). The argument for visual culture is that it may be more ‘socially relevant’ at this time. However, as Eisner (2001) points out, the study of visual culture, influenced by critical theory, pays less attention to a culture’s aesthetics than to its politics. From this perspective, what may be referred to as ‘the fine arts’ are merely products representing what those in power choose to praise. While social and political analysis of artworks can be illuminating, according to Eisner (2001), it effectively transforms the student from a productive young artist into an analytic spectator and may serve to compromise other values: making art is one of the ways in which humans can individually represent their world, and the process of art making is one that involves the whole person.

\[68\] See §4.1.1.2
There is much research literature available that explores interventionist and non-interventionist approaches to art education, particularly within the context of primary schools. Much of this pertains to the beliefs of primary school teachers or pre-service teachers (that is, university students who are training to become generalist primary school teachers, which involves teaching creative arts), regarding their own proficiency as an artist and their ideas about how art should be taught (Ashton, 1999a, 1999b; Bamford, 2002; Galbraith, 2004; Gibson, 2003; Grauer, 1998; Powell, 2001; Sanger & Tickle, 1987; Zimmerman, 1994). The literature suggests that many generalist primary school teachers and pre-service art teachers do not feel confident about their own drawing abilities (because they were never explicitly taught the skills associated with drawing), and therefore refrain from teaching drawing or art-making at all. In educational terms, this involves the use of non-interventionist approaches to art education (Ashton, 1999a p.43).

Grauer’s (1998) research suggests that the way that art was taught in both school and university courses shapes pre-service teacher’s notions about the nature of art and the way it should be taught. These ideas are echoed in Carroll’s (2006) relatively recent findings which reveal that where adult artists are trained makes a difference in the forms and meanings about art that they ultimately produce, and affects their subsequent teaching and research endeavours (Carroll, 2006 p.1). Carroll proposes that ‘artists who teach at university art schools frequently defer to their own art educational experiences and to their formative experience of the art school when it comes to the pedagogical representation of their own artistic practice’ (Carroll, 2006 p.3). It seems reasonable to suggest that the same might be true for art teachers in secondary schools and in the VET sector as well.

These findings are significant for the context of the present study because it indicates that the approaches that are utilised for teaching art to the students in this study are likely to have an ongoing influence on their art-making practice long after they leave the art school environment. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss these particular issues in depth. Suffice it to say that at the time of data collection, within the particular art school environment that was involved in the present study, there was a preference for teaching the practical skills involved in making works of art within particular studio areas, together with developing in students a personal understanding about the art-making practices of past and present artists, and the works they produced.

In this section I have briefly discussed the three main schools of thought relating to where the priority of art education can lie. These involve teaching practical skills, promoting conceptual analysis and critique, and encouraging creative self-expression. Those educators who prioritise the teaching of practical skills make the assumption that explicitly teaching the techniques and practical knowledge and experience associated with producing works of art will stand art students in good stead for their life or career as an artist. Those who prioritise
conceptual analysis and critique make the assumption that explicitly teaching students to critique the dominant discourse pertaining to quality in the arts will enable a successful life or career as an artist. Those who prioritise creative self-expression make the assumption that freedom to play around with materials, to create forms and make marks, and to learn from one’s own art-making efforts, will enable a successful life or career as an artist.

§4.2 Art education research reviews, reports and policies

Research into arts education overwhelmingly indicates that society should recognise art as being of great value to humanity, that educational experiences in art need to be given equal status with other disciplines, and that this requires a structure that accommodates all aspects of artistic activity, including history, aesthetics and criticism, learned alongside or through art making (Regent, 2002). However, in the past decade, a large body of both Australian and international research and discourse relating to art education has concerned itself with securing the place of art education in the primary and secondary school curriculum by demonstrating the way in which it contributes to student’s academic performance in other discipline areas (Catterall, 1998; Colwell, 1995; Deasy, 2002; Eisner, 1998; Murfee, 1998; O’Connor, Holland, Brodie, Dunmill, & Hong, 2003; Smithrim & Upitis, 2005).

§4.2.1 Australian art education

Australian art education reports indicate a perceived need to justify the existence of art education in the climate of an economically driven political agenda (Coulter, 1995; Davis, 2008 pp.40, 70; Strand, 1998). This can be seen to be a major problem facing art educators, as it places the arts in a vulnerable position and hinders its own development. A casual reading of the Australian government paper Creative Nation: Commonwealth Cultural Policy easily leads one to reach the conclusion that, in October 1994, there was only one politically correct view of the arts: that of an income generating profession. This is rather ironic when one considers the findings published in Don’t give up your day job which suggest that most Australian artists cannot make a living from their profession and that low income affects the amount of art that is produced in Australia (Bott, 2003; Throsby & Hollister, 2003). Nevertheless, in the introduction to the Arts Education Senate Report of 1995, Coulter suggests that the National Curriculum and other educational initiatives are an attempt to squeeze artistic activity into a restrictive mould, a mould determined by vocational training – indicated by the growing emphasis on measurable outcomes rather than on creative process (Coulter, 1995 p. vi). Coulter suggests that uncritical implementation of these outcomes is a cause for concern for educators who recognise that ‘the process of coming to understand is as important as the product’ (Coulter, 1995 p. 135).
The more recent *Research in the Creative Arts Project* was intended to ‘undertake a comprehensive study of research outputs in art, craft, design, music and drama in order to develop a set of performance indicators and weightings in the creative arts’ (Strand, 1998 p.xiii). The project required initial consideration of the importance of the creative arts in Australian society. The resulting report recognised that: ‘the creative arts are a key contributor to the development of an Australian culture that shapes both our individual and collective identities. The arts are dynamic, reflecting the changing socio-political climates, adding to our understanding and appreciation of our culture, shaping our values and attitudes, while supporting spiritual and material development’ (Strand, 1998 p. 11). The Australia Council submission envisages arts education as enriching and empowering: ‘arts education plays a key role in the socialisation process and in introducing students to imagination, experimentation and problem-solving, producing perspectives that are central to defining Australia’s role in the emerging global economy and culture’ (Strand, 1998 p. 12).

However, these perspectives need to be considered with respect to the findings from Throsby and Hollister (2003) which indicate that:

- most Australian artists cannot make a living from their art;
- one in three artists live below the poverty line;
- Australia’s capacity to create art is constrained by low income and economic factors; and
- although Australian professional artists are highly educated, they are a significantly under-utilised cultural and social resource.

How can art education possibly play a key role in defining Australia’s role in the emerging global economy and culture if the creative activity of professional artists is constrained by low income and economic factors? Will the new *Visual Arts, Craft and Design Training Package* remedy these constraints?

§4.2.1.1 *Visual Arts, Craft and Design Training Package*

The new *CUV03 Visual Arts, Craft and Design Training Package* for art-related courses within the VET sector in Australia has resulted in revised accreditation guidelines for art-related courses. The *CUV03 Visual Arts, Craft and Design Training Package* is a nationally endorsed and recognised set of integrated components for training and assessment for the Visual Arts, Craft and Design industry that can be used for developing and recognising people’s competencies. It comprises three key components, including Competency Standards, the Assessment Guidelines and the Qualifications Framework, which are endorsed by the
National Quality Council (IBSA, 2008). According to the Program Manager for Fine Arts courses at the VET organisation in which data collection for the present study took place, accredited Fine Art courses below the level of Certificate IV are being phased out (P. Wilde, personal communication, December 2008). This is a result of the new Visual Arts, Craft and Design Training Package, which offers Certificates I – III in Visual Art and Contemporary Craft instead. This means that the Certificate III in Fine Art course, (that the students who were involved in data collection for this study were enrolled in), will not be continued. Further, the Core Drawing module that was used for observational data collection in the present study is also being phased out. The course structure for Certificate III in Visual Arts and Contemporary Craft indicates that the new drawing-related module that appears to be the equivalent to the Core Drawing module from Certificate III in Fine Art, is called Produce drawings to represent and communicate the concept.  

According to the Australian Qualifications Framework (2008), Certificate III qualifications 'prepare candidates for both employment and further education and training', and 'largely replace the outdated category of trade certificates'. Successful completion of the Certificate III in Fine Art enables students admission into Certificate IV in Fine Arts, Diploma in Fine Arts and Advanced Diploma in Fine Arts (TAFE NSW, 2008 pp.52-54). This is particularly relevant for those applicants who have not completed 10 units in the NSW Higher School Certificate Record of Achievement (or equivalent).

The emphasis of the new training package appears to be on conceptual development and producing artworks. Depending on how teachers interpret this module for their students, the emphasis on ‘producing drawings’, that is, the focus on the end product, at the expense of the process of getting there, has the potential to work against an art student’s enjoyment of the process.  

The new CUV03 Visual Arts, Craft and Design Training Package also emphasises the development of ‘Employability Skills’ in replacement of ‘Key Competencies’ (IBSA, 2007 p.1). The eight Employability Skills are:

- Communication
- Initiative and Enterprise
- Learning
- Teamwork

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69 Three-quarters have had formal education in a university, College of Advanced Education, teacher’s college, TAFE or specialist artist training institution. Four out of ten have had private training (Throsby & Hollister, 2003).

70 It is worth noting that at the time of data collection, the art school environment that was involved in this study appeared to prioritise the teaching of ‘practical skills’. With the newly imposed changes, it appears that teaching ‘practical skills’, might become a secondary priority to the conceptual development of artworks. This was previously discussed in §4.1.

71 This interpretation is based on Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience, which will be explored further in §5.
• Planning and Organisation
• Technology
• Problem Solving
• Self-management.

Whilst these appear to be generic skills that could relate to a variety of industry areas, they also have very specific implications for the visual arts. For example, the Certificate IV in Visual Arts and Contemporary Craft, has four core units of competency:

CUVCOR04B  Originate concept for own work and conduct critical discourse;
CUFSAF01B  Follow health safety and security procedures;
CUVCOR09B  Select and apply drawing techniques and media to represent and communicate the concept; and
CUVCOR13B  Research and critically analyse history and theory to inform artistic practice.

(IBSA, 2007 p.15)

When it comes to assessing against the performance criteria for each of the elements in these units of competency, teachers also need to provide evidence that Employability Skills have been met (IBSA, 2007 p.16). Innovation Business Skills Australia (IBSA) suggests ‘the challenge for trainers and assessors is to build on their existing practices and techniques to ensure that the delivery and assessment of the Employability Skills meets the needs of learners and employers in the changing world of work’ (IBSA, 2007 p.17). This new priority, however, is likely to be achieved at the expense of something else.

Whilst this top-down initiative was developed in response to ‘increasing requests from industry’, and was based on wide consultation with industry, VET practitioners and training organisations, it is uncertain whether it developed out of consultation with students who have graduated from these courses. The extent to which the replacement of Certificate III in Fine Art with a more generic qualification in Visual Arts and Contemporary Crafts will impact on an art student’s experience of being at art school and becoming an artist, is yet to be determined.

The development of Employability Skills is a logical educational outcome for education within the VET sector, and also for the contribution that artists, craftspeople and designers might be able to make to the Australian economy. However, as Timms points out,

so long as art schools remain narrowly vocational, and so long as they teach contemporary cultural theory in place of art history, those few who do succeed in becoming artists will go on making work that conforms to the style of the moment without having it in them to express anything of much depth, substance or originality. In the
meantime, perhaps it’s just as well that post-modern theory provides a convenient explanation for why depth, substance and originality are no longer desirable goals.

(Timms, 2004 p.33)

The growing emphasis on industry-driven art education agendas, including the promotion of conceptual-based artwork, appears to neglect the essence of ‘what art can be’, and indeed the role which this behaviour has played in human evolutionary survival for thousands of years (Dissanayake, 1995).\[^{72}\] It is therefore reassuring to note that at the state government level the non-economic benefits of participation in the arts are being recognised, for example, the Annual Report 2006-07 compiled by the NSW Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation, celebrates the important role that the arts play in ‘promoting community identity and cohesion’ and ‘improved health and wellbeing’, in addition to their contribution to the economy (Laxton, 2007).

It would be remiss in a discussion of the literature pertaining to art education in Australia not to refer to the art education and art-making practices pertaining to Indigenous Australians. This is the topic of the discussion in the following section.

\[\textit{\textsection 4.2.1.2 Aboriginal Art}\]

Most of the qualities we admire and encourage in so-called traditional Aboriginal art are those we usually deride in contemporary non-Aboriginal art. Aboriginal art promotes cultural cohesion and religious orthodoxy; it helps, for example, to protect and maintain respect for social hierarchies, honours and perpetuates traditional practices, and reinforces the subordination of the individual to strict communal laws.

(Timms, 2004 p.60)

Here, Timms identifies an interesting anomaly in the contemporary art world. Given that Aboriginal art accounts for more than half of the overall value of visual art sales within Australian borders and the overwhelming majority of Australian exports (Timms, 2004 p.63), it appears that the practices of traditional Aboriginal art, are highly valued by the contemporary art market. This might be due to its long-standing place in history. Carnegie (1991 p. 5) suggests that Aboriginal rock engravings, which are found in every Australian state, can be traced back 40,000 years. Aboriginal art is therefore believed to be the oldest discovered on earth. Another possible reason for the privileged position of Aboriginal art in the contemporary art world, is the crucial role that ‘the arts’ play in maintaining and continuing the Dreaming

\[^{72}\] Dissanayake (1995) claims that art is a behaviour that was central to human evolutionary adaptation and that the aesthetic faculty is a basic psychological component of every human being.
(Townsend-Cross, 2003). According to Marcelle Townsend-Cross, ‘The Dreaming is based on the creative forces and the rhythms of life itself [...]. The dreaming is maintained and continued through Classical Indigenous Literature: language – song, storytelling, visual literature [...] and ritual – dance, drama and ceremony’ (Townsend-Cross, 2003 pp.3-4). It is important, however, to appreciate that what is being referred to in this thesis as ‘the arts’ may actually be a misinterpretation of what may be better known as visual literature for Indigenous Australia (Townsend-Cross, 2004 p.8).

Townsend-Cross also states: ‘it is the “act” or “ritual” of expression, the re-telling, continuum and imparting of knowledge that is most important. Through Indigenous literature, knowledge is maintained and taught to each generation’ (Townsend-Cross, 2004 p. 9). Catherine Ellis (1992), an ethno-musicologist, who was involved in a project to preserve traditional performances by indigenous Australian communities, also refers to the importance of the ritual of expression. Ellis wrote:

The senior Indulkana women asked us to film an important ceremony, which was the first we had seen performed at the actual sites represented in the song [...] The performance lasted for four days. The body designs, which are painted out of view of the main group of singers, were very elaborate and took a long time to perfect. During that period the women responsible for the singing had to keep the relevant painting song present in the minds of the performers. A form of antiphonal singing arose when the women being painted also sang these painting songs. This part of the ceremonial performance sometimes took up to three hours, while the actual dance that showed the design might only have taken two minutes. It is important to remember in such circumstances that the actual performance lasts from the minute the women occupy the ceremonial ground, not just during the time the women are performing [...] Meaning was conveyed through the singing of many small songs, through the body design, the dance steps, the musical structures and it was tied into the mapping of the region [...] We took still photographs, 16mm black and white film, anthropological, musical and textual details of this and the other performances we were privileged to witness.

(Ellis, 1992 p.158)

However, several years later, on returning to the region, Ellis reported:

We talked about how beautiful the performance had been when I was there [...] I inquired of the principal performer how recently and how often the ceremony had been done since then. Her shocked response was something for which my field training had not prepared

73 According to Charlesworth (1991): ‘The dreaming is the quintessence of reality for Australian Aborigines. It refers to the primordial shaping of the earth by the Ancestor Spirits and their giving to each Aboriginal people its moral and social Law. It also refers to the persistence of the spiritual power of Ancestor Spirits in the land, as well as to the personal life-plan of each individual, which originates in his or her spirit-assisted conception. The dreaming is not merely something in the past (though it is that) but something that is contemporaneously active [...] it is a living and present reality continually sustaining and energising plants, animals and human beings’ (Charlesworth, 1991 p. 111).
me. She said, ‘Never. We’ve given it to you.’ I discovered in the course of talking to them that I was now the sole possessor of that ceremony, and that the act of filming and recording it in order to ‘preserve’ it had, in fact been an act of destruction of the tradition. I had put a vital and living tradition into a dead form and I had no mechanism that would be traditionally acceptable for undoing that action. I was shattered.

(Ellis, 1992 p.159)

There are several things worth noting from this story with regards to the process of preparing for a performance as well as the performance itself. To begin with, Ellis writes of the meaningful body designs and the interconnected relationship between singing and painting of the body designs in the process of preparing for the dance. She also mentions that the integrated ritual of singing, painting and dancing became essential to the total performance. Ellis’ example also suggests that the process of making art, or what Townsend-Cross calls ‘the act or ritual of expression’, might be essential for imparting knowledge, celebrating life, developing values and maintaining community. Whilst the process of recording the performance on film, provides some documentation or record for future reference, it effectively turned ‘a vital and living tradition into a dead form’.

The NSW Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation’s concern with the important role that the arts play in ‘promoting community identity and cohesion’ and ‘improved health and wellbeing’ (Laxton, 2007), instead of focusing exclusively on their contribution to the economy, certainly provides no consolation to Ellis’ predicament, it is, nevertheless, encouraging and reassuring for the future of Aboriginal art practices to continue to impart knowledge, celebrate life, develop values and maintain community. It is also interesting to note that these Aboriginal art practices, which are seen to play a vital role in cultural and community wellbeing, also attract attention (and sales) within the contemporary art market. This is in spite of these same qualities often being disparaged in contemporary non-Aboriginal art (Timms, 2004 pp.60, 63).

Given these circumstances, one might ask how Australian art education helps to ‘promote community identity and cohesion’ and ‘improved health and wellbeing’ for Indigenous Australians? Further, how does the new Visual Arts, Craft and Design Training Package, referred to in the previous section, help to maintain and continue the Dreaming?

The Visual Arts, Craft and Design Training Package includes a range of qualifications which relate specifically to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts. IBSA have identified five core units of competency for the Certificate II in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts qualification:

- CUVCOR02B Develop and articulate concept for own work
- CUFSAF01B Follow health safety and security procedures
- CUVCOR07B Use drawing techniques to represent the object or idea
When it comes to assessing against the performance criteria for these units of competency, assessors also need to provide evidence that Employability Skills\(^{74}\) have been met (IBSA, 2007 p.14). Whilst these new priorities might contribute to future employment for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander art students, it is also possible that the added emphasis on Employability Skills might also serve to neglect that which will contribute to maintain and continue the Dreaming.

§4.2.1.3 Art Education Research

The Australia Council *Promoting the Value of the Arts: Arts Education Research in Australia* (2001) lists the theses completed in Australian universities over the period 1980 to 2001. Of these ‘only 11 per cent focus on any aspect of the visual arts and only two per cent have direct classroom orientation’ (Davis, 2008).\(^{75}\) In a recent review of visual education in Australia, Davis (2008) provides an explanation for this lack of research:

> art education staff across Australian universities are not numerous, with some holding only part-time or contract appointments as consistent with the restricted number of student contact hours requiring to be serviced. Most, in both education and discipline contexts have focussed their initial research attention on gaining academic research qualifications, the latter most often doing so through practice-based research. Hence there has been little time for visual education discipline-based research.

(Davis, 2008 p.58)

Further to this, Singerman points out that in the United States, ‘College and university art teachers are hired as artists rather than as educators [or indeed, educational researchers]’ (Singerman, 1999 p.188). Carroll suggests that this is similar in university-based art schools in Australia (Carroll, 2006 p.4). In spite of these constraints, research pertaining to art education is being conducted in Australia, primarily by multiple small-scale studies asking local questions, scoping studies to underpin policy, evaluations of specific initiatives, and research generated for advocacy purposes (Davis, 2008 p.59). Davis also suggests that

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\(^{74}\) The Employability Skills include the following eight components: communication, initiative and enterprise, learning, teamwork, planning and organisation, technology, problem solving, and self-management.
philosophies and agendas for arts education abound; however, studies of what actually happens in the normal course of art education at classroom level are rare (Davis, 2008 p.58 pp.59, 68).

Bresler’s (2001) Agenda for Arts Education Research suggests that studies, which examine ‘the complex operation and effect of art education in its natural settings, focusing on ordinary and exemplary school art as well as on informal settings of arts learning’, together with studies that explore ‘the “experienced art education” from the perspectives of students and learners’, are very much needed (Bresler, 2001 p.6).

Both Davis and Bresler identify a significant gap in the art education research literature, a gap that the discussion in the present thesis seeks to fill. However, contrary to Davis’ position, which seems to downplay the importance of philosophical studies, this thesis considers that philosophical discussions and methodological investigations for art education research play an important role in the process of improving art education practice. It was therefore important that I did not neglect the philosophical considerations of art education research, or the actual practice that goes on within art school classrooms. Thus, the present study engaged in a process of traversing the gap that appears to exist between these positions.

Of particular importance for this thesis is an exploration of the contribution that realist philosophies can make to the field of art education research. There is a growing trend within visual art institutions, visual art education, and research concerning art education, to deny the existence of a mind-independent reality (Ashton, 1999a; Bamford, 2002; Dissanayake, 1995; Timms, 2004). As previously noted, these irrealist positions matter because they problematise attempts at art education reform, which would have to be understood as implicitly doomed to failure when there is uncertainty regarding the very existence of the things that need to be changed. This thesis draws on the alternative views of reality and knowledge that critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality offer, to promote solidarity and strength in the way that art education research can contribute to human emancipation.

§4.3 Locating the art student within the field of art education

There appears to be a fine line that art educators must negotiate. This line can be traced between the skills and knowledge that define the fine arts discipline, and the interests and intentions of the students that arrive at the learning environment.

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75 Even in the U.S., the research analysed for the Deasy (2002) Critical Links report encompassing studies dating from 1976 to 2001, only 6 per cent relate to the visual arts.
76 The discussion throughout this thesis is underpinned by a belief that being clear about the philosophical assumptions that inform one’s research and recommendations for education practice are important.
77 See C1 §6.
From a dualistic perspective, learning within a disciplined field like the fine arts involves learning about something other than one’s self. However, there are a number of perspectives that can be taken with regards to determining those qualities of value to the discipline of fine arts and those which are not, for example, there might be the practical skills and knowledge associated with producing works of art. In some schools, representational drawing skills are valued, whilst in other environments, concepts are highly regarded. However, this thesis draws heavily on the philosophical concepts pertaining to meta-Reality. From this perspective, the fundamental nature of reality is one of unity or non-duality. What exactly does this mean for locating the student within the field of art education? From a perspective of non-duality, the art student, the discipline of fine arts and the field of art education ultimately exist in a unified state. Certainly these apparently separate elements are differentiated from each other, but by understanding their non-dual basis, we can locate the art student as central to the project of art education, without denying the influence that the fine arts discipline itself should have on what is learnt in art school environments.

From a perspective of non-duality, or more specifically, the theory of co-presence, the qualities that are recognised as valuable by the fine arts discipline, are also qualities that exist in an enfolded state (as a potential) within the ground state of every art student. The subsequent model of unfolding the enfolded suggests that learning fine art involves unfolding those qualities that are (i) recognised as valuable by the discipline of fine art, and (ii) also exist in an enfolded state within each art student’s ground state, within the repertoire of skills and knowledge of the art student’s embodied personality.

Klaus Witz (2000) refers to the relationship between personal growth and learning about subject matter related to a particular discipline in the following way:

> We are painting a picture of a phenomenon – let us call it ‘content-related opening of self’ or croos – whose exact shape needs to be established, but at the heart of which is attainment, through an opening of the self in relation to subject matter, or by channelling the inner forces using subject-matter, of some kind of stability, some sense of inner assuredness and inner-direction.

(Witz, 2000 p.11)

Witz defines ‘content-related opening of self’ as ‘an independent process of the self’s unfolding through contact with subject-matter’. This is distinguished from ‘merely operating comfortably (affectively and intellectually) in a sphere of subject-matter because of ability and favourable background, without there being a deeper change in self that persists and unfolds

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78 See §2.2 to §2.3.
79 See §2.2.4.
further the individual’s subsequent history’ (Witz, 2000 p.11). The key point that Witz makes here is that content-related opening of self involves growth. It is the self growing or opening in response to being exposed to particular content or subject matter that is embodied within a particular discipline of study. With respect to the Bhaskarian model of unfolding the enfolded,81 it is the embodied personality unfolding qualities that exist in an enfolded state within its ground state following exposure to subject matter related to a particular discipline of study.82

Witz’s concept of ‘content-related opening of self’ provides the possibility for reconciliation of the tension that might manifest between the values of the fine arts discipline (as expressed in the art school curriculum), and the values (in the form of interests and intentions) that students arrive at art schools with. This way we can locate the art student as central to the project of education, without denying the influence that the fine arts discipline itself should have on what is learnt in art school environments. This aspect of ‘content-related opening of the self’ relates to Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, which will be discussed in §4.4.

The growth which is involved in ‘content-related opening of the self’ also relates to flow experience.83 According to Csikszentmihalyi, ‘enjoyable events occur when a person has not only met some prior expectation or satisfied a need or desire but also gone beyond what he or she has been programmed to do and achieved something unexpected’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.46). Further, ‘flow forces people to stretch themselves, to always take on another challenge, to improve on their abilities’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a p.30).

Witz’s ‘content-related opening of self’ poses an important challenge for the field of art education:

The task then is to envision an educational system in which [content-related opening of self] is allowed to occur or not to occur depending on the individual, but which promotes opening of the self in other directions, or promotes other kinds of opening of the self, and thereby holds out the possibility of deeper life-fulfilment for all.84

(Witz, 2000 p.20)

Barbara Regent’s doctoral thesis provides a response to Witz’s educational challenge within the context of learning to make art. This is the topic of the following section.

80 See §2.2.4.1 and C6.
81 This is discussed further in §2.2.4.1 and C6.
82 In terms of Bhaskar’s model of human emancipation, that which unfolds in the embodied personality also needs to be consistent with the ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.243, 235).
83 This will be explored further in §5 to §5.8.
84 Witz suggests that deeper life-fulfilment is ‘a more general, more fundamental, and more universal category than [content-related opening of self]. It refers to fulfilment (in the course of a path through life)
§4.3.1 The process of creating art

Barbara Regent’s 2002 dissertation entitled, *Reflective qualities of the artistic creative process and chaos theory* (Regent, 2002), was primarily concerned with finding out how the artistic creative process works, particularly in relation to the visual arts, in order to identify essential elements of that process and find a language with associated definitions that most simply describes such a complex process. Regent’s findings suggest that the aim of an art curriculum is to enable students to reach a state of self-organisation in their work, so that they have a *personally structured framework* within which to continue to individually explore their visual world throughout their lifetime. The art curriculum can provide experience-based knowledge concerning skills in using a variety of materials, methods and subject matter, and that this is continually developed through the ontological experience that accumulates in a person’s lifetime. The findings indicated that the reflective process that is involved in the artistic creative process is of vital importance in art curriculum considerations, and suggested that Chaos Theory concepts and language can be adequately used to describe the dynamics of the activity.

The present thesis sought to build on Regent’s findings by determining the way that an individual’s attitudes and beliefs regarding art determines their *personally structured framework* for participating in the artistic creative process, and whether these attitudes and beliefs can be changed in such a way that enables further participation. While Regent’s research was concerned with collecting data about the artistic creative process of practising artists, the present study was initially concerned with relating these findings to both art students and non-art students participating in the study, but what eventuated was quite different.85

Regent’s research also suggests that an art curriculum should work towards enabling students to become independent learners through a student’s approach to learning rather than on relying on assessment of an end product to determine a student’s development (Regent, 2002). However, the assessment guidelines provided by the NSW Board of Studies (2000) in the *Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus* suggest that teachers make judgements about the qualities of finished works and works in progress based on the prescribed outcomes. A cursory glance at the Visual Arts outcomes reveals a steady progression from ‘experimental approaches’ in early education to making ‘representational imagery for particular audiences’ at the end of primary education. Such outcomes may serve to constrain students’ art education experiences if not interpreted creatively by their teachers. An Australian dissertation which elicited the significant values of accomplished art teachers and related these to pre-service art teacher education, suggests that not all Australian primary teachers

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of the individual’s “real nature” – not necessarily of what the individual believes his/her innermost nature to be, but of what he/she realizes it to be after there is deeper life-fulfilment’ (Witz, 2000 p.20).
are empowered to do this (Bamford, 2002). It is uncertain whether this is the case for secondary school art teachers.

Determining whether art teachers in primary and secondary schools or in the VET or Higher Education sector are empowered to interpret established learning outcomes in novel and creative ways, is beyond the scope of the present literature review. However, Bourdieu’s theory of the *habitus* has much to contribute to an understanding of the dialectical relationship between the art student and the particular art school learning environment that they find themselves in. An overview of this will be discussed in the following section, and will also be extended in C5.

§4.4 Bourdieu’s concept of the ‘habitus’ and Bhaskar’s stratified model of the self

Bourdieu uses the term *habitus* to refer to the evolving set of durable, transposable dispositions that a person has (Bourdieu, 1990 p.53). He also suggests that the *habitus* is the active presence of past conditions of which it is the product (Bourdieu, 1990 p.54). Bourdieu suggests that an understanding of human agency must incorporate both the evolving fields within which people are situated and the evolving *habituses* which people bring to the social fields of their practice (Bourdieu, 1990 pp.52-65).

Bhaskar suggests that ground states are ‘fields of possibilities, some of which must be actualised; but which, and in what form, depends upon what other forces and bodies, charges and constraints there are in the field of their actualisation’ (Bhaskar, 2002e p.91). It appears that Bourdieu’s concept of the *habitus* might offer a theory to help explain how the field of possibilities of one’s ground state might manifest in the actions and experience of their embodied personality, and further how the expression of ground state properties through the embodied personality might also be constrained. If this is the case, then perhaps a person’s evolving *habitus* might also be sustained by their ground state. Figure 2.7 (below) illustrates this integration of Bourdieu’s concept of the *habitus* and Bhaskar’s conceptualisation of the stratified self.

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85 See C3.
86 I would like to thank Dr. Karl Maton for exchanging ideas relating to this topic as I developed my understanding of the integrated relationship between the concepts relating to the habitus and the embodied personality and social structures.
According to Bhaskar, our ground state or transcendentally real Self is absolute; however, by manifesting in a relative world, which is necessarily constrained by physical laws, the ground state will always be slightly limited and there will always be a sense in which it seems to be constrained (Bhaskar, 2002e p.95). Bourdieu’s theory of the *habitus*, being the active presence of the past conditions that produced it, suggests that the past conditions from which the embodied personality has emerged might have constrained the ground state’s manifestation in (i) the evolving set dispositions of the *habitus*, and (ii) the experience and action of the embodied personality. In light of this, the following distinction between the embodied personality, ground state and habitus will tentatively be used in this thesis:

(a) *embodied personality* refers to the actual actions and experience of a person,

(b) *ground state* refers to the field of possibilities which enable and sustain the actions and experience of an embodied personality (Bhaskar, 2002e p.91); and

(c) *habitus* refers to the set of dispositions or tendency for an embodied personality to act in a particular way or have a particular experience (Bourdieu, 1990 p.53).

Pitt also suggests that ‘our embodied personality is formed through our social relations, through the ideologies and practices that influence attitudes to the sex, the ethnicity, the accents and the shapes and smells of our bodies’ (Pitt, 2008 p.63). It is a product of both our individual physical selves and the societies we live in (Pitt, 2008 p.207).
Bourdieu’s theory suggests that the ways that the latencies of the ground state and the durable and transposable dispositions of an art student’s habitus become realised in the embodied personality’s art practice might depend on the relations between their habitus and the structured social context that they find themselves (Bourdieu, 1990 pp.54-58). According to this perspective, human agency can only be accounted for by relating the past social conditions, in which the habitus that generated them was produced, to the present social conditions, in which it is implemented (Bourdieu, 1990 p.56). Thus, the habitus can be understood as being both structured by conditions of existence, and also generating practices, beliefs, perceptions, feeling and so forth in accordance with its own structure (Bourdieu, 1990 p.53; Maton, 2008 p.51).

The complementary relationship between Bourdieu’s concept of habitus and Bhaskar’s stratified model of the self, and its relationship to the process of learning to draw within particular art school learning environments will be extended and applied to empirical data in Chapter Five. For now, let’s consider Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience.

§5 Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience

Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow was developed with the intention of advancing understanding of the qualities which render subjective experience intrinsically rewarding and congruent with human self-fulfilment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988b p.7). Central to this theory is the concept of flow experience, which refers to the optimal experience of an enjoyable and seemingly automatic and effortless, yet highly focused state of consciousness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 p.110). The key idea in the flow construct is ‘autotelic experience’. An autotelic experience ‘refers to a self-contained activity, one that is done not with the expectation of some future benefit, but simply because the doing itself is the reward’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.67). Csikszentmihalyi suggests that flow experience occurs when ‘all the contents of consciousness are in harmony with each other, and with the goals that define the person’s self. These are the subjective conditions we call pleasure, happiness, satisfaction, enjoyment’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a p.24).

According to Csikszentmihalyi’s research into rewarding experiences, people from a wide range of backgrounds, participating in a wide range of enjoyable activities, describe the phenomenon of ‘enjoyment’ in very similar ways (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 pp.110-113). Csikszentmihalyi’s research suggests that the phenomenology of enjoyment has seven or nine main elements. In Flow: the psychology of optimal experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 pp.48-67), seven elements of enjoyment are outlined, whereas in Creativity: flow and the psychology of discovery and invention (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 pp.110-113), nine elements are described. As can be seen from Table 2.2, in Creativity, he treats the first two elements,
namely, ‘there are clear goals every step of the way’ and ‘there is immediate feedback to one’s actions’, separately (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 p.111), whereas in Flow he combines them and treats them as one: ‘clear goals and feedback’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 pp.54-58). Further, in Creativity (1996 p.113) he also identifies ‘the activity becomes autotelic’ as the ninth element, whereas in Flow (1990 pp.67-70), he treats this as a completely separate topic to the seven elements of enjoyment.

Table 2.2: The main elements of enjoyment

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<tr>
<td>1. Clear goals and feedback</td>
<td>1. There are clear goals every step of the way</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. There is immediate feedback to one’s actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. A challenging activity that requires skills</td>
<td>3. There is a balance between challenges and skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The merging of action and awareness</td>
<td>4. Action and awareness are merged</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Concentration on the task at hand</td>
<td>5. Distractions are excluded from consciousness</td>
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<td>5. The paradox of control</td>
<td>6. There is no worry of failure</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. The loss of self-consciousness</td>
<td>7. Self-consciousness disappears</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. The transformation of time</td>
<td>8. The sense of time becomes distorted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. The activity becomes autotelic</td>
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Csikszentmihalyi (1990 p.49; 1996 p.113) suggests that the combination of these elements causes a sense of deep enjoyment that is very rewarding. In the sections that follow, I consider each the seven elements listed in the left-hand column. In some instances, I have slightly varied the headings in order to convey a clearer interpretation of their essential meaning. I have also varied the order in which I discuss the first three elements with the view of developing my discussion in a more coherent way.

### §5.1 There is a balance between challenges and skills

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990 p.46), ‘enjoyable events occur when a person has not only met some prior expectation or satisfied a need or desire but also gone beyond what he or she has been programmed to do and achieved something unexpected’. Flow theory
suggests that enjoyable experiences are enabled by a particular relationship between an individual's perceived skill level and the perceived challenges that they negotiate (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a p.30). If we perceive that the task at hand is too high in relation to our perceived skills, then we might feel frustrated or anxious. Alternatively, if we believe that our potential is greater than the opportunities to express it, then we might feel bored (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 p.111). ‘Enjoyment appears at the boundary between boredom and anxiety, when the challenges are just balanced with the person’s ability to act’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.52). From this perspective, an experience of flow, or enjoyment, is likely to occur when the perceived challenges require skills that are just beyond an individual’s perceived skill level, so that all of their conscious awareness is utilised to negotiate the particular task at hand (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 pp.74-75). Csikszentmihalyi suggests that for one’s experience to remain in a state of flow, the complexity of one’s activity needs to be increased. Depending on the circumstances, this can happen by developing new skills or taking on new challenges. Thus, flow can be understood as forcing people to grow, by taking on more challenges and improving their abilities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a p.30). This relates to Dewey’s suggestion: ‘In the process of living, attainment of a new equilibrium is at the same time the initiation of a new relation to the environment, one that brings with it potency of new adjustments to be made through struggle’ (Dewey, 1958 p.17).

John-Steiner’s research into the minds of a wide range of creative people from various disciplines suggests, ‘the contradictory pulls of joy and discouragement, of sudden bursts of insight and tiring efforts of execution, of process and product, are the necessary tensions that fuel creative thought’ (John-Steiner, 1997 p.79). From this perspective, we can appreciate that although flow theory might suggest that enjoyable, autotelic experiences involve a balance between skills and challenges, and is the enjoyable alternative to experiencing boredom and anxiety, there are also a range of tensions that are involved in thinking creatively, and an experience of these tensions might not always be compatible with an experience of flow.

§5.2 Action and awareness are merged

According to Csikszentmihalyi, one of the most universal and distinctive features of optimal experience is that people become ‘so involved in what they are doing that the activity becomes spontaneous, almost automatic; they stop being aware of themselves as separate from the actions they are performing’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.53). This appears to relate to Dewey’s suggestion that it is the ‘degree of completeness of living in the experience of making and perceiving that makes the difference between what is fine or esthetic [sic] in art and what is not’ (Dewey, 1958 p.26). Basically, Dewey is suggesting that the product of fine art reflects the experience of the creator in the act of creating. It appears that from Dewey’s
perspective, the product that results from an artist experiencing flow, or what he terms 'esthetic [sic] experience', will be 'finer' than the product that results from an artist who is aware of themselves as being separate from the actions they are performing. What is the difference? In one instance the artist might experience himself or herself as being separate from their actions, in the other, such separation is not experienced. However, according to Bhaskar,

in order to act at all there must be something, at some level, which you do not do by thinking about how to do it, but which you just do, spontaneously, unconditionally, normally pretty effortlessly, and unless you acted in that non-dual way, you could never do anything at all.

(Bhaskar, 2002a p.xi)

There appears to be two points of difference between what Csikszentmihalyi and Dewey refer to, and what Bhaskar refers to. The first is that both Csikszentmihalyi and Dewey appear to be concerned with whether a person actually experiences the deep involvement that Bhaskar argues is fundamental to every human activity. The second point relates to Bhaskar’s claim that in order to act at all, there must be something at some level which you do effortlessly (Bhaskar, 2002a p.xi), and yet Csikszentmihalyi suggests that flow experience involves activity that is far from effortless.

Both Csikszentmihalyi and Bhaskar refer to the unity of awareness and action. Csikszentmihalyi suggests that it is a feature of flow experience, whilst Bhaskar refers to it as transcendental agency (see §1.2.3). Whilst Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow focuses on the deep concentration of one’s attention in one’s activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.53), Bhaskar’s concept of transcendental agency refers to either total focus or attention on an act, which he calls mindfulness, or an act which is spontaneously performed, which he calls mindlessness (Bhaskar, 2002c p.4). According to the logic of Bhaskar’s philosophy, the activity of making art consists of a series of non-dual moments in which the ‘artist’ or ‘art student’ is engaging in either mindful or spontaneous transcendental agency (Bhaskar, 2002c p.4). It seems from these definitions, that an art student’s experience might fall into Csikszentmihalyi’s criteria for ‘flow’ only if they actually experience the deep involvement, which Bhaskar argues is fundamental to every human activity.

Another potential point of difference relates to Bhaskar’s claim that in order to act at all, there must be something at some level which you do effortlessly (Bhaskar, 2002a p.xi). This appears to relate to Csikszentmihalyi’s suggestion that although flow experience might appear to be effortless, ‘it does not happen without the application of skilled performance’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.54). Bhaskar suggests that as activities become practised, the skills involved in doing them may become part of, or be one with, the innermost being of the
agent (Bhaskar, 2002e p.212). Thus, as art students practise particular drawing activities, particular skills like hand-eye co-ordination, become one with the innermost being of the art student. Bhaskar suggests that as the mind empties itself of other thoughts through the total focus on the activity, the activity is no longer controlled by the focused, undivided attentive mind, but rather, performs itself, effortlessly, efficiently, without strain (Bhaskar, 2002e p.212). Whilst this might be the case, Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow appears to be more concerned with those types of activities that extend our skills in mindful ways, rather than allow us to draw on existing skills in creative and spontaneous ways.

It appears that it is because one’s skills are only just adequate for the task at hand, an experience of flow involves disciplining our concentration, and establishing control over where our attention is focused so that we can rise to the challenge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 pp.41, 54). Such a concentrated focus of the mind is also made possible by the clarity of goals and the constant availability of feedback (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 p. 112).

§5.3 The task has clear goals and feedback

Flow theory suggests that the reason that it is possible to achieve complete involvement in a flow experience is that goals are usually clear, and feedback immediate (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.54). In some activities, like making art for instance, where goals might not be clearly established in advance, a person must develop a strong personal sense of what they intend to do. Csikszentmihalyi suggests that an ‘artist might not have a visual image of what the finished painting should look like, but when the picture has progressed to a certain point, she should know whether this is what she wanted to achieve or not. And a painter who enjoys painting must have internalized criteria for “good” or “bad” so that after each brush stroke she can say: “yes, this works; no, this doesn’t”. Without such internal guidelines, it is impossible to experience flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 pp.55-56). However, the goals and feedback that guide one’s art-making activity might not necessarily present themselves in a person’s conscious mind, as Csikszentmihalyi’s earlier work with Getzels suggests (1976).

Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi’s research was concerned with understanding the ‘problem finding’ ability in adult art students. Their findings suggest that art students who ‘delay closure’, that is, delay determining the structure that the final stage of their drawing will eventually take until late in its creation, ‘are guided by an unconscious feeling of what they are to do’ (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976 p.177). In such instances, students might ‘formulate the problem below the threshold of awareness before beginning to draw’. Further, although an art student might not consciously know what the drawing will end up looking like, ‘their behaviour shows that at some level the goal is quite clear’ (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976 p.177). Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi’s research also suggests that the use of unconscious
processes in problem formulation and solution correlate with artworks that are judged to be more original, and further, success of art students in their practice as an artist after leaving art school (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976 p.178). This study had a longitudinal component, which suggested that art students who worked with a subliminal goal in mind, guided by a ‘deep purpose’ that was below the threshold of their awareness, were more likely to continue their career as an artist after leaving art school (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976 p.201).

In dialectical critical realism Bhaskar outlines the stratification of intentional agency, suggesting that actions can be motivated by instinctual, unconscious, preconscious and conscious drives (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.164-167). He also suggests that every action has an intention (or reason) behind it. However, the real reason for a particular action or practice may not be what we believe it to be at the level of our conscious awareness (Bhaskar, 1993 p.164). This theory suggests that our actions might stem from instinctual, unconscious or preconscious reasons and therefore allows us to understand that an experience of enjoyment might not have to be limited to those activities in which goals and feedback are occurring at the level of conscious awareness.87

The idea that an experience of flow whilst learning to make art requires a clearly defined problem or goal, is complicated when one considers that the process of making art often requires more divergent than convergent thinking (Flaherty, 2004 p.87). Bearing this in mind, if an artist’s creative process is guided by a divergent thinking process, they might be more likely than their convergent thinking counter-parts, to experience less flow, and more creative blocks.

On a similar note, John Geake’s (2004) neuropsychological model of creative intelligence suggests that creative development in high-functioning individuals does not proceed in a linear or step-wise progression, but, as Anne Sterling (2003) suggests, is essentially non-linear. Geake suggests that this is because the complexity of contributing factors and their feedback into this development.

Although Csikszentmihalyi emphasises the importance of clear goals for attaining flow experience, he also acknowledges that in the case of creative endeavours the goals may not be clearly set in advance, and further, suggested that lack of precise definition of goals may differentiate conventional from creative production.

Whereas a conventional artist starts painting a canvas knowing what she wants to paint, and holds to her original intention until the work is finished, an original artist with equal technical training commences with a deeply felt but undefined goal in mind, keeps

87 In C7, I discuss Csikszentmihalyi’s ideas about clear goals and immediate feedback, together with Bhaskar’s ideas about intentional human agency and his stratified model of the self, in order to make sense of some of the students’ experiences whilst making art.
modifying the picture in response to unexpected colors and shapes emerging on the canvas, and ends up with a finished work that probably will not resemble anything she started out with.

(Csíkszentmihalyi, 1990 p.208)

It is not certain from these descriptions whether Csíkszentmihalyi’s definition of flow experience can actually be extended to include those instances of creative production in which an art student’s goals are not consciously known in advance. This topic will be explored in later chapters of this thesis.88

§5.4 Distractions are excluded from consciousness

Csíkszentmihalyi suggests that flow is the result of intense concentration on what is going on in the present moment (Csíkszentmihalyi, 1996 p.112). Distractions can interrupt an experience of flow in one’s activity, and in an activity like making art, for instance, it may take hours to recover the peaceful state of mind associated with flow experience (Csíkszentmihalyi, 1996 p.120). The absence of distractions, including thoughts, worry and frustration, appears to be an important by-product of completely focusing our attention on the task at hand (Csíkszentmihalyi, 1990 p.58). By avoiding distractions, we might be able to control the focus of our awareness, thereby experiencing ‘flow’ in our activities for longer. This is considered further in C4.

§5.5 One acts with a sense of control over their actions

This particular feature of flow experience is somewhat confusing. On the one hand, Csíkszentmihalyi suggests that exercising a sense of control over one’s actions is a key feature of flow (Csíkszentmihalyi, 1990 p.49). On the other hand, he suggests that it might be better understood as involving the lack of concern or worry about losing control (Csíkszentmihalyi, 1990 p.59). He also suggests that although some people might describe flow experience as feeling that they are in total control, this isn’t necessarily the case. He argues that the issue of control wouldn’t even arise during flow experience. Awareness of being in control would interrupt flow experience, because our attention would be split between (a) what we are doing, and, (b) our awareness of feeling in control (Csíkszentmihalyi, 1996 p.112).

What Csíkszentmihalyi seems to be saying is that there is simply no room for experiencing a concern of failing or losing control during flow experience. The reason that failure is not an
issue is that in ‘flow’ we know what has to be done and our perceived skills are adequate for coping with the complexity of the perceived challenge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 p.112). Further, in order to experience flow, we must be completely involved in our activity and experiencing a concern about failing or being in control would only serve to distract us from focusing the totality of our attention on what we are doing.

Some of the art students involved in this study made comments which suggested that some of the most enjoyable, intriguing experiences of making art occurred when they were not deliberately controlling their actions. This appears to relate quite strongly to whether the goals and feedback that are guiding our actions are present at the level of conscious awareness. This will be discussed in C7. In C7, I draw on Bhaskar’s ideas about intentional human agency, together with his stratified model of the self, to consider the idea of goals and feedback and the sense of control or lack of control that might occur during the process of making art, and also during an experience of flow.

§5.6 Self-consciousness disappears

During flow experience concern for the self disappears, yet paradoxically the sense of self emerges stronger afterwards (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.62). It seems that by focussing one’s concentration on the activity at hand, a person might forget their ‘problems’, and also temporarily lose the awareness of self, which in normal life often intrudes in consciousness, causing psychic energy to be diverted from what needs to be done. During an experience of flow the self is fully functioning but not aware of itself being so, which means that it can focus solely on the task at hand (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a p.33). It appears that the concept of self, that is, the information we use to represent to ourselves who we are, slips below the threshold of awareness during flow experience. Csikszentmihalyi’s research suggests that ‘being able to forget temporarily who we are seems to be very enjoyable’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.64).

Australian singer/songwriter, Paul Greene appears to be referring to a similar thing in the lyrics to East or West:

I finally put my fist through that mirror
And the nightmare staring back to see
That the only times I was ever really happy
Were the times that I wasn’t thinking about me.

(Greene, 2005)

See C4, C5, C6, C7.
See §2.2.3.
In these few lines, Paul Greene appears to be referring to a personal realisation that real happiness is associated with those moments when his ‘self’ is not the focus of his attention, or the content of his thoughts. This is contrasted to the ‘nightmare’ that he experiences when his thoughts and attention are concerned with his self.

Csikszentmihalyi suggests that our ideas about our ‘self’ are some of the contents of our consciousness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.34); they are second-order thoughts, that is thoughts about our thoughts and actions. Thus, when these particular ideas are no longer the focus of our attention, we might feel that we have ‘stepped out of the boundaries of the ego and have become part, at least temporarily, of a larger entity’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 p.112). Further, ‘when not preoccupied with our selves, we actually have a chance to expand the concept of who we are’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.64). This can also lead to an experience of self-transcendence, that is, to a feeling that the boundaries of our being have expanded (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.64). Flow theory suggests that an absence of a sense of the self as being separate from the world around it, is also sometimes accompanied by a feeling of union with the environment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.63).

There appears to be some similarities between the characteristics of the loss of self-consciousness feature of flow experience and Bhaskar’s model of human emancipation. Whilst Csikszentmihalyi speaks of ‘stepping outside of the boundaries of the ego’, Bhaskar speaks of ‘shedding the illusory ego and heteronomous elements of the embodied personality’ (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.17, 52-53; 2002e p.103). A further point of interest is that whilst Csikszentmihalyi speaks of ‘feeling that we are part of a larger entity’, Bhaskar conceptualises this ability to experience an expanded sense of self in terms of our underpinning ground state being situated within an all-encompassing cosmic envelope (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.54-55).

Although the language used differs, both appear to be speaking about the same phenomenon, Csikszentmihalyi from the point of view of the experience as flow, Bhaskar from the point of view of what enables that experience, namely the ground state. The matter can therefore be understood as follows. Ego awareness is an obstacle to the enjoyment of being, or flow. Hence when awareness of the ego is absented, an individual's experience of being will be more enjoyable. This is because the experience is congruent with a fundamental part of their being, or ground state. This relates to another feature of flow as involving ‘order in consciousness’ or ‘order in self’. Csikszentmihalyi suggests that once this sense of order is experienced, maintaining it becomes one of the central goals of the self (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a p.24). A loss of self-consciousness, or order in self, seems to involve a state of

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90 It is also worth noting Alice Flaherty’s suggestion that ‘a heightened self-consciousness may be necessary for at least a certain kind of introspective artist’ (Flaherty, 2004 p.137).

91 See §2.2.5.2 and C3 §3.2.1.
congruence between the different dimensions of our stratified self (Bhaskar, 2002c p.38). Bhaskar particularly states,

Self-consciousness, properly understood, is consciousness by the embodied personality of the consciousness of the transcendentally real self witnessing it; but it also connotes, with the loss of a sense of ego consequent upon self-realisation, the increasing reflexivity made possible by an expanded embodied personality, an expanded sense of self in the relative field of existence; and the totality which is awakened with it, a totality which is potentially infinite for any one being at any one moment of time, and potentially infinite for that being, in any respect, over time.

(Bhaskar, 2002c p.6, footnote 2)

It appears that ‘flow’ might be an experience that an embodied personality could have when it is being in a way that is congruent with its ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.17, 52-53; 2002e p.103). The finer details of the possible relationship between flow experience and one’s ground state is explored in C4 and C7.

§5.7 The sense of the duration of time is altered

It appears that sustained periods of intense, present-moment awareness might lead to an altered sense of the passage of time. Whilst Csikszentmihalyi suggests that losing track of clock time probably isn’t a major feature of enjoyment, he also proposes that experiencing ‘freedom from the tyranny of time’ might contribute ‘to the exhilaration we feel during a state of complete involvement’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.67).

§5.8 A summary of flow experience

There appears to be several similarities between flow experience to which Csikszentmihalyi refers, and the type of experience that an embodied personality might have when it is congruent with the consciousness of its ground state. Csikszentmihalyi’s theory complements that of Bhaskar in that it relates to how the phenomenon of enjoyment or flow might be experienced, whilst Bhaskar’s meta-theory is concerned more with the underpinning structure of reality enabling such an experience.

This thesis was initially concerned with using Csikszentmihalyi’s ideas about flow experience, together with Bhaskar’s concepts about emancipation within the framework of a stratified self, to understand human emancipation from a specific point of view: the removal of inhibitions on the enjoyment of flow experience by art students. However, it seems that in order to be able
to do this, it might first be necessary to develop an understanding of the possible relationship between the phenomenon to which Csikszentmihalyi refers as flow experience, and the state of the relationship between the various strata of the self to which Bhaskar’s philosophy refers. This is explored in finer detail in Chapter Four and Chapter Seven of this thesis.

Another point worth summarising is the confusion that Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience presents for this thesis with respect to where an art student’s goals or intentions derive from. This confusion seems to relate to whether goals are present or absent in the conscious awareness of the art student, and whether they are driven by unconscious or preconscious intentions. An alternative to these positions are those instances in which goals might stem directly from the intentionality of the most essential part of an art student’s self, without any interference from their conscious, unconscious or preconscious mind. This topic will be considered from various perspectives throughout the thesis, with each interpretation reflecting the evolution of my understanding over the past four years.

§6 Restatement of the problem to be investigated

Existing research suggests that there are dominant social norms and expectations existing in society that serve to constrain people from pursuing art-related study and careers (Pitt, 2008). Within the Australian context, this might be due to a generally low-level of regard for the arts by Australian society (Timms, 2004 p.43), or possibly because most artists in Australia cannot make a living from their profession (Bott, 2003; Throsby & Hollister, 2003). However, even if aspiring artists manage to resist these dominant norms and expectations, they might also find that their efforts at fulfilling their personal sense of purpose in their art-making practice are further constrained by forces within the art school environment (John-Steiner, 1997 p.53; Timms, 2004 pp.30-33). These forces might also serve to mislead inexperienced art students from fulfilling their personal sense of purpose in their art-making practice, and might therefore need resisting as well.

Given this state of affairs, at its most general level, this thesis is concerned with accurately describing and/or explaining the reality of emancipation of adult art students within a formal art school learning environment. This thesis is also concerned with demonstrating how Bhaskar’s philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality can be applied to the particular field of adult art education. For Bhaskar, the project of emancipation involves shedding the unnecessary and unwanted structures and determinations that prevent human beings from realising their true potential (Bhaskar, 2002a p.219). This thesis is therefore concerned with making sense of the emancipation of art students from those things that inhibited or constrained their experience of enjoyment, satisfaction and fulfilment whilst

92 See §2.2.5.
learning to draw. Whilst acknowledging that there might be external determinations and structures that block and constrain the free development and flourishing of art students in general, this study was particularly interested in looking at those constraints that also exist, internalised, within particular art students.

One specific ‘problem’ that this thesis sought to solve involved determining whether there might be a relationship between the process involved in realising one’s true potential and/or fulfilling one’s personal sense of purpose and an experience of ‘flow’ or enjoyment whilst learning to draw.

At a secondary level, there were two further, ‘methodological’ problems that this thesis also sought to address:

- How might this specific investigation proceed from the perspective of critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality?
- What might emancipation itself look like in a research project about the experience of art students as they grapple with being at art school? In particular, what are the implications for data collection of emancipation from the perspective of critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality?

In the following chapter (C3), various concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality that were first introduced in the ‘underpinning assumptions’ section (C2 §2) will be drawn upon in order to justify the processes that were involved in collecting and analysing the empirical data for this study. In this way, Chapter Three provides concrete examples of how theoretical concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality can directly inform the practical task of ‘doing’ educational research.
Chapter Three – Methods for exploration

§1 Introduction to the methods chapter

The discussion in this chapter is an honest attempt at describing how I got to the interpretations that are made in the remaining chapters of this thesis. In this chapter I provide an outline of the development of my research, from late 2004 to February 2009. I attempt to explain, as sincerely as possible, what I did and the 'possible reasons' behind my decisions.

I am reassured by the principle of the irreducibility of intentionality, which suggests we cannot avoid reference to intentionality in the genesis of human actions (Bhaskar, 2002e p.236). This means every action has an intention (or reason) behind it. However, Bhaskar’s definition of intentional agency as including actions that are motivated by instinctual, unconscious, preconscious and conscious drives (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.164-167), also means that the real reason for a particular action or practice may not be what we believe it to be at the level of our conscious awareness. As previously noted in C2 §2.1.5, Brad Shipway states:

> It is entirely possible that the agent sincerely believes he or she is acting on a particular reason, but is sincerely mistaken. Bhaskar argues that the distinction between the real, or causally efficacious reason, and the “possible reason” (the one the agent thinks is the cause) is absolutely vital to our conception of what it means to be rational and self-reflective. Any form of self-critical thinking requires the agent to acknowledge the possibility that he or she might be wrong.

(Shipway, 2002 p.118)

It is quite possible that the reasons that I give for the decisions I made – for choosing a particular object of knowledge and the ways I collected and analysed data relating to it – might not be the ‘real’ reasons, that is, the causally efficacious reasons for my actions. As a self-critical thinker, it is important to bear this in mind as I attempt to explain and justify what the reasons for my actions were. I might be mistaken, in which case, I apologise for leading you astray.

Bhaskar’s truth tetrapolity, that is, the four basic components in the analysis of truth (Bhaskar, 1993 p.217), provides a rational line of argument which indicates there are real reasons for

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93 Much of the ‘theory’ that was previously discussed in the literature review chapter (C2) plays an integral part in the methods that were used for exploration. This same theory is also drawn upon again during the discussion chapters (see C4 to C7). As the reader progresses through the thesis, they might sense some repetition, with the same theories being referred to several times, for different purposes. Thus, it might seem strange for the reader to be pre-reading what might traditionally be thought of as
the way my data collection and analysis process progressed, and these real reasons exist in the realm of alethic truth. Bhaskar’s model of the stratification of intentional agency means it is possible I may never know what these real reasons are (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.164-167), and further, that the reasons I thought were guiding my decisions and actions might not be the real reasons (Shipway, 2002 p.118). However, the truth tetrapolity also accounts for this aspect of truth. The normative-fiduciary aspect of the truth tetrapolity accounts for the possibility that data collection and data analysis could progress regardless of whether I knew the real reasons for my decisions and actions, or not. Although I might not have been conscious of the real reasons for my actions does not automatically mean that my actions were any less valid. Further, despite the potential discrepancy between the real reasons and proposed reasons, it is still possible for me to describe what I did, and make propositions about my reasons for doing it. This is the referential-expressive aspect of the truth tetrapolity. The adequating aspect of the truth tetrapolity is what enables me to argue that one way of going about doing my research was more rational than another way. This is one of the things I attempt to do in this chapter.

Bearing the above qualifications in mind, the practice of collecting and analysing data, that is, my methods for exploration, could best be described as ‘intuitive’. By this I mean, although I might have had particular reasons for planning to do certain things in certain situations, when actually presented with a ‘real’ situation, I needed to respond spontaneously, and this was not always according to my predetermined plan.

I take heart in Bhaskar’s suggestion that ‘planning, organisation and regulation is a process which is inherently unstable and one could say risky’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.105). Further, living and acting in ‘the wisdom of uncertainty, located on your ground state, to be as empty and clear as possible, so as to be free, to adjust your plan at a moment’s notice, is a far better maxim for action than a rigid conformity to some idea dreamt up in another time and place’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.105). These suggestions are reassuring, for I found what did tend to guide my actions most of the time whilst I collected and analysed the data was often an intuitive sense of what my response should be. I refer to this as ‘an inkling’. The process of practising my research in this way is expressed in the working title of my thesis as: ‘the adventures of an inkling’.

94 See C2 §2.1.5.

95 This is not a lay-person sense of intuitive, but a term that is tied to Bhaskar’s theory. Brad Shipway suggests that a critical realist approach to educational research, ‘reveals the “intuitive” aspects of data gathering and analysis to be alethically grounded in a realist ontology, by virtue of an axiological commitment toward emancipation’ (Shipway, 2002 p.5). It can be compared with Collier’s (1994) notion of ‘in-gear’ and ‘out-of-gear’ freedom: ‘in-gear freedom is a matter of interacting causally with the world in order to realise our intentions; it is threatened by any world view which denies the efficacy of our intentions in bringing about changes in the real world; out-of-gear freedom is precisely a matter of disengaging our choices from causal interaction with the world, to ward off the threat that the nature of that world might limit or determine them’ (Collier, 1994 p.98).
§2 Research Design

The term ‘research design’ has a variety of interpretations. For Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, the research design is said to situate researchers in the empirical world and connect them to specific sites, people, institutions, and bodies of relevant interpretative material (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000 p.22; 2005 p.25). Other definitions are more specific. For Punch, the research design sits between the research question and the data (Punch, 2005 p.142), whilst Bogdan and Biklen (1998 p.50; 2007 p.55) suggest research design is based on a researcher’s theoretical assumptions, on data-collection traditions, and on generally stated substantive research questions. Considering the design one’s research will take is no mean feat.

Denzin and Lincoln suggest we consider the following five questions when structuring the design of our study:

1. How will the design connect to the paradigm or perspective being used? That is, how will empirical materials be informed by and interact with the paradigm in question?
2. How will these materials allow the researcher to speak to the problems of praxis and change?
3. Who or what will be studied?
4. What strategies for inquiry will be used?
5. What methods or research tools for collecting and analyzing empirical materials will be utilised?

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2005 p.376)

Here we have philosophical questions pertaining to the fundamental nature of reality and how we can make knowledge claims about it, sitting alongside very practical questions about particular actions we can take towards making such knowledge claims. Similarly, Crotty (1998 p.2), suggests justifying our choice and particular use of methodology and methods must reach into our assumptions about reality, and also the understanding we have about what human knowledge is, what it entails, and what status can be ascribed to it. It soon became clear that traversing the gap between theory and practice would be a key feature of my research. There was simply no way of avoiding it, and in the true spirit of ‘challenge’, the task of traversing this gap was neither easy nor clear. Further, there was a vast array of methodologies and methods on display in the educational research supermarket. According to Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004 p. 16), the bottom line for determining one’s approach to conducting research is that we should choose methods and approaches that offer the best opportunity for answering our research questions. Crotty (1998 p.13) also suggests that our research question lead us to our methodology and methods. Bearing all of this in mind, the term ‘research design’ has been interpreted in the present study to refer to
the way the research questions were connected to the procedures used for collecting and analysing data.

As will be seen in the discussion which follows (§3), the idea that the research question should guide our decisions regarding methodology and method is also consistent with one of the basic tenets of critical realism: the object of knowledge (the art students’ attitudes and beliefs about art) would determine how it would be known (Shipway, 2002 p.104). In §4, I consider ‘the strategy’, that is, the logic by which the study proceeded in order to develop answers to the research questions. The logic of this particular study drew on several established strategies for research, including case study research, grounded theory and action research. I make explicit the extent to which I intervened in the research situation, constructing it for research purposes. In §5, I provide an outline of the object of knowledge. This is followed by an outline of the tools and procedures used for participant sampling, collecting and analysing the empirical materials in §6.

§3   Traversing the theory-practice gap

There are several factors influencing decisions about research methodology and the rationale this provides for the choice of methods and the particular forms in which methods are employed (Crotty, 1998 p.7). It has been suggested these decisions are based on the researcher’s training, ideology and research question, and also assumptions the researcher has about the nature of human knowledge and social reality (Burke Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004 p.16; Crotty, 1998; Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1995 pp.9, 14). In the present instance, critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality informed a concern to recognise gaps between these meta-theories and actual research practice. These gaps relate to the epistemic fallacy and human emancipation.

§3.1   Attempting to avoid the epistemic fallacy

I am obviously coming in with a whole lot of strong ideas, big ideas about what is going on, and I am really trying, as much as I can to not control that process, and have it directed by you guys as much as possible.97

96 The discussion in this section has been taken directly from the data collection section of ‘Critical realism, meta-Reality and making art: traversing a theory-practice gap’ that was published in the Journal of Critical Realism (McDonald, 2008).

97 NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo1: 366-370 (The way that NUDIST qualitative software program was utilised for data anlysis in this study will be described in §6.4.1.1, §6.4.1.2 and §6.4.2.1 of this chapter. As this is the first reference to NUDIST, please note the following descriptions regarding the codes that will be used. The codes following ‘NUDIST reference:’ in the footnote refers to transcribed interviews and group discussion with student-participants. ‘I_’ refers to an in-depth interview. ‘GD…_’ refers to a particular group discussion. ‘AR_’ refers to the student-participant’s written record from the action learning component of the group discussions. ‘RJ’ refers to the Research Journal record that I kept. ‘A_’ refers to...
This was a comment I made to one of my research participants in our first one-to-one interview together. Not only does it provide empirical evidence of my own awareness of my bias as a researcher, but it also indicates my espoused commitment to having the student-participants in my research direct the research process as much as possible. This idea of having the students’ beliefs about what was important to share in relation to their experience at art school determine what they shared and how they shared it, relates to an idea Bhaskar refers to in the philosophy of critical realism as ‘the epistemic fallacy’ (Bhaskar, 1998a p.xii; 2002a p.57; 2002e p.81).

The epistemic fallacy marks the first theory-practice gap that needed to be traversed in this research. Early on, the question needed to be posed: what does avoiding the epistemic fallacy or ‘letting the object [of knowledge] determine how it is known’ (Shipway, 2002 p.104) look like in a research project about the experience of art students as they grapple with being at art school?

In this case, a variety of data collection methods were used:
- In-depth interviews provided insight into the subjective experience of each student.
- Non-participant observation enabled an understanding of interactions between students and teachers in a drawing class (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993 p.48; Minichiello et al., 1995).
- Group discussions were seen as a dialectical activity which might help participants to recognise their own ideas and express them more freely.
- Official documents, including class handouts, application forms and the module outline, were also accessed.

It was anticipated that combining different data collection methods would: (i) help to highlight different dimensions of the phenomena, (ii) compensate for the shortcomings of each method, and (iii) help to validate the findings by examining them from several vantage points (Minichiello et al., 1995 p.14).

Regarding avoidance of the epistemic fallacy, that is, letting the object of knowledge determine how it would be known, the following steps were taken. First, students were asked to determine whether their ongoing reflections would take place in a group or on a one-to-one basis. Second, they were invited to develop their own interview questions to guide the in-

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98 The reader might recall from C1 §2, that I had also been a student in the same art school that data collection took place. I completed my final semester of study as a student in June 2005, and data collection for the thesis began in February 2006.
depth interviews. Most students created the interview questions themselves and also thought about their responses prior to the actual interview. However, one decided that she did not want to create her own questions and requested an interviewer-guided questioning process instead.100 This request was, in effect, the means used by this student to determine how access would be gained to her thoughts and feelings relating to art and art school. Finally, each group discussion was guided through three broad areas of focus:

1. General reflections on their experience as art students;
2. Specific reflections on the class being observed;
3. Reflections on an aspect of students’ art-making practice they were attempting to improve or accept.

Within this structure the students determined what they would share. The focus of the group discussions generally centred on the students' reflections about their interactions with teachers and peers at art school, and how they were grappling with the process of being an art student and/or becoming an artist.

§3.1.1 What exactly did ‘letting the object of knowledge determine how it would be known’ mean for the extent to which I intervened in the research situation, constructing it for research purposes?

As stated above, a variety of data collection methods were used to gain access to information: in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, group discussions, and official documents. Each of these methods can be seen as being located along a continuum with varying degrees of intervening in the research situation. Accessing official documents would be located down one end of the continuum – this had very little influence on the research situation.101 Non-participant observation would be further along this continuum. My very presence in the classroom, together with the video camera, three microphones, sound desk, headphones, and notebook, certainly would have had some impact on the research situation. However, Joanne, one of the student-participants in this study, commented on my presence in the classroom, indicating she believed she was too concerned with attending to her own task she forgot my recording equipment was even there. Further, Joanne also indicated she imagined, from my position (as an outsider looking in), I might be able to identify a few things that she wouldn’t necessarily be aware of:

I imagine that being on the outside looking in, you will pick up a lot, but, whereas we are in it, we sort of don’t think about it: [we] are going through the process without actually thinking about it. So you are picking up all these stuff and going ‘oh, great’ you know, so

99 See C2 §1.1.2.
100 NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo1: 366-394.
101 However, documents that are accessed might affect how future documents are written.
we are not aware of it, whereas you are, because you are on the outside looking in.
Because we are getting so involved in what we are doing, that as I say, we forget the
camera is there, forget the speakers are there.\textsuperscript{102}

I was also aware at the time of collecting my observational data how the constraints of the
technology I was using might have impacted on the natural ecology of the classroom. For
example, by keeping the participating students close to the video camera and microphones,
and by attempting to avoid collecting video footage of the non-participating students meant
particular areas of the classroom needed to be allocated to participating students and non-
participating students.\textsuperscript{103} Thus, the students who attended this class couldn’t choose to sit just
anywhere in the classroom, but rather, they needed to be located either close to or away from
the video and microphones.

The interviews and the group discussions, including the action learning cycle, are located
towards the other end of the continuum, as this could have had quite a significant influence on
the research situation. The interview and group discussions certainly would not have occurred
without my influence. Further, as outlined in the discussion in §3.2, participating in the
interviews and group discussions was seen by several students as having a positive influence
on their experience of being at art school.\textsuperscript{104} This brings me to the second theory-practice gap
that needed to be traversed in this study.

\section*{§3.2 Attempting to achieve emancipation}

The concept of human emancipation harbours the second theory–practice gap that needed to
be traversed. Before describing how emancipation was promoted in the context of this
particular research project, it might be useful to revisit Bhaskar’s perspective on human
emancipation in general.

\textsuperscript{102} NUDIST reference: I\_S-Jo1: 337-346.
\textsuperscript{103} In accordance with mandatory ethics procedures outlined in the \textit{National Statement on Ethical
Conduct in Research Involving Humans} (National Health and Medical Research Council 1999),
participation in this study was strictly voluntary. This meant that non-participating students who were
enrolled in the same class as the participating students were not involved in data collection. Because of
the ‘unequal’ relationship that exists between students, teachers and researchers, a further ethical
requirement involved ensuring that non-participating students were not penalised (in terms of reduction
in the level of educational quality) by their decision not to participate in the research.
According to Bhaskar, the project of liberation involves shedding the unnecessary and unwanted structures and determinations that prevent human beings from realising their true potential (Bhaskar, 2002a p.219). Whilst the determinations and structures that block and constrain free development and flourishing are, in a sense, external to the individual, they also exist, internalised, within the individual. Thus, emancipation can be manifested in two distinctly different forms: ‘freedom from’ and ‘freedom to’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.67). Whilst negative ‘freedom from’ implies constraints that are both external and internal to the individual, positive ‘freedom to’ flows fundamentally from conditions internal to the individual. Although the removal of external constraints plays an important role in emancipation, it is never sufficient (Bhaskar, 2002c p.129). The old adage ‘You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink’ goes to the heart of human emancipation. We cannot force a person to be free. ‘Freedom to, unlike freedom from, cannot be imposed from without’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.67).

Bhaskar’s theory of human emancipation is interwoven with his analysis of the nature of the self. According to Bhaskar, the self comprises three nested levels of being: an illusory but real ego, a limited or finite embodied personality, and an absolute, unlimited, transcendentally real Self or ground state. Whilst the ego and embodied personality are unilaterally dependent on (sustained by) the transcendentally real Self, that self is overlain and occluded by the ego and other heteronomous elements of the embodied personality (Bhaskar, 2002c p.38). Bhaskar accordingly suggests human emancipation occurs at the level of the embodied personality, rather than the ground state, which is already free, and the process of liberation consists of shedding those aspects of our embodied personality, epitomised in the illusory ego, that are inconsistent with our true, essential nature (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.17, 46, 52-53; 2002e p.103).

However, in an interconnected world, emancipation is never a purely individual matter. According to Bhaskar, emancipation requires every human to shed the elements of their embodied personality that block or constrain their free development and flourishing, that is, that are inconsistent with their ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.52-53). This includes the products of human actions, including social structures, that are inconsistent with their ground states (Bhaskar, 2002c p.142). Bhaskar offers the ontological category of real, determinate absence, as well as the idea of absenting absences conceived of as constraints or ills, to contribute to a theory of human emancipation and actualisation of freedom (Bhaskar, 1993

105 Much of the discussion in this section is repeated from C2 §2.2.5.2. It is intended that this might contribute to the flow of the discussion, and might also serve as a reminder for those readers who are not immediately familiar with these ideas.
106 See C2 §2.2.5.2.
107 These correspond to the three zones of reality – demi-reality, relative reality and absolute reality – which in turn correspond broadly to the domains of the empirical/conceptual, the actual and the real.
pp. 174, 176, 239). However, he strongly recommends we do not exclusively focus our efforts on absencing absence in others or in social structures, for the principle of the primacy of self-referentiality suggests our only point of agency is from our self, and thus emancipatory efforts must first begin with our own embodied personality (Bhaskar, 2002e pp.21, 148, 224). This is based on the logic that when our embodied personality is consistent with our ground state, we will be ‘a maximally efficacious agent in unblocking the constraints on the realisation of beings everywhere’ and this will also lead to the greater fulfilment of our own potential (Bhaskar, 2002c p.58).

According to Bhaskar, we can witness our ground state ‘at rest and gradually in everyday life in activity in an expanding holistic field of consciousness, awareness and perception’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.38), and in this way, we might be able to articulate what was going on in our consciousness at these times. We need to recall Dennett’s cautionary note here, however, and realise that while we might be able to articulate what was going on in our consciousness, this knowledge cannot be immune from error. From this perspective, although we might think we have witnessed our ground state, we cannot be certain (Dennett, 2002 p.13). Nevertheless, although an embodied personality’s belief that (a) it has witnessed its ground state, or (b) it is being in a way that is consistent with its ground state, is not immune to error, it might still be the best source about what was going on (Dennett, 2002 p.13).

§3.2.2  Emancipation in this project

For educational theory to be directly related to educational practice it must have the power to explain an individual’s development.

(Whitehead, 1985 p.98)

Whitehead suggests explanatory power is an important criterion for determining the quality of educational theory. This can easily be translated to the topic of emancipation: for emancipatory theory to be directly related to emancipation, it must have the power to explain an individual’s emancipation, that is, it must accurately describe and/or explain the reality of emancipation. We can also extend this notion further: in order for emancipatory theory to be of any practical use it must actually become emancipation itself. This was the concern that motivated the question: what does emancipation itself look like in a research project about the experience of art students as they grapple with being at art school? And further: what are the implications for data collection of emancipation from both critical realist and meta-Reality perspectives? Answers to these questions required data collection methods that would first provide research participants with a means of absencing constraining absences and, beyond that, of realising themselves (Bhaskar, 2002a pp.107-108, 140, 170-171, 219; 2002c p.xxiii).
As previously noted, the implication of Bhaskar’s principle of self-referentiality is emancipatory efforts must first begin with the researcher’s own embodied personality (Bhaskar, 2002e p.224). In this case, these efforts related to my attempts to witness the consciousness of my own ground state, and to achieve maximum congruence between my embodied personality and ground state. These attempts, where successful, would make me more effective in my efforts to support the emancipation of the students involved in this study, and to develop a theory about their emancipation.

§3.2.2.1 Did I have to intervene in the research situation – constructing it for research purposes – as I promoted student emancipation?

Whilst data collection was mainly focused on gathering information for later analysis, it became clear that participation in data collection activities contributed in a positive way to the students’ experience at art school. In-depth interviews and group discussions, during which participation in an action learning cycle was made possible, provided forums for students to become more reflective about their experiences as students of fine art (Altrichter et al., 1993 p.48; Lakin & Wellington, 1994 pp. 175–90). The use of an action research process, which aims to link action to understanding, was intended to promote the enhancement of students’ awareness of the mutual influence of actions and thoughts (Reason & Bradbury, 2004).109

Several students indicated that participation in the data collection activities associated with this research contributed in a positive way to their experience at art school.110 Some of their comments relating to this topic are included below.

Jarrah: I have to thank you [...] I don’t know what you’ve got from it, I’m sure you’ll find that out down the track, but I actually got a lot from it, just talking to you [...] it’s helped me 108 Sunset walks, meditation, taijiquan, qigong and art making were activities that enabled me to establish this consistency.

109 It should be noted, however, that the overall methodology of the study was not action research, which, rather, acted as a methodological tool for the greater enquiry. It was a means to an end, an enquiry within an enquiry, with the results of one acting as evidence for the other (Waters-Adams & Nias, 2003 p.287). This will be considered in further detail in §5.2.4.

110 Joanne and Betty particularly mentioned that it provided opportunities for them to express their self (NUDIST reference: I_S-B2: 512-546; GD4: 550-571; I_S-Jo3: 511-524). Betty also indicated that being filmed in class provided an opportunity for her to feel witnessed (NUDIST reference: GD2: 775-786; I_S-B2: 512-546). Whilst Joanne indicated that watching the DVD footage from the class helped her to step out of her comfort zone (NUDIST reference: GD4: 600-605; I_S-Jo3: 96-94), Jarrah indicated that it allowed her to realise that there was a discrepancy between her memory of what transpired in the drawing classes and what actually took place (NUDIST reference: I_S-Ja3: 475-523). Ellen indicated that participating in the data collection activities enabled her to become more conscious and accountable for her experiences at art school, and the things that she wanted to change or resolve (NUDIST reference: GD2: 739-763; GD5: 948-956; I_S-E2: 340-359) (See also NUDIST reference: GD2: 739-763, 783; GD5: 815-830, 948-956; I_S-E2: 340-359; I_S-Ja3: 14-19; I_S-Jo3: 97-116; GD2: 783; I_S-T3: 135-139).
to think about what I am doing, how I’ve got to where I am now. I certainly do feel a lot more confident.111

Teresa: This is really useful for me, sitting here like there is a mirror and I’m going ‘blah blah blah’ [...] I can hear myself saying it [Teresa then continues to write] ‘so space is filled with what works instead of with filler’.112

Joanne: I felt uncomfortable watching [the DVD], for myself and for all my human flaws. [...] I am not used to looking at myself. I never actually liked having my picture taken, but I believe it’s been very good for me because I am facing fears that I never thought I would [...] when you first came into the room and asked us [to participate in the study], I thought, you know, ‘This girl is doing this and we should put some effort in’. I thought, ‘As much as I hate the camera’, but you know, ‘I will just give it a go’. Not thinking about it as for myself [...] after doing it I thought, ‘Well hang on, I am benefitting out of this probably more then what Mel is, in a sense’. Because it’s making me look at myself and it doesn’t matter how much I don’t like looking at it or how uncomfortable I feel [...] it is making me look at my artwork, myself, reflecting back on things. I am taking more notice. So, it’s been actually more beneficial to me than what is for you [...] but in hindsight, I never saw that before. Or never went into it thinking that way [...] I wasn’t thinking ‘oh yeah, this will be really good for me’, and you know, I wasn’t so much focused on that, but that’s the reward for doing this. Yeah, so I’ve started to look at myself more and go ‘OK I can use this in my art and just myself personally’ [...] so can I choose to change this? My thought patterns, my old stale thinking, to change it to new ways of thinking to improve myself and my art?113

These comments suggest by participating in the data collection activities, these students were able to become more mindful of their experience at art school. For Jarrah, this resulted in feeling more confident, whereas for Teresa, this involved raising her conscious awareness about what she was aiming to achieve with her art-making practice. For Joanne, this involved looking at herself, her artwork and reflecting back on her experience.

One of the research questions114 guiding the data analysis process was to determine whether the philosophy of critical realism, and meta-Reality, might actually promote the emancipation of art students from the content of their consciousness that is incongruent with flow experience whilst making art. Whilst the students’ comments quoted above indicate that participating in the data collection activities might have contributed in a positive way to their experience at art school, it is difficult to determine whether the process of collecting data actually promoted the emancipation within the specific context of enabling ‘flow experience’. However, in the process of at least attempting to promote student emancipation in this way, the convergence of theory and data in this study has enabled insights about the ontological

113 NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo3: 56-80.
structures that might enable flow to be experienced.\textsuperscript{115} By utilising these insights to inform future studies, it might be possible to determine whether the philosophies of critical realism and meta-Reality not only accurately explain, but actually enable, the emancipation of students from content of their consciousness that is incongruent with flow experience whilst making art.

\section*{§4 Strategies for the inquiry}

In this section I outline the various systems of logic through which this inquiry proceeded in order to develop answers to the research questions (Punch, 1998 p.66). I also make explicit the extent to which I intervened in the research situation, constructing it for research purposes (Punch, 2005 p.64).

Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) and Crotty (1998) suggest it is possible to combine elements of various methodologies, with various data collection procedures in a way that will offer the best opportunity for answering one’s research question/s. Shipway (2002 p.5) also argues that a critical realist research methodology could also ‘appropriate the strengths of other traditional methodological approaches, while at the same time avoiding their inherent weaknesses’. Thus, in this study, several strategies, including: case study, grounded theory, and action research, were combined in an attempt at developing answers to the various research questions guiding the investigation. Each of these strategies provided their own logic for the way in which the research should develop.

\subsection*{§4.1 Case study}

Robert Stake (2005 p.443), suggests a case study is not a methodological choice, but rather a choice of what is to be studied. Whatever methods we employ, whether they be interviews or observation, for a period of time we concentrate our attention on the case. Defining and framing what a study is a case of is not straightforward; Punch (2005 p.144) suggests a case may be a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context. The phenomenon to be explained changed at various times throughout this study. Prior to even starting my Ph.D. candidature and early on in the process of developing the research proposal, it was anticipated my study would focus on an inspirational art-teacher. At this phase of my research, it fell into the category of being an ‘intrinsic case study’, as my main concern was to better understand the teaching strategies of this particular teacher (Stake, 2005 p.445). At this

\textsuperscript{114} See §5.2.
\textsuperscript{115} These insights are outlined in C7.
stage, I was particularly interested in exploring what this teacher did that enabled his students to experience a meditative state of mind whilst learning to make art.\textsuperscript{116}

As the research proposal developed, the focus of the study seemed to shift from being about this particular teacher, to being about the subjective experience of his students. In effect, it had shifted from an ‘intrinsic case study’ to a ‘collective case study’ (Stake, 2005 p.445). However, it was expected the information I collected would still tell me a lot about this particular teacher, and therefore left the option open for the investigation to return to being an ‘intrinsic case study’ as well.

In my attempt at determining measurable phenomena for my research proposal, I limited my interest in understanding the art students’ state of mind to their attitudes and beliefs about art. This interest was influenced by Barbara Regent’s dissertation entitled, \textit{Reflective qualities of the artistic creative process and chaos theory} (2002). Regent’s findings suggest the aim of an art curriculum is to enable students to reach a state of self-organisation in their work, so they have a personally structured framework within which to continue to individually explore their visual world throughout their lifetime. At the time of writing the proposal for the present study, I was interested in determining whether some attitudes and beliefs might be more conducive to participation in the process of making art than other attitudes and beliefs. I was also interested in looking at how attitudes and beliefs about painting and drawing might influence the educational change that occurs in art classes.\textsuperscript{117} I expected this might also help me to determine which attitudes and beliefs were conducive to experiencing a meditative state of mind whilst making art.

As the period of data collection neared,\textsuperscript{118} the particular staff member who was the gatekeeper for my observational data collection at the art school, and who also organised the allocation of the teaching load to the teacher I was interested in researching, decided the teaching load for the art class would be shared among three teachers.\textsuperscript{119} This meant my inspirational art teacher would only teach three lessons. I realised this wasn’t going to provide enough information for a doctoral thesis about how the teaching strategies of this particular teacher enabled his students to experience a meditative state of mind whilst learning to make art. After a few phone calls and meetings with my supervisors, in which we considered the possibility of finding another couple of exemplary art teachers or finding a group of students outside of this particular art school which my inspirational art teacher could teach, I returned to the developing focus on the art teacher’s students. Given these new circumstances, my research became more interested in the subjective experience of adult art students, rather
than the teaching strategies of my inspirational teacher.\textsuperscript{120} Thus, the ‘case’ of my study, was forced to change, on relatively short notice. At this time, my study quickly became a ‘collective case study’ of the subjective experiences of several adult art students who were enrolled in an accredited fine arts course at a government funded education institution in regional NSW.

Prior to data collection it was anticipated the individual student-participants would be the cases, and each individual’s attitudes and beliefs regarding art which constrain or enable participation in the artistic creative process would form the boundaries. During the observations, however, I noticed the content of interactions between students often related to their home life and other life experiences with no apparent connection to the particular drawing activity they were participating in. While it was expected analysis of these interactions would provide valuable background information about each student, determining what to include and what to omit was often difficult. Bogdan and Biklen (1998 p.55; 2007 p.60) suggest choosing a focus is an artificial act. In the context of this study, ‘choosing a focus’ involved breaking off a piece of the art student who was a whole, integrated being. Detaching a piece of an art student has the potential of distorting my representation of them. Bogdan and Biklen (1998 p.55; 2007 p.60) also suggest the relationship of this piece to the whole be taken into account, but, to make the research manageable, the subject matter still needs to be narrowed. By attempting to choose a piece that is a naturally existing unit, and further, one the participants themselves see as distinct may help to minimise distortions.

Having completed the data collection, data analysis, interpretation and half of the thesis write-up, it appears what was a ‘collective case study’ has now morphed into an ‘instrumental case study’. An ‘instrumental case study’ involves examining a particular case to give insight into an issue, or to refine a theory or redraw a generalisation (Punch, 2005 p.144; Stake, 2005 pp.445-447). Robert Stake suggests in these instances, the particular case becomes of secondary interest, playing a supportive role by facilitating our understanding of something else. Further, ‘we simultaneously have several interests, particular and general. There is no hard and fast line distinguishing intrinsic case study from instrumental, but rather a zone of combined purpose separates them’ (Stake, 2005 p.445). This appears to relate to the present study. However, in this thesis, it appears to be the line between the collective and instrumental case study, rather than intrinsic and instrumental case study, that lacks distinction.

Having completed the data analysis and interpretation, the set of cases, (the subjective experiences of each of the art students), has allowed me to consider the ontological structures that might be involved in experiencing enjoyment or flow whilst learning to make art. Further, these cases have also enabled me to develop and refine a theory about the relationship between Bhaskar’s theory of the stratified self and Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of

\textsuperscript{120} Research journal: 30 January 2006.
flow experience.\textsuperscript{121} This investigation has also enabled me to determine that various philosophical concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality are indeed useful for making sense of the emancipation from the contents of several art students’ consciousness which constrain flow experience whilst learning to make art.\textsuperscript{122}

In addition to employing a case study strategy, this study also utilised strategies for doing research from the grounded theory and action research traditions. Both grounded theory and action research provide their own logic for the way in which an investigation should develop, and I combined various elements of these, together with the case study approach, in my attempt at developing answers to my research questions.

\textbf{§4.2 Grounded theory}

The research methodology implied by a critical realist perspective may be characterised as constellationally over-reaching other approaches in the social sciences to data gathering and analysis, such as the well-known “Grounded Theory” approach developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

(Shipway, 2002 p.5)

Grounded theory was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) as a strategy to guide the study of complex social behaviour. Keith Punch (2005 pp.155-156) suggests that grounded theory is both a strategy for doing research as well as a way of analysing data. In terms of being a strategy for doing research, (which is what we are concerned with in this section of the chapter), the purpose of grounded theory is to generate theory from data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 p.2). The rationale for grounded theory, is that ‘theory based on data can usually not be completely refuted by more data or replaced by another theory. Since it is too intimately linked to data, it is destined to last despite its inevitable modification and reformulation’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 p.4). Glaser and Strauss contrast this to ‘exampleing’, which they refer to as an ‘opportunitistic use of theory’:

A researcher can easily find examples for dreamed-up, speculative, or logically deduced theory after the idea has occurred. But since the idea has not been derived from the example, seldom can the example correct or change it (even if the author is willing), since the example was selectively chosen for its confirming power.

(Glaser & Strauss, 1967 p.5)

\textsuperscript{121} These are discussed further in C7.
According to Kathy Charmaz (2005 p.507), grounded theory provides flexible analytic guidelines for collecting and analysing data that help to build theoretical frameworks and explain the data. In such approaches, data are first organised using simple categories; ‘higher level, overriding and integrating, conceptualisation – and the properties that elaborate them – tend to come later during the joint collection, coding and analysis of data’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 p.36). For Glaser and Strauss, ‘the adequacy of a theory for sociology […] cannot be divorced from the process by which it is generated’; they continue: ‘we suggest it is likely to be a better theory to the degree that it has been inductively developed from social research’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 p.5).

Early on in the process of developing the ideas for this study, grounded theory was identified as being a possible candidate for the strategy that would guide the inquiry.123

Grounded Theory seems to be providing a rationale for what it is that I am hoping to achieve with my research: in particular, to use the data gathered from [an inspirational art teacher’s] classes to generate a theory that can be used to inform the practice of negotiating learning in other situations.124

However, it seems I also had some reservations as well:

Having tentatively determined that Grounded Theory is an appropriate research strategy for the purposes of this study, I am now left to question the appropriateness of pre-determining the conceptual framework that will inform my research. Doesn’t this go against the very foundation principles of Grounded Theory, that the concepts and theories, etc, are not imposed, or deduced from the data, but rather, emerge from it? […] These pre-existing ideas and concepts are the bias that I bring to the data, and therefore influence the data that is selected for analysis, the concepts that tie the findings together, and the theories that emerge. […] Although I think that Grounded Theory is probably the most suitable method for my research purpose, I am […] uncertain about how the accuracy of knowledge claims that are developed inductively from empirical data are determined. Also, where do Grounded Theory knowledge claims fit within the critical realist conception of a stratified reality?125

Having attended my first critical realism conference and pre-conference workshop in July 2005, I was exposed to opinions within the critical realist community that suggested grounded theory might not necessarily be compatible with the philosophical underpinnings of critical realism.

It was interesting that I had been reading a lot about Grounded Theory before the conference and was thinking that this may become my methodology; however the pre-
conference workshop revealed that Grounded Theory does NOT resonate with critical realist perspectives. I think this is because of the stratified model of reality and the understanding that the realm of experience is just the tip of the iceberg of reality. There are things that are not experienced that have powerful causal influences, therefore the power of emancipation of empirical-based data collected without a theory is limited.126

Whether my understanding of this was what Caroline New actually intended by her comments during the pre-conference workshop was never determined, for it was around this time my explicit interest in grounded theory as a research strategy began to wane. It did not feature in any explicit way in the written proposal for this project. Apart from a very brief mention of ‘grounded theory’ in my research journal entry on 24 July 2006, in which I considered possible methods for data analysis, ‘grounded theory’ was never referred to again in my research journal or subsequent writings. Nevertheless, here I am now, attempting to justify and explain the way I have used ‘elements of’ the grounded theory strategy to guide my inquiry.

With the perspective of hindsight, I can now appreciate the way I approached some aspects of the data collection, as well as the first phase of the data analysis, were actually quite consistent with the guidelines from the grounded theory tradition. Whilst I might have stopped talking about grounded theory explicitly, it appears to have influenced my research in an implicit way. This might be because grounded theory ‘resembles what we normally do in everyday life, when we encounter a puzzling situation’ (Punch, 2005 p.158). Within the data collection process, my attempt to remain as open-minded as possible and to wait for themes to emerge before limiting the scope of the data collection process, can be seen to be consistent with grounded theory (Punch, 2005 pp.157-159). Further, my attempts to induce themes from the data itself and later cross-analyse similar themes from different students in order to generate theory from the data can also be seen to be consistent with grounded theory.127 Similarly, by reading about the philosophy of meta-Reality and flow theory after themes had begun to emerge, with the intention of finding concepts that might help to select themes and focus the analysis, can also be seen to be consistent with grounded theory as well (Punch, 2005 pp.157-159).

However, as data analysis progressed, the purpose of this study took on a different form. The purpose of the study then became to explore the efficacy of using philosophical concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality to understand emancipation from a specific point of view: the removal of inhibitions on the enjoyment of ‘flow experience’ by art students. I then began approaching the interviews and group discussions with concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality in mind.128 In this way, my investigation became

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125 Research journal: 1 July 2005.  
an instrumental case study for applying critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality to empirical research. This approach was not particularly consistent with grounded theory.

In the process of attempting to apply other theories to make sense of the data, I also noticed that whilst ‘flow theory’ was able to account for some of the students’ comments about their experience of learning to make art, there were other comments flow theory could not account for. Having identified the inadequacy of flow theory for making sense of some of the students’ comments about their enjoyable experiences whilst making art, I then needed to re-approach the data so as to enable consideration of the ontological structures that might be in play whilst learning to make art, and also during flow experience.

Given that I didn’t consciously set out to utilise a grounded theory approach in the data collection and analysis phases, it is not surprising the grounded theory strategy was not utilised in a consistent way throughout the whole research process. Whilst various stages of the research process were consistent with the logic of the grounded theory approach to research, others were not. The particular way the logic of the grounded theory approach to research was used in this study will be discussed in further detail in the data collection and data analysis sections.

§4.3 Action research

According to Reason and Bradbury, action research ‘seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities’ (Reason & Bradbury, 2004 p.1). The action learning component of this study was driven by two concerns: (i) to ensure the object of knowledge (the art students’ attitudes and beliefs regarding art) would determine how it would be known, and (ii) to contribute to the emancipation or liberation of art students from those things they believed to be inhibiting their creative self-expression.

Reason and Bradbury suggest ‘a primary purpose of action research is to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives’ (Reason & Bradbury, 2004 p.2). Producing practical knowledge that was useful for me as I played the role of researcher was one of the intentions for employing an action research strategy for this study. Prior to entering the data collection phase of my research, I identified the potential problem: my own attitudes and beliefs about art, as well as my previous experience in the art school environment, might influence the content of what the art students disclosed to me. Bearing

130 See §6.2 and §6.4.1.1.
in mind I could never be an impartial or dispassionate researcher (Dickson & Green, 2001 p.248), I still attempted to participate in an action learning cycle that was concerned with ensuring the object of knowledge (the art students’ attitudes and beliefs regarding art) would determine how it was known.132

In addition to my own action learning cycle, I provided opportunities for the art students to participate in an action learning cycle as well.133 Although I was interested in developing knowledge about art education practice that could be beneficial for future students, I was also concerned the student-participants involved in this study might also benefit from their participation in the research activities. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (2005 p.561), classroom action research typically involves teachers making judgements about how to improve their own practices. Early on in the process of developing my ideas for this study, I expressed my interest in the possibility of using ‘learners’ instead of ‘practitioners’ in the action research component of the study.134 At the time of preparing for the action learning component of my research, published studies that involve students, rather than teachers, in action research were scarce. Nevertheless, involving students in a process of identifying a part of their practice that needs improving and urging students to reflect on the success of their actions seems significant, for this could also impact on the educational change that takes place. Over the past four years, other action researchers have also started to explore the possibilities of using action research with students instead of teachers (e.g. Li, 2008).

The decision to involve the student-participants in an action learning spiral has clear links to both philosophies of critical realism and meta-Reality. Two propositions underpinning this research project include the beliefs (i) in our efforts to build knowledge and understanding, we should attempt to avoid the epistemic fallacy, that is, ‘allow the object itself determine how it will be known’ (Shipway, 2002 p. 104) and (ii), in order to become ‘emancipatory theory’ our efforts at building knowledge and understanding must also attempt to achieve emancipation. Thus, the action learning process in this study, and the group discussions which explored this process, were concerned with the actual emancipation of the participating students. Let us revisit this Bhaskarian idea of emancipation.135

According to Bhaskar, the project of liberation involves shedding the unnecessary and unwanted structures and determinations that prevent human beings from realising their true potential (Bhaskar, 2002a p.219). Whilst the determinations and structures that block and constrain free development and flourishing are, in a sense, external to the individual, they also exist, internalised, within the individual. Thus, emancipation can be manifested in two distinctly different forms: ‘freedom from’ and ‘freedom to’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.67). Whilst

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132 This is discussed further in §6.2.4.
133 See Appendix 2.2.
135 The discussion in the following paragraph has been extracted from §3.2.1.
negative ‘freedom from’ implies constraints that are both external and internal to the individual, positive ‘freedom to’ flows fundamentally from conditions internal to the individual. Although the removal of external constraints plays an important role in emancipation, it is never sufficient (Bhaskar, 2002c p.129). ‘Freedom to, unlike freedom from, cannot be imposed from without’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.67).

In this study, the action learning process was driven by a concern to facilitate each student’s emancipation from the things they thought needed changing in their art-making practice. Each student-participant was encouraged to define the aim, form, and content of the action research in terms of their own interests and understandings, and in this way, were given authority over how this aspect of the research was conducted (Minichiello et al., 1995 p.7). Where successful, these methods also enabled the participants’ own interests and understanding of their art-making practice to determine how they would be known. In this way, the action learning cycle provided a means of collecting information that might enable the process of knowledge production to avoid the epistemic fallacy.

It has been argued that the driving force within action research is the participants’ desire to discover what their practice is and to see how it can be improved (Waters-Adams & Nias, 2003 p.287). I needed a process that could work with the art students’ natural motivation to make their art-making practice ‘better’, whatever this meant for each participant, whilst yielding data for my own analysis. The predetermined goal of the fieldwork to collect evidence of the art students’ attitudes and beliefs about art, together with my presence and action as an external researcher, were catalysts that ‘nudged and guided’ the art students’ own inquiry into their experience at art school (Dickson & Green, 2001 p.251). We cannot be certain whether these students would have engaged in such self-reflective practice without prompting from an ‘external’ researcher. However, having established the parameters of the research, I then attempted to take a backseat and encourage the participants themselves to determine their own way of exploring and my role changed from being an initiator of the research to being a research assistant. It is certain my own experience and understandings would have influenced how this research was conducted. Indeed, my concern to ‘allow the object of knowledge (the art students’ attitudes and beliefs regarding art) to determine how it was known’ clearly reflects my ideology and bias as a researcher. As Dickson and Green suggest (2001 p.248), my own experiences and values as both an art student, and as an educational researcher, have influenced my relationship with the participants, and also, how I have portrayed the findings. Bearing the above qualifications in mind, comments from several students suggest participation in the data collection activities associated with this study did indeed support their growth and development.136

It should be noted that the action learning component of this investigation did not grow out of the student's own recognition of a need for change, but was, rather, initiated by myself, an 'external' researcher. It should also be noted the overall methodology of the study was not action research; but rather, it was to act as a methodological tool for the greater inquiry. Thus, action research was seen to constitute a valid way of generating evidence of art students’ actions and understanding. Following Waters-Adams and Nias' lead (2003 p.287), the action research component of this study was used as a means to an end, it was an inquiry within an inquiry, with the results of one acting as evidence for the other.

§5 The object of knowledge

One of the important contributions Bhaskar’s stratified model of reality provides for the field of applied research relates to the distinction he makes between the domains of the empirical, actual and real (Bhaskar, 1978 p.13). In very practical terms this relates to the distinction researchers need to make between the source of data about a particular object and the object itself. It also relates to the distinction between one’s object of knowledge, (that is, the particular phenomenon that exists in the ‘real world’ independently of one’s efforts at making sense of it), and one’s research question, (the set of words that are used to point towards the particular phenomenon of interest). In the present instance, the task of combining words and concepts to form of a research question or problem, which accurately point towards the object of my knowledge, was an evolving, four-year process.

This research was therefore guided by a nebulous set of problems and concerns as well as specific questions that moved through varying degrees of clarity and specificity, at different phases of the research process. In the discussion that follows, I attempt to overview the problems and concerns and the various forms my guiding research questions have taken. As you will see, my Ph.D. candidature has been an ongoing process of attempting to find the set of words that define and explain the object of my knowledge.

What follows is a lengthy discussion about the words that have been used to define my object of knowledge over the past four years. It reiterates and elaborates on some of the themes that were raised in §4.1. For ease of reading I have separated the discussion into two parts. The first part (§5.1), provides an overview of how the object of my knowledge developed prior to the data collection process (and therefore influenced the data that was collected), and the second part (§5.2), discusses the various forms the object of knowledge took during the data analysis process.
§5.1 An art student’s attitudes and beliefs about art

In my application for enrolment in the Doctor of Philosophy degree (late 2004), ‘Art education: navigating a path towards “mastery” in painting and drawing’ was the proposed title for my thesis. At this time, I indicated I was interested in exploring the nature of the relationship between an art teacher’s definition of art and their educational practice. I was also interested in determining how this information could be used to improve art education practice. I was particularly interested in identifying the sorts of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours artists need to learn in order to become self-directed learners in their journey towards ‘mastery’.

Written records from my research journal indicate that by mid-February 2005 I was beginning to narrow my investigation so that I could explore the teaching practices of one of the teachers I had found especially inspiring. At this time, I was interested in looking at what this teacher did that enabled his students to experience a meditative state of mind whilst learning to make art.137

By August 2005, when I submitted the final draft of my proposal, the research questions had narrowed dramatically, as indicated by the changes to the proposed title: ‘The adventures of an inkling: attitudes and beliefs regarding art and participation in the artistic creative process’. At this point of my study I had come to appreciate an individual’s attitudes and beliefs have the power to influence their behaviour, and was therefore interested in determining those attitudes and beliefs regarding art which may constrain or enable an individual’s participation in an artistic creative process. I used the following set of research questions to further narrow the focus of the study:

- What would people have to believe in order to constrain or enable their universal tendency to participate in an artistic creative process? Can these beliefs change? If so, how?
- Which attitudes and beliefs regarding ‘art’ constrain or enable participation in an artistic creative process?
- What pedagogical approaches can unblock the block and enable participation in an artistic creative process?

These ended up being the explicit research questions used to guide the data collection phase of the study. However, I was still interested in how students navigated their way through and around obstacles and challenges, and also had an underlying concern with the meditative state of mind art students might experience whilst making art. By the end of November 2005, I had also begun to question whether I might be able to experience a similarly peaceful state of

mind as I went about my research activities.\textsuperscript{138} As previously noted in §3.1 and §4.3, the data collection phase of my research was also guided by a general concern to ensure the object of knowledge (the art students’ attitudes and beliefs regarding art) would determine how it would be known.\textsuperscript{139}

In summary, the final set of words used to define the object of my knowledge for the data collection process were an art student’s attitudes and beliefs about art and their participation in an art-making process.

\textbf{§5.2 An art student’s state of consciousness whilst making art}

By October 2006, I had completed the data collection and processing phases of the research, and was beginning what seemed to be a daunting task of analysing the data. At this time, I began to notice my object of knowledge was beginning to change from the art students’ attitudes and beliefs about art, to their state of consciousness whilst they were making art.\textsuperscript{140} I also recognised that the aim of the study, as well as the research questions guiding the analysis might need to change in order to incorporate my growing understanding and interest in the philosophy of meta-Reality and critical realism.\textsuperscript{141} This was when I began to look at the interviews and group discussions with concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality in mind.\textsuperscript{142}

I was interested in investigating the emancipation of fine art students from content in their consciousness that inhibits their participation in a process of making art. I also indicated I was particularly interested in making sense of the experience which art students profess to sometimes have of ‘being in the zone’ when participating in a process of making art.\textsuperscript{143} By focussing on the comments of the art students’ with regards to their state of consciousness whilst making art, rather than simply looking at their attitudes and beliefs about art, allowed insight into a deeper layer of truth and reality. It was anticipated that by attempting to explain emancipation at this depth might improve the emancipatory potential of the subsequent theory. I found Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience, together with Bhaskar’s theories relating to transcendental agency, to be quite significant.

In January 2007, the working and final title for my thesis had changed to ‘The adventures of an inkling: unblocking the creative block’. By January 2007, I had completed the data

\textsuperscript{138} Research journal: 21 November 2005.
\textsuperscript{139} Research journal: 23 January 2006.
\textsuperscript{140} Research journal: 17, 20 October 2006.
\textsuperscript{141} Research journal: 21 September 2006 and 17 October 2006.
\textsuperscript{142} Research journal: 17 October 2006.
\textsuperscript{143} Research journal: 12 October 2006.
collection and had undergone a fair amount of data analysis. However, I still had not settled on a research question that would guide my analysis and interpretation efforts. Not surprisingly, I indicated I was not quite sure what the point of my research was. This prompted the following reflections:

What is the point of my research?
(a) to provide a forum for art students to reflect on, and in this way become more conscious of, their conscious experience as students of fine art;
(b) to use each art student’s reflections to identify content of their consciousness which are either consistent or inconsistent with flow experience, and in this way identify the content of the conscious experience of each art student which either enable or constrain flow experience;
(c) to apply philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality to make sense of the emancipation of art students from content of their consciousness which inhibits or constrains flow experience whilst making art; as well as
(d) to contend with the joys, struggles and obstacles of Ph.D. candidature in order to grow as an integrated and self-realised human being.144

Having identified not one, but four points to my research, I also realised I was interested in making propositions about the things that might have been constraining or enabling flow experience for each of the student-participants involved in the study. I anticipated cross-analysis of the findings between student cases might illuminate themes in the content of their consciousness which have a tendency to inhibit or constrain flow experience, and to also identify exceptional cases. I also anticipated I might be able to use the findings from my research to inspire other aspiring artists and/or art students to identify the things that may be inhibiting their own creative expression and empower them to eliminate these constraints, thereby unlocking their own creative potential.

In March 2007, I came to realise the ultimate goal of my research was to:

Examine how Bhaskar’s theory can be applied to art education, in particular: apply philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality to make sense of the emancipation of art students from content of their consciousness which inhibit or constrain flow experience whilst making art. 145

At this time, I identified that in order to do this, I would need to attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How does each art student describe the experience of art making when it flows/doesn’t flow?

2. How does each art student describe the experience of a non-dual/dual state of awareness when making art?

I will use the answers to questions 1 and 2 to:

- Identify content of each art student’s consciousness which are consistent or inconsistent with flow experience or which enable or constrain flow experience whilst making art and/or studying at art school.
- Distil the essence of creative flow and creative block for each art student.

Having done this, I will then attempt to answer the following questions:

3. What can be absented from the content of each art student’s consciousness during a dual experience to enable a non-dual experience whilst making art?
4. What ideas/concepts of Bhaskar’s helped interpret the case study?
5. How did the case study make some of Bhaskar’s ideas come alive?

Having analysed each case study, I will:

- attempt to identify points of convergence or divergence from each of the preceding case studies, particularly in relation to absence and emancipation (or other Bhaskarian concepts that are identified in the answers to question 4 and 5).

I will then be able to identify the implications of the answers to questions 1 – 3 for the practice of art education, and will use this to make suggestions for art educators.

I will also be able to identify the implications of the answers to questions 4 and 5 to answer the following question:

6. What level of explanatory power do Bhaskar’s ideas have for making sense of the emancipation of the art students in this particular study?

The answer to question 6 will contribute to the ultimate goal of my research.146

By September 2007, I was still working towards understanding whether critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality could explain flow experience whilst making art in such a way that may enable art students and art teachers to use their moments of agency to experience flow experience whilst making art.147

The ‘object of my knowledge’ appears to have shifted several times since I started on my journey of finding the words to pin it down. It seems to have congealed into something about ‘the state of mind that art students experience when making art seems to flow’. But
I also seem interested in somehow using this situation to demonstrate something about emancipation and the emancipatory power of Bhaskar’s theories. The words used to point towards the object of my knowledge in this journal entry suggest I wanted to make sense of what was going on in the art students’ minds when their experience of making art was flowing, and to use this to make sense of emancipation generally, and Bhaskar’s theories in particular. Thus, my data analysis and interpretation activities were guided by a concern to understand some of the ways in which concepts drawn from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality can advance our understanding of the various elements in play when an art student experiences flow whilst learning to make art.

I am trying to understand:
- the art students in terms of Bhaskar’s tripartite nature of the self: illusory ego, embodied personality and ground state
- the art student’s action of making art (drawing) in terms of transcendental agency (including the mindful and mindless positions)
- their experience or state of mind and how this may be understood as existing within a stratified model of reality
- things that may be able to be absented from their state of mind to enable a transformation or change in their state of mind to enable congruency with ‘flow’ experience.

In summary, the process of finding the words that point towards the object of my knowledge was far from simple. The concerns or problems guiding this study have changed form over the past four years, and the methods used in the process of collecting, processing, analysing and interpreting the data in this study have also varied. In the following section I attempt to describe what these methods were, and the reasons for choosing them.

§6 The tools and procedures used for collecting and analysing the empirical materials

In this section I outline the participant sampling strategies employed, the methods used for collecting information, and how I attempted to make sense of it.

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§6.1  Who was studied? Participant sampling strategies

As previously noted, the development of the initial research proposal centred on a particularly inspiring art teacher and the observational data collection was intended to explore the interactions between this particular teacher and his students. In this respect, ‘extreme or deviant case sampling’ was employed to learn from a highly unusual manifestation of the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 1990 pp. 169–71). However, only one week before I had the chance to recruit research volunteers, and less than three weeks before data collection actually began, unforeseen events took place within the art school environment, which required the research to change direction. This was a case of the social, political and economic structures underpinning the object of knowledge determining how it would be known. The implications of this for the teacher-participant sampling strategy was what started out as ‘extreme or deviant case sampling’ quickly turned into ‘opportunistic sampling’ (Patton, 1990 p.179).

In accordance with mandatory ethics procedures outlined in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (National Health and Medical Research Council, 1999), the attempt to recruit volunteers was by means of an information session conducted with all students enrolled in the drawing module. The following questions were shared with the students and teachers who were invited to be involved in this study during this information session; in this way, these questions can be seen to have influenced the process of participant self-sampling, and also the data collection process.

- What do you think art is and how do you feel about making art?
- How do you participate in the process of making art in your art workshops?
- What is your current focus in your own art-making practice?
- How can you go about focussing on this within the context of your art classes?
- What challenges/obstacles do you encounter on the way and how do you resolve them?

As a result of this information session, ten students volunteered to participate in the study. Following data collection, a purposeful sampling of five students was made, these students being identified as information-rich cases (Patton, 1990 p.171). Given the students in the final sample were all female, one could say a ‘homogenous sampling’ strategy was also used.

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150 These questions were chosen because they were seen to reflect the general interests of the questions that were guiding the data collection phase of the research.
151 Research Journal: 3 February 2006; see also Appendix 1.2.
152 Betty, Ellen, Joanne, Jarrah and Teresa. These are fictional names.
§6.2 Data collection methods

Data collection in this enquiry was aimed at understanding how the participants attached meaning to and organised their lives, and how this influenced their actions. It should be noted the questions guiding the research at this stage were quite different to the questions guiding the analysis and the write-up phase of the research.

The general questions at this phase of the research were interested in understanding:

- What people would have to believe in order to constrain or enable their universal tendency to participate in the artistic creative process and whether these beliefs could change, and if so, how?

It was anticipated the following two specific research questions would be more useful for answering these general questions:

- Which attitudes and beliefs regarding ‘art’ constrain or enable participation in the artistic creative process?
- What pedagogical approaches can unblock the block and enable participation in the artistic creative process?

These questions were informed by Regent’s dissertation entitled, *Reflective qualities of the artistic creative process and chaos theory* (2002). Prior to data collection, it was intended for this inquiry to build on the findings from Regent’s study by considering the way an art student’s attitudes and beliefs regarding art might determine their ‘personally structured framework’ for participating in their artistic creative process. However, as the fieldwork and subsequent data analysis progressed, other research concerns came into focus.

Given these initial research questions, it was important to choose data collection methods that would help to uncover the thoughts, perceptions and feelings experienced by participants. Decisions regarding data collection methods were based on an understanding that humans can be conscious of their own behaviour and therefore have the potential to alter their behaviour in light of social theories (Minichiello et al., 1995 p.10).

As previously mentioned, the philosophy of critical realism, underpinning this research, demanded I attempt to avoid the epistemic fallacy and ‘to allow the object itself to determine how it will be known’ (Shipway, 2002 p. 104). To enable this to happen, some aspects of this

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153 Regent’s study was primarily concerned with finding out how the artistic creative process works, particularly in relation to the visual arts, in order to identify essential elements of that process and find a language with associated definitions that most simply describes such a complex process. Regent’s findings suggest that the aim of an art curriculum is to enable students to reach a state of self-organisation in their work, so that they have a ‘personally structured framework’ within which to continue to individually explore their visual world throughout their lifetime (Regent, 2002 pp.169, 189).

154 See §2.1.
study were unfolding and emerging (Punch, 2000 p. 42). For example, the interview questions emerged from the participants’ own suggestions about what would be important to know about their attitudes and beliefs regarding art. The content and focus of these questions and their answers provided its own structure for subsequent analysis. Further, observational data from the group discussions and art workshops were completely unstructured at the point of collection (via video). It was anticipated this would allow the structure to emerge during the analysis (Punch, 2005 p.57).

§6.2.1 The observations

The observational data for this inquiry were collected over thirteen consecutive weeks (excluding two weeks of holidays) for the Core Drawing module during semester one 2006. Classes usually began at 9.30am and finished at 4pm.¹⁵⁵

Non-participant observation was used to gain access to knowledge of the motives, meanings, actions and reactions of students and teachers within the context of a drawing subject in an art school (Minichiello et al., 1995 p.10). The class observations were recorded directly to the hard drive of a DVD recorder using a digital video camera for the visual component, and three microphones (including two dynamic microphones and one conference room style microphone) via an audio mixer for the sound component.¹⁵⁶ Both the video and audio recordings were completely unstructured at the time of collection.¹⁵⁷ This meant the behaviour of the student-participants and their teachers were observed as they naturally unfolded: ‘as a stream of actions and events’ (Punch, 2005 p.179). It was anticipated the categories and concepts for describing and analysing the data would emerge during the analysis phase of the research, rather than be brought to the research, or imposed on the data, from the start (Punch, 2005 p.179). This approach to data collection and analysis is consistent with the grounded theory strategy. It was expected non-participant observation would enable a multi-dimensional picture of an art teacher’s attitudes and beliefs regarding art, and how this influenced their art teaching practice and how students responded to the teaching practice of their teacher, would be able to be explored.

Video data is arguably more ‘raw’ than other forms of data. Jacobs, Kawanaka, and Stigler (1999), suggest video recording technology not only enables lesson content and classroom events to be captured in the natural setting, but, as a permanent data source, video data enables researchers to watch the same sample of events over and over. This means they can

¹⁵⁵ See Appendix 1.1, Table 1.1.1 for an overview of student-participant attendance in the Core Drawing class.
¹⁵⁶ A pilot study revealed that the built-in microphone in the digital video camera would not be sufficient for the noise level in an art class. Further, consultation with university AV staff revealed that the external microphone input in the digital video camera would not be suitable for multiple microphones.
¹⁵⁷ They were supplemented with hand-written field notes, see Appendix 3.1.1.
look into a different dimension of the recorded verbal and physical behaviour at each viewing (Jacobs et al., 1999 p.721).

As previously mentioned in §3.1.1, it was anticipated using a naturalistic setting of an art class for participant selection and collection of observational data would mean the ecology of the art class could be intact as much as possible (Punch, 1998 p.185). However, as Schuck and Kearney (2004) note, although video recording is often associated with a naturalistic approach to data collection, the presence of a video camera inevitably intrudes on the ‘natural’ environment being studied. As previously mentioned in §3.1.1, having a camera present in the classroom influenced where the student-participants worked.

Bogdan and Biklen (1998 p.102; 2007 p.113) also note that the presence of an observer changes any setting to be observed, and the presence of a photographer can change it in more noticeable ways. My very presence in the classroom, together with the video camera, three microphones, sound desk, headphones, and notebook, certainly would have impacted on the research situation. However, Schuck and Kearney (2004) suggest that this influence can be minimised, and Bogdan and Biklen (1998 p.102; 2007 p.113) argue that the novelty of a filmer can quickly disappear after a short period of time, particularly if there are sufficiently engaging activities going on in the setting. As previously mentioned, one of the student-participants in this study, Joanne, particularly commented on my presence in the classroom, indicating that she believed she was too concerned with attending to her own task, and subsequently forgot the recording equipment was even there.

§6.2.2 The interviews

In-depth interviews were used to gain access to knowledge of the meanings and interpretations participants gave to their experiences at art school. A primary focus of in-depth interviewing is to understand the significance of human experiences as described from each participant’s perspective and interpreted by the researcher (Minichiello et al., 1995 p.12). It was anticipated these interviews would enable ‘thick description’ of the intentions, motives, meanings, contexts, situations and circumstances of the action observed in class (Minichiello et al., 1995 p.4).

Each student-participant was interviewed at least twice: the first interview was in mid-February, in the first two weeks of semester one, and the follow-up interview in late-June, after the *Core Drawing* module had been assessed. Several student-participants (Teresa, 158 See §3.1.1.  
Cadence, Jarrah and Joanne) chose to participate in additional one-to-one interviews. For Teresa and Cadence, this was instead of participating in the group discussions.

The in-depth interviews took place in a number of on-campus locations and also in two of the student-participants’ homes (Betty and Anita). The duration of each of these interviews ranged from five minutes to over an hour. The structure of the initial interview was negotiated between each participant and myself. Prior to attending the interview, each participant was invited to write their own interview questions which would be used to guide the interview. This was a means for attempting to ensure the object of knowledge (the art students’ attitudes and beliefs about art) would determine how it would be known. However, I also contributed to the interview to clarify ideas and to ask new questions about topics that emerged. I recall in some interviews the participants also asked me questions about my experience and beliefs relating to art. A similar negotiation process was involved in the follow-up interviews, which took place after the group-discussions and observations. However, there were specific things which had come out of the first interview, class observations, and group discussions which I perceived to be important topics for the participants to clarify or elaborate on, and so, with the permission of each participant, some aspects of the follow-up interviews were also directed by myself.

In addition to the interviews with student-participants, two of the three teacher-participants were interviewed on a regular basis during the period they were teaching the Core Drawing module. As with the interviews with the student-participants, the structure of the interviews with the teacher-participants was also negotiated between each teacher and myself. The content of these interviews usually revolved around their lesson plans, which provided an opportunity for each teacher to elaborate on their art-related beliefs, and also the education-related beliefs which informed their pedagogical decisions. There were also opportunities for the teachers to reflect on the learning that had taken place in the previous lesson.

Each of the interviews were recorded using a digital video camera, then transferred to the hard drive of a DVD recorder, and recorded to DVD.

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160 See Appendix 1.1, Table 1.1.3.
161 The third teacher was not interviewed for several reasons. To begin with, the actual person who was going to teach the remaining component of the subject was not decided on until a week before they actually began to teach, and the information session and signing of consent forms occurred on the morning that they began teaching this class. Given these circumstances, it felt appropriate to be as discrete as possible in my observational data collection efforts on this day which continued throughout the period that they taught the Core Drawing module. Further, by this stage I was beginning to really make sense of each of the student-participant’s unfolding journey as an art student and as such, focusing my data collection efforts on what was going on for the student-participants themselves seemed to be more appropriate.
162 See Appendix 1.1, Table 1.1.4.
§6.2.3 The group discussions

The group discussions took place in a group study room located in the on-campus library. The discussions usually lasted for approximately one hour. There were a total of nine group discussions, with the size of each group ranging from two to five participants (in addition to myself). Five students attended a total of four group discussions, three students attended three, and one student attended only one group discussion. (Note: this was one of the students who participated in additional one-to-one interviews instead).

The group discussions were semi-structured, with most group discussions consisting of three separate phases. The first phase usually included general reflections on the whole experience at art school. This process was usually directed by the student-participants themselves, however, sometimes I would invite specific participants to share their experiences if I noticed they had not had a chance to contribute to the discussion. After approximately 15 minutes I would invite students to reflect specifically on their experiences in the Core Drawing module (the class being observed for this study), and then after approximately 15 minutes I would usually initiate a more specific focus on the action learning cycle. The group discussions were recorded using a digital video camera, then transferred to the hard drive of a DVD recorder, and recorded to DVD.

These group discussions differed from traditional focus groups in that the intention for using them was not to gain consensus and conformity (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001 p.8; D. L. Morgan, 1997 p.15). Group discussions were, rather, seen as a dialectical activity through which participants might be able to recognise their own ideas and express them more freely.

Group discussions were seen to provide a ‘pool of reflection’:

In order for the pool to form, people have to start pouring out impressions, ideas and perplexities, give vent to their own problems and dilemmas. The element of the pool is just as fluid as the unstructured conversations and reflections of the group. A pool has borders: the time and space of the meetings. The pool can act as a mirror for the self; it also allows others to see themselves mirrored in it. The contents of the pool are renovated at each meeting. New ideas fall onto the deposits at the bottom (elements from previous reflections), which provides the humus for further reflections. For those members of the group who cannot take part in a particular session, what falls into the pool (the result of unstructured critical conversations) is made physically visible through the transcription of the recorded data.

(Losito & Pozzo, 1997 pp.293-294)

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163 See Appendix 1.1, Table 1.1.5.
Inspired by these comments by Losito and Pozzo, I anticipated the group discussion component of data collection would provide each participant with the opportunity to reflect on their attitudes and beliefs about artistic creativity, particularly the creative block and creative flow, and use their experiences in class to consciously think about how the learning opportunities were being negotiated. The group discussions were also used as a vehicle for the action research component of the study.

§6.2.4 The action learning spiral

As previously noted in §4.3, Reason and Bradbury suggest ‘a primary purpose of action research is to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives’ (Reason & Bradbury, 2004 p.2). Producing practical knowledge that was useful for me as I played the role of researcher was one of the intentions for employing an action research strategy for this study. Prior to entering the data collection field I identified the potential problem, in my privileged position as ‘the researcher’, that it might be difficult to ensure the object of knowledge (the art students’ attitudes and beliefs regarding art) would determine how it would be known. I was concerned my own experience, attitudes and beliefs about art, as well as the art school environment, might influence the content of what the art students disclosed to me. Bearing in mind I could never be an impartial or dispassionate researcher (Dickson & Green, 2001 p.248), I still attempted to participate in an action learning process that was concerned with ensuring the object of knowledge (the art students’ attitudes and beliefs regarding art) would determine how it was known.

I began by identifying my concern or problem: ‘How can I avoid the epistemic fallacy and ensure the object of my knowledge (the participants’ attitudes and beliefs regarding art) determines how it is known?’ I then imagined a solution: ‘to have the participants provide me with the questions that I could ask them to find out what their attitudes and beliefs about art are.’

However, having read a related article which suggested science teachers might not be able to articulate their understanding of the nature of science (Waters-Adams & Nias, 2003 p.285), I was prompted to consider whether my participants would be able to readily articulate their attitudes and beliefs regarding art. Drawing on Waters-Adams and Nias’ insights, I began to appreciate students learning art might have to be acclimatised to questions concerning the philosophical aspects of their art-making practice. Prior to entering the field, I had no knowledge of the students who might participate in the study. In view of this lack of knowledge, I was aware although each student’s art-making practice might be informed by

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their ideas and interests relating to art, they might not necessarily be able to express what these ideas and interests were. Indeed, Lakin and Wellington’s research into science teachers’ views of science and the implications for their science teaching practice indicates people are not always able to give a ready account of their ideas because construct systems ‘encompass much more of what we know than we can describe in words’ and might not be accessible to verbalisation (Lakin & Wellington, 1994 p.178). Although Lakin and Wellington’s claims do not relate directly to art education, they do suggest in order to access art students’ understanding, and to help them to ‘know what they know’, an extended process of elicitation may be necessary. Lakin and Wellington suggest ways to help this elicitation, and claim, for teachers in their study, ‘participation [in the action research] marked the first recognition that they have a “philosophy of science”’ (Lakin & Wellington, 1994 p.188). Following Lakin and Wellington’s lead, I decided to involve the participants in an action learning process. Being a longer elicitation process, it was anticipated this might yield more comprehensive data. The decision to involve the student-participants in an action learning process was not simply to avoid the epistemic fallacy by allowing the object of knowledge to determine how it would be known (Shipway, 2002 p. 104). It also provided an opportunity to promote emancipation within the data collection process, and was driven by a concern to facilitate each student’s emancipation from the things they thought needed changing in their art-making practice. Each student-participant was encouraged to define the aim, form, and content of the action research in terms of their own interests and understandings, and in this way, were given authority over how this aspect of the research was conducted (Minichiello et al., 1995 p.7).

McNiff suggests ‘action research should offer the capacity to deal with a number of problems at the same time by allowing the spirals to develop spin-off spirals, just as in reality one problem will be symptomatic of many other underlying problems’ (McNiff, 1992 pp.43-44). With this in mind, I considered the possibility, after the students had identified their initial concern and attempted to work towards resolving it, that new problems might arise that would need to be addressed before the initial concern could be resolved. However, I was also aware the data collection period might not be long enough to cover the period of time necessary for resolving the initial concern. Thus, prior to entering the field, I indicated I wasn’t particularly concerned with whether the art students consciously completed a whole action research cycle during the data collection phase of the research. I also indicated I didn’t think the art students’ participation in the action research cycle would have to be as ‘rigorous’ as Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) suggest. Rather, my intention was to engage participants in the reflective aspects of action research to prompt them to identify, discuss and act on those

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166 My research journal provides evidence that my concern to empower learners dated back to the first few months of my Ph.D. candidature. In May 2005, I stated quite clearly that ‘I really want to empower the learner. Empower learners to negotiate boundaries. Empower learners to accept their current situation as a starting point, and to push it. To set their own challenges and to accept the challenges that are presented to them’ (Research journal: 31 May 2005).


things they believed were important in their art-making practice. Whilst there was a real concern for the students to benefit from their participation in the data collection activities associated with this research, it was anticipated that regardless of the outcome, the discussion surrounding this particular component of the study would provide data that would help to answer the research questions. Thus, the action learning spiral was utilised as a means for eliciting information about the students’ attitudes and beliefs about art and how they enable and/or constrain participation in an artistic creative process.

During my first information session in which I attempted to recruit students who would participate in this study, I provided the students with an information sheet in which I made the following statement about the action learning component of the study:

In addition to reflecting on the experiences you have in class you will be required to plan ways to either improve or accept your art-making practice during future workshops.\textsuperscript{169}

Although ten students consented to participate in this study, only nine ended up participating in the action learning component.\textsuperscript{170} Those who did were guided through the action-reflection spiral as presented by McNiff (1992 pp.57-72). McNiff’s approach was chosen over the alternatives, because it allowed for the possibility of addressing multiple issues and concerns throughout the problem solving process. However, the traditional action research focus on improving practice was adapted to ensure students had the option of either accepting or improving their art-making practice.\textsuperscript{171}

During the first discussion group meeting, I invited participants to attempt a straightforward action learning cycle: to identify something they would like to improve or accept in their art-making practice, and to plan a way of achieving this.\textsuperscript{172} Whilst this focus limited the data to the areas of their art-making practice that students were willing to attempt to improve or accept, it also prompted them to share quite detailed information about the areas of their art-making practice they were concerned about. A week or two after this meeting, I made the following reflection:

Although the action research component ‘identify’ and ‘plan’ has been OK so far, it probably wouldn’t constitute fantastic examples of action research. Nevertheless, it is definitely useful in eliciting information about the students’ current tendencies in their art-

\textsuperscript{169} See Appendix 1.3.1.
\textsuperscript{170} One student, Cadence, requested that he was happy to talk with me on an informal basis, but didn’t really want to participate in the other data collection activities.
\textsuperscript{171} This meant that rather than using the action learning spiral to change their actions to fit their thinking, student-participants could use the action research process to attempt to change their thinking to fit their art-making practice instead.
\textsuperscript{172} NUDIST reference: GD2: 19-23, 274-288, 703-716.
making practice and their developing ideas about what they would like to change: theories in use and espoused theories.\textsuperscript{173}

Before the second group discussion I transcribed each participant’s dialogue relating to their plan and students were provided with a copy of this in order to check my interpretation and also to jog their memory of what they had shared.\textsuperscript{174} I also encouraged the student-participants to reflect on the actions they had taken in class and to consider whether their plan was still appropriate.\textsuperscript{175}

Between the second and third meetings, I made the following reflections:

Generally, it seems as though a lot of the students are concerned with lowering their expectations of themselves, what I understand as turning down the volume of the inner critic which inhibits spontaneity.\textsuperscript{176}

So far we have met twice and have: (1) identified a problem; (2) planned a solution; (3) acted and observed the solution (this varies from person to person – observation has been very personal – a lot of this is ‘internal’ self talk); and (4) revisited the plan, is this plan still appropriate? […] I find these sessions very valuable in so far as eliciting student beliefs.\textsuperscript{177}

This process was repeated in the third group discussion to focus each student’s attention on their reflections relating to the action learning cycle.\textsuperscript{178} However, as the period of data collection progressed, revisiting previous reflections was seen to limit the potential for new experiences, thoughts and feelings to be brought up in the discussion forum, and so this practice was not continued in the remaining group discussions.\textsuperscript{179}

\section*{§6.3 The data processing methods}

Much of the data processing occurred as close as possible to the time it was collected. However, some aspects of processing, like developing transcripts of the interview, group discussion and observational data for instance, did not occur until I was ready to begin analysis.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{173} Research journal: 6 March 2006.
\bibitem{174} The process of seeking confirmation that the researcher’s interpretations are congruent with the views of the research participants is important for establishing validity or credibility in qualitative research. It is referred to as ‘member-checking’ or ‘respondent validation’ (Bryman, 2004 p.274, 275, 543; Janesick, 2000 p.393; Punch, 2005 p.255).
\bibitem{175} NUDIST reference: GD4: 265-967; GD5: 328-810.
\bibitem{176} Research journal: 24 March 2006.
\bibitem{177} Research journal: 3 April 2006.
\bibitem{178} NUDIST reference: GD7: 651 onwards.
\bibitem{179} Research journal: 9 May 2006.
\end{thebibliography}
§6.3.1 The observations

‘Processing’ of class observations involved coding the 6 or 7 hours of unstructured video footage for each class into manageable parts for later analysis. The categories used in this processing phase included: whole-class instruction [W], teacher-initiated interaction [T], student-initiated interaction [S] and peer-to-peer interaction [P]. The code also identified each participant who was involved in the interaction by using either their first name or initial. Processing of categories were not just limited to social interactions and, where appropriate, also included footage of students actually drawing. A corresponding Microsoft Word document was developed for each day of observations, and when time permitted, the content of significant interactions were outlined.\(^{180}\) The ‘processed’ video data for each class was then recorded to a DVD (usually 2 or 3 discs per day of video footage). Some parts of video footage were erased; however, erasure was kept to a minimum at this initial stage. The moments that were erased were usually for aesthetic reasons, for example, clumsy camera movements and/or poor sound quality; however, some moments were also erased for ethical reasons, for example, to protect the privacy of the life drawing model, when they (accidentally) came into view of the camera lens.

The sections of the video footage pertaining to each student-participant were later recorded to a separate DVD, before erasing the footage from the DVD recorder’s internal hard drive. By coding each day of video footage in this way meant I was able to make a copy of the video footage on a DVD for the whole day, as well as make a copy of the video footage for each particular student on a separate DVD. This meant I had a copy of each segment of video footage within its naturalistic setting, as well as having a copy of the video footage for each particular student on its own DVD. This enabled easy access to relevant information when the time came to hone in on the interactions for each student. A Microsoft Word document was developed to correspond with each student DVD and the content of relevant interactions were transcribed.\(^{181}\)

Creating a DVD of video footage for individual students meant I was able to provide the students with a copy of a DVD with their interactions with their teachers to guide their reflections on their experiences at art school. Bogdan and Biklen (2007 p.115) suggest that sharing pictures or video footage in this way might serve to bring the researcher and the participant closer together. Jacobs, Kawanaka and Stigler (1999) also suggest such sharing can also stimulate good conversation and produce rich data; however, Mousley (1998 p.400), found that the teachers in her study were often distracted by their own looks, clothing, expressions, vocal tenor, etc. during video-stimulated interviews. The comments by the student-participants from the interviews and group discussions and written responses in this

\(^{180}\) See Appendix 3.1.2.
\(^{181}\) See Appendix 3.2.1.
study suggest that after getting over the initial shock of seeing video footage of themselves,\textsuperscript{182} watching the video footage enabled a number of realisations.\textsuperscript{183} It was also anticipated that providing opportunities for the student-participants to watch the video footage of their interactions in their Core Drawing class would provide another means by which I could allow the object of knowledge (the art students’ attitudes and beliefs regarding art) to determine how it could be known. In the question sheet, which accompanied each DVD,\textsuperscript{184} I invited each student to identify any of the footage that they thought I should pay special attention to when I came to reflect on their learning experiences at art school.

\textbf{§6.3.2 The interviews and group discussions}

The video footage from the in-depth interviews was not processed in any way prior to recording to DVD; however, video footage from group discussions were partially processed, dividing these discussions into the separate phases of the discussion before recording to DVD. Each group discussion was separated at the points where the discussion changed direction. Each discussion usually began with a broad reflection on their general experience of being at art school, and then specific reflections on the particular class I was observing, and then more specific reflections pertaining to the action learning process they were involved in. I divided the footage into these separate categories to make easy access to these different parts of the discussion during the analysis.

Processing the interview and group discussion data also involved transcribing the dialogue from the interviews and group discussions.\textsuperscript{185} Although this yielded very rich data, it was also a very time consuming process.

The above-mentioned activities associated with collecting and processing data generated very large volumes of information to be analysed. In the following section I attempt to make explicit the processes involved in analysing data for this inquiry.

\textsuperscript{182} NUDIST reference: I_S-Ja3: 496-497; I_S-Jo3: 56-107; GD8: 742-755.
\textsuperscript{184} See Appendix 2.1.
\textsuperscript{185} See Appendix 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.
§6.4 Data Analysis Methods

Confronted with a mountain of impressions, documents, transcribed interviews, and field notes, the qualitative researcher faces the difficult task of making sense of what has been learned.

(Anfara Jr, Brown, & Mangione, 2002 p.31)

Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002) offer suggestions for assessing the methodological rigor and analytical defensibility of the qualitative research paradigm. They suggest the purpose of data analysis is to 'bring meaning, structure, and order to data' (Anfara Jr et al., 2002 p.31). They also argue for the importance of making explicit the processes involved in data analysis, suggesting 'a key part of qualitative research is how we account for ourselves, how we reveal that world of secrets' (Anfara Jr et al., 2002 p.28).

The discussion in this section is my best attempt at making explicit the processes involved in making sense of the data I collected. This has been quite challenging for the practice of analysing data in this study could best be described as 'intuitive'. By this I mean although my research proposal made suggestions for analysing the data in particular ways, and was justified according to particular reasons, when actually presented with a 'real' situation, my response was often spontaneous, and was not always aligned to the predetermined plan.186 This approach is consistent with Bhaskar’s suggestion ‘if we have an idea of how we are going to act before a situation, then we are inevitably narrowing down our range of options, cramping our “style”; to be maximally pliable, to act in the best possible way, spontaneously maximally, coherently, we have to be blank, empty, free of ideas as to how we would act’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.148). Thus, I found what often did guide my actions whilst I collected and analysed the data was an intuitive sense of what my response should be. I refer to this as ‘an inkling’. The process of practising my research in this way is expressed in the working title of my thesis as: ‘the adventures of an inkling’.

The unfolding adventures of this inkling would often lead to unanticipated challenges. My actions at these times were informed by Bhaskar’s suggestion to live and act in ‘the wisdom of uncertainty, located on your ground state, to be as empty and clear as possible, so as to be free, to adjust your plan at a moment’s notice’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.105). Bhaskar goes on to suggest this is ‘a far better maxim for action than a rigid conformity to some idea dreamt up in another time and place’. It was intended my research journal would provide a means for keeping a record of my activities; however, I found I only tended to use the research journal when I was experiencing a difficulty and needed to reflect on how to resolve it.187 Thus, when my experience of data analysis was ‘flowing’, the interpretive documents I was working on

became the record of my activities. The discussion that follows is structured around the processes employed in the development of the ideas outlined in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

The process of analysing data in this study was comprised of three separate phases:

- *inducing themes* from the data in order to develop profiles for each student based on their data, and assisted by relevant theories as needed;\(^\text{188}\)

- *reinterpreting the data* according to particular theories: Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory, Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus*, Bhaskar’s stratified model of the self, intentional human agency, four-planar social being, and absence, and supplemented by findings from cognitive neuroscience;\(^\text{189}\)

- *critiquing the conclusions* from my early analysis and discussion, and reconsidering data from one student in terms of the revised model that emerged from this critique.\(^\text{190}\)

§6.4.1 Data Analysis Methods – Phase 1

The first phase of data analysis involved identifying categories and themes within each student’s comments from the transcribed interview and group discussion data. In some instances, this was complemented with data from the observations of their behaviour and interactions in the drawing class recorded on video. This enabled me to create a portrait of each student.\(^\text{191}\) Each student’s portrait differed from the other portraits in a variety of ways. This wasn’t simply because each student was saying something different, (although they often were), but rather, because what they were saying provoked a parallel journey for me to explore literature from other discipline areas, as I attempted to make sense of their comments. For example, Teresa’s comments took me down a journey into the world of cognitive neuroscience, whilst Betty’s comments took me down a path of considering the relationship between the mindful and mindless position of transcendental agency. Joanne’s comments related to flow theory, and Ellen’s and Jarrah’s comments provoked me to consider the social aspect of learning, and the role of the teacher. Later (in the second phase of data analysis), I used Ellen’s comments to consider the contribution Bourdieu’s concept of the *habitus* might be able to make. I am quite sure I could have approached data analysis in a different way and come up with different results. However, as with data collection, data analysis in this study was driven by a concern to avoid the epistemic fallacy, by ensuring that

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\(^{188}\) See §6.4.1.

\(^{189}\) See §6.4.2.

\(^{190}\) See §6.4.3.

\(^{191}\) See Appendix 4.1.
the object of knowledge would determine how it would be known. In the sections that follow, I attempt to describe how this was achieved.

Each phase of the data analysis process involved an adventure with an inkling. On some occasions my actions seemed to be very mindful; however, most of the time, when I was actually doing the analysis, the journey was navigated spontaneously. According to the philosophy of meta-Reality, this is all that could possibly happen:

in order to act at all there must be something, at some level, which you do not do by thinking about how to do it, but which you just do, spontaneously, unconditionally, normally pretty effortlessly, and unless you acted in that non-dual way, you could never do anything at all.

(Bhaskar, 2002a p.xi)

According to Bhaskar’s logic, although I might have been mindful about some aspects of my behaviour, every mindfully performed action would also be underpinned by a spontaneous, effortless element; for example, although I might have mindfully developed the criteria or approaches for analysing data, the act of typing the words into a word processing document (so as to keep a record of this in my research journal) would have been enabled by pre-existing typing skills, that I could perform spontaneously. Further, having mindfully established that I would use certain approaches or criteria for data analysis, after repeating these actions again and again, the very act of applying those criteria or approaches to new data might also pass over into less mindful, and more spontaneous, actions.

§6.4.1.1 The interviews and group discussions

NUDIST qualitative data analysis software was used to assist in analysis of the data set for each student. In line with a grounded theory approach to research, the structure this phase of analysis took emerged during the analysis, from the information available (Punch, 2005 p.57). Each interview and group discussion was first transcribed, these transcriptions were then read and re-read, and emerging themes for each participant were identified (Neuman, 2006 pp.461-462). In very practical terms, this involved sitting down with a printed copy of the written transcripts, using a highlighter and pencil to help identify ‘important’, ‘common’ or ‘interesting’ themes as I read through the transcripts (see Appendix 3.3). This process of identifying potential themes by pulling together real examples from the text has been referred

\[192\] It was during the first phase of data analysis that I began to notice my object of knowledge was beginning to change from the art students’ attitudes and beliefs about art, to their state of consciousness whilst they were making art (see §5.2).
to as ‘open coding’ (Ryan & Bernard, 2000 p.783). The typed transcripts were then imported into NUDIST: software for qualitative data analysis. ‘Nodes’, which corresponded to each of these themes, were created in NUDIST and the corresponding text from each data source was coded accordingly.194 The content of particular NUDIST nodes were later unpacked, and similar themes from various data sources throughout the period of data collection were cross-analysed. It was intended for comments from each of these nodes to be collated and discussed in an attempt to create a profile of that particular student. However, given there was a total of 294 nodes for all of the students and each student’s data set comprised of 4 to 15 main categories and 25 to 60 themes,195 this intention was not fulfilled.

The first phase of the data analysis process began with Joanne’s data.196 The categories and themes were developed inductively. The process of coding Joanne’s transcripts from the two main interviews and the four group discussions created 87 different categories and themes.197 I then began analysing the comments that were coded under the ‘art-making practice’ category and ‘history’ theme, and reduced it to a one-page narrative-style description. I then revisited the data that was coded and attempted to reorganise the themes and concepts in a combination of both Joanne’s words and my own in order to create a relatively coherent discussion (see Appendix 4.1.1).198

Having done this for only five of the nodal categories/themes, I realised it would take a long time if I were to attempt to do this with all 87 nodes. Unsure this would be the most effective use of my time, I decided to revisit Bhaskar’s philosophy of meta-reality (Bhaskar, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2002d, 2002e), together with Morgan’s critique (J. Morgan, 2003, 2005), to see if this would help me to recognise which of the 87 nodes I had developed for Joanne were most relevant for developing an understanding of free-flowing art making activity. It wasn’t too long before I found some direction:

What I am now doing is to briefly return to Bhaskar and Morgan and explore how meta-Reality can help me to focus my analysis efforts. Ground state consciousness, being in the zone, shedding beliefs and behaviours which inhibit the experience of ground state consciousness, being in the zone and participation in an artistic creative process. What is there in the data that provides insight on this matter?199

I will use the definition of transcendental agency to guide my analysis. Exploring what students have to say about being in the zone, or when it flows, or being in the mood to

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193 This is highly subjective and varied from student to student; however, it is also consistent with the critical realist underpinnings, by allowing the object of knowledge (in this case, each particular student’s comments) to determine how it would be known (that is, the criteria for analysis) (Shipway, 2002 p.104).
194 See Appendix 3.4.
195 See Appendix 3.4.
create art. I will also look at the things that the students identified as constraining this experience (their high expectations, negative self-talk, inner critics etc). 200

During this time, I also met with Rosanne Coutts from Southern Cross University’s School of Exercise Science. 201 This proved to be quite an influential meeting for the development of ideas for my thesis, for it was at this time Rosanne suggested I might like to look at Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience.

Having identified I was particularly interested in making sense of the experience which art students profess to sometimes have of ‘being in the zone’ when participating in a process of making art, 202 and realising Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience, together with Bhaskar’s theories relating to transcendental agency, might be quite significant, I then attempted to analyse Joanne’s data with these particular concepts in mind.

I feel like I am making some headway with the analysis of [Joanne’s] data. The way that I began this analysis was to view the contents of the index tree in NUDIST which contained the information relating to: S-Jo/art-making practice/the FLOW or the ZONE. I copied and pasted this into a word document. I noticed that there were references in this data to things which enabled and things which constrained [Joanne’s] experience of being in ‘the zone’. So I then used a table with two columns and sorted the content of [Joanne’s] disclosures into these different categories. This helped me to locate the relevant information as I began to write about my understanding of [Joanne’s] experience of being in the zone. As I engaged with this data I began to see links with Bhaskar’s concept of transcendental agency and Csikszentmihalyi’s flow experience, so I discussed these relationships too. I then looked at the branch of the index tree relating to things which BLOCK or INHIBIT [Joanne’s] participation in an art-making practice and at this stage I have explored the sub-categories of thoughts and expectations. 203

Appendix 5.1 has several documents demonstrating how my analysis of Joanne’s disclosures about ‘the zone’ progressed. As indicated in the research journal extract above, I first used a table with two columns to sort the content of Joanne’s disclosures from the ‘art-making practice’ category and ‘the flow or the zone’ theme to identify the enabling and constraining elements of her experience. 204 This enabled me to locate the relevant information as I began to write about my understanding of Joanne’s experience of what she referred to as ‘the zone’. This led me to analyse the content of Joanne’s comments from the theme: ‘things which block or inhibit’ from the ‘art-making practice’ category. I particularly looked at the sub-themes: ‘thoughts’ and ‘expectations’. 205 In the process of engaging with this data I began to see links

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202 Research journal: 12 October 2006.
204 See Appendix 5.1.1.
205 See Appendix 5.1.1.
with the concept of transcendental agency from the philosophy of meta-Reality, and also Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of ‘flow’.\textsuperscript{206}

I was fortunate to have another meeting with Joanne again (she came over to my house for lunch in early November 2006). She agreed for me to record our lunchtime discussion using the video camera, and so our lunchtime meeting effectively became the third interview. I was particularly interested in asking her to clarify some of her ideas about the experience of being in ‘the zone’.\textsuperscript{207} I was keen to transcribe and analyse this interview at this time, but believed I should delay this, and begin the process of analysing the interview and group discussion data for the other students.

Jarrah was the next student whose interview and group discussion data was analysed.\textsuperscript{208} The process of coding Jarrah’s transcripts from the two main interviews and the four group discussions created 62 different categories and themes.\textsuperscript{209} The first phase of analysis included the content of 2 categories and 8 themes, plus, a string search for the words: enjoy, enjoying, enjoyed, fun, challenge, challenging, and confronting. I also employed a word search in Microsoft Word using the ‘Find’ function in Microsoft Word for Jarrah’s use of the word \textit{frustrating}. This enabled me to develop a picture of Jarrah’s background and general experience of coming to art school. The written analysis of Jarrah’s data also drew on Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience, and made a brief reference to the ideas of Bhaskar. This level of analysis led to the second phase of data analysis that is outlined in §6.4.2.1 and §6.4.2.3.

I then began transcribing and analysing Ellen’s data.\textsuperscript{210} The process of coding Ellen’s transcripts from the two main interviews and the four group discussions created 55 different categories and themes.\textsuperscript{211} Analysis of Ellen’s data for the first phase included a total of 2 categories and 4 themes. This enabled me to develop a picture of Ellen’s background and general experience of coming to art school. The written analysis of Ellen’s data also drew on Bhaskar’s concept of absence, and made a brief reference to the concept of transcendental agency and Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow. This level of analysis led to the second phase of data analysis that is outlined in §6.4.2.3.

Betty was the next student whose data was analysed.\textsuperscript{212} The process of coding Betty’s transcripts from the two main interviews and the three group discussions she participated in

\textsuperscript{206} See Appendix 5.1.2 and 5.1.3.
\textsuperscript{207} Research journal: 4 November 2006.
\textsuperscript{209} See Appendix 3.4, Table 3.4.3.
\textsuperscript{210} Research journal: 4 December 2006.
\textsuperscript{211} See Appendix 3.4, Table 3.4.2.
\textsuperscript{212} Research journal: 2 March 2007.
created 63 different categories and themes. Analysis of Betty's data for the first phase included a total of 4 categories and 15 themes. This enabled me to develop a picture of Betty's background and general experience of coming to art school. Betty’s comments lent themselves well to an exploration of Bhaskar’s mindful and mindless position of transcendental agency. The written analysis of Betty's data also drew on Bhaskar’s theory of the stratified self, and also made reference to Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience. This level of analysis led to the second phase of data analysis outlined in §6.4.2.2.

I then began analysing Teresa’s data. The process of coding Teresa’s transcripts from the interviews and the group discussion she participated in created 30 different categories and themes. This enabled me to develop a picture of Teresa’s background and general experience of coming to art school. Analysis of Teresa’s data for the first phase included a total of 2 categories and 9 themes. The content of Teresa’s comments inspired me to consider the stratified nature of human consciousness. The written analysis of Teresa’s data also drew extensively on a wide variety of theories emerging from the field of cognitive neuroscience, spiritual and religious studies, and philosophy. This level of analysis led to the second phase of data analysis outlined in §6.4.2.1 and §6.4.2.3.

Having unpacked the content of particular NUDIST nodes and cross-analysed similar themes from various data sources I attempted to create a profile of each particular student. In some instances, cross-analysis suggested the participants’ ideas had changed throughout the period of data collection. In other instances cross-analysis helped to clarify and confirm participants’ ideas by providing evidence from different contexts. In yet other instances, inconsistencies in students’ thinking or behaviour were highlighted. Cross-analysis of data within each case study, together with interpretive theory from the field of cognitive neuroscience, critical realism, the philosophy of meta-Reality and flow experience enabled a portrait of each participant’s experience as an art student and their art-making practice to emerge.

The identification of students’ descriptions of art making, in terms of its flowing or non-flowing character, was followed by an exploration of the contents of each student’s consciousness (as implied in interview responses etc), in relation to the making or studying of art, in terms of its congruence or non-congruence with flow experience. This information was used to make a representation of the essence of creative flow and creative block for each student. It then became possible to identify what content of each student’s consciousness could be absented

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213 See Appendix 3.4, Table 3.4.1.
214 See Appendix 4.1.2.
216 See Appendix 3.4, Table 3.4.5.
217 See Appendix 4.1.
218 This was achieved by taking note of the things that the students mentioned in relation to their enjoyable ‘flow’ experiences and their experiences, which didn’t flow.
to enable a flow experience whilst making art. This level of analysis led to the second phase of data analysis outlined in §6.4.2.1. Following the completion of each case study, the further attempt was made to identify, first, those ideas or concepts of Bhaskar’s of most help in interpreting the case study and, second, the ways in which the case study helped to make some of Bhaskar’s ideas come alive. These were identified as the points where the data and theory converged.

§6.4.1.2 The action learning spiral

My action learning spiral

As previously noted in §6.2.4, producing practical knowledge useful for me as I played the role of researcher was one of the intentions for employing an action research strategy for this study (Reason & Bradbury, 2004 p.2). Prior to entering the data collection field I identified the potential problem that my own experience, attitudes and beliefs about art, as well as the art school environment, might influence the content of what the art students disclosed to me.220 Bearing in mind I could never be an impartial or dispassionate researcher (Dickson & Green, 2001 p.248), I still attempted to participate in an action learning process concerned with resolving the following problem: ‘How can I avoid the epistemic fallacy and ensure that the object of my knowledge (the participants’ attitudes and beliefs regarding art) determines how it is known?’221

Analysing data that related to my own action learning spiral involved identifying my comments and actions relating to my attempts at addressing this problem. I then tracked these records overtime and cross-analysed my own records with comments the student-participants made about their experience of participating in the activities associated with data collection.

The student-participants’ action learning spiral

There were two possible ways of analysing the data pertaining to the student-participants’ action learning spiral. The first related to information about the students’ attitudes and beliefs about art and how they enable and/or constrain participation in an artistic creative process, and the second related to their attempts at improving or accepting an aspect of their art-making practice. With respect to the former, the information gained from the action learning component of the group discussions was analysed in the same way as those of the group

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219 See Appendix 5.5.
discussion and interview data were analysed.\textsuperscript{222} With respect to the latter, NUDIST qualitative data analysis software was used in the following way. After each group discussion and interview were transcribed, I read through the transcripts for each participant and, with the aid of a highlighter and pencil, identified the text which corresponded to the action learning spiral. ‘Nodes’, which corresponded to these topics, were created in NUDIST and the corresponding text from each data source was coded accordingly.

\textit{§6.4.1.3 The observations}

By imposing minimal structure on the observational data at the time of collection, I delayed the analysis of this information until later. This also meant I was able to return to the same piece of information, but approach it from a different perspective and potentially make sense of it in a different way. It was anticipated the video footage coded ‘student-initiated interaction with teacher’ could later be analysed according to the way it reflected ‘the students’ attitudes or beliefs regarding art’, and the extent to which this interaction reflected ‘negotiated learning’. It was also anticipated the video data that were coded ‘whole-group instruction’ could later be analysed according to the way it reflected ‘the attitudes and beliefs regarding art of the teacher’, and also ‘the parameters which define the educational encounter’, and ‘the extent to which negotiation of the educational encounter’, was possible.

The process of collecting the observational data also meant I was in the class with the students each week. Spending a whole day with the students each week provided ongoing opportunities to build a relaxed relationship with each of the students, and this meant the interviews and group discussions yielded more information than they might have otherwise.

Having identified themes from the interview, group discussion and observational data, I then became concerned with whether I might be able to put forward various propositions about the things that were constraining or enabling ‘flow experience’ for each of the art students involved in this study. I was also interested in applying my developing understanding of Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow, as well as various concepts from the philosophy of meta-Reality and critical realism, to each of the case studies. This shift in the direction of my analysis marked the entrance into what I now refer to as the second phase of data analysis.

\textsuperscript{222} See Appendix 5.2 for an example of the analysis that came from Betty’s participation in the action learning spiral.
As my understanding of various concepts from the philosophy of critical realism began to take form, I realised Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow provided an account of what an enjoyable experience might look like in the ‘empirical’ domain of reality. ‘Flow theory’ provided a particularly meaningful example of a theory about reality at the empirical level of ‘experience’ for me to relate to, and so my parallel journey of making sense of various concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality began to deepen. The process of data analysis can therefore be understood as a three-way investigation, progressing in the following way:

On some occasions, I used

1. empirical examples from the data collected in an art school to make sense of:
   - Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience, and/or
   - concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality.

On other occasions, I used

2. Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience to make sense of:
   - the empirical examples from the data collected, and/or
   - concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality.

Other times it was more appropriate to use:

3. concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality to make sense of:
   - Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience, and/or
   - the empirical examples from the data collected.

This three-way relationship is represented in Figure 3.1, below.
The second phase of data analysis involved drawing on each of the student's profile and their comments (which related to similar and different themes), to create cohesive discussions for Chapter Four, Chapter Five and Chapter Six of this thesis. In the following sections, I discuss the data analysis and interpretation processes involved in preparing these discussions.

§6.4.2.1 The conscious experience of the stratified art student

The data analysis process involved in writing this chapter (C4) was driven by a concern with whether philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality could be used to make sense of the emancipation of fine art students from content of their consciousness that is incongruent with flow experience whilst making art. This was my object of knowledge.

The process of analysing data for this chapter began by using Jarrah’s interview and group discussion data to explore the possibility of making sense of the process of unblocking the

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223 The arrows in this figure are used to indicate that the content of the circle with the arrow tail was used to help make sense of the content of the circle with the arrowhead.
224 These chapters also correspond to three papers that I prepared. The first was for the Journal of Critical Realism (Critical realism, meta-Reality and making art: traversing a theory-practice gap), while the second and third were papers presented at the International Association for Critical Realism conference (The adventures of an inkling: unblocking the creative block) and Critical Realism in Education conference (Unfolding the enfolded: experiencing flow whilst learning to draw) in London in 2008.
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creative block using philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality. Having
induced 45 themes from Jarrah’s interview and group discussion data in the first phase of
data analysis, I then used NUDIST, qualitative software program, to explore the interview
and group discussion data pertaining to 17 of these themes. In this second phase of data
analysis, I managed to reorganise them into four key areas consisting of 14 themes. I then
attempted to draw on the data from these nodes to identify the content of Jarrah’s
consciousness that was either consistent or inconsistent with flow experience. I then cross-
analysed Jarrah’s data with data from the four other student-participants, including the
previously analysed ‘student profiles’ and interview and group discussion data. The previous
analysis of Joanne’s comments pertaining to her experience of ‘the zone’ was particularly
influential. During this phase of the analysis, I drew on philosophical concepts from critical
realism and meta-Reality – (i) the stratified model of reality, (ii) the ontological status of
absence, (iii) transcendental identification, (iv) transcendental agency and (v) the stratified
self – together with Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience and findings from cognitive
neuroscience to make sense of the emancipation of art students from the content of their
consciousness which inhibits or constrains enjoyment whilst making art.

I also looked at the interview and group discussion data for reference to their experience of
thoughts during the process of making art to see if this might shed light on the content of their
consciousness which inhibits or constrains flow experience whilst making art. Using the group
discussion and interview data, I identified several different categories of thought the students
referred to, and I made some tentative conclusions about the types of thoughts that might be
incongruent with an experience of ‘flow’ whilst making art. This enabled me to suggest a way
forward in terms of emancipation, and to generate a model for ‘unblocking the creative block’,
experienced not only by students learning to make art, but also by the wider community.

§6.4.2.2 Structure and agency during flow experience

The development of the ideas for this chapter (C5) involved analysing interview and group
discussion data for three students: Teresa, Ellen, and Jarrah.

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226 The discussion in C4 was first published as ‘Critical realism, meta-Reality and making art: traversing
a theory-practice gap’ in *Journal of Critical Realism* 7(1) 2008, 29-56.
227 These 17 nodes were chosen because they strongly related to Jarrah’s previous experience prior to
arriving at art school (including her previous art-related experiences and comments about her career in the
health industry), and her experience at art school (including the things which challenged her, and her
brief mention to when it wasn’t as challenging).
228 Research journal: 6 February 2007; also see Appendix 3.4, Table 3.4.3.
229 See Appendix 5.3.
230 See Appendix 5.1.
Teresa’s interview and group discussion data were scanned for reference to her experience of when the process of making art was guided by intentions that were below the threshold of her conscious awareness. Teresa’s comments were considered, together with findings from Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976), which suggest art students might work with a subliminal goal in mind, and Bhaskar’s stratified model of reality and intentional human agency, to develop an explanation of such experiences.

The analysis of Ellen’s data involved considering her comments from the interviews and group discussions in terms of how they might illustrate when the actions of her embodied personality were either consistent or inconsistent with the intentions of her ground state. Cross-analysis from various group discussions and the final interview that occurred throughout Ellen’s first semester at art school also enabled me to build a picture of how her experiences and attitude changed over a period of three months.

The analysis of Jarrah’s data was informed by Bhaskar’s stratified model of the self and four planar social being as well as the *habitus* theory of Bourdieu, in order to explore the role past and present social conditions might play in experiencing free-flowing activity. Data analysis involved considering Jarrah’s comments from the interviews and group discussions in terms of how they might illustrate a possible mismatch between the social field of the art school learning environment and the evolving set of durable transposable dispositions she was able to call upon to negotiate the challenges she was faced with. This was a logical focus, for Jarrah often made particular comments on how different the challenges of the art school learning environment were to the skills and behaviours she had developed over her 30-year career as a registered nurse.

§6.4.2.3 Unfolding the enfolded: experiencing flow whilst learning to draw

This chapter (C6) is concerned with exploring the theory of co-presence and the related idea that both learning and creativity might be a process of unfolding what already exists in an enfolded state within (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.114-115). My research journal entries from August 2007 provide evidence of how my understanding of the ideas Bhaskar presents developed by reflecting on them in relation to my existing understanding of the students involved in my study, the Core Drawing module outline, and previous readings by Regent and

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231 The discussion in C5 was first presented as a conference paper entitled ‘The adventures of an inkling: unblocking the creative block’ at the *International Association for Critical Realism* conference at King’s College London, 2008.

232 The discussion in C6 was first presented as a conference paper at the *Critical Realism in Education* conference at the Institute of Education, University of London, in 2008.
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Csikszentmihalyi.233 I also initiated a few exchanges on the critical realism discussion list234 to clarify my understandings.235

Data analysis for Chapter Six first began by looking at Ellen's interview and group discussion data, and considering how her actual comments related to each of the phases from the model of unfolding the enfolded.236 I attempted to repeat this for Betty, Jarrah and Teresa, with varying degrees of commitment and success. The analysis of the empirical data involved searching through each student’s data set for comments that converged with the theories being discussed in relation to the process of learning new things. The convergence between the theory and the data was expressed in four different forms:

(i) The students’ comments were used to provide evidence of what the various ideas relating to the model of unfolding the enfolded might look like in practice; 237
(ii) Various ideas relating to the model of unfolding the enfolded were used to make sense of the students’ comments;238
(iii) Students’ comments were used to demonstrate a practical situation in which an understanding of co-presence and the model of unfolding the enfolded might help to empower learners to overcome the things that block their creativity and learning;239
(iv) Students’ comments were also used to provide practical examples that might inform and develop our understanding of the model of unfolding the enfolded. 240

233 In my research journal entry from 20 August 2007, I explicitly reflect on the process involved in engaging with Bhaskar’s ideas: ‘Something that I have noticed when reading what Bhaskar has to say in this chapter is that when I come across an idea which seems to contradict something else he says, I seem to approach it with a belief that there must just be something that I don’t understand yet. I approach it with a willingness to engage with it so that I can make sense of it. Perhaps this comes from the idea that everything in the universe is enfolded in everything else, and it’s just a matter allowing it to unfold. I trust that Bhaskar’s ideas are complete and that I will be able to make sense of them, and that all I have to do is to engage with them in a way that will allow an understanding of them to unfold in my awareness. […]’. 234 http://lists.econ.utah.edu/mailman/listinfo/critical-realism 235 Research journal: 14-21 August 2007; http://lists.econ.utah.edu/pipermail/critical-realism/2007-August/date.html#start 236 See Appendix 5.4. This part of the analysis was just the beginning of my attempts at applying these theories to the practice of learning to make art. The structure of the analysis presented in this document presents a slightly different interpretation of the phases in the model of unfolding the enfolded to that which is presented in the ‘unfolding the enfolded’ chapter (C6). 237 NUDIST reference: GD2: 528-533, 535-537, 576-581, 749-754; GD5: 640-646, 648-669, 671-674; GD7: 665-670; GD8: 870-872; I_S-B1: 437, 443, 457-459, 463-464; I_S-Jo4: 266-267, 269-272, 629-630, 632-634, 638, 647-649, 688-689; I_S-E1: 158, 160-161, 251-264, 583-588; I_S-T2: 43, 46-48; I_S-T3: 212-220, 222-226; I_S-Ja3: 463-464. 238 NUDIST reference: I_S-E1: 251-264, 583-588; GD2: 749-754. 239 NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo4: 852-853. 240 NUDIST reference: I_S-B1: 109-120, 144-157, 173-174, 185-192, 328-353, 409-412, 437-444, 457-459, 461-466; I_S-B2: 363-370, 768-770; GD2: 498; GD4: 359-378, 696-708; GD8: 495, 562-567, 574-585, 956-957; S_B_AHP: 12-14, 124-125.
§6.4.3  Data Analysis Methods – Phase 3

The third phase of data analysis involved a development in my thinking based on the insights and feedback I received from the process of writing and presenting the *Unfolding the enfolded: experiencing flow whilst learning to draw* and *The adventures of an inkling: unblocking the creative block* papers for the Critical Realism in Education and International Association for Critical Realism conferences in London in July 2008. The third phase of data analysis involved revisiting the propositions put forward in *Critical realism, meta-Reality and making art: traversing a theory-practice gap* and discussing the limitations of Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory for making sense of some of the students’ comments about the nature of their enjoyable experiences whilst learning to make art. At this stage of the analysis, I was concerned with determining the ontological structures that might be in play whilst learning to make art, and also during flow experience. An understanding of this was developed during the process of writing the *On the fringe of flow* chapter.

§6.4.3.1  *On the fringe of flow*

In this chapter (C7), I outline some possible ways of distinguishing between the actions and experience of the embodied personality, and the intentionality and the consciousness of the ground state.

The process of analysing data in Chapter Seven involved using comments Joanne made during an in-depth interview to provide evidence of what the distinction between the consciousness and intentionality of the ground state, and its relationship with the experience and actions of the embodied personality, might look like in practice. To do this, I took a twenty-minute segment from a discussion between Joanne and myself on 29 June 2006, and interpreted each set of comments in terms of five categories: congruent mindfulness, incongruent mindfulness, congruent apparent spontaneity, incongruent apparent spontaneity, and supramental mindlessness. I chose this particular segment, because Joanne had prepared the questions and possible response prior to the interview, and it was these questions and accompanying notes that guided her disclosures. The content of the discussion provides data that directly relates to the topic of experiencing flow or ‘being in the zone’ whilst learning to make art, and lends itself quite well to illustrate the five categories from the revised model that are presented in the first part of the *On the fringe of flow* chapter.

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241 Much of the content of these papers is included in C6 and C5, respectively.
242 See §6.4.2.1 and C4.
§6.4.4  Data Analysis Methods – Summary

As can be seen from the preceding discussion, the analysis of data in this project progressed through three distinct phases:

(i) inducing themes from the data in order to develop profiles for each student based on their data, and assisted by relevant theories as needed;
(ii) reinterpreting the data according to particular theories: Csikzentmihalyi’s flow theory, Bourdieu’s notion of the *habitus*, Bhaskar’s stratified model of the self, intentional human agency, four-planar social being, and absence, and supplemented by findings from cognitive neuroscience; and
(iii) critiquing the conclusions from my early analysis and discussion, and reconsidering data from one student in terms of the revised model that emerged from this critique.

§7  Delimitations

According to Keith Punch (2000 p. 75), ‘delimitations’ means defining the limits, or drawing the boundaries of a study, and showing clearly what is and is not included.

This study was limited by the ability for the adult participants to use verbal expression of the English language to describe their conscious experiences relating to being at art school. Although the topics that the students were able to talk about have enabled me to develop an understanding about the nature of free-flowing art-making activity, my understanding is necessarily constrained to those topics that the students were not only conscious of, but were also able to translate into verbal language.

The perspective of hindsight indicates that the topics of particular interest to the research participants and myself were the types of experiences they had when their actions were guided by intentions that were below the level of their conscious awareness. Accurately defining these types of experiences, and explaining the reasons for them, using verbal means of expression, is clearly limited. Whilst the philosophy of meta-Reality provides concepts that enable explanation to extend beyond the constraints of the art student’s experiences and comments, critical realism also urges that we do not conflate what we can know about the phenomena with the phenomena itself.

Bhaskar’s stratified model of reality\(^{243}\) enables identification of one of the limitations of this study. Whilst data analysis and subsequent interpretations involved identifying and distinguishing between empirical experiences, actual events and the real mechanisms that

\(^{243}\) This was previously discussed in C2 §2.1.3.
cause their occurrence, the stratified model of reality also implies that empirical data always represents an incomplete picture of reality. Further, unlike other types of phenomena, it is difficult to distinguish between the content of an art student’s consciousness, that is, their experience of making art and being at art school, and the conditions which allow that same art student access to their experience.

Although this study was clearly limited by the ability for the adult participants to use verbal expression of the English language to describe their conscious experiences relating to being at art school, it is not destined to remain a simple account of the students’ perceptions and subjective experience. The ontological realist underpinnings allow us to recognise that the students who were involved in this study were not simply speaking from their subjective experience, they were also speaking about something, something that was both real and meaningful. The philosophical concepts afforded by critical realism and meta-Reality have enabled me to develop a theory that extends beyond the realm of subjective experience, and to make a proposition about the alethic ground that might be underpinning the types of subjective experiences to which the student-participants were referring.

§8 Consent, Access and Participants’ Protection

Southern Cross University is committed to three principles with respect to research involving human participants. The first of these is concerned with maintaining the rights of the participants in the research; the second acknowledges these rights take precedence over the expected benefits to human knowledge derived from the research; and finally, participation must be voluntary and participation in the research must be based on informed consent (HREC, 2005 p. 1).

This study involved the use of: ‘survey procedures, interview procedures, observation of public behaviour, discussion groups or participatory group processes, where information is recorded in such a manner that […] human participants can be identified directly or through identifiers linked to participants (HREC, 2005 p. 3), and therefore required ethical approval from Southern Cross University’s Human Research Ethics Committee.244

It was also part of the ethics requirements that the participating students and teachers made an informed decision to consent to their participation in the study, both student and teachers were provided with information about what participation in the study would involve prior to signing the consent forms. Copies of these information sheets are included in Appendix 1.3.

244 Ethics Approval Number: ECN-05-138
Chapter Four – The conscious experience of the stratified art student

§1 Overview of chapter four

As previously noted in C3 §6.4.2.1, the data analysis process involved in writing this chapter was driven by a concern with whether philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality could be used to make sense of the emancipation of fine art students from content of their consciousness that is incongruent with flow experience whilst making art. This was my object of knowledge.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the possibility of using concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality to help to analyse interview and group discussion data, and observation data to promote an understanding of human emancipation within the context of making art. The concepts relate to (i) stratified reality, (ii) the ontological status of absence and (iii) the nature of human emancipation in terms of a particular kind of connectedness with one's ground state. As the data collected could be interpreted using concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality, this chapter lends some empirical support, albeit not direct, to both of these philosophies.

Cross-analysis of five case studies enabled identification of common themes relating to the flow or non-flow character of art students' experience of making art at art school. The interview and group discussion data for these students suggests that the reason why they make art is because it feels good. Making art was variously associated with enjoyment, love, nourishment, healing, satisfaction and happiness. However, not all art-making experiences felt good. Why this should be the case may be understood by drawing on philosophical concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality.

In §2 and 3, conscious experience is located within a stratified model of reality and the nature of the self that has conscious experiences is explored from the perspective of meta-Reality. In §4 and 5, the content of consciousness during a flow experience is unpacked and drawn upon to make sense of the participants' experiences of flow whilst making art, and three categories

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245 The discussion in this chapter has been taken directly from the findings and discussion sections of 'Critical realism, meta-Reality and making art: traversing a theory-practice gap' that was published in the Journal of Critical Realism (McDonald, 2008).
248 NUDIST reference: I_S-T1: 235
249 NUDIST reference: I_S-B2: 370
250 NUDIST reference: I_S-E1: 227-228
of thoughts are explored in detail: ‘action-related thought’, ‘product-related thought’ and ‘unrelated thought’.

Within the context of making art, ‘action-related thoughts’ are thoughts that are directly related to the task of using a drawing implement in order to make marks on a surface in order to create visual imagery. ‘Product-related thoughts’ are thoughts that are concerned with the end product of an art-making process, whilst ‘unrelated thoughts’ are thoughts that distract students from their activity. It appears that ‘action-related thoughts’ are congruent with an experience of flow, whilst ‘product-related thoughts’ and ‘unrelated thoughts’ are not.

§2 Conscious experience

Despite the intriguing and fascinating nature of human consciousness, it has only recently been considered a suitable topic for scientific investigation. For many years, the traditional categories of mind and body, mental and physical, dualism and materialism have inhibited scientific investigation in the area of human consciousness. Offering a solution to this philosophical problem, John Searle suggests that ‘consciousness and other sorts of mental phenomena are caused by neurological processes in the brain, and they are realised in the structure of the brain’ (Searle, 2000 p.566). However, consciousness is a difficult topic to investigate scientifically because ‘It has a first-person ontology and therefore cannot be reduced to phenomena with a third-person ontology’ (Searle, 2000 p.567). Similarly, it should be recalled that, as Dennett points out, any proposition about one’s own or anybody else’s conscious experience cannot be immune to error (Dennett, 2002 pp.13-14).

Bhaskar’s stratified model of reality may be used, tentatively, to understand the nature of conscious experience in the following terms. Brain structures and mechanisms exist in the domain of the real. Events involving biological, chemical and electrical processes in the brain exist in the actual and the real. Following Searle’s account of the way in which brain mechanisms produce subjective states of thinking and feeling, these subjective states can be understood as existing in all three domains: the real, the actual, and the empirical. It is worth noting, though, that, as Searle points out, it remains difficult to find exact neurobiological correlates of conscious states. Furthermore, current investigative tools have not yet identified

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251 In *Art as experience* (1958), Dewey suggests that ‘experience’ is a continuous process involving the interaction of a living creature with some aspect of the world in which it lives (Dewey, 1958 pp.35, 43-44). This study is specifically concerned with the conscious experience of adult art students who are involved in a process of learning to make art within an art school environment. Dewey also suggests that conscious experience is a relation between doing and undergoing (Dewey, 1958 pp.46-47). Thus, in relation to process of making art, the act of production relates to ‘doing’, whilst perception, appreciation and enjoyment (or otherwise) of the developing artwork relates to ‘undergoing’. ‘What is done and what is undergone are thus reciprocally, cumulatively, and continuously instrumental to each other’ (Dewey, 1958 p.50).

252 See C2 §2.2.5.2.

253 The stratified model of reality was discussed in C2 §2.1.3.
the ways in which brain processes actually cause conscious states and how they are realised in brain structures (Searle, 2000 p.569).

Although an individual’s experience of thought exists in the empirical domain, Bhaskar argues that our ideas are also causally efficacious, that is, they cause us to behave in particular ways (Bhaskar, 1997). Thus, whilst the conscious experience of thoughts has a first-person ontology, the effect of that thought can be understood as having a third-person ontology. In other words, someone can observe another person’s behaviour in the empirical domain and determine that the behaviour might have been caused by a particular idea.264 Whilst observers cannot ‘see’ or experience another person’s thought for themselves, they can see its effects. In this way, we can appreciate that thoughts are generative mechanisms, which exist in the domain of the real (Bhaskar, 1978 p.13).

The distinction between the domains of the empirical and the actual appears to be quite significant for understanding students’ experience of flow whilst making art. For Jarrah, Joanne and Teresa, the experience appeared to be more enjoyable when they weren’t thinking much about what they were doing. In these instances, it appears that ‘thoughts’ might be occurring in a student’s unconscious mind, causing them to behave in certain ways. In these instances, thoughts can be understood as existing outside of the empirical domain, that is, taking place in the domains of the actual and the real. Although an art student might actually be manipulating materials in order to create a visual image, they might not be conscious of what they are doing, nor their reasons for doing it. Research in the field of cognitive neuroscience suggests that ‘the vast majority of mental processes that control and contribute to our conscious experience happen outside of our conscious awareness’ (Gazzaniga, Ivry, & Mangun, 2002). From this perspective, we can appreciate that by virtue of their existence in a stratified reality, a student might be involved in a process of making art without always having conscious awareness of the experience.

Further to this, Geake’s neuropsychological model of creative intelligence suggests that ‘for an artistic product to be regarded as creative requires a high degree of original intellectual or emotional connectivity to areas of human experience which are external to the art form itself’; however, ‘such connectivity is often unconscious or implicit, all the more so in what come to be regarded as creatively great works’ (Geake, 2004 p.3). John-Steiner’s research into the minds of a wide range of creative people from various disciplines provides further support for the importance of unconscious processing in creativity, suggesting that ‘creativity lies in the capacity to see more sharply that which one already knows or that which is buried at the margin of one’s awareness’ (John-Steiner, 1997 pp.51-52).
§3 The nature of the self

Having located the phenomenon of conscious experience within a stratified model of reality, it is necessary to focus attention on understanding the nature of the self that has conscious experiences. As previously noted in C2 §2.2.5, Bhaskar’s conceptualisation of the nature of the self, is comprised of three nested levels of being: (i) an illusory but real ego, (ii) a limited or finite embodied personality, and (iii) an absolute, unlimited, transcendentally real Self or ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c p.38).

Bhaskar argues that ‘the self in the sense of the ego, separated from other selves and a world of objects (including emotional states) to which it is attached is a “causally efficacious” illusion’. This self, which sees itself as existing separately from all other selves, has no real object, and it is in this respect that the ego is an illusion. Although it is an illusion, it can still cause things to happen, and as such is real (that is, the illusion is real despite having no real object) (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.37-38). The ego, however, is a property of the embodied personality under certain geo-historical conditions, and the embodied personality, albeit dependent and limited, is not itself an illusion (Bhaskar, 2002a p.239; 2002c pp.37-38).

According to Bhaskar, ‘the sense of self as embodied personality has a transient and slightly fuzzy character to it’. However, it ‘definitely has a mind, emotions, feelings and it definitely has a physical being’. Embodied personalities are clearly differentiated in time and space, and in terms of physicality, they are, though related, distinct from each other. This physical distinction between embodied personalities promotes a sense of separateness and gives a degree of validity to the sense of the ego (Bhaskar, 2002a pp.239-240). Thus, we can begin to understand that the form our embodied personality takes includes our physical form, and encompasses our thoughts, emotions and feelings.

Underpinning the embodied personality is our transcendentally real Self or ground state. This is the ultimate source of our causal agency in the world (Bhaskar, 2002c p.37). However, the ground state does not speak or act as such, it is rather a deep potential (or tendency) inscribed in and informing the speech and action of our embodied personality (Bhaskar, 2002a pp.240-241). Bhaskar suggests that our ground state qualities generally include: energy, intelligence, consciousness, creativity, love, the capacity for right-action and therefore the fulfilment of our intentionality. He also suggests that the consciousness of our ground state is ‘supramental’ or beyond thought, manifesting in the suspension of thought. The ground state is prior to our embodied personality; in this way, the consciousness, intentionality and energy of our ground state is always present and a part of any state of being.

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254 To be more precise, our behaviour can be understood as caused by our intentions, not our thoughts. However, in terms of conscious experience, our intentions may appear as ‘thoughts’ in the field of our awareness, with these thoughts leading us to behave in certain ways.

255 The discussion in this section has been taken from C2 §2.2.5.
or act of our embodied personality, and anything that it experiences or does in the world (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55). Thus, our ground state finds expression through the embodied personality, as thoughts and actions. Some of these expressions are consistent with the ground state nature some are not. Bhaskar refers to this inconsistency, or the split between the embodied personality and ground state, as self-alienation and suggests that the process of liberation consists in shedding the aspects of our embodied personality that are inconsistent with our true essential nature (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.39, 17, 52-53, 320; 2002e p.103).

§4 Experiencing the self whilst making art

Bhaskar’s stratified analysis of the self can be drawn upon to interpret the participants’ reasons for making art. Joanne suggested that making art ‘is my calling out of my inner core’,257 whilst Betty suggested that it enabled her to ‘feel more alive and connected’ with her ‘essential being’.258 Although these expressions vary, both appear to be speaking about the same phenomenon, which is articulated in the Bhaskarian notion of consistency between the individual’s embodied personality and its ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.17, 52-53; 2002e p.103).

In a related study, Pitt noted that the accounts from five British artists of their experience of their creative processes could also be accounted for through Bhaskar’s theory of stratified consciousness (Pitt, 2008 pp.207-208). In Pitt’s study, the consciousness of each artist’s true essential nature appeared to manifest in their experience of an inner obligation or need to create visual art (Pitt, 2008 pp.53-83, 208). This particularly relates to Joanne’s suggestion that making art ‘is my calling out of my inner core’.259

By situating these comments within Bhaskar’s model of emancipation within a stratified self, we can appreciate that the process of making art enabled these particular students to momentarily shed aspects of their illusory ego and embodied personality that were inconsistent with their ground state. In this way, consciousness of their true, essential nature could be experienced.

Joanne also referred to the particularly enjoyable state of mind that she sometimes experienced whilst making art as ‘the zone’,260 Ellen referred to it as ‘flow’.261
suggested that such an experience ‘accesses a mystery’, 262 and Betty recounted that ‘you go into a zone and lose yourself there’. 263 This idea of losing one’s self is particularly intriguing. This was the same participant who commented that making art enabled her to feel more alive and connected with her essential being. 264 Thus, whilst Betty experienced a loss of some aspect of her ‘self’ when making art, she also felt more alive and connected with her ‘essential being’. Perhaps it was a superfluous aspect of Betty’s ‘self’ that wasn’t part of her ‘essential being’, and further, an aspect of her ‘self’ that might indeed have been inconsistent with her essential being that she lost when she was making art. In Bhaskarian terms, perhaps the ‘self’ that Betty lost was simply the limited consciousness of the illusory ego and her embodied personality, which were inconsistent with her ground state. Joanne also referred to this experience of loss: ‘to me the zone is somewhere like you get lost. I mean you are not lost forever, you come back out’. 265

This idea of losing one’s self can be understood in terms of Csikszentmihalyi’s research into rewarding experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a, 1990, 1996). 266 According to Csikszentmihalyi people from a wide range of backgrounds, participating in a wide range of enjoyable activities, describe the phenomenon of ‘enjoyment’ in very similar ways (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 pp.110-113). One of the characteristics of the experience of flow is deep concentration on the activity at hand. As a result, the person experiencing flow not only forgets his or her problems, but as Csikszentmihalyi suggests, also temporarily loses the awareness of self, which in normal life often intrudes in consciousness, causing psychic energy to be diverted from what needs to be done. During an experience of flow the self is fully functioning but not aware of itself being so, which means that it can focus solely on the task at hand (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a p.33). An absence of self-consciousness, meaning the loss of the sense of an individual self separate from its environment, was one of the main elements that were consistently mentioned when describing how it feels when an experience is enjoyable. 267 Csikszentmihalyi suggests that our ideas about our ‘self’ are also some of the contents of our consciousness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.34), they are second-order thoughts, that is thoughts about our thoughts and actions. Thus, when these particular ideas are no longer the focus of our attention, we might feel that we have ‘stepped out of the boundaries of the ego and have become part, at least temporarily, of a larger entity’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 p.112).

266 The findings from Csikszentmihalyi’s research was previously discussed in C2 §5.
267 Csikszentmihalyi suggests that loss of self-consciousness can lead to self-transcendence, to a feeling that the boundaries of our being have expanded (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 pp.62-66). This loss of self-consciousness seems to involve the loss of incongruence between the different strata of the stratified self (Bhaskar, 2002c p.38).
Regarding the compatibility of the ideas of Bhaskar and Csikszentmihalyi, it is interesting to note that whilst Csikszentmihalyi speaks of ‘stepping outside of the boundaries of the ego’, Bhaskar speaks of ‘shedding the illusory ego and heteronomous elements of the embodied personality’ (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.17, 52-53; 2002e p.103). A further point of interest is that whilst Csikszentmihalyi speaks of ‘feeling that we are part of a larger entity’, Bhaskar conceptualises this ability to experience an expanded sense of self in terms of our underpinning ground state being situated within an all-encompassing cosmic envelope (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.54-55). Although the language used differs, both appear to be speaking about the same phenomenon, Csikszentmihalyi from the point of view of the experience as flow, Bhaskar from the point of view of what enables that experience, namely the ground state. The matter can therefore be understood as follows. Ego awareness is an obstacle to the enjoyment of being, or flow. Hence when awareness of the ego is absent, an individual’s experience of being will be more enjoyable. This is because the experience is congruent with a fundamental part of their being, or ground state.

Acceptance of the foregoing justifies the following hypothesis. When individuals experience an activity such as making art from the perspective of their ego, their capacity for experiencing flow is inhibited, but that when the experience is from the perspective of their embodied personality, which is consistent with their ground state, their capacity for experiencing flow is enabled.  

§5 The content of consciousness and an experience of flow

Given that individuals’ experience is in part comprised of the content of their conscious awareness at any given time, unpacking what this content is might help to make sense of aspects of consciousness that are congruent or incongruent with an experience of flow. The interview and group discussion data have proved helpful in this respect. For example, when the process of making art flowed, or was most enjoyable, thoughts that were directly related to the actual activity tended to be present, Whilst self-consciousness, concerns with the end-product, and thoughts not related to the specific activity at hand tended to be absent. When the process of making art didn’t flow so well, expectations and demands, feelings of fear and anxiety, and feeling intimidated, overwhelmed, and discouraged tended to be present.

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268 This relationship between flow experience and the stratified self is considered further in C7.
269 Joanne specifically commented: ‘the thoughts are consistent with what you are actually doing’ (NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo4: 517-521).
It appears that any thought or feeling that was not directly related to the actual activity of manipulating a drawing implement in order to make marks on a drawing surface was incongruent with experiencing flow. In this way, emancipation can be understood in part as the process of absenting the absence of congruency between the content of an individual’s consciousness and their action.

Awareness of the types of thoughts or feelings that are incongruent with flow experience might enable art teachers and students to establish environments that are conducive to the experience of flow. Csikszentmihalyi suggests that experiencing flow requires that we establish control over our attention (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.41). However, I am not suggesting that flow experience can necessarily be controlled, i.e. ‘Do these things and you will experience flow’. Having an experience of flow or being in ‘the zone’ seems to be more elusive than that. It happens by itself. Nevertheless, by being aware of the types of thoughts that are congruent or incongruent with an experience of flow, art students might be able to use their moments of agency to navigate towards these types of experiences. ²⁷³

§6 Thoughts

Bhaskar suggests that consciousness is one of the ground state qualities of human beings. From this perspective, we can appreciate that a student’s ground state consciousness enables an experience of making art to happen. Bhaskar suggests that one of the qualities of ground state consciousness is that it manifests ‘between or behind or in virtue of the suspension of thought’. However, he also suggests that the consciousness of the ground state ‘is always present and a part of any state of being or act of any embodied personality, any thing that it experiences or does in the world’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55). In this way, we can appreciate that an art student’s ground state can find expression in the form of ‘thoughts’.

Within the context of making art, these thoughts can be directly related to the activity at hand, and act as ideas that give expression to the ground state via the embodied personality. On the other hand, thoughts can be more concerned with the end product of the art-making process, or may relate to one’s experience of the self that is performing the task, or may even be concerned with something unrelated to the task, thereby splitting the content of consciousness from the action.

²⁷³ On this point, Joanne suggested that she noticed that there was a pattern to the thoughts that she experienced. She indicated that these ‘thought patterns’ were something that she wanted to change. Joanne particularly commented on the possibility of there being a causal relationship between her thoughts and her art-making practice: ‘I’ve got to change my thought pattern, and put it into practice’ (NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo3: 36, 78-80, 444-448; GD4_S-Jo: 237-238). This comment suggests that the task of changing her thought patterns and her behaviour might require conscious effort to actualise.
Bhaskar suggests that any activity that is split, for example, by attending to the result or consequence of the activity, or split by being concerned with something else, or by not being completely present in the here and now of the activity, is dualistic activity (Bhaskar, 2002a p.236). In other words, activity marked by a lack of congruence between consciousness and action is dualistic. In the case of art making, attention to the final product at the expense of the activity required to make the product is a case of dualistic activity. Such activity risks the experience of a ‘creative block’.

However, in the philosophy of meta-Reality Bhaskar argues that existence is underpinned by identity, identification and unity, not duality. He introduces the concept of transcendence to elaborate on his understanding of how ‘the way in which we communicate, perceive, see, read, follow, understand things in the world’ is a mode of non-duality, suggesting that ‘transcendental agency’ is one of four forms in which this unity or ‘oneness’ is achieved (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.4-6; 2002e p.208). For Bhaskar, in order to act at all, there must be something at some level that the actor does spontaneously, unconditionally and, normally, effortlessly. This is the non-dual activity which is necessary for doing anything at all (Bhaskar, 2002a p.xi). Thus, acting involves loss of a sense of separateness from the things we do. We become ‘one’ with the action. We cannot ‘do’ anything at all without this happening. We might think about what to do and the way we should do it, but ultimately we just have to do it, and in that moment of doing we become one with our action.

There seems to be an inconsistency between these ideas of Bhaskar’s. On the one hand, he is saying that activity can be split (in the sense that there can be incongruence between consciousness and action) (Bhaskar, 2002a p.236). However, transcendental agency also implies that any action ultimately reposes on the fundamental unity of being, which includes consciousness (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.4-6; 2002e p.208). How can there really be a split between one’s consciousness and its expression in agency if the underpinning nature of existence enabling the action to happen is non-duality? One possible interpretation of this apparent inconsistency is that the split can be understood as occurring between the empirical and actual domains of reality on the one hand, and on the other, the domain of the real, which underpins without exhaustively constituting them. In relation to the stratified self, the split can be seen as occurring between the ego and embodied personality in so far as they are inconsistent with the underpinning unity of being, on the one hand, and the transcendentally real Self or ground state, on the other.

In terms of an experience of making art, one’s action can be considered to be non-dual when ‘action-related thoughts’ are present. However, if self-consciousness, ‘product-related thoughts’, or ‘unrelated thoughts’ are present, one’s action can be considered dualistic. These different categories of thought seem to make or break an experience of flow or being in ‘the zone’.
It is important to note, however, that there also appears to be a window of awareness that enables observation of these categories of thought (awareness of 'action-related', 'product-related' or 'unrelated' thoughts), and it is through this window of awareness that this phenomenon came to be known by the art students involved in my research. For Joanne, this window appeared to be particularly clear, enabling her to distinguish between, and articulate quite clearly, these different types of thoughts. We need to recall Dennett’s cautionary note here, however, and realise that although Joanne’s comments might very well be the best source about what was going on, we cannot accept her account as infallible (Dennett, 2002 pp.13-14).

§6.1 Action-related thoughts: the mindful and the mindless

In dialectical critical realism Bhaskar outlines the stratification of intentional agency, suggesting that actions can be motivated by instinctual, unconscious, preconscious and conscious drives (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.164-167). In the philosophy of meta-Reality he extends this analysis of human agency to promote an understanding of the ways in which non-duality underpins all existence, suggesting that any successful activity necessarily involves a merging of consciousness with action (Bhaskar, 2002c p.4). This is consistent with Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory, which suggests that action and awareness merge during flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 pp.111-112). Bhaskar refers to this as transcendental agency. It involves either total focus or attention on an act, which he calls mindfulness, or an act that is spontaneously performed, which he calls mindlessness (Bhaskar, 2002c p.4).

Mindfulness is a conscious state whereby ‘attention is necessary because the activity does not (yet) flow from one’s innermost being’ (Bhaskar, 2002e p.239). This idea is consistent with empirical findings from the field of neurophysiology, which suggest that acquisition of a motor skill involves establishing an internal model (in the brain) of the dynamics of the task (Shadmehr, 1997 pp.821-825) and further, that different parts of the brain are active when learning new skills compared to those involved in practising established skills (Petersen et al., 1998). Although these studies were not specifically related to art-making behaviour, they do suggest that when students are learning to control the fine motor skills in their hand in order to manipulate a drawing implement to create a representation of a particular object, the prefrontal regions of their brain are most active.

Mindfulness pertains to where conscious effort is required to carry out a specific skilful activity. Observational data from the drawing classes indicate that teachers provided opportunities for students to mindfully engage in drawing activities. Further, the drawing module outline suggests that these drawing activities were chosen because they provided
opportunities for students to acquire specific skills and new knowledge. Data indicates that once these skills became part of the students’ repertoire, they were then able to utilise them in spontaneous ways. This relates to what Bhaskar calls mindlessness. Mindlessness pertains to ‘when the action flows so normally and spontaneously from one’s essential nature […], when one is so totally absorbed that nothing passes through one’s mind, not even thoughts’ (Bhaskar, 2002e p.239).

Whilst mindfulness involves consciousness bracketing or suspending the form of an activity (that is, when the conscious content of an activity becomes paramount), mindlessness involves consciousness bracketing or suspending the content (that is, when the structural form of an activity becomes paramount) (Bhaskar, 2002e pp.211-212). In this respect, mindfulness can be understood as the polar opposite of mindlessness. In the original version of the article from which this chapter stems, I suggested that ‘mindfulness might occur when intentions that are motivated by conscious drives are being fulfilled, whilst mindlessness might occur when intentions that are motivated by instinctual, unconscious or preconscious drives are being fulfilled’ (McDonald, 2008 p.49). However, my ideas regarding this matter have since evolved, and although this interpretation of mindlessness is consistent with the line of argument in this chapter, in later chapters of this thesis (see C5, C6 and C7), I reconsider the complex nature of the possible relationship between the stratification of intentional human agency and the mindful and mindless positions of transcendental agency.

Joanne suggested that even when she was in ‘the zone’ she still experienced thoughts; however, she was not paying much attention to them, nor was she aware of their content. Nevertheless, Joanne’s comments indicate that it was her experience of particular ‘thoughts’ that caused her to choose particular drawing materials and colours, and make particular marks. ‘You may even be making decisions in your head about what to do’, however ‘it’s natural, those thoughts aren’t forced to me, whether somehow the brain subconsciously does it or you are just thinking and it’s that natural link’. In terms of stratified reality, we can appreciate that preconscious, unconscious or instinctual intentions that exist in the domain of the actual may not necessarily present as conscious thoughts in the empirical domain. Further, Joanne’s comments suggest that even if she experienced a thought in the field of her awareness, she may not be aware of its content.

It is worth noting that a range of studies in the field of cognitive neuroscience implicates different regions of the brain in both conscious and unconscious visual information processing (Gazzaniga et al., 2002; Kumar & Kurup, 2001; Kurup & Kurup, 2003; Petersen et al., 1998; 2007).

274 This is primarily due to my developing understanding of the possible relationship between: (i) the mindful position and mindless position of transcendental agency, (ii) Bhaskar’s notion of stratified intentional human agency, and (iii) Bhaskar’s notion of the stratified self.


Rao, Rainer, & Miller, 1997; Shadmehr, 1997; Wilson, 2003). Regardless of which regions of the brain are implicated, these studies suggest that there are unconscious processes in the brain that constantly detect and respond to information in one’s environment, of which the more conscious, cognitive centres are not aware. Perhaps it is these unconscious processes that enable a type of experience in which ideas just appear, and thoughts about what to do next come before the question of what to do next is consciously posed.

Whilst talking about ‘how art works happen’, Teresa commented: ‘I so often have no idea. It’s not like I go in with a clear idea. Sometimes things emerge fully formed, and […] it’s like I’m working here maybe and it starts to come in from there and at some point it seems to have a life of its own’. She particularly commented on the process involved in creating what she referred to as ‘the dark drawing’: ‘it sort of grew out of itself’, ‘I was just doing the background and suddenly I saw ‘oh, there’s a figure there that wants to come out”, ‘it happened and I didn’t have to try. I put my finger in the right place and there it was. I like work when it just sort of does it for me’. A central theme running through these comments appears to be the unconscious processes involved in creating imagery, and in particular, the imagery that emerges in the absence of deliberate control of actions. In this regard, Teresa and Joanne indicated that the ‘unintentional’ aspects of an artwork were often considered to be more valuable than the controlled or intended aspects.

Whilst Teresa made clear that the ‘unintentional’ character of images is not a feature of all art making, she was quick to add that when it does happen, ‘suddenly they have their own dynamic, and you know, I’m just following then’. She indicated that she was intrigued by this phenomenon. Regardless of which regions of the brain are implicated, it is clear that there are unconscious processes in the brain which are constantly detecting and responding to environmental information that the more conscious, cognitive centres might not be aware of. In an activity like painting or drawing, for example, this unconscious information might collect in the reservoir called the ‘artwork’. At a later stage, the content of the artwork might become the focus of conscious awareness and this can enable recognition of seemingly coherent content that might not have been deliberately included.

Whilst Bhaskar’s concept of mindlessness contributes to an understanding of flow experience, his suggestion that ‘one can lose the content of consciousness in transcendental identification

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278 This comment derives from the interview data: see NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo4: 638
279 This comment also derives from the interview data: see NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo4: 688-689.
284 For Bhaskar, unintentionality does not exist (Bhaskar, 2002e p.236). However, intentional actions often have unintended consequences (Bhaskar, 1993 p.258). Thus, when Teresa and Joanne were referring to the unintentional aspects of an artwork, they were probably referring to the unintended consequences of intentional actions.
with its pure, abstract form, achieving an ‘inner-emptiness’ of content (this is the position of “no thought, no mind”, mindlessness), seems extreme (Bhaskar, 2002e pp.211-212). Surely there must be some content in one’s consciousness, such as, awareness of sensations relating to sensory stimuli and one’s position in space, which enable the action to be successfully completed? Although individuals might not be thinking about how to complete a particular action, it doesn’t follow that their consciousness is completely void of content.

Given that individuals’ experience in part comprises the content of their consciousness at any given time, it seems contradictory to speak of having an experience of mindlessness (in Bhaskar’s terms, an absence of content in one’s consciousness) whilst it is happening. Although an event of mindlessness might occur during a process of making art, by definition it would have had to occur outside of the realm of conscious awareness, that is, outside of the empirical domain. Thus, developing an understanding of mindlessness in relation to making art is beyond the scope of the present study. However, a student might have an experience of emerging from a possible state of mindlessness, and understanding this is within the scope of the present study. Whilst student reflections about experiencing flow can be seen to be related to an experience of emerging from a possible state of mindlessness, there is clearly an ontological difference between this experience and the actual event of mindlessness which such an experience might have emerged from.

§6.2 Product-related thoughts

Some students referred to their expectations or concerns about the finished product and the demands or pressure to perform that they put on themselves as inhibiting their ability to enjoy their art-making practice. From Bhaskar’s perspective, such concern with the finished product would constitute an example of activity that was split (Bhaskar, 2002a p.236). Similarly, from Csikszentmihalyi’s perspective, concerns about the finished product might indicate that motivation has been detached from experiencing the activity itself. At the same time, however, a perceived ‘pressure to perform’ could also constitute the recognition of a challenge that, if balanced with the necessary skills to cope with the situation, could enable an experience of flow. Csikszentmihalyi suggests that flow experiences require a balance between the perceived challenges in a given situation and the skills that a person brings to it. Thus, although each drawing activity presents an opportunity for flow, no activity can sustain

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286 This critique is consistent with the interpretation of Bhaskar’s definition’s of the mindful and mindless positions of transcendental agency that were included in the original version of the article from which this chapter stems. Although this critique is consistent with the interpretations and line of argument in this chapter, having developed my understanding of these concepts further, I can appreciate that these comments might be precariously balanced on a misinterpretation of the alethic truth to which Bhaskar refers. In C6 §2.4.2, I reconsider the above critique.
this for long unless both the challenges and the skills become more complex. Further, no activity guarantees the occurrence of flow, because an activity can only provide challenges; what is also required, according to Csikszentmihalyi is for each individual to recognise the challenges, and also be capable of focusing attention, controlling memory, and limiting awareness to the specific goals involved. Thus, if a student’s perceived ‘pressure to perform’ is not balanced with the necessary skills to cope with the situation, anxiety, rather than flow, may be experienced (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a pp.29-31).

For Joanne, experiencing specific types of thoughts, such as expectations that relate to what she wanted to achieve with her drawing activity, appear to be incongruent with an experience of free-flowing art-making activity. This was particularly the case when what was actually produced or achieved was different from what she thought it would, should or could be. The data suggested that on some occasions Joanne recognised that the expectations to perform in a certain way or to a particular standard came from within her self. However, on other occasions her expectations were related to external influences, including the perceived expectations and teaching style of her teachers.

Whilst Joanne referred to this type of experience as having ‘expectations’, Jarrah referred to it as a self-imposed ‘pressure to perform’. Evidence of Jarrah’s perceived pressure to perform appeared in her comments about having particular thoughts that related to both the quality and quantity of what she produced. The particular area of her art-making practice that this pressure appeared to relate to was finishing or completing her drawings and written assessment tasks. Jarrah recognised this to be something she wanted to change in her experience of being at art school and used the action learning component in the group discussion forum to attempt to shift her attention from the finished product to the process of getting there. ‘I think of a picture. You know a finished product, not the process on how to get there. So maybe if I was more experimental and don’t worry about what it ends up looking like, but just actually play more’. What appears to be in question here is autotelic activity, or, activity which is undertaken for its own sake rather than any future reward or advantage it might bring (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a p.29).
Jarrah’s comment above suggests that she wished to enjoy the experience of making art without being concerned with the finished product. On a similar note, Joanne suggested that one characteristic of being in the zone when she was making art was ‘just doing it because you love doing it’. Whilst Csikszentmihalyi suggests that activities like art, music and sport are usually autotelic (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 p.113), it appears that for most of the students in this study, the end product was still a significant concern. However, several of the students indicated that they were aware that being concerned with the end product might be counter-productive, and used their conscious awareness to try to change this. Jarrah commented: ‘I did try to do those things and try to enjoy the process, lots of it went in the garbage bin’, and in the final interview ‘I am trying to let go and enjoy the process’, and in the final interview ‘I try to enjoy what’s going along the way, like in that process itself […] I am really consciously thinking about it, now, which I wouldn’t have done before’.

These students seemed to share an awareness that concern for the end product was counter-productive to enjoying their art-making practice, and also counter-productive to liking what was actually produced. However, each of the classes in which they had enrolled during the period of data collection had ‘real’, externally imposed assessment requirements, about which the teachers would remind them. These reminders served to keep the importance of the end product in mind, even though the students understood that this would be a constraint on their enjoyment. Jarrah indicated that she found this challenging: ‘It’s really hard to not put yourself under pressure and just to go along with the process. Not when the teachers just pop their little heads up and remind us that we have to have things done’.

Jarrah appeared to be faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, she wanted to be more conscious of the art-making process, but on the other she was being asked to think about the end product. Csikszentmihalyi makes an observation about mountain climbing that might provide a solution: ‘The mountaineer does not climb in order to reach the top of the mountain, but tries to reach the top in order to climb. The goal is really just an excuse to make the experience possible’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a pp.33-34). Thus, all that might be required to resolve the tension in Jarrah’s dilemma, is a shift in focus from ‘drawing in order to complete the assessment requirements’, that is, focusing on the consequences of the activity, to ‘attempting to complete the assessment items in order to draw’, that is, focusing on the activity for its own sake (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.67).
§6.3 Unrelated thoughts

According to Csikszentmihalyi, one of the main elements of experiencing enjoyment or flow is the exclusion of distractions from one’s consciousness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 p.112).307 Similarly, Bhaskar suggests that a lack of interfering or distracting content is the key to successful action (Bhaskar, 2002e p.239). In this way, we can appreciate that distractions are incongruent with an experience of flow and that absenting distractions is a key to emancipation in this sphere.

Joanne’s experience of distractions was expressed in terms of thoughts ‘that aren’t to do with what you are actually doing’.308 ‘Unrelated thoughts’ have a tendency to draw students’ attention away from their activity, and in this way, disrupt their experience of flow. For Joanne, when thoughts about doing her grocery shopping, or chores that need doing appeared in the field of her conscious awareness, her experience of being in ‘the zone’ was interrupted.309 Similarly, when Joanne was distracted by other people’s activity in class, or when her dog would bark, or when she became aware that her body needed to move around a bit, her experience of being in ‘the zone’ appeared to dissipate.310

Whilst Joanne’s experience of ‘the zone’ was interrupted by thoughts or distractions that were unrelated to the activity of making art, Jarrah indicated that she was challenged by having too many ideas: ‘I’ve got too many ideas and I’ve found that’s the biggest problem coming to [art school]. There are too many ideas running around and I can’t put them down. I find it so hard to use a diary or a journal’.311 For Jarrah, an abundance of ideas appeared to paralyse her creative expression. It was as though she wasn’t able to focus her attention on one idea for long enough to express it visually. Before she had a chance to begin to express one idea, another thought or idea would distract her.

§7 Summary

This chapter has attempted to show some of the ways in which concepts drawn from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality, when enhanced by Csikszentmihalyi’s work on flow experience, can advance our understanding of the ways in which adult art students might come to enjoy a more emancipated way of practising art-making. The stratified model of reality and the ontological status of absence, along with Bhaskar’s ideas about the nature of the self and transcendental agency, have been particularly useful in explaining this phenomenon. By identifying the points where the interview and group discussion data and

307 See C2 §5.4.
interpretive theory from critical realism, the philosophy of meta-Reality, flow experience, and the field of cognitive neuroscience converged, a possible model for ‘unblocking the creative block’ was developed.

It appears that there is something in the process of making art that allows aspects of an art student’s ego and embodied personality that are inconsistent with their ground state to be shed. When these aspects are shed, the students concerned not only enjoy their experience of making art, but also experience consciousness of their ground state. This is an experience of flow, the nature of which has been understood using Csikszentmihalyi’s theory. It appears that some thoughts, particularly thoughts that are directly related to the activity at hand, are congruent with an experience of flow whilst others are not. The latter include self-consciousness, product-related thoughts and unrelated thoughts (thoughts as distractions).

Whilst there appears to be a relationship between the mindless aspect of transcendental agency and a student's experience of flow, Bhaskar’s conception of ‘mindlessness’ emphasises the complete absence of content in consciousness, and would therefore indicate an occurrence outside the student’s conscious experience. There is clearly an ontological difference between an actual event of mindlessness and an experience of emerging from a state of possible mindlessness, or an experience of flow. Whilst an event of mindlessness might have occurred for the participants in this study in the domain of the actual, by definition, the actual events of mindlessness must have remained outside of the domain of the empirical. However, a student might have an experience of emerging from a possible state of mindlessness, and understanding this was within the scope of the methods used to collect data for this study.

Absenting the absence of action-related thoughts, and absenting self-consciousness, product-related thoughts and unrelated thoughts appears to be the key to experiencing flow whilst making art. Given that students might have to meet particular assessment requirements, the end product of the art-making process will be a significant concern for some art students. However, awareness of assessment tasks does not mean that students have to forfeit an experience of flow. All that might be required for a student to experience flow whilst completing assessment tasks, is to shift their focus from ‘drawing in order to complete the assessment requirements’, that is, focusing on the consequences of the activity, to ‘attempting to complete the assessment items in order to draw’, that is, focusing on the activity for its own sake.

It is hoped that increased awareness, on the part of teachers and students of art, of the types of thoughts that are congruent or incongruent with an experience of flow might enable the cultivation of an art school environment in which students and practising artists can ride the
wave of enjoyable art-making experiences for longer. Beyond this, the findings might have the potential to contribute to the resolution of problems beyond the field of art education, including the age-old problem: *being at peace with the human condition*.

It is possible that an embodied personality’s journey towards congruence with its underpinning ground state might be enabled and might also be hindered by its social interactions with others. This is the topic of the discussion in the next chapter: structure and agency during flow experience.
Chapter Five – Structure and agency during flow experience

§1 A note to the reader

The content in this chapter was presented at the International Association for Critical Realism (IACR) conference, King’s College, London: 11-13 July 2008.\(^{312}\) In the IACR paper, I provided an overview of:

- the stratified nature of the self;\(^{313}\)
- Bhaskar’s conceptualisation of human emancipation;\(^{314}\)
- Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience;\(^{315}\)
- the art students’ comments which referred to either an experience of flow or an experience of their self whilst making art;\(^{316}\) and
- Bhaskar’s developing theory of intentional human agency.\(^{317}\)

Having introduced these theories, a discussion followed about the dialectical relationship between structure and agency during flow experience. I have already discussed these theories in previous sections of this thesis, thus, for the sake of brevity, I will not repeat the discussions again. However, the reader could revisit the chapters and sections referred to in footnotes 313 to 317, before reading further.

§2 Overview of chapter five

As previously noted in C3 §6.4.2.2, the development of the ideas for this chapter involved analysing interview and group discussion data for three students: Teresa, Ellen, and Jarrah.

Teresa’s interview and group discussion data were scanned for reference to her experience of when the process of making art was guided by intentions that were below the threshold of her conscious awareness. Teresa’s comments were considered, together with findings from Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976), which suggest art students might work with a subliminal goal in mind, and Emery’s (1989) findings which suggest that artistic purpose is something to

\(^{312}\) A copy of this paper is available at the following internet address: http://www.kcl.ac.uk/deptsa/law/events/0708/iacr/papers/McDonald_Melanie_The_Adventures_of_an_Inkling.pdf  
\(^{313}\) This was previously discussed in C2 §2.2.5.  
\(^{314}\) This was previously discussed in C2 §2.2.5.2 and C3 §3.2.1.  
\(^{315}\) This was previously discussed in C2 §5–5.8.  
\(^{316}\) This was previously discussed in C4 §4.  
\(^{317}\) This was previously discussed in C2 §2.1.5, §2.2.6 to §2.2.6.2.
be worked towards, rather than something that is necessarily present at the beginning. Bhaskar’s stratified model of reality and intentional human agency was also utilised in order to resolve the conflict between these different perspectives, and to develop an explanation of Teresa’s experiences.

The analysis of Ellen’s data involved considering her comments from the interviews and group discussions in terms of how they might illustrate when the actions of her embodied personality were either consistent or inconsistent with the intentions of her ground state. Cross-analysis from various group discussions and the final interview that occurred throughout Ellen’s first semester at art school also enabled me to build a picture of how her experiences and attitude changed over a period of three months.

The analysis of Jarrah’s data was informed by Bhaskar’s stratified model of the self and four-planar social being as well as the habitus theory of Bourdieu, in order to explore the role past and present social conditions might play in experiencing free-flowing activity. Data analysis involved considering Jarrah’s comments from the interviews and group discussions in terms of how they might illustrate a possible mismatch between the social field of the art school learning environment and the evolving set of durable transposable dispositions she was able to call upon to negotiate the challenges she was faced with. This was a logical focus, for Jarrah often made particular comments on how different the challenges of the art school learning environment were to the skills and behaviours she had developed over her 30-year career as a registered nurse.

The understanding of the relationship between flow experience and Bhaskar’s stratified model of the self from chapter four is extended in §3 to include three aspects of intentional human agency. In §4, the way in which an understanding of the dialectical relationship between human agency and social structures might also contribute towards making sense of a student’s experience of flow whilst learning to draw is considered, together with Bourdieu’s theory of the habitus.

§3 Intentional human agency

There are three aspects of Bhaskar’s theory of intentional human agency, which have informed data analysis in this study. In dialectical critical realism Bhaskar outlines the stratified nature of intentional human agency (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.164-167). In the philosophy of meta-Reality Bhaskar extends the model of stratified intentional human agency to promote an understanding of the ways in which non-duality underpins all existence, suggesting that

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318 This was previously introduced in C4 §4.4.
319 The following sections have previously been discussed in C2 §2.1.5 and C2 §2.2.6 to §2.2.6.2.
any successful activity necessarily involves a merging of consciousness with action (Bhaskar, 2002c p.4). He also argues that fulfilment of the intentions of the embodied personality requires consistency with the intentions of the ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.243, 235). These three aspects of intentional human agency will be discussed in the sections that follow.

§3.1 The stratification of intentional human agency

In dialectical critical realism Bhaskar outlines the stratification of intentional agency, suggesting that actions can be motivated by instinctual, unconscious, preconscious and conscious drives (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.164-167). He also argues for the principle of the irreducibility of intentionality, suggesting that we cannot avoid reference to intentionality in the genesis of human actions (Bhaskar, 2002e p.236). This means that every action has an intention (or reason) behind it. However, the real reason for a particular action or practice may not be what we believe it to be at the level of our conscious awareness (Bhaskar, 1993 p.164).

Figure 5.1 (below), attempts to illustrate that in terms of stratified reality, preconscious, unconscious or instinctual intentions that exist in the domain of the actual may not necessarily present as conscious thoughts in the empirical domain. However, Figure 5.1 is limited in its capacity to illustrate the possible correlation between the conscious, unconscious and preconscious intentions and instinctual / biological-base drives and the domains of the empirical and the actual: there is also a dimension of the real to each.

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320 This was previously discussed in C2 §2.1.5.
An empirical study by Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976) complements Bhaskar's model of the stratified self by providing research findings that help to explain the emancipation of fine art students from content of their consciousness which is incongruent with flow experience whilst making art.

Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi's findings suggest that art students who 'delay closure', that is, delay determining the structure that the final stage of their drawing will eventually take until late in its creation, ‘are guided by an unconscious feeling of what they are to do’ (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976 p.177). In such instances, students might ‘formulate the problem below the threshold of awareness before beginning to draw’. Further, although an art student might not consciously know what the drawing will end up looking like, ‘their behaviour shows that at some level the goal is quite clear’ (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976 p.177). Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi’s research also suggests that the use of unconscious processes in problem formulation and solution correlate with artworks that are judged to be more original, and further, success of art students after leaving art school (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976 p.178). This study had a longitudinal component, which suggested that art students who worked with a subliminal goal in mind, guided by a ‘deep purpose’ that was below the threshold of their awareness, were more likely to continue their career as an artist after leaving art school (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976 p.201).
In a related article, *Believing in artistic making and thinking* (Emery, 1989), Lee Emery takes a slightly different perspective. In this paper, Emery discusses findings from a study concerned with the art-making and thinking of ten children. She particularly comments on findings that relate to the topic of ‘intentionality’ during the process of making art. Emery states: ‘In artistic making, there is always some element of discovery as the maker attends to the process of construction. It is because of this that the artist can never actually know what she will make before she makes it’ (Emery, 1989 p.243). The key point to note here is the lack of conscious awareness regarding what will be made before it is made. Emery continues: ‘intentionality in the maker’s understanding may only be fully realized at the end of the artistic process, when the maker finally sees what she has made and can then truly realize the product as being what was sought’ (Emery, 1989 p.243). This is quite consistent with the findings from Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi’s research; however, the point where Emery’s theory differs, is the idea that ‘artistic purpose is something to be worked towards, rather than something that is necessarily present at the beginning of the making process’ (Emery, 1989 p.243). Emery suggests that intentionality evolves during the process of making art, rather than the creator’s actions attempting to give form to a pre-existing, albeit, subliminal, goal. While Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi write about ‘delaying closure’, Emery refers to ‘delaying intentionality’.

Emery particularly noted that the ability to delay intentionality appeared to assist children in several ways:

1. it meant that the child did not plan ideas which could not be made in the media provided;
2. it allowed time for the child to discover the potential of the medium so that ideas could emerge from the developing forms;
3. the child could allow for possibilities to be included as making progressed;
4. it required the child to be open to new ideas and to be accepting of other alternatives;
5. the child also showed flexibility of approach and willingness to entertain several ideas (Emery, 1989 p.243).

The main point of conflict between Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi’s research and that of Emery can be summarised in the following way. Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi suggest that the process of making art might be guided by a subliminal goal that is present from the beginning and only realised at the end of the art-making process, whereas Emery suggests that the goal or intention might be something that develops along the way. Ostensibly, these findings are not particularly contradictory. However, if we unpack them further, with the view of informing art education practice, some philosophical contradictions become apparent. From Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi’s perspective, students who utilise unconscious processes in problem formulation and solution tend to create artworks that are judged to be more original, and also tend to be more successful after leaving art school (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976 p.178). Following these findings, art educators would be inspired to encourage art
students to develop art-making practices that capitalise on their unconscious information processing. How this might be achieved is the topic for another thesis.

From Emery’s perspective, delaying intentionality altogether would be more beneficial for developing original artworks. Following Emery’s findings, art educators are urged to encourage art students to avoid intentionality in the early phases of the art-making process. However, if we bear in mind Bhaskar’s argument for the principle of irreducibility of intentionality, avoiding or delaying intentionality is an impossible task (Bhaskar, 2002e p.236). Every action has an intention (or reason) behind it. Of course, the real reason for a particular action or practice may not be what we believe it to be at the level of our conscious awareness (Bhaskar, 1993 p.164), which brings us back to Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi’s research.

With regards to the present study, Teresa’s insight regarding ‘how art works happen’ suggests that, for her at least, although she might not have a conscious intention when she began the process of drawing, something seemed to be guiding her behaviour. This is the topic of the following section.

§3.1.1 Teresa’s insight

Whilst talking about ‘how art works happen’, Teresa commented: ‘I so often have no idea. It’s not like I go in with a clear idea. Sometimes things emerge fully formed, and … it’s like I’m working here maybe and it starts to come in from there and at some point it seems to have a life of its own’. She particularly commented on the process involved in creating what she referred to as ‘the dark drawing’: ‘it sort of grew out of itself’, ‘I was just doing the background and suddenly I saw “oh, there’s a figure there that wants to come out”’, ‘it happened and I didn’t have to try. I put my finger in the right place and there it was. I like work when it just sort of does it for me’. A central theme running through these comments appears to be the unconscious processes involved in creating imagery, and in particular, the imagery that emerges in the absence of deliberate control of actions. In this regard, Teresa indicated that the ‘unintentional’ aspects of an artwork were often considered to be more valuable than the controlled or intended aspects.

Whilst Teresa made clear that the ‘unintentional’ character of images is not a feature of all art making, she was quick to add that when it does happen, ‘suddenly they have their own

323 As previously noted in C4 §6.1, for Bhaskar, unintentionality does not exist (Bhaskar, 2002e p.236). However, intentional actions often have unintended consequences (Bhaskar, 1993 p.258). Thus, when Teresa referred to the unintentional aspects of an artwork, she was probably referring to the unintended consequences of intentional actions.
324 NUDIST reference: I_S-T2: 43; I_S-T3: 218-220.
dynamic, and you know, I’m just following then’. She indicated that she was intrigued by this phenomenon. Regardless of which regions of the brain are implicated, research does suggest that there are unconscious processes in the brain which are constantly detecting and responding to environmental information that the more conscious, cognitive centres might not be aware of (Gazzaniga et al., 2002; Kumar & Kurup, 2001; Kurup & Kurup, 2003; Petersen et al., 1998; Rao et al., 1997; Shadmehr, 1997; Wilson, 2003). In an activity like painting or drawing, for example, this unconscious information might collect in the reservoir called the ‘artwork’. At a later stage, the content of the artwork might become the focus of conscious awareness and this can enable recognition of seemingly coherent content that might not have been deliberately included.

The distinction between the domains of the empirical and the actual in Bhaskar’s stratified model of reality appears to be quite significant for understanding students’ experience of flow whilst making art. Teresa, Jarrah and Joanne indicated that the experience was more enjoyable when they weren’t thinking much about what they were doing. In these instances, it appears that students’ behaviour might be guided by unconscious intentions. In these instances, the intentions can be understood as existing outside of the empirical domain, that is, taking place in the domains of the actual and the real. Although an art student might actually be manipulating materials in order to create a visual image, they might not be conscious of what they are doing, nor their reasons for doing it. Research in the field of cognitive neuroscience suggests that ‘the vast majority of mental processes that control and contribute to our conscious experience happen outside of our conscious awareness’ (Gazzaniga et al., 2002 pp.667-668). From this perspective, we can appreciate that by virtue of their existence in a stratified reality, a student might be involved in a process of making art without always having conscious awareness of the intentions that are guiding their actions.

This idea that art students might work with a subliminal goal in mind, and be guided by a ‘deep purpose’ that exists beyond the threshold of their conscious awareness appears to relate to the concept of transcendental agency, which Bhaskar articulates in the philosophy of meta-Reality. This is the topic of the following section.

§3.2 Transcendence and intentional human agency

In the philosophy of meta-Reality Bhaskar extends the model of stratified intentional human agency to promote an understanding of the ways in which non-duality underpins all existence, suggesting that any successful activity necessarily involves a unified relationship between

327 This was previously discussed in C2 §2.1.3.
consciousness and action (Bhaskar, 2002c p.4). This is consistent with Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory, which suggests that action and awareness merge during flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 pp.111-112).

However, Bhaskar suggests that in order to act at all, there must be something at some level, which you do not do by thinking about how to do it, but which you just do, spontaneously, unconditionally, normally pretty effortlessly, and unless you acted in that non-dual way, you could never do anything at all (Bhaskar, 2002a p.xi). Bhaskar refers to this as transcendental agency and suggests that transcendence occurs in every action. For Bhaskar, transcendental agency involves either total focus or attention on an act, which he calls mindfulness, or an act that is spontaneously performed, which he calls mindlessness (Bhaskar, 2002c p.4).

Whilst mindfulness involves consciousness bracketing or suspending the form of an activity, mindlessness involves consciousness bracketing or suspending the content (Bhaskar, 2002e pp.211-212). As previously mentioned in C2 §2.2.6.1 and C4 §6.1, relating this to the stratification of intentional human agency adds further complexity. I have previously suggested that ‘mindfulness might occur when intentions that are motivated by conscious drives are being fulfilled, whilst mindlessness might occur when intentions that are motivated by instinctual, unconscious or preconscious drives are being fulfilled’ (McDonald, 2008 p.49). However, having attempted to consider Bhaskar’s comments with respect to the alethic ground to which he might be referring, my ideas regarding this matter have since evolved. This will be explored further in subsequent chapters (see C6 and C7). Suffice it to say, that mindfulness appears to occur when intentions that are motivated by conscious drives are being fulfilled, whilst mindlessness occurs when the intentions that drive the action do not stem from within one’s mind, neither the conscious, preconscious nor the unconscious mind.

This calls for defining a third category of human agency, one in which the intentions driving the action are located in the preconscious and unconscious mind, but not the conscious mind. Hereafter, this type of activity will be referred to as ‘apparent spontaneity’. The adjective ‘apparent’ is used to indicate that although the activity appears to be of a spontaneous nature, there is more to understand. The unconscious and preconscious intentions driving the activity are associated with the learned behaviours that have resulted from ongoing experiences, thus the extent to which the activity is truly spontaneous is limited by such previous experiences. The finer details of this will be explored further in C7 §5.

A third aspect of intentional human agency relates to Bhaskar’s stratified model of the self, and the importance for congruency between the intentionality of the ground state and the actions of the embodied personality. This is the topic of the following section.

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329 This was previously discussed in C2 §2.2.6.1.
330 This will be explored further in C7.
§3.3  The stratified self and the fulfilment of intentions

Bhaskar’s law of coherence suggests that there must be coherence or clarity between our intentions, thoughts, feelings and physical action (Bhaskar, 2002c p.239). Thus, focused, concentrated and engaged action is a necessary condition for the intentions of the embodied personality to be fulfilled (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.235, 254). Bhaskar also argues that in order to be fulfilled, the intentions of an embodied personality need to be consistent with its ground state. If the intention of the embodied personality is inconsistent with its ground state, the intentionality will be split, thereby limiting or inhibiting the efficacy of the embodied personality (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.243, 235). This relates to a revelation that Ellen shared in relation to her experience of following the advice of another student, and also relates to her comments about the highly valued guidance that she received from one of her teachers.

§3.3.1 Ellen’s revelation

Early on in the period of data collection, Ellen indicated that she found the advice of one particular student in her class quite useful, however, by the final interview, she revealed that there were also hazards associated with following the advice of this particular student. ‘It can end up over-shadowing everything that you thought in the first place’, and that she had come to a stage where she needed to find her own way. She suggested that even if another student’s idea ‘could be a bit more sophisticated’ or ‘could maybe bring a better result [...] it’s pretty important to stick with what you want to do’, and to ‘experiment’ and ‘do the things that you want to do’, and ‘go with your own instincts’.

It appears from Ellen’s comments that early on in her course of study she did follow this particular student’s advice, but she then found that doing so never actually fulfilled what she was wanting to achieve with her art-making practice. In the final interview, Ellen also indicated that she believed that making art came from a deep, certain place at the core of her being, and that this was something that needed to be expressed. This ‘deep, certain place at the core of her being’ that Ellen refers to, could, in Bhaskarian terms, be referred to as Ellen’s ground state. If the advice of Ellen’s peers or her teachers were inconsistent with what Ellen’s ground state was wanting to express, Ellen’s efforts might not lead to fulfilment.

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331 This was previously discussed in C2 §2.2.6.2.
Bhaskar suggests that in order to be fulfilled, the intentions of an embodied personality must be consistent with the intentions of its ground state. Further, when an individual experiences an activity such as making art from the perspective of their embodied personality that is consistent with their ground state, their capacity for experiencing flow is enabled. Csikszentmihalyi (1988a p.24) describes this consistency between an embodied personality and its ground state as ‘order in consciousness’ or ‘order in self’. Thus, an experience of flow whilst learning to make art appears to involve:

(i)  a perfect match between a student’s set of dispositions and their learning environment, and
(ii)  consistency between a student’s set of dispositions and their true essential self.

However, neither does this mean another person’s advice makes it impossible to fulfil the intentions of one’s ground state, for Ellen also commented that she found the advice of one of her teachers particularly helpful. Ellen particularly commented that she felt that this teacher was ‘a bit of a mentor’ for her art-making practice, thus, hereafter, I shall refer to this teacher as ‘The Mentor’.

In the final interview at the end of semester one, Ellen’s appreciation for The Mentor became very apparent. She indicated that she had found The Mentor to be ‘a huge help and encouragement’ and suggested that the reason for this may be because she had seen The Mentor’s own artwork, that she really liked his style and believed that he liked similar styles to what she liked. Ellen also indicated that she found The Mentor’s advice ‘really helpful in doing different artworks’ and the content of his advice was ‘something that I would have liked to have done anyway’. He can say “How about this?” and I think “Wow! If I sat down and thought about it for maybe a month I would have thought of that, […] or maybe experimented, I would have come to that.” Ellen indicated that she appreciated having someone to take her down these creative paths.

Sometimes The Mentor would show Ellen a book of another artist’s work and ‘it will just be the sort of art that I really love […] I feel like he’s got a really good eye for seeing what you like’.

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339 This was a teacher who was not actually involved in data collection, and so I do not have any observational data between Ellen and this teacher. However, Ellen’s comments about her experience of this teacher have much to contribute to the analysis about the social interactions involved in learning to make art, and so will be included here.
Ellen explicitly stated that she was grateful to have him as a teacher, ‘I just really value his advice, I really appreciate his input’.  

Ellen indicated that sometimes with her art she felt like she was ‘just bumbling along with a blindfold on’ and that meeting someone ‘[who has] got that kind of insight, it’s so exciting’. She indicated that she believed that it was important to talk to people who have a similar taste ‘so that you can encourage them and they can encourage you’. Some of her comments also suggest that Ellen didn’t simply receive The Mentor’s advice passively, but rather, actively sought it out.

One proposition put forward in this thesis is that by understanding the nature of their true essential self, art students might be empowered to use their moments of agency to unfold in their embodied personality those things which are congruent with their ground state. It appears from Ellen’s comments that the guidance that she received from The Mentor enabled her to unfold in her embodied personality art-making practices that were congruent with her ground state.

§3.4  Summary of intentional human agency

In summary, intentional human agency is stratified, it involves transcendence, and fulfilment of the intentions of the embodied personality requires consistency with the intentions of the ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.243, 235). However, this is only part of the story, for the Transformational Model of Social Activity indicates that there is a dialectical relationship between human agency and social structures.

The following section explores the way in which an understanding of the dialectical relationship between human agency and social structures might contribute towards making sense of a student’s experience of flow whilst learning to draw.

353 The use of the term ‘unfold’ here will become clearer to the reader throughout C6.
354 See Figure 5.3 (in §4.2).
§4 The interplay of structure and agency during flow experience

In the sections that follow, Bhaskar’s model of the four-planar social being, Bourdieu’s concept of the *habitus* and Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience are integrated together, in order to develop a model for understanding the various elements involved in an art student’s experience of flow whilst learning to make art.

§4.1 Four-planar social being

Bhaskar’s model of the four-planar social being suggests that there are four dialectically interdependent planes which might influence the actualisation of the latent potentials of the ground-state in the practices of the embodied personality. These four planes of social being include:

(a) material transactions with nature (physical plane);  
(b) inter-personal intra- or inter-action;  
(c) social relations (social plane); and  

![Four-planar social being diagram](image-url)
C5 – STRUCTURE AND AGENCY DURING FLOW EXPERIENCE

In relation to the context of art education, these four planes can be understood in the following ways:

(a) **material transactions with nature** relates to an art student’s interactions with her physical environment, including the physical classroom environment, desk, and chair, easel, drawing materials and surface, and the process of manipulating drawing materials as she creates marks on the drawing surface;

(b) **inter-personal intra- or inter-action** relates to an art student’s interactions with her teachers, peers and her self;

(c) **social relations** relates to the art student’s relationship with the social structures that exist within the classroom and art school environment; and

(d) **intra-subjectivity** relates to the stratification of the art student herself.\(^{355}\)

Bhaskar suggests that we are ‘profoundly alienated at all four levels of our social being’ (Bhaskar, 2002a p.22). We are alienated from our selves, from each other, from social structures and the material world. Bhaskar suggests that de-alienation therefore depends on reunion at all four planes of social being (Bhaskar, 2000 p.57). However, the first step is to ensure that we are not alienated from our transcendentally real Self (Bhaskar, 2000 p.57; 2002c pp.56-58), for Bhaskar suggests that self-alienation is the root cause of all other ills (Bhaskar, 2002a p.22).

It appears that making art provided opportunities for the students in this study to experience the consciousness of their true, essential self (see C4 §4). However, Bhaskar’s four-planar social being suggests that students might have also been alienated at the physical, social and action planes of social reality. Bourdieu’s concept of the *habitus* provides an explanatory framework that helps to shed light on how social structures and social interactions might contribute to an art student’s alienation or de-alienation as well. This is the topic of the following section.

### §4.2 Integrating Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’ with Bhaskar’s ‘human agency and social structures’\(^{356}\)

As previously noted in C2 §4.4, Bourdieu uses the term *habitus* to refer to the evolving set of durable, transposable dispositions that a person has (Bourdieu, 1990 p.53). He also suggests that the habitus is the active presence of past conditions of which it is the product (Bourdieu, 1990 p.54). Bourdieu suggests that an understanding of human agency must incorporate both

\(^{355}\) See C2 §2.2.5 to §2.2.5.2.

\(^{356}\) I would like to thank Dr. Karl Maton for exchanging ideas relating to this topic as I developed my understanding of the integrated relationship between the concepts relating to the habitus and the embodied personality and social structures.
the evolving fields within which people are situated and the evolving habituses which people bring to the social fields of their practice (Bourdieu, 1990 pp.52-65).

On a related topic, Bhaskar suggests that ground states are ‘fields of possibilities, some of which must be actualised; but which, and in what form, depends upon what other forces and bodies, charges and constraints there are in the field of their actualisation’ (Bhaskar, 2002e p.91). It appears that Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus might offer a theory to help explain how the field of possibilities of one’s ground state might manifest in the actions and experience of their embodied personality, and further how the expression of ground state properties through the embodied personality might also be constrained. If this is the case, then perhaps a person’s evolving habitus might also be sustained by their ground state.

According to Bhaskar, our ground state or transcendentally real Self is absolute; however, by manifesting in a relative world, which is necessarily constrained by physical laws, the ground state will always be slightly limited and there will always be a sense in which it seems to be constrained (Bhaskar, 2002e p.95). Bourdieu’s theory of the habitus being the active presence of the past conditions that produced it suggests that the past conditions from which the embodied personality has emerged might have constrained the ground state’s manifestation in (i) the evolving set of dispositions of the habitus, and (ii) the experience and action of the embodied personality. In light of this, the following distinction between the embodied personality, ground state and habitus will tentatively be used in this chapter:

(a) **embodied personality** refers to the actual actions and experience of a person,
(b) **ground state** refers to the field of possibilities which enable and sustain the actions and experience of an embodied personality (Bhaskar, 2002e p.91); and
(c) **habitus** refers to the set of dispositions or tendency for an embodied personality to act in a particular way or have a particular experience (Bourdieu, 1990 p.53).

Bourdieu’s theory suggests that the ways that the latencies of the ground state and the durable and transposable dispositions of an art student’s habitus become realised in the embodied personality’s art practice might depend on the relations between their habitus and the structured social context that they find themselves (Bourdieu, 1990 pp.54-58). According to this perspective, human agency can only be accounted for by relating the past social conditions, in which the habitus that generated them was produced, to the present social conditions, in which it is implemented (Bourdieu, 1990 p.56). Thus, the habitus can be understood as being both structured by conditions of existence, and also generating practices, beliefs, perceptions, feeling and so forth in accordance with its own structure (Bourdieu, 1990 p.53; Maton, 2008 p.51). Jarrah made a comment during one of the group discussions about her experience at art school, which helps to illustrate the active presence of the past to which Bourdieu’s notion of the habitus refers: ‘It’s also what you are used to,
before you came to [art school] as well, what your style of life or whatever you did, as well, […] coming to [art school], we are all doing the same thing, but everybody is bringing something different to it […] where I worked, it was very structured, very rigid, there was no slackness, […], because of the style of work that I did. And then to come here […] it’s very, so opposite to what I am used to’. Jarrah’s comment indicates awareness on her part of how her past experience played an active role in her present experience at art school.357 Bourdieu (1984 p.101) summarises the relationship between the habitus, and its past and present conditions using the following equation: ‘[(habitus)(capital)] + field = practice’. Unpacking this further, Karl Maton (2008) suggests that ‘practice results from relations between one’s dispositions (habitus) and one’s position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field)’ (Maton, 2008 p.51). From this perspective, human agency is understood as involving one’s dispositions, one’s position in the social field in which they have their being, and what is taking place in that field. Using the example of Jarrah, it was the absence of a disposition to ‘make mistakes’ (which appeared to stem from her past experience) that seemed to lower her position in the present social field of the art school and the practice of drawing.359

Bhaskar’s Transformational Model of Social Activity (TMSA) reiterates Bourdieu’s description of the dialectical relationship between the structure and agency of the habitus, suggesting that ‘social structure is a necessary condition for, and medium of, intentional agency, which is in turn a necessary condition for the reproduction or transformation of social forms’ (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.154-155) (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3: The Transformational Model of Social Activity

Using the particular practice of ‘learning to draw’ as an example, we can begin to appreciate that such practice necessarily involves an intention to draw, and in the case of this research study, actually attending a drawing class in a formal art school environment. The practice of
learning to draw therefore depends on the set of dispositions, that is, the habitus of the embodied personality of a student. How a student responds to a particular kind of pedagogy depends on these dispositions as well: for example, a student might be socialised in such a way that their dispositions clash with the structuring of the pedagogy, so that they end up frustrated or feeling out of sorts. In this study, most of the students had only recently arrived at this particular art school environment. Those students who had studied art previously appeared to be more suited to the form of the pedagogy than those students who had never been to art school before. One student, who had never previously studied in an art school environment, indicated that she found her initial experience at art school somewhat foreign: ‘I have to be honest with you, when I first started it was like getting off a plane in a foreign land. It was really hard’. This comment of Jarrah’s was made to one of her teachers during an assessment interview at the end of semester one. It suggests that her initial experience at this particular art school wasn’t particularly comfortable. Although Jarrah made the comment ‘I want to enjoy this year’, the group discussion and interview data suggests that she struggled to maintain constancy in her enjoyment of being at art school. This will be discussed further in §4.3.1.

As previously noted in C2 §4.3, Witz, talks about learning in terms of ‘content related opening of the self’. The following question urges consideration of how social structures might contribute to the process of unfolding qualities from a person’s ground state, as dispositions in their habitus that can then manifest as experiences or actions in their embodied personality: ‘how does the “unfolding of self” occur, and what is it that produces the unfolding? – what is it that speaks to the soul or self, what is it that happens in the soul or self so that it unfolds and blossoms and becomes more of a person?’ (Witz, 2000 p.13). Bhaskar’s theory of co-presence and subsequent model of unfolding the enfolded contributes much to a response to Witz’s questions. This is the topic of C6. For now, let us revisit Witz’s conceptualisation of ‘content related opening of the self’, and consider the contribution that Bhaskar’s Transformational Model of Social Activity might also be able to make to Witz’s questions.

The true essential self of a human agent unfolds dispositions which actualise as experiences and actions as a result of exposure to, and interaction with, the social structures that pre-exist them. In relation to the field of education, Witz refers to this phenomenon as ‘content-related opening of self’, which he defines as ‘an independent process of the self’s unfolding through contact with subject-matter’ (Witz, 2000 p.11). From this perspective, it appears that it is the embodied personality’s interactions with subject-matter, which I re-interpret as ‘structure’ or ‘social conditions’, which provides opportunities for the ground state qualities to develop as dispositions for the embodied personality to experience or act in particular ways. Witz’s ‘content-related opening of self’ poses an important challenge for the field of art education:

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360 NUDIST reference: A_S-Ja
The task then is to envision an educational system in which [content-related opening of self] is allowed to occur or not to occur depending on the individual, but which promotes opening of the self in other directions, or promotes other kinds of opening of the self, and thereby holds out the possibility of deeper life-fulfilment for all.\footnote{Witz suggests that deeper life-fulfilment is ‘a more general, more fundamental, and more universal category than [content-related opening of self]. It refers to fulfilment (in the course of a path through life)'}

(Witz, 2000 p.20)

Witz suggests that ‘deeper substantive content areas can […] become a vehicle for unfolding of self and attaining a deeper level of “life-fulfilment” in life’ (Witz, 2000 p.16). Witz refers to the relationship between personal growth and learning about subject matter related to a particular discipline in the following way:

We are painting a picture of a phenomenon – let us call it ‘content-related opening of self’ or croos – whose exact shape needs to be established, but at the heart of which is attainment, through an opening of the self in relation to subject matter, or by channelling the inner forces using subject-matter, of some kind of stability, some sense of inner assuredness and inner-direction.

(Witz, 2000 p.11)

From this perspective, through exposure to particularly deep and substantive content areas or subject matter, art students can develop dispositions to act and experience in ways that are congruent with their true essential self. It is in this way that the dispositions of an art student, (that is, its habitus), can be understood as being both structured by conditions of existence (including the conditions of its true essential self, as well as the conditions of the subject-matter that it is exposed to in a learning environment), and also generating practices, beliefs, perceptions, feeling and so forth in accordance with its own structure (Bourdieu, 1990 p.53; Maton, 2008 p.51). In terms of experiencing flow, however, it appears that exposure to deep and substantive content areas or subject matter to which Witz refers, might not be enough; rather, there needs to be a particular type of relationship between an art student’s existing dispositions and their learning environment. This is the topic of the following section.

§4.3 Integrating Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’ with Csikszentmihalyi’s ‘flow’

An experience of flow whilst learning to make art may be understood as involving a perfect match between a student’s set of dispositions and their learning environment. Maton (2008 p.59) refers to this perfect match between a student’s set of dispositions and their learning

\footnote{Witz suggests that deeper life-fulfilment is ‘a more general, more fundamental, and more universal category than [content-related opening of self]. It refers to fulfilment (in the course of a path through life)
environment as the field-habitus match, which he likens to a ‘fish in water’, suggesting that people are likely to be unaware of the supporting, life affirming social environment in which they flourish and feel at ease. This relates to Csikszentmihalyi’s claim that optimal experience or flow requires a perceived balance between the perceived challenges in a given situation and the perceived skills a person brings to it (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a p.30). Although every activity may be an opportunity for optimal experience, no activity can sustain it for long unless both the perceived challenges and skills become more complex (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a p.30). This also relates to Witz’s theory about ‘content-related opening of self’, that is, the ‘process of the self’s unfolding through contact with subject-matter’ (Witz, 2000 p.11). Witz distinguishes ‘content-related opening of self’ from ‘merely operating comfortably (affectively and intellectually) in a sphere of subject-matter because of ability and favourable background, without there being a deeper change in self that persists and unfolds further the individual’s subsequent history’ (Witz, 2000 p.11). The key point that Witz makes here is that content-related opening of self involves growth. It is the self growing or opening in response to being exposed to particular content or subject matter that is embodied within a particular discipline of study. ‘Content-related opening of self’ appears to be related to flow experience in that it involves a balance between skills and challenges.

Figure 5.4 (below), and the discussion which follows, have been adapted from Csikszentmihalyi (1990 pp.74-75), to provide an overview of two significant dimensions of flow experience: challenges and skills, indicating the way in which flow experience serves to promote growth, or complexity, in consciousness.

Figure 5.4: How an embodied personality’s experience of flow promotes growth or complexity in the evolving set of dispositions of its habitus

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of the individual’s “real nature” – not necessarily of what the individual believes his/her innermost nature to be, but of what he/she realizes it to be after there is deeper life-fulfilment’ (Witz, 2000 p.20).
Let us assume that the figure above represents a specific art-making activity – for example, observational drawing. Two theoretically significant dimensions of the experience, challenges and skills, are represented on the two axes of the diagram. The letter A represents Angela, a student who is learning to draw. The challenge axis represents the aspects of the social and physical learning environment that Angela must negotiate. The skill axis represents the aspects of the set of durable, transposable dispositions that Angela brings with her to negotiate those challenges. The diagram shows Angela at four different points in time.

When she first commences drawing classes (A₁), Angela has very few observational drawing skills. This is because the past conditions which produced the set of durable, transposable dispositions that inform her present actions and experience were not conducive to her developing observational drawing skills. The observational drawing task (the challenge) that Angela's teacher has presented is for her to look at a two-dimensional black and white reproduction of a photographic image of the human figure, and use a pencil to make marks on a piece of paper in an attempt at 'copying' the image. Angela is able to enjoy this activity because the demands match her skills. After a while, however, if Angela keeps practising, her skills are bound to improve, at which point it is possible that she might grow bored just copying an existing image (A₂), or it might happen that Angela's teacher presents her with a more complex task, in which case she will realise that there are much harder challenges than just copying another image – at that point she might feel some anxiety (A₃) concerning her poor performance. Neither boredom nor anxiety are enjoyable experiences, so it is likely that Angela will be motivated to return to the flow state.

If Angela is bored (A₂) and wishes to be in flow again, she has essentially only one choice: to increase the challenges she is facing. By setting a new and more difficult goal that matches her skills – for instance to observe an actual human figure, Angela might experience flow again (A₄). The role of the teacher in such instances might be to offer guidance or support to increase the complexity of the task. If Angela is anxious (A₃), the way back to flow requires that she either: increase her skills or reduce the challenges. The role of the teacher in such instances might be to offer guidance or support in identifying more achievable goals along the way.

The diagram shows that both A₁ and A₄ represent situations in which Angela is in flow. In both instances there is a perfect match between Angela's set of dispositions and her learning environment. Although both are equally enjoyable, the two states are quite different in that A₄ is a more complex experience than A₁. It is more complex because it involves greater challenges, and demands greater skills from Angela. But A₄, although complex and enjoyable, does not represent a stable situation either. As Angela keeps drawing, either she will become
bored by the stale opportunities she finds at that level, or she will become anxious and frustrated by her relatively low ability. So the motivation to enjoy herself again will push her to get back into the flow channel, now at a higher level of complexity even higher than $A_4$.

Csikszentmihalyi also suggests that no activity guarantees the occurrence of flow, because an activity can only provide challenges; people also need to be capable of recognising the challenges, as well as focusing attention, controlling memory, and limiting awareness to the specific goals involved (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a p.30).

The pre-determined learning outcomes and assessment requirements of the course that the students were enrolled in provided challenges and demands. This is the field in which students had their being. Each student’s existing knowledge and skills were part of their habitus, the evolving set of durable, transposable dispositions. When the challenges of the learning environment are (i) recognised by the art student, and (ii) coupled with the ability to focus attention, control memory, and limit awareness to the specific goals involved, then the embodied personality of the student might experience flow.

Figure 5.4 (above), and the above discussion bears light on the role of the teacher to provide appropriate level challenges to maximise the possibility for flow to be experienced by students. This draws much on Lev Vygotsky’s social learning theory, and in particular, the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (Rolland, 2000 p.43). This will be discussed further in C6 §2.3.2.

The data in this study indicate that each student arrived at art school with different experiences in the form of skills, knowledge and attitudes. It seems reasonable to suggest that unless learning environments are flexible in meeting each student’s existing set of dispositions to provide challenges at appropriate levels for their development and growth, an experience of flow may not be equally available to all students. Rather, an experience of flow might only be available to the embodied personality of those students whose set of dispositions, that is, their knowledge and skills, match the demands of the learning environment.

§4.3.1 Jarrah’s field-habitus mismatch

Jarrah made several comments during the interviews and group discussions which point towards a possible mismatch between the social field of the art school learning environment and the evolving set of durable, transposable dispositions that she was able to call on to negotiate the challenges she was faced with. These comments related to Jarrah’s apparent

lack of knowledge of the discourse of art, including art materials and the skills involved in the process of making marks on a piece of paper. Jarrah’s comments also relate to a lack of recent experience in the general area of adult education.

During the final interview Jarrah shared her ideas about how the art school environment could be improved to enhance the experience for new students. These comments help set the scene for an analysis of the nature of her particular field-habitus mismatch.

At the beginning of the final interview at the end of her first semester Jarrah mentioned a number of things about the organisational or institutional structure of this particular art school that she believed needed improving. For Jarrah, this would help to enhance the experience of new students like herself. These include, providing students with guidance in ‘finding things out’, in particular:

- A typed outline or list of the materials which students need to buy for their tool box, where to buy them and a guide to pricing,
- Teachers to ensure that students are given the correct location for meeting the teachers on orientation day and to introduce themselves and the position they hold within the educational institutions hierarchy.

Bhaskar’s concept of absence allows us to appreciate the emancipatory power of Jarrah’s insights. By providing each enrolling student with a list of the materials they need to have in their tool box along with contact details of places to buy them and a guide to pricing, art schools could liberate new students from an absence of knowledge which may constrain their full participation in a process of making art. In other words, absenting the absence of knowing what to bring, where to get it, and how much to pay.

Further, implied in the name ‘orientation day’, is the purpose of orienting new students to the physical and social organisation of a particular institutional environment. In this instance it was also a forum to receive course-related paperwork. It makes a lot of sense then, to ensure that all students are given the correct place to meet. For Jarrah, orientation day appeared to be more disorienting than orienting: ‘we weren’t in the room we were supposed to be in and we were sitting there like lemons and we didn’t know.’

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368 NUDIST reference: I_S-Ja3: 20-34.
By ensuring that each student is given the correct place to meet for orientation, this art school would help to emancipate new students from an absence of knowledge, which would enable effective orientation. In other words, absenting the absence of knowing the correct place to meet. Further, by introducing themselves and the position they hold within the educational administration, staff members can be understood as emancipating new students from an absence of knowledge relating to the hierarchical power-relations in play.

Jarrah’s comments around the challenge to ‘make mistakes’, which was encouraged by her teachers at art school,\(^{371}\) points towards another area in which there was a mismatch between the learning environment and the set of dispositions that Jarrah was able to call on to negotiate the challenges.

Prior to coming to art school, Jarrah had been employed on a full-time basis as a registered nurse running a hospital:\(^{372}\) ‘where I worked, it was very structured, very rigid, there was no slackness, you just couldn’t, because of the style of work that I did. And then to come here and you know it’s very, so opposite to what I am used to’.\(^{373}\) In such an environment, making mistakes was not an option: ‘I cannot make mistakes, no way. I make a mistake and somebody would die. I find this very, very different’.\(^{374}\) This meant that in order to meet her teacher’s expectations at art school\(^{375}\) Jarrah was required to behave in ways that were inconsistent with over 30 years of past social conditions that, according to Bourdieu’s theory of habitus, would have developed the existing set of dispositions of Jarrah’s habitus (Bourdieu, 1990 pp.52-65).

Although Jarrah already had an interest in, and also some existing skills associated with drawing, she indicated on many occasions that she lacked knowledge on ‘how’ to do things, and that her knowledge of art-materials was also limited.\(^{376}\) Further, Jarrah’s lack of experience in ‘making mistakes’ meant that her ability to play around and experiment to discover how to do things for her self was inhibited.

Further evidence of Jarrah’s field-habitus mismatch occurred in her comments about her first day of art classes. ‘It was just so full on; I went home with a migraine. It was not fun. And I thought “God, what am I doing here?” That was my first day that we had. I went “Oh Christ!” I mean [teacher’s name] totally confused me. I thought “Jesus! Is this going to be normal?” And then we got to [teacher’s name] and he was in your face and we had to do, to produce

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\(^{373}\) NUDIST reference: GD2: 410-413.
\(^{374}\) NUDIST reference: GD2: 418-419.
something. I thought “I just want to go home”. It was a nightmare’. 377 ‘Oh, it’s horrible. It really was, I thought “Oh God, do I really want to go tomorrow?” and that’s what I felt’. 378

Jarrah’s comments about her subjective experience of being at art school varied throughout her first semester. In her third week Jarrah indicated that she was ‘feeling better about it’ and that ‘each day has got better, and it is more fun and enjoyable.’ 379 However, during a coffee break in week eight, Jarrah revealed to me that she had actually told one of her teachers that she wasn’t enjoying her experience at art school yet. 380 Jarrah later indicated that this teacher not only followed up on her comment about not enjoying her experience at art school, 381 but also set her a different task to the other students, in what she called ‘the precious book’. (Note: the precious book was an old encyclopaedia volume, in which the students were invited to draw over the top of the existing words and images that were already printed on the pages). ‘I just go through the book and find a bit and then do something in the book. And everybody gets a turn to do things in this book […] He said “don’t do one”. So he said, “do a couple”, and then bring it back next term, and then someone else has the joy [of drawing in it]’. 382 It is important to appreciate that this old encyclopaedia volume already had text and images in it, and so whatever marks Jarrah made in the book were made in addition to and in relation to the content of the pre-printed pages. Given that Jarrah mentioned on a previous occasion that she found it difficult to draw on the blank pages of her journal, 383 the precious book, with its absence of blank pages, appeared to enable Jarrah to approach the task of mark-making in a more relaxed way. More importantly for the topic of this discussion is that Jarrah’s teacher responded to her disclosure about not enjoying herself, and provided her with a task or ‘challenge’ that better matched her set of dispositions so that she might be able to experience flow. In the final group discussion Jarrah made the comment ‘I must admit though when I first started to now, I feel much more comfortable in the class. I am actually starting to enjoy it’ 384 and ‘I don’t know if I have developed anymore in what I am drawing to what I did at the beginning. I can’t see really that too much of that happening but umm, I feel more comfortable in myself doing stuff in class’. 385

At the beginning of the final interview after her first semester had finished, Jarrah commented on her experience at art school. ‘I’ve actually enjoyed it. It’s taken a long time to get to this place, of enjoying it, a lot of it wasn’t’. 386 However, her final comments suggest that her experience of enjoyment was still lacking constancy ‘No I haven’t had fun yet, it’s still

384 NUDIST reference: GD8: 316-318.
It appears that Jarrah’s first semester at art school might have enabled the dispositions of her habitus to evolve in a way that better matched her learning environment. As Jarrah’s skills developed, so did the challenges, and thus, Jarrah’s comments that the challenges were still confronting and that she hadn’t had fun yet might allude to the on-going nature of growth and development.

§5 Summary of chapter five

This chapter has attempted to show some of the ways in which concepts drawn from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality can advance our understanding of the various elements in play when an adult art student experiences flow whilst learning to make art. The four-planar social being, transformational model of social activity, and stratified model of the self, together with Csikszentmihalyi’s work on flow experience and Bourdieu’s ideas on habitus, have been particularly useful in explaining this phenomenon.

Integrating Bhaskar’s, Bourdieu’s and Csikszentmihalyi’s theories suggests that an art student’s experience of flow whilst learning to make art involves:

(a) a ground state or transcendentally real Self, which
   (i) sustains the evolving set of durable, transposable dispositions (the habitus) and the actions and experience of the embodied personality (§3.3 and §4.2); and
   (ii) is connected to all existence in the cosmic envelope (C2 §2.2.5);

(b) the present conditions, including:
   (i) the extent to which the consciousness and intentionality of the student’s embodied personality is congruent or incongruent with the consciousness of their ground state (§3.3);
   (ii) the student’s set of dispositions in relation to that of their peers (§4.2);
   (iii) the socially produced demands or challenges of the particular educational context in which the student is situated, and the extent to which these demands match the student’s skills and the intentions of their ground state (§3.3, §3.3.1 and §4.2); and
   (iv) the physical laws impacting on the student’s material being, including the physical structure of the educational context in which the student is situated (§4.1);

(c) the past conditions which enabled and/or constrained the latent potentials of the art student’s ground state to become part of their current set of dispositions, including:

The extent to which the consciousness and intentionality of the student’s embodied personality was congruent or incongruent with the consciousness of its ground state (§3.3 and §4.2); the student’s set of dispositions in relation to that of their peers (§4.2); the socially produced demands or challenges of the environments in which the student was situated, and the extent to which these demands matched their skills and the intentions of their ground state (§3.3, §3.3.1 and §4.2); and the physical laws that were impacting on the student’s material being §4.1).

The intentions of educators and policy makers who are involved in determining the learning outcomes for fine art students, need to be congruent with the intentions of their own ground state. Further, in order for objectified intentions, in the form of learning outcomes, to be fulfilled, they need to be congruent with the intentionality of each art student’s ground state. These objectified intentions also need to be flexible enough to ensure that each student is provided with challenges at the appropriate level for their development and growth, thereby enabling an experience of flow.

In the following chapter, Bhaskar’s theory of fine structure and co-presence, and its implications for understanding the process of learning, which are understood to involve a process of unfolding what already exists in an enfolded state within, are outlined. This is followed by a discussion about the ontological structures involved in unfolding the enfolded. The role which social interactions play in the model of unfolding the enfolded, and the implications of this for a student to experience flow whilst making art are also explored. By drawing on existing educational models and theories, as well as data from observations, interviews and group discussions, the discussion outlines the process of unfolding the enfolded in terms of a transition from novice to expert. The final section of the chapter considers the educational implications of the theory of fine structure and co-presence, and the model of unfolding the enfolded for experiencing flow whilst making art.
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Chapter Six – Unfolding the enfolded: experiencing flow whilst learning to draw

§1  Overview of chapter six

The content in this chapter was presented at the Critical Realism and Education conference, Institute of Education, London: 18-20 July 2008. It is concerned with exploring the theory of co-presence and the related idea that both learning and creativity might be a process of unfolding what already exists in an enfolded state within (Bhaskar, 2002c p.108).

This chapter begins by outlining the model of unfolding the enfolded, which is based on the logic of Bhaskar’s theory of fine structure and co-presence. Of particular concern are the implications of the model of unfolding the enfolded for understanding the process of learning. This is followed by a discussion about the ontological structures involved in unfolding the enfolded. By drawing on existing educational models and theories, as well as data from observations, interviews and group discussions, the discussion outlines the process of learning to draw in terms of Bhaskar’s model of unfolding the enfolded, and also identifies the particular phases which are conducive for an experience of flow. The final section of the chapter considers the educational implications of the theory of fine structure and co-presence, and the model of unfolding the enfolded for experiencing flow whilst learning to draw.

§2  Unfolding the enfolded: circles of creation and learning something new

In this section, Bhaskar’s theory about the ontological structures that enable both creativity and learning is outlined (Bhaskar, 2002c p.108). These ontological structures are based on the logic of the theory of co-presence, and thereby serve to demonstrate one way in which the theory of co-presence might be able to contribute to the field of art education, and art education research.

Bhaskar suggests that one’s ability to learn anything new is made possible by the knowledge, skill or values that are learnt, already existing in an enfolded state within each human being at the level of the ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c p.109). He suggests that it is incompleteness or determinate absence that is the motor that drives the learning process (Bhaskar, 2000 p.3);

388 The theory of co-presence and fine structure were previously discussed in C2 §2.2.4. For the sake of brevity I will not repeat this discussion again; however, the reader could revisit these ideas in C2 §2.2.4 before reading further.

389 From this perspective, learning involves unfolding in an explicit way, that which already exists in an enfolded (implicit) state within.
however, he also claims that it is the potential, for growth and transformation, which is enabled by fine structure and co-presence, that enables learning to occur. Thus, it is the underpinning level of reality, that is, fine structure and co-presence, that sustains the emancipatory power of absence.391

Bhaskar describes the process of unfolding the enfolded in relation to creativity, in terms of five circles of creation: calling, creation, formation, making and reflexivity (Bhaskar, 2002c p.112). These *circles of creation* correspond to the first five moments in the MELDARA schema,392 that is, the successive refinements of ontology associated with the development of critical realism and meta-Reality (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.112-113). They also correspond to five phases of unfolding the enfolded in the process of learning something new: being, becoming, binding, applying and reflecting (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.115-116).

Table 6.1 (below), previously included in C2 §2.2.4.1, provides an overview of the corresponding terms used in the MELDARA schema, the circles of creation, and the phases involved in the process of unfolding the enfolded. In the same way that the MELDARA schema identifies the successive refinements of ontology in which each emerging category presupposes the previous (Bhaskar, 1993 p.9), each of the circles of creativity and phases in unfolding the enfolded are preservative. Thus, reflexivity and reflection presuppose making and applying, which presuppose formation and binding, which presuppose creation and becoming, which presuppose calling and being. In other words, each phase is dependent upon, emerges out of, but is irreducible to the previous phase, whilst not being inconsistent with it.

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390 This section was previously discussed in C2 §2.2.4.1.
391 On a related topic, Martin suggests: ‘to say there was nothing before the universe would in fact be to say that there was no actualised universe, merely the possibility or potential for an actualised universe to come into being from absolute nothing’ (Martin, 2008 p.6). In this way, absence might be best understood as a potential for the actualisation, or unfolding, of that, which exists in an enfolded state.
392 Including the first moment (1M) of being, the second edge (2E) of absence / negativity, the third level (3L) of totality, the fourth dimension (4D) of transformative praxis, the fifth aspect (5A) of reflexivity / spirituality, the sixth realm (6R) of re-enchantment, and the seventh zone / awakening (7A/Z) of non-duality (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.xviii-xxi; Hartwig, 2008 pp.xiii-xvii).
Table 6.1: Corresponding terms used in the MELDARA schema, circles of creation and unfolding the enfolded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MELDARA schema</th>
<th>Circles of creation</th>
<th>Unfolding the enfolded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1M</td>
<td>First Moment</td>
<td>Being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2E</td>
<td>Second Edge</td>
<td>Absence or process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3L</td>
<td>Third Level</td>
<td>Totality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4D</td>
<td>Fourth Dimension</td>
<td>Transformative agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5A</td>
<td>Fifth Aspect</td>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6R</td>
<td>Sixth Realm</td>
<td>Re-enchantment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7A/Z</td>
<td>Seventh Zone</td>
<td>Awakening or non-duality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

§2.1 through to §2.5 describes the circles of creation and each phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded in detail.

**§2.1  Calling / Being**

In this section, the first circle of creation and first level in the model of unfolding the enfolded is explored.

**§2.1.1  Creativity**

The first circle of creation is ‘the initial impulse – traditionally called the “word” or “calling”,\(^{393}\) or the lightening flash or emanation, the creator’s will to impose on the world’ (Bhaskar, 2002c

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\(^{393}\) On the topic of creativity or art-making being a ‘calling’, it is worth considering Singerman’s statement about university or academic art-making practices: ‘On campus, studio art cannot be a calling or vocation. To be included among the disciplines, art can no longer bear definition as a craft or technique, the fully trainable manual skill of the guild or apprenticeship. At the same time, it cannot be purely inspirational or simply expressive: the work of genius cannot be taught or self-expression tutored. Studio art must not only differentiate itself from public knowledge and practices but also constitute itself within the university. There must be an object of knowledge, a field carved out or claimed in relation to other
This is based on the idea that there is a foundation or truth underpinning everything that exists or occurs. This is the basic, essential ingredient, implicit or enfolded in its origin in time (Bhaskar, 2002c p.106). According to Bhaskar, in relation to the first circle of creation, the first moment, of being, implicit or enfolded in what exists (or does not exist), corresponds to the raw material out of which the human agent furnishes something new; while in terms of the creative process itself this corresponds to the moment of essential or initial impulse or will.

(Bhaskar, 2002c p.107)

Bhaskar indicates that the first circle of creation corresponds to the first moment (1M) of being (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.112-113), which is the level of enfolded, potential and implicate being (Bhaskar, 2002a p.333). This is ‘the moment of Platonic anamnesis, in which what is to be created is nevertheless already (timelessly, embedded) there’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.116). This is, however, at odds with Bourdieu’s suggestion that ‘the illusion created by hindsight in which all the traces of life, such as the works of an artist or the events at a biography, appear as the realization of an essence that seems to pre-exist them [is misleading]’ (Bourdieu, 1990 p.54). Bourdieu continues, suggesting that ‘mature artistic style is not contained, like a seed, in an original inspiration but is continuously defined and redefined in the dialectic between the objectifying intention and the already objectified intention’ (Bourdieu, 1990 p.54).

One way of reconciling Bhaskar and Bourdieu’s perspective is to consider the unity of existence from which the theory of co-presence and subsequent model of unfolding the enfolded emerges. From the perspective of such unified existence, the continuous defining and redefining of a ‘mature artistic style’ or new creation does indeed involve a pre-existence prior to its actualisation, but not within separate individuals. Rather, the potential for actualisation pre-exists its manifestation as a possibility within the relationship of the various elements of the interconnected structure, which enables its manifestation, including the objectifying intention and the already objectified intention’ to which Bourdieu refers.

fields. There must be something called Art for a department to be called after it.’ (Singerman, 1999 p.198).

Platonic anamnesis refers to knowledge or skill already existing in an implicit, enfolded, encoded state, as a possibility of manifesting in your consciousness and action. It is not explicit, it is only implicit; but nevertheless it is still there. Discovery or understanding is a process in which this implicit knowledge is evoked by an external stimulus, situation or teacher (Bhaskar, 2002c p.117; 2002e p.230).
Bhaskar suggests that the first moment of this dialectic of creativity depends upon the coincidence of four sets of circumstances:

(a) Pre-preparation, the immanently prepared ground [...];
(b) Letting things happen, a space, gap or clearing in the discursive thought process for the irruption of a transcendent cause onto that immanently prepared ground [...];
(c) A moment of Platonic anamnesis, the formal condition of possibility for the ‘I see it’ which signifies the moment of understanding, discovery or learning;
(d) Becoming one with something other than oneself 395 (Bhaskar, 2002c p.109)

There is an interesting dynamic between (a) and (b), which seems to be particularly significant for understanding the first moment of creativity. ‘Pre-preparation, the immanently prepared ground’ indicates that there is a certain amount of preparation necessary for creativity to begin to unfold; however, in point (b), Bhaskar also suggests that creativity requires a letting go, or ‘letting things happen, a space, gap or clearing in the discursive thought process’. This is not a new idea. Fifty years ago, in a Symposium on Creativity, Rollo May spoke about a similar idea, suggesting that:

the unconscious insights, or the answers to problems that come in reverie, do not come hit and miss. They come only in the areas to which a person is intensively committed in his conscious living. [...] These answers or creative impulses may indeed come in times of relaxation or in reverie or in other times when we alternate play with work; but what is entirely clear is that they come in those areas in which the person has worked laboriously and with dedication in his conscious experience. (May, 1959 p.62)

What both May and Bhaskar appear to be referring to with these ideas is the dynamic between mindfulness and spontaneity, which, as outlined in §2.3, §2.4 and §3, corresponds to the dynamic between the binding phase and applying phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded. Thus, the first moment of creativity is not ‘first’ in an absolute sense, but rather, depends upon previous efforts associated with ‘learning something new’, which can be understood as being located at various phases in the model of unfolding the enfolded.

395 In terms of Bhaskar’s stratified analysis of the self, this ‘self’ includes one’s ground state, embodied personality and illusory ego. Thus, becoming one with something other than one’s self, involves connecting with other beings or things via the cosmic envelope. See C2 §2.2.5.

396 In his critique of the discursive intellect, Bhaskar suggests that our ‘thoughts and habitual thinking processes are blocked, fixated energy, reifications’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.145), which freeze and ensnare, imprison us (Bhaskar, 2002c p.124). Bhaskar also suggests that both our thoughts and actions are spontaneous and intuitive, and that our thoughts and thinking processes do not actually lead to action, which is, spontaneous. Rather than thinking, Bhaskar suggests we access the space behind, between and beyond thought, from which freedom, creativity, love, right-action all spring (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.145-146).
§2.1.2 Learning

In relation to learning something new, at this first level of being, we already know it. However, this knowledge is unmanifest, 'and so necessitates a process of "education", including external stimulus for the bringing out or manifestation of what is already implicit or known, in an unmanifest form, in the being concerned' (Bhaskar, 2002c p.115). This phase of unfolding the enfolded corresponds to the level of Platonic anamnesis, in which we simply are not aware of the particular knowledge or skill that exists in an enfolded state within us (Bhaskar, 2002c p.115). Central to an understanding of this phase of learning something new is Bhaskar's description of the ground state as being a 'field of possibilities, some of which must be actualised; but which, and in what form, depends upon what other forces and bodies, charges and constraints there are in the field of their actualisation' (Bhaskar, 2002e p.91).

In relation to learning to make art, the basic premise underpinning the model of unfolding the enfolded, is the idea that the ability to make art, already exists in an enfolded state within each person. This premise is supported by Dissanayake's ethnological theory, which suggests that 'making art' is a behaviour that was central to human evolutionary adaptation and the aesthetic faculty is a basic psychological component of every human being (Dissanayake, 1995). From this perspective, it can be understood that there are instinctual reasons why people make art. Engaging in an artistic creative behaviour has been essential to human evolutionary survival. It has existed for a very long time, some suggest 300,000 (Dissanayake, 1995), while others suggest 600,000 years (Coulter, 1995). Given such estimates of art-making existing in an unfolded state in human behaviour, it can be understood that engaging in such behaviour has the potential to provide deep satisfaction.397

Regardless of the biological foundations for art-making behaviours, the students in this study were also expected to discuss their completed drawings, and this expectation appeared to be problematic for some students. One particular student, Joanne, indicated that she didn't believe that she was capable of discussing her completed drawings: '[teacher’s name] really wants us to talk like that, ‘but I can’t [teacher’s name], it’s just not in me'.398 If Joanne were to appreciate that the ability to talk about her artworks in a certain way was already enfolded in her ground state then she might feel more empowered to unfold it in the actions of her embodied personality. However, there is more to understand in this situation, as Dewey suggests:

> If all meanings could be adequately expressed by words, the arts of painting and music would not exist. There are values and meanings that can be expressed only by

397 The topic of experiencing fulfilment or satisfaction in one’s art-making practice will be explored in further detail in §2.5.
398 NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo4: 852-853
immediately visible and audible qualities, and to ask what they mean in the sense of something that can be put into words is to deny their distinctive existence.

(Dewey, 1958 p.74)

On a similar note, Howard Gardner makes the following comment:

Neither children nor artists are necessarily comfortable expressing in discursive symbols their most important feelings and concepts; in fact they may not even feel able to engage in such expression [...] For both of these groups, the arts may offer the best – and possibly the only – avenue for affective expression of what is important at the time.

(Gardner, 1990 p.21)

One possible explanation for the difficulty associated with talking about one’s artwork might stem from the possibility for a person’s art-making practice to be guided by unconscious processes. In relation to my own art-making practice, my artworks tend to express things that my conscious mind has not yet identified. It is not until they have been expressed in an artwork, that I am able to referentially detach myself from them. The perspective that such referential detachment offers seems to enable me to then unfold in my embodied personality an understanding of their hidden meaning. However, it seems inappropriate to expect students to talk about their completed drawings if they haven’t yet unfolded the hidden meanings of the artworks in their conscious awareness. In light of this and the insights which both Dewey and Gardner share, it is somewhat alarming that the new Visual Arts, Craft and Design Training Package for art-related courses within the VET sector in Australia is placing such a strong emphasis on the conscious development of concepts before artworks are produced.

The educational implications of the first level in the model of unfolding the enfolded involves all the skills and understandings existing within all students in an enfolded state at the ontological level of being. These skills and understandings may manifest in a biological predisposition or in the unconscious awareness of a student. It is possible that behaviour stemming from this phase in the process of unfolding the enfolded might be motivated by instinctual drives (see ‘Mode of Action’ column in Table 6.2, later in this chapter, for an overview of this). In the next section, the second circle of creation and second level in the model of unfolding the enfolded are introduced.

399 This was previously discussed in C5 §3.1 and will be discussed further in §2.2.2 and §2.4.2.
400 This was previously discussed in C2 §4.2.1.1.
\section*{§2.2 Creation / Becoming}

In this section, the second circle of creation and second level in the model of unfolding the enfolded is explored.

\subsection*{§2.2.1 Creativity}

The second circle of creation ‘is creation proper itself, the articulation and emergence, \textit{de novo}, of something which had never existed before’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.108), ‘for everything that exists or occurs, there must be a moment of creativity, novelty and emergence, and so transcendence from the unmanifest or absent’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.106). This moment of creativity involves:

\begin{quote}
the genesis of the new, the emergence of something which had never existed before, an emergence which is always a transcendence of what pre-existed it, and always out of absence, always \textit{de novo} (which itself must always contain an element ‘\textit{ex nihilio}, out of nothing), a quantum leap, or jump, resulting in the germ of a new gestalt, in the existing order of things. This moment of creativity corresponds, in the morphogenesis of human action, to the creative process of thought in which the initial impulse or will takes flesh in the thought process of the creator.
\end{quote}

(Bhaskar, 2002c p.107)

Bhaskar indicates that the second circle of creation corresponds to the second moment (2E) of process (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.112-113), in which ‘creation is implicit in being, presupposed by involution (or the descent of consciousness/spirit) and explicit in becoming’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.112). This change and emergence presupposes a world containing absence or negativity (Bhaskar, 2002c p.106).

At this point of the discussion, it is worth bearing in mind Martin’s critique of Bhaskar’s notion of absence.\footnote{Previously discussed in C2 §2.1.4.2.} Martin (2008 p.6), points out that although Bhaskar claims that creation out of nothing is possible, he also suggests that it comes from a potential in the form of a spontaneous disposition (Bhaskar, 2008a p.46). Thus, the potential for a spontaneous disposition for that creation to actualise must have pre-existed its actualisation. Martin defines creativity as: ‘the human potential to make discoveries about the pre-existing potentials and powers of the world and to bring those discoveries into being through the \textit{actualising of a potential} or the \textit{revealing of a power}, or a combination of both’ (Martin, 2008 p.6). Thus, the absence to which Bhaskar refers is the absence of actualisation, rather than absence in an
absolute sense. Indeed, it is the very presence of the potential for actualisation that underpins the theory of co-presence and the model of unfolding the enfolded.

§2.2.2 Learning

In relation to learning something new, at this second level of becoming, we have the moment of discovery, 'eureka' or learning, in which the 'new' information occurs in the student's conscious mind (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.110, 115-116). This is the moment of 'I see it'. The level of becoming is when a person discovers or learns something that they didn't consciously know before. It appears that this might be the exact moment when that which existed in an enfolded state begins to unfold.

Bhaskar suggests that this moment corresponds to 'the creative process of thought in which the initial impulse or will takes flesh in the thought process of the creator' (Bhaskar, 2002c p.107). Thus, the second phase of the process of unfolding the enfolded might also relate to a conscious intention to learn something new. It appears that this phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded, although underpinned by co-presence, might also be driven by a sense of incompleteness or lack (Bhaskar, 2000 p.3). However, as previously mentioned in C2 §2.1.5 and C5 §3.1, Bhaskar defines intentional agency as including actions that are motivated by instinctual, unconscious, preconscious and conscious drives (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.164-167). He also argues for the principle of the irreducibility of intentionality, suggesting that we cannot avoid reference to intentionality in the genesis of human actions (Bhaskar, 2002e p.236). This means that every action has an intention (or reason) behind it. However, the real reason for a particular action or practice may not be what we believe it to be at the level of our conscious awareness.

In a classroom learning environment, the proposed reasons for student and teacher actions might relate to the explicit learning objectives or the conscious intentions of the student and teacher. Thus, during this phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded, behaviour occurs in the form of conscious thought (see 'Mode of Action' column in Table 6.2, later in this chapter, for an overview of this). However, Bhaskar’s conception of the stratification of intentionality (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.164-167), suggests that our intentions, that is, the real reasons for our actions, are not always conscious, but might rather be motivated by unconscious, preconscious or biological-based drives. This appeared to be the case for Joanne.402

In terms of the practice of learning, 'intentions' may come from different sources; for example, a curriculum statement constitutes a form of intention. These types of intention can be understood as being driven by a perceived incompleteness or lack in the embodied

402 See discussion in §2.1.2
personality of the student; they also presuppose the existence of the potential for students to learn, and that this might be actualised by the external stimulus provided by a teacher. A teacher’s introduction to a lesson, which orients the students to the learning activities that will follow is a form of intention, and students themselves may also have their own intentions,\textsuperscript{403} some of which might not be conscious (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.164-167). Each level of intention (institutional, teacher and student, including instinctual, unconscious, preconscious and conscious) might be congruent with each other, however they might also be incongruent.

Although the learning objectives or intentions in formal educational environments might be driven by a perceived incompleteness within the embodied personality of each student, Atkinson (1995 p.268) observes that ‘most of the time’ teachers are not conscious of the ‘ideas, assumptions and presuppositions’ which inform their interpretation of student art practices. Given that one’s intentions might constitute the exact moment when that which existed in an enfolded state begins to unfold, the possibility that teachers might not be conscious of the intentions which inform their interpretation of and response to student art practices is concerning. Further to this, Bhaskar suggests that the intentions of an embodied personality need to be consistent with its ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c p.243). If the intention of the embodied personality is inconsistent with its ground state, the intentionality will be split, thereby limiting or inhibiting the efficacy of the embodied personality (Bhaskar, 2002c p.235). It is also possible that the instinctual, unconscious or preconscious motivations in play might constrain the fulfilment of one’s conscious intentions. Recognising the potentially grave implications of such matters, Campbell (2005 p.67) urges art teachers to realise ‘the seriousness of their intentions and motivations, and critically approach these aspects of teaching in the same manner one conducts a research study.’\textsuperscript{404}

Whether the participating teachers were aware of their intentions and motivations or realised the seriousness of them, was not a concern of this study. However, these comments by Atkinson and Campbell suggest that analysis of the lesson introductions and the feedback which the teachers provided the students with during class (about how to improve drawings) might reveal the teachers’ moment-by-moment ‘intentions’ for what they believed to be worth unfolding in their students.\textsuperscript{405} These could be compared with the intentions established in the curriculum statement for the subject that the students were enrolled in, and the intentions established by the students in the action learning component of the group discussion forum to

\textsuperscript{403}I attempted to elicit what each student’s conscious intentions were during the action learning component of the group discussions.

\textsuperscript{404}As an aside, one of the students in this study, Ellen, was also a primary school teacher. During the first interview, Ellen shared her beliefs about art education, and also reflected on how her personal preference for less realistic artworks informed the learning experiences with which she provided her students. She particularly commented on how she could see that this might serve to compromise her students’ enjoyment of making art (NUDIST reference: I_S-E1: 537-545).

\textsuperscript{405}The feedback that the teachers provided the students with could also be analysed in terms of being the things that the teachers were dissatisfied with. This topic, however, will not be explored in this chapter. See Appendix 4.2 for a sample of teacher/student interactions.
determine their congruence.⁴⁰⁶ One particular student, Ellen, indicated that the comments of one of her teachers served to give her ‘permission to really play and experiment’,⁴⁰⁷ and that this was consistent with her own conscious intention to become more experimental in her approach to creating drawings.⁴⁰⁸

In summary, the intentions that drive human agency constitute the moment and direction in which what has existed in an enfolded state in an art student’s ground state begins to unfold in the skills and understandings of their embodied personality. In the model of unfolding the enfolded, an art student’s intentions constitute the second level of becoming. The next step in the process of unfolding the enfolded corresponds to a phase of consciously unfolding knowledge and skills in the actions and experience of the embodied personality. This, together with the third circle of creation, is the topic of the next section.

§2.3  Formation / Binding

In this section, the third circle of creation and third level in the model of unfolding the enfolded is explored.

§2.3.1 Creativity

The third circle of creation is that of formation or elaboration: ‘this is the shaping or binding, the activity or labour of love, desire or worth in which the imaginative creative impulse of thought is now shaped into an object about to be released onto the world’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.108). Bhaskar suggests that there must be a moment or process of formation (or binding) for everything that exists or occurs (Bhaskar, 2002c p.106). In this way we can appreciate that this moment of formation or binding in creativity corresponds to the third level (3L) of totality in the MELDARA schema (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.112-113). This is the ‘development, elaboration, shaping, forming, binding, totalising, cohering of what has emerged into a determinate whole’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.107).

Bhaskar suggests that ‘any world in which things emerge or have been created, must contain a binding energy or force in order to shape things into a totality or a whole’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.106). He suggests that love, solidarity and emotion may contribute to the binding of new,

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⁴⁰⁶ Investigating the intentions behind the new Visual Arts, Craft and Design Training Package for art-related courses within the VET sector in Australia, and in particular, whether these are congruent with the intentionality of the ground states of art students and their teachers would be an interesting endeavour.
⁴⁰⁷ NUDIST reference: GD8: 870-872
emerging totalities (Bhaskar, 2002c p.116). Thus, the process of formation ‘corresponds to the moment of feeling or emotionality in which a thought is charged with a motivating force which will carry it forward into a physical production, entailing its being made objective at a physical level, so separated from the producer and released into the world’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.107).

§2.3.2 Learning

In relation to the process of learning something new, this third level of totality corresponds to the assimilation of the new knowledge, in which the student ‘binds it back into their own being, shaping it, learning its implications and applications, what to do with it and how to use it, until the point where it is thoroughly assimilated’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.110). Through discipline, mindfulness and playfulness the student unfolds the enfolded in their conscious and unconscious awareness, so that it matures from an enfolded state into an unfolded part of their innermost being (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.110, 111-116). It is important to bear in mind that any apparently new information is only ‘new’ in the sense that it might be unfolding in the embodied personality for the first time.

The third, binding phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded appears to correspond to the mindful position of transcendental agency and involves engaging with learning activities in a mindful way.

Once the new knowledge or skill to be learnt has been identified as a conscious intention, it must be in-grown or in-built into the art student until they are in a state where they know it, without consciously thinking about it. In this way students become capable of using it spontaneously whenever the appropriate occasion arises, without carrying it in their conscious awareness (Bhaskar, 2002c p.119). Bhaskar calls this the principle of double initiation (Bhaskar, 2002c p.119). The key point to note here is: although the binding phase in the process of unfolding the enfolded involves unfolding knowledge or skills in a conscious way, the ultimate purpose is not to be hold this knowledge ‘in your head’, but rather, to make it a part of your being. In this way, the knowledge and skill can be utilised without conscious thought.409

This process of assimilation, in which a student unfolds the new knowledge or skill in their embodied personality, is central to the learning theory of David Ausubel in which meaningful learning is opposed to rote learning. According to Ausubel’s theory, meaningful learning involves new information or skills being related in a nonarbitrary and substantive way to an individual’s existing cognitive structure (Ausubel & Robinson, 1969 p.57). Novak and

409 This is the topic of the discussion in §2.4.
Robinson (1977) also suggest that there might be a dialectical relationship between the
cognitive structure and meaningful learning material components of Ausubel’s theory:
‘cognitive structure develops from nonarbitrary incorporation of meaningful learning material,
but meaningful learning material is that which potentially can be incorporated nonarbitrarily
into the cognitive structure’ (Novak, 1977 p.73). In this way, Ausubel’s meaningful learning
theory reinforces Bhaskar’s suggestion of the importance for the intentions of an embodied
personality to be consistent with its ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.243, 235). If the
learning objectives for a particular art lesson do not involve learning material that is
meaningful to an art student’s embodied personality being incorporated nonarbitrarily into
their cognitive structure, then it is unlikely that the objectified intentions of the learning
objectives will be fulfilled. In such instances, meaningful learning is unlikely to occur.

Novak and Gowin also extend and elaborate on Ausubel’s notion of meaningful learning,
suggesting that meaningful learning also involves three distinct components: thinking, feeling
and acting (Novak & Gowin, 1984 p.ix). Brody (2005), who applied Novak and Gowin’s theory
to an environmental education research project, found that meaningful learning is the result of
direct experiences over time in which personal and social knowledge and value systems are
created through complex cognitive and affective processes (Brody, 2005 pp.609-611). In
relation to Bhaskar’s stratified analysis of the self, the thinking, feeling and acting components
involved in meaningful learning may be understood as being features of the self at the level of
the embodied personality. Thus, by drawing on insights from Novak and Gowin’s theory and
Brody’s research, the binding level of unfolding to which Bhaskar refers might involve
meaningful learning that engages the actions, thoughts and feelings of an art student’s
embodied personality.

This relates to Bhaskar’s suggestion that single-pointedness, that is, focused, concentrated
and engaged action, is a necessary condition for the intentions of the embodied personality,
which are consistent with its ground state, to be fulfilled (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.235, 254). In this
way, single-pointedness, can be seen as being a necessary and significant condition for
binding, that is, fulfilling the intentions that were established in the second phase of the model
of unfolding the enfolded. Bhaskar characterises single-pointedness as ‘you are not attending
to yourself or your state of consciousness, but on that which you are focussed in the world
[…] it is your consciousness totally absorbed in what you are doing in the world’ (Bhaskar,
2002c p.235). Bhaskar appears to be referring to a similar phenomenon when he speaks of
mindfulness as involving ‘the complete saturation of one’s consciousness in one’s activity’
(Bhaskar, 2002c p.4). Both mindfulness and single-pointedness relate to one of the main
elements of Csikszentmihalyi’s optimal or flow experience, that is, one’s action and
awareness are merged (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 pp.111-112). In relation to making art,
mindfulness appears to relate to an art student’s total awareness of their experience of
manipulating a drawing implement as they make marks on a two-dimensional surface, as well
as their awareness of the emerging visual imagery. Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory suggests that when an art student’s actions and awareness merge like this, their subjective experience might feel enjoyable. Thus, the third, binding phase of unfolding the enfolded is one of the phases in the model of unfolding the enfolded in which an art student might experience flow.

As previously noted, Bhaskar suggests that mindfulness is a conscious state whereby ‘attention is necessary because the activity does not (yet) flow from one’s innermost being’ (Bhaskar, 2002e p.239). Mindfulness pertains where conscious effort is required to carry out a specific skilful activity. Observational data from the Core Drawing classes indicate that teachers provided opportunities for students to mindfully engage in drawing activities. Further, the drawing module outline indicates that these activities were chosen because they provided opportunities for students to acquire specific skills and new knowledge. Data also suggests that once these skills became part of the students’ repertoire, they were able to utilise them in spontaneous ways.410

Ellen Langer’s (2000b) mindful learning theory suggests that the role of the teacher is to facilitate mindfulness in their students when they are learning new skills or knowledge. Langer defines mindfulness as a flexible state of mind in which we are actively engaged in the present, noticing new things and sensitive to the context. She contrasts this to when we are in a state that she calls mindlessness: ‘we act like automatons who have been programmed to act according to the sense our behaviour made in the past, rather than the present’ (Langer, 2000b p.220). Langer’s distinction between mindlessness and mindfulness, and the implications for learning, varies from that of Bhaskar; this will be discussed further in §2.4.2.

I now refer back to the reference I made to Novak and Robinson (1977) several paragraphs above: ‘cognitive structure develops from nonarbitrary incorporation of meaningful learning material, but meaningful learning material is that which potentially can be incorporated nonarbitrarily into the cognitive structure’ (Novak, 1977 p.73). In terms of Bourdieu’s theory of the *habitus*,411 an individual’s existing cognitive structure might be related to the durable, transposable dispositions, which are said to develop through one’s experiences (Bourdieu, 1990 p.54). However, it appears that whilst pre-existing ideas might offer conceptual stepping stones for developing more complex understandings (Ausubel & Robinson, 1969; Novak, 1977; Novak & Gowin, 1984), pre-existing ideas might also interfere with unfolding new knowledge, especially if the new ideas contradict with the already unfolded conceptions. This final point is central to much research into science education, which indicates that student’s pre-existing ideas play a significant role in whether new information will actually be assimilated (Alford, 1997; Goodrum, Hackling, & Rennie, 2001; Harlen, 2001; Harlen & Osbourne, 1985; Murphy, 1997; Skamp, 2000).

410 This will be discussed further in §2.4.
411 This was previously discussed in C2 §4.4, and C5 §4.1 to §4.2.
Posner et al (1982) also suggest that first identifying the problems or weaknesses associated with one’s pre-existing theories might also be essential for students to accommodate ‘new’ information. This appears to relate to Bhaskar’s suggestion in his critique of the discursive intellect, that our ‘thoughts and habitual thinking processes are blocked, fixated energy, reifications’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.145), which freeze and ensnare, imprison us (Bhaskar, 2002c p.124). It also relates to Bhaskar’s notion that the spontaneous right-action involved in unfolding new information or skills in one’s embodied personality requires a process of shedding those things that are incongruent with that, which is to unfold (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.241-242).

It appears that in such instances in the process of unfolding the enfolded where preconceptions do exist in the consciousness of an embodied personality, the process of actually learning something new can be explained as involving either:
(a) identifying the problems or weaknesses associated with the preconceptions;
(b) shedding the preconceptions, in order to leave the mind relatively ‘empty’ for new understandings to develop; or
(c) relating new information to a student’s preconceptions.

In terms of social constructivist learning theories, like those of Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner, the role of an ‘external stimulus’, like a student’s interactions with their peers or a teacher, in such instances is often crucial.

According to Vygotsky’s social learning theory, learning occurs when a more experienced person passes their knowledge onto those with less knowledge (Rolland, 2000 p.43). Vygotsky referred to the potential for a student to do and learn beyond their independent capability as the Zone of Proximal Development. This is the zone where a student might not be able to achieve something on their own, but with guidance they are. Leo van Lier describes the Zone of Proximal Development as the space where a student’s inner resources and the external or outer constraints are mediated (van Lier, 2001 p.103). Another theorist who built on the work of Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner, popularised the idea of the teacher as a human scaffold, or supporting frame, for the student’s learning. The teacher offers new strategies, verbal prompts, demonstrations and so on to challenge the student’s thinking and support and extend their problem solving abilities. Bruner coined the term scaffolding to describe this process (Nixon, 2000 pp.8-9; D. J. Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976 p.90). The notion of the Zone of Proximal Development captures the idea that teachers play a crucial role in scaffolding appropriate educational challenges for students, and these appropriate level challenges might enable an experience of flow to occur. However, as Luc Steels (2004 p.147) suggests, one of the educational implications of flow theory is for students to develop competence in estimating the challenge level in a particular task situation. In real life, our chances of experiencing flow are maximised if we are able to determine for ourself when a
challenge is appropriate to our skill level. Thus, in addition to developing an awareness of our own skill level, we also need to develop appropriate categories for judging challenge levels.

Another way that the binding phase in the process of unfolding the enfolded might relate to this study is in relation to Joanne’s difficulty with discussing the content of her artworks.\textsuperscript{412} This was previously mentioned in §2.1.2. In order to help Joanne to unfold her enfolded ability to discuss the content of her artworks, Joanne’s teachers could provide her with explicit instruction in the vocabulary of the unconscious processes that might be involved in making artworks, and could also provide opportunities for her to play around with this new terminology in relation to her own artworks.\textsuperscript{413} This, in turn, might enable Joanne to unfold the enfolded ability to discuss the content of her drawings with others.

The educational implications of the third level in the model of unfolding the enfolded involves skills and understandings unfolding within students’ conscious awareness and mindful action at the ontological level of binding (see ‘Mode of Action’ column in Table 6.2, later in this chapter, for an overview of this). Once a student unfolds a new skill in the mindful action of their embodied personality, they may then need to unfold the ability to do it without being mindful of their action. In other words, after a student has made the new knowledge or skill explicit in their embodied personality, they then need to make it implicit (tacit) knowledge that can be utilised spontaneously. This is the next level in the model of unfolding the enfolded, which will be introduced in the following section.

§2.4 Making / Applying

In this section, the fourth circle of creation and fourth level in the model of unfolding the enfolded is explored.

§2.4.1 Creativity

The fourth circle of creation is ‘the circle of making, its physical objectification, the manifestation of the initial impulse or intentionality of the creator’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.108). Bhaskar indicates that this moment of creation corresponds to the fourth dimension (4D) of transformative agency (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.112-113), which involves a making or objectification of one’s intentionality (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.106, 112). This moment, in which

\[\text{UDIST reference: I_S-Jo4: 852-853} \]

\[\text{Indeed, one of the contributions that this study might offer teachers and students of fine art is a new vocabulary for discussing their drawings; particularly when their drawings are the result of an art-making process which is not guided by conscious thoughts, or characterised by mindful activity. Whether there is room for such type of art-making activity within the framework of the new Visual Arts, Craft and Design Training Package is yet to be determined.}\]
things are made, implicates the previous levels of ontology, including being itself, being as a process and a totality, and also involves being as transformative praxis or agency (Bhaskar, 2002c p.106). Thus, in the human world, ‘for anything that exists or occurs, that is for anything that is done, there must be a making, i.e. an objectification of the intentionality of the agent who makes it, a releasing or letting go of his [sic] intentionality onto the world’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.106).

§2.4.2 Learning

In relation to the process of learning something new, the fourth phase of unfolding the enfolded involves the student using or applying the new knowledge in new or novel ways, so that they can make or produce things in the world (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.110, 116). In this way, objectification of one’s intentionality, involves the result or consequence of the student’s actions standing apart from its making (Bhaskar, 2002c p.110). This is the spontaneous use or application (making or objectification) of one’s newly unfolded skills or knowledge (Bhaskar, 2002c p.116).

The fourth phase of applying appears to relate to either (i) the apparent spontaneity category of intentional human agency that was previously mentioned in C5 §3.2, or (ii) the mindless position of transcendental agency. Bhaskar suggests that mindlessness is ‘when action flows so normally and spontaneously from one’s essential nature […], when one is so totally absorbed that nothing passes through one’s mind, not even thoughts’ (Bhaskar, 2002e p.239). Bhaskar refers to the process of particular skills becoming part of one’s innermost being, and the spontaneous utilisation of these skills, as mindfulness passing over into spontaneity (Bhaskar, 2002e p.212). He describes it in the following way:

> The mind empties itself in its activity and the activity is no longer controlled by the focused, undivided attentive mind, but performs itself, effortlessly, efficiently, without strain. This effortless efficiency in activity is activity in the ground state. Such effortless, spontaneous activity must be acquired and learnt, but when we have done so there is no more mind and no more thought, but free unconditional spontaneous activity.

(Bhaskar, 2002e p.212)

This differentiation between mindful and spontaneous performance of an activity relates to the distinction that Betty made between the ‘investigation of what works’ and ‘freedom of expression’ (see §3).414 Whilst mindfulness, or ‘investigation of what works’, involves consciousness bracketing or suspending the form of an activity, mindlessness, or ‘freedom of expression’, involves consciousness bracketing or suspending the content (Bhaskar, 2002e
In this respect, mindlessness can be understood as the polar opposite of mindfulness. This is also consistent with empirical findings from the field of neurophysiology which suggest that once control of fine motor skills has been learnt, and is recalled, there is a reduction of activity in the pre-frontal cortex and increase in other regions of the brain (Petersen et al., 1998).

It is worth noting at this point, the implications of Langer’s definition of mindless learning are quite different from the implications of Bhaskar’s definition of mindlessness in the applying phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded. As previously mentioned in §2.3.2, Langer describes the state of mindlessness in the following way:

> we act like automatons who have been programmed to act according to the sense our behaviour made in the past, rather than the present. Instead of actively drawing new distinctions, noticing new things, as we do when we are mindful, when we are mindless we rely on distinctions drawn in the past.

(Langer, 2000b p.220)

The implications of Langer’s distinction between mindlessness and mindfulness vary from that of Bhaskar. Langer suggests that a state of mindlessness results from either repetition or single exposure in the learning process. With regards to repetition, Langer suggests that if we repeat something over and over, ‘we come to rely on our mind-set for how to accomplish the goal’ (Langer, 2000b p.220). However, Bhaskar suggests every situation, every action requires creativity, in that no situation will ever be the same as another. By learning mindfully in a variety of situations, particular skills and knowledge become second nature. This means that they can be utilised in spontaneous ways, without being executed mindfully. For Langer, however, this position needs questioning. She prompts the reader to consider who determines the skills and knowledge that are identified as being important enough to become second nature. This is an important consideration, for as Langer suggests, once these skills or knowledge are performed mindlessly, we are not in a position to vary them as readily as when they were mindfully performed (Langer, 2000a p.3). This relates to the second route to mindlessness that Langer describes: single exposure. This involves accepting new information at face value without questioning alternative ways that information could be understood (Langer, 2000b p.220).

The similarities and differences between Langer’s and Bhaskar’s definition of mindlessness can be understood in the following way. Both Bhaskar and Langer suggest that mindfulness is an essential part of the process of learning new skills or information. For Langer, this appears to be the pinnacle of the educational endeavour, and mindfulness is seen to be something that will help the student to rise above the perils of mindlessness. For Bhaskar however,

mindfulness is but one phase in the process of education, it is the means to an end: the process of making knowledge and skills a part of your being.\textsuperscript{415} Having made knowledge and skills a part of your being (through mindful, present-moment awareness), one can then utilise this knowledge and skill in truly spontaneous ways, without interference from the mind. The key difference between Bhaskar’s version of mindlessness and Langer’s version can be understood as follows. Langer uses the term ‘mindless’ to refer to an activity that relies on one’s ‘mind-set’ to accomplish the goal, whereas for Bhaskar, the mindless position of transcendental agency involves spontaneous action that stems directly from the intentionality of one’s true essential nature, rather than in a conditioned or automatic way.\textsuperscript{416} It appears that Langer’s definition of mindless might correlate more closely to the category of ‘apparent spontaneity’ that I referred to in C5 §3.2, and consider in further detail in C7 §5. In order to avoid confusion with Langer’s use of the term ‘mindlessness’, from hereafter I shall use the phrase ‘supramental mindlessness’ when referring to the mindless position of transcendental agency to which Bhaskar refers.

Supramental mindlessness is characterised by ‘blissful consciousness of existence (or being or truth)’ and involves an absence of thought or mental (or emotional) content, which underpins all other levels of consciousness (Bhaskar, 2002e p.212). Bhaskar suggests that we can act from this level of consciousness, and when we do, we are acting in consistency with our ground state (Bhaskar, 2002e p.213). The intentions of our embodied personality stem directly from the intentionality of our ground state without interference from our conscious, preconscious or unconscious mind.

Betty’s comments indicate that when her art-making practice was concerned with ‘investigating what works’, her mind was absorbed, engrossed, reflective and meditative.\textsuperscript{417} She also suggested that this approach to making art involved going into ‘a zone’.\textsuperscript{418} Similarly, Joanne suggested that even when she was in ‘the zone’ she still experienced thoughts; however, she was not paying much attention to them, nor was she aware of their content.\textsuperscript{419} Nevertheless, Joanne’s comments indicate that it was her experience of particular ‘thoughts’ that caused her to choose particular drawings and colours, and make particular marks.\textsuperscript{420} ‘You may even be making decisions in your head about what to do’;\textsuperscript{421} however, ‘it’s natural, those thoughts aren’t forced to me, whether somehow the brain subconsciously does it or you are just thinking and it’s that natural link’.\textsuperscript{422} In terms of stratified reality, we can appreciate that preconscious, unconscious or instinctual intentions that exist in the domain of the actual

\textsuperscript{415} Of course, from the perspective of the theory of co-presence and the model of unfolding the enfolded, knowledge and skills are already a part of each person’s being; however, they might only exist in an enfolded state as a potential, rather than in actual, unfolded state.
\textsuperscript{416} This topic will be explored further in C7.
\textsuperscript{417} NUDIST reference: I_S-B1: 437, 443, 463, 464.
\textsuperscript{418} NUDIST reference: I_S-B1: 443.
\textsuperscript{419} NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo4: 266-267, 629-630.
\textsuperscript{420} NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo4: 632-634.
\textsuperscript{421} NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo4: 269-272.
may not necessarily present as conscious thoughts in the empirical domain (McDonald, 2008 p.49). Further, Joanne’s comments suggest that even if she experienced a thought in the field of her awareness, she may not be aware of its content. Thus, it is conceivable that an art student might be involved in an activity of making art without being conscious of the thoughts that are guiding their behaviour at that time.

As previously noted, a range of studies in the field of cognitive neuroscience implicates different regions of the brain in both conscious and unconscious visual information processing (Gazzaniga et al., 2002; Kumar & Kurup, 2001; Kurup & Kurup, 2003; Petersen et al., 1998; Shadmehr, 1997; Wilson, 2003). Regardless of which regions of the brain are implicated, these studies suggest that there are unconscious processes in the brain, which constantly detect and respond to information in one’s environment that the more conscious, cognitive centres may not be aware of. In an activity like painting or drawing, for example, this unconscious information might collect in the reservoir called the ‘artwork’. At a later stage, the content of the artwork might become the focus of conscious awareness and this can enable recognition of seemingly coherent content that might not have been deliberately included. Perhaps it is these unconscious processes which enable a type of experience in which ‘ideas just appear’, and thoughts about what to do next come before the question of what to do next is consciously posed. These comments suggest that even when Joanne’s experience of making art seemed to flow, her conscious awareness was not completely void of content.

Central to the fourth, applying phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded is the idea of working with a ‘subliminal goal’ in mind, which, according to Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi’s research correlates with the success of art students after leaving art school (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976 p.178). Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi’s research was previously discussed in C2 §5.3 and C5 §3.1. Their longitudinal study indicates that art students who looked at artistic problems as if they had never been formulated before, and could work with a subliminal goal in mind, guided by a ‘deep purpose’ that was below the threshold of their awareness, were more likely to continue their career as an artist after leaving art school (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976 pp.178, 201). The idea of creating artworks with a subliminal goal in mind can be understood in terms of Bhaskar’s conception of the stratification of intentionality, as being guided by unconscious or preconscious intentions or biological-based drives (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.164-167). The findings from Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi’s research suggest that students who are taught to engage in art-making processes that are guided by unconscious, pre-conscious or biological-based drives, might experience more success than those students who are only taught to engage in art-making processes that are driven by conscious intentions. However, although art-making activity that

\[\text{Source: UNFOLDING THE ENFOLDED: EXPERIENCING FLOW WHILST LEARNING TO DRAW}\]
is guided by unconscious, preconscious or instinctual intentions might lead to long-term success and might even be enjoyable for the students in this study, such experience of making art is not consistent with the emphasis that Csikszentmihalyi places on the conscious nature of activity during flow experience.

Whilst Bhaskar’s discussion surrounding the mindless position of transcendental agency contributes to an understanding of the applying phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded, as previously noted in C4 §6.1, his suggestion that ‘one can lose the content of consciousness in transcendental identification with its pure, abstract form, achieving an “inner-emptiness” of content (this is the position of ‘no thought, no mind’, mindlessness)’ (Bhaskar, 2002e pp.211-212), seems extreme. Surely there must be some content in one’s consciousness, like awareness of sensations relating to sensory stimuli and one’s position in space which enables the action to be successfully completed (McDonald, 2008 p.50). Thus, although an art student might not be thinking about how to complete a particular action during the applying phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded, it is unlikely that their consciousness will be completely void of content. I can now appreciate that this critique might have been precariously balanced on a misinterpretation of Bhaskar’s intended meaning. Whilst Bhaskar does speak of an “inner emptiness” of content’, he also clarifies what he means by this as ‘no thought, no mind’. Thus, the mindless position of transcendental agency is not necessarily the absence of content of consciousness, but rather, the absence of mind and thought. It is the pure consciousness in which the mind and thoughts can manifest: supramental mindlessness.

Given this revised understanding, it seems reasonable to suggest that it might be possible for an art student to be involved in (and also experience) an activity of making art driven by intentions which stem directly from their ground state, without interference from the goals or intentions of their conscious, preconscious or unconscious mind. In C4 §6.1, I argued that it seemed ‘contradictory to speak of having an experience of mindlessness […] whilst it is happening’. Given my previous interpretation of mindlessness as the absence of content of consciousness, (rather than a simple case of an absence of mind and thought), this critique seems reasonable. However, the revised understanding lends itself to a different interpretation. It could be possible for an art student to have an experience of making art that is driven by intentions which stem directly from their ground state without interference from their conscious, preconscious or unconscious mind.

In terms of the model of unfolding the enfolded, awareness of enjoying one’s experience of making art and awareness of thoughts which lead to using particular drawing materials or colours can be understood as being properties of the fifth ‘reflection’ phase. Further, although an event of supramental mindlessness may occur in the ‘applying’ phase of unfolding the

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enfolded, an experience of supramental mindlessness can be understood as occurring during the reflection phase. This is the topic of the discussion in the following section.

In summary, the educational implications of the fourth level in the model of unfolding the enfolded involves skills and understandings unfolding within students’ unconscious or preconscious awareness and spontaneous actions at the ontological level of applying (see Table 6.2, later in this chapter, for an overview of this). This appeared to be one of the aspects of the art-making process that was enjoyable for the students involved in this study. However, it also appears to be inconsistent with the emphasis that Csikszentmihalyi places on the conscious nature of intentions during flow experience. Thus, although the fourth, applying phase of unfolding the enfolded might be one of the phases in the model of unfolding the enfolded in which an art student might experience enjoyment, this particular phenomenon of enjoyment might not be the same as the phenomenon of flow to which Csikszentmihalyi refers. This topic will be considered further in C7.

§2.5 Reflexivity / Reflection

In this section, the fifth circle of creation and fifth level in the model of unfolding the enfolded is explored.

§2.5.1 Creativity

The fifth circle of creation ‘is the circle of reflection, or reflexivity, which corresponds to a moment of self-consciousness, that is, becoming aware of the self that has produced the objectification / act / object / result (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.106, 108). The term ‘reflection’ is also used to refer to the fulfilment (or otherwise) of a person’s intention.

Bhaskar indicates that the fifth circle of creation corresponds to the fifth aspect (5A) of reflexivity in the MELDARA schema (Bhaskar, 2002a p.4; 2002c pp.112-113), in which the object or what we have made or produced, either reflects and confirms, or fails to fulfil the intentionality of the creator (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.107-108, 116). This might be experienced as the fulfilment of one’s will. Carl Rogers referred to this as a ‘Eureka feeling’ fifty years ago, suggesting that it was a concomitant in an individual which coincides with a creative act:

427 This is not so much a question of whether a person’s intentions are fulfilled or not. It is, rather, a case of determining which intentions have been fulfilled. As previously noted, Bhaskar defines intentional agency as including actions that are motivated by instinctual, unconscious, preconscious and conscious drives (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.164-167). He also argues for the principle of the irreducibility of intentionality, suggesting that we cannot avoid reference to intentionality in the genesis of human actions (Bhaskar, 2002e p.236). Thus, in a situation in which a person’s conscious intentions have not been fulfilled, other instinctual, unconscious or preconscious intentions might have been fulfilled instead. Further, the instinctual, unconscious or preconscious motivations in play might be incongruent with, and therefore possibly constrain, the fulfilment of one’s conscious intentions.
“This is it!” “I have discovered!” “This is what I wanted to express!” (Rogers, 1959 p.77).

Dewey appears to be referring to a similar thing: ‘Because of the relation between what is done and what is undergone, there is an immediate sense of things in perception as belonging together or as jarring’ (Dewey, 1958 p.50). Bhaskar also suggests that the fifth circle of creation might also be experienced as the consequences of one’s action (Bhaskar, 2002c p.111).

Bhaskar suggests that reflexivity may relate to unity of theory and practice (Bhaskar, 2002a p.333). Presupposed in this idea is the ability for humans to be aware of the contents of their consciousness and also of their actions. Bhaskar’s use of the term reflexivity seems to relate to being aware of or witnessing one’s consciousness and activity (Bhaskar, 2002c p.236). It is therefore possible for reflexive monitoring to occur during any of the other phases of unfolding the enfolded.

§2.5.2 Learning

In relation to the process of learning something new, the fifth ‘reflection’ phase of unfolding the enfolded includes a scenario such as when a person’s consciousness is aware of whether the objectives (or intentions) for a particular learning experience have been met.

The fifth phase of unfolding the enfolded appears to involve referentially detaching from one’s experience or current state of knowledge and skill. It appears that the fifth phase of unfolding the enfolded might be able to occur simultaneously throughout the previous four phases in the model of unfolding the enfolded. In this way, the fifth phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded can be understood as relating to a moment of self-consciousness or an experience of witnessing one’s experience and behaviour (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.106, 108). Bhaskar defines witnessing as self-awareness, or ‘transcendental consciousness aware of itself in activity’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.236). He also suggests that ‘witnessing is not thinking of or about; it is non-dual reflexive (self-) awareness in activity’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.236). Thus, the fifth phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded might involve the consciousness of the embodied personality being congruent with the consciousness of the ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c p.236).

Given that the first moment of ‘being’ manifests as a biological predisposition or as unconscious intentions, reflexive monitoring in the first moment of ‘being’ might be somewhat contentious. However, it might also be possible for an embodied personality to be aware that there are latent potentials enfolded within, without actually being aware of what they are. For example, a teacher or an art student may be simply ‘surviving’ in their educational practice, and may even be aware of this. They may also be aware that there may be another way of
being in their educational practice, which according to this model, would be enfolded within them; however, they may not know what it is or how it could be achieved.

In the second phase of ‘becoming’, reflexive monitoring might take the form of a referential detachment from one’s current knowledge or skill level to establish a conscious intention, that is, to identify an incompleteness or lack in one’s repertoire of knowledge and skills that they would like to rectify.

It appears that the reflection phase of unfolding the enfolded might take on two different forms during the third and fourth phase of unfolding the enfolded. In line with Bhaskar’s definition of the witnessing, the first form might involve self-awareness in activity (Bhaskar, 2002c p.236). The position of referential detachment that such awareness brings might then involve determining whether the objectives (or conscious intentions) for a particular learning experience are being met, or have been met. Thus, the term ‘reflection’ is used to refer to the experience of fulfilment (or otherwise) of the conscious intentions that were established in the second (becoming) phase of unfolding the enfolded. In relation to learning to draw, it is the moment when an art student might be aware of the emerging artwork fulfilling their intentions, or not. Thus, during the third and fourth phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded, referential detachment might also involve determining what one’s actual intentions were. Were the real reasons for one’s behaviour actually those intentions that were consciously established during the second phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded? Or were the real reasons for one’s behaviour related to other intentions, such as those emerging from unconscious, preconscious or biological-based drives? The reflection phase can therefore be understood as involving evaluation or assessment. This moment of evaluation has ramifications for the perceived appropriateness of the conscious intentions that were established in the second (becoming) phase, and the perceived effectiveness of the third (binding) phase and fourth (applying) phase in the process of unfolding the enfolded.

One of the participants in this study, Ellen, particularly commented on her belief regarding the importance of students being guided by teachers who could help them to recognise and appreciate the value of what they are doing, rather than just doing it and not being aware of its value.\footnote{428 NUDIST reference: I_S-E1: 583-588.} Such recognition of value could be related to the evaluation of an evolving artwork in terms of the intentions that it might have fulfilled. This was particularly important for Ellen because she indicated that she experienced discouragement when she invested a lot of time in making an artwork and it didn’t work out. She also indicated that experiencing discouragement might prevent her from continuing with her art-making practice.\footnote{429 NUDIST reference: I_S-E1: 251-264.} It appears that what Ellen referred to as discouragement might be related to the phenomenon of disappointment, which Csikszentmihalyi suggests is often a forgone conclusion when our
expectations, that is, our conscious intentions or our goals, are too high (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993 p.35). Ellen’s comments suggest that by being exposed to art teachers who helped her to recognise which of her intentions were actually fulfilled in her evolving drawings, her experience of discouragement may be minimised, and thus she might continue with her art-making practice. It appears that the reflection phase was a particularly important phase for Ellen in the process of unfolding in her embodied personality those latent drawing abilities in her ground state. Ellen indicated early on in the data collection period, that she was particularly concerned with being more conscious of her own intentions, and whether she was fulfilling them ‘to be a bit more accountable’, rather than, ‘just flowing along in the process’.430

The fifth, reflection phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded appears to relate to a student’s experience of free-flowing art-making activity, in so far as it might be what enables the student to witness the self that is enjoying its activity.

§2.6 Summary

Table 6.2 offers a provisional overview of the educational implications of the theory of co-presence and the process of unfolding the enfolded in terms of the ontological structure, the state of knowledge or skill, and the mode of action. As can be seen from Table 6.2, besides the special case of ‘reflexive monitoring’, which can occur during any of the previous phases, each of the phases in the model of unfolding the enfolded are preservative. Thus, the ontological structure of applying, which is referred to in the model of unfolding the enfolded, presupposes binding. The ontological structure of binding presupposes becoming, which, in turn, presupposes being. In terms of actual human behaviour, the conditions for the possibility of spontaneous action for example, include a transition through previous phases of mindful action and conscious intentions (which may or may not be congruent with unconscious and preconscious intentions), and there must also be a biological (instinctual) predisposition for such behaviour.

The model of unfolding the enfolded suggests that experiencing flow whilst learning to draw is likely when the fifth phase of reflection simultaneously occurs with the binding phase. It is tempting to suggest that an art student might also experience flow when the fifth phase of reflection simultaneously occurs with the applying phase. However, given the intentions that might be guiding the student’s art-making activity during the applying phase might not be located at the level of their conscious awareness, (even if they are aware of experiencing enjoyment), such enjoyment may not necessarily equate to an experience of flow, as defined by Csikszentmihalyi.

Data from this study also suggests that students might experience some tension between the binding and applying phases. This is the topic of the discussion in the following section.
Table 6.2: Educational implications of the theory of co-presence and the process of unfolding the enfolded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ontological structure</th>
<th>State of knowledge or skill</th>
<th>Manifesting</th>
<th>Mode of action</th>
<th>Educational practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being</td>
<td>Enfolded</td>
<td>In a biological predisposition or unconscious intention</td>
<td>Instinctual</td>
<td>Surviving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming</td>
<td>Beginning to unfold</td>
<td>In conscious intentions</td>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>Conscious intentions, which may take the form of pre-determined learning outcomes or goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding</td>
<td>Unfolded</td>
<td>In conscious awareness and actions</td>
<td>Mindful action</td>
<td>Teaching and learning practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying</td>
<td>Unfolded</td>
<td>In unconscious or preconscious awareness and actions</td>
<td>Spontaneous action</td>
<td>Using or applying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>May occur within any of the previous states</td>
<td>In conscious, preconscious and unconscious awareness</td>
<td>Witnessing</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
§3  A case study of Betty’s experience of tension between the binding and applying phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded

One of the students in this study, Betty, indicated that she experienced a tension between the aspects of her art-making practice relating to ‘freedom of expression’ and the ‘investigation of what works’. Betty indicated that freedom of expression consisted of drawing activity that was ‘spontaneous’. In this style of drawing, materials were applied in ‘a much bigger, more exuberant way’, which ‘connects quite quickly to emotion’. Betty implied that there was a ‘wildness’ in this approach. She contrasted this with an aspect of her art-making practice that was concerned with the ‘investigation of what works’. She referred to this as being absorbed, engrossed, reflective and meditative. In this approach to making art ‘you go into a zone and lose yourself there’. ‘Fiddling around with colour. Fine work and […] pondering and looking, you know, stopping and looking, and doing all that.’ Betty described the quality of images from this approach as being intricate and detailed, with drawing materials being applied with precision.

Betty indicated that she was interested in both of these approaches in her art-making practice and the tension she experienced appeared to be because she did not know how to bring them together. One of the things that Betty associated with expressing herself freely was spontaneous drawing activity, indicating that in the process of gaining expertise as an image-maker she didn’t want to lose her ‘spontaneity’.

By mindfully engaging in the drawing activities provided in her Core Drawing classes, Betty can be understood as practising the skills required for representational drawing. Once these skills completely unfold in Betty’s embodied personality, they will become part of her ‘repertoire’. Theoretically, she could then call on them to express thoughts and feelings in more spontaneous ways.

It appears that the tension Betty experienced might simply relate to her interest in learning new skills and knowledge so as to extend her image-making repertoire while experiencing the freedom and spontaneity of effortless efficiency that this would bring. It seems that Betty may have already experienced ‘effortless efficiency’ with other forms of expression (like theatre,
dance and writing) and might have also experienced it in the context of life drawing. However, some of the assessment tasks and learning activities provided by her tutors meant that she had to engage in activities requiring a lot of concentration and effort to complete.

When Betty was successful in focusing the totality of her conscious awareness on drawing particular details with precision, she experienced what she referred to as ‘the meditative part, you go into a zone and lose yourself there’. This comment identifies a key part of the process of drawing. At some point during the process of drawing, the mindfulness involved in controlling one’s hand in order to manipulate a drawing implement so as to make a representation on a drawing surface passes over into supramental mindlessness. When the content of an individual’s consciousness is completely focused on, that is, congruent with, the activity of drawing, the act of drawing may function like ‘a mantra in meditation’ (Bhaskar, 2002e p.212). By concentrating the focus of awareness onto the activity of drawing, ‘the undivided mind loses itself and passes into the activity’ (Bhaskar, 2002e p.212).

When drawing activities required Betty focus the totality of her conscious awareness on drawing particular details with precision, she experienced what she referred to as going into a ‘zone’ and a sense of losing her self. It appears that the sense of self Betty lost on these occasions was simply the content of her mind, which was extraneous to the actual drawing activity. It has previously been suggested that the sense of self Betty lost on these particular occasions might be aspects of her embodied personality which were inconsistent with her ground state (McDonald, 2008 p.43). According to Bhaskar, the process of liberation or emancipation consists of shedding the aspects of our embodied personality which are inconsistent with our true essential nature (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.17, 52-53; 2002e p.103). Thus, Betty’s experience of feeling more connected with her essential being when making art and her reference to art-making as healing the experience of being human may have resulted from a momentary ‘shedding’ of aspects of her embodied personality inconsistent with her ‘essential being’. In this respect, the process of focusing her conscious awareness on drawing particular details with precision may be understood as liberating Betty from aspects of her embodied personality, like extraneous thoughts for example, which were inconsistent with her true essential nature.

I wonder then, what was going on when Betty experienced the other aspect of her art-making practice that she referred to as ‘freedom of expression’? Betty indicated that ‘freedom of expression’ consisted of drawing activity that was ‘spontaneous’ and ‘connects quite quickly

447 This was previously discussed in C4 §4.
to emotion',\textsuperscript{450} with drawing materials being applied in ‘a much bigger, more exuberant way’.\textsuperscript{451} Betty also implied that there was ‘wildness’ in this approach.\textsuperscript{452} This suggests that when Betty didn’t have to think much about the activity of drawing, (when the activity of drawing was spontaneous), she was able to execute her drawings at a faster pace and with larger physical movements than when she was mindful of what she was doing. Betty’s previous experience with performance art and her comment that the excitement which comes in the act of mark-making is a wonderful experience that puts her back more into dance,\textsuperscript{453} suggests she may have found the physical act of making larger, faster-paced and more spontaneous drawings very satisfying.

Whilst Betty used terms like ‘absorbed and engrossed’, ‘reflective’, ‘meditative’, ‘pondering and looking’ and ‘stopping and looking’,\textsuperscript{454} to describe the nature of her activity and the state of her mind when she was investigating what works,\textsuperscript{455} Betty’s description of ‘freedom of expression’ in activity lacked any comparative terms and phrases. Bearing in mind the slightly problematic nature of interpreting absent data, it could be suggested that the absence of words to describe the state of her mind at these times may be indicative of the possible ‘supramental mindlessness’ involved in such spontaneous activity.

Betty, however, was able to comment on two significant differences between drawing activities that were concerned with the ‘investigation of what works’ and ‘freedom of expression’. These relate to the pace of mark-making and the size of these marks. Betty indicated that when her drawing activity is concerned with ‘freedom of expression’ the pace of mark-making is faster and involves larger physical movement than her drawing activity which is concerned with ‘investigating what works’.\textsuperscript{456} Unpacking this further, one could reason that the duration of time between moments of action in fast-paced mark-making is less than the duration of time between moments of action in slow-paced mark-making. When there is less time between actions, there is less opportunity for Betty to consciously interpret and label (and commit to memory) the nature of the activity and her state of mind at these times.

The model of unfolding the enfolded suggests that experiencing flow whilst learning to draw is likely when the fifth phase of reflection simultaneously occurs with the binding phase. The data from this study suggests that students might also experience enjoyment when the fifth phase of reflection simultaneously occurs with the applying phase; however, such enjoyment may not necessarily equate to Csikszentmihalyi’s definition of flow. Betty was one particular

\textsuperscript{449} NUDIST reference: I_S-B2: 363-370.
\textsuperscript{450} NUDIST reference: I_S-B1: 438, 462-463.
\textsuperscript{451} NUDIST reference: I_S-B1: 461-462.
\textsuperscript{452} NUDIST reference: I_S-B1: 444.
\textsuperscript{453} NUDIST reference: I_S-B1: 409-412.
\textsuperscript{454} NUDIST reference: I_S-B1: 437, 443, 463-466.
\textsuperscript{455} NUDIST reference: I_S-B1: 458.
\textsuperscript{456} NUDIST reference: I_S-B1: 461-463.
student who appeared to experience some tension between the binding and applying phases in the process of unfolding the enfolded.

In the section that follows, the educational implications of the theory of co-presence and unfolding the enfolded, and how this relates to an art student's experience of flow whilst making art will be explored.

§4 Educational implications of the theory of co-presence and unfolding the enfolded

The implications of the theory of co-presence for education is that everything that has ever existed (or ever will exist) already exists in an enfolded state within every student. All that is needed for particular aspects of being to unfold in a student's consciousness, (as knowledge), or in their action, (as skills), is already present. Art education is therefore the process of unfolding what is already enfolded within.

The practice of education (including emancipatory projects) presupposes that it is possible for people to be, become or do things that they have not yet achieved. Bhaskar’s principle of dispositional realism helps to make sense of this presupposition, suggesting that ‘the possible, the implicit, the enfolded is real, and in fact has a logical, epistemological and ontological priority over the actual, the explicit, the unfolded’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.47). The reason for a lack of unfolding in a person might be because they simply have not ‘become’ or done it; alternatively, a lack of unfolding might be because people are ‘constrained by extraneous heteronomous forces’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.48), including internalised versions of these constraining forces.

The Christian story of creation provides an alternative explanation for a lack of unfolding in a person. According to this perspective, although humans were initially created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), by taking fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 3:6), the first humans committed the ‘original sin’ (Romans 5:12). From this moment onwards, humanity was apparently born into a general condition characterised by a sense of a separation from God (Romans 3:23, 5:12). This sense of separation from God can be understood, in Bhaskarian terms, as a capacity for incongruence between the embodied personality and ground state. In other words, human beings are born with a capacity to be in life in a way that is inconsistent with their true essential nature. The theory of co-presence and the model of unfolding the enfolded suggests that an art student might be born with the capacity to unfold in their embodied personality the enfolded ability to experience flow whilst learning to draw. However, the Christian notion of ‘original sin’, suggests that an art student might also be born with the capacity (and potential tendency) not to unfold the ability to
experience flow, that is enfolded in their ground state. Further, art students might also be born with the capacity to unfold in the consciousness of their embodied personality qualities that are inconsistent with the consciousness of their ground state. When this capacity for inconsistency is actualised, it might translate as a sense of separation from an art student’s true essential self and from their recognition of the unity of existence. Abraham Maslow (1959 p.93), in *Creativity in self-actualizing people*, also refers to such an experience of separation, and suggests that it is contrary to ‘peak-experience’, which he describes as being a transient unifying of the splits within the person.

The main finding relevant to our present topic [creativity in self-actualizing people], however, was that an essential aspect of the peak-experience is integration within the person and therefore between the person and the world. In these states of being, the person becomes unified; for the time being, the splits, polarities, and dissociations within him [sic] tend to be resolved; the civil war within is neither won nor lost but transcended. In such a state, the person becomes far more open to experience and far more spontaneous and fully-functioning, essential characteristics as we have already seen, of self-actualizing creativeness.

(Maslow, 1959 p.89)

It appears that peak-experience not only involves the integration between an embodied personality and its ground state, but also an integration between an embodied personality and the world. Similarly, from a Christian perspective, peak-experience might also involve the reconciliation of an embodied personality’s sense of separation from God.

By describing the ontological structures that enable creativity and learning in a way that is meaningful to art students, it is anticipated that the theory of co-presence might contribute to a student’s belief in their ability to learn new knowledge, skills or attitudes involved in making art. Albert Bandura also suggests that a sense of personal self-efficacy in mastering tasks is more apt to spark interest in students than is self-perceived inefficacy in performing competently (Bandura, 1982 p.134).

Ashton’s doctoral thesis specifically looked at this topic of self-efficacy in Australian pre-service and practising primary school teachers’ approaches to learning to draw, in terms of drawing encouragement (Ashton, 1999b). Perhaps the findings from Ashton’s study could be combined with Bhaskar’s theory of co-presence. The theory of co-presence suggests that the ability to draw already exists within each art student, that they already have everything they need to be able to draw, and all that is required is to allow this ability to unfold, whilst Ashton’s thesis suggests that explicit teaching of drawing skills, together with a critique of the ‘hierarchical discourses which continue to frame talent, creativity and criticism within school art cultures’ can make a significant contribution to drawing encouragement (Ashton, 1999a).
Thus, if students believe the ability to draw already exists within them, then the task of learning to draw is likely to be easier than if they believe that being able to draw was something separate from them, and that they didn’t already have what was needed (R. E. Wood & Bandura, 1989 p.408). Similarly, by receiving explicit instruction in drawing skills, and witnessing the results of this instruction in their art-making practice, students might be more likely to believe in their innate ability to draw (Gist & Mitchell, 1992 p.184), and that it is just a matter of allowing it to unfold.

An example can be found in the case of Joanne who indicated that she believed she was not capable of talking about her art works (see §2.1.2):457 if Joanne were to appreciate that the ability to speak about her art works in a certain way was already enfolded within her, then she might feel more empowered to unfold it in the actions of her embodied personality. Similarly, if Joanne was provided with explicit instruction in the vocabulary of the unconscious processes involved in making artworks, and further, opportunities for her to experiment with this new terminology in relation to her own artworks,458 she might come to believe the ability to meet these particular demands of her learning environment already exists within her.

By identifying the points where the theory and practice converge, this chapter extends the notion of ‘unblocking the creative block’ for adult art students, and suggests it might be more a case of ‘unfolding the enfolded’. One of the participants in this study used the following analogy to describe the unfolding nature of her art-related learning: ‘It’s like a flower, and I’m not quite at the bud stage but a little bit opened. I’ve got a long way to go’.459 Another student appeared to be speaking about a similar phenomenon when she suggested that making art comes from a deep, certain place within her, and gets in touch with something at her core that needs to be expressed.460

In conclusion, the theory of co-presence suggests that presupposed in any educational process is the potential for acquiring new skills or understandings already existing in an enfolded state within a person’s ground state. The implications of Bhaskar’s theory of co-presence for the education of artists appear to relate most significantly to the concept of student self-efficacy. If students believe that skills and understandings that have not been explicitly learnt already exist within them, and they have everything they need for their manifestation, then they might be more likely to engage in behaviours which are conducive to their unfolding than students who believe otherwise.

458 As previously noted in section 3.3.2, one of the contributions that this study might offer teachers and students of fine art is a new vocabulary for discussing their drawings; particularly when their drawings are the result of an art-making process which is not guided by conscious thoughts, or characterised by mindful activity.
§5 Summary of chapter six

The theory of fine structure and co-presence suggests that everything that has ever manifested, or will ever manifest in the future, was enfolded in a common beginning for all of creation from which all forms of diversity have evolved. From this perspective, everything that is manifest now has the seed of everything that has ever manifested (and will ever manifest) enfolded within its being, including consciousness. Bhaskar offers the theory of fine structure and co-presence to account for why it is possible for a person to perceive things outside of the field of their consciousness but within the field of their conscious experience.

The ontological categories of being, becoming, binding, applying and reflection are implicated in the process of both creativity and learning new things, and are thus considered to be particularly significant for understanding the process of learning to draw. These phases in the process of unfolding the enfolded suggest that the conditions for the possibility of applying one’s skills and knowledge in a spontaneous way, include a transition through previous phases of mindfully binding one’s skills and knowledge, and establishing conscious intentions. There must also be a biological predisposition for such behaviour in the ontological category of being.

The educational implications of the theory of co-presence and unfolding the enfolded, and in particular, how this relates to an art student’s experience of flow whilst making art, were then considered. The theory of co-presence suggests that presupposed in any educational process is the potential for acquiring new skills or understandings already existing in an enfolded state within a person’s ground state. The reason for a lack of unfolding in an art student might be because they simply have not had the opportunity; alternatively, a lack of unfolding might be because the student is constrained in some way. The implications of Bhaskar’s theory of co-presence for the education of artists can thus be seen as being related to the concept of student self-efficacy. Students might be more likely to engage in behaviours that are conducive to unfolding ‘new’ skills and understandings if they believe these skills and understandings already exist within them and they already possess everything they need for their manifestation.

Given the emphasis that Csikszentmihalyi places on conscious goal-driven behaviour during flow experience, by definition, the third, binding phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded is likely to be the only phase in the model of unfolding the enfolded in which flow experience could occur. However, many of the art students involved in this study also indicated that they found spontaneous art-making activity, that is, behaviour that was driven by intentions or goals beyond the threshold of conscious awareness, to be very enjoyable. In terms of the model of unfolding the enfolded, these types of experiences are likely to occur when the fifth, reflection phase simultaneously occurs with the fourth, applying phase. This draws our
attention to one of the limitations of Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience for making sense of some of the art student’s enjoyable experiences whilst learning to draw. In the next chapter, I discuss this issue further, as I use Bhaskar’s stratified model of the self to explain experiences of enjoyment that seem to be located on the fringe of flow experience.
Chapter Seven – On the fringe of flow

§1  A note to the reader

In the this chapter, I draw on the following theories:

• Bhaskar’s stratified analysis of the self;\textsuperscript{462}
• Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience;\textsuperscript{463}
• the art students’ comments which referred to either an experience of flow or an experience of their self whilst making art;\textsuperscript{464} and
• Bhaskar’s developing theory of intentional human agency.\textsuperscript{465}

I have already discussed these theories in previous sections of this thesis; thus, for the sake of brevity, these discussions will not be repeated here. However, the reader could revisit the chapters and sections referred to in footnotes 462 to 465, before reading further.

Before I venture too far into the main argument of this chapter, I would first like to take the opportunity to acknowledge my deep respect for Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi for his theory of flow experience. I first became aware of Csikszentmihalyi through his early work with Getzels (1976), which I initially referred to in the proposal for this research project. Over a year later, Csikszentmihalyi’s later work was introduced to me again. At this time, Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory seemed to be exactly what I needed to focus my gaze as I approached the daunting task of analysing many hours of video footage that I had gathered from drawing classes, interviews and group discussions with ten art students and three of their teachers. It also helped me to re-formulate a research question that would guide the data analysis process.

§2  Overview of chapter seven

This chapter is a response to, and development of some of the ideas presented in C4. In C4, it was argued that Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow was useful for making sense of many of...
the students’ comments about their enjoyment whilst learning to make art. I also offered the following proposition:

When individuals experience an activity such as making art from the perspective of their ego, their capacity for experiencing flow is inhibited, but that when the experience is from the perspective of their embodied personality, which is consistent with their ground state, their capacity for experiencing flow is enabled.466

However, as I continued the data analysis process, and began to write about and share my interpretations with others, I began to recognise some of the limitations of using Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow in the analysis of my data. Although flow theory proved to be quite useful for making sense of some of the art students’ comments about aspects of their art making experiences that they found enjoyable, some of the art students also made other comments that appeared to run contrary to one of the important features of flow experience as articulated in Csikszentmihalyi’s theory. In the sections that follow, I present a critique of this proposition, for it seems that whilst it might hold on some occasions, the bigger picture is much more complex.

The contrary characteristic relates to where the art student’s awareness is focused. ‘Flow theory’ emphasises the importance of conscious awareness being fully focused on the task at hand (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.71). However, some of the art students involved in this study made comments which suggested that some of the most enjoyable, intriguing experiences of making art occurred when they were not deliberately controlling their actions. Exploring this is the topic of the discussion in §3 of this chapter.

In §4, I revisit definitions of the embodied personality and ground state, in order to clarify the distinction between the consciousness and intentionality of our embodied personality, and the consciousness and intentionality of our ground state.

In §5, I offer a revised and more complete account of the possible relationship between flow experience and the consciousness and intentionality of the ground state. It is hoped that this revised model might help art educators and their students to understand some of the elements that are in play during enjoyable art-making experiences, and might also outline the possibility for art education to contribute towards self-realisation.

In §6, I use the case of a twenty-minute segment of a video-recorded in-depth interview with Joanne to demonstrate some possible ways of distinguishing between the actions and experience of the embodied personality, and the intentionality and the consciousness of

466 See C4 §4.
ground state. The content of the discussion provides data that directly relates to the topic of experiencing flow or ‘being in the zone’ whilst learning to make art, and lends itself quite well to illustrate the five categories from the revised model that is presented §5.

§3  There’s more to the picture than ‘flow’

The comments from several of the student-participants involved in this study, together with concepts from the philosophy of meta-Reality, suggest that: (a) an experience of enjoyment whilst learning to draw, or (b) a state of congruence between the consciousness of an art student’s embodied personality and the consciousness of their ground state, might not be limited to those occasions when the totality of their conscious awareness is focussed on attending to perceived challenges that require skills that are just beyond their currently perceived level of skill. These students’ comments have inspired me to see whether I can use Bhaskar’s ideas about the consciousness and intentionality of the embodied personality and ground state to make sense of what might be happening on what I now refer to as ‘the fringe of flow’.467

Although Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience might correlate with the experience that an art student might have when the conscious experience of their embodied personality is congruent with the consciousness of their true essential self (McDonald, 2008),468 it also seems that congruence between the consciousness of one’s embodied personality and the consciousness of their ground state does not have to be limited to the way that flow is defined in Csikszentmihalyi’s theory. Several of the art student’s comments suggest that they might have experienced enjoyment when they were spontaneously using their existing skills to negotiate a task,469 as well as when they were mindfully extending their skills (as might be the case during an episode of ‘flow’). It seems that such spontaneous performance of an art student’s skill might also be enabled by a state of congruence between the consciousness of their embodied personality and their ground state, as well as the intentionality of their embodied personality and their ground state.

Although it is possible that flow might correlate with an experience our embodied personality might have when our consciousness is congruent with the consciousness of our ground state, an experience of flow might not always correlate with total congruence. It seems it could also be possible for us to experience flow even if the intentions of our embodied personality are

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467 Here, I refer to those experiences that are quite similar to flow, but differ in the following way: whether the action of the art student is guided by conscious intentions, or by intentions that (i) exist below the threshold of their conscious awareness, or (ii) stem directly from the intentionality of their true essential self, without interference from their mind.

468 See C4 §4.
C7 – ON THE FRINGE OF FLOW

incongruent with the intentions of our ground state. Whilst writing about how culture might play a role in enabling flow experience, Csikszentmihalyi suggests that: ‘while flow is a powerful motivator, it does not guarantee virtue in those who experience it […] when a group of people embraces goals and norms that will enhance its enjoyment of life there is always the possibility that this will happen at the expense of someone else’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.82). This idea of experiencing fulfilment (or enjoyment) through activities that might constrain others is quite at odds with the conditions for ultimate fulfilment or self-realisation that are presented in the philosophy of meta-Reality. As Pitt (2008) points out, the concept of interconnectivity, underpinning the philosophy of meta-Reality and indeed the whole notion of ground state (see §4.2, below), means that ‘the realisation of any individual’s potential as a human being cannot be divorced from the development of the fulfilment of all other humans and indeed the well-being of all those who make up our world’ (Pitt, 2008 pp.185-186).

We can illustrate this point by taking an example of a situation in which one person (A) is severely compromising another person’s (B) well-being. Even though A might be consciously choosing to act in a way that compromises B’s well-being, it is possible that the circumstances in which A acts might provide all the conditions that enable them to experience flow. For example, there might be a sense that their skills are adequate to cope with the challenges at hand, and there might be clear goals, and also clear clues as to how well they are performing. A’s concentration might be so intense that they might not have any attention left over to think about anything irrelevant (like the inappropriateness of their actions), or to worry about problems from other areas of their life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.71). In such circumstances, it is possible that the consciousness of A’s embodied personality might be congruent with the consciousness of A’s ground state. Although such circumstances might enable A to experience flow, if they are actually compromising B’s well-being, then it is unlikely that A would be acting from a position in which the intentions of their embodied personality were congruent with the intentionality of their ground state. A position of congruence between A’s embodied personality and A’s ground state, could, in theory, be influenced by their awareness of the interconnection between all existence. Rather than acting in a way that is based on an awareness of the interconnection of all existence, in this situation ‘A’ might be acting from the perspective of their ego, that is, a quality of their embodied personality that perceives itself as being separate from other things, including, in this instance, their victim (B).

470 Csikszentmihalyi suggests ‘many people find the only challenges they can respond to are violence, gambling, random sex, or drugs. Some of these experiences can be enjoyable, but these episodes of flow do not add up to a sense of satisfaction and happiness over time’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996 p.123-124).
This example could be critiqued for its irrelevance to the particular task of making sense of an art student’s enjoyment whilst learning to draw; however, it could help us to make sense of situations in the art world where works of art are created with the intention to shock others. This example might also be able to make a contribution to those controversial debates which consider the fine line between ‘art’ and ‘child pornography’ (Boomer, 2008; Cranby, 2008; “Don’t use kids in art/porn debate”, 2008; Lumby, 2008; Mitchell, 2008; Silverman, 2008). However, exploring this is well beyond the scope of the present chapter.

Regardless of whether this example can make a contribution to something as complex as the line between art and pornography, it does draw our attention to the importance of differentiating between the consciousness and intentionality of our embodied personality and our ground state. This is the topic of the discussion in §4.

§4 Making the distinction: the consciousness and intentionality of our embodied personality and the consciousness and intentionality of our ground state

In the philosophy of meta-Reality, Bhaskar differentiates between the consciousness of our embodied personality and the consciousness of our ground state, and the intentions of our embodied personality and the intentionality of our ground state (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55). The distinctions between these features of the self are important for understanding the experience of flow which an art student might enjoy whilst learning to draw. In the discussion that follows, I delineate these distinctions.

In §4.1, I consider Bhaskar’s definition of the embodied personality. In §4.1.1 and §4.1.2, I distinguish between the consciousness and the intentions of the embodied personality. In §4.2, I consider Bhaskar’s definition of the ground state. In §4.2.1 and §4.2.2, I distinguish between the consciousness and the intentionality of the ground state.

§4.1 Our embodied personality

According to Bhaskar, ‘the sense of self as embodied personality has a transient and slightly fuzzy character to it’. However, it ‘definitely has a mind, emotions, feelings and it definitely has a physical being’ (Bhaskar, 2002a pp.239-240). Embodied personalities are clearly differentiated in time and space, and in terms of physicality, they are, though related, distinct from each other. This physical distinction between embodied personalities promotes a sense of separateness and gives a degree of validity to the sense of the ego. Thus, the form our embodied personality takes includes our physical form, and encompasses our thoughts, emotions and feelings. In C5 §4.2, I particularly used the term ‘embodied personality’ to refer
to the experiences and actions of a particular person, and to differentiate it from the person’s ground state and habitus.

Pitt also suggests that ‘our embodied personality is formed through our social relations, through the ideologies and practices that influence attitudes to the sex, the ethnicity, the accents and the shapes and smells of our bodies’ (Pitt, 2008 p.63). It is a product of both our individual physical selves and the societies we live in (Pitt, 2008 p.207).

§4.1.1 The consciousness of our embodied personality

Pitt suggests that the consciousness of our embodied personality ‘is shaped through our physical, human presence on this planet’ (Pitt, 2008 p.63). In C5 §4.2, I suggested that the consciousness of an embodied personality could be used to refer to the experience of a concretely singular human being. In C5, it is suggested that the experiences of our embodied personality might be the result of an evolving set of durable transposable dispositions that inform our interactions with others, and Bourdieu’s notion of the habitus was drawn upon to consider how these durable transposable dispositions might operate (Bourdieu, 1990 p.53).

§4.1.2 The intentions of our embodied personality

As previously mentioned in C2 §2.1.5, C5 §3.1 and C6 §2.2.2, Bhaskar defines intentional agency as including actions that are motivated by instinctual, unconscious, preconscious and conscious drives (Bhaskar, 1993 pp.164-167). He also argues for the principle of the irreducibility of intentionality, suggesting that we cannot avoid reference to intentionality in the genesis of human actions (Bhaskar, 2002e p.236). This means that every action has an intention (or reason) behind it. However, the real reason for a particular action or practice may not be what we believe it to be at the level of our conscious awareness. Nevertheless, the real reasons for our actions exist in the realm of alethic truth.471 Thus, the intention, intentions or intentionality of an embodied personality refer to the real reasons for the particular actions of a concretely singular human being. Of course, we may never really know what these real reasons are. Nevertheless, through the consciousness of the embodied personality, the intentions of the embodied personality might be experienced: possibly in the form of beliefs, that is, the proposed reasons for one’s actions.

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471 See ‘truth tetrapolity’ C2 §2.1.5.
§4.2 Our ground state

Underpinning our embodied personality is our transcendentally real Self or ground state. According to Bhaskar, our ground state is the most basic level of our being (Bhaskar, 2002c p.54). It is singular and unique to each person, and at the same time, it is also a shared set of features that are common to all humans (Pitt, 2008 p.207), and indeed all being. Bhaskar suggests that as a human being, our ground state consists of the qualities or potentials that we are born with: energy, intelligence, consciousness, creativity, love, the capacity for right-action and therefore the fulfilment of our intentionality (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55). In this chapter, I focus my discussion on two of these ground state qualities: consciousness and intentionality.

Bhaskar indicates that the ground state of a being is ‘its most basic essential level, that level which is ingredient in and a necessary condition for all other levels, states and phases of being’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.54). He suggests that the ground state of a human-being might share qualities with other beings at three nested levels of existence:

(i) *Being*: Being is a quality that is common to everything in existence. Everything within the universe shares this common feature of existence. Everything is unified at this most basic level of existence.

(ii) *Human being*: There are qualities of being that are common to all human beings. All human beings, no matter what our differences, are unified at this most basic level of humanity.

(iii) *Specific other human beings*: There are qualities that are common to specific groups of human beings. All human beings in a particular group are unified at the level of being in which we are the same. For example: gender, culture, family, social class etc.

Bhaskar also suggests there is a most basic level of being for a concretely singular, unique human being, and that this isn’t shared with anything or anyone else in existence (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55). The essential, most fundamental nature of a unique and particular human being is necessary for all states of consciousness, physical activity, emotions, thought patterns and interactions with its external and internal environment.

The most basic level of *being* is a necessary condition for *being human*. Both *being* and *being human* are necessary conditions for being a *specific type* of human being, for example, being a female, born in 1975 in Australia from a long-line of British ancestry. Both *being* and *being human* and a *specific type* of human being, are necessary conditions for being a *unique and particular human being*, for example, being ‘me’.

Bhaskar makes a particular point of stating that ‘the consciousness, intentionality and energy of the ground state is always present and a part of any state of being or act of any embodied
personality, any thing that it experiences or does in the world’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55). Thus, although our ground state is the ultimate source of our causal agency in the world (Bhaskar, 2002c p.37), it can only find expression through the experience and action of the embodied personality.

§4.2.1 The consciousness of our ground state

Bhaskar suggests that the consciousness of our ground state is ever present in the consciousness of our embodied personality, even though we might be unaware of it. This means the consciousness of our ground state is a necessary condition for every other state of consciousness, including the states of consciousness our embodied personality might experience (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55). ‘One of the qualities [of the consciousness of our ground state] is that it is ‘supramental’, that is a level of consciousness that is beyond thought and which manifests between or behind or in virtue of the suspension of thought (mental activity)’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55). Our embodied personality might, therefore, experience the consciousness of our ground state in a state of rest (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55).

Pitt’s analysis of five British artist’s accounts of their motivations, creative processes and experiences of the practices and institutions of visual art, highlights the importance for artists, and indeed art students, to get in touch with this ‘deeper level of consciousness’ so they may work towards realising their unique potential (Pitt, 2008 p.63).

§4.2.2 The intentionality of our ground state

Along with the consciousness of our ground state, we are also born with the ‘purpose, project, destiny, function of our essential natures’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55). It is this sense of purpose for our life that Bhaskar refers to as the intentionality of our ground state.

Pitt suggests that Bhaskar uses the Sanskrit word ‘dharma’ to signify the uniqueness of each person as purposeful, to see each individual as being in the world to contribute something new. ‘We all have a particular “dharma” or set of unique abilities or contribution through which we can express our universally shared creativity’ (Pitt, 2008 p.211). For Pitt, the use of the word ‘dharma’ in the philosophy of meta-Reality refers to both our unique abilities, as well as the ‘abilities or purposes that are of value to others, as well as to each individual. Developing our own potential benefits us all.’ (Pitt, 2008 p.153).

Each one of us is born with a particular set of special abilities or potential that should form the basis of our actions and achievements in life […] realisation of the self means the
development and use of unique abilities in engagement with others and the world around us.

(Pitt, 2008 p.152)

In the same way that the consciousness of our ground state is necessary for every other state of our consciousness, the intentionality of our ground state is also always present, manifesting in all of the active states of our embodied personality (Bhaskar, 2002c p.55). This is the case even though the actions of our embodied personality might also be incongruent with the intentionality of our essential nature. Thus, the task for each of us is to become what we essentially are (Bhaskar, 2002c p.222), in the same way that an acorn grows into a particular oak tree (Pitt, 2008 p.153).472

In the following section, I offer a revised, and hopefully more complete account of the possible relationship between an embodied personality’s experience of flow and the consciousness and intentionality of their ground state.

§5  A revised model of the possible relationship between ‘flow experience’ and the consciousness and intentionality of the ground state

Making the distinction between the consciousness and intentionality of our ground state is important for understanding the possible relationship between our experiences of ‘flow’ in our activity and the state of the relations between our embodied personality and ground state. Figure 7.1, below, is an attempt at sketching out the terrain of such a relationship.

The content of the first row ‘A’, which includes the categories of mindfulness, apparent spontaneity and supramental mindlessness, is intended to be a ‘header’ for the different dimensions of congruence in consciousness that the columns below refer to. Similarly, the first column ‘1’, which includes the categories of congruent and incongruent intentions, is also intended to be a ‘header’ for the state of the relations between the intentions of the embodied personality and the intentionality of the ground state, that the columns to the right refer.

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472 This necessarily has implications for the way that the skills and knowledge associated with making art are ‘taught’ in educational contexts (See C6 §4 for more details).
### Congruence in consciousness: mindfulness, apparent spontaneity and supramental mindlessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mindfulness</th>
<th>Apparent spontaneity</th>
<th>Supramental mindlessness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> Mindfulness</td>
<td>Mindful activity that is motivated by the conscious intentions of the embodied personality.</td>
<td>Apparently spontaneous activity that is motivated by the unconscious or preconscious intentions of the embodied personality.</td>
<td>Completely spontaneous activity in which the intentions of the embodied personality stem directly from the intentionality of the ground state without interference from the conscious, preconscious or unconscious mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong> Congruent</td>
<td><em>Congruent mindfulness</em></td>
<td><em>Congruent apparent spontaneity</em></td>
<td><em>Supramental mindlessness</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mindful activity when the conscious intentions of the embodied personality are congruent with the intentionality of the ground state.</td>
<td>Apparently spontaneous activity when the unconscious or preconscious intentions of the embodied personality are congruent with the intentionality of the ground state.</td>
<td>Completely spontaneous activity in which awareness of one’s ground state (transcendentally real Self) is witnessed in activity. Characterised by (i) ‘blissful consciousness of existence (or being or truth)’ and (ii) an absence of thought or mental (or emotional) content, which underpins all other levels of consciousness. When we act from, and with an awareness of, this supramental level of consciousness, our activity will always be consistent with our ground state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong> Incongruent</td>
<td><em>Incongruent mindfulness</em></td>
<td><em>Incongruent apparent spontaneity</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mindful activity when the conscious intentions of the embodied personality are incongruent with the intentionality of the ground state.</td>
<td>Apparently spontaneous activity when the unconscious or preconscious intentions of the embodied personality are incongruent with the intentionality of the ground state.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The consciousness of the embodied personality is congruent with the consciousness of the ground state.

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**Figure 7.1:** The intersection of consciousness and intentionality
For the purposes of this particular model, 'mindfulness' refers to activity that is motivated by the conscious intentions of the embodied personality (see cell A2 in Figure 7.1). This definition uses language from Bhaskar's theory of the stratified self to refer to an activity that might enable flow experience. In a related way, the category entitled 'apparent spontaneity' refers to activity that is motivated by the unconscious or preconscious intentions of the embodied personality (see cell A3 in Figure 7.1). The adjective 'apparent' has been used to indicate that although the activity appears to be of a spontaneous nature, there is more to understand. The unconscious and preconscious intentions driving the activity are associated with the learned behaviours that have resulted from ongoing experiences, thus the extent to which the activity is truly spontaneous is limited by such previous experiences. This can be contrasted to 'supramental mindlessness' which refers to completely spontaneous activity in which the intentions of the embodied personality stem directly from the intentionality of the ground state without interference from learned behaviour and associated intentions that might be located in the conscious, preconscious or unconscious mind (see cell A4 in Figure 7.1). In each of the categories: mindfulness, apparent spontaneity and supramental mindlessness, the consciousness of the embodied personality is congruent with the consciousness of the ground state.

The use of the term 'congruent' (see cell B1 in Figure 7.1) refers to those occasions when the intentions of the embodied personality are congruent with the intentionality of the ground state; whereas 'incongruent' (see cell C1 in Figure 7.1) is used to refer to those occasions when the intentions of the embodied personality are incongruent with the intentionality of the ground state.

Based on the above definitions, I offer the following five categories:

1. Congruent mindfulness
2. Incongruent mindfulness
3. Congruent apparent spontaneity
4. Incongruent apparent spontaneity
5. Supramental mindlessness

‘Congruent mindfulness’ refers to mindful activity, when the conscious intentions of the embodied personality are congruent with the intentionality of the ground state (see cell B2 in Figure 7.1), whereas, ‘incongruent mindfulness’ refers to mindful activity, when the conscious intentions of the embodied personality are incongruent with the intentionality of the ground state (see cell C2 in Figure 7.1). In both of these cases ‘flow’ might be experienced, but, as previously outlined in the discussion in §3, it seems that it might also be possible for us to experience flow even if the intentions of our embodied personality are incongruent with the intentions of our ground state.
Let us now turn to the following two categories: congruent and incongruent apparent spontaneity.

‘Congruent apparent spontaneity’ refers to the agency of an embodied personality, when their unconscious or preconscious intentions are congruent with the intentionality of their ground state (see cell B3 in Figure 7.1). Similarly, ‘incongruent apparent spontaneity’ refers to the agency of an embodied personality, when their unconscious or preconscious intentions are incongruent with the intentionality of their ground state (see cell C3 in Figure 7.1). The key difference here is that ‘congruent apparent spontaneity’ involves the actions of the embodied personality being congruent with the intentionality of their true essential self, whereas, ‘incongruent apparent spontaneity’ involves the actions of the embodied personality being incongruent with the intentionality of their true essential self.

According to the philosophy of meta-Reality, the true nature of the self is interconnected with an all-encompassing totality. Thus, regardless of whether the real reasons for any given action are caused by conscious or unconscious motivations, if the action derives from an awareness of the interconnection of all existence, in which the fulfilment of an embodied personality’s potential is not separated from the fulfilment and well-being of all other humans, then the embodied personality can be said to be in a state of congruence with the intentionality of their ground state. However, if an embodied personality seeks enjoyment or fulfilment at the expense of another’s well-being or fulfilment, then the embodied personality can be said to be in a state of incongruence with the intentionality of their ground state.

The fifth category, ‘supramental mindlessness’ involves completely spontaneous activity in which the awareness of one’s transcendentally real Self is witnessed in activity (see cell B4 in Figure 7.1). Supramental mindlessness is characterised by ‘blissful consciousness of existence (or being or truth)’ and involves an absence of thought or mental (or emotional) content, which underpins all other levels of consciousness (Bhaskar, 2002e p.212). Bhaskar suggests that we can act from this level of consciousness, and when we do, we are acting in consistency with our ground state (Bhaskar, 2002e p.213). The intentions of our embodied personality stem directly from the intentionality of our ground state without interference from our conscious, preconscious or unconscious mind. Thus, it is not possible for incongruent supramental mindlessness to occur, in other words, it is not possible for the intentions of the embodied personality to be incongruent with the intentionality of the ground state during an episode of supramental mindlessness (hence the absence of text in cell C4 in Figure 7.1).

Expounding the relationship between the experiences and actions of the embodied personality and the consciousness and intentionality of the ground state in this way, provides us with a sharper philosophical tool. It is sharper in the sense that such an explanation allows
for understanding a wider range of different types of experiences that might not completely fall within the traditional definition of flow experience. In other words, it offers more explanatory power. The bold outline in Figure 7.1, which surrounds the B2 and C2 cells, indicates the boundaries of traditional definitions of flow experience. However, the concept of stratified intentional human agency from the philosophy of critical realism, and the concept of stratified self from the philosophy of meta-Reality allow us to step back from the phenomena of flow experience itself, and consider what might be happening at the various strata of reality that might enable flow experience. In this way, we can begin to develop a clearer understanding of what might be happening on the fringe of such experience.

In Figure 7.1, the blue text in the B2, B3 and B4 cells, indicate the types of enjoyable experiences that an art student might have when the consciousness and intentionality of their embodied personality is consistent with the consciousness and intentionality of their true essential self. This enables us to identify that although there might be an area of overlap between traditional definitions flow experience and the experience that an embodied personality might have when it is being congruent with its transcendently real Self, this is only part of the picture. Flow might also be experienced without the intentions of the embodied personality being consistent with the intentionality of the ground state (see cell C2 in Figure 7.1). Similarly, although Csikszentmihalyi does make reference to those types of experiences in the process of making art in which the goals might not be immediately clear to an artist (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 pp.55-56, 208), the otherwise strong emphasis in his definition of flow experience as involving tasks which have clear goals (and feedback), generates some confusion. Thus, as it stands, flow theory, does not seem to be able to provide a clear account for the enjoyable experiences that an art student might have when their activity is not motivated by conscious intentions.

In the section that follows, I illustrate how this revised model of the possible relationship between ‘flow experience’ and the consciousness and intentionality of the ground state can be used to make sense of the empirical data from this study.

§6 Case study: Joanne

The purpose of the discussion in this section is to use a twenty-minute segment from a discussion that I had with Joanne on 29 June 2006 to illustrate how the revised model of the possible relationship between ‘flow experience’ and the consciousness and intentionality of the ground state that was discussed in the previous section might be used to make sense of empirical data.
The whole interview went for just under an hour. The particular section I examine here began approximately twenty-four minutes after the video started recording. Joanne had just finished talking about her experience of watching the video footage from the first three or four Core Drawing classes at the beginning of the semester on the DVD that I had lent her. It should be noted that the topics explored in this interview were mainly guided by Joanne’s own set of interview questions. It was quite apparent she had put some thought into preparing for these questions and her responses to them. This differed from the first interview we had together in which Joanne requested that I guide the conversational interview with my own questions instead.

§6.1 Interview question #1: Why am I doing this course and what would I like to achieve out of it?

Joanne: I wanted to do this course to improve my drawing and painting skills, but also to surround myself around artistic people. I think that was really important, umm, because I didn’t know much about art history or, I was just doing what I was doing. I think I do need to get artistic people around me and art around me, so I thought, ‘the more I am surrounding myself around it, the more I am changing my lifestyle’. And so, that was a very important aspect of being here, being with other people and watching their styles and learning from them. [Inaudible]. You get to meet people and see how they do it, and so, as I say, I am watching people do a lot of mixed media, I’m not used to doing it and I love the effects.

Here, Joanne outlines a few of her reasons for coming to art school. It wasn’t simply to improve her drawing and painting skills, although this was important too, she was also interested in immersing herself in a social environment that supported her engaging in art-making behaviours.

In her next set of comments Joanne seemed to refer to the same thing that I refer to in my model under the category of ‘supramental mindlessness’.

Joanne: I love the playing and in playing I feel a lot more free and there is no expectations and things come out a lot nicer, and I wrote down somewhere in here, ‘when I don’t have any expectations on something I normally like it visually more’. I actually like my work more. It’s that letting go of not having expectations on it. It might be just mucking around, but quite often, I think, it was a simple little sketch ‘oh I actually like that’, and I am aware that I wasn’t actually thinking about it at the time. I wasn’t demanding myself. I know when I demand of myself, that’s when I get stuck, ‘I can’t do it, why

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473 See C3 §6.3.1.
474 NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo3: 119-120.
475 NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo3: 121-130.
can’t I do it?’ It’s because I am putting those limitations on myself. Mmm so, that’s a big one for me.\textsuperscript{476}

‘I am aware that I wasn’t actually thinking about it at the time’. This is a most significant comment. For Joanne, ‘playing’ is important in her art-making practice. Why? Because for Joanne, playing is associated with a feeling of freedom and it also brings about ‘nicer’ results. This feeling of being free in her art-making practice and also the sense of satisfaction with the results of this practice appears to relate to a state of congruence between the intentions of the embodied personality and the intentionality of the ground state.

A key feature of Joanne’s experience of ‘playing’ appears to be the lack of expectations or demands. ‘I know when I demand of myself, that’s when I get stuck’ appears to be an example of incongruent mindfulness. Her comment: ‘It’s that letting go of not having expectations on it’ appears to be referring to a transition from incongruent mindfulness to supramental mindlessness.

In her following comments, Joanne reveals another reason why she was doing the course:

\begin{quote}
Joanne: Also, gain self-confidence in my artistic skills by improving them. I think I will feel more confident when I feel like I have improved […] I want to do more. I want to get more done, so that whole cycle. I also needed new ways of producing art in quality and quantity. I sought discipline and consistency. I wasn’t making enough art, or I’d have spurts and then not touch it for ages. So I needed something that I could do constantly and consistently at that time of my life, and I think by doing the course, because I am paying for it, I am coming in, I have dedicated myself to it, it keeps me consistent and it makes me produce more […] I love that about the course. I am actually being consistent and it gives me discipline, which I need (laughing). So that’s been really good for me.\textsuperscript{477}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Joanne: My aim is to achieve ways of expressing myself into my art to be able to create from my inner emotions rather than copying from other people’s art. I now choose to look and use other artist’s work as influences to research and improve my skills rather than copying them. Which is what we talked about before.\textsuperscript{478}
\end{quote}

In this last paragraph, Joanne appears to be talking about something that seems to be related to Bhaskar’s notion of the ground state. Using Bhaskarian language, we can interpret Joanne’s comments in the following way: she is wanting to use her embodied personality to express some part of her inner self, which might possibly be her ground state. She is also realising that she can look at how other artists have expressed themselves, in order to get a

\textsuperscript{476} NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo3: 131-141.
\textsuperscript{477} NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo3: 142-158.
\textsuperscript{478} NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo3: 159-163.
few ideas for how she might be able to give expression to her own ‘inner emotions’. At this point, I asked her: ‘So it’s giving form to what’s inside?’ This is her response:

Joanne: Yeah, but it’s also getting that out rather than, ‘How do I do that?’ So now using those other artists as tools and I think now that I am in [teacher’s name] class we are coming up to this modern stuff. [Inaudible]. I was a bit overwhelmed by it all, when he first said we had to come up with a [conceptual] piece. I thought ‘What on earth am I gonna do?’ I had no idea and my thinking was stuck. I thought ‘OK, I will look at environmental stuff’. But I couldn’t quite look outside the box. So I talked to people, thinking, seeing what their idea of it was, you know, what they thought of it. I was coming up with different things, and then that was when I started to go ‘look at how I was feeling’, because I was feeling so overwhelmed, and I thought ‘oh, I can use how I am feeling’. So all of a sudden my thinking had changed. I had got really quite excited. Because that’s when this piece that I am doing, sort of started. ‘Oh I can use myself’ and that’s when I realised ‘oh I am actually using myself in my art’. You know, so it’s boom, boom, boom, boom. Finally some things are sort of clicking. Because I actually got quite scared when I thought ‘Oh struth! The rest wasn’t quite so hard, now to look at this, how do I express myself, how do I put myself into a piece of art or come up with something modern?’

‘I had no idea and my thinking was stuck’ and ‘I couldn’t quite look outside the box’ appear to be referring to a state of incongruent mindfulness, whereas ‘so all of a sudden my thinking had changed’ appeared to relate to the shift from a state of incongruence to congruence.

Joanne had previously mentioned her aim was to ‘achieve ways of expressing myself into my art to be able to create from my inner emotions’, and here she realises that she can use her own feeling of being overwhelmed by the demands of being at art school as content for her artwork. This appeared to be an exciting realisation.

Joanne: But yeah like listening to myself emotionally and mentally and I thought ‘Oh hang on I have got a piece of work here, kill two birds with the one stone. Get it out of me, but also put it into my art’. So that was just ‘Oh yeah, phew! I can do this!’ (laughing) and now it’s just expanding on that. So, now I’ve got the ideas it’s just expanding on how I actually bring it out. And so, that is part of the process. And I think without doing this course I wouldn’t have known quite how to do that. So that’s been really helpful.

Melanie: Fantastic.
By taking notice of her own emotional and mental state, Joanne was able to discover a topic for the content of the artwork for her conceptual drawing class assignment. It was a win-win situation. On the one hand, it gave her thoughts and feelings a forum for expression, and on the other, it gave her something meaningful to express in her assignment. This meant she wasn’t simply experiencing art school from the perspective of being ‘overwhelmed’, but rather, her experience of feeling overwhelmed became the focus of her awareness. She was experiencing the feeling of being overwhelmed from the perspective of an art student. By focusing her attention on her emotional and mental state, rather than merely being at the whim of it, she had something worth expressing in her artwork. Further, by making her experience of feeling overwhelmed the focus of her awareness she shifted into a mode whereby she became a witness of her emotional and mental state. According to Bhaskar, when the embodied personality witnesses itself in this way, it becomes congruent with the consciousness of its ground state. This relates to the category of ‘supramental mindlessness’. This is quite a significant shift, which Joanne also recognised: ‘Yeah, so that’s been a big one for me’.  

§6.2 Interview question #2: The plan: what do you want to put out there?

Joanne: OK, reflecting on this one: ‘The plan’, this one, ‘What do you want to put out there?’ and I put down my thoughts and my feelings. So I am now seeing my thoughts and feelings beginning to be expressed in my art. I have enjoyed learning about different ways of trying to unleash the abilities (eg. collaboration, drawing from a detail, enlarging, use of colour, application, mixed media). So,  

Melanie: Yeah OK,  

Joanne: Looking at it differently.  

Melanie: So you are learning specific ways of getting yourself out there, that you can use to get yourself out there.  

Joanne: Yeah, I can use these ways to actually [inaudible] myself. So it doesn’t matter if I am actually looking at someone else’s work, collaboration or whatever it is. It’s how I actually put it together myself that makes it my piece of work. So, they’re more tools
rather than just copying and feeling like I am just cheating. I use them as tools rather than that now.  

Melanie: Oh, fantastic! Go girl!

Joanne: Yeah I feel like it’s a small break through. Just one, one’s enough, I can’t ask for too much yet. I feel like it’s quite large really.

Melanie: So this is like a key thing?

Joanne: It is quite a key thing I think, because it’s getting me closer to my original thing about expressing myself through my own work. And as I say, the other things are just seen as tools to help me learn about them and how to do things differently, rather than just as a cheating tool. It’s more of a skill than a tool, learning from their knowledge that they have already given us.

Here we can see that Joanne was not only learning particular skills or techniques for creating artworks, but she was also building up her knowledge of other artist’s art-making practices to improve her own capacity to give expression to her own thoughts and feelings. In terms of unfolding the enfolded, we can appreciate that she was unfolding in her embodied personality both knowledge and skill that already existed in an enfolded state at the level of her ground state. Her previously-held belief that copying another person’s art work was ‘cheating’ was being replaced by a new belief that using other people’s artwork might be a valid way of helping her to unfold her own ways of self-expression.

Joanne: Expressing my own emotions through my own art enables me to get closer to my aim of producing art from myself making me stop and think about what inspires me.

Melanie: OK, so what does inspire you?

Joanne: Well looking back on some of the artists, Georgia O’Keefe is a huge one that inspires me. Her flowers, I’ve always loved flowers, I’ve always enjoyed drawing flowers, but she does it in a slightly different way. She blows everything up, she looks at it really closely, it seems quite sexual but I find it very beautiful, very sexy, umm yeah, her colours, things like that.

Joanne: I think those things inspire me. Colours are inspiring me. I love black and white, but I love using colour. Colour, I start to expand a little bit more and feel a little bit more free

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492 NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo3: 211.  
495 NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo3: 216-221.  
with what I’m doing. So I’m starting to notice little things like that. I’ve always enjoyed using colour, but now I’m thinking, oh, it’s just, it’s gone a little bit further. Now I know that when I am using colour, how it’s making me feel better. So it’s coming back to the actual colours probably reflecting on my moods as well. So it’s becoming more about emotions than just colours. Colours reflecting my emotions and things like that, so.

Yeah, so everything I feel is expanding a little bit more, it’s moving along with [inaudible] which is nice. I don’t want to be stuck in old way of thinking (laughing), stale.

Here we see further evidence of Joanne engaging with another artist’s style of artwork to unfold more knowledge about the nature of her own art-making practice. She reveals that using colour makes her ‘feel better’. When she uses colour she starts to ‘expand’ and feels ‘more free’ in her actions.

I suggest that these comments are referring to when the actions and experience of her embodied personality are congruent with the consciousness and intentionality of her ground state. However, the emphasis on her emotions implies that it probably doesn’t relate to supramental mindlessness, which is, rather, an experience of the consciousness that might underpin Joanne’s mind and emotions. In terms of the five categories outlined in Figure 7.1, I suggest that these comments might relate to ‘congruent apparent spontaneity’. However, her final comment, ‘I don’t want to be stuck in old way of thinking’, appears to be referring to the state of incongruent mindfulness or if the old way of thinking is automatic, possibly incongruent apparent spontaneity.

Joanne’s suggestion that she can use colour in her artwork to express her emotions appears to be quite a significant realisation for an art student who is concerned with expressing herself in her art and is wanting to create from her inner emotions.

§6.3 Interview question #3: How do you think you are able to improve on your skills?

Using language from the model of unfolding the enfolded, we can see that improving on Joanne’s skills is really just unfolding in her embodied personality those things that already exist in an enfolded state at the level of her ground state.

Joanne: I’ve just written down: practice, quicker sketches, more of them, simplifying, seeing things as shapes, documenting information, having fun and enjoying what I’m doing.
and not taking it too seriously, which I can get too serious and then that’s when I get stuck and I can’t feel free. So I just go ‘OK, have a laugh at myself. Be happy. Not too serious, it’s drawing. Come on! It’s not too serious. It’s not the end of the world’. So then I don’t get too serious about it, and I don’t constrict myself, because I can constrict myself. I am probably my own worst enemy there. Yeah, so not too serious.502

This comment is quite significant. Here, Joanne reveals her knowledge about an aspect of herself that inhibits and limits her free-flowing art-making practice: being too serious. Notice the words she uses to describe being serious: ‘I get stuck’, ‘I can’t feel free’, ‘I can constrict myself’, and ‘I am probably my own worst enemy there’. About five minutes earlier she had mentioned that: ‘when I demand of myself, that’s when I get stuck, “I can’t do it, why can’t I do it?” It’s because I am putting those limitations on myself’.503 The following comment of Joanne’s appears to relate to a state of congruent mindfulness: ‘practice, quicker sketches, more of them, simplifying, seeing things as shapes, documenting information, having fun and enjoying what I’m doing and not taking it too seriously’. Similarly, this comment also appears to relate to a state of congruent mindfulness: ‘So I just go “OK, have a laugh at myself. Be happy. Not too serious, it’s drawing come on, it’s not too serious. It’s not the end of the world”. So then I don’t get too serious about it, and I don’t constrict myself’. On the other hand, Joanne’s comment: ‘I can get too serious and then that’s when I get stuck and I can’t feel free’, might relate to a state of incongruent mindfulness.

In the comments that followed, Joanne provided further suggestions for improving her own skills included:

Joanne: Limit my materials to challenge myself. I think that was something that [teacher’s name] said […] if I limit my materials too, sometimes will do more. Experiment, and challenge myself. Think about my compositions. I think that’s really important for me. Be brave, and experiment more. And, when I don’t have expectations I tend to like what I produce more.504

Melanie: OK. Oh, so when you lower those expectations of yourself while you are creating, is that right?505

Here, Joanne makes more suggestions about how she might be able to improve on her skills. ‘Challenge myself’ and ‘think about my compositions’ appears to relate to congruent mindfulness. The idea of lowering her expectations, which Joanne had referred to earlier in the interview,506 is repeated again. She explores this further in the comments that follow, in

which she pulled out a drawing on a piece of paper that she had brought with her to respond to my question.

Joanne: [pointing to a drawing on a piece of paper] I actually liked her face. I wasn’t thinking about it, I just did a quick sketch. [I copied it] from one of my ones in my art book. But because I didn’t [think about it], and it’s messy and scribbley and, I actually liked her face. And I felt like it was probably a little bit more in, I don’t know, it worked, [...] I hadn’t stopped and thought about it, but I felt like it worked as a picture more for me. Whereas some things I can draw and I just think, ‘oh that’s horrible’, or ‘it’s out of proportion’. Whereas, I’m thinking about it, I sometimes find that I am [...] using some of the skills that I’ve got, and then it comes out in the sketch but I’m not thinking about it, so I’m just mucking around. [...] I hadn’t thought about how to make sure that it was just all proportional. The end result I liked. It was something really simple, but you know, for me to try and draw something like that, that’s when I get stuck, when I am trying to draw something correctly. Whereas because I was just trying to scribble and muck around it allows me to let go a lot more.  

Joanne: There’s something about it. Yeah, and to think that, you know, I wasn’t trying to get it all [in] proportion, I wasn’t trying to make it just right. But because I wasn’t trying, it seemed to work a lot better.  

‘Because I wasn’t trying, it seemed to work a lot better’, here is another key comment. Once again, Joanne seems to be referring to the same thing I refer to in my model under the category of ‘congruent apparent spontaneity’. For Joanne, when she does not think about making sure that her drawing is in proportion, it comes out perfectly. A key thing to note in this comment is that when she just draws on the skills that she already has, and she applies them spontaneously, without thinking about it, she tends to like the end result. This also relates to the category of ‘supramental mindlessness’. I could relate well to Joanne’s comments, and took the opportunity to share my experience with her as well:

Melanie: Yeah, it’s fascinating isn’t it, that? Because I find the same thing, yeah, like I can get the roughest sketches and it’s just like they hold so much. I’ve sort of culled it down to the essence, but then when I’m actually going on the ‘proper canvas’ or, you know, whatever, it suddenly goes ‘guoom’ and you can’t get it.  

Joanne: That’s exactly for me. And that’s why I look back and go ‘well how was I able to do that so simply?’ It’s because I wasn’t thinking about it as being in proportion. I mean I used it from my book that was, where I was trying to draw it in proportion, in [teacher’s name] classes. I had used it from that, and it didn’t look anything like that one (laughing). But, yeah, it’s that process which I find quite amazing, when I’m not
thinking about it. And that’s when I reflect back on [another student’s] stuff because she doesn’t think a lot about what she does, she just draws and she’s so free. I just love that stuff; it just speaks to me, whether it’s myself or it’s somebody else. But there’s something about it that’s not ‘intended’ or something. It’s something that flows out of you. And yeah, being able to do that all the time would be great, to be able to embrace that.510

Here, we have another set of comments that appear to be referring to the same thing I refer to when I am talking about spontaneous activity in the category of ‘apparent spontaneity’ or ‘supramental mindlessness’ in my revised model. ‘It’s that process which I find quite amazing, when I’m not thinking about it’, and ‘there’s something about it that’s not “intended” or something. It’s something that flows out of you.’ As Joanne suggests, it would be wonderful if we could do this all the time, however, not all art-making experiences are quite like this. Joanne’s next comment sheds light on what might be working against these free-flowing experiences.

Joanne:  But that’s where I still get stuck in myself, as human nature, trying to do something correctly, or trying to do it just perfect. My perfect little brain, yeah right, you know, how I perceive perfect to be. 511

This comment suggests it might be the part of Joanne’s mind that attempts to control her behaviour that might get in the way. Although this part of the human mind might have very good intentions of helping humans to achieve their best, in the process of ‘trying’ it actually tends to fall short of its own goal.

Joanne:  Yeah, but I know when I am in that space of just letting go and not thinking about it, I normally like what I’ve done a lot better. And I know that with my, like when I’ve had to do samples, like fifty drawings and just quick sketches and things like that, because sometimes you just put five seconds into it and sometimes you put two hours into it, but it’s more about experimenting. It’s not about producing something exactly, and I just find that there is a lot more freedom in that. And I always seem to like what I have done better.512

Melanie:  It’s like the perfection is in that.513

Joanne:  Yeah and it just comes out naturally. There’s something natural about it. It’s nothing forced about it. It’s nothing intended. Whereas when I intend to do something and it’s forced, it’s too tight, or it’s, I don’t know, it’s not loose and free enough. But that’s where it comes back to myself I think.514
At the time of this interview I could see a possible relationship between the referent of these comments, and the referent that Joanne had previously referred to as ‘the zone’ or ‘flow’, and so I took the opportunity to ask her about this.

Melanie: You have previously talked about being in ‘the zone’, letting it flow. How does that relate to this?  

Joanne: I think that is a very similar thing, a very, very similar thing. Umm, yeah because sometimes the zone, I get in the zone, when I can flow. I am just there doing it naturally, even though I might be thinking on how to do something. But the whole project I might just be flowing when I am actually doing it. You know, there might be parts that I have to stop and think about, with composition or whether something is in proportion. But when I am not thinking about that, when I am actually doing something that I really enjoy, whether it be with colour and that, and I’ve done it for a few hours, and I can really, I’m having a good day with it. You know, some days I can spend five, you know, a couple of hours with it and get heaps done, other days I can spend eight hours and go, ‘what have I done today? I’ve done nothing with it’. You know I feel like I am rubbing out, or I feel like I’ve done nothing. Whereas, you know, half an hour of that could be just really productive and I go ‘I’ve done all my best work in that half an hour’. So that to me is like being in the zone. Sometimes I have to work for two or three hours before I get into that zone. Or sometimes I can walk away and come back again in half an hour and be in that zone, and not want to leave because I think ‘Oh I don’t want it to go, because it’s working really well for me’. And then all of a sudden it could be like, or I start thinking, I start thinking about something and then I go ‘where has my flow gone? Where is my zone?’ Yeah, so very, very similar type thing, so it probably goes hand in hand sometimes.

Joanne covers a lot of ground in this set of comments. To begin with, Joanne does clarify that this is indeed a similar experience to being in the zone. Her comments also help us to appreciate that her experience of being in the zone or experiencing flow in her art-making practice involves at least two different types of activity. Some parts of her art-making process require her to think about what she is doing, and yet there are other parts that don't require thought. These different categories of her experience seem to relate to the two positions of transcendental agency to which Bhaskar refers: mindfulness and mindlessness (Bhaskar, 2002c p.4). These also relate to two of the categories that I refer to in my revised model: ‘congruent mindfulness’ and ‘supramental mindlessness’.

In this set of comments we can also see that there are other types of experiences, ones that relate to whether Joanne’s actions actually fulfilled her intentions. For example, her comments: (a) ‘some days I can spend five, you know, a couple of hours with it and get heaps

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done’, (b) ‘half an hour of that could be just really productive and I go “I’ve done all my best work in that half an hour”’ and (c) ‘it’s working really well for me’, might relate to when the actions or intentions of Joanne’s embodied personality are congruent with the intentionality of her ground state. Similarly, her comment: ‘other days I can spend eight hours and go, “what have I done today? I’ve done nothing with it”. You know I feel like I am rubbing out, or I feel like I’ve done nothing’ might relate to when the actions or intentions of Joanne’s embodied personality are incongruent with the intentionality of her ground state.

The following comments appear to be referring to the transition from a state of incongruence between the intentions of Joanne’s embodied personality and the intentionality of her ground state to a state of congruence. ‘Sometimes I have to work for two or three hours before I get into that zone. Or sometimes I can walk away and come back again in half an hour and be in that zone, and not want to leave because I think “Oh I don’t want it to go, because it’s working really well for me.”’

At the time of this interview, I had no idea of how these comments were going to be utilised in the analysis phase; however, it must have struck quite a strong chord with me as you will see in the discussion which followed.

Melanie: Yeah, OK. Interesting. I am so excited about this (laughing).  

Joanne: Why? Tell me why you are excited.

Melanie: Well, because you are talking about stuff that I feel as well, and that is really important for me in my own creative journey, which is why I am doing this whole research project as well. So when I get like, someone like you talking about the stuff that I feel so strongly in myself, you’re saying it, it’s like, ‘yes!’ I need to write about this and analyse it, you know, that means you are bringing into the project, the things that I am really passionate about myself, and that’s really nice.

This disclosure of mine provides some evidence of how by encouraging Joanne to guide the interview process herself (letting the object of knowledge determine how it would be known), actually fulfilled my own deep intentions as well. Thus, when Joanne started to talk about something that I was passionate about (so passionate in fact that it is what supposedly motivated me to begin this research project in the first place), I got very excited, and couldn’t help but share my enthusiasm. Joanne spent the next minute or so indicating to me that she was interested in hearing my feedback as well, and that she had been able to work out from

(i) my comments to her, and (ii) from the paintings that she had seen of mine, that she believed that we both had a few things in common.  

Joanne:  I think you work similar to me in some things, like when I went round and saw your pictures, umm, I think it was great. They’ve got texture, and there’s a lot of sort of, umm, bumpiness and stuff, I don’t know, there’s different levels and, I don’t know, there’s just something about it that I really liked, the way you had built it up and, yeah [inaudible] it’s just so textured and built up and [gesticulating with her hands] (it’s just not coming out) yeah, so, that appealed to me.  

Melanie:  Yeah, I really enjoyed playing with it.  

Joanne:  Yeah and that’s the key word for me, playing. When I am playing with something I feel like I am having fun. It’s probably my inner child, you know coming out and playing. You know it allows me to be more, me, accept my inner child as me. You know, it’s OK to be a child sometimes, as long as it’s in the right space and time. Your inner child, I think it’s good to use, because it is a part of me, so to use her, to allow her to come out and speak (laughing), or explore about myself. That’s really important.  

In these comments Joanne brings up another topic that appears to be quite significant. She is talking about something that she calls her ‘inner child’. Her comments suggest that by playing and having fun, she can accept this child-like aspect as being a part of her self. Further, she suggests that by being playful and having fun whilst she is creating her artworks, she gives this inner part of herself the opportunity to ‘come out and speak’. This seems to be in contrast with her tendency to be ‘too serious’ that she had referred to earlier in the interview. In terms of my model of the possible relationship between ‘flow experience’ and the consciousness and intentionality of the ground state, the qualities that Joanne associates with her inner child appear to be similar to those qualities that relate to the category of ‘apparent spontaneity’. It also appears that when she says ‘it’s OK to be a child sometimes, as long as it’s in the right space and time’ she might be talking about the difference between congruent apparent spontaneity and incongruent apparent spontaneity. Congruent apparent spontaneity involves being playful and spontaneous in the right space and time, whereas incongruent apparent spontaneity might involve being playful and spontaneous in the wrong space and time.

I asked Joanne to talk more about what she meant by this reference to an inner child.  

Melanie:  What is that inner child?  

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520 NUDIST reference: I_S-Jo3: 360-375.  
C7 – ON THE FRINGE OF FLOW

Joanne: Well I think it’s the part that likes to play. I think it’s the part that doesn’t want to have anyone put any restrictions on her, she just wants colours, and life and brightness and to have something that’s appealing and to do something. Kids love to play and I think that’s the part of me that’s young and wants to play and just have fun with it and not have too many responsibilities. Yeah and I think that’s a part of all of us. We’ve all got our own inner child. I think I have probably ignored my inner child for a long time, had to be adult and responsible and I think by doing art it allows my inner child to come back.525

Joanne helps us to see there is a part of her self that likes to play and have fun. This part of her likes colour, life and brightness, and also likes things that are appealing. Joanne uses the concept of age, and the metaphor of the child, to suggest this might be a younger part of herself. One could also interpret this part of Joanne’s self as being a part of her self that isn’t weighed down by responsibility. I suggest that this sense of being weighed down by responsibility might relate to the idea of having expectations or demanding herself to perform in certain ways. Depending on the circumstances, this could involve either a state of congruent mindfulness or incongruent mindfulness. Although Joanne claims it is a part of herself she has ignored for a long time, her comments also suggest that by doing art, this part of her self is able to come back.

I would like to tentatively suggest that the part of Joanne’s self she refers to here as her ‘inner child’, might also be related to the experience that Joanne’s embodied personality might have when it is being in a way that is congruent with her true essential self. In the continuing discussion she uses the metaphor of a child to convey the idea that this part of her is innocent, is not restricted, involves daydreaming, and is ‘open’ to anything.

Joanne: You know, and that’s the pretty neat thing about being a child, there’s innocence about it, and there are no, there’s not so much restrictions. You can daydream and you can be open to anything.526

Here is Joanne’s final set of comments from the twenty-minute interview segment:

Joanne: By letting my inner child come out I feel that there is a lot more freedom in my work. Yeah, there’s no pressures. I think that’s the important part about that. Have fun with it. It’s very important.527

This twenty-minute segment demonstrates that my revised model of the relationship between flow experience and the state of the relations between an embodied personality and its ground state can certainly help to make sense of empirical data. For Joanne, the experience

of making art appeared to involve a fluid movement through the five categories that I outline in this model: congruent mindfulness, incongruent mindfulness, congruent apparent spontaneity, incongruent apparent spontaneity, and supramental mindlessness.

For Joanne, ‘congruent mindfulness’ involved those occasions when she was thinking about what she was doing, whereas ‘congruent apparent spontaneity’ and ‘supramental mindlessness’ was when she wasn’t thinking about what she was doing, but was, rather, acting spontaneously or playfully. I suggest that ‘incongruent mindfulness’ and ‘incongruent apparent spontaneity’ might have occurred on those occasions when Joanne said she would spend all day ‘rubbing out’. It seems that on such occasions whatever marks Joanne made didn’t seem to fulfil the intentions of her ground state and she would therefore feel compelled to erase it. Similarly, when Joanne was thinking too much about what she was doing, or when she put restrictions on herself, or made demands of her self, or had expectations, these were occasions of ‘incongruent mindfulness’.

§7  Summary of chapter seven

Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow was useful for making sense of many of the students’ comments about their enjoyment whilst learning to make art, but not all. In §3, I outlined some of the limitations for using flow to make sense of the students’ comments about their enjoyable experiences whilst learning to make art. The particular aspect of flow theory that I was able to recognise to be limiting my capacity for making sense of the art students’ comments, was that aspect which related to conscious control of their actions.

Bhaskar’s concepts relating to the stratified self have allowed me to consider the ontological structures that might enable flow, and to consider the nature of this ontological terrain on the fringe of flow experience. In §4, I revisited definitions of the embodied personality and ground state, in order to clarify the distinction between the consciousness and intentionality of our embodied personality, and the consciousness and intentionality of our ground state. From the distinctions I made between these various concepts, I then offered, in §5, a revised and more complete account of the possible relationship between flow experience and the consciousness and intentionality of the ground state. In §6, I used the case of a twenty-minute segment of a video-recorded interview with Joanne to demonstrate how my revised model could be applied to empirical data.

From the analysis above, it is obvious that the relationship between our experience of flow and a state of congruence between our embodied personality and ground state is not as simple as I first proposed in C4. Whilst flow experience might coincide with a state of congruence between our embodied personality and ground state, there is more to the picture
than this. By differentiating between the consciousness and intentionality of our embodied personality and understanding how these features of our embodied personality might relate to the consciousness and intentionality of our ground state, we are in a better position to understand the relationship between our experience of flow and our experience of congruence between our embodied personality and ground state.
Chapter Eight – Summary and conclusions

§1 Summary of thesis

The introduction to this thesis noted the possibility for art students to enjoy an experience of ‘flow’ or being in ‘the Zone’ whilst learning to draw, and identified the role education can play in the achievement of human self-fulfilment and flourishing. It also noted the absence of a coherent compendium of human self-fulfilment and flourishing within the context of art education, and suggested that the reason for this might be due to a lacking ontological framework within the discipline of visual art and the field of art education. The purpose for the study was identified as exploring the efficacy of using philosophical concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality to understand human emancipation from a specific point of view: the removal of inhibitions on the enjoyment of flow experience by art students. Understanding the fluctuating nature of such experiences and determining the possible structures or systems underpinning them was considered to be important.

Three current purposes of the study were identified:
1. to explore the efficacy of using philosophical concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality to understand emancipation from a specific point of view: the removal of inhibitions on the enjoyment of flow experience by art students;
2. to consider the ontological structures that might be in play whilst learning to make art, and also during flow experience; and also
3. to examine the possibility of using various philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality to inform decisions about data collection and interpretation in an empirical study.

In Chapter One, the ‘problems’ this thesis sought to investigate were identified as follows:
• To accurately describe and/or explain the reality of emancipation of adult art students within a formal art school learning environment.
• To demonstrate how Bhaskar’s philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality could be applied to the particular field of adult art education.
• To make sense of the emancipation of art students from those things that inhibited or constrained their experience of enjoyment, satisfaction and fulfilment whilst learning to draw, with particular concern for those constraints that exist, internalised, within each particular art student.
• To determine whether there might be a relationship between the process involved in realising one’s true potential and/or fulfilling one’s personal sense of purpose and an experience of ‘flow’ or enjoyment whilst learning to draw.
C8 – SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- To document how this specific investigation proceeded from the perspective of critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality.
- To demonstrate what emancipation itself might look like in a research project about the experience of art students as they grapple with being at art school.
- To identify the implications for data collection of emancipation from the perspective of critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality.

As can be seen from the chapter summaries that follow, these problems were addressed in various ways throughout the thesis.

In Chapter Two, a diverse range of literature pertaining to the above mentioned topic was reviewed. The review of literature pertaining to critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality served several purposes: to outline the assumptions about reality and knowledge that underpin this study, and also explicate some of the possible relationships between various concepts from both critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality. The significance of these concepts for the discipline of education, and in particular, adult art students’ experience of flow whilst learning to draw were also identified.

By drawing upon various concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality Chapter Three described and justified the decisions and actions that led to the interpretations that were made in the chapters that followed. Thus, Chapter Three served to provide concrete examples of how theoretical concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality could directly inform the practical task of ‘doing’ educational research.

Chapter Four explored the possibility of using concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality to help to analyse interview and group discussion data and classroom observations to promote an understanding of human emancipation within the context of learning to draw. The relationship between Bhaskar’s theory of the stratified self and Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience that was first considered in Chapter Two was drawn upon to provide an interpretation of the art students’ comments. Chapter Four offered some suggestions for ways in which adult art students might come to enjoy a more emancipated way of practising art making.

Chapter Five centred on the dialectical relationship between human agency and social structures that might contribute towards an art student’s enjoyment of flow experience whilst learning to draw. Three different features of intentional human agency from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality, which were first introduced in Chapter Two, were drawn upon in Chapter Five to provide an interpretation of the art students’ comments. The interplay of structure and agency during flow experience was considered with reference to Bourdieu’s theory of the habitus to aid further interpretation of the empirical data. Thus, Chapter Five
provided an overview of the various elements in play when an adult art student experiences flow whilst learning to draw.

In Chapter Six, the model of unfolding the enfolded was outlined and discussed. The role which social interactions play in the model of unfolding the enfolded, and the implications of this for art students to experience flow whilst making art were also explored. A case study from the empirical data highlighted a particular phase of transition during the process of unfolding the enfolded which might not be conducive to experiencing flow whilst learning to draw. Chapter Six also provided an overview of the educational implications of the theory of fine structure and co-presence, and the model of unfolding the enfolded for experiencing flow whilst learning to draw.

In Chapter Seven some of the limitations for using Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory to make sense of the art students' comments about their enjoyable experiences whilst learning to draw were outlined. Chapter Seven extended the discussion of Bhaskar's concepts relating to the stratified self in order to identify the ontological structures that might enable an experience of flow to occur, and to also consider the nature of this ontological terrain on the fringe of flow experience. A revised and more complete account of the possible relationship between flow experience and the consciousness and intentionality of the stratified self was presented. The revised model was then used to inform the interpretation of empirical interview data.

§2 Significance

The originality and significance of this thesis lies in the following areas:

- explicating the relationships between various concepts from both critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality (C2);
- identifying the significance of these concepts for the discipline of education, and in particular, the field of adult art education (C2);
- providing a theoretical and empirical contribution to the task of understanding how various concepts from critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality might be able to inform the design of an empirical study (C2, C3);
- drawing upon Bhaskar's conceptualisation of the stratified self to interpret the participants' reasons for making art (C4 §4);
- situating the students' comments within Bhaskar's model of emancipation within the stratified self (C4 §5);
- reconsidering the possibility of experiencing flow or enjoyment whilst completing assessment tasks in the following way: any tension that might arise from having to produce drawings for assessment tasks, that is, focusing on the consequences of the activity, can be to reconciled if the student chooses to attempt to complete the
assessment tasks in order to draw, that is, focusing on the activity for its own sake (C4 §6.2);

• explicating the relationships between Bhaskar’s theory of the stratified self and Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience (C2, C4 §4 to §5, §6.2 to §6.3, C7);

• expounding the relationship between the experiences and actions of the embodied personality and the consciousness and intentionality of the ground state to provide a sharper philosophical tool for understanding of a range of different types of experiences that might not completely fall within the traditional definition of flow experience (C7);

• drawing upon Bhaskar’s theory of the stratification of intentional human agency to reconcile the philosophical contradictions between Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi’s theory and Emery’s theory about the role of intentionality in the process of creating artworks, and their implications for the practice of art education (C5 §3.1);

• drawing upon Bhaskar’s theory of the stratified self and the fulfilment of intentions to make sense of one of the art student’s comments about their experience of following the advice of peers and teachers whilst learning to draw (C5 §3.3);

• bringing together Bhaskar’s ideas about human agency and social structures, and the stratification of the self, together with Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus to consider the active role that past experiences can play in an art student’s present experiences (C5 §4.1);

• integrating Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus with Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow experience, and using these to interpret an art student’s comments which indicate a lack of enjoyment whilst learning to draw (C5 §4.3 to §4.3.1);

• over-viewing the various elements in play when an adult art student experiences flow whilst learning to draw (C5 §5);

• offering teachers and students of fine art a new vocabulary for discussing their drawing; particularly when their drawings are the result of an art making process which is not guided by conscious thoughts, or characterised by mindful activity (C6 §2.3.2 and §4);

• outlining the educational implications of the theory of co-presence and the process of unfolding the enfolded (C6, Table 6.2); and

• extending the notion of ‘unblocking the creative block’ for adult art students to suggest that it might be more a case of unfolding the enfolded (C6 §4).

§3 Directions and issues for future research

This thesis can be understood as existing in the realm of first generation empirical application of critical realism and meta-Reality to the field of educational research and as such, it paves the way for future empirical research projects that are informed by critical realism and the philosophy of meta-Reality. Extending on the various lines of investigation that were pursued within this thesis, future research projects could lie in the following areas:
• Investigating the emancipatory potential of the theory of co-presence for learning: how can teachers promote a student's realisation that they already possess the potential to learn anything they want?

• Investigating human emancipation within a stratified model of the self: how can pre-service education and educational leadership promote congruence between a teacher's ground state and their embodied personality? Further, how can educational policy and teaching practice promote congruence between a student's ground state and their embodied personality?

• Investigating the intentions behind the new Visual Arts, Craft and Design Training Package for art-related courses within the VET sector in Australia, and in particular, whether these intentions are congruent with the intentionality of the ground states of art students and their teachers.

• Investigating the educational significance of the stratification of intentional human agency and the model of unfolding the enfolded: how can the new vocabulary for discussing drawings and artworks, which result from art making processes that are not guided by conscious thoughts, be made available to teachers and students of fine art? Further, does this new vocabulary actually help those students who have previously experienced difficulty in discussing their artworks?

• Investigating overlapping areas with existing educational systems: do the educational implications of philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality have any overlapping areas with established education systems based on the insights of past and present educational philosophers (e.g. Rudolf Steiner, Maria Montessori or the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education)?

§4 Final conclusion

Bhaskar's philosophy of critical realism and meta-Reality contributes much to the process of developing knowledge claims about the emancipation of adult art students from content of their consciousness which are incongruent with flow experience whilst learning to draw. This thesis considers this contribution in relation to collecting, analysing and interpreting data.

The following concepts from the philosophy of critical realism and meta-Reality have contributed much to the data collection, analysis and interpretation:

Critical realism:

• the transitive and intransitive dimensions of science;
• referential detachment;
• the epistemic fallacy;
• the stratified model of reality;
• the ontological primacy of absence;
• truth tetrapolity and intentional human agency; and
• four planar social being.

The philosophy of meta-Reality:
• non-duality;
• transcendental identification (and referential detachment);
• transcendental agency;
• co-presence and the theory of fine structure;
• unfolding the enfolded;
• the stratified nature of the self;
• human emancipation; and
• intentional human agency.

In particular, the stratified model of reality, (together with the stratified model of the self), and
the concept of absence and theory of co-presence have enabled a realist interpretation of the
fluctuating nature of several adult art students’ experiences of being in ‘the Zone’ or
experiencing ‘flow’ and the possible structures underpinning them.

It is hoped that increased awareness, on the part of teachers and students of fine art, of the
ontological structures and mechanisms underpinning their experience of enjoyment,
satisfaction and fulfilment whilst teaching and learning art-making might enable the cultivation
of an art school environment in which students and practising artists can ride the wave of
enjoyable art-making experiences for longer. Beyond this, the findings might have the
potential to contribute to the resolution of problems beyond the field of art education, including
the age-old problem: being at peace with the human condition.


REFERENCES


REFERENCES

REFERENCES


REFERENCES


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REFERENCES

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<http://www.raggedclaws.com/criticalrealism/archive/gmac_intro.html>
REFERENCES


REFERENCES


REFERENCES


Appendix 1.1  Overview of Data Collection

Table 1.1.1: Overview of student-participant attendance in the Core Drawing class

<table>
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<th>Duration</th>
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The meanings behind the symbols: ‘•’ is used to indicate that the student was present in class and was also in view of the video camera lens; ‘-’ is used to indicate that the student was present in class but not in view of the video camera lens; ‘X’ is used to indicate that the student was absent from class.

Table 1.1.2: Overview of teacher-participant attendance in the Core Drawing class

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Table 1.1.3: Overview of interviews with student-participants

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528 The meanings behind the symbols: ‘•’ is used to indicate that the student was present in class and was also in view of the video camera lens; ‘-’ is used to indicate that the student was present in class but not in view of the video camera lens; ‘X’ is used to indicate that the student was absent from class.
APPENDIX 1 – OVERVIEW OF DATA AND PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Table 1.1.4: Overview of interviews with teacher-participants

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Table 1.1.5: Attendance at the group discussions by student-participants

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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanne</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1.6: Number of categories and themes for each student-participant’s data set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Main categories</th>
<th>Themes and sub-themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jarrah</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanne</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1.2  Outline of the information session

Thanks for coming to this information session. I know that you have probably had a big morning with the enrolment and library orientation. For some of you, you may have been here before, for others, it may be a completely new experience. This session shouldn’t take very long.

Before I begin to tell you about the actual project I am working on at the moment and what this project could mean for you, I just want to let you know a bit about my background, so you know where I am coming from.

I started studying Fine Arts at [name of educational institution] in Sydney back in 1997. I did it part time for a year and then moved up here to start the Visual Art course at the uni. I didn’t really get into the way that art was being presented there and I because I also had an interest in working with children, after the first semester I switched over to study primary teaching instead. Unfortunately there wasn’t much time for me to do art, so I took a break after a couple of years and went back to study Fine Arts at [name of educational institution]. After that I went back to uni to complete the teaching degree, with the promise that I would go back to [art school] straight afterwards to finish the Fine Arts course. So I was a student here at [name of educational institution] in 2004 and finished off my last subject last year. At the same time, the uni invited me to go back to do a research degree. The offer was too good to refuse. And I felt like life was kind of nudging me to go down this path. So here I am. I have spent a year dreaming up my research project. Because I have been so impressed with the way that art is taught at [name of educational institution], I really wanted to come back to [name of educational institution] to explore art education, this time as a ‘researcher’.

This morning you enrolled in an art course. I presume that this is because you enjoy making art and maybe you want to improve some aspect of your art-making practice, or you may just want more opportunities to make art.

Being in a formal educational environment, the curriculum and assessment is pre-set. Of course what you actually bring to the art workshops are your life experiences, your ideas about art, your abilities and skills. This means that the way you actually complete your assessment tasks will be unique to you. I imagine that some of you, if not all of you, may already have ideas about the things that you would like to change or learn in relation to your own art practice. My research is concerned with these things:

- What do you think art is and how do you feel about making art?
- How do you participate in the process of making art in your art workshops?
- What is your current focus in your own art-making practice?
- How can you go about focusing on this within the context of your art classes?
- What challenges/obstacles do you encounter on the way and how do you resolve them?

In a sense, my research is combining both cutting-edge research and educational practice. No one has ever done this before, including me. It is quite an exciting adventure. It has the potential to influence the way that art education is taught in the future, but more importantly for you is that it has the potential to transform the way that you think about art and participate in the process of making art.

However, my research can’t be done without your participation. I don’t need everyone to participate, because I will be overloaded with too much information to handle, so I am really only needing up to ten students to participate. If I read through the information sheet now, it has got all the details about what the project will require from you should you choose to participate. Then you can decide if you think that you would like to be a part of it.

READ INFORMATION SHEET

Any questions?

529 Extract from Research Journal - 3 February 2006
Appendix 1.3 Ethics information sheet

[This is a blank page.]
Appendix 1.3.1  Student

Information Sheet for Art Student

Project Title  The adventures of an inking: attitudes and beliefs regarding art and participation in an artistic creative process

Researcher  Melanie McDonald (PhD Candidate)
School of Education
Southern Cross University
(02) 6620 3417
m.mcdonald.10@scu.edu.au

I am doing research for my PhD thesis. The general concern of this project is to understand how visual art education can help to ‘unblock the creative block’. The specific aim of the current part of my study is to identify what people’s attitudes and beliefs regarding art are, and how these attitudes and beliefs influence their participation in the process of making art.

This study uses a variety of ways to gather information. Your participation in this research project involves the following activities:

1. Attending a meeting in which you will be asked to provide suggestions about the questions that I could ask to find out what your attitudes and beliefs regarding art are. You determine how long you will take to formulate these questions. This will occur on two separate occasions throughout the study.

2. You will also take part in a conversational interview with the researcher where you will have the opportunity to respond to the questions that you created during the activity described in point 1 above. This may take approximately one hour to complete and will occur on two separate occasions (at the beginning and end of the study). It will be video recorded for later analysis.

3. You will also need to participate in approximately ten art workshops. These workshops will be part of your existing course and will be video recorded for later observation and analysis.

4. You will also be required to reflect on the experiences you have in your art class, either in a small group consisting of up to five other students, or on a one-to-one basis with the researcher. In addition to reflecting on the experiences you have in class you will be required to plan ways to either improve or accept your art making practice during future workshops. These sessions will occur on three to five occasions throughout the study and will be video recorded for later analysis. The duration of the small group meetings may take two to three hours, while the one-to-one meetings will be up to one hour.

5. You may also like to take part in additional conversational interviews throughout the research. This will provide you with the opportunity to share your experience of participating in an artistic creative process during the art workshops. These ‘conversations’ will be unstructured with you directing the nature of what is shared and the researcher contributing to the conversation by way of clarifying her own understanding of things that are said or providing examples from her own observations or perspective. It is anticipated that the duration of each of these
Appendix 1.3.1  (continued)

‘conversations’ will not exceed one hour. They will be video recorded for later analysis.

Each of the above activities will take place at either ____________ or Southern Cross University, or at a more convenient location suggested by the participant.

No information provided from participation in the above activities will be made public in any form that could identify the participants. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of participants. All original data will be stored securely in a lockable filing cabinet at Southern Cross University, and will be kept for at least five years and will then be destroyed.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and confidentially is assured. If students decide to participate in the research, they are free to withdraw and to discontinue participation at any time. Each participant is required to sign the following consent form to establish their consent to participate in the study. Participants can also withdraw consent to further involvement in the research at any time and will not need to give reasons or justification for their decision. A list of available counselling services is provided at the end of this form should participants experience any discomfort, however this type of risk is not envisaged.

My research is being conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy under the supervision of Associate Professor Keith Skamp. He is also the Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies for the School of Education at Southern Cross University. If any issues or questions are raised as a result of your participation in this research please contact Keith Skamp (telephone (02) 6620-3722, or email: kskamp@scu.edu.au).

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Southern Cross University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval Number is ECN-05-138. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Ethics Complaints Officer, Ms Suze Kelly, (telephone (02) 6626-9139 or fax (02) 6626 9145, email: skelly1@scu.edu.au)

Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Free counselling services

The purpose of counselling is to provide debriefing, if required, should participants experience any emotional upset or discomfort.

Lifeline: 131114 (all areas)

Lifeline Face-to-Face Counselling: (02) 6622 4133 (during office hours)

__________ (02) _______ (for staff and students only)
Appendix 1.3.2  Teacher

Information Sheet for Art Teacher

Project Title  The adventures of an inking: attitudes and beliefs regarding art and participation in an artistic creative process

Researcher  Melanie McDonald (PhD Candidate)
School of Education
Southern Cross University
(02) 6820 2417
m.mcdonald.10@scu.edu.au

I am doing research for my PhD thesis. The general concern of this project is to understand how visual art education can help to ‘unblock the creative block’. The specific aim of the current part of my study is to identify what people’s attitudes and beliefs regarding art are, and how these attitudes and beliefs influence their participation in the process of making art.

This study uses a variety of ways to gather information. Your participation in this research project involves the following activities:

1. Teaching approximately four art workshops at [ ], which will provide the opportunity to collect observational data of students learning to draw or paint.
2. You will also take part in conversational interviews with the researcher throughout the research. This will provide you with the opportunity to share your observations and reflections from the workshop sessions. These ‘conversations’ will be unstructured with you directing the nature of what is shared and the researcher contributing to the conversation by way of clarifying her own understanding of things that are said or providing examples from her own observations or perspective. It is anticipated that the duration of each of these ‘conversations’ will not exceed one hour. They will be video recorded for later analysis.

Each of the above activities will take place at either [ ] for Southern Cross University, or at a more convenient location suggested by the participant.

No information provided from participation in the above activities will be made public in any form that could identify the participants. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of participants. All original data will be stored securely in a lockable filing cabinet at Southern Cross University, and will be kept for at least five years and will then be destroyed.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and confidentially is assured. If participants decide to participate, they are free to withdraw and to discontinue participation at any time. Each participant is required to sign the following consent form to establish their consent to participate in the study. Participants can also withdraw consent to further involvement in the research at any time and will not need to give reasons or justification for their decision. It is also a requirement of participation in this study that teachers will not bias or discriminate any student on the basis of whether they have chosen to participate, or otherwise, in the study.
A list of available counselling services is provided at the end of this form should participants experience any discomfort, however this type of risk is not envisaged.

My research is being conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy under the supervision of Associate Professor Keith Skamp. He is also the Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies for the School of Education at Southern Cross University. If any issues or questions are raised as a result of your participation in this research please contact Keith Skamp (telephone (02) 6620-3722, or email: kskamp@scu.edu.au).

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Southern Cross University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval Number is ECN-06-133. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Ethics Complaints Officer, Ms Suze Kely, (telephone (02) 6626-9139, or fax (02) 6626 9145, email: kely1@scu.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

**Free counselling services**

The purpose of counselling is to provide debriefing, if required, should participants experience any emotional upset or discomfort.

**Lifeline:** 131114 (all areas)

**Lifeline Face-to-Face Counselling:** (02) 6622 4133 (during office hours)

(02) 6622 4133 (for staff and students only)
Appendix 2.1  DVD questions

The adventures of an inkling

DVD QUESTIONS

Here is the first DVD with some of the moments from your Core Drawing Module at [___]. There is probably just over 2 hours worth of video footage. Most of this will be your own interactions with [___] or [___] and other students who are participating in this project. There may also be video footage of you in the process of drawing. Please watch the DVD and respond to the following questions.

1. Please identify, by using the title number, any of the footage which you think that I should pay special attention to when I come to reflect on your learning experiences at [___]. Please feel free to tell me why this is so important.

2. Please share any special insights that you have had in relation to your learning at [___].

3. Please share any critical incidents that may have moved you forwards or backwards on your journey at [___] this term.

THANK YOU

NOTE: The titles have been named with the date first, then AM or PM, and then either: [W] = whole-class instruction, [S] = student-initiated interaction with the teacher, [T] = teacher-initiated interaction with the student, or [P] = peer interaction, the last part of the title name will be either the name of the teacher or student, or just the initial.
Appendix 2.2  Action Learning Spiral

Step 1

IDENTIFY (stating the problem)

Identify something that you would like to improve or accept in your art making practice.

What isn’t happening in your art making practice that you would like to have happen?

or

What is happening that you would like to eliminate?

Step 2

PLAN (imagining a solution)

What do you think you could do about it?

Also: Think about what I can do, as your ‘research assistant’, while you implement your plan, to support you when you later come to evaluating the outcome of your solution? For example, I could collect video footage of art workshops or take notes of the things you do.

Step 3

ACT + OBSERVE (implementing the solution)

Now is the time to act on your ‘plan’.

Also: Think about what I can do, as your ‘research assistant’, to support you in evaluating the outcome of your solution? For example, I could edit the video footage of the art workshops and share this with you, and I could listen to your thoughts.
Step 4

REFLECT (evaluating the solution)

Now it is time to reflect on your ‘actions’.

How effective was your solution?

Step 5

PLAN (change your practice in light of your evaluation)

What needs to be done now?

If you solved the ‘problem’ in step 1:

Congratulations! You may now think about whether there is another aspect of your art making practice that you would like to improve or accept. Note: This doesn’t have to happen straight away, it may need to emerge from new experiences in your art making practice.

If you are still in the process of solving the ‘problem’ in step 1:

What is the next step? Perhaps you will choose to continue with the plan you developed in step 2, or perhaps you have realized that something else has cropped up, and that this needs to be looked at before you can solve the problem identified in step 1.
Appendix 3.1.1  Hand-written field notes (during data collection and processing)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>In class, we change the board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W, then I'm confused, we need to work the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>So, it looks like a cylinder, we work the totality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>We are here to realize things not to finish them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The nurse and then someone at nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W, then I'm confused, we need to work the totality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The nurse and then someone at nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W, then I'm confused, we need to work the totality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W, then I'm confused, we need to work the totality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The nurse and then someone at nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W, then I'm confused, we need to work the totality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The nurse and then someone at nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W, then I'm confused, we need to work the totality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The nurse and then someone at nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W, then I'm confused, we need to work the totality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The nurse and then someone at nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W, then I'm confused, we need to work the totality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The nurse and then someone at nurse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Event codes:**
- W = whole-class instruction
- T = teacher-initiated interaction
- S = student-initiated interaction
- P = peer-to-peer interaction
Appendix 3.1.2  Word-processed field notes (during or after data processing)

The adventures of an inking

FIELD NOTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23/02/06</td>
<td>The Drill Hall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher: [Name redacted]

Students: [Names redacted]

Event codes:
- W = whole-class instruction
- T = teacher-initiated interaction
- P = peer interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disc</th>
<th>Time (hh:mm)</th>
<th>Event code</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>BOXES</td>
<td></td>
<td>Setting up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>9:49</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>9:54</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>10:01</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>Black and white box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10:05</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oil pastels, do you work with your fingers too? + scratching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>10:10</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organise the shapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>Have no idea ... composition + colour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>10:16</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oil pastels, do you work with your fingers too? + scratching. Really get your fingers dirty. Reflecting on last week's phonetic drawing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX 3 - DATA PROCESSING AND INITIAL ANALYSIS

283
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disc #</th>
<th>Title #</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Code</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>11:41</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>Right, I would try another one. Simplification can be an approach for something that is confusing... shading/broader treatment. Use eraser. 4B pencil has a softer edge and it went onto the ink line. Not planning, but suddenly realising it. A multitude of resolves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td></td>
<td>11:46</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>It's very busy... as a composition. Easy to get fascinated. Simplification/brad treatment/totality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td></td>
<td>11:49</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>I keep smudging it, gets a piece of paper for her hand on while she is drawing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td></td>
<td>11:52</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>Simplification, effective, direct treatment. Broad colouring now. From a brad treatment then narrow to a fine application. Break it down, then if there's time go for the details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td></td>
<td>11:58</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cliche box R: Direct T: It's sort of doing it itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td></td>
<td>12:01</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>This is totally different from that one, yes... beautiful!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td></td>
<td>12:03</td>
<td>PM</td>
<td></td>
<td>(drumming) working on the bird cage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td></td>
<td>12:14</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>You are good at tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td></td>
<td>12:16</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hardness of line/softness of line. Force yourself to do things you don't feel comfortable with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>12:18</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>R: Can you see for this one, its strength is slowly starting to become the smudging and the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3.2  
Transcript extract: samples

[This is a blank page.]
Appendix 3.2.1  Student DVD transcript (from classroom observations) (Betty)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>I see that you are on the phone... you don't appear to be making a decision and collect the cards and then move to the next one. Because that's how transparency can work too... I demonstrate and then...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:50</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Betty:... you don't...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:55</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Betty:... you don't...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:57</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Betty:... you don't...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Betty:... you don't...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:10</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Betty:... you don't...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:11</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Betty:... you don't...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Highlighted sections are Betty's reflections on the transcript.*

APPENDIX 3 – DATA PROCESSING AND INITIAL ANALYSIS
Appendix 3.2.1 (continued)

| 7 | 12:10 | I: | 1A. What do you think the color is?  
1B. What do you think about it?  
1C. How do you feel about it?  
2A. How do you feel about it?  
2B. How do you feel about it?  
2C. How do you feel about it?  
3A. How do you feel about it?  
3B. How do you feel about it?  
3C. How do you feel about it?  
4A. How do you feel about it?  
4B. How do you feel about it?  
4C. How do you feel about it? |

| 6 | 12:55 | 1A. Do you think it's a good idea?  
1B. What do you think?  
1C. How do you feel about it?  
2A. How do you feel about it?  
2B. How do you feel about it?  
2C. How do you feel about it?  
3A. How do you feel about it?  
3B. How do you feel about it?  
3C. How do you feel about it?  
4A. How do you feel about it?  
4B. How do you feel about it?  
4C. How do you feel about it |

| 9 | 13:57 | S: | It's well balanced.  
I: It's a good idea.  
2A. How do you feel about it?  
2B. How do you feel about it?  
2C. How do you feel about it?  
3A. How do you feel about it?  
3B. How do you feel about it?  
3C. How do you feel about it?  
4A. How do you feel about it?  
4B. How do you feel about it?  
4C. How do you feel about it |

| 10 | 13:31 | S: | It's a good idea.  
I: It's well balanced.  
2A. How do you feel about it?  
2B. How do you feel about it?  
2C. How do you feel about it?  
3A. How do you feel about it?  
3B. How do you feel about it?  
3C. How do you feel about it?  
4A. How do you feel about it?  
4B. How do you feel about it?  
4C. How do you feel about it |

| 11 | 14:18 | I: | It looks perfect.  
2A. How do you feel about it?  
2B. How do you feel about it?  
2C. How do you feel about it?  
3A. How do you feel about it?  
3B. How do you feel about it?  
3C. How do you feel about it?  
4A. How do you feel about it?  
4B. How do you feel about it?  
4C. How do you feel about it |

APPENDIX 3 – DATA PROCESSING AND INITIAL ANALYSIS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>14</th>
<th>15:30</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>&lt;NAME&gt;, have you fed a strong, dehydrated thing?</td>
<td>Yes, I did the thing, and I was a little hungry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3:01 I think it's important that I see the shape, and then see something else, as if I never saw it before.</td>
<td>Yes, I think it's important that I see the shape, and then see something else, as if I never saw it before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3:02 I don't think it's possible to get the shape of the object, but I can see something else.</td>
<td>Yes, I don't think it's possible to get the shape of the object, but I can see something else.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3:03 I think the object is the one over the door.</td>
<td>Yes, I think the object is the one over the door.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3:04 I think the thing over the door is important.</td>
<td>Yes, I think the thing over the door is important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3:05 I think the door is important.</td>
<td>Yes, I think the door is important.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And then continue...
Appendix 3.2.2  Student interview transcript (Joanne)

Title: Interviewing with Student (Appendix 3.2.2)

Laughter

Marianne: But I’ll form the process a little bit.

Dr. (unintelligible)

Marianne: And that is great.

S.J.: Thank you.

Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

Dr. (unintelligible)

Marianne: Yes, that is great.

S.J.: Thank you.

Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

Dr. (unintelligible)

Marianne: That is great.

S.J.: Thank you.

Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

Dr. (unintelligible)

Marianne: And that is great.

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Dr. (unintelligible)

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Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

Dr. (unintelligible)

Marianne: That is great.

S.J.: Thank you.

Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

Dr. (unintelligible)

Marianne: And that is great.

S.J.: Thank you.

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Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

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Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

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S.J.: Thank you.

Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

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S.J.: Thank you.

Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

Dr. (unintelligible)

Marianne: That is great.

S.J.: Thank you.

Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

Dr. (unintelligible)

Marianne: And that is great.

S.J.: Thank you.

Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

Dr. (unintelligible)

Marianne: That is great.

S.J.: Thank you.

Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

Dr. (unintelligible)

Marianne: And that is great.

S.J.: Thank you.

Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

Dr. (unintelligible)

Marianne: That is great.

S.J.: Thank you.

Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

Dr. (unintelligible)

Marianne: And that is great.

S.J.: Thank you.

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Marianne: And that is great.

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S.J.: Thank you.

Marianne: I have been seeing everything from an angle.

Dr. (unintelligible)

Marianne: And that is great.

S.J.: Thank you.
Appendix 3.2.2

(continued)
Appendix 3.2.2 (continued)

you have put something in my hand. The only thing with which I identify is with the language. I feel like I could talk to the language. And when you keep away from what other things are saying, then the language starts coming back. I feel like I could talk to the language.

Joyce: And that's what I'm doing. I feel like it's some sort of relief for me. It feels like I'm doing the opposite of that. I feel like I'm doing something that I've never done before. It feels like I'm doing something that I've never done before.

Joyce: And that's what I'm doing. I feel like it's some sort of relief for me. It feels like I'm doing the opposite of that. I feel like I'm doing something that I've never done before. It feels like I'm doing something that I've never done before.

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Joyce: And that's what I'm doing. I feel like it's some sort of relief for me. It feels like I'm doing the opposite of that. I feel like I'm doing something that I've never done before. It feels like I'm doing something that I've never done before.
then I hear what he is saying and most of the time I don't. But as I say, it could be the slightest voice or
music that really pulls me out of whack, and I go "aargh! I can't think about anything but that," and so
that's when something's got to give and it's normally that. I've also heard too, I heard an artist say once:
'When you're painting and you've got a headache, something's got to go. Either you've got to stop, or the
headache goes. The brain is not capable of doing both.'

And so the interview continued...
Appendix 3.2.3  
Group discussion transcript (GD8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration of Discussion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>1-2:49</td>
<td>1-hour 25 min 34 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>1-2:49</td>
<td>1-hour 25 min 34 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>1-2:49</td>
<td>1-hour 25 min 34 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>1-2:49</td>
<td>1-hour 25 min 34 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>1-2:49</td>
<td>1-hour 25 min 34 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>1-2:49</td>
<td>1-hour 25 min 34 sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>1-2:49</td>
<td>1-hour 25 min 34 sec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a lot of laughter and a sense of camaraderie. The group seemed to be enjoying themselves and the discussion. Alex brought up a point about something he had read recently, which prompted a lot of discussion. Ben then shared an anecdote about his experience in a similar situation, which was met with a lot of sympathy and understanding. Chris added a personal touch to the conversation with a story about their own experiences. Dan then provided a contrasting viewpoint, which led to a healthy debate. Fred then summarized the discussion, bringing it back to the main topic at hand. Gary then closed the discussion, reminding everyone to keep the topic in mind for future discussions.
APPENDIX 3 – DATA PROCESSING AND INITIAL ANALYSIS

Appendix 3.2.3 (continued)
Appendix 3.2.3 (continued)

getting away with. (Laughter.) Getting away with my hands and not worrying about it. I
enjoyed the idea.

I'm very proud of you today. She's probably not the same way I am today. (Laughter.)
I'm the same way I am today.

I'm very proud of you today. She's probably not the same way I am today. (Laughter.)
I'm the same way I am today.

I'm very proud of you today. She's probably not the same way I am today. (Laughter.)
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I'm the same way I am today.

I'm very proud of you today. She's probably not the same way I am today. (Laughter.)
I'm the same way I am today.
Appendix 3.2.3

(continued)

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Appendix 3.2.3 (continued)

125 It's funny, don't ask me in, Jodi. If she's ever coming, you know, I know that the clients that we are meeting about, some of them are struggling but a lot of them actually have some support. So, never mind, we'll just use it to meet with...  
129
130 "This is Joanne. How did they do? Then did they paint all day, and then still get food on the table? How was school going for them?"
131
132 "Yes! It was sad. Then the..."
133 "Bobby, I'm Crestin. Simms, she had a snow."
134 "What's the matter with him? Once he went to school, it cleared it out?"
135 Bobby: He had a paper cut.  
136 Jeannine: His teacher suggested him, paid for his parent and everything. I don't think he was mail at all.  
137 Joanne: Oh, I know he was. I've meant, yeah, I think he was, a few things going on there... They were doing some...  
138 Jeannine: Elen and her husband is coming now, paint of... You mean, John, Steve did...  
139 Jeannine: And he was drinking. I don't know if it was because of that, but he was drinking, alcohol or whatever, it was both then.  
140 Bobby: They were drinking about the...  
141 Jeannine: It was unusual if anything.  
142 Bobby: And because he was painting, applying paint, a lot of the paint he was using too. I think I...  
143 While they were doing that there were very poisonous. So he was sitting and drinking and painting, that could happen.  
144 Joanne: I don't forget there was school for... I can really going to have to go.  
145 Jeannine: There's going to be no trouble.  
146 Bobby: What do you mean?  
147 Jeannine: You know that.  
148 Bobby: Whatever! Take you somewhere.  
149 Joanne: Oh, do you going to be here? Are you filling tomorrow?  
150 Jeannine: Yes.  
151 152..."
Appendix 3.3  Inducing categories and themes: samples
Appendix 3.3.1

Student interview transcript (Joanne)

Interviews with S-Jo

Transcript and Notes

Title: Interview with S-Jo

302

Laughter

Melanie: Ha, ha, ha!

Jo: Yeah, sure.

Melanie: These are great.

Jo: Thank you.

Melanie: I've been seeing everything from an angle.

Jo: From that angle?

Melanie: Pinching to the seed pod drawing.

Jo: This was great. I don't think of doing it or it would be possible, and I think Shiri and I thought of it but no, I can't see it because I can't see it altogether.

And then pull the petals over the top. I saw it! Only that part, with them going over the top.

And then you went... and I really appreciate how much you've worked, and then he said I think it's the same level of course I've done it and I can't see the work was still wet but I said yes, that's bringing back the wet.

Jo: No, well, what's it doing, because I've started with ink and then I've got the pastels, the chalk pastels over the top, then he said, then I got the rubber and ink. So I said, I put my rubber, this is here, and as soon as I rubbed it I thought it needs more... because I'd already,... and it is a bit of a stretching.

So I thought that was great, and my partner brought me some color pen, so all the colors made the yellow, but now I can see pastel as the yellow, I don't have to buy more if I want to, I can experiment with that. So I've got all these colored pencils I can go with, and see the pastel on the top of it. So it's really exciting. When you find something new, it becomes really exciting.

Melanie: Definitely.

Jo: Yeah, I've been nervous about it. I don't know if I'm doing it right, but I can't put the discovery when I was doing it, I can see now I can see it, because I've done so, it's sort of looking and seeing yourself, or someone else tells you that you go, so, OK, but until you do it, it was exciting. So I can do more work on that.

Melanie: It's sort of like that. It takes a little bit of knowledge that I'll talk about, that is new now.

Jo: Yeah, it's taught me a lot of things today. So that's really exciting because then I can expand on that and find my own things with that and I also appreciate to find more things to simplify, even if I don't work, it's trying to go through that barrier.

And she said, you can see how the wet paper, and as soon as I rub it, it was fine. I didn't know the whole paper was gone. Because we did, umm, pin pastel experimental drawing with paper, and because I was going to try to you do a hundred and we went for about half an hour and we went for about half an hour.

And when she said, it's a hard work, but it's not really working. I was leaving the drawing, but the first day she said we were doing a hundred drawings, nothing.

Jo: Oh, oh, oh!

Melanie: Nothing.

Jo: Nothing?

Melanie: Yeah, Um. (Laugh)

Jo: Um, (Laugh) she couldn't be anything necessarily, and I was in the room, and it was the first time I had drawn in ages, and was sort of starting to draw the ceiling, and he went.

Jo: Did she talk about class as anything?

Melanie: Yeah, exactly, so she's saying 'you're up! You're up!' you know like 'you're too tight but it's like I thought you were being less, and for me it was um, um, it's like, it's like... you know, you have to be careful. We've had a lot of fun, and I think it was um, um, it's like...
Interviews with S-Jo

Transcript and Notes

Appendix 3.3.1

(continued)

APPENDIX 3 - DATA PROCESSING AND INITIAL ANALYSIS
Appendix 3.3.2  
Group discussion transcript (GD8_Betty)

Group Discussion 8

Transcript and Notes

- I've had a disruptive time and so my focus went off! I believe it's because of you, the move, and then I got the flu.

-“Materials. You moved!”

-“Yeah, I moved. Um, so now it's time for me to put my focus back. So, it was all right, it was good looking at the video, and umm, reading what particularly what [redacted] was seeing, were things that I need to take on board. Like look at the whole of the picture. If you know, look at the whole of the picture, you are making a picture of it and it comes back for me to ensure my own creativity if that is making a picture. Don't try to do a sketch. And so I think if I get to the end of the year and I am able to make a picture it will be very satisfying. The challenge is that I don't know whether if I can do it. I think I have done a couple more, one more as that's highly. It's quite tremendous, too, because that's sort of a parallel, I will be doing those from time to time, and they, they, they do it. There are really good artists.

-“Don't ever have done anything like this?”

-“Oil paints. Oil paint is like the astroboss” I'm doing it. It's painting in oil. If you know, I realize what some things coming up for me which is quite good, because it's history is great but he also astounding.

-“Yeah.

-“Because you realize how much practice, how much they painted and how some artists, I guess really struggled and how some are given a lot of help and support, woman and man, oh you know, you can't just be a part-time artist. No matter what you do. It's hard to that.

-“So, I am really hard on myself, well, very, very want the day to be this because it is only going to be working with the picture. That's why I am sort of telling myself, because you're going to go to work and sort out that and that's going to be so much easier. You will have your enthusiasm, and feel like you have at right to attend a whole day you know, just doing art. So that's why the Tiffany drawings were good because we had to do it and I don't, I have this vague idea of I've got to do things in my journal, but I honestly have time to sort out things. So, it's just back the focus and the promotion and feeling like it's just astounding. Now talking about what you like, I know I'm just doing to do figures I just want to do figures.

-“You're great at figures.

-“Today I had a figure and then we had in all this patterned stuff and I thought ‘well if you want patterns I'll give you patterns’ (laughs) like patterns but other patterns, like other people's patterns.

-“But you just wanted to do the figures.

-“I wanted to do the patterns but I wasn't interested in the figures. So I don't want to know anything that's going on. I know what I want to do. I know where I'm going as.

-“Are you thinking of god? Tomorrow I've got to do someone else's figures.

-“I don't know what we are doing tomorrow.

-“Our imagination

-“(laughs) I don't have any.

-“I see I like doing the figures.

-“No, that's not true. I always used to think that, but that's one thing that I have done, I don't get on to it because you will get there this time next week and you will just go ‘oh’ and not anymore, I'm not creative because I can't.

-“I feel I have blocks like that.

Group Discussion 8

Transcript and Notes

- You've got to give yourself time and ah just … plus it, so I am really happy about.

- I know. It's like whether you think it's a great idea.

- To piece of paper or you play, I just like to put something down, but you don't have to know how to fly it down. Or what the picture is.

- It isn't perfect. It goes back to art history part of what sort of stimulated me a little bit less just doing the looking up manuals and I don't really like surreal art. Some of it is really pretty. I don't like Salvador Dali like his stuff.

- I love, you have to define it. It's insane and mention well executed and you know, vision really. I think, sometimes we forget that.

- I, I don't, it's also when you have an idea, you can go ‘oh, no’ and then another one, ‘no’. But if you go get it and it just do it and go ‘what else would I do?’ you know, just build on the idea instead of just get it. Because you can sort of say to me every idea and never think anything is good enough.

- And I think there is a time when you really do, think maybe it's coming from me when I really want to start drawing on some, you know, for a better word, the other side. You know that, there's sort of that schizophrenic or ornamental stuff, the dalmatians, the things that are quite sort of like that. Sometimes it - I was just talking about the dalmatians. It was all about that.

- I think you might have the idea of - or you might have the idea of the setting. You might be thinking of an idea.

- I love. I am still doing it, I will keep the camera on my desk. I just have a camera on.

- I am going to write this on the road.

- I, I don't, I think there are a number of artists, and for a better word, ‘the other side’. It's a better word, it's a much better word. It's more of ‘the other side’. It's more of ‘the other side’.

- I like Dali like his stuff, and the surreals. I like doing the figures and I like doing the figures. I feel I have blocks like that.

- Elias, his blab, there's nothing there.

- I think the language is the bit, I'm just hand in a blank book and go 'this is my art history journal' because that's about it you are going to get.

- (laughs)

- Yeah, a blank journal.

- I just don't have any. It is an invitation to see what's there. And I mean you know that probably takes a lot of courage and so I think we are probably having a bit of trouble is that we, part of it is, part of us is concerned about ‘are we original? And have we got creative ideas?’ or the other part of us is concerned with ‘is it even right? Can I do this?’

- I'm not sure. My technical skills I need you know just easy and get it right. And so we've got, we've got many challenges from both sides. And then we might find you know, you're working on one, and two you are working on the other and you are both need a lot of support and feeling. So again, the Tiffany drawings were good because we had to do it and I don't, I have this vague idea of I've got to do those things in my journal, but I honestly don't have time to sort out things. So it's just back the focus and the promotion and feeling like it's just astounding. Now talking about what you like, I know I'm just doing to do figures I just want to do figures.

- You're great at figures.

- Today I had a figure and then we had in all this patterned stuff and I thought ‘well if you want patterns I'll give you patterns’ (laughs) like patterns but other patterns, like other people's patterns.

- But you just wanted to do the figures.

- I wanted to do the patterns but I wasn't interested in the figures. So I don't want to know anything that's going on. I know what I want to do. I know where I'm going as.

- Are you thinking of god? Tomorrow I've got to do someone else's figures.

- I don't know what we are doing tomorrow.

- Our imagination

- (laughs) I don't have any.

- I see I like doing the figures.

- No, that's not true. I always used to think that, but that's one thing that I have done, I don't get on to it because you will get there this time next week and you will just go ‘oh’ and not anymore, I'm not creative because I can't.

- I feel I have blocks like that.

Title 6: Ri-EvJ 175004 0.00 am

-0.00 E: I was thinking about, you know how you were saying about you know how it's a bit distressing thinking about how artists in the past have done so much art work
### Appendix 3.4  NUDIST nodes (categories and themes)

#### Table 3.4.1: NUDIST nodes for Betty (16 Feb 2007)

8 main categories (55 themes, and sub-themes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S-B (Betty)</th>
<th>1-Reflecting on research</th>
<th>2-Art-making practice</th>
<th>3-Reasons for studying fine arts at [art school]</th>
<th>4-Reflections on [art school]</th>
<th>5-Journalism</th>
<th>6-Performing arts</th>
<th>7-Career</th>
<th>8-Action Learning Cycle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DVD1</td>
<td>Reflecting on research</td>
<td>history</td>
<td>Social activity</td>
<td>Art History</td>
<td>GD2</td>
<td>Gd4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Special moments</td>
<td>Making a picture</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Problem: FEAR-ORIGINAL (433-458)</td>
<td>Revisiting problem: ANXIETY-ORIGINALITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Special insights</td>
<td>An excuse to do art</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plan: seeing the WHOLE PICTURE (594-609)</td>
<td>performance anxiety about wanting to be FREE and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Critical incidents</td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plan: let go of ANXIETY-ORIGINALITY (609-620)</td>
<td>LESS REPRESENTATIONAL (359-366)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraged to</td>
<td></td>
<td>What Melanie can do (775-790)</td>
<td>– anxiety about not being ORIGINAL (407-428)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A big, unanswered need, calling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Am I original? (464-465)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Revisiting plan
- I am not going to worry about expectations—sometimes I really want to explode all that—holding back for 2 reasons—meditative/intricate drawings—this weekend be more zany - (365-378)
- Trust the tutors (382-389)
- (Melanie) trust the tutors – T-R – seeing the WHOLE PICTURE (401-407)

Revising problem/s
- TIME to practice and PRIORITIES (653-733)
- Do I really deserve this?
- Where I put value in what I do.
- I see it as a bit of an indulgence.
- Do you really deserve to be so indulgent, self-indulgent?
- There’s a lot of hesitation.

Revising plan
- make some more time to enjoy my home work (784-792)

Gd8

Revisiting problem: ORIGINALITY
Revisiting plan: seeing the WHOLE PICTURE
Revisiting revised plan: PERMISSION to do art

Interview2

ORIGINALITY
PERMISSION to do art

Interview1

PERMISSION to do art
Table 3.4.2: NUDIST nodes for Ellen

4 main categories (with 51 themes, and sub-themes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S-E (Ellen)</th>
<th>1-reflecting on research</th>
<th>DVD1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-art-making practice</td>
<td>Things that motivate and inspire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyment and satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looking at artwork</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content+subject matter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product + process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expressing self + interests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Copying + imitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General approach to art making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action learning cycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IDENTIFY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PLAN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>REFLECTING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>REVISED PLAN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflecting on revised plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Things that block or inhibit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3-reasons for studying fine art at [art school]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art teacher</th>
<th>Beliefs about art learning</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exposure and imitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Systematic instruction</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Early childhood</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>General philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In a group of people learning together</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practical</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural ability</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children’s beliefs about ‘good’ art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developing own practical skills

4-Reflections on [art school]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art history</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>[TEACHER’S NAME]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 drawings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Drawing</td>
<td>T-R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T-S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>practise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from peers</td>
<td>S-M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application and interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key insights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preferring 2D to 3D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trusting and accepting her self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valuing people with similar art-related interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life-long learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggles and challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finished product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[art school] workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inner critic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.4.3: NUDIST nodes for Jarrah (S-Ja) (7 Feb 2007)

9 main categories (with 53 themes, and sub-themes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S-Ja (Jarrah)</th>
<th>1- + attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>trusting teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- - attitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- nursing</td>
<td>career change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Action Learning Cycle</td>
<td>Gd2 Gd5 Gd7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be brave in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>product + process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interview2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5- Art-making practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>when it works</td>
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<td></td>
<td>at home</td>
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<td></td>
<td>current interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pressure to perform</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pressure on the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impatient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>things that BLOCK or INHIBIT participation in ACP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>being put on the spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>self-doubt -- disrespect for self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>technique - HOW?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>too many ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6- Reflecting on research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>looking at DVDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7- Family support</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8- Life long learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9- Reflecting on art school</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>coming to [art school]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>application+interview</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>looking at other people’s work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>comparing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>for ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>being new to art at [art school]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>suggestions for improving [art school]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>outline of what to bring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>guidance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disjointed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>journal?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>first day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reasons for studying at [art school]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>originality and creativity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>art vocabulary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>making mistakes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>journal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art History</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Core Drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PROBLEM+SOLUTION</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>art classes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fifty drawings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Core Drawing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>T-S</td>
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<td></td>
<td>T-R</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>links with other areas of life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.4.4: NUDIST nodes for Joanne (S-Jo)

15 main categories (69 themes, and sub-themes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S-Jo (Joanne)</th>
<th>1-Reflecting on research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DVD1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valuing researcher perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Attitudes</td>
<td>Towards learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Towards art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Towards [art school] class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Art-making practice</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expressing human emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The flow or the zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognising it in others</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness</td>
<td>Themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reasons for making art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Things that block or inhibit</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thoughts</td>
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<td>Expectations</td>
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<td>Other commitments</td>
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<td>Technique</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Control freak</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Expressing self</td>
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<td>4-Beliefs</td>
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<td>5-Reasons for studying fine art at [art school]</td>
<td>Learning how to draw myself</td>
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<td>New ways of producing art</td>
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<td>6-Reflecting on [art school]</td>
<td>Core Drawing</td>
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<td>Talking about art</td>
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<td>7-Letting go</td>
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<td>9-Interview questions</td>
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<td>10-Frame of mind</td>
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<td>11-Self</td>
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<td>Self and art</td>
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<td>Commitment to art leading to other changes in self</td>
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<td>Perception of self</td>
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<td>Challenging self</td>
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<td>12-Transcendental agency</td>
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<td>13-Her approach to learning</td>
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<td>14-Action learning cycle</td>
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<td>Problem-plan</td>
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<td>Step 1 – identify something to change or accept in AMP</td>
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<td>The real problem</td>
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<td>15-Fears</td>
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Table 3.4.5: NUDIST nodes for Teresa (S-T)

5 main categories (with 25 themes, and sub-themes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S-T (Teresa)</th>
<th>1-Reflecting on research</th>
<th>2-Art-making practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Reasons for making art</td>
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<td>Process and end result</td>
<td>Accessing mystery</td>
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<td>Spiritual exercise</td>
<td>Constraints</td>
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<td>Working in a group</td>
<td>Links between art-related learning and other areas of life</td>
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<td>Links between art-related learning and other areas of life</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-Reasons for studying fine arts at [art school]</td>
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<td>4-Reflections on [art school]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>50 drawings</td>
<td>Negative space</td>
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<td>Core Drawing</td>
<td>T-R</td>
<td>Still life</td>
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<td>T-S</td>
<td>The dark drawing</td>
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<td>T-I</td>
<td>Figure drawing</td>
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<td>The big fluffy cat drawing</td>
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<td>Imagination drawing</td>
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<td>Accessing mystery</td>
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<td>5-Action Learning Cycle</td>
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<td>Gd2</td>
<td>Interview2</td>
<td>Interview3</td>
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Appendix 4.1  Student profiles

The student profiles are vignettes of each student that were developed from the NUDIST coded interview and group discussion data during the first phase of data analysis. The creation of each profile provided an opportunity to engage with and make sense of the large volumes of interview and group discussion data that had been transcribed. It also allowed identification of existing theories that might help to make sense of the data for each individual student. Appendix 4.1 includes samples of the profiles for two students: Joanne and Betty. The profiles for Ellen, Jarrah and Teresa are available, but due to size restrictions, have not been included here. Please contact the author (m.mcdonald.10@scu.edu.au or c/- PO Box 621, Wahroonga, 2076, Australia) should you require further information.
Appendix 4.1.1  Joanne

Data consulted:
Interview #1 and #3
Group Discussion #2, #4, #7 and #8

As long as Joanne remembers she has always enjoyed doing art (I_S-Jo1: 213-214). Having lived out of
town as a child (GD8_S-Jo: 230), with a brother who was ‘either driving me crazy or stirring me up or,
you know, or doing chores and stuff’ (GD8_S-Jo: 233), Joanne had to amuse herself. Joanne would
take herself away, particularly on the weekends, and amuse herself by doing something she loved to do
(GD8_S-Jo: 234-235).

As a teenager Joanne started ‘getting into tattoo magazines’ (I_S-Jo1: 113-114). She always had a
fascination with the pictures, so she would buy the magazines, flick through them and find a picture that
she liked and draw it (I_S-Jo1: 115-119). Joanne’s history of copying other people’s drawings and
pictures was mentioned on a number of occasions, “It’s just too easy to go and pick up somebody else’s
drawing that I like and copy that in my own way.” (I_S-Jo3: 8-13). However, Joanne always felt like she
was cheating, because she was not drawing from herself (I_S-Jo1: 119-120), and she didn’t like this.
‘Oh I hate it, I really don’t like this thing about myself” (GD2_S-Jo: 164-165). She wanted to make art
that came from her (GD2_S-Jo: 167). She was determined to know ‘What can I put out there?’ (I_S-Jo1:
133), but she didn’t know how to start (GD2_S-Jo: 167). Having spent so many years drawing other
people’s pictures she didn’t know what to draw and she believed that she didn’t know how to draw
anything (I_S-Jo1: 134-136).

Joanne also reflected on how she liked painting when she was at school, and that it was only recently
that she started to teach herself how to paint (I_S-Jo1: 136-139). However, she had got to the stage
where she didn’t know how to get the effects that she was looking for (I_S-Jo1: 139-143). “I wanted to
do water and I kept working and I thought, at this stage it is going to be this thick because I keep
working at it, but I didn’t know how to” (I_S-Jo1: 141-143).

Joanne’s reasons for making art

Joanne mentioned on several occasions that doing art is about “doing something that I love” (GD4_S-
Jo: 350; GD7_S-Jo: 343), and also that doing art for her is “honouring something that I am really
enjoying inside” (GD4_S-Jo: 355-356). She expressed a belief that “If I don’t do it I think I will probably
be less of a person for myself” (GD4_S-Jo: 354-355). Thus, doing art for Joanne is also about doing
something for her self (GD4_S-Jo: 353-354). Joanne’s espoused belief that “this is my calling out of my
inner core” (GD4_S-Jo: 468) suggests that making art is both related to her perception of herself and
also something very important for her to do during her life. She expressed a concern that “If I don’t do
something I am going to die doing, why didn’t I do that?” and that’s the last thing that I want to be
thinking about on my deathbed, ”why I didn’t draw more or paint or just be artistic” (GD4_S-Jo: 468-
472).

Doing art for Joanne, however, is not just about doing something she enjoys and loves, but it is also
about “putting myself out there” (GD4_S-Jo: 351). This seems to be about expressing her self. The form
that this self-expression takes however is two-fold. On the one hand Joanne is expressing herself in her
artworks, but she is also expressing her self by doing things with her life (like making art) that she
enjoys. In this way the choices that Joanne makes in relation to what she does in her life also become a
form of self-expression. Thus the artistic creative process is not just limited to manipulating materials
to create an ‘artwork’ that expresses something from within her, but is also about making choices and
commitments to do things in her life that expresses something from within her.

Reasons for studying fine arts at this particular art school

In 2005 Joanne studied the Certificate II in Fine Arts at this particular art school. This was a six-month
course. Joanne’s reasons for studying fine arts at art school can be understood using critical realism’s
idea that absence making things happen (Shipway 2002 p.140). Bhaskar argues that determinate

530 These comments of Joanne’s were made during a group discussion in response to another
participant recalling that they only ever made art at home as a child when it was raining because of a
perceived pressure to help out around the house/farm. Thus, although Joanne did not specifically state
that ‘doing something she loved to do’ involved making art, this was implied.
531 Absenting the absence of knowing how to start.
532 Absenting the absence of knowing how to get effects.
absence, that is “absence as experienced as lack, as need, as want” is a compelling force behind any action or change (Bhaskar 2002 p.38). Thus, we can identify Joanne’s reasons for studying fine arts at [art school] in terms of things that she experienced as lacking in the context of her art-making practice.

It appears that there were several reasons for Joanne choosing to study fine arts at [art school], including a perceived absence of:
- discipline and consistency in her art-making practice,
- confidence in her basic drawing skills and knowledge of techniques,
- artistic people in her life, and
- knowing how to express herself.

**Absenting the absence of discipline and consistency in her art-making practice**

One of Joanne’s reasons for studying art at [art school] was so that she could develop discipline and consistency in her art-making practice.

Joanne mentioned on a number of occasions that her decision to study art at [art school] was informed by an interest in “doing something that I love” (GD7_S-Jo: 336-346). Doing art was apparently something that she had always loved and was always passionate about, but didn’t honour (GD4_S-Jo: 378-379): “I wasn’t taking the time to do it” (GD4_S-Jo: 458). “It’s taken me 33 years to do something about it” (GD7_S-Jo: 336-346). Joanne’s art-making practice lacked consistency (I_S-Jo1: 214-215). “I go through spurts, I draw for six months, I put it away and don’t touch it for a year” (GD4_S-Jo: 479-480). Joanne mentioned that at the times that she didn’t make art she always missed it being a part of her life (I_S-Jo: 215-216). Joanne recalled that she found the sporadic nature of her art-making practice “really frustrating” (GD8_S-Jo: 202). Realising that “this isn’t good enough for me. I need that consistency I need that discipline” (GD4_S-Jo: 481), Joanne decided to commit herself to study fine arts at [art school] (GD4_S-Jo: 482-484).

Thus, Joanne believed that prior to studying fine arts at [art school] her art-making practice lacked discipline and consistency. It appears that by committing herself to study art at a formal educational institution meant that, on the one hand, Joanne was giving herself permission to do art (GD4_S-Jo: 472-473, 505-508), and on the other, would provide a framework for her to establish discipline (GD4_S-Jo: 458-459, 505-508) and consistency in her art-making practice (GD4_S-Jo: 480-484; GD8_S-Jo: 203-205; I_S-Jo3: 147-158).

Joanne also mentioned that other commitments often stopped her from making art (GD8_S-Jo: 250-251). It appears that housework is the main culprit (GD8_S-Jo: 253). “I planned to spend all yesterday just doing my artwork, but I went ‘I can’t relax and do this, unless I do this first’. So I got the housework out of the way, until about two o’clock and then I sat down and did the artwork, and then I thought ‘now I didn’t get as much done as what I wanted to, but now I can at least relax more because the housework is done’.” (GD8_S-Jo: 254-259).

Other related comments:
- When I went home there was always something to do. I should be doing this. I should be doing that. And I wasn’t taking the time to do it (GD4_S-Jo: 459-461) ... it would be so easy to just keep putting it aside (GD4_S-Jo: 477-478).
- Joanne: Maybe in society today it is easy to put it off, and go, ‘oh well, I’ve got all these other things to do’. And it’s that part of being selfish enough to go, ‘this is something I really love to do and I’m going to do this, and I deserve to do it. (GD8_S-Jo: 219-222)

**Absenting the absence of confidence in her basic drawing skills and knowledge of techniques**

Joanne’s decision to study fine arts at [art school] was influenced by a perceived lack of knowledge about technique and a lack of confidence in her basic skills: “I just want to improve my skills and do more” (GD8_S-Jo: 128-141, 324).

During the final interview Joanne revealed that she wanted to do the course at [art school] “to improve my drawing and painting” (I_S-Jo3: 121) and “also, gain self-confidence in my artistic skills by improving them” (I_S-Jo3: 142-143). This was consistent with the initial interview when she expressed her belief that her artwork has always been “a bit amateurish, a little bit childlike” (I_S-Jo1: 205-207), and that one of her reasons for studying at [art school] was to “do my basics, go back to my basic skills” (I_S-Jo1: 205-207).
She also mentioned that she wanted to learn how to get particular effects with paint (I_S-Jo1: 144-145, 162-165).

The practical approach to art education provided at [art school] provided considerable support in absenting the absence of confidence in Joanne’s basic drawing skills and her knowledge of techniques.

- “I have my good days, I have my bad days. I struggle with things like [drawing] the figure, I like doing it, and I want to do more, but I struggle with that. I’m not very confident and went it comes out I go ‘oh, it’s so out of proportion’.” (GD8_S-Jo: 310-313)

REFLECTING ON [another teacher] – EMANCIPATION!

- “to work on those things that you are lacking in, something when he stuck those sticks in my hand, and said here you go, and extended, you know, made me even more uncomfortable and I go, like ‘thanks’, but this was like something I really need. So it was really good that he did that for me. And that’s where I reflect on [another student’s] style, I love her style because it is so free. And that’s what he is trying to get me to do. Is be more free and as much as I wanted to, I didn’t know how to be.” (GD8_S-Jo: 343-350)
- “that’s something I know that I’d like to work on and need to work on more and that’s why he stuck that stick in my hand I think. Because he could see what I needed to do to get past my old stuff, and work on something new.” (GD8_S-Jo: 355-358)

Absenting the absence of artistic people in her life

In the final interview, Joanne mentioned that surrounding herself around artistic people was another reason for coming to art school.

- “I think I do need to get artistic people around me and art around me so, I thought ‘The more I am surrounding myself around it, the more I am changing my lifestyle’. And so that was a very important aspect of being here, being with other people and learning from their styles and learning from them … you get to meet people and see how they do it” (I_S-Jo3: 122-128).
- “I feel like there is a little bit more understanding [of] where I am coming from” (GD4_S-Jo: 336-341)

However, Joanne also recalled that during her first six months at art school that she would compare her art with other students and that this also involved judging herself. It appears, however, that by taking a different perspective, that Joanne may have resolved this, “it’s how you look at it though, everyone has a totally different style” (GD2_S-Jo: 135-136).

Absenting the absence of expressing herself

The interview and group discussion data suggest that self-expression was a very significant concern for Joanne. On several occasions Joanne mentioned that she expected that studying art at [art school] would enable her to learn how to express herself and put that into her artworks (GD2_S-Jo: 167; I_S-Jo3: 8-13). The focus of Joanne’s action learning process was also concerned with self-expression.

During the action learning component of the first group discussion Joanne initially identified that the expectations and demands that she put on herself was a ‘problem’ in her art-making practice and something that she would like to change (GD2_S-Jo: 101-118). “I think sometimes when you put those demands on yourself it’s almost like a block and you can’t get past and that stops you from actually letting go and letting it happen”534 (GD2_S-Jo: 110-112). In this way we can understand that the expectations and demands that Joanne put on her self were experienced as a constraint on her self-expression.

The way that Joanne planned to act to on this ‘problem’ was to “keep challenging myself” and to “tell people so it’s out there” (written record from group discussion 01/03/06 – GD2). Joanne elaborated on this: “…what I wrote down was ‘telling people, this is my personality’ so then you’re aware of it. Whether you stir me up about it, but it pushes me, whether you say something, it might be just a little joke or it might be a question or, it’s pushing me, it’s telling people. Because if you keep it to yourself well then nobody knows and you’re not facing it, whereas if you put it out there and you go ‘OK, for the world to see it’. It might be really stupid or it might be really uncomfortable but now it’s out there. It’s not a secret, so people start challenging people and you start to learn and to grow from it and all of a sudden it’s not so scary, and I’m changing my behaviour, for the better” (GD2_S-Jo* 283-294).

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534 This was Joanne’s initial verbal response and she didn’t actually write this on the paper provided to record the focus of her action learning process.
During the next group discussion Joanne had a chance to elaborate on what it was that she wanted to put out there: “Just my thoughts and my feelings I think. I think probably because I am more of a closed off person, it’s probably good for me to open myself up a little bit more. But I think this course is allowing me to do that more and more anyway. I am starting to naturally do that, and not even really noticing … It’s just naturally starting to open up. But I realise I need to keep pushing it, to be aware of it. It’s too easy for my personality type to go ‘Oh I don’t care’. Be very blasé about it. You know, so I think just by doing this and just by talking to people probably” (GD4_S-Jo: 322-341).

The way that I interpreted Joanne’s comments was that the thing that she identified that she wanted to change or work on, was more about her whole being, and her being herself, rather than anything specifically related to her art-making practice (GD4_S-Jo: 345-348). I put this to Joanne and she responded: “Yes, but I think somehow they are sort of combined because by doing art it’s about doing what I love, it’s about me. So it’s about putting myself out there and doing something that I love… It doesn’t matter whether someone thinks it’s great or bad. It doesn’t matter about that. It’s about the fact that I am doing something that I love. I’m doing something for me. That if I don’t do it, I think I will probably be less of a person for myself. I’m honouring something that I am really enjoying inside. It doesn’t matter how good or bad I am. The fact that I am just doing it is an important thing for me” (GD4_S-Jo 349-358).

PROBLEM2 + PLAN2: I’ve got to change my thought pattern and put it into practice (GD4_S-Jo: 238)
PROBLEM3 + PLAN3: I just put far too many restrictions on myself. Try and let go this week. Try (laughs) tomorrow. (GD4_S-Jo: 267-269) …
M: I am not quite sure how that then went for you? (GD7_S-Jo: 102-103)
ACTING ON PLAN3: I had the week off, the next week off, because I was sick (GD7_S-Jo: 104-105).
I’ve sort of let go, ’Well you know, that’s what it is, and I haven’t finished it, but I’m working on it’ (laughs). I’m learning to take that pressure off myself. Because I beat myself up more then anyone else will. I don’t need anyone else’s help. (laughs). (GD7_S-Jo: 235-239)
PLAN4: Enjoying it (GD7_S-Jo: 317-361)
Enjoying it is one of the most important things about this for me, you know, … why am I here if I am not enjoying what I am doing? (GD7_S-Jo: 358-360)
ACTING ON PLAN3+4: I start to get in this panic mode. Then I think ‘Let it go Joanne. Let it go. Relax and enjoy what you are doing’. But I really find that’s my biggest struggle, I think. Finding that time to do it. (GD8_S-Jo: 77-79)
ACTING ON PLAN4: Joanne: In the beginning I don’t think I actually thought about it, I think I just thought about drawing them, and then it was after the first half a dozen I thought ‘I’m bored, I’ve got to change what I am doing to actually come back to enjoying it, because this is about enjoying it’. You know, no point doing it and hating it, but you know, I think I would have enjoyed it more if I had more time, if I didn’t have art history thinking, and you know going, ‘you’ve got to do me as well’. I would have loved to enjoy doing more of that and I would have expanded it more, and so, it was only the time limit where I go, ‘Well that’s got to be enough, I’ve got to stop somewhere, and go on with the next one.’ But yeah, I definitely could have produced more out of that. I like that, the experimental side of it. Coming up with new things and you find new things out of doing that, those experiments and because it is sort of just mixed media, experimenting to see what you can get, by building on that you come up with new things which I find that exciting. New discoveries, or new effects, you hadn’t done before. So I find that exciting as well. (GD8_S-Jo: 167-184)
ART HISTORY -“at first I probably found it hard to get into it … now I am enjoying it … I never thought I would enjoy it as much as I did … it’s the deadlines.” (GD8_S-Jo: 380-382)

This was a bit unexpected for me because I had anticipated that the action research component of the group discussion would relate specifically to each student’s art-making practice. During the following group discussion with Joanne I had a chance to share where I was coming from “I suppose I came with an expectation that it was something to do with your art-making practice, whereas what I got more from Joanne was that it was really just herself, that’s what, yeah, that you are putting out there” (GD7: 255-259). This provided another opportunity for Joanne to clarify the relationship between expressing herself in her life and also in her art: “And I think that somehow works back to my art. You know, it’s by expressing myself, that I can feel like I can express myself more in art” (GD7: 260-262).

It is interesting to note what was going on in class for Joanne at this time too and how she was processing the new insights and information between classes. During the second group discussion Joanne revealed: “…even though I struggled last week we were doing like human emotions and all of a sudden I am looking at these pictures and going ‘oh, I love that!’ and I’m going ‘oh, it’s the human
During the final group discussion, Joanne identified one of her main reasons for studying at art school: "...if there is anything that I do want to get out of this, it is drawing from myself. For years and years I've always copied from magazines, like, 'Tattoo', I used to always buy the tattoo magazines. I loved the pictures, and I would find my favourite pictures and draw them. So I was always drawing from pictures that I liked, but I thought 'How do I draw something from inside me? How do I do that?' ... So, that's my biggest aim of being here is learning how to draw myself" (GD8: 946-955). Although this relates to improving basic skills, it also sheds light on Joanne's reasons for wanting to improve her basic skills, that this will enable her to express her thoughts and feelings. Later on during the final group discussion, Joanne and another student began to talk about the emotions that sometimes come up during the process of drawing. At this time Joanne added, "I see it as something quite healthy too because you are putting all those emotions into something ... it's actually a good way to express the emotions" (GD8: 1155-1158).

During the second interview Joanne elaborated on these ideas further. "One of my main reasons for being here is about expressing myself and how to put that into works, I don't know how to" (I_S-Jo3: 9-10); and later, "My aim is to achieve ways of expressing myself into my art to be able to create from my inner emotions rather than copying from other people's art. I now choose to look and use other artist's work as influences to research and improve my skills rather than copying them" (I_S-Jo3: 159-163). This reference to copying other people's art is quite significant as Joanne's reference to thoughts which she experienced relating to copying other people's artwork appeared to change significantly throughout the period of data collection.

During the first interview Joanne revealed that she always felt like she was cheating when she was copying other people's artwork because she was not drawing from herself (I_S-Jo1: 119-120). Two weeks later, in the first group discussion, she mentioned that she used to be very rigid in how she thought about copying other people's pictures (GD2:476-477). She also realised that she didn't want to be copying other people's picture: "Oh I hate it, I really don't like this thing about myself" (GD2: 470-471). At the same time, she mentioned that she was beginning to use copying in different ways, "I am actually expanding on it, I am making it my own" (GD2: 475-476). Further, letting go of old ideas meant that she could "go and do so much more" (GD2: 479).

Take note that Joanne had previously revealed that she always felt like she was cheating when she was copying other people's art works because she was not drawing from herself (I_S-Jo1: 119-120), and that she didn't like this: "Oh, I hate this about myself, I really don't like this about myself" (GD2: 470-471). However, by the end of data collection it was apparent that Joanne was beginning to change the way that she thought about copying other people's artwork. "I am now seeing my thoughts and feelings beginning to be expressed in my art. I have enjoyed learning about different ways of trying to unleash the abilities (eg. collaboration536, drawing from a detail, enlarging, use of colour, application, mixed media)" (written record from interview #2 19/06/06; I_S-Jo3 194-200). On two separate occasions Joanne specifically noted that she was beginning to look at it differently (GD2: 490; I_S-Jo3 202), and also revealed "I feel like it's a small breakthrough" (I_S-Jo3 212). "It is quite a key thing I think, because it's getting me closer to my original thing about expressing myself through my own work and as I say, the other things are just seen as tools to help me learn about them and how to do things differently, rather than just as a cheating tool. It's more of a skill than a tool, learning from their knowledge that they have already given us" (I_S-Jo3 216-221).

Four months after the initial interview Joanne commented: "I am now seeing my thoughts and feelings beginning to be expressed in my art. I have enjoyed learning about different ways of trying to unleash the abilities (eg. collaboration535, drawing from a detail, enlarging, use of colour, application, mixed media)" (written record from interview #2 19/06/06; I_S-Jo3 194-200).

In the final interview Joanne was using a totally different language to describe the relationship of her own art-making practice with other people's artworks. She referred to the artwork of Georgia O'Keefe as being something that inspires her, rather than it being something that she may choose to copy. Joanne also elaborated that using colour (which was inspired by the artwork of Georgia O'Keefe) was making her feel better (I_S-Jo3: 238-239). She also commented how her use of colour was beginning to reflect emotion." (GD4: 475-478). Joanne was struggling with being unwell (GD7_S-Jo: 104-135), and also a certain amount of anxiety about having to "be on the ball" in class (GD4_S-Jo: 45, 274), however, the specific drawing activities that she was required to perform can be seen as helping her to achieve one of her aims. "My aim is to achieve ways of expressing myself into my art to be able to create from my inner emotions..." (I_S-Jo3 159-163).

Joanne and another student began to talk about the emotions that sometimes come up during the process of drawing. At this time Joanne added, "I see it as something quite healthy too because you are putting all those emotions into something ... it's actually a good way to express the emotions" (GD8: 1155-1158).

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535 Joanne uses the term 'collaboration' to refer to the process of looking at and copying someone else's work (I_S-Jo3 206).

536 Joanne uses the term 'collaboration' to refer to the process of looking at and copying someone else's work (I_S-Jo3 206).
her emotions (I_S-Jo3: 241). This suggests that by the time the data collection was coming to an end Joanne was establishing different ways of thinking about her choice to refer to other people’s artworks in her own art-making practice. Further, this new way of thinking was enabling Joanne to find ways of expressing herself in her artwork.

It is interesting to note that Joanne’s relationship with an aspect of her art-making practice which she didn’t like, that is, copying other people’s artworks, was reconciled later by the simple realisation that it was a valuable tool for making art from herself. “It is quite a key thing I think, because it’s getting me closer to my original thing about expressing myself through my own work and, as I say, the other things are just seen as tools to help me learn about them and how to do things differently, rather than just as a cheating tool. It’s more of a skill than a tool, learning from their knowledge that they have already given us” (I_S-Jo3: 216-221).

In the final interview Joanne shared a story from one of the assignments for the subject which replaced the Core Drawing module. “I think now that I am in [T-S’s] class we are coming up to this modern stuff … I was a bit overwhelmed by it all, when he first said we had to come up with a piece. I thought ’What on earth am I gonna do?’ I had no idea and my thinking was stuck. I thought ‘OK I will look at environmental stuff’. But I couldn’t quite look outside the box. So I talked to people, seeing what their idea was, you know, what they thought of it. I was coming up with different things, and then that was when I started to go ‘look at how I was feeling’, because I was feeling so overwhelmed I thought ’oh, I can use how I am feeling’. So all of a sudden my thinking had changed. I had got really quite excited. Because that’s when this piece, that I am sort of doing, sort of started. ’Oh I can use myself’ and that’s when I realised ’oh I am actually using myself in my art’” (I_S-Jo3 165-179).

During the second group discussion Joanne mentioned that it was important for her to do something that she had always loved, that she was always passionate about, but didn’t honour (GD4_S-Jo: 378-379). Further, studying art at [art school] was the beginning of ’getting myself out there’ (GD4_S-Jo: 380).

One included expressing herself and putting herself out there, enjoying the process of making art, and changing the way that she viewed copying other people’s art.

References


537 Absenting the absence of doing/honouring something that she loves/is passionate about.
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Appendix 4.1.2 Betty

Guiding Research Questions

• What is going on in Betty’s consciousness when she experiences a non-dual state of awareness when she is making art?
• What is going on in Betty’s consciousness when she experiences a dual state of awareness when she is making art?
• What can be absented from the content of Betty’s consciousness during a dual experience to enable a non-dual experience whilst making art?

Background

Betty brought a wide range of experiences and skills to her first term at art school. She had been involved in creative practices within the performance arts field (theatre, dance and singing), as well as journalism and teaching the Alexander Technique (I_S-B1: 56, 101-120). She moved to Australia towards the end of 2003. She indicated that she had not had much experience as an image-maker before moving to Australia: “I was just kind of more interested in performing arts. And so it never occurred to me to consider doing art or being a visual artist” (I_S-B1: 142-147).

On several occasions Betty reflected on her early experience and exposure to the visual arts. She referred to her art-making experience as a ‘little girl’ (GD8 657-667; I_S-B2: 267-271, 334-341) and also commented on the lack of encouragement to pursue study in the creative arts at high school538 (I_S-B1: 221-228; I_S-B1: 231-236). In spite of these internally and externally imposed constraints on her early art-making practice, Betty experienced “odd kind of flashes” every now and then (I_S-B1: 142-147). These ‘flashes’ appeared to be occasions when she was inspired to make images. During the first interview Betty showed me a watercolour painting of Liv Ullmann: “See that picture there? … That came out of no where. I painted that […]. In Paris,540 when I was studying theatre. And it was just an afternoon, I was at somebody’s place and there were some watercolours and - I um that was a picture off a dust jacket of a book. It was a portrait and - I painted it and that was it and I never painted again” (I_S-B1: 844-858).

Betty indicated that she had started drawing seriously in 2005 and that this emergence “just kind of happened” (I_S-B1: 157, 201-202). Apparently she didn’t “have a burning desire to do art” (I_S-B1: 877-878) and her journey as an image-maker was prompted through a friend who had studied graphic design (I_S-B1: 157-159; I_S-B2: 163). “We got drawing and he thought ‘oh, your good’ and you know. So he really encouraged me and I was probably ready” (I_S-B1: 161-163). “He said, ‘you’ve got to do it’ and in a way, I guess that’s how often it can happen to people. Somebody will say ‘Go that way’. It’s not that I didn’t decide on my own to do it, but his encouragement, and his total confidence that I’m really good, or could be really good. And it’s like, ‘Oh don’t doubt, don’t just do it’” (I_S-B2: 163-168). It was this type of encouragement that led Betty to take her art-making practice more seriously (I_S-B1: 875-882).

“First I did a [six week] watercolour course, an [Adult Community Education] course, which was really fun and then I didn’t do anymore after that” (I_S-B1: 167-169). “It was a good introduction and then I started life drawing classes and that really got me going” (I_S-B1: 173-174). “Because for me particularly the connection with physical, being in love with body, and personality and physical expression. I just clicked with the life drawing and it’s hugely challenging. I mean, you know, you struggle to get proportions and the foreshortening and the likeness, and then […] I ended up going to the dynamic drawing, and of course [that] got blown completely out the window” (I_S-B1: 176-182).

“Which is great because it frees you up, but the other thing about the [dynamic] life drawing classes is it’s all very. It’s done with music […] so I just dance […] and it’s the whole physical, you know, to me it’s, yeah, that side of it that’s really pushed me” (I_S-B1: 185-192).

538 NUDIST nodes consulted: S-B/art-making practice/history

539 Betty later shared her memories of her earlier education experiences in which ‘bright’ students were not encouraged to pursue study in the creative arts. “I want to say that when I was growing up and going to school […] the schools were different and the school I went to was really academic, so I got like, I think I got a term, maybe half a year of art, and then, and then it was taken away from me. And dance was the same” (I_S-B1: 221-228). “We were really pushed academically, I mean instead of doing art, art was for dummies, for the bottom streams, and I got to study Latin and Physics. Even Biology, can you believe it? Even Biology, we had to do Chemistry and Physics, and the less bright girls got to do Biology, because that was a softer science” (I_S-B1: 231-236).

540 Betty indicated that she had lived in Europe from 1979 to 1986 (I_S-B1: 111-112).
"I could probably carry on just doing the life drawing and get a lot out of it, but then I get to a point where I want to, it's still really challenging, but even before I'm kind of ready I always want to move on to the next stage, which is part of who I am. It might not mean something's mastered or perfected, but I need to reach for the next big challenge" (I_S-B1: 192-199). Betty's tendency to reach towards new challenges appears to relate to Csikszentmihalyi's theory of flow experience (1988; 1990; 1996).

According to Csikszentmihalyi optimal experience or flow requires a balance between the challenges perceived in a given situation and the skills a person brings to it (1988 p.30). Thus, although an activity, like drawing, may be an opportunity for optimal experience, it can not sustain it for long unless both the challenges and the skills become more complex (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 p.30). Further, no activity guarantees the occurrence of flow, because an activity can only provide challenges, what is also required, according to Csikszentmihalyi (1988 p.31), is for each individual to recognise the challenges, plus be capable of focusing attention, controlling memory, and limiting awareness to the specific goals involved. Thus, it appears that Betty may have been reaching for new challenges to extend her art-making practice in order to maintain or sustain her experience of flow.

In her search for 'the next big challenge', Betty attended two Byron Bay Art Workshops. Whilst she choose both of these workshops because the focus was on the human form, the medium for both workshops was paint. Having not had much experience with using paint Betty indicated that she “had a wee freak out” (I_S-B1: 211-221). This was around the same time that she applied to study at art school (I_S-B1: 204-205; I_S-B2: 168-169). “I got this little fantasy about going. I said I was going to run away to art school. I didn’t end up running there because I’m already here. But it did just feel like a real fantasy, because I would have only started drawing seriously at the beginning of last year” (I_S-B1: 199-202). And so continued Betty's strive for new challenges.

Reasons for making art

So why would I want to do art? Because I love it. Because I love colour. Because I love life. I love people. It's just an extension of that emotion. In some form, it's necessary. Um, it's sort of been hovering around, there's been writing, there's been dancing, art. It's the same thing in a different form. And the healing arts, the healing arts, it's like trying to heal the, heal the experience of being human, in a human body.

(I_S-B2: 363-370)

The comment above, made by Betty during the final interview at the end of her first semester of studying fine art, clearly articulates two main reasons why Betty chose to make art: love and healing. This comment suggests that making art provides a means by which Betty can celebrate her love for art, colour, people, and indeed life itself. Betty expressed similar views during the first interview: “I mean all art at its best, or art at its purest, […] to me it's like the celebration of our existence, of life” (I_S-B1: 810-816). Not only is art-making a way of celebrating life and expressing love, but the comment above also suggests that art-making is a way that Betty has been able to heal the experience of being human. Betty made another comment during the first interview in which she implied that making art provided an opportunity for her to “feel more alive and connected” with her “essential being” (I_S-B1: 768-770). Unfortunately I didn’t get a chance to clarify what Betty meant by this during the interviews and group discussions. She did, however, make several comments about what this experience felt like for her:

- It’s the excitement that comes when I am doing it, making the marks, which is a wonderful experience and that puts me back more into dance, where it is an immediate, vitalising, revitalising experience (I_S-B1: 409-412);
- All the expression has to make you vibrate (I_S-B1: 746);
- There’s something going on (I_S-B1: 753-754);
- There’s a lot of feeling going on about this activity that takes you out of the ordinary (I_S-B1: 757-759);

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541 The second of these was an ‘Exploring Faces’ workshop with my favourite art teacher in November 2005 and this was where I first met Betty.

542 This probably resulted from not focusing her attention, controlling her memory and limiting her awareness to the specific goals involved (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 p.31).

543 NUDIST nodes consulted: S-B/art-making practice/reasons for making art

544 According to Bhaskar, ‘love is the totalling, binding, unifying, healing force in the universe’ (2002b p.175).

545 Humanity has been attempting to harness the therapeutic potential of creativity for thousands of years. These attempts have evolved into a distinct field in the health profession called ‘art therapy’.
There’s a reverence about, a reverence about that total absorption in what’s happening, um, the presence in that moment, and the connection with the model or object. And so you are there with a kind of wonderment about this thing that you are looking at properly (I_S-B1: 770-774);

Oh anything that makes you feel more alive and connected with your essential being, for me is a spiritual activity (I_S-B1: 768-770);

There’s some sort of vibrant connection, that, that’s what I want from my art. Which is really, like that is the only reason I could see. Why bother otherwise? (GD8: 1123-1127); and

I really sense energy very, very strongly and I want that. I want to capture, I want to become part of that force, force field (I_S-B1: 367-369).

These comments focus on the experience that Betty had when she made art and in so doing, felt more connected with her essential being. Bhaskar’s philosophy of meta-Reality, in particular, his discussion surrounding the nature of the self helps to makes sense of what this essential being that Betty refers to may be, and what it means to feel more connected with it (Bhaskar, 2002b pp.34-96; 2002c pp.69-116).

Bhaskar’s conceptualisation of the nature of the self is comprised of three nested levels of being: an illusory ego, a real, but limited, embodied personality, and an absolute, unlimited, transcendentally real Self or ground-state (Bhaskar, 2002b p.38).

Bhaskar argues that “the self in the sense of the ego, separated from other selves and a world of objects (including emotional states) to which it is attached is a ‘causally efficacious’ illusion” (Bhaskar, 2002b p.37). This self, which sees itself as existing separately from all other selves, has no real object, and it is in this respect that the ego is an illusion. Although it is an illusion, it can still cause things to happen, and as such is real (that is the illusion is real despite having no real object) (Bhaskar, 2002b p.38). The ego, however, is a property of our embodied personality, which, according to Bhaskar, is not an illusion (Bhaskar, 2002a p.239). It is real, albeit dependent and limited (Bhaskar, 2002b pp.37-38).

According to Bhaskar, “the sense of self as embodied personality has a transient and slightly fuzzy character to it” (Bhaskar, 2002a p.240), however, it “definitely has a mind, emotions, feelings and it definitely has a physical being” (Bhaskar, 2002a p.239). Embodied personalities are clearly differentiated in time and space, and in terms of physicality, embodied personalities are distinct from each other (Bhaskar, 2002a p.239). This physical distinction between embodied personalities promotes a sense of separateness and gives a degree of validity to the sense of the ego that we all have (Bhaskar, 2002a p.239). Thus, we can begin to understand that the form our embodied personality takes includes our physical form, and encompasses our thoughts, emotions and feelings.

Underpinning the embodied personality is our transcendentally real Self or ground-state. This is the ultimate source of our causal agency in the world (Bhaskar, 2002b p.37). However, it is in virtue of our physical embodiment as a personality that our ground-state can speak and act in the world (Bhaskar, 2002a p.239). Bhaskar suggests that our ground-state qualities generally include: energy, intelligence, consciousness, creativity, love, the capacity for right-action, and therefore the fulfilment of our intentionality (Bhaskar, 2002b p.55). He also suggests that the consciousness of our ground-state is beyond thought and manifests between or behind or in virtue of the suspension of thought. Because our ground-state is prior to our embodied personality, the consciousness, intentionality and energy of our ground-state is always present and a part of any state of being or act of our embodied personality, and anything that it experiences or does in the world (Bhaskar, 2002b p.55). However, our embodied personality may manifest as thoughts and actions, which are inconsistent with our ground-state. Bhaskar refers to this split between our embodied personality and our ground-state as self-alienation (Bhaskar, 2002b p.39), and suggests that the process of liberation or emancipation consists of shedding the aspects of our embodied personality which are inconsistent with our true, essential nature (Bhaskar, 2002b pp.17, 52-53; 2002c p.103).

Thus, Bhaskar argues, what we think we are is often a mixture of an illusory ego, a real, but limited, embodied personality, and an absolute, unlimited, transcendentally real being, which is, for the most part, occluded and dominated by the ego and embodied personality which depend on it (Bhaskar, 2002b p.38).

Bhaskar’s understanding of the tripartite nature of the self and the idea of shedding being integral to emancipation allows us to interpret Betty’s reasons for making art. It seems that when Betty speaks of making art as helping to connect her with her ‘essential being’ she may be referring to the same thing that Bhaskar refers to when he speaks of our ‘ground-state’. It also suggests that there may be something that goes on for Betty when she is making art which allows her to shed aspects of her illusory ego and embodied personality so that she can feel more alive and connected with her ‘essential being’ or ‘ground-state’. Let us now consider what Betty had to say about her art-making practice to see if we can make sense of what this ‘something that goes on’ is.
Art-making practice

Betty indicated that she had “only really just started” on her journey as a visual artist (I_S-B1: 144-157, 284; S_B_AHP: 97-98), however, she had been a performing artist for many years (I_S-B1: 109-120, 144-157, 328-353; GD4: 696-708; GD8: 574-585; S_B_AHP: 12-14). Betty’s experience with theatre and dance appeared to contribute to her art-making practice, both in the process of making art and in the content of her artworks. She even commented that if music is playing whilst she is drawing, that it can influence both the process of applying the drawing materials and the content of her image (I_S-B1: 185-192, 418-422; GD2: 102; GD8: 570-578, 1094-1112).

On several occasions Betty indicated that she was interested in expressing ‘wildness’ in her art-making practice, particularly in the process of making art (I_S-B1: 281-282, 283, 444; GD8: 1205). Betty’s definition of expressing wildness appeared to relate to her self-expression being connected to “the original art form, which is movement, voice” (GD8: 1216-1309). Betty also indicated that the act of drawing itself was a performance: “it’s the excitement that comes when I am doing it, making the marks, which is a wonderful experience and that puts me back more into dance, where it is an immediate, vitalising, revitalising experience” (I_S-B1: 409-412, 416).

Having already gained proficiency in expressing her self using her body in theatre and dance, her voice in song, and words as a writer, Betty was turning her attention to expressing her self by way of image-making.

Knowing what effort it has taken me to acquire a little skill in other modes of expression, I realise how challenging it is to start all over trying to gain expertise as an image-maker: without losing my beginner’s enthusiasm, without losing my focus on what I want to express, and without losing spontaneity and authenticity.

(S_B_AHP: 120-125)

This comment indicates that Betty simply wanted to absent the absence of expertise as an image-maker. However, she also wanted to eliminate anything that may constrain or inhibit her enthusiasm, her focus on what she wanted to express, and her spontaneity and authenticity547. However, in the process of absenting the absence of expertise as an image-maker, Betty indicated that she also experienced a tension between the aspects of her art-making practice relating to “freedom of expression” and the “investigation what works” (I_S-B1: 457-459).

Betty indicated that freedom of expression consisted of drawing activity that was “spontaneous” (I_S-B1: 438). In this style of drawing, materials were applied in “a much bigger, more exuberant way”, which “connects quite quickly to emotion” (I_S-B1: 461-463). Betty implied that there was wildness in this approach (I_S-B1: 444). She contrasted this with an aspect of her art-making practice that was concerned with the ‘investigation of what works’. She referred to this as being absorbed, engrossed, reflective and meditative (I_S-B1: 437, 443, 463, 464). In this approach “you go into a zone and lose yourself there” (I_S-B1: 443). “Fiddling around with colour. Fine work and, you know, or just pondering and looking, you know, stopping and looking, and doing all that” (I_S-B1: 463-466). Betty described the quality of images from this approach as being intricate and detailed, with drawing materials being applied with precision (I_S-B1: 436, 441; GD4: 365-378).

Betty indicated that she was interested in both of these approaches in her art-making practice and the tension she experienced appeared to be because she did not know how to bring them both together (I_S-B1: 438-440). This appears to be quite significant. As we have already noted, one of the things that Betty associated with expressing herself freely was spontaneous drawing activity (I_S-B1: 438) and she also indicated that she wanted to ensure that in the process of gaining expertise as an image-maker she didn’t lose her “spontaneity” (S_B_AHP: 124-125).

The mindful and mindless positions of transcendental agency549, outlined by the philosophy of meta-Reality, provide a possible explanation for the tension experienced by Betty with respect to these

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546 NUDIST nodes consulted: S-B/art-making practice; S-B/art-making practice/reasons for making art/ x-artform connection to self; S-B/performing arts (some); S-B/reflections on [art school] (some).

547 It is interesting to see how these qualities of enthusiasm, intentionality, spontaneity and authenticity relate to the qualities of the ground-state: energy, intelligence, consciousness, creativity, love, the capacity for right-action, and therefore the fulfilment of our intentionality (Bhaskar, 2002b p.55).

548 I will unpack Betty’s reference to ‘self’ in this comment in just a little while.

549 Transcendental agency is transcendental identification with the activity that an individual is doing. It involves either total focus or attention on an act (mindfulness), or an act which is spontaneously performed (mindlessness) (Bhaskar, 2002b p.4). Participation in the process of making art appears to
particular aspects of her art-making practice. To begin with, Bhaskar argues that both mindfulness and mindlessness are positions of transcendence or non-duality; he elaborates that mindfulness is when the content of one’s consciousness is totally focused on and attending to one’s activity (Bhaskar, 2002c p.212).

Observational data from Betty's weekly Core Drawing class indicate that the tutors provided opportunities for Betty to mindfully engage in drawing activities (CD_week1-14). Further, the module outline for this subject suggests that these drawing activities were chosen because they provided opportunities for students to acquire specific skills and new knowledge (CD_MO). Bhaskar suggests that as particular activities are practised, the skills associated with the activity become part of the innermost being of the agent (Bhaskar, 2002c p.212). Thus, by mindfully engaging in the drawing activities provided in her Core Drawing classes, Betty can be understood as practising the skills required for representational drawing. Once these skills become part of Betty's repertoire, she would then be able to call on them to express thoughts and feelings in more spontaneous ways (GD2: 498; GD8: 956-957). Bhaskar refers to the process of particular skills becoming part of one’s innermost being, and the spontaneous utilisation of these skills, as mindfulness passing over into mindlessness (Bhaskar, 2002c p.212). He describes it in the following way:

The mind empties itself in its activity and the activity is no longer controlled by the focused, undivided attentive mind, but performs itself, effortlessly, efficiently, without strain. This effortless efficiency in activity is activity in the ground-state. Such effortless, spontaneous activity must be acquired and learnt, but when we have done so there is no more mind and no more thought, but free unconditional spontaneous activity. (Bhaskar, 2002c p.212)

Thus, it appears that the tension which Betty was experiencing may simply relate to her interest in learning new skills and knowledge so as to extend her image-making repertoire and also wanting to experience the freedom and spontaneity of effortless efficiency that this would bring. It seems that Betty may have already experienced ‘effortless efficiency’ with other forms of expression (like theatre, dance and writing) and may have also experienced it in the context of life drawing. However, some of the assessment tasks and learning activities provided by her tutors meant that she had to engage in activities that took a lot of concentration and effort to complete (GD4: 365-378; GD8: 562-567).

When Betty was successful in focusing the totality of her conscious awareness on drawing particular details with precision, she experienced what she referred to as “the meditative part, you go into a zone and loose yourself there” (I_S-B1: 442-443). This comment identifies a key part of the process of drawing. At some point during the process of drawing, the mindfulness involved in controlling one’s hand enough to manipulate the drawing implement in order to make marks on a drawing surface to create the illusion of a particular object passes over into mindlessness. When the content of an individual's consciousness is completely focused on, that is, congruent with, the activity of drawing, the act of drawing may function like ‘a mantra in meditation’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.212). By concentrating the focus of awareness onto the activity of drawing, “the undivided mind loses itself and passes into the activity’ (Bhaskar, 2002c p.212).

When drawing activities required that Betty focus the totality of her conscious awareness on drawing particular details with precision, she experienced what she referred to as going into a zone and a sense of loosing her self. It appears that the sense of self that Betty lost on these occasions was simply content of her mind which was extraneous to the actual drawing activity. I would like to extend this further by suggesting that the sense of self that Betty lost on these particular occasions could also be understood as being aspects of her embodied personality which were inconsistent with her ground-state. According to Bhaskar, the process of liberation or emancipation consists of shedding the aspects of our embodied personality which are inconsistent with our true, essential nature (Bhaskar, 2002b pp.17, 52-53; 2002c p.103). Thus, Betty’s experience of feeling more connected with her essential being when making art (I_S-B2: 768-770), and her reference to art-making as healing the experience of being human (I_S-B2: 363-370), may have resulted from a momentary ‘shedding’ of aspects of her embodied personality inconsistent with her ‘essential being’. In this respect, the process of focusing her conscious awareness on drawing particular details with precision may be understood as liberating Betty from aspects of her embodied personality, like extraneous thoughts for example, which were inconsistent with her true, essential nature.

I wonder then, what was going on when Betty experienced the other aspect of her art-making practice that she referred to as 'freedom of expression'? Betty indicated that “freedom of expression” consisted of drawing activity that was “spontaneous” and “connects quite quickly to emotion” (I_S-B1: 438, 462-463), with drawing materials being applied in “a much bigger, more exuberant way” (I_S-B1: 461-462).

APPENDIX 4 – FIRST PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS

I wonder then, what was going on when Betty experienced the other aspect of her art-making practice that she referred to as 'freedom of expression'? Betty indicated that "freedom of expression" consisted of drawing activity that was “spontaneous” and “connects quite quickly to emotion” (I_S_B1: 438, 462-463), with drawing materials being applied in “a much bigger, more exuberant way” (I_S_B1: 461-462).
Betty also implied that there was wildness in this approach (I_S-B1: 444). This suggests that when Betty didn’t have to think much about the activity of drawing, that is, when the activity of drawing was spontaneous, she was able to execute her drawings at a faster pace and with larger physical movements than when she was mindful of what she was doing. Betty’s previous experience with performance art and her comment that the excitement that comes in the act of mark-making is a wonderful experience that puts her back more into dance (I_S-B1: 409-412), suggests that she may have found the physical act of making larger, faster-paced and more spontaneous drawings very satisfying.

Whilst Betty used terms like “absorbed”, “engrossed”, “reflective”, “meditative”, “pondering and looking” and “stopping and looking” (I_S-B1: 437, 443, 463-466), to describe the nature of her activity and the state of her mind when she was ‘investigating what works’, her description of ‘freedom of expression’ in activity lacked any comparative terms and phrases. Bearing in mind the slightly problematic nature of interpreting ‘absent data’, I would also like to suggest that the absence of words to describe the state of her mind at these times may be indicative of the mindlessness in such spontaneous activity.

Betty, however, was able to comment on two significant differences between drawing activities that were concerned with the ‘investigation of works’ and ‘freedom of expression’. These relate to the pace of mark-making and the size of these marks. Betty indicated that when her drawing activity is concerned with ‘freedom of expression’ the pace of mark-making is faster and involves larger physical movement than her drawing activity which is concerned with ‘investigating what works’ (I_S-B1: 461-463). Unpacking this further, one could reason that the duration of time between moments of action in fast-paced mark-making is less than the duration of time between moments of action in slow-paced mark-making. When there is less time between actions, there is less opportunity for Betty to consciously interpret and label (and commit to memory), the nature of the activity and her state of mind at these times.

It’s interesting to note that although Betty’s art-making practice clearly provided opportunities for her to heal the experience of being human and connect with her essential self, she still had to contend with obstacles and challenges along this journey.

**Challenges and obstacles associated with Betty’s art-making practice**

During the first interview Betty distinguished between challenges and obstacles in relation to her art-making practice. My understanding is that Betty’s definition of a challenge are problems that she comes across in the process of trying to make art which need solving in some way. She suggested that being tired or unfamiliar with the medium she is using are challenges, or when she is aware of having too many things to do (I_S-B1: 641-686). An obstacle, however, is something that actually prevents her from participating in the process of making art:

> Yeah, obstacles are more like blocks. And for me it’s a more psychological thing: ‘Oh I can’t. I’m stuck. I can’t do this.’ That’s an obstacle. (I_S-B1: 641-644)
> Yeah I think obstacles are more self-generated in that you know you just say: ‘I can’t. I can’t or I’m frightened or I don’t know where to go, what to do.’ (I_S-B1: 648-652)
> It’s a probably yeah that, yeah that emotional feeling of being inadequate, or performance anxiety (I_S-B1: 648-652).

During the action learning component of the group discussions, Betty identified several ‘problems’ in her art-making practice that she attempted to solve. The first of these had to do with wanting less performance anxiety around not having original ideas (AR_S-B: 2-3).

Not trusting that she was creative or original

One aspect of Betty’s consciousness which she believed inhibited her art-making practice were particular thoughts she experienced relating to her creativity and imagination: “I’m not really that

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550 NUDIST nodes consulted: S-B / art-making practice / obstacles+challenges (ONLY THE FIRST REFERENCE – I may like to return to this node again);

551 According to the above distinctions, two of these would fall into Betty’s category of self-generated obstacles. Not trusting that she was original or creative was the first self-generated obstacle that Betty had to contend with. This appeared to be closely associated with the second obstacle, needing to prioritise art in her life, or give herself permission to do art. As we will see in the discussion that follows, these apparent obstacles could indeed be negotiated.

creative. ’I’m not really that imaginative. Who am I to be presumptuous to think that I am creative, a creator, or an artist?’” (I_S-B1: 683-685).

During the first action learning component of the first group discussion, which took place in the second week of semester one, Betty identified her “performance anxiety around not having original ideas” (AR_S-B: 2-3) as being something that she would like to change in her art-making practice: “[W]hat I would like to change, or make a, make a leap, is not to feel that I am not really a very original artist, or creator” (GD2: 444-446). In other words, she wanted to absent the experience of thoughts about not being an original artist or creator. She indicated that although she believed that she could learn technique (GD2: 450-452), she didn’t believe that she could learn to be original: “it’s sort of there or its not” (GD2: 452-457). “I’ve got this kind of […] fear around ‘Oh well I’m not really a visionary, original or creative’” (GD2: 452-457). Not only was Betty wanting to absence the experience of thoughts about not being an original artist or creator but she also wanted to absent the experience of fear and anxiety which she associated with the experience of believing these thoughts. She decided to address this problem by trusting that she was original and creative (GD2: 609-620). She indicated that her plan was “to trust in the tutors’ instructions / suggestions / propositions / exercises as just what I need to get beyond these blocks / anxieties. I think that mostly it’ll be good for me to relax!” (AR_S-B: 14-16).

Three weeks later, however, after attending a weekend art workshop, Betty indicated that she was still experiencing anxiety around not being original: “Oh yeah. You are working purely from imagination and there’s no model, there are no objects. There was just what’s in here [she gestures towards her head]” (GD4: 410-414). She indicated that she was a bit daunted by seeing other artist’s work which consisted of “stupendous technical ability” (S_B_AHP: 118-119: I_S-B2: 216-217) and complex scenarios and asked “where does all that stuff come from?” (GD4: 416-419) She responded to this by suggesting that she believed that it comes from deep inside one’s being: “It can be planned but a lot of it comes from deep” (GD4: 419-420). This is interesting because three weeks earlier Betty indicated that she had been doubting whether if she did dig deep, whether she would find that she had a “vision” (GD2: 446-450). However, her comment on this occasion suggests that she believed that the solution was to dig deep: “I think a lot of it is about digging deep. And it needs to come along with enough technical ability to be able to, you know, even start to go there, in a way, without putting the cart before the horse. But they need to grow together” (GD4: 419-428). Thus, it appears that in just a few weeks Betty’s thoughts about this problem and it’s solution were beginning to develop553. This development in Betty’s thinking was even more evident in the final group discussion (which took place in week thirteen of the first semester) when, in response to another student suggesting that she didn’t have any imagination, Betty stated: “No, no that’s not true. I always used to think that, but that’s one thing that I have done. I said ‘come on, get on to it because you will get there this time next week and you will just go ‘I’m not original, I’m not creative because I can’t […] you’ve got to give yourself time and ah just … plan it”554. (GD8: 516-522). She indicated that she saw the ‘imagination’ drawing task as “an invitation to see what’s there” and suggested that this was taking a bit of courage (GD8: 553-554). She also indicated that she was interested in drawing on “subconscious and emotional stuff” in her own art-making practice (GD8: 539-543), which appeared to stem from her explorations into art history (GD8: 1159-1160).

As much as I love beauty, I wasn’t surprised to find that I am drawn to the “dark side”. Artists who evoke the haunting, wild, dark side of human nature and the physical world speak to me of passion, and also of compassion; of obsession and catharsis; of transgression and absolution. In short, the work of such artists – from whichever era - speaks to me of the complexity and poignancy of life. Beneath the surface technique and style of the art work, there is deep emotional substance. (S_B_AHP: 101-108)

This interest of Betty’s in artworks with ‘deep emotional substance’ appeared to be based on a belief that what makes art really interesting, in fact the whole art of artistry, is the ability to channel your emotions into really good technique (GD8: 1149-1153).

553 However, her focus on this was waylaid for a while because she had begun struggling with another issue to do time and not having time to practice (GD4: 658-660).

554 It is interesting to note how Betty’s view on planning artworks had changed throughout her first semester at art school. At the end of her first week of classes Betty had contemplated how she thought she may approach the role of image-maker: ‘I don’t think I am going to be an academic kind of artist, or intellectual, try and work out a formula. I don’t think. I can be very precise and neat, but I still don’t want necessarily to have a kind of a prescribed thing that I’ve got and that I’m going to put on paper or canvas’ (I_S-B1: 285-290). During her second group discussion she stated: “It can be planned but a lot of it comes from deep” (GD4: 419-420), and here, in the final group discussion she indicated that she had been using ‘planning’ as a technique to counter her belief that she wasn’t original or creative and was even advising another student to consider this approach as well (GD8: 516-522).
She suggested "where I think we are probably having a bit of trouble is that we, part of us is, part of us is concerned about 'are we original? And have we got creative ideas?' The other part of us is concerned with 'oh am I, can I do this technically? What about my technical skills I need to, you know, just copy and get it right?' And so we've got, we're challenged from both sides" (GD8: 554-560). Betty made this distinction between the technical side, and the creativity or originality aspect of her art-making practice on several occasions throughout the interviews and group discussions (AR_S-B: 2-5; GD2: 451-452; GD4: 421-423; I_S-B2: 35-36, 50-57). It appears from these comments that Betty believed that she was capable of improving the technical side of her art-making practice, and that her concern was largely whether she was original or had creative ideas.

In the final interview, at the end of her first semester at art school, Betty revealed that she had actually absented the absence of trusting that she was an original artist or creator:

I've had a lot of discovery about that there is something there which is a big relief (I_S-B2: 19-21)

A big discovery in a way, and it totally surprised me, that I have a bit of originality there. There is something there and there is something there and I think that is what I voiced in the early sessions that I was unsure, you know, 'I'm quite good at getting a likeness of a person on a blank piece of paper but then I thought 'well is there anything more?" (I_S-B2: 26-31)

And yeah, there was something there. So I think that's always reassuring. I think every time I need that reassurance. So yeah that's one, I think that's been more the challenge and struggle for me (I_S-B2: 47-50).

Yeah, so going back to the whole creative thing, I think that was the big question mark for me. And I know it always will be. It's not because I might have done something interesting once or twice (laughs), but no, it's reassuring, and I'm happy about that (I_S-B2: 58-62).

I was particularly happy with the, the two drawings we did with [S-I], that was [T-S's] class but he said we had to do something entirely from the imagination. Before that I had done his composition, I had enjoyed his composition, with those musicians […] And so that was also good, another big step, to do a whole picture with an interesting composition and figures, not much background but that worked. So the next step then was like 'ohhh' a big picture something from, entirely from your imagination, and that had to be planned. (I_S-B2: 62-71).

This change in belief about her creativity and originality appears to be a very significant milestone in Betty's journey as an image-maker. It appears that the combination of the learning experiences at art school, as well as the action learning component of the group discussions, enabled Betty to reconsider the validity of her previous beliefs regarding her creativity and originality. It is also interesting to note that in the process of attempting to absented the absence of trust that she was original and creative, that Betty was also faced with issues to do with prioritising art and making time to practice her art outside of the formal art school environment.

Not having time to practice: priorities and permission

Although Betty’s art-making practice clearly provided opportunities for her to heal the experience of being human and connect with her essential self, she still had to contend with aspects of her embodied personality which considered art-making to be a frivolity and indulgence (GD4: 695-696; GD8: 493-495).

- [T]here’s many, many reasons and excuses not to find a time or give yourself permission (I_S-B1: 821-824)
- Because I am new at it still, I see it as a bit of an indulgence (GD4: 695-696)
- Do you deserve really to be so indulgent, self-indulgent? (GD4: 713-714)
- I am really hard on myself. ‘Well, why am I doing this because it is only going to be a part-time hobby?’ (GD8: 483-484)
- [T]here’s support here at [art school], but outside of [art school] there is not, for me personally. It's just me trying to, you know, whip up enthusiasm, and feel OK about 'It's all right to spend a whole day, you know, just doing art.' (GD8: 486-489)
- [A]nd feeling like it’s just a frivolity (GD8: 493-495)

These are just a few of Betty’s comments during the interviews and group discussions which shed light on some of the internally imposed constraints which Betty had to contend with in regards to her art-making practice. In spite of these constraints, Betty not only gave herself permission to make art (I_S-B1: 821-824; 834-835), but made a commitment to extend her art-making practice by receiving formal tuition in an accredited course, two days a week for an entire year.

555 NUDIST nodes consulted: S-B / Action Learning Cycle / interview1 / PERMISSION to do art; S-B / Action Learning Cycle / gd4 / Revising problem/s; S-B / Action Learning Cycle / gd4 / Revising plan; S-B / Action Learning Cycle / gd8 / Revisiting revised plan: PERMISSION to do art; S-B / Action Learning Cycle / interview2 / PERMISSION to do art
However, five weeks into the course and Betty indicated that she was struggling with an issue to do with time and not having time to practice (GD4: 659-669). She indicated that she was “grappling with a few things” relating to priorities (GD4: 661). Although Betty had made a commitment to study at art school, she also had to make a living whilst she was studying, and indicated that she had other areas of her life that were important to her and that she could be pursuing (GD4: 673-677; 691-693). This forced Betty to ask herself the question “how much time can I give this?” (GD4: 663-665). She indicated that although she was able to keep on top of her assignments, she wasn’t getting time to do “all the juicy bits, at home” (GD4: 667-669). She specifically commented on the time required to maintain a journal for each of the subjects she was enrolled in: “[It] comes back to the journal thing, well, you know, filling in the journal. Well, it would be fun, but, you know, when am I going to do it?” (GD4: 671-673) and “I don’t honestly have time” (GD8: 492-493). Betty indicated that she was aware that these issues around prioritising her time were going to come up for her throughout the year, and although she really wanted to be at art school, “I always bite off more than I can chew” (GD4: 686-687).

This issue for Betty wasn’t just about making time for art in her life and contending with the challenges associated with learning to make art. She also suggested that doing the course was presenting challenges with regards to her attitudes towards “how to prioritise and what I am worth, am I really, and do I deserve this?” (GD4: 687-690). She indicated that she was recognising that there was something to do with “self-worth, self-esteem, where I put value in what I do, and art is, because I am new at it still, I see it as a bit of an indulgence. I went through the same thing with dance” (GD4: 693-697). Apparently Betty never danced until her late 30s. However, when she started “Oh I realised just how much it had been a huge missing all my life, because I danced when I was little. And, and I just, you know, I still had to work, I still had to get other parts of my life happening but it became just vital” (GD4: 698-702), “I question why this art thing is coming up now because I’m not dancing”. Betty indicated that she was recognizing that there was something to do with “self-worth, self-esteem, where I put value in what I do, and art is, because I am new at it still, I see it as a bit of an indulgence. I went through the same thing with dance” (GD4: 693-697). Apparently Betty never danced until her late 30s. However, when she started “Oh I realised just how much it had been a huge missing all my life, because I danced when I was little. And, and I just, you know, I still had to work, I still had to get other parts of my life happening but it became just vital” (GD4: 698-702), “I question why this art thing is coming up now because I’m not dancing”. Betty indicated that she was aware that these issues around art-making practice as a child: “I remember as a little girl I would not do what I really wanted to do, like draw or yeah things like that, […] I would end up helping [out around the house/farm] […] and it wasn’t ‘t a rainy day when there was nothing to do. And I’d start, I’d actually do little cut outs, and draw people or I used to draw little mannequins and do little dresses on them. […] things like that, but it was a rainy day, but I lived in an area that didn’t rain very much” (GD8: 657-667).

In the first interview Betty implied that making art provided an opportunity for her to “feel more alive and connected” with her “essential being” (I_S-B1: 768-770) and that art at its best is like “the celebration of our existence” (I_S-B1: 810-816). However, by the end of her first semester at art school she was asking herself the question: “am I being grounded by the art or am I feeling more precarious because of
the art?" (I_S-B2: 193-194) Her answer to this question was “Sometimes it’s one and sometimes it’s the other” (I_S-B2: 194-195).

We have already established that the process of focusing one’s conscious awareness on the act of drawing may help to liberate an individual from aspects of their embodied personality which are inconsistent with their true, essential nature. This would account for why Betty sometimes felt like she was being grounded by her art. Further, her comments like: “I think all of us in that class have come to it because it was just a big, unanswered need, calling [and] at that level […] there are no doubts. It’s just right. It’s good.” (I_S-B2: 229-232) and “It’s such a necessary and wonderful thing. Yet so few people have got the chance, and, you know, lead more stunted lives because of it” (I_S-B2: 233-235) suggest that she viewed art making as being an important aspect of her life.

However, Betty also indicated that sometimes she felt more precarious because of her art-making (I_S-B2: 193-195). It appears that this was related to another ‘problem’ that she was experiencing, which related to wanting to know where her journey as an image-maker was going to take her:

I don’t know where I am going with it. I’ve got no idea (I_S-B2: 195-196).  
Is it going to further my so-called, you know, career? (I_S-B2: 198-199). 
I want to bring it into dance. I want to blend the dance and the art. I don’t know how to do that (I_S-B2: 204-208). 
[A]m I ever going to paint anything that is going to be exhibited or sold? (I_S-B2: 221-222). 

It appears that these questions are concerned with future-oriented goals and whilst Betty indicated that she wasn’t sure whether she should really be asking them (I_S-B2: 199-200; 208-209; 223-224), the fact that she was asking them suggests that it was important for her to know where her journey as an image-maker was going.

BETTY’s financial commitments and range of career and creative interests meant that when she was not in the art school environment, there were a number of things pulling for her time and attention. Her decision to study art meant that two whole days of her week were taken up by attending art school, with more time being required for completing the homework assignments. In addition, she was committed to live within travelling distance of the art school. Thus, Betty’s experience of feeling precarious because of her art may have been because she was forced to live in a particular geographical location, and after attending to the requirements of her art studies, had a very limited amount of time to make a living and pursue her other creative and career interests.

Thus, by looking at the bigger picture, we can begin to appreciate how Betty’s commitment to make time to make art could be experienced as precariously grounding.

References


559 This interest or concern with career is understandable considering that the art school environment was within an educational institution which was concerned with vocational training. Further, the Application Form that Betty completed prior to commencing her studies specifically asked applicants to comment on their career goals.  
560 Csikszentmihalyi (1988 p.33) suggests that one of the characteristics of experiencing flow is deep concentration on the task at hand. If one’s conscious awareness is concerned with any future reward or advantage it may bring, an experience of flow is unlikely (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 p.28). This is because there is a split between the content of one’s consciousness and the activity. According to Bhaskar, any activity which is split, for example, by attending to the result or consequences of the activity, or split by being concerned with something else, or by not being completely present in the here and now of the activity, is dualistic activity (Bhaskar, 2002a p.236). This would account for Betty’s claim that she sometimes felt precarious because of her art.
Appendix 4.2  

Student Interactions with teachers: samples

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Appendix 4.2.1 Teresa

Week one (16/02/06)

T-R provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:

- Creating a surface which reflects the quality of the object she is attempting to represent (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T1)
- Using the qualities of the thing she is observing (e.g. ...) and trying to draw to suggest which drawing materials she could use and how to apply them (including direction of the contour of a shadow) (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T1, T4, T5, T6)
- Using lateral thinking to match an object with appropriate drawing materials (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T1)
- Appreciating the mark-making qualities that particular modes (the process) of applying drawing materials (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T1, T2)
- Appreciating the temperature value of colours in the shadows of objects (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T3)
- Appreciating the importance of fascination, intrigue and involvement when attempting to represent an object in a drawing (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T5, T6)

Week two (23/03/06)

T-R provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:

- Using the qualities of the thing she is observing (e.g. ...) and trying to draw to suggest which drawing materials she could use and how to apply them (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T8)
- Using lateral thinking to identify similarities between the qualities of various objects, to aid in their representation, rather than simply trying to describe them (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T8, T9)
- Identifying parts of a drawing which look unfinished, and attending to them in order to create a sense of resolve (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T11)
- Washing her hands to aid in minimising the occurrence of smudges (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T11)

Week three (02/03/06)

T-R provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:

- Identifying qualities of her ink lines and what they suggest about the qualities of the object she is attempting to represent (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T16)
- Appreciating that achieving an evenness of line when using an ink nib will come with time, experience and confidence (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T16)
- Appreciating the emotional quality of drawing lines (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T16)
- Attempting to strive for straighter, even lines using an ink nib (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T16)
- Using the quality of marks achieved from using a brush, water, and ink to reflect the qualities of fish (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T24)
- Appreciating that striving to represent a fish by describing a particular one may cause her to approach the task of representation in a different way (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T24)
- Appreciating the simplicity of representing a fish using a brush, water and ink (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T25)
- Using other mediums (e.g. a candle stick) together with brush, water and ink in attempting to represent a fish (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T26)
- To avoid over-working her fish drawings, start a new drawing when she notices that she wants to extend the process, and introduce this process on a fresh drawing (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T27)
- Affirming that making unintentional marks is an important part of the fish drawing task (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T27)
- Appreciating that the experience of using the brush, water and ink process involved in drawing the fish, may help to develop trust in one’s self to control the drawing materials just enough, whilst still providing for uncontrolled and unintended mark-making to take place (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T28, T32)
- Drawing on her experience of using the process of applying water and ink with a brush to represent the reflective quality of a fish, and applying this to the task of representing the reflective quality of metal objects (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T28)
• Integrating both approaches to using ink (nib and brush) in the one image (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T29, T30, T31, T32), plus extending it (dampen the paper first, then use pen and ink) (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T39)

• Appreciating how the amount of water she applies, or degree of wetness of the area on the paper that she then applies ink to, will create different qualities of the marks, and will vary in their appropriateness of representation for particular subject matter (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T31, T32)

• Affirming that a significant part of the process of making art-works involves correcting mistakes (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T34)

• Appreciating that the highest point on a reflective object will reflect the strongest light (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T38)

• Combining observation and knowledge to aid in the analysis and subsequent representation of a metal object (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T38)

• Appreciating the value of keeping her drawings of fish, the same size as the actual fish that she is drawing from (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T40)

Week four: absent

Week five: (16/03/06)

T-S provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:

• Revisiting the previous week’s lesson (as she was absent): proportions of basic facial feature layout, variations on this for expressing emotion, for representing gender, and application of tone (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T41)

• Applying darker tones to her drawings (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T42, T43, T49, T60)

• Turning a caricature-style drawing of a face expressing emotion into something ‘more usable’ (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T47)

• Using tonal variation (and contrast) to indicate overlap and position in space (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T51)

• Affirming her successful representation of structure and form (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T54)

Week six (23/03/06)

T-S provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:

• Affirming her successful use of a circular composition (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T2)

• The position / placement of limbs in a drawing of figure from her imagination (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T3)

• Developing a starting point for drawing an image with a composition involving at least three figures from her imagination (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T4, T5)

• Drawing on her knowledge of art history to extend the area (backgrounds) of her developing composition / image that she is concerned with, including use of tone (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T7, T10)

• Considering possible ways of guiding the viewer’s mind through the subject matter in the image (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T11)

• Considering method of composition and use of tone that may reflect a sense of tragedy (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T12)

Week seven (30/03/06)

T-S provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:

• A pre-class discussion on traditional art-making versus deconstructionism: “you must work with the consciousness of history” (appears to prefer the idea of reconstruction) “where do we get our guidance from?” (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T13)

• Working at a faster pace with a temperamental ink nib (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T14)

• Identifying mark-making tendencies of different materials for applying ink (e.g. the stick), using the heavily laden stick to apply darker tones where needed on a picture of a face, and when it starts to dry out, working on areas that are not as dark (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T15, T24)

• Deciding when to stop working on an ink drawing (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T18)
• Application of tone, use of contrast (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T18, T25, T28)
• Appreciating her efforts (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T21, T25, T28)
• Treating the background of an image using ink (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T26)
• Revisiting Teresa’s drawing from week six and suggesting ways that she could improve her drawing by using tone to convey a stronger sense of tragedy (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T29)

Week eight (06/04/06)
T-S provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• One-point perspective (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T31, T32)
• Three-point perspective (and its relationship to foreshortening) (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T36)
• Tonal variation when attempting to represent a set of stairs (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T38)
• Experimenting with vanishing points “pop it in and if it’s wrong” (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T39)

Week nine: absent

Week ten (04/05/06)
T-I provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• Drawing a grid onto a photocopy to assist in enlargement (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T46)
• Identifying tonal values and different ways of representing tonal variation (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T55, T57, T61)
• Considering the different mark-making capabilities of willow and compressed charcoal (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T57)
• Identifying focus area of her picture that may benefit from details (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T61)
• Appreciating that different mediums have different possibilities for making marks (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T61)
• Appreciating the balance between accurate representation and a drawing that is interesting to look at, and associated considerations teaching art (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD2 / T61)

Week eleven (11/05/06)
T-I provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• 2D and 3D (patterns tend to flatten) (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD3 / T16)
• techniques for transferring images (e.g. carbon paper) (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD3 / T19)
• archival considerations when using non-conventional materials (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD3 / T29)

Week twelve (18/05/06)
T-I provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• masking areas of her image off so that she gets unintended compositions (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD3 / T34, T35)
• seeing her artwork as a way of making lots of marks that are later isolated to reveal interesting compositions, that are later extracted and used as a starting point for further artworks (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD3 / T34; O_CD_S-T / DVD4 / T22)
• being able to see derivative influences of artists like Matisse in illustrations today (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD4 / T7)
• considering how the advent of computer graphics resulted in a considerable increase in awful images (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD4 / T7)
• identifying possible interpretations of the content of her developing image (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD4 / T16)
APPENDIX 4 – FIRST PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS

- appreciating the intuitive nature of composition (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD4 / T22)

T-R provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
- appreciating that composition involves acceptance (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD4 / T25)
- identifying possible interpretations of the content of her developing image, and using this interpretation to provide a solution for unresolved areas of her composition (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD4 / T25)
- considering tonal variation to help resolve the image (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD4 / T25)

Week thirteen (25/05/06)

T-I provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
- finishing off a drawing, identifying the qualities of particular elements of her drawing and what they contribute to the overall piece (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD4 / T32)
- identifying possible interpretations of the content of her developing image, and using this interpretation to provide a solution for unresolved areas of her composition (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD4 / T32)
- suggesting that her drawing had reached a stage of completeness (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD4 / T38)
- using masking off as a tool for creating unintended compositional elements (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD4 / T43)
- considering qualities of the scanned and printed images and how they vary from the original drawing (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD4 / T46)
Appendix 4.2.2  T-R

Week one (16/02/06)

T-R provided Betty with one-to-one guidance in the area of:

- Using her eraser as a drawing tool to achieve particular effects (e.g. transparency) (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T1, T2, T3)
- Recognising that her fears (of making the picture muddy) are holding her back (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T3)
- Appreciating that by being persistent (or tenacious) in spite of an experience of frustration or anger when creating an image may lead to new discoveries or a resolution in the image (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T3, T4)
- Appreciating that an experience of frustration or anger when creating an image may sometimes lead to a holding back, and in these instances, moving onto a different subject matter and new image may be more appropriate (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T3)
- Appreciating that working quickly may correspond to an experience of ‘switching off’ and absenting an experience of responsibility, and enabling an attitude of daring to do something free and flowing (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T3)
- Appreciating that the experience of manipulating drawing materials on a paper in order to create an image is more valuable than the end product (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T3)
- Appreciating that experience is more important than skill (because experience becomes skill and also confidence in one’s own knowledge, which can guide one’s art-making practice) (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T4)
- Appreciating the quality of the marks she is creating (and the possibilities and limitations of particular materials), and how she can consciously choose particular drawing materials, applying them in different ways to create a wide variety of marks with particular qualities, and these different qualities can be used purposefully to create a greater sense of illusion (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T4, T8, T11, T12)
- Appreciating the value of limiting her palate (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T4, T9)
- Appreciating that it is sometimes appropriate to just apply materials and then not touch them again (e.g. in strong reflections / highlights) (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T4)
- Appreciating that she can create an illusion of string on a spool of string without drawing every line (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T5, T7)
- Appreciating the way that an ellipse’s size and shape varies according to its position from eye level (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T5)
- Appreciating that attempting to rectify mistakes, is an opportunity to learn what happens when certain materials are used in combination, which isn’t necessary if everything falls into place (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T11)
- Appreciating that changing the way she looks at an object to be drawn, may change the way that she goes about applying materials to create an image of what she sees (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T14)

T-R provided Ellen with one-to-one guidance in the area of:

- Limiting the drawing materials she used in order to find their possibilities and versatility (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T2)
- Being aware of the qualities of her subject matter (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T2)
- Discovering new ways of making marks with drawing materials on the paper (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T7)
- Appreciating that different ways of applying drawing materials create different effects, and that matching these effects with the qualities of subject matter is an effective way of creating representational imagery (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T7)
- Learning from her experience of experimenting and making mistakes (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T8)
- Being aware of how the different elements of a drawing work together as a totality and being prepared to change the quality of particular elements so that the totality is more harmonious (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T10)

T-R provided Jarrah with one-to-one guidance in the area of:

- using her eraser as a drawing tool to disturb the clarity of her lines (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T1, T2, T5, T10)
• using the disturbing quality of the eraser and a dirty finger (in particular areas of her drawing) to convey a sense of volume (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T10)
• being prepared to try new, unexpected things to build up knowledge and experience (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T1, T2, T5)
• that’s beautiful, that bit of white, did you scratch that or leave it? (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T1, T2, T5)
• creating samples to experiment with mark-making possibilities of different drawing materials and processes (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T5, T10)
• considering the surface qualities of her subject matter (e.g. a paint brush) and attempting to describe these qualities using different drawing materials and processes of applying them (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T5)

T-R provided Joanne with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• Finding out what she can do with different drawing materials and mediums (extending her experience) (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T2, T5, T6)
• Using the qualities of the thing she is observing (e.g. texture) and trying to draw to show her which drawing materials she could use and how to apply them (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T1, T3)
• Learning when to stop (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T4, T11)
• Learning about not being in control and letting the drawing material, and the process of applying it, guide the way (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T12)

Week two (23/03/06)

T-R provided Betty with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• Considering the materials she intends to use early on in the drawing construction (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T16)
• Considering the totality, using simplification and a broad treatment to approach her image creation (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T16, T17, T19, T21)
• Identifying similarities between apparently disparate objects (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T16, T17)
• Suggesting materials and ways of applying those materials to represent particular subject matter (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T16, T21)
• Appreciating the value of realising certain things about applying materials to represent subject matter, rather than finishing the drawing (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T17)
• Considering the value of intrigue and fascination for viewing subject matter, making marks, and viewing artworks (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T17, T21)
• Tonal variation (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T26)
• Appreciating her over-use of colour and how to rectify it (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T27)
• Appreciating that the contour of shadow follows the direction of the surface that it falls on (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T27)

T-R provided Ellen with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• Discovering new ways of making marks with drawing materials on the paper (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T7)
• Appreciating that different ways of applying drawing materials create different effects, and that matching these effects with the qualities of subject matter is an effective way of creating representational imagery (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T7)
• Learning from her experience of experimenting and making mistakes (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T8)
• Being aware of how the different elements of a drawing work together as a totality and being prepared to change the quality of particular elements so that the totality is more harmonious (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T10)

T-R provided Jarrah with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• simplifying forms, broad treatment, being aware of the totality (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T13, T16, T18)
• focusing on the negative spaces and relating different objects in the set up in order to work with the totality (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T13)
• attempting to describe the different types of objects or aspects of the set up using different drawing materials and processes of applying them (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T16)
• finding different ways of applying drawing materials to reflect the qualities of the objects and help to solve/resolve the challenge of representation (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T16, T19)

T-R provided Joanne with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• Focusing on the similarities of different objects (e.g., colour, or texture, or direction) in order to establish connections between different aspects of the image (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T16)
• Simplify forms, broad treatment, be aware of the totality (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T17, T18, T22)
• Using the qualities of the thing she is observing and trying to draw to show her which drawing materials she could use and how to apply them (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T18)
• Creating a drawing which reflects working and experimenting and trying different ways of using materials, rather than an accurate representation of a particular object (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T19)
• Limiting herself with the colours she uses, trying to convey the sense of form and texture and tonal variation out of a few selected colours (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T22)
• Building on previous experiences with drawing materials to solve present challenges (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T23)

T-R provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• Using the qualities of the thing she is observing (e.g. …) and trying to draw to suggest which drawing materials she could use and how to apply them (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T8)
• Using lateral thinking to identify similarities between the qualities of various objects, to aid in their representation, rather than simply trying to describe them (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T9)
• Identifying parts of a drawing which look unfinished, and attending to them in order to create a sense of resolve (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T11)
• Washing her hands to aid in minimising the occurrence of smudges (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T11)

Week three (02/03/06)

T-R provided Betty with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• Appreciating that art-making is often driven by an absence of satisfaction with what one is doing: “it can be better” (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T31)
• Appreciating that Chinese and Japanese brush and ink masters, don’t know when to do their brush strokes: “they wait for it” (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T38), and also that they “try and draw a fish … they don’t try to do a Japanese drawing” (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T46)
• Knowing that the art shop would be the place top go to purchase drawing ink (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T38)
• Appreciating the value of keeping her water clean (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T39)
• Recognising the realistic quality of her fish drawing (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T40)
• Appreciating that working with brush and ink on water colour paper requires that she keep renewing the water (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T40)
• Recognising the value of the open mouth on one of her fish drawings (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T40)
• Considering a possible link between the pace of making a line with a nib and ink, and the emotional quality of the line (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T41)
• Appreciating that part of the art of purposefully using accidental mark-making in brush and ink, is experience (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T41)
• Considering that skillful drawings which have had a lot of time spent executing them may “lose that magical unexpected quality” (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T41)
• Appreciating the value of repeating the same process which lead to a ‘terrific’ drawing (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T43)
• Considering that not having much to do with making a drawing is “how it should be” (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T43)
• Suggesting that she combine the nib and ink and brush and ink approaches in the same drawing: “the expected and the unexpected” (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T46)
• Suggesting ways of applying water to the background area of her drawing to control the area for the unexpected, ink bleeding to take place (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T46)
• Appreciating that although a fish looks simple, drawing it is more complicated and suggesting that she use different mark-making techniques to represent the different parts of the fish (head, body and tail) (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-B1 / DVD1 / T48)

T-R provided Ellen with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• Being light-hearted about her mistakes (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T13)
• Doing repeat drawings of particular subject matter, from different angles and in different positions (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T14, T17)
• Appreciating that continual awareness of her mark making may coincide with an experience of being nervous and that disconnecting from one’s self-consciousness whilst making marks may be more effective (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T15)
• Appreciating that not being satisfied with what she creates doesn’t have to be a disappointing experience (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T16)
• Respecting the minds eye of her potential audience, the minds eye can complete an image, not all the elements have to be present (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T23)
• Acknowledging that there is a certain technical skill and experience which is indicated in the drawings that she produces (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T23)
• Continuing to work with materials (like the brush and ink) that she doesn’t feel particularly comfortable with (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T24)
• Introducing different ways of creating lines with ink without using a nib pen (scratching an indent in the paper and then washing over it with watery ink) (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T24)
• And as soon as you like something, you add the eyes, and then you extend it (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T24)
• Combining different mark-making techniques within the one image to reflect the different qualities of her subject matter (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T27)
• Appreciating that the wetness of the brush and the cleanliness of the water is what makes the brushing and flowing of ink work (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T28, T30)
• Learning from her experience of experimenting and making mistakes (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T8, T30)
• Maintaining the effectiveness of her drawing materials (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-E / DVD1 / T34)

T-R provided Jarrah with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• Introducing a process of applying and removing ink, water, candle wax, indenting paper etc. to create a drawing of a fish (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T29)
• appreciating the value of drawing subject matter (e.g. the fish) on a life size scale (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T32)
• doing a little bit more on each fish drawing to build up her knowledge and experience of drawing with ink (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T29, T32, T36)
• combining skilful line drawings from a nib pen with difficult to control water and ink drawings using a brush ((Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T29, T35)
• recognising the difficulties she experiences in letting go of her skilful control of drawing materials (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T36)
• being prepared to let go of her skilful control of drawing materials, letting the process of applying materials do it for her, and the value of combining this with skilful control (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T29, T36) “we are here to challenge ourselves” (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Ja / DVD1 / T35)

T-R provided Joanne with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• Different ways of applying wax, water and ink, and dabbing with a cloth to create different effects (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T37, T39, T42, T43)
• Accepting that simply realising that she gets carried away (heavy-handed) when she applies materials is good (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T37)
• Learning from each ink drawing (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T43)
• Repeating the same process but extending it, modifying it slightly (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T41, T42)
• Make lots of drawings (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T42)
• Don’t stick with one drawing for too long (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T42)
• Keeping her water clean (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-Jo / DVD1 / T42)

T-R provided Teresa with one-to-one guidance in the area of:
• Identifying qualities of her ink lines and what they suggest about the qualities of the object she is attempting to represent (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T16)
• Appreciating that achieving an evenness of line when using an ink nib will come with time, experience and confidence (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T16)
• Appreciating the emotional quality of drawing lines (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T16)
• Attempting to strive for straighter, even lines using an ink nib (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T16)
• Using the quality of marks achieved from using a brush, water, and ink to reflect the qualities of fish (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T24)
• Appreciating that striving to represent a fish by describing a particular one may cause her to approach the task of representation in a different way (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T24)
• Appreciating the simplicity of representing a fish using a brush, water and ink (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T24)
• Using other mediums (e.g. a candle stick) together with brush, water and ink in attempting to represent a fish (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T26)
• To avoid over-working her fish drawings, start a new drawing when she notices that she wants to extend the process, and introduce this process on a fresh drawing (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T27)
• Affirming that making unintentional marks is an important part of the fish drawing task (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T27)
• Appreciating that the experience of using the brush, water and ink process involved in drawing the fish, may help to develop trust in one’s self to control the drawing materials just enough, whilst still providing for uncontrolled and unintended mark-making to take place (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T27)
• Drawing on her experience of using the process of applying water and ink with a brush to represent the reflective quality of a fish, and applying this to the task of representing the reflective quality of metal objects (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T28)
• Integrating both approaches to using ink (nib and brush) in the one image (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T28, T30, T31, T32), plus extending it (dampen the paper first, then use pen and ink) (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T39)
• Appreciating how the amount of water she applies, or degree of wetness of the area on the paper that she then applies ink to, will create different qualities of the marks, and will vary in their
appropriateness of representation for particular subject matter (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T31, T32)

- Affirming that a significant part of the process of making art-works involves correcting mistakes (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T34)
- Appreciating that the highest point on a reflective object will reflect the strongest light (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T38)
- Combining observation and knowledge to aid in the analysis and subsequent representation of a metal object (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T38)
- Appreciating the value of keeping her drawings of fish, the same size as the actual fish that she is drawing from (Observational Data Video Footage Reference: O_CD_S-T / DVD1 / T40)
Appendix 5.1  ‘The Zone’ and Joanne

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### APPENDIX 5 – SECOND PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS

#### Appendix 5.1.1  Data Analysis: Joanne (the zone #1)

#### Processing Joanne’s comments about ‘the zone’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block / stuck / constrict / restrictions</th>
<th>Flow / zone / enjoying / having fun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like today’s class, I got a bit stuck, because I thought ‘Oh, I don’t know what I am doing’</td>
<td>but when I just sat down and I started going ‘Oh well I’ll do that and then that’. And I stopped thinking about it. I don’t even realise that I stop thinking about it, until I’ve sort of done it and then I go ‘Oh I didn’t really think about that’. And that’s when it flows and it flows naturally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s where the restrictions come in, you know ‘What am I going to do?’ or ‘How am I going to do this?’ and that’s that thinking process where you get stuck, where I get stuck</td>
<td>Whereas, if I don’t think about it, it is going to be what it is going to be. There is no expectation on how it is going to look in the end, and that is when it just flows nicely.</td>
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<td>I call it the zone. I will call it the zone. I know if I have been painting or drawing, and I’m just, you’re not thinking about it, it comes free. I can’t seem to force myself to be in that position, it has to come naturally. And it’s like, if it was twelve o’clock at night, two o’clock in the morning, I find it easier. I don’t know if it’s got to do with if you’re sleepy, or you just get in that state easier. I find it easier to get in that state. Otherwise, sometimes I have got to be really comfortable, or working on something for a couple of hours, maybe I’ve got the right music, maybe I’ve got no music, it’s different elements, different things make it work. I mean some things, you know, don’t. What I have noticed is [Betty] actually in that. I’ve watched her and gone, ‘Oh, that’s the zone. She’s in the zone’. It’s just that flow. It’s so beautiful. I recognise when I’m in it. I try not to think about it when it does pop into my head, because I kind of just want to let it flow. But, I can’t always stay there for very long. And I think with time, the more I do, the more that will come. And the more I learn, the more I’m comfortable, all that will come. It’s a place I really love to be because I see my own artwork becoming more free and there are no restrictions on it, yeah. But yes, it’s something I’ve recognised in [Betty] when she’s drawing. And I just go, ‘Oh, I want to do that’. (laughs)</td>
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<td>Yeah I am a little bit more anxious, because I believe he expects more and so I expect more of myself. If I’m not living up to those standards then I start to punish myself and then I start to get into that stage where it’s not working for me and so it’s just a vicious circle really.</td>
<td>So it’s learning to let go of that and enjoy it. Because I know he still says ‘Enjoy it. Make sure you enjoy it. Don’t forget to enjoy it.’ So it’s letting go of that, still enjoying it.</td>
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<td>DOING IT BUT NOT ENJOYING IT</td>
<td>It’s probably the demand that I put on myself, or my expectations. Once again, those expectations. This is like, ‘Well, why can’t you do this? You should be able to be doing it better, or’ (laughs). There’s always them.</td>
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<td>But I think ‘Just to enjoy it. Letting go and enjoying it.’ I think the work that comes out of that is so much better. If you can let it go and enjoy it.</td>
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I think that is probably one of my biggest
struggles is letting go of all that other stuff and go 'OK, just enjoy'. [GD4_S-Jo : 538 - 545]

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<tr>
<th>Struggles is letting go of all that other stuff and go 'OK, just enjoy'. [GD4_S-Jo : 538 - 545]</th>
<th>So I’m really in this space of worrying about getting everything done. If I get everything done then I don’t seem to worry as much. But it’s then that another week goes past and I think ‘(gasp) I’ve still got this to do’ and then I start to worry again. I start to get in this panic mode. … I really find that’s my biggest struggle, I think. Finding that time to do it. [GD8_S-Jo : 73 - 79]</th>
<th>Then I think ‘Let it go [Joanne]. Let it go. Relax and enjoy what you are doing’. [GD8_S-Jo : 73 - 79]</th>
<th>How do you think you are able to improve on your skills? I’ve just written down: practice, quicker sketches, more of them, simplifying, seeing things as shapes, documenting information, having fun and enjoying what I’m doing and not taking it too seriously [I_S-Jo3 : 245 - 254]</th>
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<td>I can get too serious and then that’s when I get stuck and I can’t feel free… I can constrict myself. I am probably my own worst enemy there. [I_S-Jo3 : 245 - 254]</td>
<td>… when you have to do it, you will push yourself, but it’s pushing myself to the limit and going ‘Did I enjoy that? Did I enjoy that process?’ Because I was so busy thinking about getting it done in time, that I think sometimes I forget about the process. [GD7_S-Jo : 154 - 165]</td>
<td>So I just go ‘OK’. I’ve had a laugh at myself. ‘Be happy. Not too serious, it’s drawing come on, it’s not too serious. It’s not the end of the world’. So then I don’t get too serious about it, and I don’t constrict myself, because I can constrict myself. I am probably my own worst enemy there. Yeah, so not too serious. [I_S-Jo3 : 245 - 254]</td>
<td>‘It’s a bit like the fifty drawings. Bring yourself back, ‘OK, how can I do this so I can enjoy it?’ Because I know that after half a dozen or so I am like ‘I am so bored!’ And it is just doing different mediums, different papers and I went ‘Oh wow, I am enjoying this now’. So, but, I might get stuck again, I might get to forty and go, ‘Oh, I’m bored’. But I think it’s like expanding my mind, looking outside what I would ordinarily do. Thinking of something really different to challenge yourself. [GD7_S-Jo : 154 - 165]</td>
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<td>… doing art it’s about doing what I love, it’s about me. So it’s about putting myself out there and doing something that I love… It doesn’t matter whether someone thinks it’s great or bad. It doesn’t matter about that. It’s about the fact that I am doing something that I love. I’m doing something for me. That if I don’t do it, I think I will probably be less of a person for myself. I’m honouring something that I am really enjoying inside. It doesn’t matter how good or bad I am. The fact that I am just doing it is an important thing for me. [GD4_S-Jo : 349 - 358]</td>
<td>… …nothing matter how hard or how challenging it gets, and there are going to be moments when I just don’t like it, or I just don’t want to be here or, I am human just like everyone else, it’s normal. But over all, I love it. For me to have a week off, that sort of hurt me, as much as I knew I needed it, I just didn’t have the energy to come here, it still hurt me deep down. It was sort of like ‘oooh, I’m going to miss [art school]’. I would so much rather miss work then [art school] any day. Work, you know, as much as I beat myself up about it, I don’t have to think twice about not wanting to go there, I know I don’t want to go there. Whereas [art school], I want to be here. I willingly put myself here. I paid this money to be here. You know, so, I want to get as much out of it as I can, but there are going to be days when I don’t want to be here. There are going to</td>
<td>It’s really important that I enjoy it, and that’s something I’ve got to focus on, enjoying it. [GD7_S-Jo : 323 - 361]</td>
<td>It love it, as I say, for me to have … no matter how</td>
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be days when I just don’t like what I am doing, or I’m bored, or … that’s got to come with it. I can’t expect that I am going to love it every second. But I love the fact that I am doing art, that I am doing something I love, because for 33 years, it’s taken me 33 years to do something about it. You know, and I’ve always loved it. I don’t think that I’m that great at it, but I love it. And you know, I get a chance to do that and learn more and so, even art history. Art history I knew nothing and I thought ‘Oh, boring’. I’m actually enjoying it. I’m starting to pick up more now, which is really good because then you are learning more about other artists. So you actually, it’s a win, win situation really. So as much as you know, the deadlines I really don’t like, … I have really trouble with that, but, it’s like everyone we’ve all got to work to it. It’s not easy. Mmm. [GD7_S-Jo : 323 - 361]

That’s really important for me. Enjoying it is one of the most important things about this for me, you know, … why am I here if I am not enjoying what I am doing? I will go to work instead. That’s how it’s got to be. [GD7_S-Jo : 323 - 361]

In the beginning I don’t think I actually thought about it, I think I just thought about drawing them, and then it was after the first half a dozen I thought ‘I’m bored, I’ve got to change what I am doing to actually come back to enjoying it, because this is about enjoying it’. You know, no point doing it and hating it [GD8_S-Jo : 167 - 177]

...but you know, I think I would have enjoyed it more if I had more time, if I didn’t have art history thinking, and you know going, ‘you’ve got to do me as well’. I would have loved to enjoy doing more of that and I would have expanded it more, and so, it was only the time limit where I go, ‘Well that’s got to be enough, I’ve got to stop somewhere, and go on with the next one.’ [GD8_S-Jo : 167 - 177]

Sometimes it’s just that start. It’s like a blank piece of paper … well what do I write? I probably have trouble with the blank piece of paper, but it’s like once you start you build on it and then it starts to flow … and you can let go of it rather then push it ...[GD2_S-Jo : 226-230]

I think last week I was putting a lot of expectations and the more expectations I was putting on myself, I couldn’t let go. You know, I couldn’t probably let go at all. So that’s why I think I had such a hard time last week ... when I’m thinking about it far too much I can’t produce, because I’m too busy thinking about it ... [GD4_S-Jo : 233-241]

So I think combining practice and being a little kinder on myself I think will go along way so I’ve got to change my thought pattern, and put it into practice, which I think that comes the confidence then to go in there and not worry about it. So when I’m thinking about it far too much I can’t produce, because I’m too busy thinking about it ... [GD4_S-Jo : 236-241]
Processing Joanne’s comments about thoughts.

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<th>My interpretation</th>
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<td>Sometimes Joanne's thinking just gets in the way of doing, particularly when she thinks that she needs to know what she is doing before she actually does it</td>
<td>...when I’m thinking about it far too much I can’t produce, because I’m too busy thinking about it</td>
<td>GD4_S-Jo: 240-241</td>
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<td>That’s where the restrictions come in, you know ‘What am I going to do?’ or ‘How am I going to do this?’ and that’s that thinking process where you get stuck, where I get stuck</td>
<td>GD7_S-Jo: 188-199</td>
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<td>Like today’s class, I got a bit stuck, because I thought ‘Oh, I don’t know what I am doing’, I was a bit overwhelmed by it all, when he first said we had to come up with a piece. I thought ‘What on earth am I gonna do?’ I had no idea and my thinking was stuck.</td>
<td>GD7_S-Jo: 188-199</td>
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<td>...I actually got quite scared when I thought ‘Oh struth! The rest wasn’t quite so hard. Now to look at this: how do I express myself? How do I put myself into a piece of art or come up with something modern?’</td>
<td>I_S-Jo3: 168-171</td>
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<td>It’s probably the demand that I put on myself, or my expectations. Once again, those expectations. This is like, ‘Well, why can’t you do this? You should be able to be doing it better, or’ (laughs). There’s always them.</td>
<td>GD4_S-Jo: 349-358</td>
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<td>...I actually got quite scared when I thought ‘Oh struth! The rest wasn’t quite so hard. Now to look at this: how do I express myself? How do I put myself into a piece of art or come up with something modern?’</td>
<td>I_S-Jo3: 173-189</td>
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<td>Whereas some things I can draw and I just think, ‘oh that's horrible’, or ‘it’s out of proportion’</td>
<td>I_S-Jo3: 261-282</td>
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<td>Other times Joanne believes that she simply is not capable of a particular task or doesn’t accept what her current skill level and knowledge of techniques are</td>
<td>But I think ‘Just to enjoy it. Letting go and enjoying it.’ I think the work that comes out of that is so much better. If you can let it go and enjoy it.</td>
<td>GD4_S-Jo: 538-545</td>
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<td>‘OK, how can I do this so I can enjoy it?’ Because I know that after half a dozen or so I am like ‘I am so bored!’ And it is just doing different mediums, different papers and I went ‘Oh wow, I am enjoying this now’. So, but, I might get stuck again, I might get to forty and go, ‘Oh, I’m bored’. But I think it’s like expanding my mind, looking outside what I would ordinarily do. Thinking of something really different to challenge yourself.</td>
<td>GD7_S-Jo: 154-165</td>
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<td>Then I think ‘Let it go [Joanne]. Let it go. Relax and enjoy what you are doing’.</td>
<td>GD8_S-Jo: 73-79</td>
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<td>In the beginning I don’t think I actually thought about it, I think I just thought about drawing them, and then it was after the first half a dozen I thought ‘I’m bored, I’ve got to change what I am doing to actually come back to enjoying it, because this is about enjoying it’. You know, no point doing it and hating it.</td>
<td>GD8_S-Jo: 167-177</td>
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<td>So I just go ‘OK’. I’ve had a laugh at myself. ‘Be happy. Not too serious, it’s drawing come on, it’s not too serious. It’s not the end of the world’. So then I don’t get too serious about it, and I don’t constrict myself, because I can constrict myself. I am probably my own worst enemy there. Yeah, so not too serious.</td>
<td>I_S-Jo3: 245-254</td>
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<td>Other times Joanne’s thoughts serve to counter her tendency to believe that she needs to know what she is doing before she actually does it</td>
<td>… when I just sat down and I started going ‘Oh well I’ll do that and then that’. And I stopped thinking about it. I don’t even realise that I stop thinking about it, until I’ve sort of done it and then I go ‘Oh I didn’t really think about that’. And that’s when it flows and it flows naturally</td>
<td>GD7_S-Jo: 188-199</td>
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<td>My interpretation</td>
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<td>On other occasions Joanne’s thoughts relate to the specific problem at hand</td>
<td>I was coming up with different things, and then that was when I started to go ‘look at how I was feeling’, because I was feeling so overwhelmed I thought ‘oh, I can use how I am feeling’. So all of a sudden my thinking had changed. I had got really quite excited. Because that’s when this piece, that I am sort of doing, sort of started. ‘Oh I can use myself’ and that’s when I realised ‘oh I am actually using myself in my art’. So it’s you know boom, boom, boom, boom. Finally some things are sort of clicking.</td>
<td>I_S-Jo3 : 173-189</td>
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<td>But yeah like listening to myself emotionally and mentally and I thought ‘Oh hang on I have got a piece of work here, kill two birds with the one stone, get it out of me, but also put it into my art’.</td>
<td>I_S-Jo3: 173-189?</td>
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<td>Joanne’s thoughts sometimes countered her tendency to believe that she wasn’t capable of doing a particular task</td>
<td>‘Oh yeah, phew! I can do this!’ and now it’s just expanding on that. So, now I’ve got the ideas it’s just expanding on how I actually bring it out.</td>
<td>I_S-Jo3: 173-189</td>
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<td>I actually liked her face. I wasn’t thinking about it, I just did a quick sketch. And it was from one of my ones in my art book. But because I didn’t, it’s messy and scribby and, I actually liked her face. And I felt like it was probably a little bit more in, I don’t know, it worked, it didn’t actually, I hadn’t stopped and thought about it, but I felt like it worked as a picture more for me. ... I sometimes find that I am just … using some of the skills that I’ve got, and then it comes out in the sketch but I’m not thinking about it, so I’m just mucking around. This was just, my idea was ‘I’m thinking about what I am going to do for my work’. So, I hadn’t thought about how to make sure that it was just all proportional, the end result I liked. It was something really simple, but you know, for me to try and draw something like that, that’s when I get stuck, when I am trying to draw something correctly. Whereas because I was just trying to scribble and muck around it allows me to let go a lot more.</td>
<td>I_S-Jo3: 261 - 282</td>
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### Processing Joanne’s comments about ‘expectations’

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<th><strong>My interpretation</strong></th>
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<td>Sometimes Joanne recognised that the expectations to perform in a certain way or to a particular standard, came from within herself</td>
<td>…it’s what you sort of put on yourself and expect yourself to come up with, and all of a sudden you do the work and you think ‘it’s just not what I was expecting’ or you are pushing yourself that extra point can be frustrating, if it’s not what you are imagining, in your head, and what’s coming out on paper, or, sometimes that can be really hard, and letting go of that, so I think it can flow a little more easily. So I think sometimes when you put those demands on yourself it’s almost like a block and you can’t get past and that stops you from actually letting go and letting it happen. As [another student] said to me ‘Oh just don’t think about it. Just do it’ and that’s the one that used the different colours, and it looked very abstract. She just said ‘I wasn’t thinking about it, I was just doing it.’ And so I sometimes think, ‘the more you think about it, the more strain you put on yourself to get something closer to perfect, the harder it is to actually get it there’.</td>
<td>GD2_S-Jo: 101-118</td>
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<td>I think last week I was putting a lot of expectations and the more expectations I was putting on myself, I couldn’t let go. You know, I couldn’t probably let go at all. So that’s why I think I had such a hard time last week.</td>
<td>GD4_S-Jo: 230-241</td>
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<td>I think for me it comes back to more myself, what I expect of myself.</td>
<td>GD4_S-Jo: 280-281</td>
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<td>This is my personal stuff I’ve got to work out for myself. You know the restrictions I put on myself, that then restrict me in my drawing. So I think for me practise is important because then I don’t put as much pressure on myself.</td>
<td>GD4_S-Jo: 298-301</td>
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<td>It’s probably the demand that I put on myself, or my expectations. Once again, those expectations. This is like, ‘Well, why can’t you do this? You should be able to be doing it better’, or’ (laughs). There’s always them. But I think ‘Just to enjoy it. Letting go and enjoying it.’ I think the work that comes out of that is so much better. If you can let it go and enjoy it. Yeah and I think that is probably one of my biggest struggles is letting go of all that other stuff and go ‘OK, just enjoy’.</td>
<td>GD4_S-Jo: 538-545</td>
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<td>I know when I demand of myself, that’s when I get stuck, ‘I can’t do it, why can’t I do it?’ It’s because I am putting those limitations on myself. Mmm so, that’s a big one for me.</td>
<td>I_S-Jo3: 131-141</td>
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<td>However, on other occasions Joanne could see how the expectations which she put on herself were also related to external influences</td>
<td>And I think that’s where I’ve got to bring my expectations up in [teacher’s name]’s class and that’s where I punish myself and go ‘[Joanne] will you pick up your pace, you know you’ve go to be on the ball with him’. (14.12) And especially like umm, today’s class, I don’t have to be like that, it’s just with the teachers I have, or it’s just, oh I don’t know, it’s just what it is.</td>
<td>GD4_S-Jo: 272 - 277</td>
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<td>Yeah I am a little bit more anxious, because I believe he expects more and so I expect more of myself. If I’m not living up to those standards then I start to punish myself and then I start to get into that stage where it’s not working for me and so it’s just a vicious circle really. So it’s learning to let go of that and enjoy it. Because I know he still says ‘Enjoy it. Make sure you enjoy it. Don’t forget to enjoy it’. So it’s letting go of that, still enjoying it.</td>
<td>GD4_S-Jo: 283-290</td>
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<td>Joanne also commented on what happens when she does not have any expectations</td>
<td>I love the playing and in playing I feel a lot more free and there is no expectations and things come out a lot nicer, and I wrote down somewhere in here, when I don’t have any expectations on something I normally like it visually more, I actually like my work more. It’s that letting go of … not having expectations on it, it might be just mucking around, but quite often I think it was a simple little sketch ‘oh I actually like that’, and I am aware that I wasn’t actually thinking about it at the time. I wasn’t demanding myself</td>
<td>I_S-Jo3: 131-141</td>
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<td>… when I don’t have expectations I tend to like what I produce more … I actually liked her face. I wasn’t thinking about it, I just did a quick sketch. And it was from one of my ones in my art book. But because I didn’t, it’s messy and scribbley and, I actually liked her face. And I felt like it was probably a little bit more in, I don’t know, it worked, it didn’t actually, I hadn’t stopped and thought about it, but I felt like it worked as a picture more for me. … I sometimes find that I am just … using some of the skills that I’ve got, and then it comes out in the sketch but I’m not thinking about it, so I’m just mucking around. This was just, my idea was ‘I’m thinking about what I am going to do for my work’; So, I hadn’t thought about how to make sure that it was just all proportional, the end result I liked. It was something really simple, but you know, for me to try and draw something like that, that’s when I get stuck, when I am trying to draw something correctly. Whereas because I was just trying to scribble and muck around it allows me to let go a lot more</td>
<td>I_S-Jo3: 261-282</td>
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Appendix 5.1.2  Data Analysis: Joanne (the zone #2)

What is my understanding of Joanne’s experience of being in ‘the zone’?

Joanne’s art-making practice appears to consist of different types of experiences. One particular type of experience that Joanne mentioned was one that she calls ‘the zone’ (GD8_S-Jo: 461-482). One of the characteristics of Joanne’s experience of being in ‘the zone’ is that she is not thinking about what she is doing (GD7_S-Jo: 188-199; GD8_S-Jo: 462). This relates to the position of mindlessness associated with spontaneous transcedental agency (Bhaskar, 2002b p.4; 2002c pp.211-212).

According to Bhaskar, mindless activity involves being in transcendental identification with the form of a particular activity without being concerned with the content of consciousness at that time (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.211-212). During a group discussion, Joanne made the comment ‘…when I’m thinking about it far too much I can’t produce, because I’m too busy thinking about it’ (GD4_S-Jo: 240-241). Joanne later commented that when she is not thinking about what she is doing is ‘when it flows and it flows naturally’ (GD7_S-Jo: 188-199) and ‘it comes free’ (GD8_S-Jo: 463). These comments suggest that when Joanne is thinking about drawing, she finds it difficult to actually draw, and that to actually ‘produce’ a drawing requires that she spontaneously participate in the act of drawing without thinking about it. In other words, when Joanne’s attention is totally focused on the activity of drawing and is not distracted by other thoughts, she is able to ‘produce’ a drawing. This allows us to appreciate the practical significance of Bhaskar’s suggestion that all action ultimately reposes on spontaneous non-dual action (Bhaskar, 2002a pp.236-237). However, if all action ultimately reposes on spontaneous non-dual action why is it that Joanne doesn’t experience being in ‘the zone’ every time she draws, or does anything at all?

Critical realism’s stratified model of reality allows us to appreciate that although an event, like spontaneous action uninhibited by thought, may actually occur, it may not be experienced by the person who is doing the action (Shipway, 2002 p.109). It seems strange to suggest that a person who is acting would not be experiencing their action. However, if experience is simply the content of consciousness, as Csikszentmihalyi suggests (1988 p.17), and spontaneous activity involves loosing the content of consciousness as one transcendentally identifies with the activity at hand (Bhaskar, 2002c p.211), then it is understandable that one may not consciously experience the non-duality of any action. For Joanne to consciously experience ‘the zone’ requires the content of her consciousness recognising or noticing that she has been acting without thinking. The moment this happens, however, there is content in her consciousness. Bringing her attention back to the activity at hand without consciously thinking about it, allows Joanne’s experience of being in ‘the zone’ to be maintained: ‘I recognise when I’m in it. I try not to think about it when it does pop into my head because I kind of just want to let it flow’ (GD8_S-Jo: 474-476).

This characteristic of deep concentration on the activity at hand is similar to a characteristic of the ordered, negentropic state of consciousness called ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 pp.33-34). According to Csikszentmihalyi (1988 p.33), the person experiencing flow not only forgets his or her problems, but also temporarily loses the awareness of self that in normal life often intrudes in consciousness, and causes psychic energy to be diverted from what needs to be done. During the experience of flow the self is fully functioning but not aware of itself doing it, which means that it can use all the attention for the task at hand (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 p.33).

Joanne also commented that she can’t force herself to be in the zone or let it flow, ‘it has to come naturally’ (GD8_S-Jo: 463-464), and she also indicated that she can’t always stay there for very long (GD8_S-Jo: 476). It is, however, a place that Joanne really loves to be because she sees her artwork ‘becoming more free and there are no restrictions on it’ (GD8_S-Jo: 478-480). These characteristics of expansion and enjoyment which Joanne associates with being in ‘the zone’, and would also like to experience more often, are similar to other characteristics of ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 pp.33-34).

According to Csikszentmihalyi optimal experience or flow requires a balance between the challenges perceived in a given situation and the skills a person brings to it (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 p.30). Thus, although each drawing activity may be an opportunity for optimal experience, no activity can sustain it for long unless both the challenges and the skills become more complex (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 p.30). Further, no activity guarantees the occurrence of flow, because an activity can only provide challenges, what is also required, according to Csikszentmihalyi (1988 p.31), is for each individual to recognise the challenges, plus be capable of focusing attention, controlling memory, and limiting awareness to the specific goals involved.

Csikszentmihalyi suggests that autotelic motivation, that is, where the goal is primarily the experience itself, rather than any future reward or advantage it may bring, is important for experiencing flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 p.29). This particular characteristic of the flow experience also relates to Bhaskar’s suggestion that any activity which is split, for example, by attending to the result or consequences of the activity, or split by being concerned with something else, or by not being
completely present in the here and now of the activity, is dualistic activity (2002a p.236). In other words, when the content of an individual's consciousness is attending to information, memories or thoughts that are not directly related to the specific activity at hand, then the content of an individual's consciousness and what they are actually doing lacks congruence.

The interview and group discussion data suggest that Joanne experienced her art-making practice as being blocked or inhibited by her own thoughts and expectations. Other factors that Joanne experienced as inhibiting or blocking her art-making practice include other commitments, technique, and wanting to be in control.

**Thoughts**

One of the characteristics of being in 'the zone' for Joanne is that she is not thinking about what she is doing. Joanne also indicated that some of her thoughts inhibit or block her art-making practice.

Sometimes her thinking just gets in the way of doing, particularly when she thinks that she needs to know what she is doing before she actually does it:

- ...when I’m thinking about it far too much I can’t produce, because I’m too busy thinking about it (GD4_S-Jo: 240-241)
- That’s where the restrictions come in, you know ‘What am I going to do?’ or ‘How am I going to do this?’ and that’s that thinking process where you get stuck, where I get stuck (GD7_S-Jo: 188-199)
- Like today’s class, I got a bit stuck, because I thought ‘Oh, I don’t know what I am doing’ (GD7_S-Jo: 188-199)
- I was a bit overwhelmed by it all, when he first said we had to come up with a piece. I thought ‘What on earth am I gonna do?’ I had no idea and my thinking was stuck. (I_S-Jo3 : 168-171)
- ... I actually got quite scared when I thought ‘Oh struth! The rest wasn’t quite so hard. Now to look at this: how do I express myself? How do I put myself into a piece of art or come up with something modern?’ (I_S-Jo3 : 173-189)

Other times Joanne believes that she simply is not capable of a particular task or doesn’t accept what her current skill level and knowledge of techniques are:

- It’s probably the demand that I put on myself, or my expectations. Once again, those expectations. This is like, ‘Well, why can’t you do this? You should be able to be doing it better, or’ (laughs). There’s always them. [GD4_S-Jo : 349 - 358 ]
- ... I actually got quite scared when I thought ‘Oh struth! The rest wasn’t quite so hard. Now to look at this: how do I express myself? How do I put myself into a piece of art or come up with something modern?’ [I_S-Jo3 : 173-189]
- Whereas some things I can draw and I just think, ‘oh that's horrible', or ‘it's out of proportion' [I_S-Jo3: 261 - 282]

It is important to note, however, that the interview and group discussion data also indicated that Joanne had thoughts that appeared to enable her art-making practice:

Some of these related to a belief that making art should be enjoyable:

- But I think ‘Just to enjoy it. Letting go and enjoying it.’ I think the work that comes out of that is so much better. If you can let it go and enjoy it. [GD4_S-Jo : 538 - 545 ]
- ‘OK, how can I do this so I can enjoy it?’ Because I know that after half a dozen or so I am like ‘I am so bored!’ And it is just doing different mediums, different papers and I went ‘Oh wow, I am enjoying this now’. So, but, I might get stuck again, I might get to forty and go, ‘Oh, I’m bored’. But I think it’s like expanding my mind, looking outside what I would ordinarily do. Thinking of something really different to challenge yourself. [GD7_S-Jo : 154 - 165 ]
- Then I think ‘Let it go Joanne. Let it go. Relax and enjoy what you are doing’. [GD8_S-Jo : 73 - 79 ]
- In the beginning I don’t think I actually thought about it, I think I just thought about drawing them, and then it was after the first half a dozen I thought ‘I’m bored, I’ve got to change what I am doing to actually come back to enjoying it, because this is about enjoying it’. You know, no point doing it and hating it [GD8_S-Jo : 167 - 177 ]
- So I just go ‘OK’. I’ve had a laugh at myself. ‘Be happy. Not too serious, it’s drawing come on, it’s not too serious. It's not the end of the world’. So then I don’t get too serious about it, and I don’t constrict myself, because I can constrict myself. I am probably my own worst enemy there. Yeah, so not too serious. [I_S-Jo3 : 245 - 254 ]

Other times Joanne’s thoughts serve to counter her tendency to believe that she needs to know what she is doing before she actually does it:

- ... when I just sat down and I started going ‘Oh well I’ll do that and then that’. And I stopped thinking about it, I don’t even realise that I stop thinking about it, until I’ve sort of done it and then I go ‘Oh I didn’t really think about that’. And that’s when it flows and it flows naturally (GD7_S-Jo: 188-199)
On other occasions Joanne’s thoughts relate to the specific problem at hand:

- I was coming up with different things, and then that was when I started to go ‘look at how I was feeling’, because I was feeling so overwhelmed I thought ‘oh, I can use how I am feeling’. So all of a sudden my thinking had changed. I had got really quite excited. Because that’s when this piece, that I am sort of doing, sort of started. ‘Oh I can use myself and that’s when I realised ‘oh I am actually using myself in my art’. So it’s you know boom, boom, boom, boom. Finally some things are sort of clicking. [I_S-Jo3 : 173-189]
- But yeah like listening to myself emotionally and mentally and I thought ‘Oh hang on I have got a piece of work here, kill two birds with the one stone, get it out of me, but also put it into my art’.

Joanne’s thoughts sometimes countered her tendency to believe that she wasn’t capable of doing a particular task:

- ‘Oh yeah, phew! I can do this!’ and now it’s just expanding on that. So, now I’ve got the ideas it’s just expanding on how I actually bring it out. [I_S-Jo3 : 173-189]
- I actually liked her face. I wasn’t thinking about it, I just did a quick sketch. And it was from one of my ones in my art book. But because I didn’t, it’s messy and scribbley and, I actually liked her face. And I felt like it was probably a little bit more in, I don’t know, it worked, it didn’t actually, I hadn’t stopped and thought about it, but I felt like it worked as a picture more for me. ... I sometimes find that I am just ... using some of the skills that I’ve got, and then it comes out in the sketch but I’m not thinking about it, so I’m just mucking around. This was just, my idea was ‘I’m thinking about what I am going to do for my work’. So, I hadn’t thought about how to make sure that it was just all proportional, the end result I liked. It was something really simple, but you know, for me to try and draw something like that, that’s when I get stuck, when I am trying to draw something correctly. Whereas because I was just trying to scribble and muck around it allows me to let go a lot more. [I_S-Jo3: 261 - 282]

**Expectations**

Having expectations of the end-product of her art-making practice was another type of experience which Joanne reported as having which appeared to block or inhibit the free flowing of her art-making activity.

Sometimes these expectations came from within:

- …it’s what you sort of put on yourself and expect yourself to come up with, and all of a sudden you do the work and you think ‘it’s just not what I was expecting’ or you are pushing yourself that extra point can be frustrating, if it’s not what you are imagining, in your head, and what’s coming out on paper, or, sometimes that can be really hard, and letting go of that, so I think it can flow a little more easily. So I think sometimes when you put those demands on yourself it's almost like a block and you can't get past and that stops you from actually letting go and letting it happen. As [another student] said to me ‘Oh just don’t think about it. Just do it’ and that’s the one that used the different colours, and it looked very abstract. She just said ‘I wasn’t thinking about it, I was just doing it.’ And so I sometimes think, ‘the more you think about it, the more strain you put on yourself to get something closer to perfect, the harder it is to actually get it there’. [GD2_S-Jo: 101 - 118]
- I think last week I was putting a lot of expectations and the more expectations I was putting on myself, I couldn’t let go. You know, I couldn’t probably let go at all. So that’s why I think I had such a hard time last week [GD4_S-Jo : 230 - 241]
- I think for me it comes back to more myself, what I expect of myself [GD4_S-Jo: 280 - 281]
- This is my personal stuff I’ve got to work out for myself. You know the restrictions I put on myself, that then restrict me in my drawing. So I think for me practise is important because then I don’t put as much pressure on myself. [GD4_S-Jo: 298 - 301]
- It’s probably the demand that I put on myself, or my expectations. Once again, those expectations. This is like, ‘Well, why can’t you do this? You should be able to be doing it better, or’ (laughs). There’s always them. But I think ‘Just to enjoy it. Letting go and enjoying it.’ I think the work that comes out of that is so much better. If you can let it go and enjoy it. Yeah and I think that is probably one of my biggest struggles is letting go of all that other stuff and go ‘OK, just enjoy’. [GD4_S-Jo: 538 - 545]
- I know when I demand of myself, that’s when I get stuck, ‘I can’t do it, why can’t I do it?’ It’s because I am putting those limitations on myself. Mmm so, that’s a big one for me. [I_S-Jo3: 131 - 141]

However, on other occasions the expectations appeared to be related to external influences:

- And I think that’s where I’ve got to bring my expectations up in [teacher’s name]’s class and that’s where I punish myself and go ‘Joanne will you pick up your pace, you know you’ve got to be on the ball with him’. (14.12) And especially like umm, today’s class, I don’t have to be like that, it’s just with the teachers I have, or it’s just, oh I don’t know, it’s just what it is. [GD4_S-Jo: 272 - 277]
Yeah I am a little bit more anxious, because I believe he expects more and so I expect more of myself. If I’m not living up to those standards then I start to punish myself and then I start to get into that stage where it’s not working for me and so it’s just a vicious circle really. So it’s learning to let go of that and enjoy it. Because I know he still says ‘Enjoy it. Make sure you enjoy it. Don’t forget to enjoy it.’ So it’s letting go of that, still enjoying it. [GD4_S-Jo: 283 - 290]

Joanne also commented on what happens when she does not have any expectations:

• I love the playing and in playing I feel a lot more free and there is no expectations and things come out a lot nicer, and I wrote down somewhere in here, when I don’t have any expectations on something I normally like it visually more, I actually like my work more. Its that letting go of … not having expectations on it, it might be just mucking around, but quite often I think it was a simple little sketch ‘oh I actually like that’, and I am aware that I wasn’t actually thinking about it at the time. I wasn’t demanding myself [I_S-Jo3: 131 - 141]
• when I don’t have expectations I tend to like what I produce more ... I actually liked her face. I wasn’t thinking about it, I just did a quick sketch. And it was from one of my ones in my art book. But because I didn’t, it’s messy and scribbley and, I actually liked her face. And I felt like it was probably a little bit more in, I don’t know, it worked, didn’t actually, I hadn’t stopped and thought about it, but I felt like it worked as a picture more for me. … I sometimes find that I am just … using some of the skills that I’ve got, and then it comes out in the sketch but I’m not thinking about it, so I’m just mucking around. This was just, my idea was ‘I’m thinking about what I am going to do for my work’. So, I hadn’t thought about how to make sure that it was just all proportional, the end result I liked. It was something really simple, but you know, for me to try and draw something like that, that’s when I get stuck, when I am trying to draw something correctly. Whereas because I was just trying to scribble and muck around it allows me to let go a lot more. [I_S-Jo3: 261 - 282]

In the final interview with Joanne I had a chance to share my understanding of what was going on for Joanne with regards to the expectations and restrictions that she was putting on herself, ‘you’ve pretty much acted on that by just shifting and changing those expectations and looking at the things that you thought were restricting you looking at them in a different way so that they are no longer restricting you’ [I_S-Jo3: 437 - 443] – changing beliefs

Other factors that Joanne experienced as inhibiting or blocking her art-making practice include other commitments, technique, and wanting to be in control.

Other commitments

• So, even though it was all right for me to do it as a child, because I had that spare time, you know, I was isolated, I could do that. But getting older you go ‘well I’ve got commitments I’ve got to go and do this, I’ve got to do that’. And that’s something that stops, you know, yeah, housework will get in my way of sitting down and doing stuff. You know, I planned to spend all yesterday just doing my artwork, but I went ‘I can’t relax and do this, unless I do this first’. So I got the housework out of the way, until about two o’clock and then I sat down and did the artwork, and then I thought ‘now I didn’t get as much done as what I wanted to, but now I can at least relax more because the house work is done’. So I do struggle with that sort of thing, balancing that [GD8_S-Jo: 249-260]
• So I’m really in this space of worrying about getting everything done. If I get everything done then I don’t seem to worry as much. But it’s then that another week goes past and I think ‘(gasp) I’ve still got this to do’ and then I start to worry again. I start to get in this panic mode. … I really find that’s my biggest struggle, I think. Finding that time to do it. [GD8_S-Jo : 73 - 79 ]
• …but you know, I think I would have enjoyed it more if I had more time, if I didn’t have art history, thinking and you know going, ‘you’ve got to do me as well’. I would have loved to enjoy doing more of that and I would have expanded it more, and so, it was only the time limit where I go, ‘Well that’s got to be enough, I’ve got to stop somewhere, and go on with the next one.’ [GD8_S-Jo : 167 - 177]

Technique

• I get stuck with very similar sorts of things …how do I get that effect? [GD2_S-Jo: 125-126]

Wanting to control

• I think that I am probably a bit of a control freak, and I think that’s why [teacher’s name] probably gave me that stick, … ‘here try the stick that’s this long’. And ‘Aargh, I’ve got no control what so ever’. He gave me a long stick and he’s tapped my pencil up on the end of the stick and I just had no control. It was probably to try and let go of that control … being a control freak … wanting it to be perfect or, and then sometimes just going ‘OK well it’s not perfect’. And as [teacher’s name] said
APPENDIX 5 – SECOND PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS

‘Sometimes you have got to do it 50 times before you might get one really good picture out of it’. Pushing your self a bit more. [GD2_S-Jo: 200-209]

- Like today’s class, I got a bit stuck, because I thought ‘Oh, I don’t know what I am doing’ [GD7_S-Jo: 188-199]

Another type of experience which Joanne mentioned was being ‘anxious’ [GD4_S-Jo: 283-290]. This experience related to being in class with a particular teacher, ‘I believe he expects more and so I expect more of myself’ [GD4_S-Jo: 283-290]. Having high expectations, however, wasn’t very productive for Joanne in this instance. ‘If I’m not living up to those standards then I start to punish myself and then I start to get into that stage where it’s not working for me and so it’s just a vicious circle really’ [GD4_S-Jo: 283-290].

References


Appendix 5.1.3 **Data Analysis: Joanne (the zone #3)**

Joanne’s art-making practice appears to consist of different types of experiences. One particular type of experience that Joanne mentioned as being significant was one that she calls ‘the zone’ (GD8_S-Jo: 461-482). One of the characteristics of Joanne’s experience of being in ‘the zone’ is that she is not thinking about what she is doing (GD7_S-Jo: 188-199; GD8_S-Jo: 462). This relates to the position of mindfulness which Bhaskar associates with spontaneous transcendental agency (Bhaskar, 2002b p.4; 2002c pp.211-212).

According to Bhaskar, mindless activity involves being in transcendental identification with the form of a particular activity without being concerned with the content of consciousness at that time (Bhaskar, 2002c pp.211-212). During a group discussion, Joanne made the comment ‘…when I’m thinking about it far too much I can’t produce, because I’m too busy thinking about it’ (GD4_S-Jo: 240-241). Joanne later commented that when she is not thinking about what she is doing is ‘when it flows and it flows naturally’ (GD7_S-Jo: 188-199) and ‘it comes free’ (GD8_S-Jo: 463). These comments suggest that when Joanne is thinking about drawing, she finds it difficult to actually draw, and that to actually ‘produce’ a drawing requires that she spontaneously participate in the act of drawing without thinking about it. In other words, when Joanne’s attention is totally focused on the activity of drawing and is not distracted by other thoughts, she is able to ‘produce’ a drawing. This characteristic of deep concentration on the activity at hand is similar to a characteristic of the ordered, negentropic state of consciousness called ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 pp.33-34).

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1988 p.33), the person experiencing flow not only forgets his or her problems, but also temporarily loses the awareness of self that in normal life often intrudes in consciousness, and causes psychic energy to be diverted from what needs to be done. During the experience of flow the self is fully functioning but not aware of itself doing it, which means that it can use all the attention for the task at hand (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 p.33). However, Bhaskar suggests that all action ultimately reposes on spontaneous non-duaI action (Bhaskar, 2002a pp.236-237). If this is the case then why is it that Joanne doesn’t experience being in ‘the zone’ every time she draws, or does anything at all?

Critical realism’s stratified model of reality helps us to answer this question by appreciating that although an event, like spontaneous action uninhibited by thought, may actually occur, it may not be experienced by the person who is doing the action (Shipway, 2002 p.109). It seems strange to suggest that a person who is acting would not be experiencing their own action. However, if experience is simply the content of consciousness, as Csikszentmihalyi suggests (1988 p.17), and spontaneous activity involves loosing the content of consciousness as one transcendentally identifies with the activity at hand (Bhaskar, 2002c p.211), then it is quite understandable that Joanne may not consciously experience the non-duality underpinning any of her actions. For Joanne to consciously experience ‘the zone’ requires that the content of her consciousness recognises or notices that she has been acting without thinking about it. The moment this happens, however, there is content in her consciousness. Bringing her attention back to the activity at hand again, without consciously thinking about it, allows Joanne’s experience of being in ‘the zone’ to be maintained: ‘I recognise when I’m in it. I try not to think about it when it does pop into my head because I kind of just want to let it flow’ (GD8_S-Jo: 474-476).

Joanne also commented that she can’t force herself to be in the zone or let it flow, ‘it has to come naturally’ (GD8_S-Jo: 463-464), and she also indicated that she can’t always stay there for very long (GD8_S-Jo: 476). It is, however, a place that Joanne really loves to be because she sees her artwork ‘becoming more free and there are no restrictions on it’ (GD8_S-Jo: 478-480). These characteristics of expansion and enjoyment which Joanne associates with being in ‘the zone’, and would also like to experience more often, are similar to other characteristics of ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 pp.33-34).

According to Csikszentmihalyi optimal experience or flow requires a balance between the challenges perceived in a given situation and the skills a person brings to it (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 p.30). Thus, although each drawing activity may be an opportunity for optimal experience, no activity can sustain it for long unless both the challenges and the skills become more complex (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 p.30). Further, no activity guarantees the occurrence of flow, because an activity can only provide challenges, what is also required, according to Csikszentmihalyi (1988 p.31), is for each individual to recognise the challenges, plus be capable of focusing attention, controlling memory, and limiting awareness to the specific goals involved.

Csikszentmihalyi suggests that autotelic motivation, that is, where the goal is primarily the experience itself, rather than any future reward or advantage it may bring, is important for experiencing flow.

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561 NUDIST nodes consulted: S-Jo’s art-making practice / the FLOW or the ZONE / recognising it/conditions; S-Jo’s art-making practice / things that BLOCK or INHIBIT / thoughts+expectations; S-Jo’s art-making practice / enjoying/having fun
(Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 p.29). This particular characteristic of the flow experience also relates to Bhaskar’s suggestion that any activity which is split, for example, by attending to the result or consequences of the activity, or split by being concerned with something else, or by not being completely present in the here and now of the activity, is dualistic activity (2002a p.236). In other words, when the content of an individual’s consciousness is attending to information, memories or thoughts that are not directly related to the specific activity at hand, then the content of an individual’s consciousness and what they are actually doing lacks congruence. In this way, the content of consciousness and the activity can be seen as being split. When there is a split between consciousness and activity within the context of making art the individual may experience a ‘creative block’.

Joanne indicated that experiencing thoughts sometimes inhibit or block her art-making practice. For Joanne, thinking sometimes just gets in the way of doing, particularly when she experiences thoughts that are concerned with knowing what she is doing before she actually does it (GD4_S-Jo: 240-241; GD7_S-Jo: 188-199; I_S-Jo3: 168-189). On other occasions, however, Joanne experiences thoughts that are concerned with not being capable of particular tasks, or thoughts which don’t support her current skill level and knowledge of techniques (GD4_S-Jo: 349-358; I_S-Jo3: 173-189, 261-282).

The group discussion and interview data suggest that Joanne sometimes experiences specific types of thoughts which relate to what she wants to achieve in her drawing activity. Further, what Joanne actually produces or achieves in her drawing activity is often different from these thoughts (GD2_S-Jo: 101-118; GD4_S-Jo: 538-545; I_S-Jo3: 131-141). Joanne referred to these types of thoughts as expectations. These expectations appeared to block or inhibit Joanne’s experience of free-flowing art-making activity. Csikszentmihalyi’s description of flow experience helps us to make sense of this (1988 p.30). Quite simply, it appears that Joanne’s perception of the challenges associated with particular drawing activities were greater than the skills which Joanne brought to the activities. The data suggested that on some occasions Joanne recognised that the expectations to perform in a certain way or to a particular standard came from within herself (GD2_S-Jo: 101-118; GD4_S-Jo: 230-241, 280-281, 298-301, 538-545; I_S-Jo3: 131-141). However, on other occasions her expectations were related to external influences, including the perceived expectations and teaching style of one of her teachers (GD4_S-Jo: 272-277, 283-290).

Joanne particularly noted that striving to make something ‘perfect’ is often counter-productive (GD2_S-Jo: 101-118), and that letting go of expectations and demands on her artwork is associated with enjoying her experience of drawing (GD4_S-Jo: 283-290, 538-545). In the final interview Joanne commented that when she does not have any expectations she tends to like what she produces (I_S-Jo3: 131-141, 261-282).

It is important to note, however, that although some of the thoughts which Joanne experienced can be seen as inhibiting or blocking her art-making practice, because they constitute a split between consciousness and activity, Joanne also reported to have experienced thoughts which appeared to enable her art-making practice. On a number of occasions Joanne indicated that she experienced thoughts which were concerned with the activity of art-making being enjoyable (GD4_S-Jo: 538-545; GD7_S-Jo: 154-165; GD8_S-Jo: 73-79, 167-177; I_S-Jo3: 245-254). Joanne also indicated that she experiences thoughts which counter the beliefs that (a) she needs to know what she is doing before she actually does it (GD7_S-Jo: 188-199) and (b) she isn’t capable of a particular activity (I_S-Jo3: 173-189, 261 - 282). On other occasions Joanne experienced thoughts which attempted to solve the specific problem at hand (I_S-Jo3: 173-189). In these instances the content of Joanne’s consciousness may be understood as attending to information, memories or thoughts directly related to the specific activity at hand. In this way, the content of Joanne’s consciousness and what she was actually doing was congruent.

It appears that although Joanne may experience a wide range of thoughts, she is also conscious that she can choose which thoughts she identifies with to guide her behaviour. Joanne commented on a number of occasions that she wanted to change her thought patterns (GD4_S-Jo: 238; I_S-Jo3: 444-446) and appeared to have used the action learning component of the group discussions to simply shift and change the expectations which she had of herself and to look at the things that she thought were restricting her in a different way so that she no longer experienced them as being restrictive (GD4_S-Jo: 233-239; I_S-Jo3: 425-452). This appeared to help her to enjoy the experience of making art at [art school].

References


Not trusting that she was creative or original  

One aspect of Betty’s consciousness which she believed inhibited her art-making practice were particular thoughts she experienced relating to her creativity and imagination: “I’m not really that creative. I’m not really that imaginative. Who am I to be presumptuous to think that I am creative, a creator, or an artist?” (I_S-B1: 683-685).

During the first action learning component of the first group discussion, which took place in the second week of semester one, Betty identified her “performance anxiety around not having original ideas” (AR_S-B: 2-3) as being something that she would like to change in her art-making practice: “[W]hat I would like to change, or make a, make a leap, is not to feel that I am not really a very original artist, or creator” (GD2: 444-446). In other words, she wanted to absent the experience of thoughts about not being an original artist or creator. She indicated that although she believed that she could learn technique (GD2: 450-452), she didn’t believe that she could learn to be original: “it’s sort of there or its not” (GD2: 452-457). “I’ve got this kind of […] fear around “Oh well I’m not really a visionary, original or creative” (GD2: 452-457). Not only was Betty wanting to absence the experience of thoughts about not being an original artist or creator but she also wanted to absent the experience of fear and anxiety which she associated with the experience of believing these thoughts. She decided to address this problem by trusting that she was original and creative (GD2: 609-620). She indicated that her plan was “to trust in the tutors’ instructions / suggestions / propositions / exercises as just what I need to get beyond these blocks / anxieties. I think that mostly it’ll be good for me to relax!” (AR_S-B: 14-16).

Three weeks later, however, after attending a weekend art workshop, Betty indicated that she was still experiencing anxiety around not being original: “Oh yeah. You are working purely from imagination and there’s no model, there was no objects. There was just what’s in here [she gestures towards her head]” (GD4: 410-414). She indicated that she was a bit daunted by seeing other artist’s work which consisted of “stupendous technical ability” (S-B_AHP: 118-119; I_S-B2: 216-217) and complex scenarios and asked “where does all that stuff come from?” (GD4: 416-419) She responded to this by suggesting that she believed that it comes from deep inside one’s being: “It can be planned but a lot of it comes from deep” (GD4: 419-420). This is interesting because three weeks earlier Betty indicated that she had been doubting whether if she did dig deep, whether she would find that she had a “vision” (GD2: 446-450). However, her comment on this occasion suggests that she believed that the solution was to dig deep: “I think a lot of it is about digging deep. And it needs to come along with enough technical ability to be able to, you know, even start to go there, in a way, without putting the cart before the horse. But they need to grow together” (GD4: 419-428). Thus, it appears that in just a few weeks Betty’s thoughts about this problem and it’s solution were beginning to develop. This development in Betty’s thinking was even more evident in the final group discussion (which took place in week thirteen of the first semester) when, in response to another student suggesting that she didn’t have any imagination, Betty stated: “No, no that’s not true. I always used to think that, but that’s one thing that I have done. I said ’come on, get on to it because you will get there this time next week and you will just go ‘oh I’m not original, I’m not creative because I can’t […] you’ve got to give yourself time and ah just … plan it” (GD8: 516-522). She indicated that she saw the ‘imagination’ drawing task as “an invitation to see what’s there” and suggested that this was taking a bit of courage (GD8: 553-554). She also indicated that, she was interested in drawing on “subconscious and emotional stuff” in her own art-making practice (GD8: 539-543), which appeared to stem from her explorations into art history (GD8: 1159-1160).

From Methods chapter (C3 §6.4.1.2)  


563 However, her focus on this was waylaid for a while because she had begun struggling with another issue to do time and not having time to practice (GD4: 658-660).  

565 It is interesting to note that Betty’s view on planning artworks had changed throughout her first semester at art school. At the end of her first week of classes Betty had contemplated how she thought she may approach the role of image-maker: ‘I don’t think I am going to be an academic kind of artist, or intellectual, try and work out a formula. I don’t think. I can be very precise and neat, but I still don’t want necessarily to have a kind of a prescribed thing that I’ve got and that I’m going to put on paper or canvas’ (I_S-B1: 285-290). During her second group discussion she stated: “It can be planned but a lot of it comes from deep” (GD4: 419-420), and here, in the final group discussion she indicated that she had been using ‘planning’ as a technique to counter her belief that she wasn’t original or creative and was even advising another student to consider this approach as well (GD8: 516-522).
As much as I love beauty, I wasn’t surprised to find that I am drawn to the “dark side”. Artists who evoke the haunting, wild, dark side of human nature and the physical world speak to me of passion, and also of compassion; of obsession and catharsis; of transgression and abstraction. In short, the work of such artists – from whichever era - speaks to me of the complexity and poignancy of life. Beneath the surface technique and style of the art work, there is deep emotional substance.

(S-B_AHP: 101-108)

This interest of Betty’s in artworks with ‘deep emotional substance’ appeared to be based on a belief that what makes art really interesting, in fact the whole art of artistry, is the ability to channel your emotions into really good technique (GD8: 1149-1153).

She suggested ‘where I think we are probably having a bit of trouble is that we, part of us is, part of us is concerned about ‘are we original? And have we got creative ideas?’ The other part of us is concerned with ‘oh am I, can I do this technically? What about my technical skills I need to, you know, just copy and get it right?’ And so we’ve got, we’re challenged from both sides” (GD8: 554-560). Betty made this distinction between the technical side, and the creativity or originality aspect of her art-making practice on several occasions throughout the interviews and group discussions (AR_S-B: 2-5; GD2: 451-452; GD4: 421-423; I_S-B2: 35-36, 50-57). It appears from these comments that Betty believed that she was capable of improving the technical side of her art-making practice, and that her concern was largely whether she was original or had creative ideas.

In the final interview, at the end of her first semester at art school, Betty revealed that she had actually absent the absence of trusting that she was an original artist or creator:

- I’ve had a lot of discovery about that there is something there which is a big relief (I_S-B2: 19-21)
- A big discovery in a way, and it totally surprised me, that I have a bit of originality there. There is something there and there is something there and I think that is what I voiced in the early sessions that I was unsure, you know, I’m quite good at getting a likeness of a person on a blank piece of paper but then I thought ‘well is there anything else?’ (I_S-B2: 26-31)
- And yeah, there was something there. So I think that’s always reassuring. I think every time I need that reassurance. So yeah that’s one, I think that’s been more the challenge and struggle for me (I_S-B2: 47-50).
- Yeah, so going back to the whole creative thing, I think that was the big question mark for me. And I know it always will be. It’s not because I might have done something interesting once or twice (laughs), but no, it’s reassuring, and I’m happy about that (I_S-B2: 58-62).
- I was particularly happy with the, the two drawings we did with [S-I], that was [T-S’s] class but he said we had to do something entirely from the imagination. Before that I had done his composition, I had enjoyed his composition, with those musicians […] And so that was also good, another big step, to do a whole picture with an interesting composition and figures, not much background but that worked. So the next step then was like ‘ohh’ a big picture something from, entirely from your imagination, and that had to be planned. (I_S-B2: 62-71).

This change in belief about her creativity and originality appears to be a very significant milestone in Betty’s journey as an image-maker. It appears that the combination of the learning experiences at art school, as well as the action learning component of the group discussions, enabled Betty to reconsider the validity of her previous beliefs regarding her creativity and originality. It is also interesting to note that in the process of attempting to absent the absence of trust that she was original and creative, that Betty was also faced with issues to do with prioritising art and making time to practice her art outside of the formal art school environment.
Appendix 5.3  Emancipation and Jarrah

Traversing a theory-empirical gap

Bhaskar’s philosophy of critical realism and philosophy of meta-Reality provide several concepts about the nature of reality and knowledge which are proving to be beneficial in making sense of the emancipation of art students from content of their consciousness which inhibits flow experience whilst making art. Neither of these philosophies have been applied to a study of the emancipation of art students from content of their consciousness which inhibits a flow experience whilst making art. Thus, my research can be understood as making an original contribution in two ways:

- By attempting to apply the philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality to make sense of the emancipation of art students from content of their consciousness which inhibits or constrains flow experience whilst making art, I will be able to contribute to the body of knowledge relating to art education and flow experience.
- The way that I go about interpreting and applying philosophical concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality will contribute to the body of knowledge about what these particular emancipatory meta-theories may look like in practice.

Both critical realism and meta-Reality provide concepts to be aware of as I engage in the activities of research including data collection and analysis. These concepts help me to orient my gaze – highlighting things about being and knowing that I need to be aware of, take into account, and think about – but the challenge appears to be in operationalising them as actual methods for data collection and analysis. Critical realism and meta-Reality are meta-theories rather than theories, thus, there is a theory-empirical gap which the concepts associated with each of these philosophies can not traverse unambiguously. However, in order for emancipatory theory to be of any practical use to humanity, at some point it has to stop being theory about emancipation, and must actually become emancipation itself. Thus, I appreciate the importance of diving into this place of ambiguity to establish some connections between these meta-theories and my own research practice. I will use the case of one art student from a multiple case study consisting of nine/ten art students to illustrate how I am attempting to traverse this particular theory-empirical gap.

Applying critical realism and meta-Reality to a case of student emancipation

The case of one art student

Jarrah took a year of long-service leave from her position as a registered nurse in 2006 in order to study fine art at a government educational institution. She enrolled in an accredited ‘Certificate III in Fine Arts’ course. At this time, Jarrah lived with her husband and her youngest child, who was in the final year of high school. Jarrah’s two adult children had moved out of the family home and were now supporting themselves.

Invitation to participate in the study

During an ‘orientation day’ for her ‘Certificate III in Fine Arts’ course Jarrah attended an information session with myself, in which I invited all students in her class to consider participating in this study. One week later, after attending her first day of formal classes at art school Jarrah, along with nine other students, met with myself to find out more about what participation in the study would involve.

Data collection

Having decided to participate in the study, Jarrah attended two in-depth interviews, four group discussions and an informal, self-initiated lunchtime sharing. Jarrah also attended eleven 7-hour drawing classes that were observed for the study. Each of these activities were video recorded and transferred to DVD.

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566 An extract from my research journal dated 6 February 2007
How does this relate to critical realism and meta-Reality?

The epistemic fallacy

One critical realist underpinning which seemed particularly significant for data collection in this study was avoiding the epistemic fallacy (Bhaskar 2002a p.81) or letting the object of knowledge determine how it will be known (Shipway 2002 p.104). What this means, according to Shipway, is that the observer must be cautious about “defining which aspects of the object will constitute how it is known, and then subsequently claiming that these aspects constitute the whole ontology of the subject” (2002 p.104). Although this helped to guide me in terms of what not to do, such a broad statement did not provide specific guidelines about which methods to use for data collection.

This was the first theory-empirical gap that needed to be traversed. I had to ask myself, ‘what does avoiding the epistemic fallacy or letting the object of knowledge determine how it is known look like in an actual research project about the experience of art students as they grapple with being at art school?’

I needed a method that would provide insight into the subjective experience of each art student, however, I also wanted to be able to observe the interactions between students and teachers and peers whilst at art school. A combination of in-depth interviews and non-participant observations seemed like an obvious choice. I was also interested in the possibility of group discussions, my reason being that hearing other people’s ideas may help the participants to recognise their own ideas and express them more freely. However, I was conscious that some people might not feel comfortable sharing their thoughts in a group situation. Thus, during the first interview, I asked each student-participant to think about whether they would prefer to share their on-going reflections in a group environment or on a one-to-one basis. By providing a choice between interview or group discussion, I therefore allowed the student-participants (my object of knowledge) to determine how I would know them.

Another way that I found that I could avoid the epistemic fallacy and let the object of knowledge determine how it is known was by inviting each student to develop their own interview questions to guide the in-depth interviews. Whilst some participants came with written questions, other participants came with them in their head, some participants even had their answers written down. Whichever way they chose, the student-participants came up with the questions themselves and also had an opportunity to think about their response. These questions then guided the ‘conversational interview’. However, I also asked each student additional questions which emerged from the content of our developing conversation. By providing each student with the opportunity to create the questions that they would be asked in the interviews, I further enabled my object of knowledge to determine it would be known.

Another way that I found that I could avoid the epistemic fallacy and let the object of knowledge determine how it is known was by keeping the group discussion forum fairly unstructured. This meant that the student-participants themselves determined what they would share in relation to their experiences and concerns with studying Fine Art. The focus of the group discussions generally centred on the students’ reflections about their interactions with teachers and peers at art school, and how they were grappling with the journey of being an art student and/or becoming an artist.

Note: I also initiated an action learning cycle during three of the four group discussions which Jarrah attended. This provided an opportunity for Jarrah to determine something that she would like to improve or accept in her art-making practice and to reflect on how this was going.

Human emancipation

A central theme of both critical realism and meta-Reality is emancipation or liberation from things which ‘prevent the realisation of the true essence of humanity as free, creative and loving’ (Bhaskar, 2002 p.219).

Critical realism can be seen as being an emancipatory philosophy insofar as it helps to isolate the deeper structures of relative reality (Bhaskar 2002b p.xxiii).

By providing a model of stratified reality and by stressing the ontological primacy of absence, the philosophy of critical realism approaches the task of emancipation from a perspective of identifying structures which constrain the emancipation or liberation of individuals and then working towards absenting these constraints.

In this particular case of student emancipation, critical realism provided the conceptual framework in which to recognise that Jarrah’s experience of being constrained was underpinned by real structures that had become actualised. Further, the process of transforming the situation so that Jarrah no longer experienced being constrained simply involved absenting the constraints.
One of the things which Jarrah identified as inhibiting her from enjoying her experience at [art school] was a perceived ‘pressure to perform’. The particular area of her art-making practice that this pressure appeared to relate to was finishing or completing her drawings and written assessment tasks (GD5: 129-133; GD7: 540-541). Jarrah recognised this to be something that she wanted to change in her experience of being at [art school] and used the action learning component in the group discussion forum to attempt to shift her attention from the finished product to the process of getting there (GD5: 908-939).

It appeared that Jarrah encountered a number of obstacles to achieving this:

- Jarrah’s 30-year career as a registered nurse required her to meet ‘real’, externally imposed demands to perform in a certain way within a given time frame. It appears that these externally imposed demands to complete activities within a certain period of time had become internalised within Jarrah’s own thought patterns over the years (GD5: 908-939).
- Each of the subjects that Jarrah was studying at [art school] in semester one had ‘real’, externally imposed assessment requirements and according to Jarrah, her teachers kept reminding her of this which she found challenging (GD5: 925-926; GD7: 765-766). ‘It’s really hard to not put your self under pressure and just to go along with the process. Not when the teachers just pop their little heads up and remind us that we have to have things done.’ (GD7: 763-766).

A critical realist approach to getting past the first struggle might be to absent Jarrah’s internalised thought patterns to complete activities within a certain period of time, or to absent the power which she gave these particular thoughts. However, given the second obstacle, this might be unreasonable.

It appears that Jarrah was being faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, she wanted to be more conscious of the art-making process, but on the other she was being asked to think about the end product.

However, Bhaskar argues that, “such a description is still grounded in duality, and the liberatory potential it affords will always be circumscribed until its deep essential, alethic, non-dual grounds, mode of constitution and deep interior are fully displayed, cognised and lived self-consciously in the experience of agents who are intelligent, creative, loving, right acting and capable of fulfilment of their intentionality” (Bhaskar 2002b p.xxiii). Bhaskar offers the philosophy of meta-Reality in an attempt at overcoming the limitations in the emancipatory power of his previous thoughts.

This brings me to the philosophy of meta-Reality.

Meta-Reality approaches the task of emancipation by describing the world in such a way that individuals are not merely thinking being, but rather be being, at its deepest level, that is, realise themselves (Bhaskar 2002 p.xxiii)(MR1). From this perspective, all forms of oppression are recognised as being dependent on a unified, non-dual basis: love, creativity and freedom.

Transcendence and transcendental agency

Bhaskar introduces the concept of transcendence to elaborate on his understanding of how ‘the way in which we communicate, perceive, see, read, follow, understand things in the world’ is a mode of non-duality. Bhaskar begins exploring the concept of transcendence by differentiating between the different forms that transcendence may take. Transcendental agency is one of these forms that is particularly significant for appreciating how meta-Reality may help to resolve Jarrah’s dilemma associated with shifting her attention from the finished product to the process of getting there (Bhaskar 2002b pp.4-6; Bhaskar 2002a p.208).

According to Bhaskar, transcendental agency involves either total focus or attention on an act (mindfulness), or an act which is spontaneously performed (mindlessness) (Bhaskar 2002b p.4). Participation in the process of making art appears to consist of a series of non-dual moments in which the ‘artist’ or ‘art student’ is engaging in either mindful or spontaneous transcendental agency (Bhaskar 2002b p.4).

Bhaskar defines transcendental agency as being activity which is not split. This is implied in the definition of it being a form of non-duality. According to Bhaskar, any activity which is split, for example, by attending to the result or consequences of the activity, or split by being concerned with something else, or by not being completely present in the here and now of the activity, is dualistic activity (Bhaskar 2002c p.236).

This characteristic of transcendental agency also relates to a condition which Csikszentmihalyi calls optimal experience or flow (1988 p.24). This experience involves the feeling of doing something that is worth doing for its own sake, and is often characterised by the subjective conditions that are usually
APPENDIX 5 – SECOND PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS

referred to as pleasure, happiness, satisfaction, and enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi 1988 p.24). Studies suggest that the feeling associated with optimal experience or flow are described in very similar terms regardless of the context. Further, the experience of being in this state is so desirable that one wishes to replicate it as often as possible (Csikszentmihalyi 1988 p.29).

One of the characteristics of the experience of flow is deep concentration on the activity at hand. As a result, the person experiencing flow not only forgets his or her problems, but as Csikszentmihalyi suggests (1988 p.33), also temporarily loses the awareness of self that in normal life often intrudes in consciousness, and causes psychic energy to be diverted from what needs to be done. During the experience of flow the self is fully functioning but not aware of itself doing it, which means that it can use all the attention for the task at hand (Csikszentmihalyi 1988 p.33). The deep concentration associated with experiences of flow also relates to ones motivation for being involved in the activity. Csikszentmihalyi suggests that autotelic motivation, that is, where the goal is primarily the experience itself, rather than any future reward or advantage it may bring, is important for experiencing flow (1988 p.29).

‘The mountaineer does not climb in order to reach the top of the mountain, but tries to reach the top in order to climb. The goal is really just an excuse to make the experience possible’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 pp.33-34).

Let us return to Jarrah’s dilemma: on the one hand, she wanted to be more conscious of the art-making process, but on the other she was being asked to think about the end product.

All that may be required to resolve the tension in Jarrah’s dilemma, is a shift in focus from ‘drawing in order to complete the assessment requirements’, that is, focusing on the consequences of the activity, to ‘attempting to complete the assessment items in order to draw’, that is, focusing on the activity for its own sake (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 p.67). This may help Jarrah to reconcile the ‘split’ which she was experiencing as she attempted to shift her attention from the finished product to the process of getting there.

So this is what the theory could suggest, but how did Jarrah actually reconcile this in practice?

Regardless of whether a theory of emancipation emphasises a dual or a non-dual ontology, it is important to recognise that in order for emancipatory theory to be of any practical use to humanity, at some point it has to stop being theory about emancipation, and must actually become emancipation itself.

How does this relate to the data collection in this study?

I was interested in my research contributing to the emancipation or liberation of art students from those things which inhibited their creative self-expression. Although my research wasn’t strictly Action Research – in that it did not grow out of the student’s own recognition of a need for change, but rather was initiated by myself, an external researcher – participation in this study however, appeared to support Jarrah’s growth and development as an art student. From the very beginning of data collection Jarrah indicated that she hoped to get something out of participating in the research (I_S-Ja1: 130-131).

At a later stage, during a group discussion, Jarrah indicated that she was interested in viewing the DVDs of her interactions during the drawing classes to see if ‘there’s been a change in myself’ by the end of the year (GD5: 815-830).

However, it was in the final interview at the end of semester one, that Jarrah indicated that participating in the activities associated with data collection in this study did indeed contribute to her emancipation as an art student: ‘I have to thank you, because this, I don’t know what you’ve got from it, I’m sure you’ll find that out down the track, but I actually got a lot from it, just talking to you umm, it’s helped me to think about what I am doing, how I’ve got to where I am now. I certainly do feel a lot more confident.’ (I_S-Ja3: 14-18).

This comment of Jarrah intrigues me. I am interested in understanding how participation in the activities associated with data collection in this study may have helped raise Jarrah’s conscious experience of what she was doing, how she got to where she was, and how this relates to her experience of confidence. This led me to have a good look at my experience of my relationship with Jarrah and to also look at the activities associated with data collection from a participant’s perspective.

My relationship with Jarrah

I felt very relaxed in Jarrah’s company. It probably took a few weeks for us to get familiar with each other, but I felt that by the end of the research, we had a comfortable and easy relationship.
My role in the activities associated with data collection

- I provided a forum for Jarrah to talk about art and her experience as an art student.
- I provided a forum for Jarrah to listen to other students talking about art and their experiences as art students.
- I listened to Jarrah talk about art and her experience as an art student.
- I answered some of Jarrah’s questions about making and studying art.
- I encouraged and supported Jarrah’s actions and decisions relating to her experience as an art student.
- By initiating the action learning cycle I challenged Jarrah to consciously think about and reflect on what was going on for her as an art student.
- I witnessed what went on for Jarrah in her drawing class.
- I provided a copy of the video footage from the first five drawing classes for her to look at (this provided Jarrah with an opportunity to expand her awareness of events from her conscious experience, or memory of her conscious experience of them to what actually happened – as the video camera saw it – dipping down into another level of stratified reality).

From my perspective, these activities enabled me to develop a sense of solidarity with Jarrah. By showing a genuine interest in Jarrah’s experience as an art student, Jarrah and I were able to develop a non-dual relationship with regards to this particular aspect of her life. This appeared to be very important for Jarrah because she also indicated that she felt that her family wasn’t as supportive as she would have liked: “If I ever talk about [art school] at home they say ‘Oh Mum, it's only [art school]’. I say ‘Well, it's my [art school]. It's a big thing for me.’ So I don’t even like to talk about it” (S-Ja3: 334-366).

Data analysis

Analysis of the content of Jarrah’s disclosures during the in-depth interviews and group discussions has involved transcribing these conversations, using a highlighter and pencil to help identify ‘important’, ‘common’ or ‘interesting’ themes as I read through the transcripts. The typed transcripts have then been imported into NUDIST: software for qualitative data analysis. I created ‘nodes’ in NUDIST which related to the themes that I had identified and then entered the data into NUDIST by selecting the parts of each document which related to each of these themes. This process enabled me to differentiate 45 interrelated themes that emerged from Jarrah’s six interview and group discussion transcripts (see Table 1). Having entered this data into NUDIST, I then went into each of the 45 nodes and looked at the content of the various occasions that Jarrah’s discussion covered these themes. This has allowed me to integrate the various references to common themes to paint a picture for myself of her ‘story’ as an art student.

So far I have managed to reorganise the content from the 45 nodal themes into 4 key areas consisting of 14 themes:

- **Background**: Art-making practice, Coming to [art school] and Family support
- **S-Ja’s experience at [art school]**: Enjoyment and Ideas for improving [art school] experience for new students
- **Perceived challenges**: Keeping a journal, Pressure to perform at [art school], Finishing things, Making mistakes and Technique

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567 I am aware that this is highly subjective and it varies from student to student. I realise that at some point I will have to justify this aspect of my data analysis and I am not sure how I will go about doing this.

568 Note: I have only referred to 17 different NUDIST nodes.

569 Nodes consulted in NUDIST: S-Ja/art-making practice/history

570 Nodes consulted in NUDIST: S-Ja/art-making practice

571 Nodes consulted in NUDIST: S-Ja/reflecting on [art school]/coming to [art school]

572 Nodes consulted in NUDIST: S-Ja/family support

573 Based on results from a string search in NUDIST for the words: enjoy, enjoying, enjoyed and fun.

The data included interviews, group discussions and research journal.

574 Nodes consulted in NUDIST: S-Ja/reflecting on [art school]/suggestions for improving [art school]

575 Based on results from a string search in NUDIST for the words: challenge, challenging, confronting and frustrating. The data included interviews and group discussions.

576 Nodes in NUDIST consulted: S-Ja/reflecting on [art school]/Journal; S-Ja/ reflecting on [art school]/Journal/Art History; S-Ja/ reflecting on [art school]/Journal/Design; S-Ja/ reflecting on [art school]/Journal/Core Drawing; S-Ja/ reflecting on [art school]/Journal/problem+solution

577 Nodes in NUDIST consulted: S-Ja/art-making practice/pressure to perform

578 Nodes in NUDIST consulted: S-Ja/art-making practice/pressure to perform

579 Nodes consulted in NUDIST: S-Ja/reflecting on [art school]/making mistakes
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When it works\textsuperscript{581}

I am attempting to use this data to identify content of Jarrah’s consciousness which are either consistent or inconsistent with flow experience, and in this way identify the content of Jarrah’s conscious experience which either enable or constrain flow experience.

How does this relate to CR and MR?

Analysis of Jarrah’s disclosures during the interview and group discussions has allowed me to explore different aspects of her ‘story’ as an art student. I am attempting to use this data to identify content of her consciousness which are either consistent or inconsistent with flow experience, and in this way identify the content of Jarrah’s conscious experience which either enable or constrain flow experience.

References


\textsuperscript{580} Nodes in NUDIST consulted: S-Ja / art-making practice / things that BLOCK or INHIBIT / technique - HOW?

\textsuperscript{581} Nodes in NUDIST consulted: S-Ja/art-making practice/when it works
Appendix 5.4  Unfolding the enfolded: Ellen’s sample

This part of the analysis was just the beginning of my attempts at applying these theories to the practice of learning to make art. The structure of the analysis presented in this document presents a slightly different interpretation of the phases in the model of unfolding the enfolded to that which is presented in the ‘unfolding the enfolded’ chapter (C6).
Table 1: Educational implications of the theory of co-presence and the process of unfolding the enfolded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ontological structure</th>
<th>State of knowledge or skill</th>
<th>Manifesting</th>
<th>Mode of action</th>
<th>Educational practice</th>
<th>Empirical examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1M</td>
<td>Being</td>
<td>Enfolded</td>
<td>Instinctual</td>
<td>Surviving</td>
<td>This is where I could refer to particular comments and actions of art students and teachers which may illustrate what Bhaskar’s abstract notions of reality (from CR and mR) may look like in practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2E</td>
<td>Becoming</td>
<td>Beginning to unfold</td>
<td>Thinking only</td>
<td>Conscious intentions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3L</td>
<td>Becoming whole</td>
<td>Completely unfolded</td>
<td>In conscious awareness &amp; actions</td>
<td>Mindful</td>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning practice (including evaluation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4D</td>
<td>Transformative agency</td>
<td>Completely unfolded</td>
<td>In actions</td>
<td>Spontaneous</td>
<td>Using / applying</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 5 – SECOND PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS

#### 1 Enfolded knowledge and skills: spontaneous activity (unconditioned)

This is the ground-state expressing itself through the limited skills of the embodied personality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status in the model of unfolding the enfolded</th>
<th>Interpretation/Description</th>
<th>Empirical example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enfolded knowledge and skills manifesting in unconscious awareness and instinctual activity.</td>
<td>Ellen’s comment here is about the practice of not explicitly teaching or instructing children (students) in art knowledge or skills, in other words, not making the knowledge visible to the learner. The problem with this approach to teaching art is that students who already have drawing skills and related knowledge are able to develop their drawing skills, whereas those students without drawing skills or knowledge are left in the dark.</td>
<td>And then like, yeah, I reckon systematic instruction is really important too. Like I probably wouldn’t have a little while ago, I would have thought that it was better to just learn and develop you know, as you are inspired or whatever. But umm, I think it’s just even after last week, seeing how good it is just getting umm a bit of instruction. It just really can make a big difference (I_S-E1: 185-189). […] the art course that I did there [at a University in Tasmania], she, the teacher was really good she was just like saying so many kids umm, you know like in the first few years that they are at school, like in the infants years I guess, they just sort of do little crafty things like painting a paper plate or something, and writing you know ’I love mum’ on it. Or you know, things like that, which are probably really fun for little kids too, but she was saying that there is not that much instruction in art in like the younger years. And I guess through more like infants there is still developing their motor skills, but I guess like through primary school there is not that much instruction with drawing and with you know, even composition, and you know, all those sorts of things, and colours and so kids are sort of left without any instruction just kind of to do their own thing, which there is a nice, I think there is a place for that too. But then they sort of go ‘oh I can’t draw’ like there is the one’s who can draw, and there is the one’s who can’t draw, when they haven’t been taught to draw. And then, so they don’t really go on to do any artwork like they just sort of think, ‘Oh I am not artistic’. Because they haven’t really been given any instruction. And then they, yeah, they just stop and that’s it for them, no more art (I_S-E1: 439-458). Yeah and you sort of think it’s nice for them [children] to just be creative, which it is, but I think it sort of needs to be balanced with a bit more, with a fair bit more instruction (I_S-E1: 515-518).</td>
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<td>1M – Being</td>
<td>Ellen’s comment here seems to be referring to the unconscious visual information processing that may be informing decisions in the process of making marks.</td>
<td>Yeah, I’m sure there are, you know, there’s things going into your artwork that you are not aware of at the time and then afterwards you, because I just sort of think what I am doing is just because I like the look of it or the colour or the shape or whatever but I am sure that there is things going into it that, you know, different things that have influenced me to do it (I_S-E2: 98-103).</td>
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### APPENDIX 5 – SECOND PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS

#### Status in the model of unfolding the enfolded

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<tr>
<td>The importance of a teacher who can help you to recognise and appreciate what you are doing, rather than just doing it and not being conscious of the value of what you are doing.</td>
<td>I do still think that there needs to be like a teacher who you know, has learnt the knowledge and you know has done a lot of artwork themselves so that they know how, and like what good instruction is and can recognise something good in someone’s artwork, and really encourage them and help them to develop it. So I do think that it is important (I_S-E1: 583-588).</td>
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<td>Not only being conscious of (observing) her own art work, but also looking at other people’s artwork to get a few ideas so that she doesn’t remain too stuck in her own way of doing things – expanding her repertoire...?</td>
<td>I just put one other thing just ‘to look at other people’s artwork’. Just to get a few more ideas. Just like look at other people’s artwork in the classes artwork, because I don’t usually go for a bit of a walk around, I usually do my own thing. And then, but I think it would be good for me to look at other people’s artwork just to get a few more ideas. How you could do things differently. Just to stop me from getting too stuck (GD5: 940-946).</td>
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<td>Commenting on the value of thinking about (being conscious of) her experience of making art and learning to make art.</td>
<td>It’s really good to umm, like I find it really helpful to think about what’s going on and talk about what’s going on because you can just sort of be a bit oblivious to it and not really know why things are a problem or why things work, or whatever. It’s good to reflect on it (GD5: 948-952).</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does this relate to keeping a journal?</td>
<td>I just wrote down what you said, ‘write in journal ideas from lessons for artworks’ because I feel by doing that will really make me keep this, in my head, as learning, keep it straight in my head as learning. Because I sort of feel ‘I need to write a lot more in my journal. I need to start to but I haven’t. I need to keep that in my head to do that. (GD7: 806-809)</td>
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### Unfolding knowledge (and skills): observing and accepting

#### 2E – Becoming Enfolded knowledge and skills manifesting in conscious awareness. Observing and accepting the results of one’s instinctual activity.

- Yeah, like when you said you were doing it, like I sort of thought, ‘oh, that’s what I really want, I really want that part in like learning. To learn how I’m learning. Learn how you learn. (GD5: 954-956)

- Yeah, I think, when I do an artwork, or probably more than one artwork, like not just one artwork, but like if I do a few artworks that I really, that I’m not happy with, and I’m just feeling really discouraged, like that can really stop me and I just think ‘oh, you know, I don’t want to do anything else because it’s too discouraging when you put, I guess when you do get into...”
These comments suggest that rather than just being at the whim of these influences, Ellen is conscious of them and may therefore be able to do something about them. Doing it you can spend ages and ages on it and then if it’s just not working out, you just feel so discouraged. Like you’ve wasted all that time and I guess all that emotional like energy that’s gone into it. And you just sort of go ‘ohh’. And when you really want to do it, you really want to do art and you really want to develop and you know you really love it, it can be pretty heart breaking to not feel like you can do what you want to do. So I feel a bit, yeah I feel a bit, like umm, that will, discouragement will stop me from kind of keeping on going (I_S-E1: 251-264)

It can really discourage you and I sort of went home feeling really like ‘oh, I’m so crap!’ and then I sort of went home and I thought ‘OK I will look at some things that I’ve done that I like’. And then I’m like ‘that’s all right everyone’s got different you know strengths in different areas in art and also people are at different stages’. Like I have never really done you know realistic drawing before. Like I’ve just never been interested in it so I haven’t done it, but I am interested in it now. So I’ve just got to kind of accept that I’m starting at you know at the grass roots level. And just learn, but. So in one way it’s good to umm it’s good for me to look at other people’s work, but in another way it’s not. Like it’s good for me to just kind of concentrate on what I am doing and go ‘oh, OK, that’s a bit better than it was last week’. You know or ‘yeah I’m quite happy with that’ (GD7: 700-713).

And also I think, I think it is also when I don’t really feel like there is, there is like steps, like when I don’t really feel like I have as much direction. Like I think I’ve just started going out and doing a fair bit of sketching and just doing things that I think, that you know that just sort of keeps me going and getting ideas. But when I, like before I started doing that, I would just feel a bit direction-less with art. And I’d think I don’t really know how to quite get into doing what I, doing something. (I_S-E1: 264-271)

I guess when I haven’t got as much inspiration from different artists; I haven’t seen artwork that I really get inspired by. (I_S-E1: 272-273)

Sometimes getting a bit umm a bit intimidated by artwork. Like sometimes it can work in both ways with amazing artwork. Sometimes I feel really inspired and sometimes I feel like I have to put the book down, I feel overwhelmed its like ‘Oh gosh! How do you do that?’ (Laughs). It’s feeling a bit, yeah, intimidated and overwhelmed by how good some artwork is (I_S-E1: 274-279).

I guess just not, I guess when it’s, when I don’t break things down to a point where I can start. When it seems like this amazing masterpiece or doing art as this sort of ‘big thing’ rather than thinking ‘ok if I do some sketches’, that’s a beginning. If I look at something that an artist is doing like a technique, or colours, like that’s a beginning, like I guess if I don’t feel like I have a starting point I can just get a bit overwhelmed and feel like I can’t really achieve anything because it’s all too amazing and the idea of doing art is a bit too, yeah, a bit too big. I think just trying to bite off a bit more than I can chew, without really having any starting point (laughs) (I_S-E1: 279-289).
### APPENDIX 5 – SECOND PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS

#### 3 Unfolding knowledge: *experimenting*, observing and accepting

This is the ground-state and embodied personality working together to **extend** the embodied personality’s knowledge.

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<th>Empirical example</th>
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<tr>
<td>3L – Becoming whole</td>
<td>Unfolding knowledge and skills in conscious awareness and mindful action. The intention to experiment (and observing and accepting) the results of one’s experimental activity.</td>
<td>I guess it’s just the right instruction at the right time is really important. I guess it could really hold you back from just experimenting and sort of like moving into a, you know, your own area if it was too like rigid and but I guess if it’s the right, so that’s probably the main thing, like the right instruction at the right time, and the right amount. Otherwise it could end up a bit too, like stifled or, like it was nice the way, is it [another teacher]? Yeah [another teacher] and [T-R], it was nice how they gave a bit of instruction and they went away, and left you for quite a while, then they come back. That was good. I thought, because sometimes if someone’s there saying ‘oh, what are you doing there?’ I’m just thinking ‘oh give me a chance’ you know. I’m starting off and, so yeah, not too much. The right amount at the right time (I_S-E1: 206-218).</td>
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<td>This is about how learning art without a teacher may be a bit limited. I guess because students only have their existing skills and knowledge to guide the process (they only have what has already unfolded in their embodied personality). It’s good to have a teacher to help them, to realise what is still enfolded within them so that it can unfold.</td>
<td>I guess yeah, that’s sort of more without a teacher, like developing more as a group and talking about ideas with each other and developing together. Rather than there being someone yeah, sort of instructing. In <em>I guess that can sometimes be a bit narrow in the way that things can develop</em> (I_S-E1: 579-583)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Talking about how people who haven’t studied art may come up with ‘fresher’ ideas (because they haven’t been conditioned into thinking in a certain way). However, given the comment above, such ideas may be ‘fresh’ to onlookers, but not necessarily ‘fresh’ to the particular student concerned.</td>
<td>Because maybe sometimes like one person who has been teaching can get stuck in a certain way and that can be good to pass on those ideas. But then other people who haven’t been thinking so, they haven’t had the learning themselves like just come up with fresh ideas, like something new that you wouldn’t hear from a, like an art teacher whose been kind of thinking in a certain way about things. Because everyone’s, I reckon everyone’s got, you know, everyone sort of comes up with their own interesting little revelations about art and things, you know, life in general, that can be, I guess can be a lot fresher, and a lot less umm, like restrained like by different ideas that you know, people have had over the years, if its more a group of friends and not so much a teacher (I_S-E1: 602-613).</td>
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582 This needs to be made explicit for students: What does being experimental in their mark-making look and/or feel like? How will they know when they are being experimental?
### APPENDIX 5 – SECOND PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The importance of the social aspect of making art, with peers talking and encouraging each other in their art-making practice.</th>
<th>But I think it is also good in <strong>groups of people, like friends or whatever doing art together</strong> to just be <strong>talking together</strong> about different things. And kind of <strong>encouraging each other and giving each other ideas</strong> and I think that’s really important. Like I guess that’s a bit more of <strong>being part of an art, like an art community</strong>. A bit more like <strong>people talking about their artwork</strong> and that’s really important I think, because you just sort of hear different things people say and you know. Rather than it just being one person to the masses, like <strong>everyone sort of working together</strong> as well. So both are important (I_S-E1: 588-597).</th>
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<tr>
<td>Talking about the <strong>hazards</strong> of taking other student’s advice about how you should make art, and the importance of giving yourself the opportunity to experiment with your own ideas.</td>
<td>How much advice should you take from other people about your art? (Q3) It’s kind of, I don’t know, it’s kind of hard I think with that because everybody has their ideas about what they like and they do have, you know, people do have good advice and good ideas but you can just end up, I just find <strong>it can end up over shadowing everything that you thought in the first place</strong>. And even if it’s not I don’t know even if maybe their idea could be a bit more sophisticated or a bit, you know, could maybe bring a better result in one way, <em>I think it’s pretty important to stick with what you want to do, like in the first place</em>. Because I don’t know, I just find that yeah like different times when I have taken different people’s advice I just sort of <strong>ended up a bit frustrated</strong> and I sort of thought ‘oh I just, you know, I just kind of want to do what I want to do and I don’t want to have to, you know, change it and go through the process of working out. I just want to have a go at doing what I want to do and then if it doesn’t work maybe then take on something else. I guess it’s, I think it’s good to take advice from other people but have a lot of time to just experiment yourself as well and <strong>do the things that you want to do without yeah feeling like other people have a better idea of things</strong>. Just you know just if they’re more umm, you know, experienced or just have more umm skill in different areas just to just to like <strong>go with your own instincts a bit and then you know if it doesn’t work then maybe take some one else’s advice</strong>. I just find it a bit frustrating when I have to come back and go, ‘oh that was a bit of a waste of time doing all that and just wishing that I had have stuck with my own ideas in the first place.’ (I_S-E2: 210-237)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>But I guess it’s just about other people in the class, who sort of say you know, like [another student’s] great (laughs) but he’s like one who sort of says ‘do this and this and this and’ you know he’s really into the you know, technical side of painting and maybe sticking to really traditional methods and you know making it looking really, you know, really umm, thorough and, which is good, but umm, I think I just need to be left alone a bit (laughs) to do my own thing […] because I have just found it a little bit frustrating at the end of the day to go ‘nothing really worked here’ because I was just trying to do what he was telling me to do and it didn’t work and you know, I just wish I had stuck with my own thing’ (I_S-E2: 251-263). Yeah, I got enough I think. And it has been good and I will take those ideas on but it’s just not, I’ve just sort of realised ‘you don’t have to do everything you know, by the book for it to work out’ like he’s just very, like he reads heaps and has you know a lot of knowledge about painting and drawing and you know that’s alright to do it that way but you don’t have to. You know you can just do what works for you and so yeah, it’s good but, it’s good in moderation</td>
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When you are experimenting with making marks and learning how to express yourself with mark-making, it can feel like you don’t know where you are going.

Ellen identifies that she wants to learn how to be a bit more experimental in her art-making practice.
because I think before like when I wrote ‘being more experimental’ we were kind of left a bit more with [T-R], like there wasn’t as much instruction. And so I would always kind of just veer off down my own little track. […] And with [another teacher], yeah, I probably still, I probably need to push myself a little bit more to get a bit more adventurous with [another teacher’s] class. Because I feel like that kind of comes more naturally to me that kind of, like the things we do in his class. Most often, some of them aren’t. But mostly I kind of feel like, you know, but yeah there has I have also just tried to do a few different things like just, like even when we were experimenting with the colour just kind of thinking ‘I don’t care if it looks ugly’. Just had a go and you know, don’t get so caught up in how it’s going to look in the end. Just be a bit more prepared to make mistakes (GD5: 648-669).

I feel like I am getting more like that. Like I was feeling a lot more hung up on the finished product before, whereas now I am feeling more relaxed with the process. And I feel like that lets me be a bit more experimental (GD5: 671-674). I’ve umm, I was just looking there at umm, experimenting with colour, and I’ve been doing that quite a bit and I have been doing it at home. And getting really into it. So that’s been so good. Because it’s been something I have been kind of trying to tackle for a while and I just feel like lately I have been getting into it. and that’s been really exciting, it’s been good. Yeah. (GD7: 665-670) he [another teacher] obviously does say little things like that but I feel that he does really give you permission to really play and experiment and he’s just very open (GD8: 870-872)

This is related to unfolding the skill of losing a sense of control. This means that she can be more experimental. Let go of a bit of control with it all. (GD2: 583)

Talking about wanting me to ask her how she is going with her action plan so that she is more conscious of it in class. To reflect a bit more on how I’ve done something, it helps me to sort of go a bit further … experimenting a bit with the size or the colours. Make this more conscious than just flowing along in the process, to be a bit more accountable (GD2: 749-754)

Commenting on how one teacher (and the homework assignments he set) helped her to play and experiment. […] experimenting with colour, and I’ve been doing that quite a bit and I have been doing it at home. And getting really into it. So that’s been so good. Because it’s been something I have been kind of trying to tackle for a while and I just feel like lately I have been getting into it. And that’s been really exciting, it’s been good. Yeah. […] That’s more with, yeah fifty drawings and yeah just some ideas with [another teacher], yeah (GD7: 665-674). and I reckon also how he [another teacher] lets you play (GD8: 860) he [another teacher] obviously does say little things like that but I feel that he does really give you permission to really play and experiment and he’s just very open (GD8: 870-872)

583 Maybe do a cross-analysis of this with the first few minutes of I_S-B1
These comments of Ellen’s seem to sum up the transition from layperson to mastery: moving from a lack of control, through a phase of gaining a sense of control (including the ability to be experimental) and, after the benefits of gaining a sense of control – or mindfulness - have been acquired, losing this sense of control again.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last week when we were doing the line drawing with [T-R], talking about like trying to lose a bit more control with pencils. I was just thinking ‘that’s what kids have already’ (I_S-E1: 164-166) It’s just like something that you lose, you know, I guess, like trying to become more precise and things over the years. And you kind of try to get it back a little bit. They [children] just do such cool stuff (I_S-E1: 169-171).</th>
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<td>These comments of Ellen’s seem to sum up the transition from layperson to mastery: moving from a lack of control, through a phase of gaining a sense of control (including the ability to be experimental) and, after the benefits of gaining a sense of control – or mindfulness - have been acquired, losing this sense of control again.</td>
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<td>From Ellen’s experience and observations as a primary school teacher she has noticed that primary school children seem to be aiming for ‘realistic’ drawings, that is, they are not so interested in experimenting with their mark-making, but rather, they are wanting more control of it.</td>
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<td>And I was like, the thing is, I was like, the only problem is I don’t think that kids feel like they look good. I feel like kids really want to umm, do things that look really realistic. And they don’t really feel that what they do is good unless it looks really realistic. So sometimes I think ‘Oh am I kind of pushing them towards what I like the look of?’ And there is not so much enjoyment for them, so yeah, that’s kind of a bit hard, because I will go ‘that looks amazing!’ And they will go ‘oh’, you know wont really think that it will look very good. But umm, I guess it is just a bit of exposure to different things. […] and things can just be so, can turn out really interesting if they are not too realistic. (I_S-E1: 537-551)</td>
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4 Unfolding skills: gaining a sense of ‘control’

This is the ground-state and embodied personality working together to extend the embodied personality’s repertoire of skills.

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<tr>
<td>3L – Becoming whole</td>
<td>Ellen seemed to be considering whether unfolding the enfolded knowledge and ability to make art is best learnt by systematic instruction, exposure or imitation (copying other artists work).</td>
<td>So, is art learnt best with systematic instruction or exposure or […] imitation. Umm, I guess I think all three really. Like I think that looking at artists is really important […] I guess I’ve just found that to be the starting point, to any ideas that I’ve got, from art things. And yeah, and copying them. Just copying pictures. I’ve just found that to be, really just imitating different techniques that they use I found that to be pretty much vital to umm any artwork that I have done. Like I feel like I would be completely stuck, if I didn’t have artists to look at, like, to begin with (I_S-E1: 173-184) Yeah, and I know I have got to look at other artists to be able to do artwork, like I’m nothing like I wont be able to do anything if I just and that’s what’s good about (GD8: 904-906) And also I guess just looking at different artists and the way that they’ve developed as well like looking at, like I was looking at some of Picasso’s earlier work and he pretty much copied Toulouse Lautrec and you know, and different artists. That I just think you know, you can jump the gun a little bit sometimes, I think its good to begin with learning from people who you know, really developed their style, really nailed certain techniques. And all the better if someone can actually instruct you, having teachers and umm yeah, people who can learn about different techniques (I_S-E1: 189-198). And then like, yeah, I reckon systematic instruction is really important too. Like I probably wouldn’t have a little while ago, I would have thought that it was better to just learn and develop you know, as you are inspired or whatever. But umm, I think it’s just even after last week, seeing how good it is just getting umm a bit of instruction. It just really can make a big difference. (I_S-E1: 185-189) I guess it’s just the right instruction at the right time is really important. I guess it could really hold you back from just experimenting and sort of like moving into a, you know, your own area if it was too like rigid and but I guess if it’s the right, so that’s probably the main thing, like the right instruction at the right time, and the right amount. Otherwise it could end up a bit too, like stifled or, like it was nice the way, is it [another teacher]? Yeah [another teacher] and [T-R]. It was nice how they gave a bit of instruction and they went away, and left you for quite a while, then they come back. That was good. I thought, because sometimes if someone’s there saying ‘oh, what are you doing there?’ I’m just thinking ‘oh give me a chance’ you know. I’m starting off and, so yeah, not too much. The right amount at the right time (I_S-E1: 206-218)</td>
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<td>Part of keeping the flow going for Ellen</td>
<td>that’s a beginning, like I guess if I don’t feel like I have a starting point I can just get a bit</td>
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<th>Ellen seems to think that learning why artists used different techniques, compositions, mediums will help to gain a sense of control in her own art-making practice.</th>
<th><strong>overwhelmed and feel like I can’t really achieve anything</strong> because it’s all too amazing and the idea of doing art is a bit too, yeah, a bit too big. I think just trying to bite off a bit more than I can chew, without really having any starting point (laughs). (I. S-E1: 284-289)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ellen is particularly interested in using her time at art school to unfold the ‘practical skills’ that are enfolded within her.</td>
<td>I think it’s more the practical skills [that] I want to get out of the course. Because I think yeah, those sorts of things I can sort of look at pictures in books and read about a bit, it’s not so much, yeah I think more than anything else it’s the practical side (laughs) to begin with (laughs) the first thing. (I. S-E1: 387-392)</td>
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<td>Ellen seems to think that instruction is important for learning to make art.</td>
<td>[…] the art course that I did there [at the Uni. in Tasmania], she, the teacher was really good she was just like saying so many kids umm, you know like in the first few years that they are at school, like in the infants years I guess, they just sort of do of little crafty things like painting a paper plate or something, and writing you know ‘I love mum’ on it. Or you know, things like that, which are probably really fun for little kids too, but she was saying that <strong>there is not that much instruction in art in like the younger years</strong>. And I guess through more like infants there is still developing their motor skills, but I guess like <strong>through primary school there is not that much instruction with drawing and with you know, even composition, and you know, all those sorts of things, and colours and so kids are sort of left without any instruction just kind of to do their own thing, which there is a nice, I think there is a place for that too.</strong> But then they sort of go ‘oh I can’t draw’ like there is the one’s who can draw, and there is the one’s who can’t draw, when they haven’t been taught to draw. And then, so they don’t really go on to do any artwork like they just sort of think, ‘Oh I am not artistic’. Because they <strong>haven’t really been given any instruction.</strong> And then they, yeah, they just stop and that’s it for them, no more art. (I. S-E1: 439-458) but specifically <strong>to teach ‘how to draw a face’ and ‘how to [draw] a body’</strong> and all those sorts of things. (I. S-E1: 469-471)</td>
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| Ellen is considering why there may be a lack of instruction in art education at primary school. | Melanie: So what I was leading to though, was, like having been trained in primary education, and feeling that yeah, young children aren’t really getting that opportunity to learn skills, why do you think that is? Ellen: Probably because **a lot of teachers don’t really feel like adequate themselves to teach art** I reckon. And I guess, art just isn’t really looked at as one of the more important things to be doing to I guess putting a lot of instruction into, I think probably I just noticed that you know, I guess **it is a stressful situation**, with lots of kids, with paint, and it’s always loud and so it can be pretty tempting to just make things as you know, open as possible, and say, ‘OK, you can do this and this’. And you know, **keep things pretty simple.** That’s probably a big part of it. And probably they are not just, I don’t know if there are some good resources around. I **haven’t really found that many good resources, for teaching art with primary**
APPENDIX 5 – SECOND PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS

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<th>School kids. I haven’t looked heaps, but I’ve looked a bit and I haven’t really found that much (I_S-E1: 488-500). Melanie: a lot of, from my perspective, for me any way, I think, it comes from my own experience, and skill and knowledge in making an artwork so I can tap into when I see children doing stuff, I go ‘Wow! Oh my gosh! That looks great. Push that further, or do whatever’. Whereas if people don’t have that same understanding or appreciation then they can’t, because it doesn’t necessarily have to be right, we are all going to do this, but it’s a bit like tapping in, a bit like [T-R] does, at key points, and knowing what those key points are. Ellen: For sure. I think that’s probably it. Just if you are not really that interested in art yourself, or you are not or you don’t really feel as though it is something that you really understand or whatever, it can be a bit hard for teachers to give instruction at good times in the lesson (I_S-E1: 510-514).</th>
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<td>Ellen provides examples of how she structured a unit of work for primary students. Ellen: Yeah and you sort of think it’s nice for them to just be creative, which it is, but I think it sort of needs to be balanced with a bit more, with a fair bit more instruction. I think not last year but the year before I had a year three and four class and I just focussed on Van Gogh for a term and I would just show them different art works and like I would read through a bit about different things that he did and talk to them about it and then I would get them to do the art to just copy the artwork pretty much and then use different techniques and then to do another picture of their own using those techniques (I_S-E1: 516-524) Melanie: Wow. Ellen: They did such great stuff, I was just, it was so good. I was like almost weeping (laughs). They were so clever and yeah I did it with a few other artists like at different times and I just found that they would do some really amazing stuff, just when they had looked and seen some different things that artists had used. And I did, do you know Hunldewaiser? He sort of does these really colourful artworks of aerial views but then he sort of, they don’t look like aerial views. It would be different shapes and but really amazing and really great colours and so I got some aerial views of capital cities in Australia and got them to do them, sort of looking at the way that he did things, you know he does like lots of patterns and they, they looked so good. (I_S-E1: 526-536)</td>
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<td>From Ellen’s experience and observations as a primary school teacher she has noticed that primary school children seem to be aiming for ‘realistic’ drawings, that is, they are not so interested in experimenting with their mark-making, but rather, they are wanting more control of it. And I was like, the thing is, I was like, the only problem is I don’t think that kids feel like they look good. I feel like kids really want to umm, do things that look really realistic. And they don’t really feel that what they do is good unless it looks really realistic. So sometimes I think Oh am I kind of pushing them towards what I like the look of?’ And there is not so much enjoyment for them, so yeah, that’s kind of a bit hard, because I will go ‘that looks amazing!’ And they will go ‘oh’, you know won’t really think that it will look very good. But umm, I guess it is just a bit of exposure to different things (I_S-E1: 537-545). Melanie: yeah definitely. Because there is a dominant trend or has been anyway, for realism, as being something that people strive for. And often in that process of striving for realism you miss the process that actually allows you to get there.</td>
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Ellen: and things can just be so, can turn out really interesting if they are not too realistic. (I_S-E1: 550-551)

The importance of a teacher who can help you to recognise and appreciate what you are doing, rather than just doing it and not necessarily being conscious of the value of what you are doing. I do still think that there needs to be like a teacher who, you know, has learnt the knowledge and, you know, has done a lot of artwork themselves so that they know how, and like what good instruction is and can recognise something good in someone’s artwork, and really encourage them and help them to develop it. So I do think that it is important. (I_S-E1: 583-588)

Ellen is talking about having a mentor (or a mid-wife?) to support her in expressing herself artistically. (I guess this relates to gaining control of self-expression? – not sure though) I love his class too. (GD8: 798)

I feel like he can just see, like I am only talking from personal experience but, like I’ve heard him sort of say it to other people as well, I just feel like he sees kind of what you are doing and you know can sort of pin point different times when you don’t know where to go, and like just give really good advice at that time, which I feel like really pushes me forward. And then I feel like ‘oh you know, like look at this book’ and [he will] show me a book and it’s something that will really help me and I feel like he’s just good at seeing what will give me that little push forward. He just seems to have [...] a good eye for what people are doing (GD8: 823-834).

But like he doesn’t seem to be really bias in ‘oh this is what’, you know, ‘art should be’. I feel like he looks at each individual and goes ‘Oh OK’ and you know, has advice for everyone (GD8: 851-853) and I reckon also how he lets you play (GD8: 860) he obviously does say little things like that but I feel that he does really give you permission to really play and experiment and he’s just very open (GD8: 870-872)

 [...] well the teachers have been good, I just like, I just find [another teacher] such a great teacher and I feel like, I don’t know, like I guess I’ve seen his artwork and I really like his style and I just feel like he, I don’t know. I feel like every bit of advice he has given me has been something that I would have liked to have done anyway. So I feel like I’ve kind of I don’t know, I just feel like I kind of clicked a bit with, or he’s clicked a bit with my style as well. So I find his advice, I really, I don’t know, I just really value his advice, I really appreciate his input (I_S-E2: 240-248).

But as for like [T-S] and [another teacher], they’re, you know, I take their advice just because [T-S], I know I need instruction in that sort of area and with [another teacher], I really value his advice. So I’m kind of like ‘what do I do now?’ (laughs). Just because I, yeah, just because I’ve found that his advice has been really, you know, really helpful in doing different artworks (I_S-E2: 294-299).

But I just feel so grateful that I’ve, you know, got him as a teacher because I kind of feel like he’s a bit of a, a bit of a mentor, you know, with art and so, like I haven’t told him but you know, things that he has said to me have just helped me so much. I suppose I should
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<th>Talking about the value of being able to hear the comments which teachers make to other students, particularly comments which they wouldn’t be able to say about her own drawings.</th>
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<td>I think it [art] is probably learnt best in groups. I’d say, and I probably think small groups, not big groups just because there is a bit more opportunity for discussion between people, and you get to look at other people’s work. I guess if you can talk more, you get a bit of an idea of why they are doing things. And yeah, I do think it can be really good when you are alone, just because you can get into your own little world and things can really take off. And sometimes if you are with people that can be a bit of an umm, a bit of a distraction. But I guess like, I guess when you are alone it’s not so much that you, I guess you are learning by just like the process that you are going through and the ideas of the things you are doing. But I guess in groups there’s more discussion and more like people can sort of bounce off...</td>
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tell him, but he’s been such a big help. And yeah, I don’t know, I just feel like he really, I don’t know, like he’ll sort of say ‘I will get a book to show you’. And it will just be the sort of art that I really love. Like I feel like he’s got a really good eye for seeing what you like and... yeah and just really encouraging! So yeah, so he’s been great. (I_S-E2: 306-315)  
‘Is it important to talk to people to get advice?’ (Q4)  
[...] I was consciously thinking about him [another teacher]. I was just thinking he’s been a huge help and encouragement! I think because he’s, you know, he likes similar styles and his art is kind of a similar style to what I like and so I just found it really encouraging and really helpful. Because I think, you know, because art’s so, you know, people have such different tastes and like someone will do something that you know that looks really good but it’s just not your taste. And like you know that when you do something and someone else might just look at it and think you know, ‘That’s nothing to me’. Like so I think it’s pretty important to talk to people who kind of have a bit of a similar taste so that you can encourage them and they can encourage you. Because someone might think, not think that it looks bad but it just doesn’t, you know, resonate with them. Because I just think people do things in the class which I think you know they’re good, like they’re great, they look really good but to me but I don’t really look at I and go ‘Wow!’ Whereas I see someone else say that to them so I think it’s really important for people to you know, talk to people who really like the same sorts of things. Because it can be a little bit discouraging when people just go ‘Oh yeah’. And you sort of, you know, you know that it just doesn’t really mean anything to them. You know, the sorts of things that you like and ... (inaudible) ... so that’s what I was thinking about in that question. (I_S-E2: 315-339).  
That’s great. It’s so exciting, like experiencing that. Like we kind of, I guess with our art we can feel so, I don’t know, like you are just bumbling along with a blindfold on. So then when you meet someone whose got that kind of insight it’s so, exciting. Yeah I just feel like with [T-M] he’s so, yeah, he can sort of see what you know, what, what I want to do, you know and he can say ‘how about this?’ And I think ‘wow, if I sat down and thought about it for maybe a month I would have thought of that, and that would have been what I really, or maybe experimented, I would have come to that, but just having someone to take you yeah. [...] It would be great to have someone like that for your whole life, [...] a mentor (I_S-E2: 503-520).
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<tr>
<th>Reflecting on T-S’s teaching style – unfolding the enfolded.</th>
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<td>That’s, I’m finding that really good. I find it really hard, like, I’m, that’s all new to me, and so I am finding it really hard, but I am finding his teaching really good. He’s such a good teacher, like I feel like I have learnt so much just having him a few times. I find how he is so structured and just teaches you one thing, and do it and you go, ‘OK, I’ve just learnt that’. I am finding that really good. Like, because I need that with that sort of drawing, like with life drawing and (GD5: 175-182) Whereas with [T-S] it’s very structured, so it doesn’t feel like there’s as much room to get stuck, in your own little thing, because I guess it’s new, it’s like I can’t really get stuck in my own little thing because its all new. (GD5: 656-660) And [T-S] too that’s fine, because he’s doing something different and so I just follow what he says to do in those classes because you know I don’t really have much of an idea about what he is teaching us (I_S-E2: 248-251) But as for like [T-S] and [another teacher], they’re, you know, I take their advice just because [T-S], I know I need instruction in that sort of area (I_S-E2: 294-296).</td>
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<th>Unfolding the ability to make realistic representations will take practice.</th>
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<td>But I just think ‘oh gosh this [life drawing] is something you’d have to practice a lot to get really good at it’ (GD5: 196-197). and just practice. So much of it is practice (GD7: 719).</td>
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<th>The ability to do life drawing hasn’t unfolded in Ellen yet.</th>
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<td>Yeah I do, I guess I just feel like there’s different things, like, you know like life drawing for example. I don’t feel like it’s kind of my thing, you know, when I say my thing I mean it is not something that feels that natural for me to do (GD5: 361-363).</td>
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<th>Recording the ideas that she has for possible artworks as she attends to drawing assignments for class means that she doesn’t have to feel like she wants to be doing</th>
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<td>I just wrote down what you said, ‘write in journal ideas from lessons for artworks’ because I feel by doing that will really make me keep this, in my head, as learning, keep it straight in my head as learning. Because I sort of feel I like this, I want to do something with it’ and I feel if I do that, ‘write them in my journal’ I will feel like it is a bit more in control, like I’ve got that idea, put...</td>
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### Listening to the advice of peers as she learns how to gain a sense of control of the mark-making process.

It’s quite funny actually. I find it quite funny. Because he’s like, I might say, have you got a rubber I can use and he’s like ‘NO! You do not use a rubber!’ He kind of takes on the role of the second teacher. Whenever I am next to him, he sort of really instructs me. But I like it too because he really knows what he’s talking about (GD5: 529-534).

He really knows what he is talking about and I listen to him. Like I listen to what he says and I go ‘oh right, why?’ and he goes you don’t use a rubber because of this, this and this.’ Sometimes I use a rubber, like but he really knows what he is talking about. He has helped me heaps (GD5: 536-540).

I was with him with life drawing last time and he was going ‘you’re not measuring’ and I was going ‘yes I am just doing this’ and he goes ‘No. You must measure’ so I was measuring and then I was doing something else and he is going ‘you’re still not measuring’ and it’s like ‘I did’ (laughs). So he really kind of gets on your case, but then he is really encouraging. I really like working next to him because he is really helpful (GD5: 543-549).

We were just saying how sitting next to another student he gives you some good tips (GD: 466-467).

No, I find he kind of walks around and looks at different people’s things and I always, … I listen to his advice. I think he has got good advice (GD7: 476-478). and he also gives you little tips about how to do something (GD7:494-495).

### Commenting on the hazards of listening to the advice of peers as she learns how to gain a sense of control of the mark-making process.

How much advice should you take from other people about your art? (Q3)

It’s kind of, I don’t know, it’s kind of hard I think with that because everybody has their ideas about what they like and they do have, you know, people do have good advice and good ideas but you can just end up, I just find it can end up over shadowing everything that you thought in the first place. And even if it’s not I don’t know even if maybe their idea could be a bit more sophisticated or a bit, you know, could maybe bring a better result in one way. I think it’s pretty important to stick with what you want to do, like in the first place. Because I don’t know, I just find that yeah like different times when I have taken different people’s advice I just sort of ended up a bit frustrated and I sort of thought ‘oh I just, you know, I just kind of want to do what I want to do and I don’t want to have to, you know, change it and go through the process of working out. I just want to have a go at doing what I want to do and then if it doesn’t work maybe then take on something else. I guess it’s, I think it’s good to take advice from other people but have a lot of time to just experiment yourself as well and do the things that you want to do without yeah feeling like other people have a better idea of things. Just you know just if they’re more umm, you know, experienced or just have more umm skill in different areas just to just to like go with your own instincts a bit and then you
**APPENDIX 5 – SECOND PHASE OF DATA ANALYSIS**

**know if it doesn’t work then maybe take some one else’s advice.** I just find it a bit frustrating when I have to come back and go, ‘oh that was a bit of a waste of time doing all that and just wishing that I had have stuck with my own ideas in the first place.’ (I_S-E2: 210-237)

But I guess it’s just about other people in the class, who sort of say you know, like [another student’s] great (laughs) but he’s like one who sort of says ‘do this and this and this and’ you know he’s really into the you know, technical side of painting and maybe sticking to really traditional methods and you know making it looking really, you know, really umm, thorough and, which is good, but umm, I think I just need to be left alone a bit (laughs) to do my own thing [...] because I have just found it a little bit frustrating at the end of the day to go ‘nothing really worked here’ because I was just trying to do what he was telling me to do and it didn’t work and you know, I just wish I had stuck with my own thing’ (I_S-E2: 251-263).

Yeah, I got enough I think. And it has been good and I will take those ideas on but it’s just not, I’ve just sort of realised ‘you don’t have to do everything you know, by the book for it to work out’ like he’s just very, like he reads heaps and has you know a lot of knowledge about painting and drawing and you know that’s alright to do it that way but you don’t have to. You know you can just do what works for you and so yeah, it’s good but, it’s good in moderation (laughs) (I_S-E2: 271-277).

[...] it just gets a bit, a bit too much. Not him, like he’s not pushy but, oh he is a bit (laughs) no he’s fine. He’s really helpful but no for me I just sort of think ‘ok well what do I do with this?’ and then it sort of gets a bit frustrating (I_S-E2: 282-285)

Melanie: so you are just remembering to trust your own ideas and (I_S-E2: 286) and just not think that things have to be done a certain way. Like that you can, like art doesn’t really, like there are rules, but you don’t have to follow them. Like you can if you want, but you don’t have to and you can still have a picture at the end that hasn’t followed rules but that you like. And so, yeah, so I think it’s good for me to remember that (I_S-E2: 287-292)

The ability to make realistic representations in her drawings hasn’t yet unfolded as much as in other people in the class.

But umm, yeah, I’ve been finding it a bit hard in [T-S’s] class just because I just feel like I’m a lot less skilful with drawing realistic things than pretty much everyone else in the class (laughs) (GD7: 674-681)

Yeah. So it’s just a matter, I think well, you know this is just something I’ve got to develop and it’s something I am enjoying doing, but I’ve just got to not, I think just not compare to other people. … I found last week really hard when we had to have our books open and he went around and looked at everyone’s because everyone’s were so good and mine was really crap (laughs) and so (GD7: 684-689)

I have never really done you know realistic drawing before. Like I’ve just never been interested in it so I haven’t done it, but I am interested in it now. So I’ve just got to kind of accept that I’m starting at you know at the grass roots level. And just learn, (GD7: 705-709) I did feel a bit sooky at the end of last week. Just because I was like ‘everyone else’s is good and mine’s crap. I’m sick of it!’ (laughs) But I got over it, like … I went home and I was like
… (GD7: 916-927) I just felt like the dumb kid. The dumb kid in class. (GD7: 931)

Talking about whether she will ever be able to unfold the enfolded ability to make realistic representations in her drawings as well as other students.

and you do some beautiful pictures that, I think everybody’s just got their own strengths and like you know some people you know can just, I don’t know, really do that realistic thing, really well. You know they’ve just got it and I feel like no matter how much I practice, I’d never have that thing (GD7: 885-889)

Ellen’s interest in and ability to make stylised, abstract representations in her drawings has unfolded more than her interest in and ability to make realistic representations in her drawings.

I think I’m always just you know veered a bit more towards the you know stylised, more abstract sort of stuff and so I feel like I get sort of a bit like, a little bit discouraged. But then I think well I’ve just got to keep on doing it. I’ve never really done it. (GD7: 674-681)

with art history we just moved on to modernism. And so I’ve just been waiting for that and just talking about you know, different movements and I was just thinking like you know how you sort of have a thing inside you, a bit of a vague idea of what you want to do, and what you like, and it, I don’t know, it’s a bit blurry and you don’t really know where you are going and just today when umm, when Rochelle was talking about how they, like Matisse and they, how everything went 2D, from 3D back to 2D. And I just sort of thought ‘That’s what I want to do. I want to do 2D, I don’t want to 3D’. Like and it’s that kind of, I think I you know, kind of struggled trying to do things because some things will kind of be a bit more 3D with toning and all of that sort of thing and some things will be flat and it’s not working and I just sort of thought ‘oh it’s because I just want to do 2D’….. (GD8: 204-219)

Even though I feel like it’s been great learning how to make things look realistic and whatever and you know learn about shade and tone and all that sort of thing, I just know that, I don’t know, it was just good when she [another teacher] said that and I said ‘oh yeah, that’s it (laughs) I want things to be pictures, like flat pictures. I don’t want things to be a picture of something that looks 3D’. And so that was a bit of a good, like because I have kind of been feeling something like that but not knowing quite what it is, and do something and it won’t quite work because something will be a bit 3D and then other things will be flat and I think ‘oh I like the look of that’. But I don’t know, it seems like something that should be obvious but, but it wasn’t, like, yeah, so that was good (GD8: 219-230)

I do like doing that with [T-S] and I know I need to you know improve in those areas, but I just know when we go to do things with tone and all of that, like you were saying (to Jarrah) that you really liked seeing that. To me I just sort of don’t care about any of it (laughs) and I don’t care about texture, and I like doing it, but I don’t care about it, I couldn’t be less if something doesn’t look realistic, or you know, so. I suppose I do when we are doing the exercises you know and that’s like the objective, but I think, yeah, it’s just a relief to think, I know what I don’t care about. I know what I don’t want to do (laughs). I know what I don’t care about (laughs) (GD8: 245-255)
Unfolding the enfolded may be a life-long process. And also, I'm trying to think of it as you know even though I want to make progress this year, just sort of thinking of this being like the beginning of you know like the rest of my life. (GD7: 745-748) not being like this is the year, and I've got to start here and kill myself practising. Like I want to practice but not like I have to get it all happening this year. And I don't and you know, if its not the way I want it to be, be like 'ah'. Just sort of think, 'these are skills I am learning now, which I am going to be practising hopefully the rest of my life' you know, that's what I want to do for the rest of my life. So it takes a lot of pressure off when you think that way, you just sort of think 'this is the start, the finish is when you die' (GD7: 750-758).

Talking about how she is using the focus of the Core Drawing classes (to unfold the enfolded ability to make realistic representations in her drawings) to her own advantage. That was something that you have to be, you know it's hard enough to do it well realistically to then do it in a bit of an abstract you know or whatever way. So like I do, I guess I'm kind of feel like I'm using that class to get where I want to go. But at the same time I am enjoying learning how to do that. so I am happy with it. It doesn't feel like 'oh I don't want to do this, this is not what I'm into, it's a waste of time'. Not at all. But I really like doing it even though I don’t really like what I produce at the end. So yeah, so I am happy with it. … (GD7: 916-927) I don't, I don’t know, yeah I think it is still, like how to do a figure well, you know if I have something in my head, you know still even if its if it doesn’t look 3D, even if you know the shape of the figure in a, a 2D figure still needs to have things in the right place and even if it's you know like stylised or whatever or a bit more abstract it still needs to come from the knowledge of how to do it properly. So I guess not so much in the way of getting the real kind of, you know, life into it of the of a real person but yeah I still feel like I need to make sure that I know how to compose a figure properly and I've had enough experience drawing them to go you know, even just little things you know like in, I was just looking at Toulouse Lautrec how he would have someone going like that (demonstrates propping arms up on the back of her chair) just like the difference of an arm out there to there, creates so much of a different feeling and just little, I don’t know, taking lines, observing little lines that take all the difference in the picture like in the figure how they are standing and all that. yeah. And I still feel like that but maybe not so, I guess there’s not as much pressure to get a figure really looking real, and 3D out of my head because that’s a pretty big thing to be able to do. (GD8: 1022-1042)

Although Ellen can enjoy the process of unfolding the enfolded ability to make realistic representations in her drawings, she doesn’t seem to care for the realistic representations themselves. But at the same time I am enjoying learning how to do that. So I am happy with it. It doesn’t feel like 'oh I don’t want to do this, this is not what I’m into, it’s a waste of time'. Not at all. But I really like doing it even though I don’t really like what I produce at the end. So yeah, so I am happy with it. (GD7: 916-927) Even though I feel like it’s been great learning how to make things look realistic and whatever and you know learn about shade and tone and all that sort of thing, I just know that, I don’t know, it was just good when she said that and I said ‘oh yeah, that’s it (laughs) I want things to be pictures, like flat pictures. I don’t want things to be a picture of something that looks 3D’. And so that was a bit of a good, like because I have kind of been feeling something
like that but not knowing quite what it is, and do something and it wont quite work because something will be a bit 3D and then other things will be flat and I think 'oh I like the look of that'. But I don’t know, it seems like something that should be obvious but, but it wasn’t, like, yeah, so that was good (GD8: 219-230)

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It seems that gaining a sense of control may also relate to knowing what type of art Ellen likes to make.

Also look at the role that teachers and students may be able to play in helping her to work this out for herself.

See section on ‘mentor’

I feel like I’m just getting a clearer picture now of like what I want to do and how to do it. Like I just feel like it is getting gradually clearer, all the time which, is really good like sometimes I think ‘I know what I want to do’ and just go to do it and like ‘ooh, no that’s terrible’ like it doesn’t work. So I am just kind of trying to keep on doing you know things and just keep pushing through that. Because I don’t really, I don’t know whether other people have a very clear idea about art where, what they, what sort of art you want to do. (GD8: 355-363)

with art history we just moved on to modernism. And so I’ve just been waiting for that and just talking about you know, different movements and I was just thinking like you know how you sort of have a thing inside you, a bit of a vague idea of what you want to do, and what you like, and it, I don’t know, it’s a bit blurry and you don’t really know where you are going and just today when umm, when Rochelle was talking about how they, like Matisse and they, how everything went 2D, from 3D back to 2D. And I just sort of thought ‘That’s what I want to do. I want to do 2D, I don’t want to do 3D’. Like and it’s that kind of, I think I you know, kind of struggled trying to do things because some things will kind of be a bit more 3D with toning and all of that sort of thing and some things will be flat and it’s not working and I just sort of thought ‘oh it’s because I just want to do 2D’…. (GD8: 204-219)

Even though I feel like it’s been great learning how to make things look realistic and whatever and you know learn about shade and tone and all that sort of thing, I just know that, I don’t know, it was just good when she [another teacher] said that and I said ‘oh yeah, that’s it (laughs) I want things to be pictures, like flat pictures. I don’t want things to be a picture of something that looks 3D’. And so that was a bit of a good, like because I have kind of been feeling something like that but not knowing quite what it is, and do something and it wont quite work because something will be a bit 3D and then other things will be flat and I think ‘oh I like the look of that’. But I don’t know, it seems like something that should be obvious but, but it wasn’t, like, yeah, so that was good (GD8: 219-230)

I do like doing that with [T-S] and I know I need to you know improve in those areas, but I just you know when we go to do things with tone and all of that, like you were saying (to Jarrah)
that you really liked seeing that. To me I just sort of don't care about any of it (laughs) and *I don't care about texture, and I like doing it, but I don't care about it, I couldn't care less if something doesn't look realistic*, or you know, so. I suppose I do when we are doing the exercises you know and that's like the objective, but I think, yeah, *it's just a relief to think, I know what I don't care about. I know what I don't want to do (laughs). I know what I don't care about (laughs)* (GD8: 245-255)

It seems that gaining a sense of control may also involve being able to let the art making process flow.

yeah but I was thinking the other day about how when like before I did this course like I'd go to do something and it would take me ages to get into it, like ages and ages to get into it. And then I'd do it and then like I wouldn't do anything for ages and then it would be so hard to get into it again. And I was just thinking like since I have started this course I feel like even though I haven't done that much art work, I feel like I've kind of got, like it sounds a bit hippie, but *I feel like I'm kind of more open to, I think just because I'm thinking about art more, and thinking and looking and just open artistically* (GD8: 596-605)

and like looking at, you know, colours and looking at, even when I'm not doing art, I'm kind of, I feel like kind of of the channel's open a bit more and that means that when I go and do it, *it happens a lot more easily than it used to* and I think like even though I might not have so much time to do art, like because I've got to work and whatever, at least if you've kind of open to it it means you can be happening, even if it's happening more and more inside than. Because *I was just thinking 'what's the difference now than before'. And I was just thinking I just kind of feel like I am umm, open to* (GD8: 607-616)

yeah, and just kind of thinking about I guess because you can come here and you get ideas and you hear things and then you have a while to kind of chew over what's going on in your head and then you might see something and go 'oh yeah, that kind of you know would look good'. I don't know, it's really, *it's just made such a difference though I feel like for me when I go to do stuff*. (GD8: 618-623)

*the channels are open to be able to take it in and chew it over*, like chew it, chew over it and I don't know *it just feels like it is a lot easier to* … (GD8: 638-640)
Unfolding skills: losing a sense of ‘control’

This seems to be about gaining a sense of control of being able to lose one’s sense of control. Therefore it is not a complete lack of control, but rather, shedding the illusory ego and the discursive intellect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status in the model of unfolding the enfolded</th>
<th>Interpretation/Description</th>
<th>Empirical examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3L – Becoming whole also 4D - Transformative agency Unfolded knowledge and skills manifesting in spontaneous activity. The intention to try to lose a sense of control of one’s mindful activity in order to enable spontaneous activity.</td>
<td>These comments of Ellen’s seem to sum up the transition from layperson to mastery: moving from a lack of control, through a phase of gaining a sense of control and, after the benefits of gaining a sense of control – or mindfulness - have been acquired, losing this sense of control again.</td>
<td>Last week when we were doing the line drawing with [T-R], talking about like trying to lose a bit more control with pencils. I was just thinking ‘that’s what kids have already’ (I_S-E1: 164-166) It’s just like something that you lose, you know, I guess, like trying to become more precise and things over the years. And you kind of try to get it back a little bit. They just do such cool stuff (I_S-E1: 169-171). In order to be more experimental in her drawings she needs to learn to lose her sense of control. Let go of a bit of control with it all. (GD2: 583)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is feeling relaxed a necessary condition for losing a sense of control?</td>
<td>I was feeling a lot more hung up on the finished product before, whereas now I am feeling more relaxed with the process. And I feel like that lets me be a bit more experimental (GD5: 671-674) And relax enough in letting yourself do art to be able to do it. Like, for it to be able to happen, because you can’t really do it when you’re not relaxed (GD8: 685-687).</td>
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6 Enfolded knowledge and skills: spontaneous activity (conditioned)

Once the knowledge and skills have been unfolded in one’s embodied personality, the ground-state can then be expressed spontaneously.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4D - Transformative agency</td>
<td>Unfolded knowledge and skills manifesting in unconscious awareness and spontaneous activity.</td>
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This is stuff that didn’t really fit into the above categories but I think they are important:

- whether art should have an idea behind it (I_S-E1: 320-352; I_S-E2: 41-87)
- talking about the ground state and **how making art comes from this deep, certain place at the core of your being** (I_S-E2: 157-171)
- whether people can actually be taught to be ‘masters’ (I_S-E1: 393-411; 419-420; 432-435, 440-485)
Appendix 5.5  Overview of ideas or concepts from critical realism and meta-Reality that helped in interpreting each case-study and, the ways each case-study helped to make some of these ideas come alive
Table 5.5.1  Joanne

| What ideas/concepts of Bhaskar's helped interpret Joanne’s data? | The primacy of absence (and the emancipatory power of absenting absences)  
The stratified model of the self (illusory ego, embodied personality and ground-state)  
The stratification of intentional human agency  
The theory of co-presence, and the model of unfolding the enfolded |
| How did Joanne’s data make some of Bhaskar’s ideas ‘come alive’? | Joanne’s reasons for studying at art school can be understood using the critical realist idea of absence ‘making things happen’. Bhaskar argues that determinate absence, that is ‘absence as experienced as lack, as need, as want’ is a compelling force behind any action or change (Bhaskar, 2002 #169 p.38). This theory allowed me to identify Joanne’s reasons for studying at art school in terms of things that she ‘experienced as lack, as need, as want’. It appears that there were several reasons for Joanne choosing to study at art school, including a perceived absence of:  
- discipline and consistency in her art-making practice,  
- confidence in her basic drawing skills and knowledge of techniques,  
- artistic people in her life, and  
- knowing how to express herself  
Joanne’s data also lent itself to demonstrate practical examples of what a state of congruence and /or incongruence between the actions of the embodied personality and the intentionality of the ground-state might look like and feel like in practice. |
| What level of explanatory power do Bhaskar’s ideas have for making sense of Joanne’s emancipation from the content of her consciousness that are incongruent with flow experience whilst learning to make art? | I first need to be clear about how Joanne was constrained… |
| A comparison of what evolved from this case study (in Bhaskarian terms) that was similar/ different to other case studies. | |
| Other fields of knowledge or theories that contributed to the analysis | Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow |
### Table 5.5.2 Jarrah

| What ideas/concepts of Bhaskar’s helped interpret Jarrah’s data? | The primacy of absence (and the emancipatory power of absenting absences)  
The mindful and mindless positions of transcendental agency |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How did Jarrah’s data make some of Bhaskar’s ideas ‘come alive’? | Jarrah’s data lent itself to exploring ‘perceived challenges’ in terms of things that were either absent or present.  
Jarrah’s data also lent itself to consider the way that an art student’s past experience might exert some influence over the actions and experience of the embodied personality within the context of their present social environment. |
| What level of explanatory power do Bhaskar’s ideas have for making sense of Jarrah’s emancipation from the content of her consciousness that are incongruent with flow experience whilst learning to make art? | I first need to be clear about how Jarrah was constrained…  
Bhaskar’s concept of absence being central to emancipation enables us to understand how the ‘perceived challenges’ in Jarrah’s situation could be transformed. |
| A comparison of what evolved from this case study (in Bhaskarian terms) that was similar / different to other case studies. | |
| Other fields of knowledge or theories that contributed to the analysis | Bourdieu’s theory of habitus  
Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow |
**Table 5.5.3**  
**Ellen**

| What ideas/concepts of Bhaskar’s helped interpret the case study? | The primacy of absence (and the emancipatory power of absenting absences)  
The stratified model of the self (illusory ego, embodied personality and ground-state) |
| --- | --- |
| How did the case study make some of Bhaskar’s ideas ‘come alive’? | S-E’s data lent itself to exploring absence and absenting absence in relation to the things that hindered her from making art in the past.  
S-E’s data demonstrated practical examples of what a state of congruence and/or incongruence between the actions of the embodied personality and the intentionality of the ground-state might look like in practice. |
| What level of explanatory power do Bhaskar’s ideas have for making sense of Ellen’s emancipation from the content of her consciousness that are incongruent with flow experience whilst learning to make art? | I first need to be clear about how Ellen was constrained…  
Bhaskar’s concept of absence being central to emancipation enables us to understand how the hindering aspects of Ellen’s situation could be transformed. By absenting Ellen’s feeling of being intimidated, overwhelmed, and discouraged, and absenting the absence of inspiring artwork, a starting point and direction in her art-making practice, it may be understood that Ellen could be emancipated from her creative block. |
| A comparison of what evolved from this case study (in Bhaskarian terms) that was similar / different to other case studies. | |
| Other fields of knowledge or theories that contributed to the analysis | Bourdieu’s habitus  
Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow |
Table 5.5.4  Betty

| What ideas/concepts of Bhaskar’s helped interpret Betty’s data? | The primacy of absence (and the emancipatory power of absenting absences)  
The stratified model of the self (illusory ego, embodied personality and ground-state)  
The mindful and mindless positions of transcendental agency  
The theory of co-presence, and the model of unfolding the enfolded |
|---|---|
| How did Betty’s data make some of Bhaskar’s ideas ‘come alive’? | Betty’s data lent itself well to getting my head around how Bhaskar’s stratified model of the self might be able to help understand what goes on for ‘the zone’-type experiences in making art. Betty’s comments about ‘connecting’ with her ‘essential being’ and healing the experience of being human allowed me to dive into Bhaskar’s discussion about a person’s ground-state.  
Betty’s data also lent itself to explore the differences between the mindful and mindless positions of transcendental agency, and the binding and applying phases in the model of unfolding the enfolded. |
| What level of explanatory power do Bhaskar’s ideas have for making sense of Betty’s emancipation from the content of her consciousness that are incongruent with flow experience whilst learning to make art? | *I first need to be clear about how Betty was constrained…* |
| A comparison of what evolved from this case study (in Bhaskarian terms) that was similar/ different to other case studies. | This was the first time that I really got to unpack the whole thing about the ‘ground-state’ and how this might relate to ‘being in the zone’ when making art. I then returned to Joanne’s data to consider this further. |
| Other fields of knowledge or theories that contributed to the analysis | Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow |
Table 5.5.5  Teresa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What ideas/concepts of Bhaskar’s helped interpret Teresa’s data?</th>
<th>The stratification of intentional human agency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did Teresa’s data make some of Bhaskar’s ideas ‘come alive’?</td>
<td>Teresa’s comments about painting accessing mystery allowed me to define mystery using the stratified model of reality. This led to exploring conscious and unconscious processes, and situating these within the stratified model of reality. Teresa’s data urged me to look into the field of cognitive neuroscience and see some relationship between this and Bhaskar’s theories.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What level of explanatory power do Bhaskar’s ideas have for making sense of Teresa’s emancipation from the content of her consciousness that are incongruent with flow experience whilst learning to make art?</td>
<td><em>I first need to be clear about how Teresa was constrained…</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A comparison of what evolved from this case study (in Bhaskarian terms) that was similar/different to other case studies.</td>
<td>This was the first time that I got to use the stratified model of reality to make sense of student’s comments about the art-making experience. Also, the causal efficacy of absence of marks (the gaps between the marks) in an actual artwork.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Other fields of knowledge or theories that contributed to the analysis | Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow  
Cognitive neuroscience  
Conscious and unconscious information processing  
Spirituality |