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Radical Learning Space: a case of a voluntary A Level English Masterclass

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Summary

The argument put forward in this thesis is that as a consequence of the pedagogic and professional restrictions created by managerialism, as reflected in the highly regulated field of current state educational provision dominated by the school effectiveness paradigm, it is essential for the furthering of liberal critical democratic education that freer, but no less legitimate, pedagogic and learning spaces are recognized, established and embedded in mainstream practice.

According to this premise, a critical theory position explores both empirically and theoretically how critical democratic pedagogic legitimation, can be made possible in the context of English A Level teaching and learning practice in a sixth form college. This thesis begins by contextualizing the debate for the need for this possibility in the context of New Labour Policy development during 1999-2003. It then identifies and explores the politico-pedagogic nature of an open learning initiative derived from a voluntary, interdisciplinary English Masterclass. This empirical site is then analysed in the context of a 'critical' case study research design, based on the theoretical model of Jurgen Habermas, especially his ideological, political and pedagogic theorization of the concept and politics of a self-generated emancipated 'lifeworld' that attempts to re-negotiate alternative practice and identify through self-created and self-legitimized pedagogic method and social relations.

This site of research has necessarily involved my research into an exploration and critique of much wider debates. In particular it engages with the nature and role of liberal democratic political theory and ideology and its influence on A Level curriculum modelling, learning experience and constructions of learner identity and teacher professionalism. What has also emerged from this wider study is an exploration of the nature and extent to which learning and teaching within the formal, official A Level curriculum model (Curriculum 2000), based on the learning dichotomy and

dual learning sites of 'modularity' and 'synopticity', has produced not only a learning imbalance of democratic learning experiences and learning identities but also an uncritical learning and professional conformity and passivity inherent in the social construction of consumer-based studentship, professionalism and liberal democratic citizenship. It also engages with debates regarding the extent to which the social construction of consumer learning and professional identity and learning citizenship has been achieved at the expense of the full development and maturity of pluralistic and more active forms of critical studentship, critical citizenship and critical professionalism.

As a consequence, this thesis both theoretically argues and demonstrates empirically how the official A Level curriculum and teacher professionalism is a product of the social and political reproduction systems of New Labour's 'middle way' political product and practice which I argue became increasingly more authoritarian and statist owing to its integration of neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism as a redemptive 'theological-educational' project. I attempt a more detailed analysis of this redemptive educational project through an exploration of the concept of learning 'space wars' as set in the wider context of official learning principles and practices of globalisation. In attempting to theorize this emerging politicization of an empirical aspect of my own professional practice, I have also explored the nature and extent of the influence of the then new initiative of Student Voice and Student Voice work and the 'Building Bridges' policy that together offered the potential to encourage, facilitate and legitimate alternative principles and practices and outcomes of more radical open learning spaces.

Finally, my argument for attempting to diversify the democratization of official A Level learning is ultimately, therefore, derived from a belief that we need to re-base democratic schooling in general on classical notions of discursive democratic morality, identity and practice. This, I argue, in the context of a developing, liberal democratic state under advanced corporate capitalism, would open up genuine and legitimate curricula, pedagogic and professional spaces for wider opportunities for the cultivation of rational, critical debate of important ethical and political questions relating to what makes a good citizen and what makes a good society, rather than asking more mundane utilitarian questions relating to what makes learning more standardized, efficient, productive and more predictable.

Introduction

My thesis has been sponsored by a professional angst and interest experienced at a specific moment in time. My point of entry into researching this angst within my own professional practice has been derived from a combination of my practitioner position as a teacher, Head of Department in a sixth form college and more recently a curriculum manager of teacher training and professional studies in an 11-16 mixed Academy and an academic researcher.

Since 1993, when post-16 A Level education became incorporatized and educational public sector professional identity and ethics in general became uniformly influenced by corporate capitalist management theory and practice, I have experienced increasing concern relating to a personal feeling of a loss of status owing to what seems to be the re-interpretation of the complexities of professionalism to a situation in which a narrowing of legitimate practice or skills set has created a sense of professionalism being an artisan-like apprenticeship model of practice.

At times, it felt like being caught up in a process of de-skilling or, to be more precise, of intellectual and political de-skilling and as result, feeling de-valued and increasingly marginalised as a critical, professional educator. This was mainly brought about by what seemed to be the narrowing, bracketing out, of the more complex and often intuitive, autonomous actions and justifications underpinning professional practice to that of mere demonstration of explicitly prescribed practical skills and competences. Simultaneously, and just as importantly, I have been concerned about the extent to which students or learners as they are now officially called have become worryingly passive, excessively dependent on the skills and work rate of others, on systems to ensure and define almost guaranteed success and all too quick to blame others for their failings or perceived lack of success. I became interested in being more independently informed about what might be causing these issues and concerns and how these might be linked, especially in the context of the rapid, relentless and radical changes to the structures and ethics of teaching and learning practice brought about by national educational reform.

Within my sixth form institution itself, especially at the point of merger with a local FE College, there seemed to be rapidly declining opportunities for open professional spaces, to take some time out and think rationally and critically about why this was happening and what might be the medium and long term implications for teaching and learning. I felt acutely increasing restrictions on my legitimacy to think through what it might mean to be an instrumental part of a formal educational system in the future that was becoming it seemed irrationally obsessed with results at all or any cost; of seemingly doing whatever it takes as a new kind of professional to meet or increasingly exceed pre-specified targets for achievement. The very processes of learning, the way individuals

were expected to articulate their work, the social meaning of achievement were I felt, all becoming overly standardized, predictable, and de-intellectualized which was also leading to grade inflation and an actual lowering of standards despite yearly increases in results. Student expectation for success was becoming unrealistic and disproportionate to notions of ability and indeed the amount of effort put in to achieve. The ethics of individual student responsibility and accountability were disappearing from the judgemental frame of things. A new breed of student was being created by these educational reforms and, of course, a new breed of professional.

It became obvious to me, therefore, early on and even prior to my starting any formal doctoral study, that teaching and learning, indeed pedagogy itself, was now becoming ideologically and politically motivated and that the new kind of professionalism that underpinned, audited and validated this new way of learning and producing learning identity was premised on an increasingly narrowing concept of teacher accountability. It was the effectiveness of the teacher as a kind of salesperson employed to meet or exceed specified targets of achievement rather than a critical educator of liberal minds who was suddenly in the self-justifying spotlight, rather than the academic ability, aptitude and personal effort of the student. It also seemed to me that all kinds of personal and individualized learning processes within the institution were not only becoming officially de-intellectualized, but also officially de-politicized and replaced by a kind of reality of systemic abstraction, a self-regarding and self-protecting rationalist control and monitoring system that was more interested in people as symbolic, statistical abstractions, more interested in its reputation as a mass producer of non-failure or over-achievement. Moreover, I felt that trying to raise concerns and attempting to discuss the nature and effects of these trends was not only difficult, but also increasingly impossible because the very principle and practice of contestability was regarded as illegitimate and because I found that professional and learning spaces, forums such as meetings, were being closed down.

I consequently became interested in how it might be possible to relate to and engage with the professional and intellectual implications of these changes more proactively and less passively and indeed less fearfully under the moral and political auspices of maintaining the belief in and commitment to intellectual standards and democracy. I needed to feel and think that I could and should try to maintain and reclaim some sense of individual defining control over who I still wanted to be as a professional educator, as an individual learner in my own right. I wanted to understand what exactly was happening to education and why. I wanted to understand why I was feeling and thinking as I did and, as a committed professional who wanted to stay in their job, what I, as an individual practitioner, could do about it. The EdD 'professional' research degree, then, seemed an ideal means of serious inquiry into this situation. This of course has meant that my subsequent research to date has been sponsored by a need to explore and rationalize a number of professional angsts caused by the re-professionalizing effects of incorporatized education, the consequential

changes in A Level curriculum modelling, teaching and learning and professionalism and concomitant pedagogic changes that compelled ideology and politics to be present at all times in mainstream classroom practice.

However, although these professional angsts have been obviously present in some way in all my research, what has emerged as a consistent point of both professional and intellectual interest and commitment has been the identification and the exploration of sites and forums of emerging open learning spaces, how these learning spaces are pedagogized and what kind of social relations construct and underpin them. This final thesis within the EdD course of professional study, should not, therefore, be understood as a stand alone piece of research. It must be understood in the context of it being just the latest stage of my thinking and professional engagement with current educational reform. It has its roots and indeed very critical standpoint inherent in the overall development of thinking through all my research papers to date. Throughout the process of conducting previous EdD research, then, I have therefore developed specific assumptions about the nature of reality, regarding the relevance and significance of my preferred research standpoint when understanding current educational topics and issues and the democratic usefulness and validity of practitioner research. My work in the area of trying to further democratic education through the research standpoint of critical action research and the attempts to establish and critique legitimate open learning has necessarily and inevitably drawn me into an understanding and critique of much wider arguments regarding political theory and ideology, the relationship between political theory and ideology and policy formation and declaration, of curriculum modelling, and the nature of changes to professionalism, all of which have been integrated directly into the analytical frame of inquiry. It has also drawn my attention to the need for a policy analysis, an empirical dimension and an overarching coherent theoretical perspective.

In trying to answer these questions in this thesis, I have tried to show how it is possible to generate and validate alternative democratic pedagogic forms to those espoused in official policy statements. In using student responses to show how the nature and implications of emergent radical politico-pedagogic relations can transcend the conventional teacher-student boundary in order to establish legitimate participative and direct democratic action within the school effectiveness learning paradigm, it attempts to demonstrate how it is both practically and theoretically possible to reconcile what can be regarded as two competing, irreconcilable configurations of legitimate democratic learning spaces.

The Introduction to this thesis situates and outlines my research topic in the context of my personal, professional experience. In Chapter 1, I contextualize the development my personal, professional concerns by situating them in the context of an analysis of development of New Labour's 14-19 learning policy between 1998-2002 in relation to the extent to which and by what means it manifests

a political commitment to reconfiguring, restricting and managing intended constructs of learning and professional training spaces. I have focused on the development of such policy development, rather than the policy relevant to the research years 2001-2003 for two main reasons. The first is that the previous EdD paper I wrote for the 'Critical Analytic Study' (20,000 words) concluded with a need to offer a policy analysis dimension to the work on the relationship between Third Way political ideology and the educational politics of New Labour. The second reason is that this chapter functions as a meso-level literature review. In Chapter 2, I outline the nature and development of the empirical field and justify the relevance of a critical theory research design, data collection methods and data analysis strategy I have used and thought appropriate for this study given the kind of research questions I have asked and my position as an insider researcher. In Chapters 3, 4 and 5, I outline and analyse empirical data in the theoretical context of the core and sub-zones of Habermas' notion of the lifeworld. The analysis of this data is initially dichotomised into the two heuristic devices of pathologies and emancipations derived from the paradigm of critical theory. It is then situated in the more sophisticated theoretical context of Habermas' construct of the ideal speech situation and his theory of communicative action. Chapter 6 offers an extension to my argument of the need to continue the consideration of Habermas' theory in today's developing educational context and as a contribution to understanding the nature and function of critical studentship and critical professionalism. Finally, in the Conclusion (Chapter 7), I attempt to document my own changing and developing sense of legitimate critical professionalism within the context of recent educational reform. Ultimately, I give a brief statement of what I believe this thesis has offered in terms of substantial originality in the field of 'professional' research studies together with a brief outline of possible linked research work in the future.

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Abbreviations

AFL	Assessment for Learning
CK2	Curriculum 2000
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
FE	Further Education
GTC	General Teaching Council
GTP	Graduate Teacher Programme
HE	Higher Education
LMS	Local Management of Schools
MTL	Masters in Teaching and Learning
NPM	New Public Management
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
OCN	Open College Network
PEST	An evaluation questionnaire based on responses to the following coding categories: Political, Economic, Sociological and Technological
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SAS	Student Associate Scheme
SCITT	School Centred Initial Teacher Training
SWOT	An evaluation questionnaire based on responses to the following coding categories: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TQM	Total Quality Management
TTA / TDA	Teacher Training Agency (later the Teacher Development Agency)

For Rebecca

Chapter 1

Policy Context

1.1. A Consideration of the Politics of Policy

The concept, nature and meaning of a policy are very debateable. Colebatch (1998) for example, says:

“that policy proves to be an elusive concept...partly, when used by practitioners...for whom ambiguity can be useful” (Colebatch, 1998:111).

He argues that policy as a term *“is not a scientific absolute, but a socially constructed variable”* (Colebatch, 1998:114) and that:

“policy is concerned with creating coherence in the face of continuing ambiguity and contest” and ... “policy is problematic and graduated rather than definitive and absolute” (Colebatch, 1998:113).

He concludes, ultimately, that a satisfactory definition of policy “would have to recognize the tension between the model and the way it is used” (Colebatch, 1998:111). Firstly, Colebatch outlines and debates the traditional view about the extent to which policy should still be regarded as an outcome, an artefact or product produced by what he defines as a vertical, hierarchical, process of rational instrumentalism, of political ambition and intention to rectify and redeem a failing current state of affairs in relation to a social issue by some kind of authoritative decision-making body. It is something that is presented publicly as a *“prior statement of the actions and commitments of a future government in respect of some area of activity”* (Colebatch, 1998:1). It is something that acts what he calls *“prospectively rather than retrospectively”* (Colebatch, 1998:1). Secondly, he outlines the alternative definition of policy that is something that has meaning only in its social use, as a functioning site of on-going democratic process in a liberal democratic society, something he assumes is premised on the notion of a horizontal, democratic logic of dialogic power relations, a concept that is in use as an on-ongoing democratic tool (Colebatch, 1998:13). Whatever the definition of one’s preferred choice, Colebatch states that all policy is a term that:

“frames the action rather than simply describing it; it labels what we see so that we can make sense of it in a particular way” (Colebatch, 1998:11).

This dual definition of policy as 'vertical', based on authoritarian product of intent, and 'horizontal', a democratic process recognizing that policy attempts to frame and justify a preferred kind of social reality, is further explored more politically in the work of Dunne, Pryor and Yates (2005). Their work is concerned with the actual cultural politics of policy deconstruction and interpretation. They construe policy as a "*semiotic system*" (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:110), as a site for potential contestability as much as a site of constraint, of the idea of policy having a "*coercive element in discourse...in order to re-order our real worlds and our social practices and what they mean*" (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:110) and to declare the intention that a preferred social reality "*is encoded in policy documentation that have a special relationship with reality*" (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:110) and "*in doing so construct our identities*" (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:111), not only define the empirically real but also "*attempt to constrain and define future realities*" (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:115). Furthermore, they argue that since Thatcher's first government in 1979, the emergence of the integration of neo-conservative and neo-liberal ideologies has linked education specifically to the economy and the market. This has "*made education policy a key site for ideological contest*" (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:112). When this kind of educational politics was then linked to and reproduced by the performativity and accountabilities of the school effectiveness system and the concomitant rise of what Dunne, Pryor and Yates (2005) call the political use "*vernacular positivism*" (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:113), that is used to "*validate a particular reading of the real and to invalidate all other readings*" (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:114). They also argue that this form of vernacular positivism makes claims to the social production of apparent context free data and reports (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:114).

Their views highlight that issues regarding policy formation and policy validation were and should be issues of democratic political power. This is an especially convincing argument when they link their concept of the manufacturing of strong social order by the production of a general "*cultural cul-de-sac*" (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:125) to what they call "*the radical confusion ... of performativity and conformity with the exploration and expression of what is it to be a human person*" (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:125) based on "*the easy confusion of the behavioural, which is to do with conformity, with the moral*" (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:125). Such an official form of educational 'governmentality', (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:125) can clearly be seen to link with Colebatch's categorization of policy as 'vertical' and hierarchical product and artefact rather than a 'horizontal' site of genuine social democratic processes. The work of Dunne, Pryor and Yates (2005) also reminds us that leftist governments are more concerned with both policy processes and social outcomes, whereas rightist governments are more concerned with outcomes (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:112-113) and that the technicist rationality and scientism of "*vernacular positivism*", enacted in the name of practical, common sense, is to be regarded as an "*overarching discourse of subjection*" that legitimates a paradoxical professional and pedagogic "*freedom to do as one is told*" (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:126).

This kind of approach to understanding the nature and purpose of policy is furthered by reading the work of Carr and Hartnett (1996) who set educational ideas and practice in the context of a critique of the nature, rise and development of New Right educational ideas since the mid-1980s that attempted to strength the authority of the state and simultaneously turn educational theory and practice into a neoliberal consumer product. They describe the policy making and policy-endorsing politics of managerialism as *“an imperialist discourse...which marginalizes the problems, concerns, difficulties, and fears of the subject”* (Carr and Hartnett, 1996:179). It is they claim, citing Foucault, a *“moral technology”* or a *“technology of power”* and as such, is a modern, all-purpose equivalent of Bentham’s panopticon that *“works through surveillance”* (Carr and Hartnett, 1996:179). Carr and Hartnett (1996) further argue that:

“managerialism attempts to take political and moral issues out of organizational discourse and recast them in the neutral language of science, technology, and bureaucracy” and that it “makes it difficult, if not impossible, to raise moral and political issues about how schools should be run, and makes it almost impossible to provide a framework and an organizational structure within schools which will allow such questions to be pursued” (Carr and Hartnett, 1996:180).

The work of Dunne, Pryor and Yates (2005) is also important here because it outlines the need for a researcher to establish what they call ‘a place to stand’ (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:11-25). They stress the need for any researcher, but especially critical researchers, to offset claims of bias by the principle of reflexivity. This principle assumes that no research position is value-free and that reflexivity is a key aspect of the relationship between research claims and democracy because it foregrounds *“self-understanding as researcher”* (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:14), foregrounds the role of assumptions, researcher pre-positioning and the pre-framing of the empirical social world. It also foregrounds bias when attempting truth-making and truth-validation based on the basis that:

“we are not dealing with a fixed and exterior world, but a world of meaning where the actors are constantly in the process of social construction” ... and ... “where knowledge is ... understood as something that is jointly constructed or negotiated between researchers and their collaborators” (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005:15).

However, when this important democratic, critical reflexive principle is related to critical engagement with policy formation and policy validation set in the context of the moral auspices of school effectiveness and TQM (total quality management), it raises the serious question of the extent to which democratically and critical levels of macro-reflexivity is possible. Such a context for reflexivity

has the very real potential to allow only micro-levels of reflexivity, at most reflexivity at the institutional micro/meso-level. Under this management regime, the potential for limiting opportunities for genuine reflexivity is obvious as it is real. It is reasonable and pertinent to claim that teachers are in the official processes of being entirely and continually trained rather than continually trained as well as educated. Limited opportunities for meso/macro levels of critique, or more importantly opportunities to demonstrate, allow, critical reflexive engagement at all levels of micro / meso and macro analysis, can be seen to be tantamount to the inculcation of legitimate convergent reflexivity only. In this sense, both of Colebatch's definitions of policy as 'vertical' and 'horizontal' have the potential for restricted or negated critical reflexive spaces which establishes the prospect of reflexivity as an instrument of uncritical policy implementation rather than democratic policy negotiation or contestation.

This point about officially restricted and de-legitimized critically reflective practice at the meso / macro level of critique was something that I explored in my earlier Phase 2 thesis positioning work 'Critical Analytic Study'. This paper explored the nature of hypertextuality, defined by Svedjedal (cited in Hobbs, 2001) as *"a new way of conceiving and interpreting the truth of any given text by virtue of its structural form"* and the assumption that the *"text is experienced only in an activity of production"* (Hobbs, 2001:4); that it functions as an *"abstract artistic entity and its appearance in realization"* (Hobbs, 2001:4); that it is a paradoxical *"semiotic event"* (Hobbs, 2001:4) and a form of pragmatic, consumerist truth-play rather than a commitment to truth-seeking with reference to external reality. Chartier, (also cited in Hobbs: 2001), focuses our attention on the illusory nature of the emancipatory claims that hypertextuality can make in the name of double-democratization of social meaning because:

"the entire system of perception and manipulation of texts are upset by the material logic that defines a totally original rapport between reader and text" (Hobbs, 2001:5)

and that *"it could lead to the destruction of all common reference, to the compartmentalization of identities and the exacerbations of particularisms"* (Hobbs, 2001:5). Moreover, I began to see links between the nature and use of the concept of hypertextuality and its two integrated yet radically different rationalities, narrative forms, of monosequentiality, defined by Svedjedal as an attempt to *"arrive at meaning through the logic and practice of stable meaning production"* (Hobbs, 2001:4) and multisequentiality defined as *"arriving at meaning through the logic and practice of pluralistic discourses"* (Hobbs, 2001:4), as a novel way of arriving at an understanding of how it might be used to interpret New Labour's appropriation of Third Way political ideology and practice based on extending my reading of state and societal forms of corporatism. I concluded that monosequentiality can be seen to be akin to the more totalitarian, state corporatist form and that multisequentiality can

be akin to the more democratic, societal form of corporatism. I also concluded that this integration needed a policy analysis and policy endorsement dimension in any future development work in a thesis. Therefore, since my recent work on policy studies, I have now been able to further and deepen this kind of integrated understanding of current discussions of hypertextuality, political theory and policy studies and depict in a diagrammatic form:-

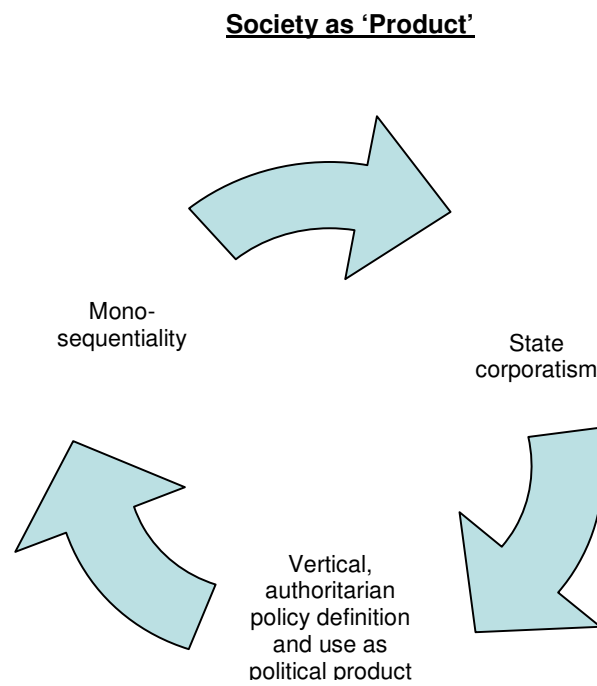


Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of Society as 'Product'

Society as 'Praxis'

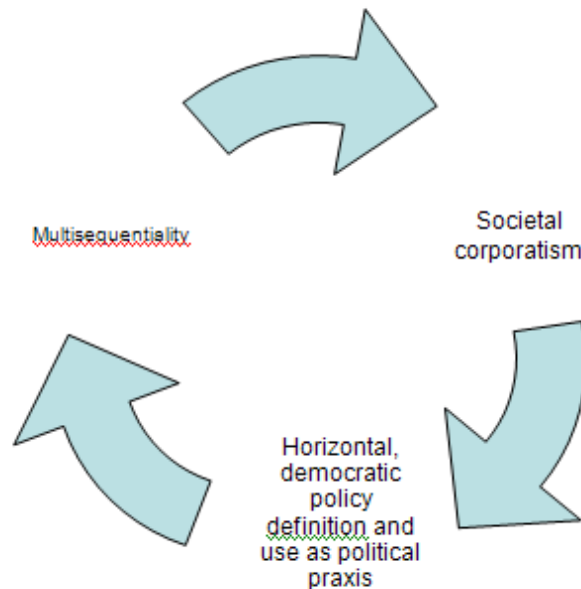


Figure 2. Diagrammatic representation of Society as 'Praxis'

The significance of working towards the creation of these two integrated models for the purposes of this thesis is that it has enabled me to establish a clear and coherent critical logic and position from which to discuss and critique government policy statements between 1997-2003 in accordance with my interest in the extent to which official policy statements showed a commitment to the marginalization, restriction and negation of critical reflexive learning spaces and how they also reveal a commitment to the legitimate establishment of new ones. It helped me explore further my interest in the rhetorical nature and officially declared institutional practices that both de-legitimize and re-legitimize the nature of intellectual engagement inherent in official reflective learning space. Furthermore, as a counterpoint to the rise and hegemony of the merging of New Right and neo-liberal ideology and educational practice and, to what I argue is becoming tantamount to the increasing levels of the inculcation of state corporatist educational values and practices, I have drawn on the work of Carr and Hartnett (1997).

They outline, for example, the important principle of “*double democratization*” (Carr and Hartnett, 1997:189), a “*process aimed at the simultaneous democratic development of both education and*

society" (Carr and Hartnett, 1997:189), and a process that they refine by citing the work of Amy Gutmann, who articulates the principles of *non-repression* and *non-discrimination* (Carr and Hartnett, 1997). The principle of *non-repression* she argues concerns itself with:

"preventing the state and any group in it, from using education to restrict rational deliberation of competing conceptions of the good life and the good society" (Carr and Hartnett, 1997:190).

The value of Gutmann's second principle of *non-discrimination* is that it foregrounds the need that *"all educable children must be educated"* and that this belief applies to those:

"forms of education necessary to prepare children for ... participation in conscious social reproduction" (Carr and Hartnett, 1997:190).

In order that:

"no educable child should be excluded from an education adequate to participating in the political processes that structure choice among good lives" (Carr and Hartnett, 1997:190).

Together, Carr and Hartnett (1997) argue that these two principles of *non-repression* and *non-discrimination* form the basis of the process of 'double-democratization' and

"provide a distinctively democratic way of resolving those issues about the potentially dangerous consequences of unconstrained democratic authority that the New Right has so effectively exploited in order to gain political acceptance for its educational policies" (Carr and Hartnett, 1997:190).

The next section of this chapter then contextualizes a critique of some key New Labour policy statements during the years 1998-2002. It is particularly concerned with foregrounding the extent to which it was possible to reveal evidence of official attempts to re-classify the nature and scope of academic pedagogic legitimacy. It will briefly and outline the nature of newly configured learning pedagogic sites that indicate possible marginalizations, restrictions or negations of opportunities for the politics of *"double democratization"* and how these new, official learning sites can be seen to reflect the ideology and politics of Third Way political ideology through the instrumentality of corporatized managerialism.

1.2. An Analysis of New Labour Policy (1998-2003) and Early Evaluations

David Blunkett's Green Paper, December 1998: 'Teachers: meeting the challenge of change'.

This offered debate about New Labour's identified need for a *"new professionalism"* based on *"greater individual accountability, more flexibility and higher standards"* (68) in order to a *"create a world-class education service"* (68). From the outset, it can be seen that this document endorses the influence of global rather than national ambitions and that educational principle and practice is to be premised on the auspices of a 'service'. It presupposes that this kind of reconfiguration of education is needed to *"prepare for the citizen of tomorrow"* (7). This *"new vision"* (6) for a modernized profession is therefore determined by the ambition to turn English education into a product in order for it to be disseminated to other countries as a market commodity rather than a site for national democratic debate, praxis. It is a document that demands, in a consistently strident and imperative tone, centralized control through various kinds of changes in the strengthening of school leadership, the engendering of a strong culture of accountability in continuous professional development, the requirement to improve the image, morale and status of the profession by regular and rigorous performance management and performance-related pay structures, introduce fast-tracking of teachers into managers, an intense focus on the role of ICT, the widening of routes into teaching, flexible pay scales, national initial teacher training standards and the creation of a General Teaching Council (GTC). It claims to bring about these reforms through rigorous systematic processes of continuous improvement and the promotion of innovation.

Even though the New Labour government claimed that it *"did not wish to impose any single model of professionalism"* (11:13) the document paradoxically, for example, contains many examples of standardizing intentions, such as the invitation to practitioners to enter a competition for producing a new staffroom model with the aim of having *"the winning design...constructed in a number of pilot schools"* (163:63) financed by the private sector. There is also the creation of AST positions (Advanced Skills Teachers), whose role it is to disseminate good practice within and between schools, and the National Professional Qualification of Headship (51:26) with a similar standardising brief with wider intention of helping turning teachers into *"managers of learning"* (12:14). It promises more standardization in teacher training (105: 45-47).

These proposed reforms are expressed passionately and imperatively throughout the document. It claims to be committed to opening up many new radical learning spaces within the concept of a re-professionalizing agenda. Yet, when set in the social and political context of managerialism and commodification, it is not difficult to see that these innovative radical open spaces and sites for rapid professional change, self-styled as being *"visionary and excessively ambitious"* (35:19), are ultimately premised on principles of individual accountability and intended standardizing outcomes. It therefore set a potential policy benchmark for change in professionalism that had the potential to marginalize, restrict and de-legitimize other principles and practices outside the official system of

being able to deliver a world-class global service. It outlined the case for future white paper policy to be used and structured monosequentially, and used vertically as a social instrument of state corporate commitment to social order.

1.3. David Blunkett's 'Learning to Succeed: a new framework for post-16 learning', June 1999.

This kind of future policy intention was also evident in the above Green Paper as it signalled a continuation of the same kind of corporate capitalist principle and operational commitment to help underpin 14-19 curriculum and pedagogic reform. It is a document however, that more explicitly and robustly articulates a blend of neo-conservative concern for strong social order and neo-liberal concerns for mass-productivity. It promotes social development and opens and legitimates educational learning sites and practice in accordance with a tendency to reify more state corporatist ideas and ideals and again promotes the nature and use of policy as political product rather than promote democratic praxis in accordance with the principle of *'double-democratization'*. Blunkett's 'Learning to Succeed: a new framework for post-16 learning', (June, 1999) was the consultatory policy-birth of 'Curriculum 2000' (CK2) as it was popularly called. It articulated a curriculum vision to compliment the policy effects that were already beginning to change teacher professionalism. In order to bring about a sufficiently clear and robust framework for accountability and standards in teacher professionalism, this policy introduced a harsh national funding regime which forced colleges to expand while cutting unit costs. This of course created the potential for many problems relating to the contradiction between catering for higher numbers, and lowered entry qualifications, between retention and success rates, and the expectation of increasingly higher levels of achievement with a commitment to an uncritical belief in year on year continuous improvement. This document clearly established a corporatist learning agenda based on paradoxical operational principles of mass productivity and yet it asserts moral claims to excellence and indeed even elitism. It premised these new principles and practices on both being committed to *"achieving world class standards"* and on achieving *"value for money"*. It claims unambiguously that curriculum and pedagogic reform must be based on the principle that *"education and training should be more relevant and accessible to both individuals and employers"* and that it is the responsibility and job of government to *"drive up the demand for learning"* (9), to engender parity of esteem between a wide range of courses. It stressed the need for greater *"transparency"* in learning process, the need for skill rather than knowledge acquisition and development. It repeatedly stresses the need for *"clear accountability, efficiency and probity"* (6) and it repeatedly speaks of ensuring *"quality delivery"*, and significantly defines students unambiguously as *"customers"* (32). It speaks stridently of the need and virtues of rigorous target setting and of *"delivering"* learning as a marketable and consumerable product (44). It repeatedly articulates and defines learning as a product to be monitored and delivered by a mass production system. In terms of the extent to which this policy opens up and closes down learning spaces that allow for rational, critical democratic debate, it is obvious and very

clear that all professional and learning spaces were to be rationalised and integrated into a managerially controlled learning system that could manufacture high level of achievement more predictably. It assumes the need for and manufacturing of a more consumer-driven professional and learning citizenship based on increased levels of individual accountability and continued systemic integration.

1.4. Estelle Morris' 2001 White Paper, 'Schools: Achieving Success'

This policy was even more explicitly committed to the idea of the *"radical modernization"* of 14-19 education and training (2.33:16) and the explicit political manufacturing of much higher levels of achievement, learning productivity, through what was called the 'Transformation' of 14-19 academic and vocational curriculum provision, classroom teaching practice and terms and conditions of employment. The principles and instrumentalities of transparency and the market concept of delivering education as a product to consumer-citizenship stakeholders, of ICT-driven rationalisation and a commitment to standardisation in the context of widening diversity of provision are emphatically and stridently articulated throughout. The policy intensifies the reform agenda further with a nomenclature that is particularly notable for its zealous and stridently redemptive premise, by its copious use of pseudo-religious discourse such as *'vision'* and *'mission'* and extensive use of modal verbs such as *"must"* / *"will"*. "Britain must transform the knowledge and skills of its population" (1.2:5). *"The talents of each individual child must be developed to the full"* (1.4; 5). The introductory paragraph even concludes with the rather alarming political catch-all phrase that the government will do *"whatever it takes"* (1.10: 7) and *"We must do whatever is necessary"* (6.26:52) to have a truly world class education system that meets the needs of every child and to achieve the high levels of success which is everyone's *"right"* (6.26:52). The overall tone of this policy conveys an almost desperate and authoritarian attitude and commitment to reifying the stated necessary change and reform which presupposes and suggests not only a self-righteous idealism to their reforms, but also a worrying cynical attitude to anything that has gone before. It appears to herald a new regime of principle and practice that would be intolerant of any degree of speculation or alternative democratic engagement in the form of the processes involved in education as an instrument of 'double-democratization' brought about by more societal forms of policy implementation.

In summary, the main characteristics of this reform reflect a commitment to securing high levels of minimum standards and *"floor targets"* (6.8:49), particularly the stipulation of the arbitrary target of securing 50% of young people progressing to higher education by the age of 30 by 2010 (4.3:31). It states that in order to achieve this, many new learning and professional developments are to be opened up that ensured new working partnerships to meet the complex and contradictory demands of the choice, diversity, inclusive, widening participation, employability and excellence agendas. The commitment to securing parity of esteem between academic education and vocational training was

to be engendered through the reform of pedagogic practices and the inculcation of universal basic skills for employment training, rather than knowledge acquisition and contestation for the purposes of ensuring the development of democratic education and the principle of *'double democratization'*. Yet, despite this commitment to the 'training' rather than 'training' and 'education' of all kinds of individual talents and aspirations at 14-19, it claims to build the infrastructure for universal 'excellence' and success: *"Our task is to spread this excellence nationwide"* (1.4:5) by attempting to *"break down the traditional barriers against vocational education"* (4.13:33). This paradox or contradiction at the heart of its claims and ambitions is evident in the fact that it stimulates more choice and diversity yet all forms of learning were to be pedagogically standardized whether academic or vocational so that *"no teacher and no pupil feels he or she cannot succeed"* (2.18:12). This process of re-pedagogizing teaching and learning was to be supported by the creation of centralized on-line resources under the auspices of what called *"Culture Online"* (3.27:23), by the use of external support from Creative Partnerships to act as *"stimulus for new thinking"* (5.22:43), by the creation of TeacherNet and by the use of *"ICT-delivered courses"* (7.19:57).

This powerfully articulated and contradictory policy also stresses 'The Excellence Challenge' through the concepts of personal mentoring, personalisation, and school masterclasses (4.24). Masterclasses were intended to offer not only stretch and challenge for all kinds of learners on a range of different kinds of courses, but also provide the stimulation for the creation of a new kind of school innovation unit with the purpose *to*:

"act as a powerhouse and an incubator for new approaches, which might not fit the rules as they currently exist, but could be developed as prototypes and tested for their effectiveness" (5.21-5.22).

It also promised new partnership working as a *"stimulus for new thinking"*. Therefore, it focused its attention on the need for changes and improvements in classroom teaching. This commitment is repeated many times: *"the quality of classroom teaching and learning lies at the heart of school improvement"* and reform is targeted directly at classroom teaching: *"the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom is the key to raising standards"* (3.1:17). The ICT imperative is foregrounded as a means of ensuring this success as is the repeatedly stressed need for learning transparency, the need to ensure universal 'engagement' supported with a robust intervention agenda. The policy also shows a commitment to accessing and using student voice as an instrument of customer service provision and quality assurance: *"the system as a whole must be accountable to pupils and parents"* (2.3:8) and *"Ofsted inspectors will now systematically seek the views of a school's pupils as part of its inspection"* (3.46:28). Moreover, the inculcation of the practice of using student voice in these ways to support the reforms *"to go further"* (3.45:27) is

described as *“Education with character”* (3.45:27). Finally, the policy introduced the concept of Beacon Status as recognition that a school has taken up the challenges and is acknowledged as being *“among the best”* in the new system (5.8:39).

1.5. Estelle Morris’ ‘Success for All: Reforming Further Education and Training’ (June, 2002)

This policy continued the *“ambitious reform agenda”* in that it described a programme for raising quality and effectiveness in colleges and training providers (10:7). In doing this, the policy uses even more copiously the pseudo-religious nomenclature of ‘visions’ and ‘missions’ (9) to articulate further the paradoxes and contradictions of Third Way, corporate capitalist ideology and practice as a means of bringing about the stated floor targets for improvements. What dominated this policy statement is its unequivocal stress on the need for pedagogic reform to bring about desired political outcomes and politically stated floor targets for success. This policy, in particular, repeatedly stresses the importance to the development of new approaches to ensuring pedagogic ‘effectiveness’ and to the notion of official standards in teaching and learning. It, for example, articulates the need for the universal use of *“particular pedagogic practices”* (34:15), in the form of ICT and E-learning and the identification of *“those teaching methods (mastery learning) which have proved effective in the learning and skills sector”* (34:15). It argues for the need for quick and efficient dissemination of information relating to this pedagogic development and to *“provide appropriate training for teachers and trainers and [to] encourage their use”*. It continues with *“We believe that the essential criteria for judging excellence in teaching and learning should be the same for all providers within the learning and skills sector”* (35:16) which indicates the enforced use and conflation of teaching and learning and assessment practices across the academic and vocational divide by the instrumentalism of learning objectives, the standardising effects of a key skills, basic skills, and competence-driven learning agenda and detailed criterion-referenced assessment. To support this conflation of pedagogic practice underpinning the parity of esteem and accuracy of and ease of learning predictability and measurability between academic and vocational learning, the policy announces the introduction of Ufi/Learndirect designed to:

“standardise teaching and learning and to ensure that e-learning strategy can be best extended across all learning and [gives] a coherent approach to the delivery of content online” (39:17).

1.6. Charles Clarke’s White Paper: ‘Success for All’, November 2002

As the title of this policy suggests the new 14-19 system is a *“vision of the future”* for further education that has no learning failure and is designed to ensure the success of *“key deliverables”* (71: 31) that will *“increase customer focus”* (96.c:42) in the 14-19 learning phase by the delivery of teaching and learning and other forms of provision.

This policy, more than any other, is clearly located in corporate capitalist, market-driven ideology, operational practice and nomenclature. Its tone is very purposeful and strident. Its use of the concept and terminology of the 'delivery' of education and training throughout the document indicates that it constructs learning as a product and commodity to be bought and sold and purchased by a learner customer. It is premised on the stated need to inculcate enterprise education for all kinds of learners on all kinds of courses motivated by reformed funding for official and non-official courses of learning and supported by a strong accountability system from within and from outside individual institutional life and practice. To further support this reformed learning phase, it also introduced a reformed system of extra funding linked to the achievement of improvements targets. The new learning system was clearly being situated within the ideological context of market productivity, learning as commodification and a bonus culture for achievement of floor targets and financial penalties for underachievement, even though it stipulated the need to continually widen participation and increase students numbers (104:43). It also stipulated that funding would be available for *"recognizing non-accredited learning"* (108:44) such as extra-curricular and voluntary learning initiatives.

It is also a policy that quite emphatically *"puts teaching, training and learning at the heart"* (12) of these reforms as a commitment *"to delivering excellence"* by ensuring *"improved delivery methods"* (63:29) in learning and achievement across the 14-19 phase of learning (34:20). It indicates that innovation that stimulates such excellence within this new system is to be used for the greater purpose of standardizing through accountability to local, regional and national delivery plans, by the concept of spreading good practice (65:30), by the creation and use of a national data base for the promotion of an *"effective e-learning infrastructure"* (77:33), by what is called *"intensive face-to-face training....delivered to practitioners by practitioners"* (71:31). This is indicated, too, for example, by the creation of a national Standards Unit to lead reforms derived from the adult basic skills strategy and Key Stage 3 strategy in schools (12). It is also supported by pledging an extension of Curriculum Online and to both simultaneously academicize vocational learning by the creation of vocational GCSEs and vocationalize academic learning by the Key Skills and the furthering of the unitization of learning (49:24) agenda in the name of parity of esteem and facilitating the means of mixing and matching courses to give learning and assessment coherence to choice and diversity (34:20). It also lends support to the commitment *to "champion economic prosperity for all"* (40:22) by virtue of its roots in increasing levels of work-based learning, of enterprise and employability, by making sure that the qualification system *"meets employer needs"* (49:24), by the creation of Beacon Status that will recognize that *"good provider[s are] responsive to employers"* (50:24), by the *"importance to the economy in terms of measurable skills"* (69:31). It concludes with a commitment to:

“encourage the flow of experience from business and the wider world of employment into teaching and training” (96:39).

It finally concludes with a coda (Annex1) that explains how these FE (Further Education) reforms would affect school sixth forms. This section of the policy indicates that school sixth form and sixth form colleges, already incorporatized into FE since 1993, *“will be assessed against the priorities of learners, employers and local communities”* and *“its measures of quality and success”* will be *“assessed on its contribution to wider targets and policies”* (Annex 1, 4:52).

1.7. Charles Clarke’s White Paper February 2003: ‘14-19: Opportunity and Excellence’

This policy, too, continues the ambitious corporate capitalist vision and objectives of previous policy statements regarding the principles and practices of the effectiveness agenda to ensure reform. The difference this time is that this one emphasises the need to move *“from reform to transformation”* (4:38) in order to *“set about building a consensus”* (Foreword:3) for the achievement of universal excellence through diversity and uniformity, through more cross-disciplinary learning (1.5:10) of standardized assessment practice and learning identity across the academic and vocational divide. It also widens the context of its justification to include European comparisons (1: 9-13). In doing so, it offers a much more explicit promulgation of transferable employment skills and training and of consumer learning identity and practice resulting from enforced and personally accountable standardized pedagogic practice across all curricula divides (2.2:14-15).

The policy states a commitment to:

“promote higher participation and attainment and to build a system in which young people come first with learning that is uniformly of high quality”

and a commitment that *“combines general and specialist study”* (5:348). At the end of the introductory paragraph, it admits that previous New Labour reforms have created an *“insufficiently broad and demanding offer on the A Level track”*. This was reinforced by Tomlinson’s two reports in 2002 on A Level standards, in which it was stated that the new A Level system basically lacked credibility in stretch and challenge, accuracy of marking, overall grading value and that it was still too narrow in range and restrictive in flexibility to achieve full parity of esteem and employability, especially in terms of mixing and matching vocational and academic and the lack of cross-disciplinary coherence even though the use of General Studies and Key Skills in particular was used as an attempt to achieve this.

The policy continues to espouse in response to Tomlinson *“the need to re-establish confidence in a system and to ensure the processes involved is robust, secure and effective”* (3.9:24). It continues to espouse the need for the creation of new learning partnerships beyond the classroom and with the private sector. For the first time, ICT is configured unequivocally as remedial and redemptive rather than emancipatory in that it is defined as *“innovatory” ‘solutions’* (3.1:21). Revised assessment principles and practice are also foregrounded with the creation of a 14-19 assessment group with the brief:

“that it should focus primarily on principles underpinning effective assessment rather than looking at detailed arrangements within individual qualifications” (4.23:45).

The standardisation of assessment within a rationalised and coherent curriculum system is clearly identified with re-professionalisation and re-pedagogizing. It shows further commitment to the notion of excellence by maintaining the A Level curriculum and extending the range of options for Advanced Extension Studies, yet it postpones the introduction of a distinction grade at A Level. It also promises a national programme of masterclasses through the Excellence Challenge for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and poorer performing schools and collaboration with the private sector through the ‘Building Bridges’ initiative.

In terms of achieving parity of esteem, it becomes clear that the main thrust of claim to success is pedagogic equality, in the main to drive a dual process of standardising through the academicization of vocational learning and the vocationalization of academic learning in order for them to enhance employability, be more relevant to what is called:

“the essential practical skills of life, and how the content of individual subjects and programmes could place greater emphasis analysis, problem solving and thinking skills as well as presentation and argument of conclusions” (4.13:42).

This is endorsed by the claim that *“Programmes should contain a coherent blend of general and specialist education and training”* (4.12:42). However, it does seem that the main intention behind the reforms was to improve the quality of vocational training and learning by stressing that it should have an educational dimension:

“we must improve the quality of vocational programmes if all young people are to have access to high quality, motivating options” (4.12:42).

1.8. Early Educational Literature Responses to 'Curriculum 2000'

Ofsted's 2001 Report on 'Curriculum 2000' (September 2000 to July 2001)

The work of Hodgson and Spours (1997) is important because it highlights the conservative elitism and traditional knowledge transmission model of original A Level learning which for many was:

"a system in which students are engaged with a small number of hard subjects with the only common experience for advanced level students being tutorial guidance and that the amount experienced also varied significantly" (Hodgson and Spours, 1997:55).

This last point is important for my thesis because it is a reminder of the fact that the original A Levels never did show any wider political and cultural interest in and commitment to communitarian and democratic ideals and practice.

However, they also remind us of the fact that the old style A Levels are "*no longer an adequate form of general education*" (Hodgson and Spours, 1997:41) and that previous attempts to reform them between 1950 and 1996 failed because of the commitment to an elite gold standard and to norm-referenced assessment criteria influenced greatly by university entrance requirements. A-Levels were, they argue, even from the outset:

"criticized for their social exclusiveness, linear syllabuses, terminal assessment, intellectual insularity and exclusivity, their prioritization of knowledge reproduction and a disciplinary concept of knowledge and skill" (Hodgson and Spours, 1997:52-53).

They also argued the fact, which is often over-looked, that norm-referenced assessment criteria failed 30% of students in the interest of controlled university admissions (Hodgson and Spours, 1997:52).

In the context of their work supporting a major revision of the social and cultural significance of the traditional A Level curriculum on inclusiveness and neo-socialist grounds and, in accordance with need to align the English academic system to a more European one, it is important at this point to highlight what emerges as the main characteristics of the development of New Labour's 14-19 policy during 1999-2002 and to explore further the significance of the implications this has for the legitimization of more enlightened participative democratic pedagogic forms of engagement and for opportunities for greater social emancipation and social justice. These characteristics are sixfold:

1. *promote and achieve higher participation and retention*

2. *promote and achieve greater flexibility and choice with overall coherence and parity of esteem between academic and vocational learning*
3. *promote and achieve stipulated success targets and concomitant integrated operational accountability systems*
4. *promote and achieve a preferred and accountable ICT-driven teaching and learning, pedagogic and assessment system across the vocational and academic divide*
5. *promote and achieve workforce professional development systems that prioritize business enterprise and work-based learning priorities especially through partnerships with outside bodies, agencies and people with relevant business skills sets*
6. *promote and achieve consistency and standardization through the innovatory sites and practices of the dissemination of good practice and its recognition in Beacon Status and rewards of extra funding and reduced official inspections*

Combined, these policy development characteristics indicated a move towards an official technologically-integrated, monitored and accountable learning system that essentially is serving the needs of the economy, employers and employment. It seems to presuppose the social conditioning of learners as customers and teachers as technical supervisors. Learning, especially the pedagogy of academic learning at A Level, was being asked to redefine and market itself as a rational and consumerable product rather than a site for the development of critical praxis for the purposes of furthering democratic education.

The later work of Hodgson and Spours (2006) further states, that when considering the development of a policy analysis framework based on what they call *"the contested case of 14-19 reform in England"* (Hodgson and Spours, 2006:3), it is noticeable that there has been *"the growth of arms length"* (Hodgson and Spours, 2006:3) of the *"steering mechanisms"* (Hodgson and Spours, 2006:5) of multifarious quasi-autonomous, non-governmental agencies, or quangos, and political advisers involved not only in educational policy making but also in the more micro-politics of policy implementation and evaluation which *"raises problems of democratic legitimacy"* (Hodgson and Spours, 2006:3). This is because these semi-autonomous quangos *"operate directly between ministers, representing national government and education providers"* (Hodgson and Spours, 2006:3). It is the kind of widespread devolved democratic practice that is leading to paradoxical increases in levels of *"political centralization"* (Hodgson and Spours, 2006:4), that has attempted to re-define the nature and scope and practice of democratic legitimacy in the field of education, especially at the levels of teacher training, teacher education, of the kind of educational critical debate that can legitimately flourish at and within individual institutional level. This veneer of educational democratization, managed through the devolutionary, state corporatist politics of 'quangosim', they argue, has superseded the kind of direct and participative, societal corporatist, democratic forms that was likely to have been evident in the learning and professional worlds of individual institutions

in relation to their local education authorities. Democracy was and still is being conducted 'legitimately' in the specialized and politically accountable sphere of inter-agency collaboration rather than through the individual professional and pedagogic exchanges underpinning the learning life of individual institutions. Individual and personalised democratic spaces, or more radical "*political spaces*" (Hodgson and Spours, 2006:6) were being closed and silenced in the name of systemic rationality, efficiency, productivity, performativity and accountability. More importantly, their concepts of the marginalisation and demise of the significance of the "*policy memory*" of practitioners, with its '*grounded*' memory in "*what has worked in particular contexts*", and the increase of the rise and dominance of the "*policy amnesia*" (Hodgson and Spours, 2006:8) of politicians dictated by the pragmatism and expedience of short term political cycles and the vagaries of electoral politics and managers by the short-termism of ensuring increased yearly results and the meeting of floor targets of imposed three year plans.

What indicates evidence for the argument that customer-defined learning experience and identity was leading to a decline in levels of higher quality, critically independent thinking at A Level was in the process of being 'dumbed down' is reflected in my own professional practice as a teacher and manager, but also an examiner and coursework moderator for a major examination board. Initially, I was in favour of the A Level reforms because they offered, for English studies in particular, the development of a much wider range of knowledge bases and analytical skills drawn from different literary traditions. What was learned and how one taught suddenly become more 'modern' as the reforms indicated a shift in critical focus from universal, old-fashioned, liberal humanist assumptions about character, plot and theme to those of constructivism critical theory and formalism. It did not, however, take long to realize that the rationalized new approach, in its own way, was also producing predictable, overly-formulaic and instrumentalized exploration, thinking and analysis. This time it was based on analytical skill development and demonstrating a narrowing of skill competence rather than formulaic analysis of the notion of content. This concern is also given credibility and greater justification and significance in the main conclusions of Ofsted's research (2002) which, although finding overwhelming support for the new A-level model, still informs us that "*higher order study and thinking skills were rarely promoted at the level of specific subjects*".

1.9. House of Commons Education and Skills Committee Response to the QCA Committee's Third Report: A Level Standards (23 July, 2003)

The above views from the 2002 Ofsted report, in particular, highlight that reflection on the actual teaching and learning and its immediate, short and long term social and cultural effects was an incontestable domain of critique as well as assumption that what was 'new' was also officially constituted as 'higher' learning standards. Ofsted claims that it was primarily a consequence of the over-ambitiousness of teachers who "*often attempted to cover the same ground as they would have*

done for the first year of the former GCE A-Level courses”, but it does not mention the poor quality and lateness of resources and prior professional training that may have been responsible for this.

1.10. Early Educational Critical Responses

The work of Priestly (2003) also explored the nature of the crisis of 2002 and concludes, by drawing on the policy analytical typology of Michael Young, who states that the problems related to the crisis derived from what Young calls the *“institutional logic”* (Priestly, 2003:226) of practical and professional implementation and the *“intrinsic logic”* (Priestly, 2003:226) of pedagogic and learning experience. Given this insightful and interesting conceptualization of the crisis, it can be seen that the Government Response to the QCA Committee’s Third Report: A Level Standards (23, July 2003) welcomed Tomlinson’s two Inquiries of 2002 but concluded that the nature of the crisis was solely focused on the *‘institutional logic’* of administration. Nothing was said about the *‘intrinsic logic’* of teacher and learner pedagogic experience and the pedagogic justifications for its continuation or revision as a commitment to the on-going success of the notion of A Level ‘gold standard’. For example, it blamed the DfES for presenting:

“a timetable of implementation of Curriculum 2000 that was not properly thought through” and “which placed considerable pressure on all those in the examination system from the QCA to students themselves” (5:2).

“The failure to initiate a pilot” (1:1) was highlighted which led to widespread confusion and uncertainty about grading and general introduction of the A2 exams without adequate trials. It reported that QCA had now produced simpler and clearer descriptions for AS and A Level standards and that exemplar scripts were to be made available. It called for *“a period of stability” (3:2)*. It raised the need *“for extensive trialling and clarity over standards and assessment criteria against which performance will be assessed” (5:3)*. The Report concluded with a recommendation that a campaign be launched *“to emphasise students’ achievements, entitled ‘A Level of Pride’ featuring advertisements in the national press” (8:3)*.

Higham’s work (2003) also exploring the A Level crisis of 2002 is based on a similarly limited and administratively focused *“institutional logic”* view to that of the government of the time. He believes the three-unit Advanced Subsidiary qualification representing the first half of the six-unit A level, albeit at a standard between GCSE and the A2 level, was effective because:

“it eased the transition from GCSE to A level with the intention of encouraging more students to study five subjects to AS level and then to continue with three subjects to full A level standard in the second year” (Higham, 2003:5-7).

The argument was that breadth of study was more important than depth of study and that this would help more students to make clearer and more flexible choices post-16 and beyond. It was also hoped that the Curriculum 2000 reforms would result in greater integration of academic and vocational study and the Advanced GNVQ was reconfigured as the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education, with new six-unit and three-unit qualifications, to equate to and interlock with the single GCE A level and AS qualifications respectively. He further says that the move towards breadth and greater integration of academic and vocational study has, however, been somewhat limited, though the transition to A level study has been assisted by the Advanced Subsidiary examination which, unlike the previous Advanced Supplementary examination, was not only at a standard lower than A2 level but was more aligned to the revised GCSE subjects, having taken on some of the process-oriented and criterion referenced characteristics of GCSE referred to earlier. Together, with the overall A Level having 50% of its assessment at a lower level, this has resulted in greater accessibility and, as students refine their choices for A2 and 'resit' modules, the potential for increased success by a wider range of students is obvious. This is an important contribution towards the government targets for increasing wider participation in higher education.

By using the Third Way political model outlined by Levitas (1986:173-174) which describes the paradoxical interrelationship between two ideal types of social politics based on a neo-conservatism, rooted in the need for strong government, social authoritarianism, disciplined society, hierarchy and subordination and the nation, and based on a neo-liberalism, rooted in the concerns for the individual, freedom of choice, market society, laissez-faire and minimal government, it can be construed that the policy trajectory of New Labour's educational thinking and practice does seem to reveal both characteristics of the dual aspects of this theory in relation to developing curriculum modelling and pedagogic and assessment practice. I explore this later in more detail in the context of A Level reform as reflected in Curriculum 2000 in Chapter 6 but, suffice it to say for the moment, that the identified developing strands of neo-liberalism within liberal democratic society as a whole discloses a form of policy development under New Labour, that Johnson and Steinberg (cited in Hodgson and Spours, 2006:9) call a "*statist / managerial neo-liberalism*" unlike Thatcher's form of conservatism based on "*social authoritarianism*" (cited in Hodgson and Spours, 2006:9). The impact of these "*statist / managerial neo-liberal*" reforms, with their underpinning and legitimization by an overlapping and integration of two forms of radical elite theory, namely that of the cult of the 'visionary' leader and politics of 'leadership' in general and corporatized, politicized bureaucracy, has led to an increasing hegemony of a "*business civilization*" and a consequential "deformed polyarchy" within pluralistic liberal democracy (Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987:299-324). These views have also been echoed by Docherty who describes such corporatized rationality as "*fetishised transparency*" (Docherty, THES: 30 July 2009). Furthermore, it has produced what Dunleavy and O'Leary call a "*technostructure*" that creates and legitimizes a form of relationship between corporations and government that allows no:

“clash of organizational norms, no basic incompatibility of procedures, but instead a ready understanding and a high degree of congruence in administrative arrangements” (Dunleavy and O’Leary, 1987:296).

The series of rapid ‘visionary’ and ‘bureaucratic’ based policy development and its micro-managed, ‘institutional logic’ of implementation within the school effectiveness learning paradigm and the ideology and practices of Total Quality Management (TQM) can be seen as producing an ever-increasing sense of intensified and ever-changing accountability, an anxiety in both the workplace and in the classroom. In the classroom, in terms of the ‘intrinsic logic’ of pedagogy, of teaching and learning, it can be seen that this was especially caused and underpinned by what I can now define as the dominance of the pedagogic methods of Bloom’s concept of mastery learning derived from the 1950’s (Davis and Sorrell:1995). This learning model was and still is extremely behaviourist, goal and achievement-oriented and a pedagogic approach that is premised on very linear notions of learning with its extreme rationalisation of learning into ‘step-learning’ or learning that is broken down into isolated sub-sets of skills which are then set in a hierarchy of instructional objectives. It is also a pedagogic method that uses a criterion-referenced series of tests designed to assess the degree of mastery achieved for each of these sub-skill sets and provide clear descriptions of learning weaknesses, strengths and overall progress made and to make. What is very important to remember at this point is that the mastery learning system and method of learning, that was becoming dominantly mainstream to underpin professionalism and legitimate pedagogic practice, was originally a system designed not to produce consistency of practice, or uniformity results, or excellence but a system of redemptive and remedial learning that only had clear and significant benefits for the less able, very low ability and the remedial (Davis and Sorrell: 1995). That the mastery learning model was and still is being implemented and enforced universally and uncritically to all forms of learning and indeed professionalism itself within the public sector, is a powerful and worrying indication of the extent to which mastery learning theory and practice has become so extensively appropriated by and entwined with politico-pedagogical practice under the auspices of managerialism. It seems to almost be incontestably redefining and re-legitimizing a one-dimensional mode of learning and training which defines the legitimacy of both professionalism and studentship in what is and should remain a vibrantly pluralistic democratic state. Moreover, it assumes a universal and continuous state of pathology, of endemic failure, in all parts of previous, existing and developing systems. It is antipathetic to any alternative educational ideology and system of practice.

1.11. Policy and the Politics of Reflexivity

When policy development is construed then within the context of the socio-cultural and political effects of corporatized managerialism, of escalating accountabilities, of the concomitant ideological,

political and rhetorical function of mentoring, of officially defined effective 'reflexivity', it raises important questions about how this rationalising system actually controls and officially appropriates the more independent and idiosyncratic linguistic aspects of studenthood and professionalism. This nature and level of potential linguistic control and re-appropriation has the potential to encourage and indeed enforce conformity especially when linked to the rise of individual monitoring structures such as the 'performativity' and 'effectiveness' structures of annual/mid-year Performance Reviews, Distributed Leadership, Total Quality Management, Ofsted inspections. Reflexivity, in this sense, can be seen to erode the foundations of criticality by promoting a kind of an openness and porousness between the distinction and boundary of private and public discourse, which in turn undermines the legitimacy of 'other', the dialectic, which is necessary for rational critical reflection at the meso (policy) / macro level (political theory) level of understanding. Critical reflection at the higher meso-macro level is necessary for identifying, understanding and critiquing points of intersection and their transformative potential where principles and promises of societal corporatist reform is pragmatically transmuted or converted into state corporatist principle and practice. This has the potential to produce a totality of experience linking the private agency and public symbolic representative states of being. Professional and learning spaces are marginalised or rendered illegitimate or closed down by virtue of their perceived irrelevance and lack of effectiveness.

In relation to this issue of the creation of an incontestable learning system based on the micro-management of effective learning, conducted through the notion and processes of '*managed reflexivity*', (Hodgson and Spours: 2006), Gerwitz and Ball's (1996) democratic and individualized counter-notion of 'ethical reflexivity' is important to foreground when committed to furthering deliberative and participative democratic education. The need to try and move educational principle and practice forward by going back to the actual pedagogical past, as Schweisfurth's (2002) work suggests, reminds us that the notion and commitment to reform assumes a belief in "*renewal, transformation and amendment*" Schweisfurth (2002:6) and that "*Embedded in the notion of reform is a directed attempt to improve*" (Schweisfurth, 2002:6). Her work also reminds us of the fact that:

"important to an understanding of reform, and critical to this study, is the fact that the lived experience of legislated changes by those forced to implement them often bears little resemblance to the outcomes anticipated by the policy makers" (Schweisfurth, 2002:7).

Furthermore, Campbell & Neill's argument (cited in Schweisfurth, 2002:7) that:

"Since 1988 the word 'reform', has been "corrupted by the way it has been used in political discourse, promiscuously attached to any untried proposal for change, in advance of the time when it could be known whether the change would lead to improvement"

and that reform solely premised on:

“centralisation and performance measurement, and the competency-based view associated with it, tend to generate reforms which exacerbate the marginalisation of teachers as professionals” (Schweisfurth, 2002:8)

gives rise to potential authoritarianism. What Hodgson and Spours' (1997) work highlights is that New Labour reform policy leading to the production and implementation of Curriculum 2000, even throughout its policy formation stage, has failed to fully realize the need for and promise of much needed social justice and social inclusiveness. For example, they argue that:

“in the last period of reform between 1991-1996, the period for the gestation and final planning of Curriculum 2000 [...] political conflicts over A-Levels have been more overt and the debates about A Levels has become part of wider debate about the future of 16-19 education as a whole” (Hodgson and Spours, 1997:46)

and that *“A Level debates from the end of 1980's have become polarized and politicized”*. This they claim has had the effect of *“minimizing the professional and technical debates and masking the differences within the education community”* and that *“the professional and academic community have been increasingly excluded”* (Hodgson and Spours, 1997:49) from educational debate and policy making. They further argue that in order re-ignite debate that begins to challenge and eventually prevent polarization, A Levels should continue to be reformed on the basis that they should be socially accessible, have modular syllabi, be skills driven rather than knowledge driven, be therefore intellectually inclusive and reformed so that parity of esteem between academic and vocational study be the driver of social justice (Hodgson and Spours, 1997:50). Subjects, they argued, should be interrogated from the point of view of learner's purposes, one of which may be knowledge for its own sake and that the prioritization of the production of new knowledge based on inter-disciplinary concept of knowledge is paramount. Effective and socially meaningful learning, they argue, is premised on “knowledge and skill combined in all areas of specialization” (Hodgson and Spours, 1997:52-53).

Moreover, further work by Hodgson and Spours (2005), conducted on the learner experience in the first two years of Curriculum 2000 with a school/college consortium in the south west of England, revealed why this failure occurred. Their work, for example, highlights some very interesting insights into what was actually happening to and within the actual teaching and learning experience. They suggest that the main problems and sources of student discontent were related to the learning involved in the AS year of study rather than the A2 year and, in particular, it drew attention to *“the*

rushed, superficial, pressurized learning experience”, “the lack of teacher coordination and knowledge of the standard required for the AS” (Hodgson and Spours, 2005:110). It highlighted the “heavy workload” and the “missed opportunity for subject skill development” (Hodgson and Spours, 2005:111). It also expressed the fact that students felt that the new reforms led to the pragmatic need “to over-teach in order to ensure that “students passed the examinations” for good league table positions (Hodgson and Spours, 2005:115). It was thought that:

“AS had been highly teacher directed” and had the adverse affect of diminishing “their motivation to undertake the type of independent learning required for A2 study” (Hodgson and Spours, 2005:111).

Furthermore, their work concluded that students regarded *Key Skills and General Studies* as “pointless” and that they were “shocked at the big jump” from GCSE to A-Level study and, furthermore, that they were “disillusioned with the general responses from universities and employers” (Hodgson and Spours, 2005:110). Overall, students “did not appear to be highly motivated or energized after gaining their AS results” (Hodgson and Spours, 2005:111). Their research, however, revealed that most students “enjoyed the increased intellectual challenge of the A2 [and] welcomed the experience of further specialization” (Hodgson and Spours, 2005:112). Generally, students felt that it was “a forgiving modular examination system when it came to grade achievement” (Hodgson and Spours, 2005:113) and that “most felt a sense of solidarity with their teachers who, in common with them, had faced an unpredictable and stressful two years” (Hodgson and Spours, 2005:113).

1.12. The case for commitment to social and participative radical, democratic learning spaces

The Power and Promise to Innovate

Pring’s (2005) moral and philosophical analysis of New Labour policy development and his account of the rise and nature of the skills revolution has contended that this revolution and the policy trajectory that ensued was initially a major political response to the 1996 Moser Report of 1996. This report researched the standards of adult literacy and numeracy and found serious underachievement when compared with international standards. These findings prompted the redesign of the state educational system and its concomitant professionalism. Pring’s contention was that this skills-based revolution was the economic drive behind New Labour’s commitment to social inclusion, higher standards and economic relevance. Furthermore, Pring’s contention was also that the nature and impact of such reforms have proved to privilege competence training at the

expense of the marginalization if not eradication of the idea of critical education. Furthermore, he argued that this uncritical political obsession with skill competency and economic utility has meant that:

“there has been no clear educational aim or purpose, hardly any reference (except in the introduction of citizenship) to the kinds of qualities and values which make young people into better human beings, no vision of the kind of society which a more skilled workforce should serve, no idea of the kind of learning which one should expect of an educated person in the present economic, social and environmental context” (Pring, 2005:82).

He further argues that:

“the policy is trapped in a language which militates against the broader moral dimension of education – the language of skills and targets, of performance indicators and audits, of academic studies and vocational pathways, of economic relevance and social usefulness” (Pring, 2005:82).

and that:

“there is a need to introduce young persons to ideals which enable them to transcend immediate wants and desires, to be inspired to make the world a better place, to persevere when the going gets tough” ... and that they should be given “an introduction to that perennial discussion of issues, which affect us deeply, and to different visions of what is good and worth pursuing” (Pring, 2005: 82-83).

Kelly’s (2004) ideas, moreover, on the pedagogic and political role of radical curricula development, namely that of the nature of education Action Zones, reinforces Pring’s democratic moral and philosophical objections to the ubiquity of learning instrumentality, by offering a more explicitly political interpretation of potential radical learning space. For example, he outlines the attempt of this initiative to reinvigorate more creative and institutionally-relevant bottom-up learning opportunities reminded me of the Government’s interest in and commitment to the prospect and promise of pedagogic devolution and innovatory practice as part of its *“Power to Innovate”* initiative in the 2002 Education Act (Kelly, 2004:625). Furthermore, the work of Halpin, Dickson, Power, Whitty and Gerwitz (2004), has also explored this issue of promoting social inclusion through the possibility and legitimacy of curriculum innovation and its relationship to the idea of balancing risk and regulation. In their work on Education Action Zones (EAZ’s) and the political promise and

rhetoric that *"integrated solutions"* are needed for *"complex social problems"*, (Halpin et al, 2004:198), conclude that very little innovation was actually able to take place because of professional pressures and problems accruing from the 'realpolitik' of high-stakes testing, high-performance regimes, quasi-market settings and league table perceptions. This they say *"illustrates the difficulties of developing an innovative, responsive and inclusive curriculum within an evaluative state"* (Halpin et al, 2004:205).

I took a lead in this area of my argument from the higher education educationalist Ronald Barnett who says that in the current School Effectiveness context of formal educational provision we must provide opportunity to encourage students to *"branch out"* (Barnett, 1994:119) and *"to promote personal risk taking and independent thought"* (Barnett, 1994:119), to encourage and develop *"intellectual daring and personal initiative"*, to take advantage of a space in which:

"to form their own insights, and support, so as to achieve the confidence to necessarily form a view point of their own when surrounded by the often intimidating weight of authority" (Barnett, 1994:118).

This need became more obvious to me after reading the work of Torrance and Pryor (2008) on assessment in which they articulate a compelling need for more divergent assessment practices. They believe that formative assessment should not be based on the principle of 'assessment as learning', as it is now configured, but on the contrary should be *"much more oriented towards identifying what students can do in an open-ended and exploratory fashion"* (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:291) rather than in learning situations in which *"criteria compliance"* and notions of 'effective teaching' and 'effective learning' predominate and *"leads to instrumentalism"* (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:282). Their commitment to a form of learning at A-Level that is premised on the induction into *"communities of practice...which explore and interrogate criteria, rather than accept them as given"* (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:292) and which provide *"local communities of practice"* the social and cultural space in which all meaningful judgements are made and thus should be at the level of the system at which most efforts at capacity building are directed" (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:292-293). This, they argue:

"may start to reinstate the commitment to challenge in the post-compulsory sector and attend to it as an act of social and intellectual development rather than one of acquisition and accumulation" (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:293).

Kelly's (2004) work, too, on the rise of the interest and exploitation of the intellectual capital of schools, as a form of moral and economic legitimacy underpinning School Effectiveness, also

declares a need for freer and more open learning spaces which he defines as generating *"intellectual agility competence"* (Kelly, 2004:620). Moreover, what is needed, therefore, is a commitment to the establishment of a form of democratic pedagogy that is rooted in the Aristotelian philosophical notions of learning as 'praxis' and 'phronesis'. Carr defines 'praxis' as a form of practical philosophy, or *"good deliberation"* that is based on a commitment to *"a life devoted to right living through the pursuit of the human good"* (Carr, 1995:71). He further defines 'phronesis' as a democratically produced and legitimated *"practical wisdom"* based on the moral idea that *"the man who lacks phronesis may be technically accountable, but he can never be morally answerable"* (Carr, 1995:71). Carr further states, significantly for my argument in this thesis, that *"deliberating well is a mark of phronesis"* (Carr, 1995:72) because it emphasises the democratic need for the continual opening of 'oral' learning sites and practices necessary for the creation and maintenance of relatively free and open, critical, dialogue. It is this classical definition that I use in this thesis.

From the point of view of the 'intrinsic logic' of pedagogy, therefore, that I argue that what is needed is a commitment to the production of a phronetic, democratic learning site that can use and reproduce Bernsteinian-like 'horizontal' and 'weak regulatory' / 'normative' pedagogic codes that help create and maintain more open, egalitarian, intersubjective and macro-aware learning processes and identities (Bernstein: 1996). Having thus foregrounded the philosophical and pedagogical primacy of such 'dialogic' learning potential, it is also important to stipulate, at this point, the need for more ideological and political definition and understanding of this issue. In this sense, the work of Alexander (2004) on dialogic teaching and learning has been important. He, for example, states that talk is *"arguably the true foundation of learning"* (Alexander, 2004:9) and that *"true dialogue entails challenge and disagreement as well as consensus"* and, more importantly, that dialogic talk *"helps children locate themselves within the unending conversations of culture and history"* (Alexander, 2004:23). Finally, what is needed is an institutionalized commitment to a form of democratic pedagogy that promulgates and legitimates the liberal-progressive philosophical tradition outlined by Carr (1995: 55) as having the following characteristics:-

- a political perspective that is liberal / communitarian
- a view of society that is egalitarian
- a guiding educational slogan of 'learning from experience'
- has classroom organization based on flexible groupings on the basis of needs and interests
- defines curriculum content on the basis of child-centred and weak subject differentiation
- has curriculum knowledge that is subjective rather than objective
- determines the teacher's role as facilitator that enables the pupils to learn from personal learning
- that encourages the use of discovery methods

- uses assessment procedures based on informal evaluations of qualitative developments in student understanding

1.13. Research Questions

As a consequence of the need for and my commitment to this kind of research ethic and politic, I was able then to devise three main research questions which underpin this study:-

1. How does the changing policy context re-frame pedagogical engagement?
2. What are student views on the pedagogy and learning in a space outside national curriculum structures?
3. How does the changing policy context re-frame the professional project?

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1. An Overview of the Development of the English Masterclass Empirical Field: (1991- 2003)

Park College was a small independent sixth form college in Eastbourne, East Sussex that evolved from a boys' grammar school and comprised approximately 800 students drawn mainly from six local 11-16 coeducational schools. It was historically a small and relatively low achieving sixth form college until it changed its name to Park College in 1994 in response to Incorporation in 1993. Since that time Ofsted reports praised the College's commitment to widening participation, increasing its numbers and in maintaining increasing levels of achievement with a below average entry qualification baseline of four GCSE passes at grade C or above. This led the College to being called "a particularly successful college" in the Ofsted Inspection of 2002. In 2002 the College was merged with a large, local Further Education College named Sussex Downs College and its name then became Sussex Downs Park College. My personal professional roles during 1991-2003 were Teacher of English, English Curriculum Leader and Staff Governor of Park College from 1997-2001 serving on the Curriculum and Standards, Search and Governor Training committees. I was reappointed staff governor at Park College in 2001 at the point at which the College merged with the local FE College and so I became a governing member of the new college with the original Park College becoming an annex in the form of being the elite learning brand of Sussex Downs College. The thesis research years into the learning of the extra-curricula English Masterclass group took place during the merger process and outcome (2001-2003).

The origin and development of the English Masterclass learning initiative between 1991-2003 was based on the process of reaction and pro-action. It began in 1991 when I joined the traditional sixth form college as an English teacher. I was expected to be involved in an extra-curriculum activity on Wednesday afternoons relating in some way to the study of English and in this capacity I was given responsibility for Oxbridge coaching. It was attended by one female student and the learning was primarily based on discussions of the ethics and politics of literary interpretation and in particular the nature and typologies of literary theory. Therefore, my first contact with and experience of the idea of a masterclass was very much based on the traditional subject model and on a form of elite education in which I was the expert providing an elite form of knowledge to an elite student body essentially pedagogized as knowledge transmission with some discussion and traditional note taking as evidence of learning having taken place. This type of learning continued in 1992/1993 the only difference being that student numbers rose to four.

From September 1993, however, as a consequence of Incorporation, the nature of the English Masterclass began to change and I was very much in favour of this change particularly because I

was becoming frustrated by the limitations of the traditional and elite nature of the original configuration. A new principal and a new inclusive learning vision prevailed and this was much more akin to my natural academic inclinations. Therefore, elitism was replaced with egalitarianism and subject specialism replaced with interdisciplinarity. Participating numbers increased partly because it lost its Oxbridge bias and partly because it was now open to any student who wanted to improve especially in the area of discussion rather than writing. The Masterclass learning initiative became more socially and discursively focused rather than exclusive and focussed on writing. This fundamental change remained until 2003 but it became under threat from 2001 as a result of merger with the FE College and its links, under the auspices of the 'Building Bridges' initiative, with a local private school.

From 1993 until 2001, however, the Masterclass grew in number and in 1999/2000 it totalled twenty five and the sessions often lasted for about two hours. It was focused on reading and discussion of the nature of English studies and its potential relationships to other subjects. Sessions were not driven by the demands of an official programme of topics or lead and affirmed by learning objectives or outcomes. They were not dictated by the teacher but by the developing interests and needs of the students. The Masterclass pedagogic method, the 'intrinsic logic' of its ethical and operational practices, was based on strong student-centred learning principles. Students created their own curriculum of learning. This process began at the beginning of the academic year and again at the beginning of each term with an initial personal audit of learning interests, passions, fears and anxieties and curiosities. This personal audit was thus partly derived from topics from official A-level study, from the perceived gaps between official subject based A Level learning and partly derived from developing personal interest, passion and conviction. The group then discussed all preferred topics and went through a process of topic integration, of enhancement and then re-clarification according to interdisciplinary principles to try and ensure maximum potential for originality of learning enterprise and thought. The group then created an 'official', tentatively agreed, curriculum of interdisciplinary topics of interest to debate for as long as the group wanted to or needed to. The interdisciplinary learning programme was therefore not fixed despite the initial processes of consensus. My initial role as a teacher / leader of this learning process was initially based on helping the group achieve some kind of clarity and workability during this process of integration and re-clarification. My role was then to help with the production of appropriate and challenging resources to facilitate discussion although the students too were responsible for this aspect of their learning in the form of personal research. The learning material was thus co-created and co-used and the resources I produced were often not used in favour of their personally researched and preferred choices. My role was then based on the constructivist principle of co-learner.

The Masterclass project became so successful and was so original and innovative, the students so motivated and excited and committed, that I attempted to understand and interpret what was

happening and why in a number of early 'unofficial' research projects. What I mean by 'unofficial' was that the purpose and data was not part of any institutional process of formal evaluation or official Higher Education degree course or any part of my required professional practice as Head of English. I simply felt that something was happening pedagogically that was highly unusual, highly significant and truly educationally innovative due, in part, to the very high degree of student commitment, participation and level of learning discourse. I just felt that the data would and should be of use and significance in some capacity at some time and some point in my professional development as a teacher. This tentative early research took the form of a qualitative SWOT/PEST analysis in 1996/1997 as to why a masterclass initiative should take place and the research subjects were participating students and the staff in the English department. Unfortunately, I am not able to draw on this earlier and developmental pilot work on the Masterclass initiative because of word count restriction of this thesis but it is part of the Appendix (Appendix 11).

In 1998, I began the EdD course, initially at the Institute of Education but two years later I transferred to Sussex University owing to personal reasons. As a result of studying for this qualification, the masterclass became more consolidated in terms of its educational purpose and learning identity. Between the years 1998-2001, therefore, possible major research into the Masterclass project was increasingly viable both professionally and academically. In 1999/2000, Park College senior leadership team understandably wanted to make financial capital out of extra-curricular activities by making sure that all activities were open college network (OCN) accredited which had the effect of unitizing learning. The impact that this had on the masterclass was extraordinary in that the students actually voted to boycott participation because it was suddenly configured as an official learning site which had its educational and learning validity in what they saw as systemic officialdom rather than in their own attempts at creating a learning site that reflected the need and idiosyncrasies of individual participating members. Participation rates declined rapidly from November through to January and sometimes nobody turned up at all. The decline in participation stopped in late January when OCN accreditation was dropped and the Masterclass returned to its preferred format.

Another comparatively simple attempt at researching the pedagogic and political nature of the Masterclass in relation to its professional implications occurred in September of 2001, a time when it was linked with a local private school and Sussex University under the policy auspices of 'Building Bridges' which encourages "*innovative networks and partnership*" (Parliament Stationary Office: 2003:1). The links with the local private school operated on the principle that an agreed and official model of Masterclass was necessary for the project to be taken seriously and promoted by the private school and the senior management of my own college in the local press. This led to a situation in which the original democratic, egalitarian, and dialogic radicalism of the student-centred original configuration was very quickly superseded by a more traditional teacher-led Masterclass

learning model, one based on a pre-set and rigid topic agenda dictated by the interests and expertise of expert presenters. In this sense, students in the state sector believed they had lost control of the learning agenda and the process by which the agenda could be pedagogized and validated democratically, intersubjectively and dialogically. For the students in the private sector, it was very familiar learning territory. The original plan was for each institution to be responsible for hosting alternate Masterclass sessions every two weeks in accordance with the official programme of talks but this did not materialise in practice mainly because the state students again began to boycott the sessions or remain silent in participation. Eventually, the official Masterclass programme broke down and then ceased to function altogether for about three months.

However, some kind of research did still take place and this took the form of general questions regarding the group's responses to the realities of linking the now joint state-public school nature of the Masterclass to the creation of a new student voice research group initiative which I had been asked to establish and lead in the college as an offshoot of the work I was doing in my role as staff governor serving on the curriculum and standards and governor training committees. Most of the state sector qualitative data I collected from this kind of research has, unfortunately, been lost and the private school students and staff declined to complete any questionnaires so I have not been able to use data as an example of both the empirical and theoretical development in this thesis. However, the loss of this data did contribute to my decision to finally use the thesis element of my EdD course to research the teaching and learning of the Masterclass at this time of its development as it was being configured during the relatively problematical yet interesting years of 2001-2003. From September 2003 to January 2004 the Masterclass changed again in nature and this time it was forced to operate within the more systemic school effectiveness approach and more commercial and business orientation to teaching and learning as determined by the newly formed Sussex Downs Park College.

2.2. Research Design

(i) Case Study

The writing of this thesis has in practice turned into an unexpected and, at times, problematical longitudinal, critical, case study. To help me rationalise the complex processes involved into a rational order for more conventional research purposes, I have separated my work into two separate parts. The first part, the Introduction and Chapters 1-5, outlines and explores my purposes, offers a literature search as a policy contextualization of my concerns, the empirical field and analysis of empirical data between 2001 and 2003. The second part, Chapters 6 and 7, discusses the wider contemporary ideological, political, pedagogic and professional implications of my research.

I will begin with Bell (1993:155) who says that:

“methodology is concerned with the explanation and rationalisation of how a problem is to be investigated and why particular methods and techniques are more appropriately and consistently deployed”.

With this definition in mind and given that the EdD approach to research is based on practitioner and therefore insider-research practices and ethics, and given further that it is ‘bounded’ by the natural field of the institution in which one works, it is obvious that the nature of what would be regarded as an appropriate research design has already been decided. Insider, practitioner research is by nature a case study and a project of action research. It should, therefore, be contextualized within some legitimate typology of case study Action Research.

The kind of data that I needed to help answer my three research questions essentially required qualitative and descriptive accounts of the experiences, thoughts, feelings, attitudes and opinions of those being researched. This is because they are questions concerned with “what” issues relating to varied interpretative ‘actors’: students, my academic self, my professional self and the theoretical standpoint from which I was operating. This kind of quadruple hermeneutic effectively therefore prevented my research from being positivistically designed and legitimated by knowledge claims to traditional research notions of objectivity and generalizability. I could only attempt to make situated, subjective, qualitative claims to truth in my case study as my own research position was so integral to and implicit within the field being studied.

In this sense, I was originally committed to conducting some kind of inductive case study rather than a deductivist one because I was so focused on the respondents’ wide range of experiences. I did originally think, therefore, of the inductivism of Grounded Theory but I also knew I needed, paradoxically, an inductive research design that also enabled me to legitimately include, at some point, some kind of deductivist dimension owing to my obvious, apriori democratic political interests, convictions and assumptions. I was, therefore, at this early stage rather paralysed by the complexities of the “*epistemological paradox*” (Brown and Dowling, 1998:47). I realized that from the outset I needed to position myself in relation to the use of an overall design strategy that was both apriorially and deductively ‘critical’ at the macro-level of understanding and inductively constructivist at the micro-level. This epistemological hybrid would then enable me to legitimately create, establish and explore data relating to the links that I had already claimed existed between the micro-ethnographic aspects of meanings gathered from research subjects in the field and the more macro-ideological, political and social meanings with which they could both potentially intersect. I, therefore, needed to work within an action research typology that was not conventionally and traditionally either inductivist or deductivist. Thus, I rejected Grounded Theory and its Popperian-like falsification methodological principle of generating valid knowledge, of generating theory out of the gradual redefinitions and integrations of empirical constructs through

the process of data collection, data transcription, category development in order for the case to be finally *“known at the end of the research process”* (Akyeampong, 2006:3).

A critic I found initially helpful in resolving my epistemological paradox was Akyeampong (2006) whose work on the development of the understanding of case study methodology highlighted the fact that in order to establish an authentic and legitimate ‘case’, it was necessary to ‘construct’ a research subject and this could be done either empirically or theoretically. He also highlighted that case study work could be used to redefine definitions of cases. Yet, while I began establishing this approach towards the establishment my initial overall research design, I began to realize more and more that my research data was extremely bound up with my own personal experiences and assumptions and that the nature of the Master Class was also so reactive to what was happening to me personally in my own professional life and to the students operating within the official system, was so inextricably influenced from the outset by my own experiences and values that an acute awareness of the axiological positioning emerged. Erroneously, I had always construed the axiological dimension of research as a very real weakness in terms of its potential accusations of bias and issues of validity, but at this point I was undeterred in seeking a justification for a special and different kind of validity, one that was able to turn what was perceived as a potential research weakness into an actual research strength. More importantly, my on-going conviction regarding the appropriateness of the use of a critical, constructivist, action research-based approach was convincing me that this macro-critical research paradigm was the only legitimate means of being able to describe, explain and interpret not only the origin and pedagogic development of the Master Class but also how it would be possible to conceptualize and meta-theorize it in the wider ideological and political context of contemporary developments in liberal democratic educational systems and state theory.

In the light of this realization, my search for an appropriate research and design strategy therefore although having fluctuated quite drastically and changed from an inductivist and traditionally interpretivist one to one that I thought was a pure deductivist one because I was obviously beginning to pre-impose a theoretical identity on the research subjects and construct my research subjects as *“authoritarian personalities”* (Akyeampong, 2006:3). In this sense they functioned as theoretical constructs from within the more politically orientated critical theory paradigm. My research subjects were being constructed from a particular theoretical angle because of the meaning and implications of the term ‘critical’ in critical theory and its claim to transformational, emancipatory promise from *“domination, alienation, and social struggle”* leading to what Cresswell calls *“the envisioning of new possibilities”* (Cresswell, 1998:80). These *“new possibilities”* are, he says, based on the nurturing and cultivation and ultimately the social and political use of dialogic reason and the commitment to *“helping individuals examine the conditions of their own existence”* (Cresswell, 1998:81). Furthermore, he explains that this *“distinctive approach to methodology”*

requires that *“the end goal of study might be social theorizing”* (Cresswell, 1998:81), something which he cites Morrow and Brown as believing is:

“the desire to comprehend and, in some case transform, the underlying orders of social life – those social and systemic relations that constitute society” (Cresswell, 1998:81).

(ii) Abduction and Critical Theory: relevance and limitations

Moreover, Cresswell (citing Kinchloe’s definition in Cresswell, 1998:81-82) says that the methodological positioning and typology of critical theory is based on the idea that the teacher seeks philosophical guidance, seeks to expose the assumptions of existing official research orientations, seeks to critique official knowledge production bases that produce ideological effects on teachers, schools and the dominant culture’s view of education. It seeks, furthermore, a particular selection of social actors in a naturally occurring field, seeks to make sense of information by the researcher viewing himself as part of a wider cultural and, more importantly, ideological and political panorama. Lastly, it situates the teacher and respondent in a joint journey that involves the pedagogy of personal, social and ideological / political transformation. This work made it clear to me that this is what located me in the critical theory dimension of the hermeneutic / constructivist typology of Action Research. It finally clarified for me the important differences between the socio-political constructivism of critical theory and more traditional interpretivist / hermeneutic form of constructivism. For me, the contradiction in my methodical positioning was essentially reconciled by the fact that Blaikie enabled me to understand that critical theory is a form of abduction premised on a macro-interpretivist configuration of constructivism, of critical interpretivist, hypothesis-testing (Blaikie, 1993:168-178).

Having therefore, realized the fundamental appropriateness of abductivist critical theory methodology, it also became clear to me that its apriori definitions and concepts of ‘pathologies’, here in this thesis defined and used as attempts to *“ascertain the felt needs and sufferings of a group of people”* and their ability *“to speak to discontent and suffering as actually understood by subjects themselves”* (Dryzek, 1990: 185) were both theoretically and pragmatically apt. Likewise, it was also both theoretically and pragmatically apt to identify, understand and use the apriori definition and concept of ‘emancipation’, used here in my thesis as attempts to achieve *“rational autonomy of action freed from domination”* (Blaikie, 1993:54) leading to transformative action based on a *“concern with how people think”*, and attempts to *“encourage them to interact, form networks and action-oriented groups”* in order for them to *“examine the condition of existence”* (Cresswell, 1998:80-82) so that they can transform, reinvigorate and revive pluralistic and expressive forms of social existence. Critical theory offered, therefore, unlike a more conventional

inductivist/constructivist methodological paradigm, namely Grounded Theory, a legitimate opportunity for explicit and legitimate commitment to ideological and political critique of 'pathologies' and 'emancipations' (Blaikie, 1993:54) that:

"leads to a promise of critical-emancipatory knowledge interest and commitment to social reconstructionism as a consequence of its concern for critiquing the epistemological dichotomies of both positivism and empiricism, its analysis of new forms of domination in advanced capitalist societies, its analysis of the culture industries and its fear of the decline of individuality in modern society" (Slattery, 2003:86-87).

(ii) The Case for Habermasian Critical Theory

Habermas' (1987) main concern was based on the political theorizing of the traditional critical theory concepts of 'pathologies' and 'emancipations' as reflected in the ideology and manner of speech acts, discourse, of what he calls communicative rationality. He related this democratic speech-act focus to critical statements on the condition of advanced corporate capitalism and what he called the globalised economic system's "*legitimation crisis*" which Slattery says is premised on four 'crisis tendencies' within the modern capitalist system (Slattery, 2003:226-229). These are:

1) the economic crisis tendency based on "inherent contradictions designed to promote inequality and exploitation rather than a just redistribution of wealth and power"

2) a crisis tendency related to its rationality based on what is defined as "a permanent state of crisis management" of this contradictory system, a system "only kept in balance by one sub-system compensating for the deficiencies of another leading to the irrationalities of an anarchic market in which there is no rational planning according to human need but only the unstable forces of supply and demand, underpinned by the motivation of private and personal gain"

3) a legitimation crisis derived from the fact that the government is seen as a politically biased state in "bailing out failing private companies which then appears that the government, the state, favours business against labour or industry against finance especially if it attempts to manage this financial crisis by cutting welfare spending". "It will lose legitimacy as a representative of the people"

4) a motivation crisis because of the ways in which these "crisis tendencies are managed and legitimated, controlled by a form of rationality that distorts pure reason", a form of increasingly dominant, official, systemic and instrumentalized reason "that is used to promote and justify the capitalist system rather than to identify the real needs and purposes of mankind at large"

Crisis tendency number four is the pedagogic basis of Habermas' communicative theory and the process which he calls the '*colonization*' of individualized and personalized lifeworlds, or domains of existence, by the increasingly hegemonic systemsworlds of the economic, political and social-cultural. This, in turn, it is argued results in the marginalisation and negation of alternative social and cultural space and realities, sites and articulations of resistant value systems and associated discourses. In outlining the linguistic and pedagogic processes of lifeworld '*colonization*', Habermas also offers a re-configuration of the nature and thrust of critical theory which re-positioned it away from the traditional economic determinism of its Marxist roots and re-established it linguistically and pedagogically in the form of a typology rooted in the critical labour of communicative action theory, communicative reason set against the instrumentalizing reason of late corporatist capitalism and, more latterly, in the context of legal and ethical discourse. Habermas' more linguistic-legalistic speech-act configuration of critical theory was a model that was potentially able to make political sense of the developing oracy of Master Class and how it possible to explore:

"an attempt to analyse and present a general truth regarding the realities of life within the techno-rational culture and industry of accountability and fear leading to the threat of the decline of dialogic rationality underpinning individuality in current liberal democratic models of society" (Slattery, 2003:86-90).

The main reason why I finally chose a specifically Habermasian, abductive, configuration of critical theory in order to establish my overall methodical position is that it clearly reflects not only my macro-theorizing interests in critiquing the "*legitimation crisis*" of corporate capitalism and how this can be understood in its reification in the ideological composition of and pedagogic relations within the Curriculum 2000 (CK2) curriculum model, but also its:

"appeal to some transcendent standard that does not exist anywhere in the self-understanding of the social actors" (Dryzek, 1990:186).

However, I am aware that there are many limitations and criticisms of his particular typology of critical theory and its real power to transform the social lives of the social actors involved. Baert (1998:147-150) for example outlines six points of weakness of the concept of the ideal speech situation based on its lack of empirical grounding, its premise of communicative action being oriented towards agreement rather than mutual understanding, its endorsement of the notion of the force of the better argument, its insistence that the ideal situation can operate without regard to the inequalities of social and cultural resources and contexts, its impoverishment of the sense of self and personhood (alterity), its vagueness as to what actually determines and validates the force of the better argument apart from the pedagogy of procedurality and juridificationism. Fay (cited in

Blaikie, 1993:57-58) outlines two main weaknesses that produce the difficulty of providing evidence that *“shows that given the current social situation, these conditions are satisfied”* and that:

“it lacks a detailed plan of action indicating the people who are to be ‘carriers’ of the anticipated social transformation and at least some general idea of how they might do this”.

Eagleton (1990) too, finds fault on the basis that Habermas’ typology is premised on what he calls the ideology of the aesthetic, resulting in it being a mere product of an *“academicist”* mind, a product of *“a political aesthetician defending the lived against the logical, phronesis against episteme”* (Eagleton, 1990:402) and a concept operating only in a *“world of pure hypothesis, a perpetual ‘as if’* (Eagleton, 1990:107). Furthermore, this ideal speech community, says Eagleton:

“virtualizes the constraints of practical interests, suspends them, like a work of art, for a privileged moment, puts out of play all motives other than the will to a rationally grounded argument” (Eagleton, 1990:405).

Yet, however, Eagleton, in his overall work on the ideology of the aesthetic, also claims that:

“man is fully human only when he plays” ... and that “the aesthetic must be the telos of human existence, not the transition to such an end” (Eagleton, 1990:109).

However, despite these criticisms and limitations, I still regarded Habermas’ version of critical theory, modelled as it is on the rationality of communicative action theory, as theoretically and politically appropriate for my thesis. This is because it provided a coherent politico-pedagogic means of integrating the micro, meso and macro aspects of my professional and academic concerns. It was also because his, albeit extreme and apparent impractical, idealist concept of an ideal speech situation serving as a completion of Enlightenment rationality, did offer my work a necessary means of inculcating and using both a theoretical and empirical point of countervailance. It did this in the form of the principle of ‘counterfactuality’. I use this principle, and Dallmayr’s definition and explanation of it, as an attempt re-inscribe the dialectic in the dialogic form of democratic communication. Habermas calls ‘counterfactuality’ a non-hegemonic, conceptual *“yardstick”* (Habermas, 1987:271). It is a moral and political ‘yardstick’ by which is it possible to identify, assess and ultimately *“correct pathological trends”* (D’Entrves and Benhabib, 1996:91) created by forms of *“bureaucratic terrorism”* and a *“one-sided cultivation of rational competence”*, (D’Entrves and Benhabib, 1996:50), namely resulting from the integration of the scientific, the

technological and the instrumental, which threatens to *"impoverish the layperson's capacities for autonomous moral (and expressive) reflection"* (Habermas, 1987:1270).

2.3. Data Collection Methods

(i) Rationale

I therefore needed data collection methods that produced ethnographic data that was philosophically premised on ontological relativism, epistemological subjectivism and axiological and rhetorical pluralism. Seeking such data would, of course, normally require the use of data collection methods of interviews or focus groups or both. However, I regarded the use of these methods, with their detailed requirements of data transcription and coding, as simply being much too time consuming and impractical given my other ever-increasing workloads, work constraints and many other competing deadlines at the time. Given that the research was becoming a longitudinal study owing to continued personal issues during the entire research process, I therefore attempted data collection based on pragmatic compromise in the form of using a series of semi-structured questionnaires over a five year period that would allow for some degree of standardisation and pre-coding and of openness of response across time and space. This compromise did not, however, include the use of questionnaires modelled on a Likert measurement scale because I did not want quantitative data as a final end result. Also, because of time constraints, I was not able to conduct a pilot of these questionnaires, although I did conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats / PEST(Political, Economic, Sociological and Technological) evaluation pilot study of Master Class education using student and teaching staff in my department back in 1996, which I have not used in this study, but have included in the Appendix (Appendix 11) as a statement of my long-standing interest in and commitment to a less conventional form of masterclass education.

(ii) Methods Used To Answer Research Questions

Questionnaires were issued and collected in three phases and each questionnaire I used, when and how, is listed below. I did not need to reflect on sampling needs, issues and procedures because the research group of nine was so small and all of them expressed an interest and commitment to research participation. Below is the timescale for the issuing of questionnaires and data collection process took place in three phases.

Phase 1: issued in May 2003 (in a college-based, normal Masterclass session towards the end of the first year of A Level):-

1. SWOT Questionnaire Teaching (Appendix 1)
2. SWOT Questionnaire Learning (Appendix 2)

3. PEST Questionnaire Teaching (Appendix 3)
4. PEST Questionnaire Learning (Appendix 4)
5. 'Pedagogy' Questionnaire (Appendix 5)

The first two questionnaires issued were conventional SWOT evaluation questionnaires aimed at eliciting general data into how the students interpreted both the 'teaching' and the 'learning' aspects of Master Class education. These were issued to each respondent by hand in a group meeting. Each questionnaire was distributed in the same way and at the same time. I decided to use an 'evaluation' data collection instrument in the form of SWOT/PEST questionnaires, a business and organizational situational capability and sensitivity instrument and a problem-solving method (<http://www.marketing-intelligence.co.uk/services/CI/swot-mn.htm>), for both variables of 'teaching' and 'learning'.

I also chose this data collection methodology because of its usefulness and legitimacy in producing data within an official paradigm related to school effectiveness. I have assumed for the purposes of this thesis that such a methodology is ideological which links to my overall critical research position of critical theory which assumes that all knowledge claims and methodologies are ideologically biased and value-laden. With this in mind, I assume that the data accruing from such a methodology will have a self-legitimizing rationale: that student views gained from this method will therefore have an innate validity to the overall study. Furthermore, the evaluation method I chose reflected Guba and Lincoln's (1989: 265) definition of evaluation as a "*Fourth Generation model*" that construes evaluation a democratic socio-political process of power negotiation. For the same reasons, and distributed in exactly the same way and time, I also chose to use a PEST method for my third and fourth questionnaires. These questionnaires were also chosen to compliment and widen the nature of the data from SWOT questionnaires in that the two questionnaire types could produce both micro-personal and macro-social data with which to answer my research questions.

Overall, the SWOT/PEST questionnaire methodological approach was also chosen because all of the respondents were studying science and social science subjects alongside English Literature so I assumed, albeit wrongly, that all concepts and terms were understood. However, because I did not conduct a pilot that would have very probably clarified the very precise differences between 'teaching' and 'learning', the actual data I elicited from both the SWOT & PEST questionnaires suffered what can be called category drift and was consequently very imprecise in terms of accessing clear differences between 'teaching and 'learning' experiences. This occurred to such an extent that I could discern no significant differences in understanding from the respondents. Their data was, as a result, simply repeated and on occasions worded differently so that data on 'teaching' was more or less the same as that for 'learning'. I was therefore forced to later

reconfigure this rather muddled and imprecise data set and analyse it differently (see section on Data Analysis Strategy for more information on this conceptualizing process).

The 'Pedagogy' Questionnaire was also issued at the same time and in the same way as the SWOT/PEST questionnaires and I created it with a two-fold purpose. The first was to act as a pragmatic back up for any failure of the SWOT/PEST questionnaires. The second was to ultimately narrow the focus by conflating the conceptual variables of 'teaching' and 'learning' into one major meta-conceptual variable of 'pedagogy' as the notion of the politics of pedagogy was the main focus of my thesis. This helped me gain access to appropriate qualitative data relating to how their perceptions of their experiences regarding the nature of the learning taking place in Masterclass sessions. This ensured greater clarity and relevance based on what Brown and Dowling (1998) calls the "*discriminative power*" of coding (Brown and Dowling, 1998:70) and what they call theoretical "*face validity*" (Brown and Dowling, 1998:71). This was because I specified, on the questionnaire itself, a clearer understanding of how the concept of 'pedagogy' was to be understood and also because I specified a clearer definition of each satellite response category. This data set was not therefore re-configured during the devising of the data analysis strategy process. With regards to the sub-conceptual variable called 'The Role of the Teacher', the data collected has been used in its entirety in Chapter 7 where I explore the personal professional implications of my overall involvement in this study as an answer to my third research question: How does the changing policy context re-frame the professional project?

These questionnaires were distributed to all nine participating members of the masterclass group at the time and during a masterclass session in the college. I set a deadline of two weeks for completion. Six out of nine students returned the questionnaires; so the response rate for Phase 1 was 66.6%. The data derives from the data I was given on 'The Role of the Teacher' from the pedagogy questionnaire and the respondent evaluation, post-Master Class questionnaire completed at the end of each students' second year at University. There was not enough data produced to offer a detailed theoretical analysis of my professionalism similar to that given on the student experience data. I have, therefore, more simply dichotomised the data into the two basic critical theory heuristic devices of 'pathologies' and 'emancipations' and reflected on these in the context of the lifeworld zones of 'Culture', 'Society' and 'Personality' (Chapters 3, 4, 5 respectively).

Phase 2: original questionnaires in Phase 1 were re-issued in a group meeting in a public house during August 2003 (in the summer vacation at the end of the first semester at University because the students were no longer at park College and I needed a neutral environment):-

1. SWOT Questionnaire Teaching: (Appendix 1)

2. SWOT Questionnaire Learning: (Appendix 2)
3. PEST Questionnaire Teaching: (Appendix 3)
4. PEST Questionnaire Learning: Political, Economic, Sociological and Technological (Appendix 4)
5. Pedagogy Questionnaire (Appendix 5)

The purpose of re-issuing these questionnaires, with a return date to my home address and schedule of one month, was to try to obtain a more critical and objective view of the nature, significance and value of Masterclass learning on the basis of providing a greater commitment to ethical considerations through the operation of a critical / evaluative dialogic model of respondent validation and data refinement. Based on the numbers of students who responded in Phase 1, i.e. six out of nine, the response rate of Phase 2 re-issues was also 66.6%.

Phase 3: these questionnaires were issued in a group meeting in a public house during December 2006, when the respondents were on Christmas vacation in the last year of their respective degree courses:-

1. Revised SWOT / PEST / Pedagogy Questionnaire (Q1a) (Appendix 7)
2. Masterclass Transition Questionnaire and Data: learning links between Masterclass and degree study (2003-2006) (Appendix 14)

The first of these final phase questionnaires was designed and issued to finalize the process of data refinement and commitment to data respondent validation. They were also given a return date to my home address and a return schedule of one month. The second was designed and issued to give evidence of the extent to which Masterclass learning, its constructivist knowledge-creation process and in particular its pedagogic nature, was a transferable, transitional and universal learning experience across the two educational sectors of FE and HE. The response rate of these questionnaires was 83.3%, based on the fact that five out of the six who originally participated in the research responded. When based on the nine students participating in the masterclass initiative the response rate was 55.5%.

2.4. Data Analysis Strategy

Earlier in this chapter, I explained that probably owing to the failure to conduct a pilot of the original SWOT/PEST questionnaires in Phase 1, owing to severe time restrictions and increasing work load and intensification, respondent comments in relation to the pre-coded categories of 'teaching' and 'learning' revealed considerable response drift across the two main categories of response ('teaching' and 'learning') produced elicited from the SWOT/PEST evaluation questionnaire model. Actual responses did not always fit in with the appropriate response categories and it was very

difficult, if not impossible, at times to distinguish between 'teaching' and 'learning' data categories. I therefore needed to reconfigure the data for the purpose of clarity, coherence and meta-theoretical analysis potential. I initially attempted to do this by reducing and dichotomising data into two very general response categories. These were related to experiences of some kind of 'compensatory learning' and the others were experiences relating to some kind of 'counter-learning'.

(i) The Relevance and Limitations of the Sub-Heuristic Devices of 'Pathologies' and 'Emancipations'

However, given my standpoint of working within the research paradigm of critical theory, I then saw the significance and rectitude of renaming these two data categories in terms of the general terms of 'pathologies' and 'emancipations'. As a consequence '*compensatory learning*' became the critical theoretical concept of '*pathologies*' and '*counter-learning*' became '*emancipations*'. This re-coding of basic response categories, based on the critical theory definition of 'pathologies' 'emancipations' defined in section 2.2ii, proved to be more apt and valid in helping me align and integrate Habermas' typology of critical theory. It began to give my overall research design and strategy much greater epistemological and theoretical clarity and coherence. I did this not only because they were key, legitimate, apriori theoretical categories of critical theory, but also because they enabled me to give a relatively bounded coherent and systemic analysis of the extent to which articulations of Habermasian communicative concepts and principles could be used to help formulate an understanding of the extent to which it would be possible to understand the Master Class as an empiricization of the ethico-political and structural dimensions of the ideal speech community. These two fundamental critical concepts of critical theory, then, helped give my overall research design clarity, coherence and significance at the micro-level of practical experience, the meso-level of institutional and government policy and the macro-level of political and social theory of attempting to explore the nature and extent of "*pathogenesis*" (Habermas, 1987:147) or "*manifestations of crisis when reproduction processes are disturbed*" (Habermas, 1987:143) and critical emancipatory type, need and commitment. I understood finally that my research design could be legitimately in-between inductive and deductive, could be abductive and interpretivist in its particular form of constructivism and focus on the belief that:

"reality is regarded as the product of a process by which social actors together negotiate meanings and situations" (Blaikie, 1995: 96),

and that what was indeed legitimate and possible was "*a complex of socially constructed meaning*" (Blaikie, 1993:96).

(ii) The Relevance of the Heuristic Devices of Core Lifeworld Zones: 'Culture', 'Society' and 'Personality'

Secondly, in accordance with the abductive methodological strategy of critical theory, I originally intended to organize the data analysis into two chapters entitled 'pathologies' and 'emancipations' but I soon realized the limitations of this intended re-categorization especially when deciding on the structuring of chapters relating to data analysis. Given my initial struggle to ensure some legitimate epistemological and theoretical 'hinge' that would enable my thinking and analysis to mutually shift between a macro-structural, theoretical view to the 'lived' and 'living' experiences of my students and myself in what was at times a radically changing and fast-moving ideological, political, policy and pedagogic context, it seemed inappropriate to work within what I came to regard as oversimplifications, polarizations and dichotomizations suggested by the conventional critical theoretical structures of 'pathologies' and 'emancipations'. I, therefore, needed to bridge these initial polarizations and provide more sophisticated and refined structural and heuristic devices for this purpose, ones that both acknowledged and facilitated analysis of the greater levels of complexity reflected in the actual social scenario and research field in which my students and I found ourselves. Furthermore, I needed to ensure a data analytical framework and strategy that reflected the complexity and contingencies of my case study situationism, the emergent pragmatism and 'social bargaining' that inevitably occurred but also my essential critical research assumptions relating to my very sceptical stance towards the de-intellectualizing and de-democratizing effects of combined neo-liberal and neo-conservative forces inherent in school effectiveness and managerialism.

As a consequence, I decided to subsume data relating to 'pathologies' and 'emancipations' from the two original chapters into three chapters, with each chapter being headed by one of the three 'core zones' of the concept of the lifeworld, namely 'culture', 'society' and the 'person'. I used these chapter headings as they reflected much more appropriate and accurate heuristic devices for pragmatic, epistemological and politico-ideological reasons and purposes. By subsuming the original bi-heuristic categories of '*pathologies*' and '*emancipations*' into the tri-heuristic "*core zones*" categories of the Habermasian-defined lifeworld namely those of 'culture', 'society' and 'personality' (Habermas, 1987:224) I have tried to ensure that any social meanings ultimately intersect and overlap in accordance with Habermas' view that:

"the structures of the lifeworld lay down the forms of intersubjectivity of possible understanding" (Habermas, 1987:126).

According to Slattery (2003: 230), the concept of the lifeworld is where "the inherent contradictions of modern capitalism are revealed, rationalised and challenged". This view was an important point for me to consider because it helped determine and rationalize explicit politico-pedagogic links between the micro-personal/personality, the meso-cultural and macro-societal levels of possible

meanings to be drawn from data linked to my three research questions. Habermas, himself articulates these “core zones” of the lifeworld in the following ways and I use his definitions as a basis for my analysis throughout this thesis:-

1. **The “core zone” of ‘Culture’** focuses critical attention on “*the rationality of knowledge*” (Habermas, 1987:141), the “*stock of knowledge from which participants in communication supply themselves as they come to an understanding about something in the world*” (Habermas, 1987:138). Data determined by this micro/meso-level heuristic frame relates to my research question 2: What are student views on the pedagogy and learning in a space outside national curriculum structures? This is because it allowed framing of data relating to how and why Masterclass participants (myself included) drew upon exiting and new, unfamiliar, interdisciplinary and intersubjective / experiential forms of codified and informal knowledge and learning processes in order to create and sustain typical Master Class learning.

2. **The “core zone” of ‘Society’** draws critical attention to the idea of member solidarity (Habermas, 1987:141) and is explained as “*the legitimate orders through which participants regulate their memberships in social groups and thereby secure solidarity*” (Habermas, 1987:138) and “*a means by which subjects know they are connected to others and are part of a social group that is valuable, and thus we ourselves are valuable*”. Data determined by this macro-level heuristic frame relates to my research question 1: How does the changing policy context re-frame pedagogical engagement? This is because it allowed framing of data relating to how and why Masterclass participants (myself included) created their democratic own rules of participation, engagement and disengagement partly in accordance with official government and institutional policy and partly in accordance with their own emerging, unscripted underpinning ‘policy’ thinking.

3. **The “core zone” of ‘Personality’** focuses critical attention to “*the ego strength*” (Habermas, 1987:41), that is derived from “*the responsibility of the adult personality*” (Habermas, 1987:141) from “*the competencies that make a subject capable of speaking and acting, that put him in a position to take part in the processes of reaching understanding and thereby assert his own identity*” (Habermas, 1987:138). Data determined by this micro/meso/macro-level heuristic frame relates to my research question 3: How does the changing policy context re-frame the professional project? This is because it allowed framing of data relating to how and why Masterclass participants (myself included) felt they had self-created rights to develop a form of learning self-understanding, learning self-identify and learning competence that

facilitated increasing levels of ideological and political critique. It was here, most of all, that they could begin to understand how it was possible, as a critical learner, to see “the world in a grain of sand” (quote from William Blake’s poem ‘Auguries of Innocence’).

(iii) The Relevance of Habermas’ Social and Cultural Reproduction Sub-Categories within the Lifeworld Zones

Within each of these chapters, I have then analysed respective ‘pathologies’ and ‘emancipations’ within the more refined sub-analytical categories of each core zone, namely those actual social and cultural reproduction processes inherent in each core zone: ‘cultural production’, ‘social integration’ and ‘socialization’. Throughout, I have used Habermas’ own definitions and descriptions of these multi-levelled heuristic categories of the lifeworld (see Appendix 10). Outlined below is an overview of my data analysis strategy together with a brief explanation of how I believe they work to facilitate the adoption of an abductive methodological approach to exploring and framing meaning from data relating to my three research questions, namely:-

Within the zone of ‘Culture’

Cultural Reproduction

- Pathologies (the rationality of knowledge and loss of meaning)
- Emancipations (interpretive schemes for fit consensus and ‘valid knowledge’)

Social Integration

- Pathologies (solidarity of membership and the unsettling of collective identity)
- Emancipations (obligations)

Socialization

- Pathologies (personal responsibility and the rupture of tradition)
- Emancipations (interpretive accomplishments)

Within the zone of ‘Society’

Cultural Reproduction

- Pathologies (withdrawal of legitimation)
- Emancipations (legitimations)

Social Integration

- Pathologies (anomie and solidarity of members)
- Emancipations (legitimately ordered interpersonal relations)

Socialization

- Pathologies (personal motivation and withdrawal of motivation)
- Emancipations (motivations for actions that conform to norms)

Within the zone of 'Personality'Cultural Reproduction

- Pathologies (crisis in orientation and education)
- Emancipations (reproduction, socializing patterns and educational goals)

Social Integration

- Pathologies of 'Social Integration' (alienation)
- Emancipations of 'Social Integration' (social membership)

Socialization

- Pathologies (psychopathologies)
- Emancipations (interactive capabilities / personal identity)

2.5. Ethics

Given my high level of professional and academic involvement, co-construction of and within the Masterclass initiative, issues of ethics were very important. The following ethical statement underpinning this research project is based on the guidelines set down by Sussex University's document 'Standards and Guidelines on Research Ethics: a checklist for proposed research'. This research complies with the University of Sussex's ethical standards and guidelines except for some uncertainty regarding the following:-

Standard 1-3: 'Safeguard of the interests and rights of those involved or affected by the research. Establishment of informed consent'. According to 1.2, written and signed consent has not been given although verbal consent was given by all nine participating members of the masterclass initiative at the outset of the research period and six of the participating nine members of the actual research group agreed and continued to supply data willingly via questionnaires throughout the five year research period. I assume that consent was implicit in this respect. I have not named any student in any stage of the study by their original name even when using quotation. I have not named the students individually by their real name but have used pseudonyms instead beginning with same letter. According to 1.6, participants were not involved in the design, data collection or

reporting. According to 1.7, conditional and confidentiality has not been formally offered to participants.

Standard 4: “*Develop the highest possible standards of research practices including in research design, data collection, storage, analysis, interpretation and reporting*”. According to 4.6, plans have not yet been made to enable the archiving of data through consulting the guidance available from the UK Data Archive.

Standard 5: “*Consider the consequences of your work or its misuse for those you study and other interested parties*”. According to 5.1, the short term and long term consequences of the research have not been considered from the different perspectives of participants, researchers, policy makers and where relevant, funders. According to 5.4, plans were flexible in terms of being able to ensure time was initially available to discuss any issues that arose from the effects of the research on the individuals throughout the research process, but since 2005, due to personal problems, I lost contact with them. With regards to institutions/services, plans were not officially put in place to ensure time to discuss issues arising that might have affected individuals within the organization that the research was being conducted. However, the management were fully aware of the nature of the research I was conducting but it must be said that they were not very interested in the research either and that therefore no individual colleague or specific job title has been mentioned. Any ethical issues that could have arisen were therefore able to remain anonymous according to name and job title.

Standard 6: “*Ensure appropriate external professional ethical committee approval is granted where relevant*”. According to 6.1, colleagues/supervisors have not been invited to comment on my research because nobody else was involved in the research or has been mentioned by name.

2.6. Study Restrictions

There have been inevitable limitations imposed on this study. This is a particular consequence of the nature of the EdD approach to research. Firstly, by the inevitable ever-increasing pressures of full-time work and, in particular, the problems in researching an aspect of educational provision or issue in the workplace which is itself constantly changing. Secondly, the restricted word count has meant that some important and interesting features of the study have unfortunately been omitted. For example, from the micro-empirical point of view, the main areas of significant study that have not so much been omitted but not included are descriptions or transcripts of actual Masterclass pedagogic exchanges and a concomitant analysis of the extent to which the four validity claims underpinning the ‘*ideal speech situation*’, namely intelligibility, truthfulness, moral rightness / justification and sincerity (Scott & Usher, 1999:31) and the degree of discourse ‘*procedurality*’ can be assessed. I did not consider this at all not only because of time constraints, but also because the

recording of Masterclass speech acts could have added a distorting feature to normal masterclass discourse practice.

Other empirical dimensions that were not explored and analysed because of time and word count restrictions were an evaluation of the actual masterclass student experiences of Curriculum 2000 itself, the learning of which would have constituted the learning of an official learning 'systemsworld'. However, the Masterclass empirical data does give some basic implicit insight into mainstream learning experience. Another interesting and potentially valid source of data would have been an evaluation of the Masterclass from the point of the senior managers of the college. Staff and students from the participating private school were asked, however, to complete the same questionnaire as participating Park College students but they declined to take part on the grounds that they could not understand the questionnaires because it was too difficult. Finally, a major element of empirical work that has not been able to be included is related to how the Masterclass group took advantage of the early development of the Student Voice initiative in order to transform high level democratic academic and intellectual capital into direct democratic-political capital. However, their work is included as Appendix 15.

From the macro (ideological and social theoretical) level of theorization, another significant aspects of the study that was not able to be included is a gender analysis, especially given that so many of participating members from Park College were, and always had been, female. I would regard this dimension as essential in future Masterclass research.

Chapter 3

Data Description and Analysis: the Lifeworld Zone of 'Culture'

My research question 2 was 'What are the student views on the pedagogy and learning in a space outside the national curriculum structures?' The next three chapters explore an answer to this question. The nature and relationship between learning pathologies and emancipations in the context of lifeworld zones and sub-zones is to be understood in the following terms: that emancipated learning is based on moments that *"foster the revitalization of possibilities for expression and communication"* that have been pathologised by being *"buried alive under the overburdening of the communicative infrastructure"* (Habermas, 1987: 395) which in turn:

"make us drastically aware of standards of livability, of the flexible limits to the deprivation of sensual-aesthetic background needs"
(Habermas, 1987: 394).

In summary, the relationship between these lifeworld zones are premised on the need for *"movements for autonomy"* (Habermas, 1987: 394) that attempt to repair a *"damaged intersubjectivity"* caused by *"forced abstractions on the lifeworld"* (Habermas, 1987: 395).

In the context of the English Masterclass and English Masterclass empirical data, these definitions will be discussed and evaluated in relation to the key transitional year 2002-2003. This was the year in which the English Masterclass initiative was beginning to be 'colonized' by the twofold official influence of 1) the pressure to return to a more traditional and elite masterclass model based on the exposure to and engagement with a so-called expert as a consequence of the link with the private school under the auspices of the 'Building Bridges' policy initiative and 2) the pressure to conform to the ethical, economic and politico-pedagogic dictates of the school effectiveness paradigm in the reflected in the need for compulsory attendance registers, the objectification and unitization of Masterclass learning to warrant OCN (Open College Network) financial accreditation.

3.1. Pathologies of 'Cultural Reproduction' (the rationality of knowledge and loss of meaning)

The main causes of this form of pathology were derived from 1) worry about being used as research guinea pigs, 2) a return to learning didacticism, 3) the potential for teacher bias and 4) the language of learning was too difficult.

Only one student articulated a form of pathology that related to the possibility that Masterclass rationality of knowledge had a teleological intent behind the masterclass method. This was reinforced by the notion of masterclass evolving into a methodology whereby students were being constructed as *“guinea pigs”* (Alice) in a laboratory. However, it was not clear whether the students in general believed that they were vulnerable to exploitation because of their lack of knowledge and experience or whether they believed themselves to be, indeed, actively knowledgeable and knowing agents ripe for exploitation for ultimately somebody else’s or something else’s gain. Furthermore, this feeling of possibly being exploited was linked to a few other comments that show a worry that mainstream learning, rather than in master class learning per se, was overly didactic in that mainstream official learning was being surreptitiously inculcated in the English Masterclass. There were, therefore, a few comments that mention a *“corrupting influence of the teacher in teaching”* (Alice) and that the teaching role constituted *“biased sources”* (Alice).

In this regard, it is significant to include that one comment drew attention to a possible return to the *“force-feeding”* (Alice) learning rationale of mainstream learning and that the difficulty of the language of learning also signalled a return to mainstream learning or that it reflected an elitist form of learning articulation from within the masterclass itself: *the “work was too hard and advanced”* (Roberta) that it was *“too difficult especially teacher vocabulary”* (Roberta), that there was an *“over-dependence on one strong teacher”* (Roberta) which meant there was no learning life *“independent”* (Roberta) from the teacher. It was occasionally felt that even when free from normal classroom constraints:

“the viewpoint is often that of the person teaching, which means students struggle to retain an open mind” and “the class can often end up thinking the same” (Alice).

This is important because it raises the issue of wanting an individual voice, but also showed resistance to a collective voice based on attempts at impersonal agreement or consensus. This indicates that there was some form of anxiety and disillusionment relating to what was happening to them during the time Masterclass was being influenced by the involvement of the private sector, the normalizing influence of OCN accreditation processes and the possible influence of my research into the masterclass lifeworld itself.

3.2. Emancipations of ‘Cultural Reproduction’ (interpretative schemes fit for consensus and ‘valid knowledge’). These emancipations were derived from an understanding of the emerging Masterclass pedagogical approach, its developing pedagogic schema, which promoted a means for possible consensus-making and legitimate knowledge production and re-production. The basic

pedagogical approach was based on what Claire called a “cumulative / progressive approach”. Yolanda reinforced this by saying that:

“It was quite an accumulative process, i.e. knowledge you acquired in previous classes would come up time and time again – not just in the Masterclass but also in other subjects” and that “The learning process always began with an article, a poem, a piece of literature ... and then from that we would look at wider issues that stemmed from the original”.

Claire gave an example of how it worked in practice:

“For example, in relation to this the teacher generally instigates the session by introducing the discussion and handing out leaflets”.

Yolanda said it would often take the form of an “introduction to theoretical approaches to lit (inc feminism and liberal humanism) which was “particularly valuable for me”, as it was “enabling me to apply my knowledge to my English modules – and to widen my critical perspective for later discussion”. It was noted also by Yolanda that this process was reinforced by its acceptance of the validity of the affective dimensions and aspects of learning. For example, she said “This was particularly successful” as it allowed “us to connect with the material on an emotional level e.g. the tragedy in ‘Shadowlands’, and then to delve into more theoretical issues in our discussions (as we did when watching ‘Zulu’)”. The fact that the Masterclass process of learning ‘how’, the method of learning, as apposed to ‘what’, or the content, was summed up in the comment by Julia that:

“More important than the topics themselves was the way in which we approached them. Steve’s introduction to theoretical approaches to lit (inc’ feminism and liberal humanism) were particularly valuable for me, enabling me to apply my knowledge to my English modules – and then to widen my critical perspective for later discussion”.

Another view that described the process clearly was expressed by Claire:

“The students consider the topic and discuss its points and raise new ideas and tangents” and that “The teaching always provided further opportunities for learning, through introduction of new vocabulary, new texts / articles, new theory which could then be applied to our college courses (even non-english related)”.

This indicated that the emerging and preferred pedagogic approach to Masterclass learning and its emancipatory nature was essentially and constantly divergent, iterative, outward looking, adventurous, risk-taking and always seeking to establish new possibilities, based on Roberta's view that it helped her *"Go beyond the restrictions of one's discipline's opinion"*. In this sense, students gained the confidence to speak both within and outside and beyond the codified knowledge and nomenclature and linguistic confines of conventional learning of and within individual subjects and began to fill in the gaps with more personal and self-created knowledge. It also helped them find a means of articulating a learning unknown with an uncertain and newly developing metalanguage of learning experience based on changing, fluctuating derivations and integrations of varied discourses and knowledge bases.

Yolanda said that as a group:

"We were asked what we were interested in and what we would like to study so that masterclass could be tailored to our interests".

In this sense said Yolanda *"Every masterclass built on the last"* which was clearly:

"advantageous as students are able to discover what methods are most conducive to learning for them and consequently use this knowledge to enable them to get the most from each session".

The fact that the potential for knowledge consensus building was derived from learning divergence was summed up in Roberta's comment that:

"Masterclass sessions stimulate me intellectually and I really enjoy it, with discussion ranging from current affairs to matters of personal interest to one of its members".

Claire said that the learning approach gave the students a sense of power and means to create genuinely new knowledge in the possibility of an new emerging nomenclature:

"I think that this is one of the really great things about the masterclass that its content is not necessarily pre-arranged and that it has no illusions of grandeur by only discussing topics deemed suitable by an elitist regime".

3.3. Pathologies of ‘Social Integration’ (solidarity of members and the unsettling of collective identity)

The main causes of this form of pathology were derived from 1) learning links with private sector affecting content, pedagogy and the role of the teacher and 2) the processes of the commodification and bureaucratization of masterclass learning through OCN Accreditation.

Masterclass learning and the nature of group solidarity was clearly threatened when it began working with a local private sector school through the ‘Building Bridges’ policy initiative. This involvement changed the masterclass learning in the following ways. Roberta said that *“It restricted the free reign of discussion and topic choice”* and that after merger with the private sector *“a structure was imposed”* which threatened the interdisciplinary, *“imaginative learning”* (Julia) of the masterclass which *“was equally as important as the raw knowledge I’ve acquired”* (Julia). This notion of restriction to the development and legitimation of *“raw knowledge”* is interesting and important because it points to the personal need for the socially relativist and constructivist nature of the original masterclass. It was said by Claire that:

“More structure was introduced and more lecturing and didactic teaching with prescribed topics and explicit programmes promoted and advertized with flyers”.

Roberta said that:

“By 02/03 masterclass the inter-disciplinary approach faded, with most students studying conventional English Literature. Also, the 02/03 year seemed to rely /allow the authority of the teacher and a more classroom situation than the 01/02/ year”.

Towards the end of the first year and throughout the first half of the second year, this kind of development led Julia to believe that the Masterclass was becoming just another official initiative that would ensure that *“just another person (was) passing through a system”* because it was becoming *“just another form of institutionalized provision”* in the form of an extra-curricular activity which was *“only once a week”*. This last comment suggests that students were increasingly resistant to increasing levels of learning bureaucratization, commodification and accountability especially in voluntary extra-curricular activities which were beginning to decline in number and participation in general.

At the same time as the developing link with the private school, the sixth form college, on the point of merger with a local FE College, also insisted that all voluntary, extra-curricula learning activities

were to be bureaucratized, unitized and officially accredited for financial purposes by the OCN (Open College Network) at a time, understandably, when the college was suffering acutely from financial problems, which in turn was a major factor determining merger with an FE college. It very soon became apparent that the private school involvement and the senior managers of the sixth form college wanted greater pedagogic and financial control and rationalization of the Masterclass initiative in general and therefore began exerting a high level of direct control over content, teaching and learning principles and practices, and increasingly endorsed the practice of assessment of outcomes. Registers were taken and a timetabled programme of activities and learning outcomes were produced. Claire identified the possibility of some advantages to this process of change in that she said that:

“The possibility of greater financial support may help the learning in the masterclass because more resources can be purchased – books in particular (and Steve will have more money for photocopies!). There may be more opportunities to expand the masterclass by making links with other colleges – even universities (with extra money for travel – or for new communication technologies to be explored)”. “Trips – museum / theatre / exhibition may also be possible”.

However, the vast majority of students resented this degree of centralizing control and its attempts to reformulate learning processes and identities along more economically systemic and symbolic lines.

3.4. Emancipations of ‘Social Integration’ (obligations)

The nature of emancipation as interpreted through the Habermasian ethical notion of an obligation was derived from the emergent emphasis on the requirement to participate through sharing, contesting and agreeing to agree to differ. It was also derived from the creation and internal validation of emergent egalitarian rules of debate. This two-dimensional aspect of emancipation was engendered by a respect for and commitment to the freedom and security to experiment, described by Alice as trying to learn new things in a constant *“melting pot”*. Yolanda stressed the importance of the fact that:

“We had the opportunity to take control of the class and take the debate in a direction we wanted it to”

because, as Claire said, *“learning was not restricted by teacher or by the syllabus objectives”*. The focus of the nature of masterclass mastery was, as Julia said, the developing obligation *“to know oneself”* through self-consciousness, self-knowledge and emerging self-responsibility for

constructions of self-identity, or as Alice called it “*self-mastery*” rather than a body of pre-specified and codified subject knowledge or officially determined and sanctioned skill development or grade application and endorsement. The fact that:

“The group was just full of people who enjoyed discussing intellectually who tend to think in a haphazard manner” (Claire)

allowed for the sessions to be “*more valuable to everyone because they have the opportunity to get what they put in*” said Claire. That Julia said that “*Learning was done through other students as well as the teacher*” and the “*debating with others*” helped “*you construct your own argument*” indicated that the obligation to learn was not only an individual and personal one, but also a collective one. This was created said Claire because:

“Though the teacher organizes the original topic for consideration the path taken in discussion is not restricted and is very dependent on the interests and experiences of those involved” which provided the “chance to question other’s judgements”.

The emergent obligation of self-empowerment through the interpersonal and intrapersonal group dynamics of contestation and legitimating rather than through the legitimations of official, external rewards, was, said Yolanda:

“comes through the interest, wide-ranging content (no curriculum/AO’s to follow)” and the fact that “subject matter is designed by the interests of the members - no hierarchy” or outside influence.

3.5. Pathologies of ‘Socialization’ (personal responsibility and the rupture of tradition)

The main causes of this pathology were 1) anxiety of elitism created by commodification and 2) fear of de-personalisation through the use of technology. Owing to the involvement of the private school and the joint links with Sussex University’s English Department on Saturday mornings, the students clearly felt that the Masterclass was beginning to live up to the traditional name for a designated elite group of students gaining access to elite forms of teaching and learning.

For example, Claire said:

“In this wider scale, the ideas of Masterclass adopted explicit elitist connotations, which may influence its teaching in other institutions”.

Roberta said that *“For example, many of us felt the English masterclass was only introduced to the most able students”* at the private school – *“not those with the greatest interest or passion”* in order *“to boost the ability of other students”*. This view was also construed in more political terms when Julia said:

“I think the recent political attitude to education is a threat to learning – there is increased elitism and censorship of learning (and teaching)”.

Other views also stressed the elitist configuration of official control. Alice said:

“For instance (and I don’t know whether I misconstrued the original aim of masterclass) but masterclass was meant to be a forum for interested students to expand their learning beyond the classroom, but recently it seems masterclass is more about increased education of the brightest (you could argue that the brighter ones are the only interested ones, or naturally attracted / but this argues against the picked-out students)”.

There was also the view expressed by Claire that this process was also political as well as an administrative and financial one:

“Also the government seems keen to control such learning i.e. – you fill in these forms we give you increased cash” ... which led to her belief that “the teaching was influenced” which in turn “restricted the free reign of discussion we once had”.

However, this had the reverse effect. The programme of promulgating traditional notions of learning excellence were challenged in the belief that:

“Rather than such broadening of the m/c having a positive effect by introducing a wider spectrum of approaches and opinions, I would argue that it has narrowed / been constrained by reducing it to its name - a further class in English for brighter students” (Roberta).

Another overtly politicised point by Yolanda suggested an anxiety in the loss of democratic learning potential: *“Masterclass has been understood in many different ways – most notably, contradicting with our value of democracy”*. She further said that it was *“less democratic in the second year as it strengthened links with private schools”*. Roberta identified forms of administrative and financial restrictions on learning by saying that *“when the possibility of financial support (e.g. for resources/*

photocopying) arose at the college, it became more necessary to show 'results' of the masterclass, proof of its worth". Yolanda said explicitly that:

"I think the government poses a great threat to masterclass. It seems to be constraining learning or at least moving towards it (those silly what-we-are-going-to-do-today blue forms). You can kind of see this developing until the government begins to out guidelines for what we shall be taught" ... "it has control over what is essentially a recreational activity".

One view, however, adopted a more reluctantly pragmatic view in that Claire said the:

"Masterclass has to change (even if only minutely) in the way it is run to conform to government initiatives to gain carrot cash".

As a result of these pressures to change the group adopted a political participative democratic stance and boycotted masterclass for weeks.

These changes to Masterclass learning also coincided with the compulsion to learn through ICT. One view expressed was that "Technology began to infiltrate the class more as time went by" (Alice) and it was thought that ICT-based registration and learning was a major source of contention in that it was seen as limiting and controlling an essentially voluntary learning opportunity. The following comments further indicate a rupturing of tradition:

"The group was required to take a class register (Yolanda)"; the "college wanted to increase assessment and regulation" (Claire)

and *"I don't think that masterclass learning would benefit in any way from greater use of technology. (Although the trees might!)" (Roberta); "Unlike subjects such as science, technology has a limited value to the study of English, which relies on the study of text" (Julia)*. This last comment is very significant in terms of what it tells us about the value that was put on genuine dialogic pedagogic practice in the original masterclass:

"The use of technology could be incorporated in learning through ... Powerpoint presentations ...but such forms of learning would change the nature of Masterclass into a less dynamic force, it would slow the interchange of ideas and be a pointless exercise" (Yolanda)

emphasizing the preference for real time, dialogic and interpersonal talk. Claire raised the point about the limited college resources for the use of ICT but then qualified it with a question doubting its validity in the masterclass context: *“There was ‘V.little opportunity for pupils to use technology within the class’ but then went on to ask the question as to whether ‘it was necessary’.* Finally, Alice raised the politico-pedagogic question as to why ICT should be used compulsorily even if the resources were there:

“On the role of technology: I would say that technology is a tool like any other; use it when it’s useful, don’t when it is not. There’s no point using it just because its there. I think this attitude was reflected in masterclass, as technology was only used when it would facilitate the flow of ideas (apart from registers etc. but that was more to do with the college in general than masterclass itself”.

3.6. Emancipations of ‘Socialization’ (motivation for actions that conform to norms)

This section relates to the motivations that helped establish social norms and helped socialize individuals into a committed group engendered by the acceptance and sharing of individual and collective learning dispositions, interests and passions. It focuses on how the Masterclass developed into a forum that allowed for the exploration of how the idiosyncrasies of a group of individual learners can best negotiate the most meaningful and fulfilling means of self-teaching.

Firstly, it seemed that students appreciated and revelled in the lack of competition and conformity, the freedom to explore and take risks: *“Everybody was welcome at Masterclass” (Roberta), “There is a sense of keenness to share ideas” (Julia), “There is a sense of information coming from all around”* said Roberta. It was said by Claire that:

“This relaxed manner of teaching in turn creates a relaxed learning environment that I think for both teachers and students is quite different from the majority of mainstream classes”.

Secondly, it clearly provided a genuine individualised and personalised learning environment in that they felt and accepted a high level of learning self-responsibility to help others as well as themselves. Roberta said that *“We were asked what we were interested in and what we would like to study so that masterclass could be tailored to our interests”.* It was said by her too that *“The teacher then came in and helped us with what texts he could to relate to our ideas”.* This was reinforced by other comments that emphasised self-responsibility: *“Both students and teachers contribute to discussions with far more equality than in normal classes” (Julia), “The group would*

be introduced to a topic / article/ picture / issue, and everyone had the opportunity to develop the discussion - it was not lead, and unplanned" (Yolanda). Claire said that:

"In practice, some people can be more ready than others to contribute their thoughts. Everyone is able to speak when they wish to, but also, everyone knows when to listen to others. This means that the not so forceful members of the group get a chance to speak as well as the confident members of the group".

Chapter 4

Data Description and Analysis: the Lifeworld Zone of ‘Society’

4.1. Pathologies of ‘Cultural Production’ (withdrawal of legitimization)

The causes of pathology in this context were derived from 1) perceived dumbing down through official control and threat to a change to the masterclass name 2) the instability of the masterclass because of only one teacher supporting and driving the initiative. Changes to Masterclass structure and pedagogic approach also led to a discussion of the possibility of a change in name of masterclass to something else such as an Advanced English Group. The threat of nomenclature change produced an interesting ambivalence and paradox in student learning identity. Students had always valued highly the informal, egalitarian and idiosyncratic nature of the original masterclass, *“because learning wasn’t standardized”* (Claire) and *“it was not dictated by an iron syllabus”* (Roberta) and had *“no dictating knowledge”* (Julia). Attempts, therefore, to turn it into an elite, rationalized commodity produced interesting paradoxical debates about the relationship between naming and learning identity formation.

This was reflected in Roberta’s view that *“the group was called ‘The English Masterclass’, but we did not like the label”*. Yolanda said that the group:

“did not want to change it – some liked the kudos the name offered and wanted it to be known that this group was for English lovers and for able students”.

Further ambiguous views on the consequences of the masterclass name were as follows:

“with regard to the nature of masterclass, I am undecided to how I feel about it. On the one hand, I like the prestigious nature of the name because I feel it sums up the importance of what masterclass presents (i.e. how important I feel it is that groups like this exist). However, I also know from personal experience how daunting the thought of joining a masterclass can be. Therefore I think in order to encourage people to take part and attract more members, the name ‘masterclass’ may need to be changed to ensure that as many people as possible give themselves the chance to be involved in something truly beneficial” (Alice).

This view was compounded by Roberta’s worry of failing to live up to masterclass expectation: there was a *“Fear of being looked down upon by teachers”*. Teachers and students from the private

school were happy with the masterclass name as it was instrumental to their initial desire to be involved in the notion of an elite masterclass. They regarded the name as a unique selling feature of the learning and a significant motivational factor. Related to this debate about the legitimacy of the name was the fact that in the sixth form college version of the masterclass all participants were female yet in the private school half of the students involved were male.

As well as the legitimisation crisis caused by the masterclass name, another form of angst regarding legitimacy was linked to the feelings of insecurity engendered by the knowledge that the masterclass was “*essentially the brainchild*” (Alice) of mine, the initiative of only one highly committed teacher and not part of official college provision. They worried therefore about a “*collapse when*” I was “*gone*” (Alice) resulting from a deficiency in medium to long term capacity building. What was paradoxically called “*The absent teacher presence*” (Claire) was something that was experienced as “*unstable*” (Yolanda) as “*It wasn’t very stable & too dependent*” (Yolanda) on an individual teacher. Yet, on several occasions, the Masterclass still took place in my absence through either illness or meeting / course engagements because the students themselves provided their own self and group tuition based on self-teaching derived from their own efforts and will to develop personally meaningful pedagogic principles and practices which proved to be, ironically, the ultimate form of legitimisation and validation of the newly configured Masterclass learning approach in the first place.

4.2. Emancipations of ‘Cultural Reproduction’ (legitimisations)

A major form of emancipation in the Masterclass was the idea and practice of a group self-regulated learning relationship between emerging intersubjectivities and intrasubjectivities. This was especially the case when related to gender identity and legitimisation. Apart from a few exceptions over the years of Masterclass development, the vast majority of participating students were a mix of year 12 and year 13 females, especially between the years 2000-2001 when twenty two out of twenty five students participating were female. During the formal research years of 2001-2003, participating numbers from Park College were smaller, but all eight research members were female. The fact that the opening and ‘colonisation’ of what promised to offer a freer more radical learning space was historically, and what soon became traditionally, an all female learning enclave was its most interesting and compelling feature. This was most evident up to the point of joining with the private school which preferred a more conventional, masculine, competitive and passively knowledge-driven traditional masterclass forum based on the use of so-called expert lecturers and a simple model of learning based on demonstration and replication. The following data gives some indication as to why and how it developed as a site and resource for female gender experimentation and legitimisation. Student responses reveal that it was believed that females are more likely to self-legitimise as independent learners through spontaneous and intersubjective learning processes, and more adventurous, unpredictable, less competitive and egalitarian learning forums. The nature

of the inter-subjective characteristics that gave them a sense of being together in a joint enterprise were that they were a group committed to intellectualism, a group committed to understanding how females aspire to independence through a form of social intersubjectivity, a group committed to a form of learning that can be seen as committed to acknowledging and promoting the values of practices of deliberative democracy. The notion of achieving harmony in a collective form of life clearly related to a particular gendering of participation and of learning.

By 2001-2003, Masterclass had become an all female learning enclave despite the open invitation to all students from all subjects. The gender imbalance in the Masterclass (which has always been historically evident) raises questions of whether there was something available pedagogically and socially that was particularly attractive and important to female students, something they were not getting in mainstream learning. Some students simply attempted to make sense of this gender imbalance in terms of historical momentum of participation which was construed as a tradition. Yolanda linked this to the gender imbalance of English as a subject:

"I don't know why there is a gender imbalance in favour of women. It may (in more recent mc particularly) reflect the gender imbalance in English as a subject".

Claire's view that expressed a similar position was: *"our masterclass is an English masterclass which probably deters more males as they may consider English to be women's subject"*. Alice's view on the issue was that:

"The gender ratio has in the past been predominately female but in my opinion this reflects the English nature of the course and is not an important factor in group politics".

Other views revealed deeper thought about how the gender imbalance reflected interest in and commitment to the emancipatory potential in the nature of learning itself, its evolving constructivism and consequential emerging politicality. Yolanda said she thought the imbalance was *"due to the content of masterclass"*, which in comparison with traditional masterclasses was not content or knowledge-based but *"more skills based"* and focused intensely on self-awareness of personal learning development and resultant personal effectiveness. Alice said in relation to this that:

"This imbalance has been attributed to mental differences, with suggestions that the female mind forms language links earlier and makes such links quicker and easier than the male. It would be beneficial to masterclass participants if more of a balance could be achieved between the two sexes".

What this reveals is that participating females legitimize their 'being' on the premise that they are explorative, patient, risk-taking, pioneering, able to live constructively with uncertainty and can help others broaden and deepen the minds of others to embrace a greater sense of alterity.

There were other views, too, that linked the gender imbalance to a greater awareness of the emancipatory possibility that the Masterclass was reflecting wider cultural and political gender politics. The imbalance, said Claire, was *"due to the increasing power of women in society since feminism"*. However, in relation to this awareness Yolanda showed an interesting paradoxical relationship with the inherent sexism in the Masterclass name:

"We were asked if we wanted to change the name from 'Masterclass' in case we felt it was patriarchal, but we were happy with it".

This shows that females will venture into new social spaces, even ones that are opened up by traditional patriarchal pedagogic nomenclature, only to exploit that nomenclature for their own pedagogic, social, cultural and political purposes and actualization or desire for the will to power. As Claire asked pertinently "is it mostly females who want to broaden their minds with discussion and argument?"

4.3. Pathologies of 'Social Integration' (anomie and solidarity of members)

The main cause of this kind of pathology was derived from the Masterclass name and gender issues. The Masterclass name with its male gendering suggesting some kind of patriarchal power and dominance as a learning individual and as a group of apparent privileged learners also caused some ambivalence out of which emerged some uncertainty about not only legitimation but also how it defined the all-female group and its all-female will-formation to become significant and influential in the wider institutional context of learning. For example, Claire said that:

"This imbalance has been attributed to mental differences, with suggestions that the female mind forms language links earlier and makes such links quicker and easier than the male mind in general, therefore creating a predilection for language-based subjects".

This view, however, is interesting because of its use of *"our"*, its sense of togetherness in the face of this uncertainty regarding the gender constitution of the group: *"our masterclass is an English masterclass which probably deters more males as they may consider English to be women's"*

subject. (I also think this deters students who don't do English Lit or Lang" (Julia). This particular view about the gender reasons for masterclass participation is also reinforced by the opinion expressed in Yolanda's view that "the gender imbalance is due to the content of masterclass (as it is assumed to be sessions being more feminine)". Interestingly, Claire said that "in the private school" contingent "this is reversed but in both cases I have never encountered any form of discrimination". Alice said that:

"the gender ratio has in the past been predominately female but in my opinion this reflects the English [literature] nature of the course and is not an important factor in group politics".

Some comments widened even further the social and political implications of gender issues and imbalanced participation. For example, Claire's view expressed the belief that *"it could be said that girls are motivated to increase the gap between male and female educational attainment, which is a reflection of the increasing power of women in society since feminism"*. Yolanda indicated an awareness of the possibility that males and females learn differently:

"Males want instant results from their study and may find it frustrating and tedious to completely deconstruct an entire text to find a meaning. English is a women's subject".

Alice adopted a more practically-minded awareness and said simply that *"There may be other reasons for the imbalance in the masterclass most notably the fact that all extra-curricular activities at the College are organized for Wed afternoons – inc drama and sports – which may be more attractive to male students"*. All these views are interesting and significant in that they reflect deep reflection on the differences in gender politics and learning communities but what emerged, paradoxically, from the data generally was a clear preference for greater gender balance in participation in order to obtain more validity but under a traditional patriarchal name.

4.4. Emancipations of 'Social Integration' (legitimately ordered interpersonal relations)

Data shows that gender was a key aspect of the legitimization of interpersonal relations that determined and regulated the emancipatory nature of Masterclass learning. It also legitimised thereby a more political dimension to its evolving radical pedagogy. This radical political dimension of gender-specific learning also manifested itself in unambiguously articulated participative democratic forms of social integration.

Firstly, all students commented emphatically on the importance of the democratic spirit and practice that permeated every aspect of Masterclass learning. The democratization of learning manifested itself in several ways. It was reflected in the egalitarian processes of engagement. For example, Julia said that *“While I participated in the masterclass, great value was placed in democracy”* and Roberta noted that:

“There was never a sense of hierarchy – even the tables and chairs were moved out of their traditional places (we joked that it was to free our minds from the constraints of an authoritative education system)”.

Julia commented on the fact that *“for some sessions we even sat in a circle outside on the grass – and any teachers in the group (or visitors) took an equal role in discussion”*. Another comment from Yolanda emphasised the point that *“Everyone was free to speak their opinions, ask questions, and change the topic of discussion – we did not need to raise our hands”*. Students clearly relished the opportunity to contest the ideas of teachers without fear of being frowned upon due to the open-minded, egalitarian and constructivist nature of discussions. It was, said Roberta:

“a democracy in that it was not just the teacher’s ideas but we all had a say. Participation is based on an equal-voice system and is based on discussion of the issue”.

Secondly, others stressed the more personal benefits of being aware of the political nature of the learning and such engagement: *“It gave me the confidence I needed to be an active participant (Julia)”* and

“The impression is gained that all are there to discuss issues with the same weight given to one person’s opinion and right to express as another and all opinions open to criticism” (Alice).

Roberta elaborated insightfully and confidently that:

“The m/class is democratic due to a set of “unwritten rules”.

This clearly endorses Habermas’ notion of the democratic need for self-creating and self-legitimizing rule-making. Furthermore, it was said by Yolanda that:

"Everyone is able to speak when they wish to, but also, everyone knows when to listen to others. This means that the not so forceful members of the group get a chance to speak as well as the confident members of the group".

Julia, more importantly, said that:

"However, I think it is also important to mention that I think despite being democratic, the masterclass is non-conformist in the way it creates its own rules out of mutual respect its members have for each other".

This was engendered by the fact that *"We were all encouraged to contribute but we were also free to listen to the ideas of others"*, by the fact that:

"There is an aspect of community in masterclass sessions stemming from the fact that although often led by the main or central teacher m/class are fed into by all involved and the result is a situation whereby you both give and receive information and thus accumulate knowledge from everyone in the m/class" (Claire)

and by the appreciation that:

"The control was not in the hands of the teacher" who "certainly did not have the final verdict on the issue we were discussing" (Julia).

Moreover, what Masterclass teaching and learning seemed to become for all participants was that it also offered a form of expansion of intersubjective knowledge and skills to that of a form of academic citizenship education and training. They could understand and appreciate what they were evolving and achieving in the context of a much wider political spectrum and scale. In this sense, it was notable that some began to realize that the original democratic nature of Masterclass learning was becoming more committed and yet, simultaneously, threatened by its links with the private school and the increasing standardising and bureaucratising impact of the notion and practice of schooling effectiveness. For example, Roberta said *"I would have described previous masterclass as more democratic than later years"*.

4.5. Pathologies of 'Socialization' (personal motivation and withdrawal of motivation)

This pathology was reflected in views that engaged with 1) the drop in participation levels, 2) a masterclass boycott and 3) the feeling of being overwhelmed when in a masterclass discussion. As

a consequence of the above data about gender and motivation and learning resulting from the changes brought about by a link with the private sector and the College's commodification commitment, participation rates declined drastically over a three week period. This process ended with a complete withdrawal of support for three weeks in the form of a boycott. This left the private school in complete control of masterclass learning in a state sector context. Another perceived withdrawal of motivation was based on the role and responsibility the individual had when participating in masterclass discussion. This form of participation was the approach that developed naturally over time. Two students expressed some concern about this adopted approach. Alice said *"I joined because of a friend's pleas. It was initially daunting as I felt I needed a great deal of background knowledge"*. Alice further said that *"Discussion progressed rapidly so we could not always go in real depth with an issue ... however this was only a small hindrance to learning"*. Another pathology was based on Roberta's view that:

"A weakness in m/class style learning is the same weakness of masterclass teaching. It could overwhelm a student - not a personal view but an omniscient view".

4.6. Emancipations of 'Socialization' (interpretative accomplishments)

This section relates to what the students believed they had created to help them make sense of their learning in terms of developed interpretative accomplishments or achievements or skills. To describe and discuss what they thought they were mastering is important in this respect. In essence, what they thought they were mastering in the Masterclass learning group was an intensely personal self-awareness of a developing personal learning identity, one that was intimately and inextricably linked to and derived from a form of developing interdependence with each other as a committed group to self-teach and also to self-validate a form of self-transcendence. The process helped cultivate a more meaningful and politically-aware learning identity as construed outside the official learning identity engendered by mainstream educational practice which they believed made their responses and sense of criticality the same, of being mass-produced, even as symbolic representations of a system rather than unpredictable, multi-faceted, nuanced individuals.

Comments about the nature and implications of this kind of Masterclass mastery and sense of emancipation were focused on the affective-cognitive aspects of learning such as *"coping with the uncertain"* (Alice), the *"spontaneous"* (Claire) which:

"teaches you to order your thoughts into a hierarchy of importance so you can bring forth the relevant piece of information at the relevant time" (Claire).

Others cited the depth and breadth of analytical skills such as *“it gave me the ability to critically analyse and evaluate a text; looking at language, sentence structure, syntax etc and also by placing it into an ideological context and realising the influence it may have on the text”* (Yolanda). This was a common aspect of Masterclass mastery and another view stressed:

“The nature of mastery in m/class is not that of further mastery over a subject or discipline but rather increasing adeptness at techniques of discussing / debating, analysing and criticizing for example. We were learning how to analyse texts and mastering the tools that could be used to do this. As part of mortal nature nothing can be truly mastered” (Claire).

Alice expressed the view that:

“I don’t think knowledge can be mastered: one can feel that they have mastered information when they have digested and understood it (and can explain it to others), but the information is not objective – the facts aren’t set in stone. There will always be new developments in knowledge, and new perspectives introduced by others who have a different learning background, so absolute “mastery” is impossible”.

What is also interesting is that many comments about interpretative accomplishments revealed a focus on emancipated empowerment derived from the relationship between developing analytical skills and the emergence of learning self-consciousness and learning self-awareness. The sense of self-conscious and self-reflexivity as a learner, free from official assessment ideology and practice, was very strong in most comments. The following view from Roberta is very clear in this respect:

“As far as mastery goes, I am not sure what to write. I believe that it is the mastery of your own mind. Through m/class sessions I have come to understand how my mind works and therefore find it easier to order and express my ideas. I think I have achieved a mastery of my own mind by repeated testing of it in a situation where I want to appear intelligent and interesting; therefore, I force myself to concentrate and try to really understand and think about what is being said. We were mastering an amalgamation of skills. I am empowered by having widened horizons”.

Yolanda could even link this emphasis on the skills of emergent, self-articulating analytical independence to the deeper social aspects of self-realization through negotiated intersubjectivity:

“This has certainly been great prep for uni: critical analysis of others views in the discussion and criticality in terms of my own views on a subject in order to develop my own opinions and produce a strong argument it is important to first negotiate my perspective. It empowers through teaching us to question things”.

Julia also identified the importance of understanding the processes of self-realization through feeling *“empowered by intellect and open-mindedness”*, another by describing learning the nature of learning accomplishments as based on an *“Accumulation process to knowledge”*(Claire) that was *“not hierarchical”*. That Roberta said *“I would describe myself as vocal learner”* and that she learns *“through speech and by discussing issues out loud”* and that she is *“able to weigh them up and assess them and consequently commit them to memory”* reveals a similar sense of responsibility to self and others as an effective learner, a similar recognition of the need to interact with others as a key means of understanding self-identity and an awareness of their own and each other’s learning potential. In short, the articulation of these interpretative accomplishments were even more notable for the extent to which they revealed a fascinating degree of natural insight, precision and passion when compared with how they tended to use official Assessment for Learning (AFL) nomenclature and self-assessment practice in mainstream A Level learning. This became apparent to me as I was their mainstream English Literature or English Language and Literature teacher, too.

Chapter 5

Data Description and Analysis: the Lifeworld Zone of ‘Personality’

5.1. Pathologies of ‘Cultural Reproduction’ (crisis in orientation and education)

As already articulated, the period between 2002-2003, in particular, became what can be called a ‘political’ period in the development of the English masterclass as it proved to be an important critical incident from which to gain insights into and understanding of the issues arising from the incorporatization of teaching and learning resulting from increased bureaucratization, and more public and therefore symbolic representations of official notions of mastery learning. This process, according to both the Masterclass zeitgeist and actual student response data, revealed increasing pathologization created by increasing levels of official control and legitimation. This led to the marginalization, silencing and exploitation of student involvement and official constructions and uses of student voice. The emerging processes of official control and institutional exploitation produced a crisis in the orientation of the kind of education and learning identity that the masterclass could offer alongside mainstream learning.

5.2. Emancipations of ‘Cultural Reproduction’ (socialization patterns and educational goals)

The nature and purpose of the socializing patterns governing Masterclass interaction evolved into a what Yolanda called a “*Close knit learning group*” and learning situation in which originality of thought was the main educational goal. It was an aspiration to originality premised on the commitment to self-knowledge and self-realization and to epistemological constructivism. It was this, combined with shared risk taking and intellectual adventurousness, which created such high levels of intrinsic motivation and the sense of personal competence. As Claire said:

“it was largely based around the interaction between different members of the group with no strong guiding hand or pre-determined outcome”.

Students could create their own form of unique engagement and own and validate its own outcomes. Alice said that it was based on a “*Bombardment of ideas which he or she must make sense of by themselves*” and Julia said that:

“It encouraged interaction which is more intense than in normal classes which keep the interest of the student longer ... evokes a desire to learn more”.

As a consequence of this high level learning intensity, it was claimed by Yolanda that:

“Masterclass is fulfilling in the respect that classes reach a more wholesome conclusion and do not leave students with a feeling that they have scraped the surface of the topic”.

The reason for this was suggested by a view from Roberta when she said that:

“This was probably because “Masterclass allowed us to connect with the material on an emotional level and then to delve into more theoretical issues in our discussions”.

Another comment on motivation indicated that the commitment to learn in this way was paramount *“I joined the masterclass not to be the best but to learn”* (Alice). Roberta said *“Learning was not forced upon us It was a happy outcome of the class”*. Julia that *“In masterclass, students were able to establish a position based on less pressure and more mutual respect”*. The establishment of a personal *“position”* said Claire was created because:

“It was “the lack of structure which made the class so unique” ... “it was a stream of consciousness of a collective group” and “up to the individual to apply the structure”.

In this sense, said Yolanda:

“Critical learning in the masterclass is more of an art than in normal classes as from each normal lesson you are given the information you need to keep whereas in masterclass you must take the information you want to keep”.

This self-created and self-legitimated knowledge-making process was also something that engendered a strong sense of self-actualization:

“I try to stand by my arguments when challenged but I have found that it also important to have the confidence to challenge others – in order to develop my understanding and allow them to strengthen their own points – whoever they are!” (Julia).

Roberta said:

“When participating in the masterclass, I have always been very vocal – but with questions as well as voicing my own views. I like to get involved in discussion in order to learn from others, and have always listened carefully to others and I try to encourage people to participate vocally where they may not have had the confidence”.

Finally, in terms of educational goals, Masterclass also demanded a high level of self-responsibility. For example, Julia said *“The masterclass and student voice has encouraged my wilful and curiosity traits”* which meant that students *“can develop their own learning identity”*. Moreover, it was also said by Claire that:

“Students are able to develop the ideas they are interested in which encourages original thought which puts students in good stead for exam situations where they will be under pressure to produce something by themselves”.

In essence, Masterclass provided students with an opportunity to *“learn to look beyond”* (Yolanda) with which to create and live a learning life of anticipation and of becoming:

“It has”, said Julia, “created a possible ‘new status’ of possibility”.

5.3. Pathologies of ‘Social Integration’ (alienation)

The causes of pathology in relation to an increasing sense of alienation were derived from 1) uncertain learning identity in Masterclass and 2) high level of interaction which was often regarded as fast, intense and intimidatingly alive and raw.

Firstly, this multi-faceted ‘political’ crisis in the Masterclass initiative, produced responses that reflected some degree of pathology based on uncertainty regarding the true nature of studenthood in the initiative. For example, the view by Alice that *“There was perhaps an over-reliance on capable / articulate students”* was not a general one. However, another view indicated that having such apparent elite students in the group was not detrimental to a sense of group identity. Yolanda said that:

“Although these skills did filter down the group, I never believed that the masterclass was only for the best of the best. It is a shame if others thought so”.

In defence of the high levels of individualization and idiosyncrasy underpinning any notion of collectivity, there was also the opinion of Roberta that *“Some people in the group did speak more*

than others” and that “it was as much about asking questions as giving opinions”. The view continued with:

“Everyone had the opportunity to challenge or to give opinions, and they were not prevented by the teacher, so I don’t understand why this was written as a teaching weakness”

which emphasised the importance of participating on an intense intersubjective basis, on the basis of the Habermasian tenet of the will of and force of the better argument. Even silence, based on mere passivity was, therefore, agreed to be a recognised form of participation from within the group and not a sign of alienation. Another view from Alice rather intelligently and interestingly acknowledged silence as a legitimate form of democratic participation:

“I found that the classes were often dominated by one or two strong personalities and this only served to further silence the quieter people. I would challenge the idea that quieter people would feel excluded by masterclass-style learning. I tended to listen rather than talk and I never felt excluded – in fact, Masterclass was most ‘useful’ in letting me hear other people’s opinions. I suppose the problem is rather that the more vocal students wouldn’t get to benefit from hearing the voices of the quieter students”.

Julia said that:

“Different types of students take away different things – the ‘listeners’ would perhaps gain more knowledge and understand other people’s opinions while the ‘talkers’ learnt “how” to express their ideas and challenge other’s views”.

Alice said that:

“Though I don’t think the distinction between the two is quite that simple ... My individual learning identity was passive learning – listening and questioning on paper. I never engaged with the type of masterclass learning identity (active, discussing, criticising, challenging) that was encouraged. I never really participate and often actively avoided participation. This may mean that I never learnt, at least to apply the kind of knowledge being taught. Therefore, I feel that individuals do have different learning identities but I am not sure about public and private learning identities, but they can’t be that different”.

Roberta said that there was a perception that effective Masterclass participation was dependent:

"on strong students" but she qualified this sense of the possibility of uncontrolled, competitive elitism based on strength of character with "it sounds awful but in reality it is found to be true. I need to emphasise that we all joined the masterclass with an unfulfilled expectation of education. Not necessarily despondency with the current system, but rather hungry to know more – I think everyone had this in common".

In terms of identifying how the emergence of the virtue of strength of character and the preferred manner and nature of participation was construed as a democratic impulse and dialogic act and construed as a possible cause of any degree of alienation, it can be seen that the Masterclass allowed for and engendered varied democratic propensities and positions. This democratic pluralism did, however, produce some uncertainty regarding the notion of legitimate democratic criticality. It was said by Julia that *"I think it is quite difficult to define what being critical is, and I also think that being critical is a term that can be used for many situations"*. Yolanda said of criticality that:

"I feel masterclass opened my mind and provided harsh realizations about the world ...m/c (masterclass) made me very cynical and untrusting. In doing so it may have hindered my A Level education – as I know longer wanted my answer to a question to fit in 'the box' / tick the points that the examiner thought was the perfect answer".

I will conclude this section based on aspects of alienation with a view of Claire who raised the point about the possible de-intellectualizing effects of mainstream consumer-driven pedagogy and learning and adverse peer reaction to masterclass membership:

"although pathology is subjective, there seems to be a universal pathological foundationof frustrated intellectual ambition etc" (in the masterclass group).

I never experienced any teaching pathologies except *"coping with the resentment of peers"* (Roberta) in the sense that:

"In consuming knowledge are we in ourselves an elite group... there was a certain resentment felt by other peers who did not attend the classes even though this was done out of choice".

5.4. Emancipations of 'Social Integration' (social membership)

The personal competences acquired by students in order to “*Learn to look beyond*” (Yolanda) the prescribed, the pre-ordained and the conventional, was a strong socially-binding ethic which was also acutely responsive to the possibilities of affiliation to wider and even higher levels of cooperative engagement with other and different kinds of learning communities. In this sense, Masterclass learning developed an intense disposition, desire and capacity to want to widen and share its existence and experiences of social learning membership to other kinds of ‘communities’. These linked learning ‘communities’ were interpreted by students as multifarious: individual students, individual subjects, different kinds of school institutions in the form of private schools and as links to the communities of the next phase of learning, for example higher education and employment. More importantly for this thesis, concerned with understanding the emergence of the relationship between pedagogy and democratic, political will-formation, it was also linked to the new opportunities created by the learning community opened up by the incipience of Student Voice work.

In terms of how Masterclass claimed social membership with other subjects other than English, it was clear that the interdisciplinary learning premise was not only highly valued, but also seen as instrumental in engendering the kind of learning that made Masterclass so stimulating and unpredictable for them. For example, it was seen by Yolanda as a key motivation and as an important point of social membership between subjects: “*Masterclass is applicable to any subject – I liked its transferability across social and academic contexts*”. It was also, for Julia, an opportunity to enrich the learning relationship with mainstream A Level learning: “*Skills and knowledge gained in the masterclass, I applied to classroom learning*”. Many students also commented on how they believed Masterclass, even more so than mainstream learning, enabled them to understand how it would provide them with insights into, and perhaps give an advantage to, their higher education aspirations and hopes. It was believed that:

“Much of the masterclass learning agenda can be transferred favourably on other subjects and that it looks good on a university personal statement” (Yolanda).

Julia simply said it is “*Great preparation for higher education*”. Claire, as a point of motivation said “*It would be lying not to admit that improvement in my English and knowledge of how good masterclass would look on my personal statement*”. Alice said in relation to how, in part, masterclass motivated her to participate that “*This has certainly been great prep for uni. Masterclass was great practice for university*”.

It was this rather utilitarian and pragmatic link with the future HE ambitions and the transition to the learning of higher education that seems to have been the basis of the stimulus for the more explicit politicising of Masterclass pedagogic experience. For example, all female Masterclass members helped initiate and pioneer the College's first Student Voice Research group. They believed that linking intellectualized Masterclass learning to that of the democratic citizenship learning of student voice research was, as Claire said when participating in student voice research work, *"more significant in the scheme of things"*. What helped to formalize this link further was that the Masterclass / Student Voice Research group received research training by Professor Michael Fielding from Sussex University. These combined critical democratic learning initiatives enabled students to regard themselves and their combined learning identities as critical researchers, as significant political *agents of radical change* (Fielding: 2001) helped then develop a means of inculcating what Fielding calls a *"discourse of the personal"*, derived from his contention that the impersonal, corporate organization of high performance schooling risks destroying a counter-balancing affective and democratically person-centred education (Fielding, 2003:6-18). This meant that the work of the Masterclass group had developed from intellectuality to politicality. Their work, as a result, was now taken more seriously by senior management. As Julia said Masterclass:

"is I feel quite revolutionary in its consideration and consumption of the student voice" (see Appendix 15 for Student Voice Research Paper and its impact on the College's tutorial system).

5.5. Pathologies of 'Socialization' (psychopathologies) – no data seemed relevant

5.6. Emancipations of 'Socialization' (interactive capabilities / personal identity)

Much has already been said about how the multifarious forms of learning interactivity of Masterclass engendered meaningful learning identities for participating students. Firstly, students found it highly self-creative and self-validating as, for example, expressed in Yolanda's view that *"Through masterclass I can form argument clearly and use terminology depending on context"*. Another key aspect was that individuals believed that their views would be heard, taken seriously and then acted upon by others:

"Masterclass broadened my mind by being able to express my opinions and hear them being discussed and agreed with or disputed, thereby being introduced to more ideas and gaining deeper knowledge and understanding of areas of interest to me and also discovering areas of interest that I had previously known little about" (Roberta).

This was reinforced by Yolanda's belief that:

"The skills and knowledge one acquired were not just tangible things such as work or verbal skills. One gained the confidence and inspiration to formulate new ideas and gain the courage to openly articulate these views".

Roberta, in relation to the issue of Masterclass criticality, said *"I am much more aware of the bias"*.

Alice said that:

"The critical analysis of others views in the discussion and criticality in terms of my own views on a subject in order to develop my own opinions and produce a strong argument" is important but "it is important to first negotiate my perspective".

The ethico-political point about accepting and believing in the need and right to negotiate and establish a personal perspective is crucial to this study as it, as Julia said:

"encourages individuality in students and therefore students create a stronger sense of what they believe in and understand".

Chapter 6

Discussion

6.1. A Reconsideration

It has become obvious to me over time that the radicalism of the pedagogic process inherent in Masterclass was derived from what I came to call an attempt to follow ‘intellectual white rabbits’, a dialogic learning journey that was derived from Alice’s journey of strange and unfamiliar encounters through Wonderland in ‘Alice in Wonderland’. As the data reveals, this learning process, the Masterclass pedagogic method, its proceduralism and linguistification, operated in Bernsteinian parlance, according to the radicalism of constructivist, democratic and dialogic principles, of horizontal and very weak regulatory and normative codes (Bernstein: 1996). In Bakhtinesque parlance, it has become clear to me that it also operated according to the radical sociolinguistic concepts of heteroglossia, centrifugalism, unfinishability and even aspects of the carnivalesque (Morson and Emerson: 1990).

Moreover, the development of this kind of radicalism in a voluntary English learning initiative actually pre-dated the official use of masterclasses by New Labour as reflected in the policy trajectory outlined in Chapter 1. New Labour’s policy trajectory legitimizes this learning initiative on a voluntary and elite basis under the auspices of a commitment to gold standard learning and excellence, under the auspices of more vertical and normative pedagogic codes. However, the legitimacy and radicalism of the Park College Masterclass, especially during the actual research years of 2001-2003, can be seen to be derived from within the legitimate context of mainstream official policy and curriculum practice but the nature of its pedagogic method and learning inter-relations and the kind of studentship, learning citizenship it began to inculcate, its learning politics especially when linked to the emerging student voice initiative, was very different to what the official policy trajectory was trying to promulgate.

However, in terms of how this developing radical interpretation of an official learning site can be understood in the context of the continuing significance of Habermasian communicative theory, it is important to understand the issue in the following context. Habermas, for example, says clearly that a:

“schematically summarized specification”, a “communication-theoretical concept of the lifeworld” ... “has not yet attained the degree of explication of its phenomenological counterpart”
(Habermas, 1987:143).

Secondly, he reminds us that:

“Statements about the internal colonization of the lifeworld are at a relatively high level of generalization” (Habermas, 1987:356)

and that:

“the concept of the lifeworld that emerges from the conceptual perspective of communicative action has only a limited analytical and empirical range” (Habermas, 1987 118).

For these reasons, and for more pragmatic reasons relating to restrictive word counts and lack of research time, I have not attempted to use his communicative rationality model in full to analyse the actual empirical masterclass pedagogic discourse and then to draw on his validity criteria to make sense of it. Moreover, to have attempted this would or could have included a distorting and therefore invalidating dimension to naturally occurring discourse. I am therefore content, at this stage of my research interest in Habermas' theory, to base his theory on the premise of the dialectical principle of 'counterfactuality' that allows for and gives a basic justification of any attempt to empiricize his abstract ideal, acting as he claims as a yardstick by which to judge the degree of democratic commitment and freedom inherent in any form or site of communicative rationality. The kind of 'counterfactuality' developing and operating in the English Masterclass has then shown how it is possible to use this as an empirical method for the re-legitimation of a democratic dialectic to critically inform education debate, offer an opportunity for a revitalized, individualized and critical learning life, set within group solidarity. The theory helps us understand how it is possible to establish a strong commitment to a re-negotiation of a more personally meaningful sense of learning identity and purpose on the principle, but not necessarily according to the more abstract moral-linguistic rationalities of 'procedurality' and 'juridification'. His theory also enables an attempt to re-establish a more personal democratic form of learning that was concerned with developing and mutually valuing and validating learning individuality and a sense of alterity or recognition and validation of other forms of individuality in developing and validating one's own developing sense of democratic selfhood. It has also helped me understand that Masterclass learning had some kind of social revelatory or epiphanic dynamic and dimension that helped participants to achieve a half-understood social transcendence derived from the mutually-dependent dynamic between personal and the collective. In short, this form of social transcendence derived from a serendipitous iterative and oscillating learning lifeworld that was premised on a continuous cycle of exploration, negotiation, discovery and compromise, of endless informed and exciting possibilities with no pre-determined end or outcome. The result, as one student said, was a learning experience that was

unpredictable and excitingly “raw”. For purposes of how this research might begin to contribute to future pedagogic policy development, it is significant that this kind of free learning more naturally developed much higher levels of engagement, of intellectual curiosity and risk taking, of basic learning skills without the limiting and pathologizing effects of performativity set against rigid curricula and pedagogic systems of accountability, without the fear of failure derived from always having to justify what is and can be learned according to official systemic notions of the good and worthy.

A more detailed analysis of Masterclass learning reveals that the main point of its on-going significance for future policy and pedagogic development was that it gave participants the opportunity to co-define their own needs and identities and what Habermas calls “*action situations*” (Habermas, 1987:124) that are premised on a cyclical process of the identification and discussion of shared issues and needs as reflected in “*contexts of relevance*” (Habermas, 1987:123) leading to shifting ‘*horizons*’, ‘*boundaries*’ and ‘*themes*’ of utterance and engagement, which in turn leads to the “*coming to an understanding cooperatively*” based on the “*intersubjective recognition of the validity claim the speaker raises for it*” (Habermas, 1987:120-121). Learning in this way thus becomes a shared narrative that “*binds*” the development of self-understanding “*to a linear process*” (Habermas, 1987:135) leading to “*a half-transcendence*” (Habermas, 1987:125) of possibility. Habermas further says that “*The background of communicative utterance is thus formed by situation definitions, as measured against the active need for mutual understanding*” (Habermas, 1987:121) and that:

“a lifeworld is therefore not a private world but an intersubjective one ... which renders a lifeworld already substantively interpreted”
(Habermas, 1987:130-131).

In the context of Masterclass, these “*contexts of relevance*”, “*themes*” and this “*active need*” were, for the students, to be able to satisfy an intellectual frustration and hunger by clearly working together more cooperatively but without loss of individuality and with more intellectual risk on the basis of an intellectual commitment to what Goldman (in Oskenberg Rorty, 1998:439-442) calls “*veristic epistemology*”, or “*truth revealing situations*” rather than academic, sophistic epistemology, the difference being that the former is committed to the idea of knowledge and truth-creation derived from a cumulative, cyclical and egalitarian process of affective and cognitive learning and the latter derived from a commitment to demonstrating verbal and rule-driven skills of winning arguments and impressing in examinations (Oskenberg Rorty: 1998). The need for and commitment to the reification of such “*truth revealing*” and truth-endorsing situations is reflected unambiguously and in a sustained way in the data analysis chapters. From Masterclass data on pathologized and emancipated learning in the contexts of the lifeworld zones and their sub-zones, it has been

possible to begin to assess in general the nature and extent to which, as Habermas himself asks, “*how great the active need for consensual knowledge, legitimate orders and personal autonomy*” actually was (Habermas, 1987:142).

6.2. Habermas Re-engaged

Habermas’ idealist theory of an undistorted ideal speech situation based, on the premise of the innate rationality of communication, although probably unreifiable in an absolute sense, thus has great liberal democratic potential and significance in helping pathologized individuals or groups to mobilize and focus an understanding and critique of the full ideological, political, ethical and rhetorical implications of current School Effectiveness learning and professional practice premised on consumerist ethics and practices. This remains a possibility through the dialecticism and politics of ‘*counterfactuality*’.

I have attempted to explore and contend that the cause of my professional angst and doubt as an official educator has been premised on the need for more and greater societal and participative / deliberative democracy in official learning practice. I have argued for the democratic need for the pedagogization of the legitimacy of an alternative to consumer learning identity, citizenship identity, can emerge rights to reproduce a critical learning citizenship that is not consumer defined but critically defined in the name of widening the range of democratic practise in official systems of learning. The use of the theoretical work of Habermas’ and his concern relating to a politically and economically infiltrated, instrumentalized, personal lifeworld, and his radical and controversial challenge to such infiltration based on the need for a reification of an ‘ideal speech situation’ based on universal communicative rationality and consensual need, is the most appropriate and enlightening way I could think of, to date, to help make sense of all my current thinking on these matters and commitment to take participative and deliberative action.

In this sense, Habermas’ notion of a ‘legitimation crisis’ in late, corporatist capitalism in the field of education and the idea of infiltrated lifeworlds based on participative, deliberative, democratic societal corporatist values by hegemonic state corporatist values of economic and media systemworlds, have been important working ideas. They have not only helped me begin to understand the nature and extent of how all this determines the understanding of a “*manifestation of deprivation*” (Habermas, 1987:142) in a personal, professional sense but also in the sense of why it transpired that students helped develop a voluntary oral-based English-based Masterclass initiative into an increasingly intellectualized politicality or a politicized intellectuality at a time when the official learning world was becoming more commodified and consumerized under the influences and ethical and political auspices of School Effectiveness movement. This thesis has become a focus for an understanding of how learners, including myself as a professional educator and teacher, working within an official system, can justifiably and legitimately take some direct and

constructive action to ameliorate the situation, keep alive a democratic sense of the value of legitimate, rational, critical and personal agency. The importance of this position is summed up by Isaiah Berlin when he outlines the dangers of overly systematizing individual human lives and collective social human relations into a social theory when he says that:

“Systems are mere prisons of the spirit, and they lead not only to distortion in the sphere of knowledge, but also to the erection of monstrous bureaucratic machines, built in accordance with the rules that ignore the teeming variety of the living world, the untidy and asymmetrical inner lives of men, and crush them into conformity for the sake of some ideological chimera unrelated to the union of spirit and flesh that constitutes the real world”.
(Richards, TES, 27.08.10: 21).

The kind of systemic imprisoning of the learning spirit that formal learning is labouring under today owing to the imposition of the corporate rationalities of accountability and productivity, of effective learning derived from mastery and so-called step learning is, I argue, the basic cause of the now annual arguments and accusations relating to a year-on-year over-production of achievement, an increasing sense of grade inflation.

Eight years have passed since this empirical study of Masterclass education in 2001-2003 and I know longer teach and manage A Level English courses so I cannot argue now argue from the premise of personal experience. However, evidence is still suggesting that the A Level system is still over-producing, that it is still losing cultural credibility and cultural currency despite the recent 2008 reforms and the recent acknowledgements by Ofqual of ‘fixing’ relating to the awards of the new A* grading in 2010. This is, perhaps, just the latest evidence of the current system working in its own interests and in the name of standardisation, transparency, efficiency, accountability and obsession with productivity and (TES, 13.08.10) and (TES, 20.08.10). These on-going yearly claims of success, of debates and counter-claims of grade inflation and of ‘dumbing down’, can be explicitly linked to Habermas’ (1987: 370-373) views on how schooling can be seen as a manifestation of the ‘legitimation crisis’ of advanced capitalism. He says for example, that:

“for a public domain such as schools, the analogous demand for deregulation and de-bureaucratization meets with resistance”
(Habermas, 1987:370-373)

and that:

“the call for a more pedagogical approach to instruction and for a democratization of decision-making structures is not immediately

compatible with the neutralization of the citizen's role" (Habermas, 1987:370-373)

It is, he continues:

"even less compatible with the economic system-imperative to uncouple the school system from the fundamental right to education and to close-circuit it with the employment system" (Habermas, 1987:370-373)

which has the potential to:

"penetrate deeply into the teaching and learning process" (Habermas, 1987:370-373)

He further says that subsuming education under the medium of law and other inter-related steering mechanisms of the state produces an *"abstract grouping together of those involved in the educational process"* which has the potential to *"endanger the pedagogical freedom and initiative of the teacher"*. Moreover, Habermas continues this argument on the basis that:

"The compulsion towards litigation-proof certainty of grades and the over-regulation of the curriculum lead to such phenomena as depersonalisation, inhibition of innovation, breakdown of responsibility, immobility, and so forth" (Habermas, 1987:370-373)

His highlighting of this decline in the potential for educational democratization through the instrumentalizing means of the *"juridification of teaching practice"* (Habermas, 1987:372) is what provides the means for total situational mastery or micro-management of learning and the hegemony of a mass-media form of learning communication or *"generalized, symbolic form of communicative rationality"* (Habermas, 1987:390) which in turn damages intersubjectivity because *"there we find relations between the objective, social and subjective worlds already pre-interpreted"* (Habermas, 1987:125).

Habermas' argument for the need for some kind of alternative democratic learning culture to systemic hegemony, some kind of emancipatory *"counterweight"* (Habermas, 1987:390), based on the linguistic rationality is also explored and endorsed in the work of Robin Alexander on dialogic teaching (2004). Alexander, for example, raises the important point that the official Ofsted emphasis

on need for pace in learning irrespective of learning need type, and characterized by him as a *“sense of urgency driven by the need to make progress and succeed”*, actually *“appears to be having the opposite effect to that intended”* (Alexander, 2004:21). He continues with:

“the increased use of ‘traditional’ whole class teaching with ‘pace’ is in fact undermining the development of a more reflective approach” (Alexander, 2004:21).

His comment, too, on the democratic potential of dialogic teaching and learning, namely that:

“True democracy subverts authoritarian tendencies” (Alexander, 2004:48)

is crucial to the support of the argument of this thesis for it helps underscore the fact that the Masterclass was a radical forum, out of which emerged a vigorous and renewed lifeworld that offered a successful direct democratic challenge to a systemsworld.

In the context of Masterclass learning, progress was made for the benefit of all students not only in the Masterclass but also for all those in the institution itself. The combined forms of life in each of the lifeworld components provided more than just a *“potential for protest”* (Habermas, 1987:391) and the Masterclass lifeworld did begin a process of reification of Habermas’ claim that:

“new conflicts arise in domains of cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization; they are carried out in sub-institutional – or least extraparlimentary – forms of protest” (Habermas, 1987:392)

and that this process did begin to delineate:

“a new kind of politics aimed at restoring endangered ways of life” (Habermas, 1987:392).

It was partly an attempt to return to a form of liberal humanist education project combined with a social-reconstructionist agenda. What I and we, as a group, had in common was, therefore, a shared *‘action situation’* born of intellectual frustration and moral and political concern with current official provision. Masterclass did provide us with:

“a transcendental site where speaker and hearer meet, where they can reciprocally raise claims that their utterances fit the world and where they can criticise and confirm those validity claims, settle disagreements and arrive at agreements” (Habermas, 1987:126).

Habermas says that *“Lifeworld knowledge conveys feelings of absolute certainty only because we do not know about it”* (Habermas, 1987:135). It was this paradoxical sense of a shared, mutually defined and self-emancipated conviction and belief, expressed through *“communicative action”* that served *“to transmit and renew cultural knowledge under the aspect of coordinating action”* which in turn served group *“social integration and establishment of solidarity”* (Habermas, 1987:137). It was this self-creating and evolving opportunity of developing and establishing a new learning identity formation that enabled *“this process of reproduction”* to connect *“new situations with the existing conditions of the lifeworld”* (Habermas, 1987:137) that disclosed *“an attempt to reaffirm politics in the face of pure administration”* (Dryzek, 1990:402) and revealed *“an attempt to return to the beliefs and convictions of classical discursive democracy”* (Dryzek, 1990:19) that could *“release creative energy in the polity”* (Dryzek, 1990:23) leading in turn to *“more democratization of expertise in politics”* (Dryzek, 1990:218).

6.3. The Learning Spaces of Mastery Learning

(i) The Politics of Mastery Learning

Habermas’ ideal speech theory and ‘counterfactuality’ also enabled me to reconsider the School Effectiveness Movement’s re-appropriation of Bloom’s theory and practice of mastery learning (Davies and Sorrell: 1995). This appropriation is premised on a form of *“programmed instruction”* (Davies and Sorrell, 1995:2) with a commitment to giving *“specific predications about the gains from mastery learning procedures”* so that *“students do not have to put in much more time on the school tasks to achieve this level of proficiency”* (Davies and Sorrell, 1995:2) and that, for example, the original students of the programme in the 1950 and 1960’s who were *“taught for mastery”* (Davies and Sorrell, 1995:2), were *“low ability and slow learners”* (Davies and Sorrell, 1995:2). Moreover, they argue, *“mastery learning procedures are likely to enhance learning outcomes in most or all subject areas”* and more importantly that *“only grades of “A” and “B” were permitted because these are the accepted standard of mastery”* (Davies and Sorrell, 1995:2).

It is clear that such an official ‘deficit’ and ‘redemptive’ learning model has now been universally applied to all learners within and across the vocational and academic divide and ability range and types. There has been an attempt to realize a particular kind of ethico-political defined ‘parity of esteem’ that manufactures a neo-liberal claim to social justice (Davis and Sorrell, 1995:2). The universal atomising of all learning processes into bite-sized, linear, micro-managed and hierarchical

chunks and its assumption that all progress can be redemptively premised on managerialized and micro-managed step-learning, on excessively rational, linear learning, is entirely behaviourist, conformist and instrumentalist, is the means by which the ideology and surveillance practices of 'performativity' engenders and enforces the delivery of one particular definition of incontestable social and cultural truth. This politico-managerialized delivery of incontestable proof and truth of 'impact' in relation to meeting pre-specified production targets is democratically and ironically contrary to the other seemingly contradictory official learning agenda of learning 'personalization'. In short, the current system of learning operates on a contradiction and paradox of standardised personalisation and expects learners and professionals to reconcile this contradiction and paradox under increasing levels of impact accountability. Such an intensification of the learning environment, therefore, can be seen as being:

"Nearer the totalitarian end of the learning spectrum rather than the democratic" (Kelly, 1999:71-72)

with the obvious social and cultural implication that such inherent systemic pedagogic-methodology rationalisation articulated does have much potential for the creation of individual disaffection and alienation (Kelly: 1999). It can, therefore, be seen that the current dominant learning system is premised on excessive cognitivist, remedial and redemptive assumptions, on a socially and culturally decontextualized, systemic, high-stakes testing regime, under the contradictory moral-socio auspices of both widening participation, ensuring parity of esteem between academic and vocational learning and raising standards in both.

(ii) The Politics of Self-Reflexivity

Moreover, when reconsidering the usefulness and validity of drawing on Habermas' socio-linguistic political theory to make sense of the developing politicized democratic intellectuality of a voluntary English A Level Masterclass, it becomes significant then to reflect on the extent to which it is possible to construe the official use of mastery learning and the practice of learning reflexivity as instruments of hegemonic systemic rationality sanctioned by the school effectiveness movement. The ideological, political and rhetorical function of 'reflexivity' clearly has the potential to encourage and indeed enforce conformity of speech and action especially when linked to formal, normative accountability, performance and effectiveness review structures such as performance reviews and the very nature of instantaneous and naturally occurring learning. In this sense, the increasing imperative for demonstrating individual and so-called common sense defined reflective practice in all kinds of official learning by using and assessing overly-prescribed teaching and learning nomenclature, a form of official metalanguage, can be seen to open up and inculcate a porousness in the distinction and boundary between private and public. This has the potential to undermine the

legitimacy of 'other', of eroding the lifeworld of idiosyncrasy and difference, the operational base of a dialectic necessary for wider and deeper critical reflection of the relationships between micro (personal practice) the meso (government and institutional policy) / macro level (ideological, political and social theory). Officially sanctioned 'orality' and 'reflexivity' thus legitimizes only a certain kind and degree of reflection on performance between the micro (practice) and meso (policy) levels of being but not the micro-macro or the meso-macro levels. There is clearly an imposed legitimacy of how far critical reflection can go in terms of socially and culturally and politically contextualized significance and meaning. It suggests a scientistic form of return to the official medieval Trivium and Quadrivium curriculum system outlined by Bernstein (1996: 82-88) in his work on pedagogy, symbolic control and identity, curriculum in that the official control of word definition (Trivium) has prime importance in learning before applying the these officially defined words to an official interpretation and understanding of the 'truth' of the world as seen through the content and pedagogy of subject specialisms (Quadrivium).

This point of the undemocratic politics of an official metalanguage speaking and writing and validating lived and living experience is very important to consider when considering the current nature of the relationship between official structure and personal agency in official learning because it foregrounds the necessary point of intersection at which it is possible to mobilize an understanding and indeed critique of the extent to which aspects of democratic pluralism inherent in societal corporatism can be identified and understood as showing worrying signs of totalitarian-like state corporatism. Practices of reflexivity dictates and controls a preferred and pre-determined totality of official experience and meaning that blends the critical rationality of private agency entirely with the uncritical consumer rational agency of official public policy in the name and ethical primacy of pragmatic common sense. Alternative professional and learning spaces are thus in danger of being increasingly marginalised or rendered morally and politically illegitimate, closed down by virtue of their perceived irrelevance and lack of effectiveness and impact with regards to meeting current institutional and government policy imperatives and targets.

(iii) The Politics of Assessment

When we consider the possible reasons why the current, over-rationalized system has returned to the pedagogic ideas and practices of Bloom's programmes of mastery learning of the 1950's, it is easy to see this re-appropriation, since general Incorporation in 1993, as a an ideological and political strategy of inscribing an assumed redemptiveness into the current system of School Effectiveness. It can also be seen as the basis of the universal pathologizing of the less centrally and politically controlled educational provision and practice prior to 1993. When considered in this way, it is possible to understand current practice as tantamount to an inculcation of an uncritical acceptance of a managerially and corporatist-dictated learning vision masquerading as a kind of redemptive pedagogic theology. What evidences this argument is the research, conducted during

the time in which the CK2 was being formulated, by the Institute of Education, London and the Nuffield Institute in 1997. They concluded that:

“Alongside these changes to A-Level, GNVQs had been reformed to align them more with A Levels; to make them more effective in delivering greater consistency of standard” (IOE / Nuffield 1997: 49)

under the socio-moral auspices of parity of esteem and the inclusiveness agenda . Furthermore, the research by Torrance and Pryor (2008) into the nature and effects of official uses of formative assessment in the form of Assessment of Learning (AFL) and Assessing Pupil Progress (APP), likewise, indicates that current official uses of formative assessment can also be seen as being misused for corporatist ideological and political reasons, which has the effect of marginalizing and eliminating any kind of other learning that is outside official assessment paradigms leading to what they claim is a worrying narrowing of the distance inherent in the relationship between what is taught and how it is assessed. They also argue that:

“The distance (between actual learning and forms of assessment) is now so little that there is no longer any difference and that as a result we now have a situation in which we have moved from the notion of assessment of learning, through the notion of assessment for learning to that of “assessment as learning” (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:281).

Their argument is that such assessment, combined with officially accountable learning reflective action, is preventing freer and more spontaneous, more flexible and independent, more speculative and creative learning opportunities that are not tied to and controlled by the imperatives of conformity, standardization, predictability and productivity. Torrance and Pryor’s (2008) work on the nature and politics of assessment, also claims that there has been an *“overall orientation towards the pursuit of achievement”* and that *“the structural properties of awards such as modularization can facilitate this”* (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:285)

Furthermore, their work also highlights not only how learning has become assessment led, but also how consumer learning practices are used to inculcate more passive forms of learning. For example, the conflation of learning with assessment is supported by what seems to be a discourse and practice of care, or more precisely a form of customer care. Having outlined how the impact of such learning is redefining the nature and function of contemporary schooling along consumer-citizenship, there is, they claim, a direct correlation to the proliferation of a multi-faceted learning support cultures. For example, they argue that it is obvious now that:

“a significant, even overwhelming, culture of support for learners exists, “at every level and across every sub-sector” (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:285).

In the context of A Level learning they argue that even in normal A-Level teaching and beyond the learning advantages of the modularization pedagogic, there is support:

“provided by tutors through the breaking down and interpreting of assessment criteria” of sustained “exam coaching”, the sharing of “detailed grade criteria are articulated ... for students to follow” (Torrance and Pryor, 2008: 285).

They also emphasize that increasing levels of teacher accountability is partly responsible for this high level of support. Their view that *“The amount of “the hidden work” done by teachers and institutions to meet targets and improve league table positions also highlights the fact that teachers are “adept at coaching” (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:290)* in the pursuit of achievement which means that success *“falls on the shoulders of tutors as on the learners” (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:286).* They further argue in their research that *“as a consequence, assignments and portfolios from some institutions can often look very similar – in structure, format, types of evidence include etc...” (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:286),* This is something with which I can concur in relation to my other professional work as a coursework moderator / Team Leader and AS/A2 coursework adviser. Torrance and Pryor (2008) conclude that:

“in a very real sense we seemed to have moved from ‘assessment of learning’ through ‘assessment for learning’ to an official position as ‘assessment as learning’ (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:291).

It is this last point that indicates that:

“the imperative to compliance and the expulsion of failure from the post-secondary sector” (291) actually works to weaken rather than strengthen the development of learner autonomy” (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:291).

Their argument that formative assessment is entirely convergent, based on the need for *“identifying and reporting whether or not students achieve extant curriculum-derived objectives” (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:291),* is what they see as the potential downside of such activity namely:

“that the achievement can come to be seen as little more than criteria compliance in pursuit of grades” (Torrance and Pryor, 2008: 291).

Torrance and Pryor's (2008) rather startling conclusion that such convergent learning is leading to a situation in which:

"criteria compliance comes to replace learning" (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:282)

so that "the imperative to compliance" ... leads to the "expulsion of failure" and the elimination of challenge from learning itself (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:291-3), is fundamental to any attempt to justify an argument for a 'dumbing down' point of view as it suggests that current learning merely nurtures and encourages immediate gratification, immediate and short term achievement and learning passivity, dependence and conformity. Their argument that such 'unitization' of learning is a commitment to social justice by virtue of its learning inclusiveness through transparency is countered by the alternative argument that:

"Transparency promotes instrumentalism" (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:290).

Finally, their work is important because it also highlights the extensive use of various kinds of scaffolding support strategies and the opportunities to *"draft and redraft assignments, as necessary, in order to retake unit and modular tests to improve grades"* (Torrance and Pryor, 2008:290). What makes these views more compelling as evidence of 'dumbing down' and grade inflation in relation to my own professional experience and practice was the fact that many of my students simply persisted in retaking the easier AS units of work rather than make the effort and perceived risk of trying hard to achieve more in the more difficult and sophisticated A2 units. This was because 50% of total A Level marks were carried forward into the total A Level marking scheme. There was thus no legitimate incentive to acquire and develop the higher level thinking and analytical skills to that would otherwise indicate A grade skill and achievement.

The effects of this process are also, of course, felt in the higher education sector. For example, the ubiquity of a high stakes, remedial / intervention / support culture has led to what Furedi (THES, 6 August, 2009:13) has called, a *"therapy culture"* which, in turn, is premised on the notion of pre-existent sickness or pathology that needs to be cured, which in turn seems to be leading to a form of emotional, intellectual and moral 'infantilization' of the student and professional body politic. Given the ever-widening deliberate, or perhaps unintended consequences of, this situation, it is obvious that a new, re-invigorated and legitimatizing critical democratic learning ethic needs to be able to emerge and indeed flourish. Evidence is needed to assess the extent to which it can be indicated that such an overly rational and oligarchic system is now in the throes of undermining its

own claim to legitimacy. This is because such systemic self-glorification and the social and cultural anomie produced by the over-production of high and ever-increasing levels of achievement are leading to claims of ever-weakening legitimacy. A sense of learning worthlessness, based on sameness and constant and rapid change in systems of earning legitimation is quickly rendering previous notions of achievement irrelevant. The constant need to re-learn and to re-train is now in danger of producing a deepening and fundamentalist political and social pathology leading to a need for alternative and, by default, more seemingly radical notions of learning citizenship and democratic learning practice and identity.

It is then the impact of enforced learning convergence engendered by the rationalities of mastery learning, learning reflexivity and intensive support strategies, offered under the moral auspices of learning 'intervention', which play a very large part in the now predictable annual debates claiming over-production and claims of grade inflation, of 'dumbing down the actual quality and socio-cultural effects and mid-to long-term advantages of such learning that underpins accelerating success and achievement rates. The now almost predictable national rise in achievement, especially in the higher achievement categories of A grades, is a constant reminder that all is not well in the current system and that students are not sufficiently being trained intellectually, interpersonally and socially in terms of the necessary independence and interdependence, self-motivation and critical thinking skills necessary for both the successful training for employment and economic utility but also training for the kind of social utility produced by liberal education that helps historically and trans-culturally contextualize the vagaries and unpredictabilities and realities of life outside the narrow scope of human understanding produced and validated by the pragmatism and self-interest of a highly rationalised and overly-supportive official learning system (Pring: 1995). Evidence of this has also been reflected in the media but, in particular and very recently, a view expressed by Diane Warwick of 'Universities UK' who says that already, having lost faith in the system, some universities have begun setting their own tests:

"because A-Level grade inflation has destroyed institutions' ability to discriminate between bright and average students" (THE, 24 July 2008:5).

It is also claimed that *"Some fifty schools, including fifteen state schools, announced that they are to ditch A Levels in favour of the new Cambridge Pre-U exam from September"* and that another one hundred schools have said they will adopt the exam in the next three years in response to *"too easy A Levels"* (THES, 31 July, 2008). This situation seems prophetic now when considered in the context of the extent to which this is still happening, now in 2011, as a result of the general commodification of the official learning experience and its ethico-social justification through the ideology and practices of managerialism, of politicized management.

(iv) The Politics of Learning Commodification

However, it has been the work of Bruner (in Leach and Moon, 1999:17) that has highlighted the anti-democratic emergence of the trend towards more corporatized and oligarchic learning. Bruner's work is premised on the argument that:

"Any choice of pedagogical approach inevitably communicates a conception of a learning process and of the learner" (Leach and Moon, 1999:17)

and that:

"Pedagogy is never innocent" (Leach and Moon, 1999:17)

and that:

"it is a medium that carries its own message" (Leach and Moon, 1999:17).

This point about the ideological political and moral bias and role of pedagogy is important as it also supports Lemke's (cited in Schweisfurth: 2002) belief that:

"Schooling today would be seen to be paying too much attention to what and how we study and not enough to what we become" (Schweisfurth, 2002:28).

This highly significant point about the value-impregnation of pedagogy and its relationship to learning identity formation was the starting point of my further investigation into the social engineering implications for learning citizenship resulting from the ubiquity of mastery learning.

Furthermore, my understanding of the rise of a kind of learning oligarchism has also been informed by the work of Ritzer and his idea of the so-called *"iron cage"* of commodification, leading to what he generally and derogatively calls the *'Macdonaldization'* thesis (Ritzer, 1996: Chapter 8). Ritzer's thesis argues that education is in the process of being packaged-up neatly, quickly and efficiently and then consumed on a mass scale according to the production principle of predictability relating to standardization, replication of settings, employee and customer behaviour, products. Most importantly, Ritzer's argument stresses the instrumental use of standardised 'scripted interaction' between employee and customer to ensure total control, maximal efficiency and

production of service and profit (Ritzer: 1996). In the context of how this use of a standard and pre-scripted learning language and dialogic form of language, leading to a standardised form of articulation and communication for the benefits of mass production profit, I became very interested in how a similar kind of politicized metalanguage was in fact being used to define and 'speak' the learning necessary for successful completion of the CK2 A Level courses of study as outlined in the sections (above) on the politics of mastery learning, self-reflexivity and uses of formative assessment. Moreover, reading Ritzer's commodification thesis has helped my understanding of how it is possible to begin to integrate my concerns relating to disparate aspects of official educational practice into a coherent understandable whole. His work too led me to an understanding of the macro-implications of linking this argument to the work of Bakan on the nature of corporations (2004), of Green (1997) on the politics of globalisation, of Giddens on Third Way politics (2000), of Morgan on management theory and '*psychic prisons*' (1997) and finally of Baumann and his work on '*space wars*' (1998).

Notably, Bakan argues that any form of or commitment to corporatization is premised on the belief that it has a particular view of and makes an assumption about human nature. Bakan's work on the nature and power of corporatist ideology and practice theorizes these on the idea that:

"The Corporation and its underlying ideology are animated by a narrow conception of human nature that is too distorted and too uninspiring to have lasting purchase on our political imaginations. Though individualistic self-interest and consumer desires are core parts of who we are and nothing to be ashamed about, they are not all of who we are. We also feel deep ties and ties to one another and that we share common fates and commitments to one another" (Bakan, 2004:166).

From this perspective, it seems that the end justifies the means. Bakan suggests this when he says:

"As the corporation comes to dominate society – through among other things, privatization and commercialization – its ideal conception human nature inevitable becomes dominant too. And that is the frightening prospect. The corporation is deliberately designed to be a psychopath: purely self-interested, incapable of concern for others, amoral and without conscience – in a word, inhuman – and its goal, as Noam Chomsky states is to "ensure that the human beings who (it is) interacting with, you and me, also become inhuman. You have to drive out of people's heads natural sentiments like care about others, or sympathy, or solidarity... The ideal is to have individuals who are totally dissociated from one another, who don't care about anyone else ...whose conception of themselves, their sense of value, is "just how many created wants can I satisfy?" (Bakan, 2004:132-135).

Bakan's thesis is compelling in the context of my concerns in this thesis. Furthermore, his view that:

"Corporate rule must be challenged in order to revive the values of practices it contradicts: democracy, social justice, equality and compassion" (Bakan, 2004:166)

is important and should obviously, in the name of furthering participative, deliberative democratic schooling, be foregrounded in any future educational debate about democratic teaching and learning.

When, moreover, Bakan's anti-corporatist thesis is linked to Green's (1997) argument that:

"globalisation predicts the end of the national economy and the end of the nation state as the primary unit of political organization and loyalty" (Green, 1997:167)

and that it *"promotes the demise of national cultures through the transformation of global communications and cultural hybridization"* (Green, 1997:167), it can be seen that globalizing educational policies are impacting on the nature of liberal democratic ethics and principles and by implication on the nature of western educational systems too. Green's further point that:

"National governments would cease to control their education systems, which would gradually converge towards some regional or global norm, divested of any specific national characteristics" (Green, 1997:130-133)

and that the process by which the state begins:

"to consolidate systems of integrative and administrative control over territory, replacing the uneven and limited central controls of the feudal state with its poor communication ... in order to formulate and inculcate new forms of civic loyalty" (Green, 1997: 132-133)

is, ironically, very close in nature and implication to Giddens' (2000) own view on Third Way communitarianism. Giddens' view states that *"a stable sense of self must be anchored in a community"* and that *"globalization creates favourable conditions for the renewal of communities"* and more importantly for my thesis that if these communities *"become too strong, communities*

breed identity politics, and with it the potential for social division, or even disintegration" (Giddens, 2000: 63-64). On a similar point of the need of Third Way politics and global corporate capitalism to establish stable, safe and conflict free "*safety zones*" (Giddens, 2000:49) of social and learning existence, despite some initial upheaval resulting from radical transformations of selected sites as part of the social renewal agenda in order to maximise economic and social investment policies, Held et al (1984) also refers to the global proliferation of similar structures of control, compliance and capital concentration. These places of control are what Thomson calls "*oligopolistic structures*" (cited in Held, 1984:492) based on the principles that "*participation only in routine channels allows the concentration of corporate power to dominate*" (Held et al, 1984:581-582). Thompson further argues that such a rise in global use of interrelated economic, politico-administrative and socio-cultural sub-systems herald what he describes as:

"the coming of a totally administered world in which dissent is successfully repressed and crises are diffused" (Held et al, 1984: 493)

which, in the context of learning, become sites of "*cognitive capitalism*" (492) and "*capital concentration*" (Held et al, 1984:492).

My reading of the global implications of the educational ideology and politics of Third Way politics, namely that of narrowing and standardising educational systems to maximize productivity, and the transferability of intellectual and social capital has also been deepened by the work of Morgan (1997) and the heuristic instrument of metaphor. In the context of Morgan's work, I was particularly interested in the relevance of the '*psychic prison*' metaphor as a contribution to helping me understand and explore the concerns of my thesis. I began by linking this particular metaphoric notion of organizational structure of learning to CK2 because it began to highlight the fact that metaphorical reading:

"encourages us to dig below the surface to uncover patterns of control that trap people in unsatisfactory modes of existence and to find ways through which they can be transformed" (Morgan, 1997: 245).

Morgan says, for example that:

"the psychic prison metaphor thus heightens our awareness of the relationship between 'the rational' and what seems 'irrational'" (Morgan, 1997:245)

and he warns of the dangers of dismissing or downplaying the significance of the latter, because the:

‘irrational’ can be an incredibly powerful force for the people involved” (Morgan, 1997:245-6)

His view also suggests that this metaphor indicates that organizations are by nature irrational but seek rationality often leading to a kind of repression. He thus encourages us to:

“recognize that rationality is often irrationality in disguise” (Morgan, 1997:246),

that *“the psychic prison metaphor shows us that we have over-rationalized our understanding of organization” (Morgan, 1997:246)* and that it is *“pointless to talk about creating learning organizations’ or of trying to develop corporate cultures that thrive on change if the unconscious human dimension is ignored” (Morgan, 1997:246)*. He also says that:

“many sub-cultural groups provide rallying points for positive ideas and developments that cannot find formal expression elsewhere, or for counterbalancing negative aspects of the dominant culture” (Morgan, 1997:247-248).

That this innate communitarian argument acts as a potential antidote and blueprint for reform of what I have come to regard as the excessive rationalism underpinning the current system of A Level provision was an idea that initially brought me into contact with the ‘de-schooling’ ideas of Illich (1971). His work in turn enabled me to begin thinking about how his idea of an “alternative currency” of learning within mainstream provision might be possible. For example, Illich’s (1971) belief that:

“Skill teaching does not provide equal benefits for both parties” in that “the teacher of skills ...must usually be offered some incentive beyond the rewards of teaching. Skill-teaching is a matter of repeating drills over and over and is, in fact, all the more dreary for those pupils who need it most” (Illich, 1971:94).

He further argues that *“A skill-exchange needs currency or credits or other tangible incentives in order to operate, even if the exchange itself were to generate a currency of its own” (Illich, 1971: 94)*. This clearly endorses the democratic need for a more politically diverse and more socially meaningful form of formal education based on the conviction that another kind of legitimizing

'currency' is needed as a motivational and legitimizing force, a force for the inculcation of more effective forms of practical social and participative democracy. Moreover, Illich's notion of an alternative currency was also important because it made me fully realize that by aligning myself to such a reformist project clearly constituted my being wholeheartedly implicit and complicit in its empirical and multi-faceted theoretical world.

6.4. A Review of the Learning Politics of 'Curriculum 2000'

Moreover, reading work on Third Way global corporate ideology, politics and economics and the production of consumer citizenship, and the arguments for de-schooling, ultimately stimulated my interest in the possibility of offering a macro-analysis of how, and the extent to which, my previous and earlier analysis of the New Labour policy trajectory and the experiences and reflections on participation in a voluntary A Level English Masterclass educational initiative can help propose a more general political and ideological understanding of the Third Way learning politics inherent in the structure of the A Level curriculum model of CK2 itself enabling it to be construed as a politico-pedagogic text. This has led me to believe that such an analysis shows how CK2 organizes, produces and legitimates three different kinds of specialized pedagogic classifications, three different kinds of knowledge and discursive orders and three different kinds of learning voices and identities all of which produce different kinds of learning mind-sets and states of consciousness, of learning selfhood, according to the re-organization of learning rooted in corporate capitalist ethics and practices.

I propose to do this by considering the democratic nature and implications of the radicalism of newly configured learning space concepts, the notion of learning space wars, between the learning politics of the two idealist, bifurcated and yet paradoxically integrated learning sites of 'modularity' and 'synopticity', and how these different yet 'vertically' and 'horizontally' linked learning sites seem to have been circumscribed, in turn, by the compulsory metadiscourse of the Key Skills agenda. By construing the CK2 learning model in these regionalized metacognitive, pedagogic and metalinguistic terms, it initially alerted me to the fact that part of the professional problem I was exploring and trying to make sense of was a linguistic one, which in turn raised issues relating to the pathologies arising from trying to contend and negotiate with some kind of Bakhtinesque-defined form "*semiotic totalitarianism*" (Morson and Emerson, 1990:28), a new societal-educational form of learning monologism circumscribing, de-legitimizing and silencing all other forms of educational and learning discourses emerging out of and under the linguistic-ethical auspices and practices of New Public Management (NPM), School Effectiveness and Total Quality Management (TQM), Key Skills and Assessment for Learning (AFL). All this, as reflected in the CK2 model seemed initially to combine to legitimise a democratically just attempt to achieve social equality, a unity and coherence in the ethical pursuit of inclusiveness, of widening participation and the maintenance of a commitment to an elite gold standard of academic excellence.

It has been Bauman's (1998) work, however, on the nature and disorienting effects of globalisation that has helped most in the overall politico-pedagogical conceptualization of my ideas. For example, his work on the planning and development of global cities entitled 'Globalization: the human consequences' (1998), outlining what he calls the politics of "*spacial administration*" and "*cartographic monopoly*" (Bauman, 1998:41) leading to "*the 'dematerialization' of space and time*" which when "*blended with 'rational happiness' turns into a resolute, unconditional commandment*" (Bauman, 1998:40), has helped me develop a theoretical typology by which it is possible to establish and evaluate links between the purposes and effects of corporate capitalism and its relationship to the Third Way A Level curriculum model of CK2. It also has the potential for the analysis of the more unintended pathologies and emancipations resulting from the commodification and consumerization of education.

In this work, Bauman's outlines his typology of what he calls global '*space wars*'. This is an argument that contends that the success and hegemony of globalisation derives its power to control from a form of dual-panopticism formed out of a paradoxical dichotomisation, polarisation and integration of two essential states of cultural being in order to nurture, control and ultimately exploit for the benefit of capital production. He further calls these social conditions, sites of "*agoraphobia*" and / or "*the renaissance of locality*" (Bauman, 1998:2). His argument, for example, that "*An integral part of the globalizing process is progressive spatial segregation, separation and exclusion*" (Bauman, 1998:3) and the utopian notion of constructing "*the perfect city*" (Bauman, 1998:37) through the "*cartographic monopoly*" of planners (Bauman, 1998:41) and "*spatial administration*" (Bauman, 1998:40) clearly has links with the kind of A Level curriculum modelling I have outlined in this thesis so far, based on the two bifurcated and yet integrated learning sites of 'modularity' and 'synopticity'.

According to my typology, then, my critical position on the analysis of CK2 is based on what Bauman (1998) defines as the quintessential tendency of globalisation to dichotomize the lived and living, namely the paradoxical cultural process underpinning "*the bifurcation and polarization of human experience*" (Bauman, 1998:4). This process of bifurcated polarization is further defined as the creation and legitimation of two fundamentalist and contradictory states of being which he defines as "*the anthropomorphic and the praxeomorphic*" (Bauman, 1998:28). The former is the lived experience inherent in stable structures and symbolic states of being, and the former the living experience inherent in change, innovation and risk. The living experience of the majority is stable and symbolic sites of social and moral being something he defines as '*localism*' and the lived experience of an elite minority is premised on sites of change, innovation and risk something he defines as '*glocalism*'.

Bauman's first locale of '*localism*' is what I have come to define educationally as the neoconservative learning site of CK2 modularity because of its vertical, strong, and regulatory / normative pedagogical classification and its purpose to accrue mass capital derived from both 'symbolic' and 'social' learning space, a space in which there can be "*perpetuation of control*" (Bauman, 1998:30), a necessary de-personalisation, de-culturalisation and "*immobilization*" (Bauman, 1998:52) of what was once indigenous and idiosyncratic lived experience. It is a process, Bauman argues, of de-culturalization that ensures the necessary responsiveness, transparency, domestication and sameness of "*quantifiable space*" (Bauman, 1998:32), that ensures appropriate "*codification*" of renewed space (Bauman, 1998:40), "*the regularity of, uniformity, homogeneity, reproducibility of the space element*" (Bauman, 1998: 36) leading to the gradual marginalization and "*death of the street*" (Bauman, 1998:42) ostensibly in the name of "*the guarantee of security*" (Bauman, 1998: 47). In reality, he argues that it is premised on maximizing profit in the global "*pursuance of panoptical objectives*" (Bauman, 1998:34). This model of analysis offers us an interpretation of the emergence of a global learning "*panoptican*", which has the main purpose of:

"instill (ing) discipline and to impose a uniform pattern on the behaviour of its inmates ...a weapon against difference, choice and variety" (Bauman, 1998:50)

a system into which:

"people are forced into a position where they could be watched" (Bauman, 1998:52).

It is a form of cultural existence that he calls paradoxically the security of "*prisonization*" (70) and the consequential rise of the pathology of living or learning 'agoraphobia' (Bauman: 1998,) and the:

"present-day tendency to criminalize cases below the idealized norm" (Bauman, 1998:5)

as "*the power-holders wished to accord a uniform treatment to a large number of subjects*" (Bauman, 1998: 28). It is what one Masterclass student called the "*iron cage*" with a pedagogic classification that is vertical.

These views are shown both structurally and statistically within the original CK2 model by the fact that the model originally comprised six units, five of which were based on the principles and practices of modularity and only one on the principles and practices of synopticity. Therefore, 83.3%

was based on the behaviourist learning site of 'modularity' and 16.6% of the more constructivist learning site of synopticity. When such views on the global politics of 'space wars' are set in the context of understanding the socio, economic and political nature of modularity, it is possible to see clearly how and why the use of the all-important learning instrument of the objective, as outlined by Swann & Pratt (1999), is so important for the successful manufacturing of the ideal learning environment that helps reconstitute education as training, knowledge production to information flow, divergent to convergent learning, criticality to competence and skill-acquisition, critical studentship and professionalism to that of customer service ideology. Furthermore, Bauman's ideas on 'space wars' are given significant credibility when his claims are linked to the justification of objectives (Swann & Pratt: 1999) to help constitute the ideal learning state based on the following tenets:-

1. *We need to know where we are going*
2. *If our objectives are clear, we are less likely to be side-tracked by trivial ad hoc suggestions*
3. *Objectives-based planning helps us focus on important and worthwhile achievements*
4. *The formulation of objectives is consistent with democratic principles; it makes teaching and learning transparent and more equitable because everybody knows the criteria by which achievement is judged*
5. *Practitioners can be guided in their work by means of objectives set by policy makers. This results in higher standards of performance and greater consistency within and between institutions*
6. *The use of objectives is consistent with establishing systems of accountability. People know what they are required to do and to achieve during a specific period. It is relatively straightforward to assess whether objectives have been met*
7. *Only the most trivial and basic learning can be planned in detail and predicted with accuracy. Objectives focus attention on performance rather than learning. The use of behavioural objectives focuses attention on readily observable events and treats learning as a linear process. These objectives, will in particular, fail to address the development in attitudes, and changes in disposition and potential*
8. *The achievement of stated objectives tends to take priority over the issue of whether or to what extent the aims and objectives were worthwhile in the first place*

The second political locale of 'glocalism' is what I define as being premised on the linking of neo-liberalism to the learning site of 'synopticity'. In the CK2 model, synopticity was different from modularity because learning was less instrumentalized, was not dominated, constrained and dictated by one particular learning objective as other modules but based on a learning site that was more balanced, more open, speculative, egalitarian and integrated in its use of multiple learning objectives, something which in Bauman's conceptualization and terminology would be a synopticanism, an exclusive site for "the global elite" (Bauman, 1998:52), a site in which "The

centres of meaning-and-value production are today extraterrestrial and emancipated from local constraints" (Bauman, 1998:3), a site for the "nomads" as opposed to a site of the "settled" (Bauman, 1998:3). It was a learning site that factored in the recognition of and commitment to the notion of the A Level 'gold' standard and operated according to the pedagogic classification of weaker and greater pedagogic codes.

Any formal bifurcation and polarization of two distinct sites of 'learning being', into seriously imbalanced proportions, has implications for democracy in that the enforced separation should be, says Baumann, *"a particular cause for worry"* because of:

"the progressive breakdown in communication between the increasingly global and extraterrestrial elites and the ever-more 'localized' rest" (Bauman, 1998:3).

In this quotation, he highlights the potential democratic problems and dangers arising from inherent *"fundamentalist tendencies"* within these sites of separation and exclusion (Bauman, 1998:3). This minority and exclusive learning site of 'synopticity' can be seen as neo-liberal because of its relatively unconstrained and entrepreneurial learning opportunity, its assumed 'glocal' disposition and operational practice. Moreover, this particular learning site, when set in the context of how the less instrumental use of the learning objective can engender an alternative ideal state of being based on relative freedom, elitism and exclusivity, can, as argued by Swann & Pratt (1999), be seen as being based on the following tenets of greater learning freedom when learning is relatively freed from the instrumentalism and utilitarianism of objectives-based learning:-

1. *The alternative to the use of objectives is a laissez-faire approach which results in chaos*
2. *Can only achieve goals in situations that are unproblematic*
3. *Fails to address the open-minded nature of human endeavour and in particular social change*
4. *Tends to encourage a blinkered view of what will be possible and successful in practice. Unforeseen consequences of action may go unnoticed. Does not encourage critical reflection of ad hoc ideas and experiences.*
5. *The belief that good planning with the formulation of aims and objectives is mistaken; it is important to focus initially on the problem context and the formulation of one or more pressing problems. More concerned with the question "have our stated objectives been met? If not, why not?"*
6. *Discourages the expression of contention. Disagreement has no legitimacy, is suppressed or sidelined*

7. *Promotes mediocrity because it provides no social mechanism by which to be bold and potentially valuable ideas may be shared, discussed and subsequently tested*
8. *Often generates lists in which the objectives are not prioritized*
9. *When objectives are set by one group for others to adopt, ideological and empirical issues are raised.*
10. *Objectives are essentially authoritarian and diminishes the practitioner's sense of creativity and responsibility. Consistency and control are achieved at the expense of diversity and responsibility*

6.5. The Learning of Global Corporate Consumer Citizenship

Through reading Kelly's work (1999: 616-625) on the intellectual capital of schooling, I was able to understand the potential for and relevance of the linking of the bifurcated and integrated learning sites of 'modularity' and 'synopticity' inherent in the structure of the CK2 curriculum model to his tripartite capitalist production model. For example, I began to realize that his concept of '*structural capital*' could well be construed as the rationality of the totality of CK2 model itself as an idealist and pragmatic form of provision for and commitment to universal social justice integrating neo-conservative, neo-liberal and neo-socialist strands of Third Way politics. I began to see the possibility that his concept of '*competence capital*' could well be the micro-managed main production learning site of 'modularity', of "*the settled*" and saw too that his concept of '*intellectual capital*' was similar to the more exclusive and elite learning site of 'synopticity', the site for learning "*the nomads*".

What the work of Green (1997) added to my political reading of CK2 was the dimension of how it could be further linked to the extent to which globalisation, corporate capitalism, was beginning to threaten and undermine any other kind of educational systemic difference, which might be manifested in the residual notion of a nation state, by its legitimating relationship with the hegemonic moral, ethical and economic auspices of the growing global influence of the World Trade Organization (WTO) which promotes the liberalization and marketization of trade in education globally through the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), (Green, 1997:170-174). Furthermore, Green's argument that the commitment to such a global 'Knowledge Economy' in facilitating education provision and development of policy and knowledge transfer systems under GATS, is re-conceptualizing education as primarily concerned with economically-driven and consumer-oriented citizenship training. It further follows, that this growing intrusion of global capital in the governance of public education is also, of course, repositioning the ideological, political, curriculum design, management, administration, and even the teaching, learning and assessment of education. This can be seen in the plethora of GATS inspired quality control 'instruments' such as LMS, NPM, the dominance of business discourse and practices such as TQM, teaching and learning 'production' targets, 'competence', 'performance', 'productivity', 'audit', 'accountability', 'effectiveness', commodification, consumerism, customer-focused practice, the notion of the

learning organization, of continuous improvement and the need of professionals to meet pre-specified targets linked to funding.

My reading of the work of Giddens on the Third Way, in this context, is also important for outlining the development of my particular political conceptualization of the professional problems I am raising in this thesis. He defines the Third Way paradigm as a:

“new form of centre left politics, which was designed to come to terms with globalization by a commitment to an endeavour to respond to change” (Giddens, 2000:27).

He further describes the Third Way as not being a political ideology at all but an inclusive, pragmatic rationalization for political compromise between traditional left and right wing politics underpinning the post-war consensus politics. He believes that globalization is a given, *“an irresistible force of nature”* and has *“a radical centre”*, *“an active middle”* ground and a shifting, pragmatic one with no ideological or principled core other than the desire for increasing levels of corporatized mass production (Giddens, 2000:43).

My interest in this view is based on the extent to which this professed left / right pragmatic, non-ideological compromise marginalizes or negates the possibility of any kind of neo-socialism, of praxeomorphic learning sites to democratically counteract the proliferation of official oligarchic learning sites, in the face of what has been described as the rise of corporate:

“authoritarian capitalism and the rise of illiberal democracy”
(Observer: 30.12.07).

Giddens' further comment that the Third Way shies away from radicalism opting for a middle course in everything and advocates a *“politics without adversaries”* (Giddens, 2000:43) must be seen as a chimera. This view of Third Way radicalism of centre left politics, the politics of globalisation, therefore ends up accepting the world as it is rather than seeking to transform it, and consequently it is not adequately resisting or challenging globalisation on democratic conviction. The extent to which it serves to strengthen the position and hegemony of the holy trinity comprising the OECD, World Bank and GAT (Lawton and Gordon, 2002:190-191) is evidence of this. Lawton and Gordon (2002) further warn us of the dangers of this partnership and the World Bank in particular promoting *“one single model of educational development”* based on economically driven *“naïve cultural borrowing”* (Lawton and Gordon, 2002:191). The prospect, therefore, of the global marginalisation of 'other', the marginalisation and de-legitimation of an ideological and political dialectic and the resultant decline to a commitment to the validity of a claim to universal reason based on

enlightenment principles by global advanced corporatist capitalism, is what is configuring western education systems as instruments through which professionals and learners are becoming susceptible to one kind of homogeneous political identity and form of citizenship, namely a consumer and corporate citizenship one.

Baumann's (1998) work on '*space wars*', the work of Green (1997), and Giddens (2000), in particular, have further enriched my reading of literature on learning corporate citizenship. The work of Macintosh et al (2003) too has been significant in that it has helped me realize that calls for such global corporate citizenship was in fact part of the ethical base for the renewal of international human rights inherent in what was then called the 'Global Compact'. This was an initiative of the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who first articulated to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland (127) the idea of, premised on Thomas Paine's 'Rights of Man' and invoked the old idea of "*the great chain of (human) connection underpinning a civilized community*" (Macintosh et al, 2003: 225), that global corporate business was best placed to offer a voluntaristic panacea to the increasing realization that globalization had "*elements of (moral) fragility*" (Macintosh et al, 2003: 127), and a tendency to create a pathology owing to the "*uneven distribution (of wealth and opportunity)*", resulting in a social and moral "*void in (national) governance and a series of social issues which have not been supported by equivalent robust (moral and ethical) frameworks*" (Macintosh et al, 2003:127). This Global Compact also presupposed a realization of the need for all parties to be "*all sitting round the same table*", be "*part of the same conversation*" (Macintosh et al, 2003:225), be part of "*a brave New World*" of "*bringing together groups and organizations*"... "*through the commitment to listening, engaging in rational conversation and recognition of 'the other'*" (Macintosh et al, 2003:224), "*in cross sector partnerships*" in order "*to give a human face to the global market*" (Macintosh et al, 2003:221). It was a project in which it is possible to "*explore the notion of living corporate citizenship*" (Macintosh et al, 2003:12).

What my wider reading of globalizing ideology and politics has enabled to do then is to understand the reasons why those students voluntarily participating in the English interdisciplinary Masterclass did so with a varied sense of emotional and intellectual pathology. It has also enabled me to understand why the student notion of an "*iron cage*" of learning was so dominant and stark an image to use to express their experiences of mainstream modular learning that produced a form of learning agoraphobia that was preventing from them from developing intellectual creativity and enterprise. It also, of course, has helped me understand my own position as a developing professional in this respect and why both students and myself felt so needful of and committed to the promise and potential of the more emancipated learning site of Masterclass that initially expressed itself as a form of '*compensatory*' learning, and then over a short period of time became more a form of '*counter-learning*' once it had begun to exploit the democratic possibilities of early student voice research work. When this transition in the learning politics of Masterclass is viewed

from the point of view of global political theory and policy, viewed from the point of view of what this transition can tell us about much wider changes in the nature of what it meant to be student and a professional at the time and of course can still tell us, it can be argued that the current idealist and pragmatic model of universal education and citizenship is an interpretation of liberal democratic state theory and learning theory that is derived from what Stronach and Maclure (1997) have called a kind of *"Hegelian transcendence of contradictions"* (Stronach and Maclure, 1997:5). This is endorsed by Hamilton (cited in Slee, et al, 1998:13) when he says that the School effectiveness movement in education has become *"a global industry"* (Slee, et al, 1998:13) and *"stands at the intersection of educational research and social engineering"* (Slee, et al,1998:13). He further states the view that *this*:

"cloaks school practices in a progressive, social Darwinist, eugenic rationale" (Slee, et al,1998:15)

on the basis that it derives its eugenic drive because:

"it privileges the desirable and seeks to eliminate the negative" (Slee, et al,1998:15)

and that:

"It underwrites a pathological view of public education" (Slee, et al,1998:14)

from which it derives its moral status as:

"a culture of redemption" (Slee, et al,1998:23).

What is significant about these last few points in relation to my argument for the need to open up more legitimate radical, participative and deliberative democratic learning sites is Wrigley's (2004) point that the:

"the assertion of a scientific methodology makes it easier to place policies beyond dispute" (Wrigley, 2004:230)

and “*political arguments for democratic reform*” are “*kept at bay by pseudo-scientific determinism*” (Wrigley, 2004: 230). His further view that “*methodological reductionism*” (Wrigley, 2004: 234) must be seen “*not only within the research methodology, but also in terms of the public discourse*” (Wrigley, 2004 234) and that:

“This hegemony of statistical forms of evaluation configures the word ‘value’ as ‘exchange value’ rather than individual ‘worth’ thus placing important curricular questions beyond discussion” (Wrigley, 2004:234).

It is a position, he continues, in which “*gatekeepers seal the boundary to exclude much research which ought to be of interest*” (Wrigley, 2004:236). Systemic rationality, managerialized transparency attempts to supersede and exclude dialectical debate in the name of depersonalised social justice and pragmatic common sense.

6.6. The Need for Critical Studentship and Democratic Schooling

The data derived from the Masterclass open learning site indicates that the learning site emerged as a radical one because students were feeling varying degrees of pathology engendered by official educational practice and it was their attempt to self-remedy through self-generated processes of enhanced intellectuality, criticality and their exploitation of official opportunities for using and developing this form of critical intellectuality through early developments in student voice and institutionally-orientated research. From a pedagogic point of view it, therefore, attempted, by virtue of its tendency to produce and integrate a form of what Bernstein (1996) has labelled ‘elitist’ (characterized by “a refusal to engage with the market”), ‘fundamentalist’ (characterized by a “strong isolationism and an unambiguous, stable and intellectually impervious collective identity”) and ‘prospective’ (characterized by “future-oriented” vision of the potential for “a new basis of solidarity” leading to “a revival of the sacred”, learning identities (Bernstein, 1996: 78-80) in order to formulate a legitimate democratic challenge to the system from within the system itself. It attempted to affect a renewal of participative democracy and critical studentship within current formal educational settings in the face of technicist depersonalisation of student learning experience and learning identity. Masterclass, it can be argued, was attempting to formulate and execute its own unique form of democratic schooling, critical intellectuality and critical studentship in the face of the corporate capitalist-determined and micro-managed competence and performance learning models. Barnett, (1994) in his book called ‘The Limits of Competence’, outlines what he calls the:

“shrinking of student’s intellectual space and, by extension, the need for a space for critical reflection” (Barnett, 1994:118)

owing to the growth of “a *highly controlled learning environment*” in which:

“risk will be minimized; learning will be safe, efficient, reliable and predictable” (Barnett, 1994:118)

hence the priority for what Held says is the need for an opening up of new learning sites by finding a “*loop hole in the circle*” of systemic rationality (Held, 1984: 580). In this sense, the participative, democratic politics of Masterclass learning, as a producer of a specific kind of alternative civic state of being has its roots in the social contract model and tradition of Rousseau and classical democracy. This point regarding the democratic nature of Masterclass is further explored and defined in Chapter 7.

Such views help support the democratic need for providing an ideological, political and professional counter-balance to the kind of mechanistic, “*set piece learning*” (Mortimore, 1999:14) that is currently being enforced on learners by politicians, TDA policy makers and managers of education, all of whom comprise the official exponents of the School Effectiveness movement. It is important, says Mortimore, to remember that in education “*all prescriptions are implications*” (Mortimore, 1999: 15). The creation and legitimacy of a genuinely new and alternative kind of “*emancipatory critique*” that Barnett (1994: 125) espouses is tantamount to an argument that calls for a challenge to the rise of some kind of master discourse that de-legitimizes a more active and pluralistic view of citizenship, that ensures that notions of the ‘public good’ are subordinated to the need to supply ‘symbolic’ and ‘ideal’ persons which, in turn, leads to a restricted and incomplete understanding and social and political utilization of the full range of human experience.

Carr and Hartnett (1997) similarly argue for a more diverse pedagogic creed based on and bound up “*in group agency*” (Carr and Hartnett, 1997:154) and a new form of learning validity born of “*lived and living experience*”, a provision that provides for:

“the intellectual resources for nourishing rational debate about what the future role of education in society should be” (Carr and Hartnett, 1997:10).

These are just some of the kind of views derived from Illich’s (1971) early views on the possibility of freeing critical democratic learning from formal schooling. When Illich states that:

“a desirable future depends on our deliberately choosing a life of action over a life of consumption”, depends “on our engendering a life-style which will enable us to be spontaneous, independent, yet

related to each other, rather than maintaining a life-style which only allows us to make and unmake, produce and consume - a style of life which is merely a way station on the road" and depends on "a set of criteria which will permit us to recognize those institutions which support personal growth rather than addiction" (Illich, 1971: 57)

it can be recognized more than ever that alternatives need to be created and legitimized. Moreover, from the point of view of the possibility of liberating a more personalised language of learning and commitment to social and cultural truth, what is needed is some kind of commitment to what Montaigne, writing in Renaissance England of the sixteenth century, describes as "*a language of the natural self*", one that "*is the best for the language of instruction and learning*" (Montaigne, 1971:77). He further describes this natural learning language in terms of a learning reality in which "*When things have seized the mind, the words come of themselves*" (Montaigne, 1971:77), in which, "*when provided with some kind of incubus*", it is possible that "*you will see that their labour [learning and speaking] is at the stage of delivery but of conception*" (Montaigne, 1971:77). A more contemporary articulation of the same pedagogic point is given by McNamara (cited Mortimore, 1999:8) who describes it as "*vernacular pedagogy*" something which Mortimore then comments on as being committed to "*supporting the active construction of meaning and ensuring that learners learn about learning*" (Mortimore, 1999:12).

There have been numerous precedents of curriculum models over the last thirty years articulating the need for such alternative learning sites. For example, there is Eisner and Vallance's (1974) 'orientations' model for curriculum (cited in Marsh: 1997) in which they argue for a "*self-actualization and social-reconstructionist orientation*"; Longstreet and Shane's 1993 student-centred and eclectic knowledge-centred '*orientation*' model (cited in Marsh: 1997) and Young's (1999) more recent '*transformative*' model in which he argues for radical curriculum change premised on the need to change from what he defines as subject knowledge to curriculum knowledge, teacher-centred to student-centred pedagogic knowledge, intra-professional to inter-professional knowledge and insular knowledge to connective knowledge.

It can be seen here that this last model based on the learning principle of connectivity is the premise of the integrative and normative model of teaching and learning of CK2, but also the intersubjectivity and interdisciplinary nature of the English Masterclass. Although this curriculum model does not explicitly state a commitment to democratic, redistributive and emancipatory learning, it does offer a clear rationale for a potential promise of more universal interdisciplinary discursive and critical-emancipatory pedagogic life. This is because it rejects the key features of past curriculum modelling based, as he defines them, on the embodying of a concept of knowledge and learning 'for its own sake, on the almost exclusive concern with transmitting existing

knowledge, on the value it places on subject knowledge rather than on the knowledge on the relationship between subjects and on its assumption of a hierarchy and a boundary between school and everyday knowledge. This, of course, will create problems of the *“transferability of school knowledge to non-school contexts”* (Young: 1999) but its nature will give genuine democratic impetus to:

“a transformative concept of knowledge which emphasises its power to give learners a sense that they can act on the world, a focus on the creation of new knowledge as well as the transmission of existing knowledge, an emphasis on the interdependence of knowledge areas and on the relevance of school knowledge to everyday problems” (Young, 1999:75).

In this sense the kind of radical learning space that Masterclass has opened for students and for myself as a changing professional educator can be summed up as a learning space that is essentially a pedagogic site that Hargreaves' (1994) would probably describe as an early or incipient form of *“reification of a post-technocratic model”* (Hargreaves, 1994:138) created out of and within an existing official and legitimate curriculum framework that was and still is becoming increasingly panopticanistic. It is one that had and still has the potential, as seen from a liberal democratic standpoint, to challenge what Hargreaves defines as uncritical professional conformity of the postmodern age and which he calls learning and professional *“ideological misrecognition”* (Hargreaves, 1994:138).

This argument clearly supports the need for greater commitment to the wider inculcation of genuine democratic schooling, one that works for students on the basis of Gutman's notion of “double democratization”, previously explored in Chapter 1, rather than with students through student/learner voice initiatives in order to exploit learner experience for corporatist management quality assurance, teacher monitoring, customer service and customer satisfaction purposes. Several key writers have tried to address this issue. Apple (1993), for example, articulates the work he has conducted in into the nature and legitimacy of a form of radical open learning space in higher education which he called ‘The Friday Seminar’. His ideas are founded on the conviction and belief that:

“at the cultural level, capitalism establishes a metric that measures everything - including persons like any of us – by the ability to produce wealth and by the success in earning it” (Apple, 1993:5)

and that *"this leads ... naturally to the moral condemnation of those who fail to contribute to the production of profit"* (Apple, 1993:5). He therefore continues to argue the point on the basis that:

"criticism is one of the most important ways we have of demonstrating that we expect more than rhetorical promises and broken dreams, because we take certain promises seriously"... and that "being critical means something more than simply fault-finding. It involves understanding the sets of historically contingent circumstances and contradictory power relationships that create conditions in which we live". (Apple, 1993:5)

However, his argument also indicates a problem in that:

"a large part of what is called "critical educational studies" has tended to be all too trendy ... as "it moves from theory to theory as each new wave of elegant meta-theory...makes its way here". (Apple, 1993:7)

These views are significant for an understanding of the furtherance of the democratic schooling argument I am putting forward in this thesis because they suggest that the esoteric nature of critical education theory itself is what can be seen to fuel the rise of what Hall (cited in Apple) calls uncritical *"authoritarian populism"* (Apple, 1993: 21), derived from the exaggerated fiscal and cultural claims of 'crisis' inherent in neo-conservative and neoliberal educational ideology and practices which thus formulates a policy trajectory and which is:

"based on an increasingly close relationship between government and the capitalist economy, a radical decline in the institutions and power of political democracy, and attempts to at curtailing "liberties" that have been gained in the past". (Apple, 1993:21)

Apple also raises the possibility of a more hopeful political and cultural educational scenario and prospect, when he reminds us that:

"not only are people successful in creating some space where such contradictory values can indeed "echo, reverberate, and be heard", but they transform the entire social space. They create entirely new kinds of governments, new possibilities for democratic political, economic and cultural arrangements". (Apple, 1993:57)

even though he also qualifies this hope with realism when he says that *"it is difficult to keep progressive visions alive"* (Apple, 1993:151).

Apple's own work in the development of his "Friday Seminar", in particular, is testimony to this possibility in that he describes and evaluates its *"special quality of the interactions"* (Apple, 1993:158) and its spontaneous emergence as *"a struggle for democratic possibility"* (Apple, 1993:152). Moreover, it is described and evaluated as a:

"a story of the conscious attempt by one limited group of people to maintain a sense of community, one both grounded in an ethic of caring and connectedness and at the same time one meant to challenge the existing politics of the official knowledge and each others' thinking about it, in a kind of institution where this is difficult to maintain". (Apple, 1993:52)

Furthermore, to bring this kind of radical democratic possibility up to more contemporary times, the later work of Apple and Beane (1999) suggests that the movement for more acceptance and accessibility of critical educational theory and practice is still resonating in mainstream institutional life. For example, when they state that the *"very meaning of democracy is being radically changed"* (Apple and Beane, 1999:118) they pose an interesting politico-moral commitment to all those who attempt to facilitate meaningful critical action in the current educational context. This is further rooted in their belief that:

"under these complicated conditions, a book on democratic schools seems foolhardy. After all, if the meaning of democracy is so confused in the larger society, how can we possibly settle on its meaning for everyday life in schools?" (Apple and Beane, 1999:118)

Their work also offers some useful working definitions of what democratic schools are and these are based on the extent to which they:

"attempt to honour the right of people to participate (democratically) in making decisions that affect their lives" (Apple and Beane, 1999:10)

and that:

"that those involved in democratic schools see themselves as participants in learning communities" (Apple and Beane, 1999:11).

Furthermore they argue that these schools:

“unlike other kinds of progressive schools, such as those that are simply humanistic or child-centred, democratic educators seek not simply to lessen the harshness of social inequities in school, but to change the conditions that create them. For this reason, they tie their understanding of undemocratic practices inside the school to larger conditions outside. (Apple and Beane, 1999: 13).

They argue that what links the radical democratic learning of these schools to the ‘larger conditions’ outside schools is that their curriculum:

“is based on the belief that knowledge comes to life for students and teachers only when it is connected to something that is serious ... when “rigorous intellectual work is prized, not for the sake of symbolic standards or agreeable publicity, but because of its ability to make a difference in how we understand and act powerfully on the social world in which we live” (Apple and Beane, 1999: 119).

This last point about the need for democratic learning to be rigorous and serious is, therefore, a crucial dimension of radical, critical learning to acknowledge. This is something that resonates very strongly with my own teaching experiences both at the time of the Masterclass research years in a sixth form college but also now in my current post of Curriculum Leader: Professional Studies in an 11-16 mixed school. This is because of the extent to which my personal experience is still leading me to believe that mainstream official learning has become and still becoming more de-intellectualized and de-politicized owing to the current obsession with learning aestheticization, learning based on the neoliberal principles of product attractiveness of design and production fun and pleasure, learning based on short term, intense active pleasure which in turn is underpinned by a learning process based on mere fun and which I have come to call ‘gamification’.

Finally, it has been my reading of the latest work on radical education by Fielding and Moss (2011) that can offer the most powerful argument for the continual need for the growth and acceptance of the kind of radical democratic schooling argued for in this thesis. For example, their very useful outline of two diametrically opposed conceptions of the rise and democratic nature of student voice, namely the ‘neoliberal’ and the ‘person-centred’ (Fielding and Moss, 2011:152), shows us unambiguously why and how the neoliberal representative and corporatist configuration of student voice is quickly de-legitimizing and superseding what was originally a more socially ‘participative’ person-centred one. This process, in turn, is fundamental to an understanding of their understanding of the need for a firm commitment to the promulgation and inculcation of what they call an *“insistent affirmation of possibility”* (Fielding and Moss, 2011:82) which they define as:

“One of the most important confluences of the libertarian and egalitarian impulses that inform our advocacy of pre-figurative practice” (Fielding and Moss, 2011:82)

They further draw on the work of Ungar to support this claim whom they quote as saying that as a consequence of being:

“Energized both by rage against ‘the abandonment of ordinary humanity to perpetual belittlement’ and by profound belief- in the powers of ordinary men and women to create new and better ways of being in the world, this generosity of presumption requires us to keep options open, to counter the confinement of customary or casual expectation. This belief in the ‘powers of ordinary men and women’ is the key feature of radical education”. (Fielding and Moss, 2011:82)

In this sense they argue that *“Democratic politics must always be a personalist politics”* (Fielding and Moss, 2011:160). When this emphasis on the need for the democratically personal is understood in the context of what they call the current *“emaciated state”* (Fielding and Moss, 2011: 170) of democratic politics in the contemporary western world, brought about in turn, by *“the indecent haste of new government legislation and the absence of substantive political opposition”* (Fielding and Moss, 2011:170), it becomes clear that attempts at inculcating piecemeal, personalised, participative action is invaluable in trying to address what they rather alarmingly describe as the rise of a *“dictatorship of no alternatives”* (Fielding and Moss, 2011:170) which can be seen to be premised on what Lightman (2012) calls:

“the toxic narrative” engendered by “an unprecedented upheaval in our educational service”, ... a “punitive” and “vituperative approach to constant criticism of teachers and schools” and “the increasing use of coercive leadership styles” (TES, 23 March, 2012: 48-49).

To this argument, of course, could be added the increasing levels of individual monitoring, surveillance and accountability. To conclude this discussion chapter, I return to the work of Fielding and Moss (2011) and their useful and compelling argument that we must still try to *“reclaim education as a democratic project and a community responsibility”* (Fielding and Moss, 2011:171) ... on the basis *“of an insistence of the advocacy of a piecemeal” form of “radical incrementalism”* (Fielding and Moss, 2011:161)...*“that does not serve “compliant gradualism”... “but provides real “anticipatory enactments of fundamentally different ways of being in the world”* (Fielding and Moss, 2011: 61) so that *“democratic experimentalism”* becomes part of a legitimate *the “transformatory process”* (Fielding and Moss, 2011:168).

Chapter 7

Ways Forward

Throughout this thesis, I have argued for what Trefonis (2000: 113-115) calls the democratic '*regrounding of academic responsibility*' in debates relating to what can be regarded as a decline in critical learning and the nature of critical teacher professionalism as a consequence of the skills revolution, of the corporatization of education and the rise of high performance, high productivity schooling engendered by the cognitive capitalism of the school effectiveness learning paradigm. From a pedagogic and assessment perspective, I have explained how it is possible to account for the reasons why students showed pathological forms of learning compliance and learning agoraphobia increasingly lacked the inclination and skills for critical and intellectual enterprise when learning in the context of official A Level curriculum modelling. My thesis has also shown how it is empirically possible for students and professional teachers to inscribe more critical democratic education in mainstream A Level learning. All this, in turn, has ultimately argued for the mobilization of a democratic 'critical friend', counter-culture to the hegemonic nature of current school effectiveness educational practice that worryingly conflates education and training and one that, up till now, marginalizes and invalidates alternative technologies of critical reason and for the furthering of democratization of learning in accordance with principles of non-sophistic deliberative discourse.

Pring's (1995) attempt to re-examine the nature and social and contemporary political relevance of the liberal ideal is important to consider. His contention that we need to both vocationalize liberal education and liberalize vocational training on the basis that we need to avoid the false dichotomy between vocational and academic learning, between theory and practice because it serves to eternally polarize and perpetuates a stereotyping of debates and moral and social learning prejudices:

"training can be so conducted that the student is educated through it – in becoming critical of what is happening, in understanding the activity, and in coming to see it in a wider educational context" ... "so that although competence is limiting", he argues, "it need not be" (Pring, 1995:189).

In this paradoxical context of attempting to achieve parity of esteem between the educationally liberal and vocational, he further reminds us that:

“One cannot dissociate the quality of life from the broader questions about the institutional framework within which ... education is to take place” (Pring, 1995:192).

It remains to be seen, of course, whether this kind of moral and philosophical commitment to an academic democratic re-grounding of universal critical teaching and learning, of critical learning identify, can be legitimized in the current condition of the school effectiveness learning paradigm and lead to more explicitly politicized engagement and a wider recognition of the legitimacy of more varied forms of pedagogic sites and knowledge production processes. We need *“to work the tension between dreams and practice”* (Fielding and Moss, 2011:2) so that Wright’s notion of a *“real utopia”*, derived from his ‘Real Utopias Project’, becomes legitimate according to his three criteria of desirability, viability and achievability (cited in Fielding and Moss, 2011:4). However, more importantly for my thesis exploring the democratic radicalism inherent in the relationship between politics and pedagogy, this ‘Utopia’ project has been crucial in helping me identify and define a new kind of professionalized pedagogic method that has helped define and describe the kind of learning and knowledge production that took place (and is still continuing to take place) in my own Masterclass project. This is something that Deleuze calls *“rhizomatic knowledge”* (cited in Fielding and Moss, 2011:5) which is described as:

“something which shoots off in all directions with no beginning and no end, but always in between, and with openings towards other directions and places. It is a multiplicity functioning by means of connections and heterogeneity, a multiplicity which is not given but constructed. Thought, then, is a matter of experimentation and problematization - a line of flight and an exploration of becoming” (Fielding and Moss, 2011:5)

7.1. Documenting My Own Sense of Professionalism.

This is not too dissimilar in pedagogic practice to the metaphorical definition I have already given to my own Masterclass educational project, namely that it provided an opportunity to follow ones’ own ‘intellectual white rabbits’ leading to a warren of possible learning possibilities and activities and problems to solve. Of course, what they both have in common is that they function and operate, derive their ethical and pedagogic sustenance and survival from being ‘underground’, which is an interesting, potential political metaphor in its own right. My ‘Alice in Wonderland’ metaphor also, of course, applies to myself as a co-learner, co-participator in and co-constructor of the Masterclass learning project. This restatement of my critical theory research position, therefore, leads me to the need to address my third research question: ‘How does the changing policy context re-frame the professional project’. This question relates to what can also be regarded as being linked to restoring the notion of *‘endangered ways of life’*. In Chapter 1, ‘Policy Context’, I have already explored and

outlined a critical position in relation to the policy trajectory of New Labour in terms of highlighting its authoritarian tendency derived from the integration of two forms of radical elite theory, the individual in the form of the obsession with the notion of a leadership cult and that of sophisticated bureaucratic rationality, and how it discloses evidence of a commitment to closing down alternative democratic learning spaces for both students and professional teachers. I have already outlined how it is possible for a kind of critical studentship to open and exploit more democratic and radical learning sites. The focus of this chapter, then, will partly be on the exploration of how it is possible to establish a legitimate site of critical professionalism. Firstly, I consider how Masterclass students construed and related to my professional role and then I reflect on what I thought about these student views in terms of how they have helped me to accept my newly configured sense of professional duty and possibility. In attempting this, I explore a wider understanding of contemporary professional issues, conceptualizations and legitimizations within a developing liberal democratic state.

7.2. Pathologies

(i) Lifeworld Zone of 'Culture'

I will start with the core zone of 'culture' which Habermas defines as a *"the stock of knowledge from which participants in communication supply themselves as they come to an understanding about something in the world"* (Habermas, 1987:138). I have already outlined the nature of the loss of meaning I experienced as a professional educator of critical learning in the face of increasing levels of 'normative' managerialist and consumerist professional development, but what I felt I was losing professionally, my anomie, was intellectual, political and philosophical legitimacy to my professional educative role. I began, therefore, to seek ways of reviving and re-validating these more intellectual and scholarly dimensions of my teaching and my leadership roles.

My first thoughts returned to my academic roots in English Literature. In 1996, I gained a masters degree in English Literature specializing in Shakespeare but, in particular, I focused on how and the extent to which providential leader-figures in his so-called 'Problem Plays' could be seen to reflect the need to gain legitimacy through the creation of formal and informal speech acts that allowed for the development of participative democratic, republican political ideas. This previous postgraduate work in English Literature had clearly established a political critical position in my desire to continue to doctoral level work. My further research interest in critical theory, in the learning of democratic politics, however, enabled me to change direction from the study of imaginative world of literature to the real world of education. My interest in the formal pedagogizing of democratic commitment and practice was thus born but, from this moment, I was also aware of the potential accusations of bias in any formal educational research in which I might engage.

However, coming from a literary background and seeing the world of education as a 'text' to be continually interpreted, I simply saw the extent to which the world of education was becoming so obviously a site of political manipulation and control, of the hermeneutic politics of the democratic relationship between 'writerliness' and 'readerliness'. I soon began to see education as 'text' to be interpreted, understood and even contested as its status was no more than an 'offering' of an alternative world view. In my preferred personal professional role of critical educator, I wanted to ensure that constructivist 'education' was not unquestioningly simply going to become behaviourist-driven 'training'. I wanted to be responsible for the continuation of the development of a shared, critical and democratic learning ethic committed to consensus and truth as well as inculcating straightforward academic cleverness in order to simply gain high marks to meet pre-specified targets.

In wanting to preserve this critical educative role, I have tried to be as removed as possible from overtly and excessively shaping and dictating the consensus and truth-establishing processes of Masterclass learning. I made clear what I was trying to achieve in the Masterclass learning forum. The pathologies experienced by the Masterclass group relating to this critical standpoint and my overt democratic, political involvement were referred to by Yolanda in the following way:

"Perhaps the teacher was motivated by his own despondencies of learning and education". Therefore, to some extent, this was a forum by which the teacher could "vent" and freely introduce topics which would otherwise not have been covered – his own creativity stifled. Perhaps, this despondency has increased since the Moira House incident. I do not mean this in a bad way, merely an observation from when we last met). However, any fault with the role of the teacher was linked not to bias or indoctrination".

I take heart and legitimacy from this quotation because it offers clear evidence that even though I was so ideologically and politically morally and emotionally involved in this educational initiative I was still able to participate in a reassuringly objective and non-biased way.

(ii) Lifeworld Zone of 'Society'

This aspect of pathology focuses on how group identities are stabilized or *"the legitimate orders through which participants regulate their membership in social groups and thereby secure solidarity"* (Habermas, 1987:138). The democratic nature of the learning exchanges that constituted the Masterclass pedagogic approach will be looked at in the next section, but it is pertinent here to re-state that the only anxiety I felt relating to lack of solidarity was, like the students, the issue of the *"instability"* of the initiative because I was the only member of staff interested in this method of learning. In relation to this instability, I, too, worried about its capacity-building capability and

significance within the institution to make a wider difference. I tried to achieve this by inviting all teachers from all subject areas to participate and contribute to sessions. However, interest only came from sociology, media and business studies albeit very intermittently and infrequently.

(iii) Lifeworld Zone of 'Personality'

In terms of the personal competencies which might have caused pathologies in others was the anxiety I experienced over possible accusations of bias and worse ideological and political indoctrination. I tried in every way to avoid being seen in this way and I succeeded. I feel that the vast majority of students vindicated this claim in the data I was supplied by them. The vast majority overwhelmingly reflected the fact that I managed to achieve and sustain a high level of objectivity despite being so closely professionally and intellectually involved with the creation and perpetuation of the Masterclass initiative and Masterclass research project. I was therefore able to restrict and avoid bias from the point of view of subject specialism knowledge and discourse because of its inter-disciplinarity learning premise. It was partly through the inter-disciplinarity of Masterclass learning that some kind of self-transcendence in the role of professional critical educator, independent from the normative constraints of a professionalism based on performativity and effectiveness in meeting specified targets was possible.

7.3. Emancipations

(i) Lifeworld Zone of 'Culture'

There was much evidence given by the students about how they felt the Masterclass provided them with a genuinely open and democratic pedagogic learning culture, shaped and determined as it was by the interests and disposition not only of the whole group, but also the participating members in each session. Learning was thus personalised at all times in every session. Each session was different according to the dispositions and interest of each participating member. For example, Julia said that:

"Any member of college staff in the masterclass has always been different to that in mainstream teaching, because the masterclass sessions are not lessons. The role of the teacher is not to dictate or dominate - they are more of a facilitator – or even gatekeeper providing us with discussion topics and materials and theory".

Roberta said that:

"The role of the teacher is most important in why students participate in m/classes. I participated because I was inspired to do so by the passionate support of the m/class and by my teacher".

Claire expressed the view that:

“the teacher is a facilitating force, enabling students to consider new theories, contexts and possibilities – helping them to learn”.

Roberta said that:

“I agree that the teacher did not “dictate knowledge” in the sense that he did not just give out opinions as correct, or truth. The teacher gave new information, and suggested ways to approach and understand it but, until it was digested by students, it could not be called knowledge”. “The teacher made himself an equal within the rest of the group and he didn’t presume to have the greatest opinion or the final say, allowing everyone else to develop their points freely”.

These views indicate to me that I was capable of producing a professional identity in which it was possible for me to believe that I was capable of creating and teaching appropriately within a semi-official participative, democratic, social re-constructionist learning site.

(ii) Lifeworld Zone of ‘Society’

The stabilizing factors, or what Habermas calls the “*The legitimate orders*” (Habermas, 1987:143), that allowed for the effective regulation of such a democratic learning site was premised on a sustained and collective interest in and commitment to an ‘*intellectual*’ rather than an ‘*academic*’ endeavour to meaningful personalised learning. It was also stabilized and legitimized by the sustained principle and practice of relatively free, open and egalitarian learning relationships, all of which Yolanda said was:

“inspiring us to think outside of our mainstream education with new ideas and an extended vocab – bringing us together as a group, so that we can interact and also progress as individuals”.

Claire described the group learning process as being based on the fact:

“The teacher opened up discussion and provided a text of some sort to discuss. He encouraged the students to develop their ideas, and entered the discussion as another participant rather than an absolute authority figure - so that we can interact and also progress as individuals”.

Julia developed this point about the mutual interaction between the shifting boundaries of pedagogized individuality and collectivity further in this way:

“As group members gain experience they become more self-sufficient and begin to develop their own methods of driving the session - “The teacher’s role was limited by taking more of a democratic role. We had the opportunity to reach our own conclusions in discussion and be confident with them”.

Finally, Alice said:

“The teacher was careful not to influence our opinions; only to help us consider different ideas and viewpoints”.

(iii) Lifeworld Zone of ‘Personality’

Habermas defines this aspect of the lifeworld as *“The competencies that make a subject (person) capable of speaking and acting”* (Habermas, 1987:138) and be able to assert identity. From the data supplied by the students, it was clear that the most significant ‘competency’ I developed in participation was the ability to establish, maintain and help co-validate an egalitarian and democratic form of pedagogic exchange that was underpinned by a judicious use of my knowledge of discourse theory or conversational management strategies gained from my previous A Level English Language teaching and management experience. This helped ensure what one student called an *“equal voice system”*, a pedagogic system in which I was not dominant but a facilitator and negotiator of other views that allowed for the possibility of others to realize points of agreement and consensus if they thought such agreements were useful and valid in terms of their own experience and need.

7.4. ‘Active’ Professionalism

At this point, I think it significant to reflect on the significance of my reading of literature on professionalism, in particular one theory of professional competence. For example, the Dreyfus professional competence model, described by Eraut as a:

“model that provides an analysis of skilled labour under conditions of rapid interpretation and decision-making” (Eraut, 1994: 128)

and a model that offers a devastating critique of the *“calculative rationality”* ... of *“mathematical modelling, decision-making and computerized simulations”* (Eraut, 1994: 127) is based on a five stage competence development premise: Level 1, Novice; Level 2, Advanced Beginner; Level 3,

Competent; Level 4, Proficient and Level 5, Expert (Eraut, 1994: 124). When this five stage model is situated and interpreted in the contexts of the short term political and ideological imperatives and realpolitik and practices of managerialism and school effectiveness, total quality management, distributed leadership, performance management and continuous improvement, it is possible to understand that these 'calculative' rationalities and instrumentalities can work to create a continual process of professional de-skilling, of professional 'pathologies' which systematically undermine and prevent the likelihood of more long term opportunities to develop, achieve and maintain the highest level of competence, namely that of the 'expert' which is underpinned by the skills of autonomy, independence, intuition and tacit understanding, high level of holistic analysis and the ability to develop a vision of what is alternatively possible (Eraut, 1994: 124-128). In conjunction with this view of the possibility of politico-systemic undermining of professional competence at the very highest level, it is also significant to recount the significance of attending a seminar by Professor Ted Tapper in 2003, who, at the point of leaving the University of Sussex for the University of Oxford, said that:

"the politics of education is not yet an established sub-discipline of educational studies and that "invariably local conflicts are a manifestation of wider system values".

His other comment that:

"invariably, local conflicts are a manifestation of wider system values"

has been significant. Also Professor Les Back's comment that good and legitimate research is often based on a "*private angst made public*" (Back: 2004, Sussex University Research Seminar) was also seminal for me in the early stages of this thesis formulation as it endorsed the potential validity of an authentic and personal involvement in formal research. Furthermore, more thoughts from Professor Les Back also were influential through his claims that in postmodernist paradigms and the postmodern cultural milieu in general, "*the impulse to communicate has been lost in epistemological and systemic complexity, sophistication and uncertainty*". This is a modernist voice trying to re-centre itself according to truth premised on veritistic epistemology or 'social' epistemology' (Goldman cited in Oksenberg Rorty, 1998: 439-444), which he summarizes as a commitment to a form of essentialist and 'good' argumentation premised on the belief that:

"people have innate dispositions to veracity and credulity" and that "if they [participants in a debate] are sufficiently competent, then

trust may be a truth-conducive practice" (Goldman cited in Oksenberg Rorty, 1998:448).

This kind of emergent social voice is antipathetic to more sophisticated epistemology and pedagogic methods of truth making. In this sense, I believe that the emerging master class learning paradigm was trying to achieve the same kind of commitment to individual and social truth which can be seen as an attempt to reclaim what Les Back defined as:

"the embracing of life in the prospect of death" and that an "attempt to use "ones own research" is "to leave a trace upon life" (Back: 2004).

It has also been the work of Cresswell (1998) on the validity of the use of critical theory in educational research that began to help me re-define my professional sense of worth and social status as a consequence of my participation in the development of the Masterclass learning initiative. Cresswell suggests, for example, that a critical theorist research position is concerned with the *"historical problems of domination, alienation and social struggles"* and *"a critique of society and the envisioning of new possibilities"* (Cresswell, 1998:80). It is also a position, he says, that is concerned with an analysis of *"crisis tendencies in advanced capitalism"* (Cresswell, 1998:81).

In order for me to try and make wider sense of this analysis in terms of its significance with educational literature on professionalism, my reading of various kinds of typologies of alternative professionalism has been useful in helping me locate a legitimate dimension to my developing 'critical' form of professionalism. It takes as a starting point Hoyle's (1970) category of an *'extended professional'* which categorizes the notion *'extended'* as follows:-

- *Regular reading of professional literature*
- *Involvement in in-service work is considerable and includes courses of an atheoretical nature. Teaching is seen as a rational activity*
- *Skills derived from a mediation between experience and theory*
- *Perspective embracing the broader social context of education*
- *Classroom events perceived in relation to school policies and goals*
- *Methods compared with those of colleagues and with reports of practice*
- *Value placed on professional collaboration*
- *High involvement in non-teaching professional activities (especially teacher's centres, subject associations, research)*

However, this ‘*extended professional*’ model is, now I feel, a rather limited one when trying to help make sense of the professional journey I have undergone in this course of study, one that fully describes and accounts for what I have become since co-creating and participating the radical learning space that is now called by students simply, ‘Masterclass’. This is because it so obviously neglects a political tenet, a tenet that Bourdieu defines as a:

“a political struggle rationally oriented toward defending and promoting the social conditions for the exercise of reason, a permanent mobilization of all cultural producers in order to defend, through continuous and modest interventions, the institutional bases of intellectual activity. Every project for the development of the human spirit ...to advance the causes and which does not appeal to political struggle aimed at endowing reason and freedom with the properly political instruments which are the precondition of their realization in history, remains prisoner of scholastic illusion”
(Bourdieu, 2001:139-140).

Bourdieu’s further view that:

“social space is indeed the first and last reality, since it still commands the representations that the social agent can have of it”
(Bourdieu, 2001:13)

This, I feel, is crucial to the understanding of and much needed legitimacy for the pedagogic nature and socio-political consequences of my particular configuration of Masterclass professionalism. What is significant is the learning legitimacy that Bourdieu says is based on commitment to the “*particular of the possible*” (Bourdieu, 2001:13) created by “*putting a scholar in the machine*” (Bourdieu, 2001: 133) and “*tantamount to inscribing intellectualism in mechanicism*” (Bourdieu, 2001:133).

In terms of how and the extent to which this Habermasian-based self-analysis reflects or contests the educational literature on ‘active’ professionalism, a political extension of the critical action research approach, as reflected in the work of John Mason (2002), is the focus of this next section on this debate. He, for example, in ‘Researching Your Own Practice’ explores ‘*the discipline of noticing*’ or “*interrogating*” ones “*own experience*”, based on Lao Tsu’s view, expressed around 500 BC that, ‘*How shall I know the way of all things? By what is inside me*’ (Mason, 2002:204) Such a view on professionalism is now, Mason, argues:

“the cornerstone of personal development” and professional development as “the discipline of noticing offers activities which

support the broadening and deepening of sensitivities to notice selected attributes of professional practice” (Mason, 2002:204)

and

“to offer a fundamentally important way to re-vivify sensitivities to the experiences of others” and to “re-awaken similar experiences in myself” (Mason, 2002:204).

Mason continues with the assertion that:

“It requires being committed to act as a student while simultaneously being awake to noticing what it is like; being involved in exploring or encountering new topics or new aspects of familiar topics, while at the same time being aware of how you go about exploring; engaging in the processes of thinking in your discipline, while at the same time being awake to notice the use of those processes, perhaps even to notice the way in which you use your powers” (Mason, 2002:205).

Only then can “*genuine*” (Mason, 2002:207) learning questions be asked on a more equal footing and on the basis of genuine veritistic epistemological foundations between different kinds of open-minded learners. His work presupposes the necessity of the foregrounding of the personal, the axiological, the iterative, the dialogic, the opening up and nurturing of the essential agency of relatively unconstrained and excessively distorted rational critique, or the uncoupling of systems worlds and lifeworlds, something Dallmayr (cited in Passerin D’Entreves and Benhabib: 1996) defines as a “*transformative community life*”, “*a community of questioning ...within that fragile moment when the question is not yet determined enough for the hypocrisy of an answer*” (cited in Passerin D’Entreves and Benhabib, 1996:92). Mason further argues that it is a method of learning that has the purpose of and potential for “*correcting pathological trends*” (Mason, 2002:91).

Further validation of this kind of pedagogic exchange and newly emerging, more radical professional space and identity is articulated by Goldman when he draws on the epistemological notion of ‘veritistic’ or ‘social’ epistemology’ (Goldman in Oksenberg Rorty, 1998: 439-444), which he summarizes as a commitment to a form of essentialist and ‘good’ argumentation premised on the belief that “*people have innate dispositions to veracity and credulity*” and premised on the belief that “if they [participants in a debate] “*are sufficiently competent, then trust may be a truth-conducive practice*” (Goldman in Oksenberg Rorty, 1998:448). He furthers this argument by stating “*that intellectual skills and knowledge-acquiring abilities*” can be developed by such disputational means (Goldman in Oksenberg Rorty, 1998:448). This kind of commitment to ‘good’ argumentation

is, of course, in direct contrast to mere sophistry, a more pragmatic, expedient form of so-called truth-making and truth-validating based on adversarial contestation with the moral aim to simply win an argument by verbal trickery rather than to attempt to not lose sight and belief and commitment to the establishment of a collective, general universal truth. What endorses this point about the necessity for professional democratic agency related to insider research is Kelly's (1999) view:

"that the only genuine changes in the school curriculum, changes in the 'actual' rather than the 'official' curriculum, in the 'received' rather than the 'planned' curriculum, are those which result from developments which are school-based" (Kelly, 1999:213).

Kelly then furthers his argument by contending that:

"the important point to note is the emphasis this places on the role of the individual school and of the individual teacher, on the concept of the 'the teacher as researcher', as 'reflective practitioner'" (Kelly, 1999:213).

He defines this point further by saying that:

"the task of the teacher, at least of the teacher come educator, cannot, and indeed, should not be defined in the kind of technicist and mechanistic terms that current policies imply" and "that education in the full sense" (Kelly, 1999:213)

can only be democratic and therefore political:

"if teachers are able to make professional judgements on a much larger scale, and that any attempt to inhibit them in the exercise of this kind of judgment is likely to rebound to the disadvantage both of education and of their pupils" (Kelly, 1999:215).

I have come to accept this argument as a major tenet of my own position on the issue of what should constitute modern teacher professionalism. It is certainly one that I increasingly developed, often sub-consciously at first, but more consciously in the latter stages of the research years, throughout the kind of learning I underwent resulting from Masterclass participation and EdD research. The exploration and rationalization of my own professional selfhood has thus led me to the current self-validating belief that my kind of *'active professionalism'* is a meaningful and increasingly needed insider socio-political agent, a *"mobilizer of critique"* (Stronach and Maclure, 1997:93), a promoter of participative democratic learning through the agency of legitimate professional research, rather than legitimate professional sophistry based simply on the label of

being a common sense notion of an 'effective teacher'. Being an effective professional is, I believe, and as John Taylor argues, particularly in the early stages of post-technicist times, increasingly premised on a means "*of extending the range of opportunities for people to do research*" of finding "*an important way of getting people in work to undertake research in universities*" that does not simply meet "*the requirements for the current vogue for employer engagement in higher education*" and which "*serves the needs of self-interested careerism*" (Gill, TES, 26 February 2009: 30).

It was also the work of Groundwater-Smith and Sachs (2002) that drew my attention to how and the extent to which politicized professionalism can be legitimised within the strict remits of managerialism, the resultant experiences of workplace intensification (Hargreaves: 1994) and the rise of what has been called "*proletarianized professionalism*" (Larson: 1980), all of which serve the function of eroding professional teacher trust. This, they argue, has resulted in a reconfiguration of professionalism that is tantamount to the managerialized "*entrepreneur professional*", a form of professionalism that is a product of neoliberal ideology in that its ethical base is:

"individualistic, competitive, controlling and regulative, externally defined and standards led...and one that meets the desires of the audit society for externally controlled practice, where there is little requirement for trust and moral professional judgement" (Larson, 1980:352).

In short, this is the kind of professionalism that symbolizes and reifies the hegemony of systemworld rationality. In counterpoint to the rise of the proletarianized 'entrepreneurial professional', however, Groundwater-Smith and Sachs (2002) also outline the nature of and need for the "*activist professional*" which they define as "*emerging perhaps in reaction against managerialism*" (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2002: 352) and which:

"draws for inspiration and momentum from the work of people in the broad democratically based enterprises which hold the best interests the clientele at heart in recognition that needs vary, are contextualized, and require careful and thoughtful decision making" (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2002: 352)

and that it has:

"a classification of identity as a nexus of multi-membership and as a relation between local and global conditions" (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2002: 352).

Furthermore, they argue that such ‘active professionalism’ is first and foremost “concerned to reduce or eliminate exploitation, inequality and oppression” and “is deeply rooted in principles of equity and social justice” and principles and practices of “deliberative democracy ... in which citizens come together on a regular basis to reach collective decisions about public issues” (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2002: 352). It is admitted by Groundwater and Sachs that such ‘active professionalism’, committed to “creating new forms of power at all levels of a community” and its “generative politics and the establishment of active trust” will prove very difficult in its attempt to:

“stem the tide of technicist and instrumental forms of teacher professionalism that standards regimes are promoting”
(Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2002: 354)

owing to the politicized nature of school effectiveness ideology and practice and the de-intellectualization and de-politicization of teacher training and CPD.

With this idea of the real possibility of ultimate failure to try and inculcate the kind of critical, active, education and professionalism I have developed in my own professional practice, I was drawn to the work of Frost and Harris (2003) whose work entitled, ‘Teacher and Educational Leadership: towards a research agenda’. This article outlined the new official leadership reforms. Their work offers a way forward in that they argue for democratic renewal in teacher status and self-esteem and leadership through insider research carried out under the authority and legitimising auspices of the ideology and practices of institutional distributed leadership and transformational leadership (494). Yet, as Clarke and Newman (1997) had already argued, this form of management is akin to a universal managerial consciousness or oligarchic consciousness; so that any research data and knowledge claims are managerially biased from the outset, something which Rikowski (cited in Avis 2005), says is tantamount to:

“becoming complicit in our own exploitation and introject the social antagonisms characteristic of capitalist societies” (Avis, 2005:218).

This possibility, however, remains for me a continuing point of conviction in the belief that the open radical learning space created by formal professional research is a major way forward towards a more critically democratic professional model. It was in fact this belief that made me embark on an EdD course of professional doctoral study in education rather than the traditional D.Phil / PhD route. It was also the motivation, perhaps for a momentary period at least, that led to what Stronach and Maclure (1997) have described “as partial exit work” (from teaching) to the “outside” resulting from “the seductions of the intellectual life” and critical “encounters with theory” which:

“represent a kind of freedom or liberation” ... “or at least an escape from other mundane concerns” and redress for feeling institutionally “silenced” or “marginalised” (Maclure, 1997:119-124).

It has been the pleasures and tribulations of engaging with the “outside” and “theory” that provided me with an opportunity to begin to take control over my own learning, pursue my own “agendas” to establish a fresher and freer look at my own professional identity and sense of self-worth (Stronach and Maclure, 1997:122) and the possibilities for the creation of more legitimate open learning spaces, new democratic, humanistic, human scale, communitarian and discursive learning sites dedicated to freer forms of learning.

This kind of need for partial ‘exit work’ or integration of research into mainstream professional life in order to what Carr (1995) says is a need to “confront a historical tradition participating in its dialogues and debates” (Carr, 1995:24) has now indeed become, it seems, a more legitimate part of and commitment to a more forward looking and enlightened professional practice for the twenty-first century. There have been several attempts recently to perhaps move learning in this direction. For example, the idea of the new Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) established in 2008 and the new ‘Research Engaged Schools’ initiative of the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) are but two means by which contemporary professionalism is becoming research-active. Also, Andrew Pollard’s work (2010) in conjunction with the General Teaching Council, the Teaching and Learning Research Programme and the Economic and Social Research Council on the relationship between what he calls ‘Professionalism and Pedagogy: a contemporary opportunity’ is also very significant. In this work, Pollard states a belief that:

“In liberal democratic societies, it (teaching) ... also embodies particular kinds of values, to do with furthering individual and social development, fulfilment and emancipation” (Pollard, 2010:4).

He further believes that there is a social and cultural need for what he calls “unexpected teaching and learning opportunities” (Pollard, 2010:5). In his outline of the Teaching and Learning Research Programme’s (TLRP) ten principles of effective teaching and learning, he also states, in Point 8, that teaching and learning must “Recognize the significance of informal learning”. He then goes on to elaborate this point in saying that “Informal learning, such as learning out of school, should be recognized as being:

“at least as significant as formal learning and should be valued and used appropriately in formal processes” (Pollard, 2010:8).

Lastly, he articulates some views about what he calls “*a cultural Revolution in teaching and learning*” (Pollard, 2010:26) implying that, in future, teaching and learning is to be based on three premises: progression, reflection and development. In the first of these, ‘progression’, “*research lessons*” should “*support teachers in developing their own pedagogic subject knowledge*”, and should “*provide appropriate new learning challenges*” (Pollard, 2010:26). In the second, Pollard states that:

“reflection should ensure that schools should provide both formal and informal structures and processes to help teachers and children think about learning” (Pollard, 2010:26).

Lastly, ‘development’ he says should:

“ensure that pupils better understand, engage with and influence processes of teaching and learning, whilst self and peer assessment help children to identify new personal goals” (Pollard, 2010:26).

7.5. Pedagogic and Professional Implications of the Gove Reforms (2010)

Furthermore, Pollard’s (2010), idea of ‘*warranted pedagogy*’, which attempts to enhance the public esteem of teachers and teacher professionalism by opening up legitimate possibilities of pedagogic innovation to robust evidence-based justification, scrutiny of other practitioners and other stakeholders such as learners and parents through the ethical auspices of local consortia based-training schools (Point 6), is now at the heart of latest government thinking. The 2010 Gove reforms (DFE: 2010) seem to be pointing emphatically towards an incipient form of democratic and possibly ‘active’ professionalism’ through the encouragement of research-driven learning and professional development cultures that appears to be concerned with opening up and legitimizing possibilities for more radical learning spaces based on legitimate pedagogic experimentation and innovation derived from the work of professional networking and CPD training via local teaching schools. These reforms claim that they will provide official “*structures and processes*” to help learners “*think about their learning*” (DFE, 2010:27). Furthermore, the introduction of the Ebac (English Baccalaureate) which has enforced a more robust and general academic curriculum appears to be interested in and committed to the idea of an academic re-grounding of general official learning. The recent DCSF White Paper (2009) ‘Your Child, Your Schools, Our Future’ also shows a commitment to developing this kind of ‘active professionalism’ as a way forward to ensure the possibility making contributions to “*the debate on world-class pedagogy*” (Pollard, 2010:6). Moreover, the government website outlining the more recent ‘Power to Innovate’ initiative, <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance>, 21.05.11), which can suspend

educational law if a particular pedagogic innovation or a new radical learning space and method, can be:

1. proven to be sufficiently radical
2. prove to have a positive impact
3. can be 'warranted' by fellow professionals and stakeholders

is perhaps the ultimate contemporary political statement committed to greater democratization of learning and research-based professional development. The reform says that *"there are no preconceptions about the kind of ideas that could be supported"*

(<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance>, 21.05.11:1) given, of course, strict adherence to the above context of certain eligibility criteria.

Moreover, the 'Power to Innovate' policy initiative does seem to be offering an opportunity for what Michael Fielding (2001) calls the moral-political notion and possibilities of *"transversal politics"* (Fielding, 2001:7), a form of learning politics that allows and embraces *"a shifting anomie"* (Fielding, 2001:7), one that acknowledges difference is *"intolerant of non-communication and values"* and:

"ways which neither embrace a false consciousness nor dissipate and fragment the possibility of genuinely shared understandings and joint action" (Fielding, 2001:7).

It is a transformative learning concept that constitutes students and teachers as 'radical agents' of democratic change and co-creators of structures and knowledge, as informed exponents of being able to help open up a wider range of knowledge-creating sites, of pedagogical development and of knowledge-creating models of the more social collaboratist kind, of the kind that is in *"pursuit of newness"* explored and articulated, for example, by Paavola, Lipponen and Hakkarainen (2004: 560).

In 2008, New Labour initiated A Level reform based on the following changes to the A Level curriculum:-

- the ending of the notion of a dominant learning objective for learning modules and a return to an equal balancing of assessment objectives for each module. This seems to have been premised on an extension of the old elite and more sophisticated learning notion of 'synopticity' to all modules
- the reduction of a six modular structure to four making each module less instrumentalized

- a restriction on the number of times a module can be re-taken
- a reduction of the marks that can be officially carried forward from AS to A Level assessment
- the availability of a choice of pursuing a substantial individual research project (the Extended Project) as an alternative to an exam or coursework module work something which has increased considerably in popularity throughout 2010-2011
- the introduction of A* grading to identify and reward academic and intellectual excellence

These most recent curriculum reforms, combined with research-driven professional development reforms, should go some way to reground learning and training in more academic and in more democratic terms, contexts and reality. From a professional point of view, since September 2010, I personally have been pioneering several research projects that have opened up innovative learning spaces. For example, under the notion of *'warranted pedagogy'* and in the spirit of the 'Power to Innovate', I am currently involved in extending the now defunct Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) into MA / M.Ed franchising work in conjunction with Brighton University and, hopefully, at some point, Sussex University. I am also working towards the introduction and development of a whole school, research-based CPD programme involving staff, students and academic staff at Brighton University. In connection with this I have managed to establish and become involved in several European international research / CPD projects. Throughout this forthcoming academic year I also intend to establish a formal research dimension to formal teacher training provision and to the institutional 'politics' of the voice of the Student Council, and the departments of Maths and English.

7.6. The Claim to Originality

In Habermas' essay 'The Task of Critical Theory' (1987) he says that assumptions regarding:

"the growth of the monetary-bureaucratic complex affects domains of action that cannot be transferred to system-integrative mechanisms without pathological side effects" (Habermas, 1987: 374)

and that:

"this boundary is overstepped when systemic imperatives force their way into domains of cultural reproduction, social integration,

and socialization needs to be tested empirically in connection with real abstractions detected in the core zones of the lifeworld"
(Habermas, 1987:374).

This thesis has in part been premised on an attempt to show how it is possible to further the cause of participative and deliberative democratic educational theory by reifying, through empirical study, the Habermasian concept of the ideal speech situation through his principle of 'counterfactuality'. In doing this, I have also offered an attempt to show how it is possible to re-couple and re-engage, in legitimate discursively pedagogic and democratic terms, the Habermasian conceptual notions of systemsworlds and lifeworlds that allows for genuine classroom-based deliberative democratic engagement.

This re-coupling of the lifeworld and the systemsworld model, through critical insider professional research, is one that could begin to create a more robust participative, democratic and societal form of learning corporatism within a liberal democratic state that could begin to halt the hegemonic rise of radical elite, totalitarian forms, defined by state corporatist theory and practice as reflected in the ideology and cultural practices cult of leadership integrated with self-serving bureaucratic systems (Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987:184). This participative, democratic consensus approach to knowledge-creation, seemingly at present endorsed by the current notion of 'warranted pedagogy', offers the potential only to legitimately reify Habermas' notoriously abstract theory of communicative action. The politics of such a radical transformation of open learning space would probably best be summed up as that of a pedagogic radical middle ground, or point of intersection between competing discourses and practices and constituted by a constantly serendipitous negotiation of liberal democratic and social democratic impulses drawn and defined and reified from the ideas and experiences from a wide range of learning stakeholders. Radical learning spaces have continued to emerge in the context of my own continuing professional practice in an 11-16 Academy, in that I am still able to keep alive the original masterclass initiative at both KS3 and KS4. They are still female dominated and are now beginning to emerge as a research-based pedagogic and democratic 'think tank', with a democratic premise that seems, according to the work of Carr & Hartnett (1997), classical in origin. Carr and Hartnett (1997) argue, for example, that Greek democracy was essentially "*a moral concept*" and "*essentially educative*", that:

"the ideal of Greek democracy was the maximum direct participation of all, citizens in the common life of the community"
(Carr and Hartnett, 1997:40)

and that:

“in this community of man (but ironically not women) it “was understood that man, by nature, was a “political animal” (Carr and Hartnett, 1997:40).

The classical radicalism of the Masterclass open learning space should not, therefore, be interpreted outright and entirely as a Marxist one or a radical learning site committed to the reification of Illich’s radical concept of de-schooling (1971). I have tried to argue that the radicalism of the Masterclass learning space should be construed and legitimated in current terms as necessary democratic breeding and training ground for greater integration of personalised learning selfhood, of the necessity of the encouragement and validation of the critically speculative, the ontologically and epistemologically uncertain, as a legitimate part of the utilitarian and the sophistic. It has the potential to offer a continually evolving classically-defined, radical pedagogic middle ground position to Paul Yates’ account, in a graduate twilight graduate research seminar at Sussex University in 2002, of the dichotomizing of the contemporary learning and professional body politic into the dual notions of the body-politic of a protestant *“anorexic pedagogic body”* produced by and within the hegemony of the School Effectiveness paradigm and that of an enriched almost self-indulgent Catholic *“Baroque body-politic”* produced by more unofficial, individualized and personalised and enriching pedagogic learning methods. In this sense, the emancipatory potential of re-inscribing the notion of a Baroque learning body, similar to the Masterclass educational initiative into mainstream education is both morally and philosophically important as it is politically important for furthering opportunities for the critical education of direct democratic commitment and engagement.

Four student comments are most telling in this respect of supporting the wider dissemination of the kind of learning that master class offered. Firstly, Roberta says that after she had left the college and was in their first year of university she thought that:

“To be honest I don’t think there is much that can be done to improve the usefulness of masterclass at this point”.

Secondly, Yolanda said that:

“The content and manner in which masterclass was taught would have to be extended to a point beyond that which is capable given time limits. I would say essay writing skills or something, but that’s boring – which is something masterclass should never be! Perhaps a bit more focus on individual or group research would be useful”.

Thirdly, Claire said that she felt she had not been a ‘spoonfed’ student, that she “*was capable of independent thought*” based on the fact that “*the teaching and learning methods were incredibly similar to those at degree level*”. She also lauded the idea when she says that independent thought was “ingrained into us in Masterclass” namely that:

“even the opinions of the most highly regarded people can be fallible is invaluable. It applied not only when challenging academics’ views in essays but was essential to my realization that no matter how people dress views up with fancy words, when you stop being intimidated and really listen, more often than not they are talking rubbish. I found it far more useful than mainstream A level teaching because there was no text book, no right way and no relaying of other’s views”.

Fourthly, there was the view expressed by Julia that there was a hope that the:

“m/class will continue to get itself noticed until such time when it may be used more widely in education, thus reaching the potential that it has”.

7.7. Future Research Potential

With the prospect of finally completing my doctoral study, I have both in intellectual and professional terms, thought much about why it is important that teacher and student knowledge and experience regarding pedagogic experience politics should be made public via research, the scholarship of teaching in order to facilitate the moral, philosophical and political advancement of teaching, how and why such knowledge should be, as Roberta said, “*used more widely in education*”, “*to develop the potential that it has*” for the benefit of all. Apart from the fact that public reporting prevents such ‘lifeworld’ human knowledge and experience to be forgotten in the symbolic politics of systemic rationality, or in Habermasian parlance, in the politics of ‘systemsworlds’, it also helps support debates about the extent to which the real nature and importance of the experience of teaching and learning influences political debate and decisions regarding the concept of school leadership, or schooling leadership. It is my belief and contention that the institutionalisation of the radical learning space as reified in the interdisciplinary English Masterclass can be developed and used further in the context of legitimate professional development and teacher training programmes. In my current capacity as English teacher and Curriculum Leader of Professional Studies, I will continue to work towards greater acceptance and use of this radical learning model, to open up similar learning sites across a wider range of student and professional bodies so such that radical spaces become more mainstream and begin to generate credible ideas for improvement towards, what I argue, should be a reform of current assessment theory and practice that legitimate official pedagogic method. I hope

that this thesis will advance serious debate about the need to establish a form of personalised and flexible education premised on a double-democratizing rationality, the valuing of the notion of 'educement' rather than what can currently be regarded as a restrictive model of systemic 'reducement'. In more academic and intellectual terms, my research into the need for the inculcation and proliferation of such official participative democratic learning sites, leading to a significant production of democratic '*social capital*' (Print and Coleman: 2003), has stimulated further research interest into the democratic use of various forms of dialogic learning. I am currently interested in the nature and educational practicalities of the use of discourse theory, Bernstein's pedagogic code theory and the potential, outlined by Skidmore (2006), of a form of official learning that can be derived from Bakhtinian linguistic social theory, especially that of applying the concept of '*heteroglossia*' and dialogic '*unfinalizability*, of the carnivalesque, in order to begin to re-think the learning value and importance of the radical learning space of democratic 'oracy' and the assessment of such 'oracy'.

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Appendix 1

EdD Questionnaire Instruction Sheet

("Teaching" and "Learning" Assessment)

Name

Date/s Participating

AS Student Yes No

A2 Student Yes No

This questionnaire provides you with an opportunity to reflect on your experiences relating to participation in the English Masterclass. I should be very grateful if you would complete five types of questionnaire:-

1. **SWOT Analysis Sheet for "Teaching"** (SWOT = Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
2. **SWOT Analysis Sheet for "Learning"** "
3. **PEST Analysis Sheet for "Teaching"** (PEST = Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological)
4. **PEST Analysis Sheet for "Learning"** "
5. **Masterclass "Pedagogy" Analysis Sheet.** Please try to use the category definitions as defined below:-
 - **Learning Identity** – how would you describe yourself as a learner when participating in the masterclass?
 - **Criticality** – have you become more critical as a result of participation?. How would you define being critical?
 - **Democracy** – would you describe the masteclass as democratic? If so in what ways was / is it democratic / undemocratic?
 - **Role of the Teacher** – was/is the role of the teacher significant in how and why you participate in the masterclass. Is the role of the teacher different to that in mainstream teaching and learning?
 - **Motivation** – was has motivated to join / continue / not continue?
 - **Nature of Knowledge** – what kind of knowledge is discussed / made in this learning environment?
 - **Nature of Mastery** – what exactly is / was being mastered and how?
 - **Participation** – how would you explain / define / account for how students and teachers participate in the masterclass project?
 - **Gender** – how would you account for the gender imbalance in the masterclass?

N.B. Please write as honestly and as fully as you can. I should be grateful if you could you return the completed forms ASAP by post (addressed to Steve Hobbs, Sussex Downs Park College, Kings Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 2 UN. Thank you very much for your time and effort. Thank you. Steve Hobbs

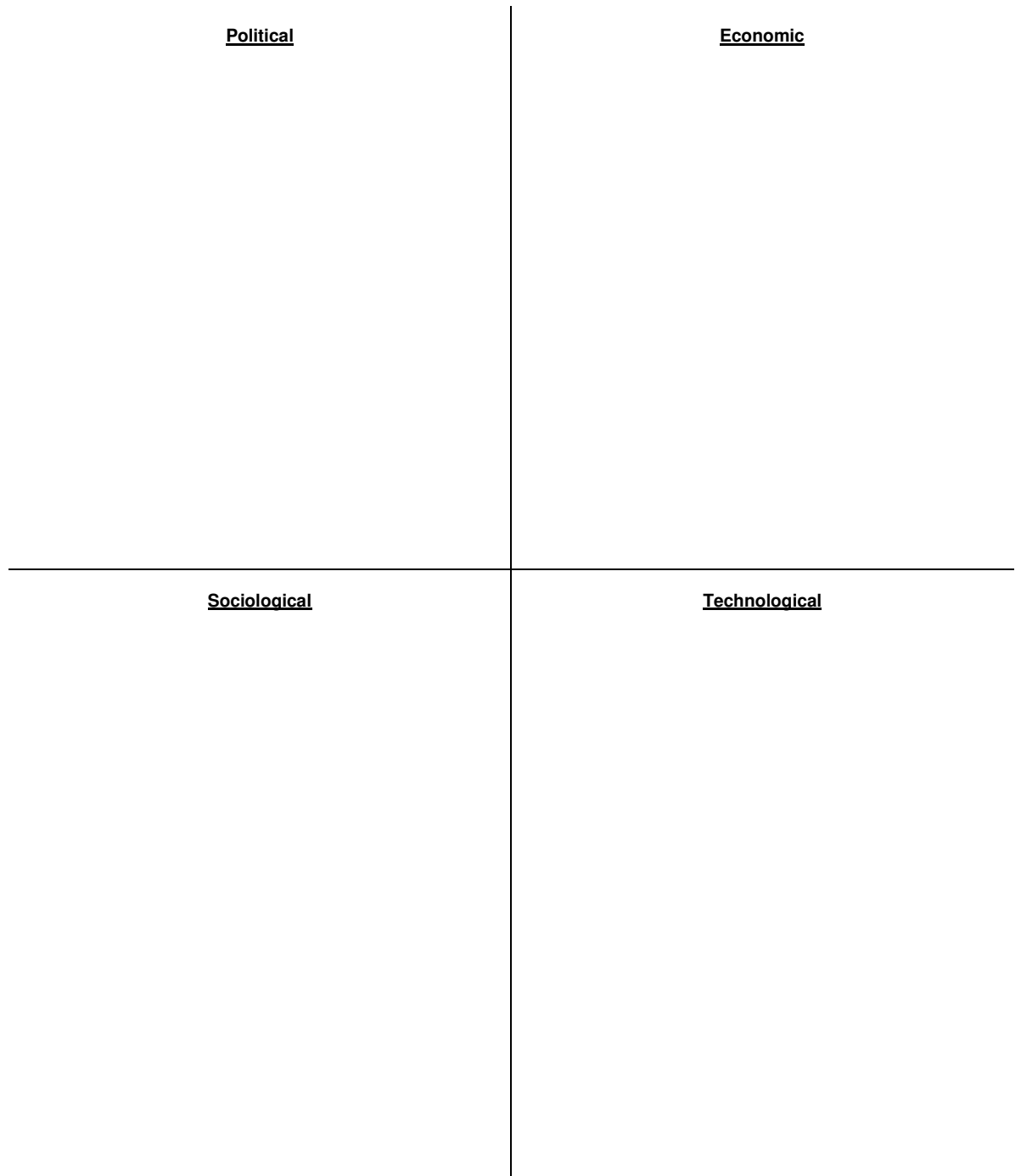
Appendix 2

EdD: English Masterclass: SWOT Analysis for “Teaching”

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<u>Opportunities</u>	<u>Threats</u>

Appendix 3

Edd: English Masterclass: PEST Analysis of “Teaching”



Appendix 4

EdD: English Masterclass: SWOT Analysis of “Learning”

Strengths

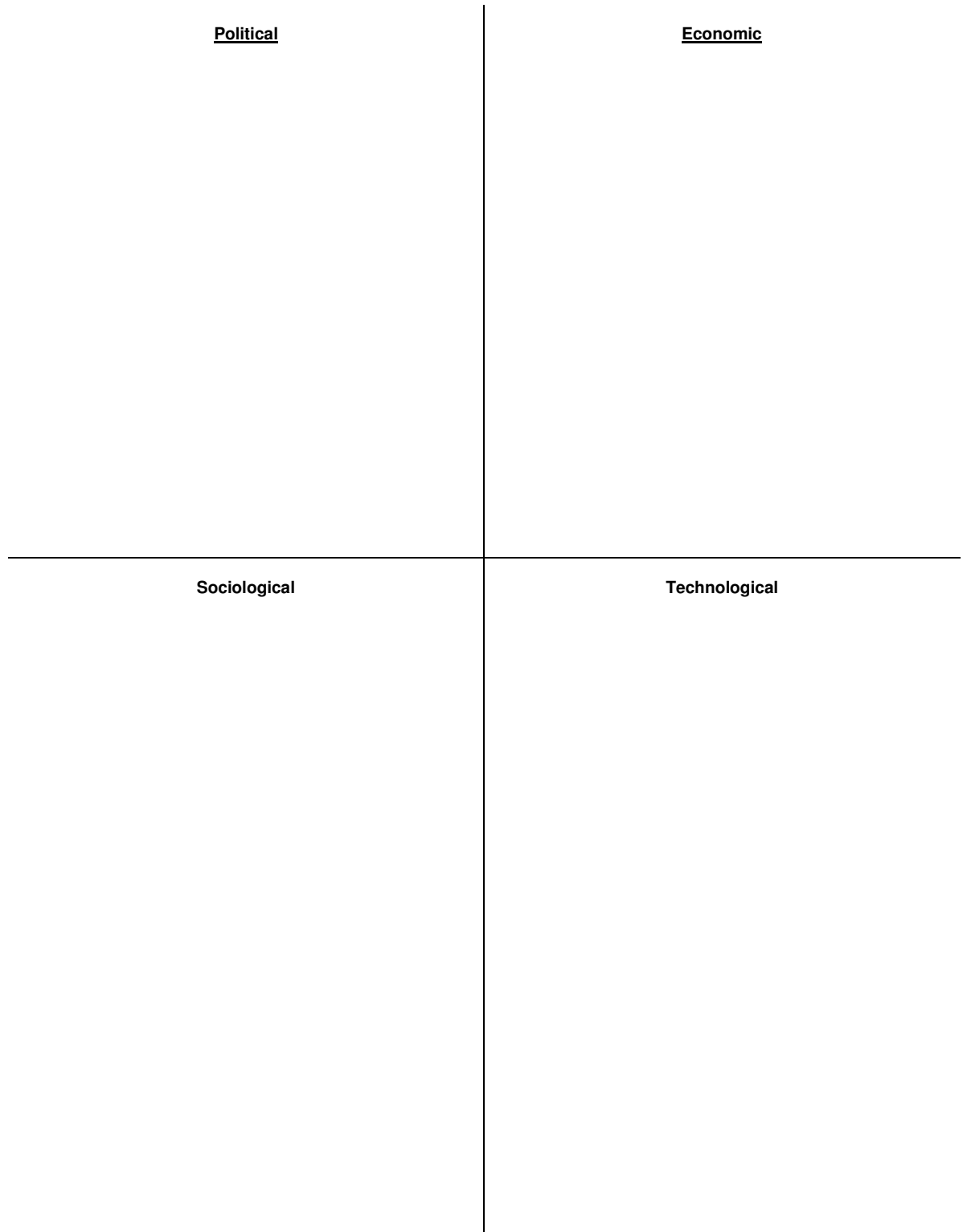
Weaknesses

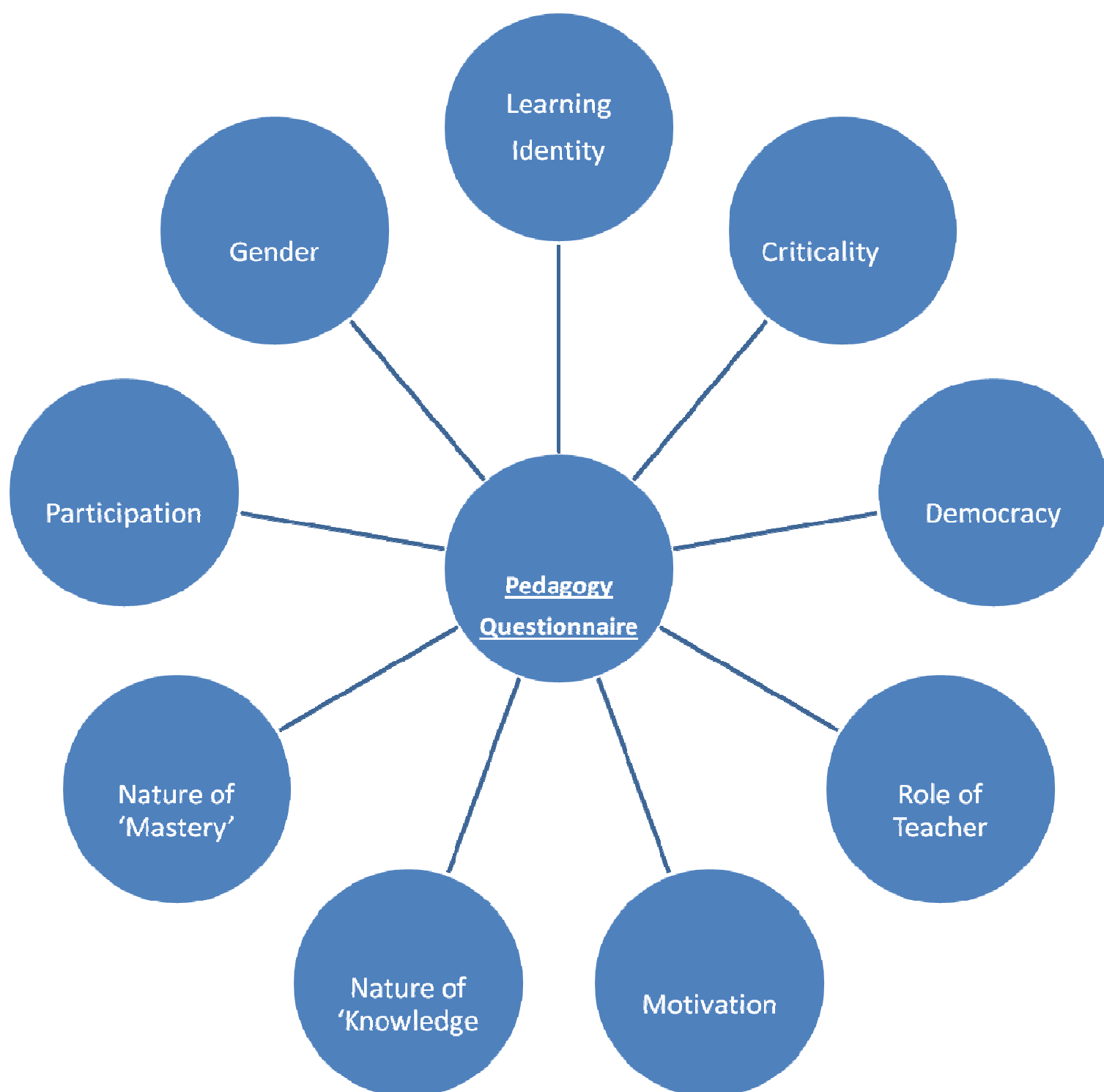
Opportunities

Threats

Appendix 5

Edd: English Masterclass: PEST Analysis of “Learning”



Appendix 6

Pedagogy Questionnaire**Participation**

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Motivation

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Role of Teacher

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Learning Identity

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Masterclass: 'Pedagogy' Questionnaire Data

This questionnaire includes verbatim, raw data previously provided by yourselves: pedagogy data from the second questionnaire you completed last year as undergraduates and the data you provided as year 2 A Level students on the extent to which masterclass / student voice / research group can empower students. It also contains some initial points of interpretation of this data by myself (underlined at the end of each coding concept / data set). Please read the data and offer some comment on the data and/or my initial interpretations by completing the attached questionnaire (Q1b).

Motivation – link data to literature / Habermas and Feminist learning theory

Pathologies

Joined because of a friend's pleas, initially daunting as I felt I needed a great deal of background knowledge, my sister told me that a boy in her English Lit group decided to come to masterclass because he believed that it was 'an intellectual study group for exceptional students – he told her that he wanted to be the best of the best'. To be the best is a motivation for some which is encouraged by the title. To make the best English students even better and improve their eligibility for university places.

Emancipations

Curiosity, ever-changing debate especially the sessions where a topic (not always related to English) or idea (for instance the debate on whether education 'empowered' students – Sept 02) was flung in. It would be lying not to admit that improvement in my English and knowledge of how good masterclass would look on my personal statementinspired into continuing and have never looked back... masterclass sessions stimulate me intellectually and I really enjoy being able to express my opinions and hear them being discussed and agreed with or disputed, thereby being introduced to more ideas and gaining deeper knowledge and understanding of areas of interest to me and also discovering areas of interest that I had previously known little about. I joined the masterclass not to be the best but to learn. I enjoyed the discussion topics and debate. We had a close knit group. The lack of predictability in the content.

Participation - link data to literature / Habermas and Feminist learning theory

Pathologies

Fear of being frowned upon by teachers. Expectations of name / Initial doubts because of its name.

Emancipations

Can contest the ideas of teachers without fear of being frowned upon due to the open-minded and forward-moving nature of discussions. There is a sense of keenness to share ideas. Both students and teachers contribute to discussions with far more equality than in normal classes. Intellectually rewarding and provides a forum for expression, explanation and in-depth discussion without the pressure of normal classroom situations (i.e. pressure to provide a correct answer. The nature of participation changes depending on the nature of the session. The teacher generally instigates the session by introducing the discussion and handing out leaflets / asking a question, yanks debate back on subject (not sure I agree with this last) The students consider the topic and discuss its points and raise new ideas and tangents. This learning is done in small groups as a group, occasionally participation is class-style – a teacher explaining a concept or series of isms and their application. The interaction of students and teachers in the masterclass works well on a personal level where people participate according to their learning identities. Though the teacher organizes the original topic for consideration the path taken in discussion is not restricted and is very dependent on the interests and experiences of those involved. The sessions are more valuable to everyone because they have the opportunity to get what they put in. Everybody was welcome at Masterclass; both teachers and students participated on an equal footing. We were all encouraged to contribute but we were

also free to listen to the ideas (meritocratic but without the pressure of performativity ..) of others. The use of smaller groups within the larger group allowed for greater participation. Participation is based on an equal-voice system and is based on discussion of the issue.

Forum for contestation, non-exclusiveness, open-mindedness, open-endedness, keenness, no preoccupation and worry about the correct answer, newness and tangential learning, dependent on effort and interest of the group, meritocratic, egalitarian

Nature of Mastery – link data to literature / Habermas and Feminist learning theory

Pathologies

The group was called 'The English Masterclass', but we did not like the label.

Emancipations

We did not actually stick to English-based discussion and the sessions were certainly not aimed to attract the students with the highest grades – there were no elitist values. The group was just full of people who enjoyed discussing intellectually who tend to think in a haphazard manner. It teaches you to order your thoughts into a hierarchy of importance so you can bring forth the relevant piece of information at the relevant time. I think I have achieved a mastery of my own mind by repeated testing of it in a situation where I want to appear intelligent and interesting, therefore, I force myself to concentrate and try to really understand and think about what is being said. We were mastering an amalgamation of skills. To construct an argument and argue your point using relevant evidence. The ability to critically analyse and evaluate a text; looking at language, sentence structure, syntax etc and also by placing it into an ideological context and realising the influence may have on the text.

As far as mastery goes, I am not sure what to write. I believe that it is the mastery of your own mind. Through m/class sessions I have come to understand how my mind works and therefore find it easier to order and express my ideas. I think m/class works extremely well for people like me. The nature of mastery in m/class is not that of further mastery over a subject or discipline but rather increasing adeptness at techniques of discussing / debating, analysing and criticizing for example. We were learning how to analyse texts and mastering the tools that could be used to do this. As part of mortal nature nothing can be truly mastered. However, there is a drive towards the exploration of nature of existence and universal balance.

No mastery of exclusive / elite skills / knowledge, a non-hierarchical intellectually vibrant and purposeful forum, mastery of self-knowledge and how one self thinks etc – self-reflexivity as a learner, self-testing assessment, skills development not subject knowledge, learning skills and developing a disposition for exploration / pioneering intellectual ambition and conviction

Nature of Knowledge - link data to literature / epistemology / Habermas and feminist learning theory

Pathologies

None

Emancipations

Although my academic knowledge of English (esp critical theory) did improve in the masterclass, the sessions were more successful in developing my intellectual skills, and inspiring me to apply them in my approach to learning. There have been

many, many different topics discussed ranging from current affairs to matters of personal interest to one of its members. I think that this is one of the really great things about the masterclass that its content is not necessarily pre-arranged and that it has no illusions of grandeur by only discussing topics deemed suitable by an elitist regime. The beauty of the masterclass is that it has no pretentiousness – other than its name! – and through this you can make seemingly mundane subjects interesting by looking at them in different ways and shedding new light on old material.

I don't think knowledge can be mastered – learning is an on-going process that is never ending. I don't think we were mastering the knowledge but just consuming it and? to new levels in order to shed light on the issues.

I would argue that it is not the kind of knowledge (i.e. the topic) discussed, but rather the methods used to discuss it that is both the knowledge gained and that made it into a learning environment! The type of knowledge discussed was wide-ranging though with an understandable (considering the teacher) bias towards literary texts. The range of the materials discussed meant that chance was given to apply analysing and critical examination techniques in different ways.. It fostered an environment which was relaxed and comfortable and encouraged the exploration of new ideas and theories.

Academic and intellectual learning differentiated – emphasis on the intellectual, equal balance of theory and application of theory to personal / lived experience as well as text based experience, integrity / no pretentiousness, knowledge results from a social process not a systems product, shedding light on what exists already – forward intellectual momentum – use what has been learned and discussed before, - Renaissance in spirit / not scholastic - the use of the dialectic and reason / experience rather than official or simply useful knowledge? Utopian??

Learning Identity – (sense of self) - link data to literature / Habermas and feminist learning theory

Pathologies

With regard to the nature of masterclass, I am undecided to how I feel about it. On the one hand I like the prestigious nature of the name because I feel it sums up the importance of what masterclass presents (i.e. how important I feel it is that groups like this exist). However, I also know from personal experience how daunting the thought of joining a masterclass can be. Therefore I think in order to encourage people to take part and attract more members, the name 'masterclass' may need to be changed to ensure that as many people as possible give themselves the chance to be involved in something truly beneficial.

Conflict of ethics – elitist and egalitarian?, the ethical and social angst of meritocracy ?

Emancipations

I would describe myself as vocal learner. I think I learn through speech and by discussing issues out loud. I am able to weigh them up and assess them and consequently commit them to memory. Learning in the masterclass is more of an art than in normal classes as from each normal lesson you are given the information you need to keep whereas in masterclass you must take the information you want to keep. Students can develop their own learning identity. When participating in the masterclass, I have always been very vocal – but with questions as well as voicing my own views. I like to get involved in discussion in order to learn from others, and have always listened carefully to others and I try to encourage people to participate vocally where they may not have had the confidence. I try to stand by my arguments when challenged but I have found that it is also important to have the confidence to challenge others – in order to develop my understanding and allow them to strengthen their own points – whoever they are!

My individual learning identity was a passive learning – listening and questioning on paper I never engaged with the type of masterclass learning identity (active, discussing, criticising, challenging) that was encouraged. I never really participate and

often actively avoided participation. This may mean that I never learnt, at least to apply the kind of knowledge being taught. However, (and I don't know if this is completely off the point) masterclass is an enjoyable forum made so partly because of the enthusiasm of the ...participants. I therefore feel that individuals do have different learning identities. Not sure about public and private learning identities, but they can't be that different. As someone who attempts to build on the arguments of others.

Importance of speaking / vocal – oracy not literacy! Oracy undervalued in teaching and learning, personal responsibility for learning in a group setting, social individualism (anti/non-Cartesian), self-constructed learners (multiple intelligences and preferred learning styles – intellectual plasticity), highly interactive, the enjoyability of experimentation

Criticality - link data to literature – gifted and talented / Habermas and feminist learning theory

Pathologies

I think it is quite difficult to define what being critical is, and I also think that being critical is a term that can be used for many situations. I think being critical is being able to absorb information and understand it fully and then give an opinion on it. I don't think my definition of being critical does justice to the term.

Uncertainty of term / meaning

Emancipations

I am definitely more critical as a result of my participation in the masterclass. I am much more aware of the bias... a text can have – or its ability to influence and shape your opinion. My criticality has not been restricted to the field of literature – I can't watch a film or look at a painting without engaging in critical thought and attempting to find hidden meanings.

My critical analysis of written work - articles/poetry for example improved through practice in masterclass sessions – esp in terms analysing an unknown /unfamiliar work – this practice helped me to be critical of the very words on the page; without considering contexts of information. This has certainly been great prep for uni: critical analysis of others' views in the discussion and criticality in terms of my own views on a subject in order to develop my own opinions and produce a strong argument it is important to first negotiate my perspective. This is especially important in the masterclass because I wanted to know my argument before criticising others.

Through my participation, my critical skills have developed from being unsure of how to react to a situation in which I was supposed to be critical, to one where I feel confident of being able to say something valid. A large part of the masterclass creed / breed is to evaluate your opinion of new theories and to compare them critically with others. I would define being critical as evaluating data to the best of your ability with all the other approaches you possess out of your own feelings towards the issue.

I don't think that I as an individual became more critical as a result of English masterclass (this may be because I didn't pay much attention).

Awareness of bias and power issues inherent in knowledge production and knowledge claims, knowledge contestable, unrestricted access to different knowledge domains, the metadiscourses of self-criticality / self-awareness / self-consciousnesses as learners – no impediment / liberatory, strong endorsement of a sense of self even amidst sites and forms of change – belief in human / cognitive essentialism.

Gender – link data to literature on education and females / feminist research / and the results of my first piece of EdD research into A Level Inductiondifference between males and females with coping with in- betweeness - 'becoming' something else as one moves up the educational ladderquote myself..... Habermas and feminist learning theory: Grosz, Lather, Fine etc – concept of architectural space / transitional space and Chora – in the forms of masterclass and its development into other spaces

- Synopticity – means of habitation
- Extended synopticity / masterclass – means of habitation
- Student Voice / Student Research – means of habitation
- Masterclass / Degree bridging – means of habitation

Pathologies

Males want instant results from their study and may find it frustrating and tedious to completely deconstruct an entire text to find a meaning. English is a women's subject

Status – a slight sense of female superiority over the male methods and reasons for learning in masterclass? A denigration of female participation and conviction?

Emancipations

Women have, maybe, more patience, and take more time over their work. They may not mind that answer isn't always directly in front of them, but something to be searched for. The male and female conception of time differ – Greek philosophy
1) male time devours 2) female time – time as a healer

The gender imbalance in the masterclass (which has always been evident) raises questions of whether there is something available in the sessions that are particularly attractive to female students - is it mostly females who want to broaden their minds with discussion and argument? Is it only females who want to increase their eligibility for university? If this is true, it could be said that girls are motivated to increase the gap between male and female educational attainment, which is a reflection of the increasing power of women in society since feminism

I think the gender imbalance is due to the content of masterclass (as it is assumed to be sessions being more feminine). Also, in Park College, our masterclass is an English masterclass which probably deters more males as they may consider English to be women's subject. (I also think this deters students who don't do English Lit or Lang. It would be beneficial to masterclass participants if more of a balance could be achieved between the two sexes as it would provide different sides to arguments and most likely more scope for debate

The gender ratio has in the past been predominately female but in my opinion this reflects the English nature of the course and is not an important factor in group politics. Interestingly, in the St.Bedes group this is reversed but in both cases I have never encountered any form of discrimination

It was mainly females who participated ... but there were a few males, and all were treated the same. We were asked if we wanted to change the name from 'Masterclass' in case we felt it was patriarchal, but we were happy with it

I don't know why there is a gender imbalance in favour of women. It may (in more recent mc particularly) reflect the gender imbalance in English as a subject. This imbalance has been attributed to mental differences, with suggestions that the female mind forms language links earlier and makes such links quicker and easier than the male mind on general, therefore creating a predilection for language-based subjects. It also could reflect the social bias against education

There may be other reasons for the imbalance in the masterclass - most notably the fact that all extra-curricular activities at the College are organized for Wed afternoons – inc drama and sports – which may be more attractive to male students

Females are more explorative, patient, pioneering, can live with uncertainty, broaden minds as well as depth, aware of social power differential – self-conscious will to close the gap by participation?, females will venture into new social spaces to ensure / gain more social and cultural recognition and power - masterclass a useful stepping-stone in this process? Yet recognition of the need for the other (males) – not interested in female exclusivity in these new social spaces for learning, masterclass an ideal / utopian site for greater cooperation and understanding of each other for the benefit of more valid knowledge, gender not an issue in educational attainment despite mental / cognitive differences – processes are different only?

Democracy - link data to literature (post-communist democracy) / Habermas and feminist learning theory

Pathologies

None

Emancipations

We were asked what we were interested in and what we would like to study so that masterclass could be tailored to our interests. The teacher then came in/us? with what texts he could relate to our ideas. It was a democracy in that it was not just the teacher's ideas but we all had a say. Also, the question of changing the name demonstrated the democratic nature of the masterclass.

Masterclass politics is based on an equal voice ideal and so theoretically it acts as a forum for the exploration of the issue. In practice, some people can be more ready than others to contribute their thoughts.

The m/class is democratic due to a set of "unwritten rules" that its participants abide by. Everyone is able to speak when they wish to, but also, everyone knows when to listen to others. This means that the not so forceful members of the group get a chance to speak as well as the confident members of the group. However, I think it is also important to mention that I think despite being democratic, the masterclass is non-conformist in the way it creates its own rules out of mutual respect its members have for each other.

While I participated in the masterclass, great value was placed in democracy. There was never a sense of hierarchy – even the tables and chairs were moved out of their traditional places (we joked that it was free our minds from the constraints of an authoritative education system) – for some sessions we even sat in a circle outside on the grass – and any teachers in the group (or visitors) took an equal role in discussion. Everyone was free to speak their opinions, ask questions, and change the topic of discussion – we did not need to raise our hands. I valued that sense of democracy in the masterclass. It gave me the confidence I needed to be an active participant.

I would have described previous ('01) masterclass as more democratic than later years. The idea behind masterclass (despite the misleading name) is democratic in the room. The impression is gained that all are there to discuss issues with the same weight given to one person's opinion and right to express as another and all opinions open to criticism. The masterclass is also open to all disciplines i.e. science as much as English. However, by the 02/03 masterclass this interdisciplinary approach faded, with most students studying English. Also, the 02/03 year seemed to rely /allow the authority of the teacher and a more classroom situation than the 01/02/ year. Masterclass seems to have also grown more elitist – especially in other's interpretation of the idea (St.Bede's). Rather than such broadening of the m/c having a positive effect by

introducing a wider spectrum of approaches and opinions, I would argue that it has narrowed / been constrained by reducing it to its name - a further class in English for brighter students.

- Liberal democracy
- Classical democracy
- Student Voice initiative / Citizenship

Student – centred content, equal voice / free speech / non-hierarchical, no teacher domination, teacher responsive to needs and interest of students, inequality of effective democratic participation owing to previous skills and personal qualities, create own rules of engagement out of mutual respect for others in the group / no set written rules, less democratic in the second year as it strengthened links with private schools – much more teacher-centred and institutionally owned and defined, narrowed in content and nature of participation, became more elitist and exclusive

Appendix 7**Revised SWOT/PEST Questionnaire Instruction Sheet (Part 1 & 2)****Items in Pack****Action**

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) Personal information form | Complete and return |
| 2) Copy of 1 st / 2 nd questionnaires | Read / Re-familiarize / keep |
| 3) Raw SWOT/PEST data | Read / write your comments (can annotate any data, too, as well as the questionnaire form itself) / return |
| 4) Raw Pedagogy data | Read / write your comments (can annotate any data, too, as well as the questionnaire form itself) / return |
| 5) Questionnaire on Masterclass / Degree Links | Complete and return |

To return in my stamped SAE

1. Your completed personal information form
2. Your annotated / completed /questionnaire data on SWOT/PEST
3. Your annotated / completed /questionnaire data on Pedagogy
4. Your completed questionnaire on masterclass / degree study links

P.S. I should be very grateful if you could complete/return ASAP

Thank you again for your interest and time

Steve

Questionnaire Completion Instruction Sheet (Part 2)

Steve Hobbs

Home Tel: 01323 - 511096

Email: sih@mfield780.freemove.co.uk

Mobile: I do not use this / leave this on very often; so it is not a reliable means of contact / communication, but here it is anyway – 07855873460

Your name

.....

Name of University

.....

Degree Course Title

.....

Email

.....

Mobile No

.....

Appendix 8**(Revised SWOT/PEST Questionnaire and Data)****Q.1a. (SWOT/PEST)**

Please read the verbatim summary of the raw data taken from the SWOT/PEST questionnaire on Teaching and Learning. I have extrapolated from this data some initial and basic interpretations in terms of “pathologies” and “emancipations”. I should be grateful if you would comment on these initial interpretations i.e. please feel free to contest/challenge, elaborate/refine and/or add to anything I have written.

Contest/Challenge**Elaborate/Refine****Add**

Revised SWOT/PEST Data

'Pathology'

1) SWOT and PEST: "Pathologies in Teaching"

Teaching Strengths and Pathologies

- "Hopefully producing a more confident, assured student" – hope! - female
- "In a classroom, information often comes from teacher, to the students – 'one way' learning" - female
- "not dictated by an iron syllabus" – male
- "no dictating knowledge" – female
- teacher experience as "tainting" – female

Teaching Weaknesses and Pathologies

- "A little too advanced for A Level, perhaps, especially the vocabulary used to teach" – female
- "the lack of structure which made the class so unique" / stream of consciousness of a collective group" / up to the individual to apply the structure" – female
- title of group – "may take a more authoritative approach (e.g. lecture style)"
- "depends on strong students" – female
- depends on strong central figure, ..."no independent life" of teachers
- "successful depending on the character of the person being taught / a lot of people could be overwhelmed by the high level of interaction and therefore shy away from what could be useful to them"
- "more handouts than I can read" - male

Teaching Opportunities and Pathologies

- Free from normal classroom – "the viewpoint is often that of the person teaching, which means students struggle to retain an open mind" / "the class can often end up thinking the same"
- **Teaching Threats and Pathologies**
- "Having one teacher over such a wide range of topics could lead to bias"
- "some people found the information intimidating, dwarfed by their lack of knowledge in comparison to the teacher"

- “when we merge with private sector it became apparent that the private school teachers wanted more direct control over teaching and learning process”
- “that the teachers independence may conflict with the teachers aims” i.e. how much did your Sussex thesis dictate the masterclass syllabus and way it was run?” – paradox of the teacher absence / equality ...

Teaching and Political Pathologies

- “Masterclass has been understood in many different ways – most notably, contradicting with our value of democracy. In this wider scale, the ideas of Masterclass have elitist connotations, which may influence its teaching in other institutions” – “For example, many us at Park felt that at St. Bedes, the English masterclass was only introduced to the most able students – not those with the greatest interest or passion” ... “to boost the ability of other students”
- “Masterclass has to change (even if only minutely) the way it is run to conform with government initiatives to gain “carrot” cash”
- “I was aware of some discrepancies between what was **needed** by those running the masterclass and what was **provided** for those running the masterclass. I think there is a lack of willingness to try new methods of teaching and learning in education and as result the ‘pioneers’ of the masterclass initiative are having to work doubly hard. Education has (I feel) become increasingly driven by government targets.” – links with private sector problems
- More influence and control (Marx would have perceived this as deriving from their economic status” – influence of private school
- “However, those with more academic ability and knowledge did tend to dominate the class”

• **Teaching and Economic Pathologies**

- “when the possibility of financial support (e.g. for resources/ photocopying) arose at the college, it became more necessary to show ‘results’ of the masterclass, proof of its worth. So the teaching was influenced, in the sense the Steve began to introduce more structure into the sessions – this did mean that we had the opportunity to study topics more deeply but it also restricted the free reign of discussion we once had”

Teaching and Sociological Pathologies

- “In consuming knowledge are we in ourselves an elite group... there was a certain resentment felt by other peers who did not attend the classes even though this was done out of choice”

Teaching and Technological Pathologies

- Assumption that technology learning would only “scrape the surface of the topic. This feeling is quite common in mainstream teaching”

- “I think greater use of technology has more implications for teaching than learning...However, I still feel that technology (or lack of it) is no impediment to knowledge or learning/ teaching in English”
- “Technology began to infiltrate the class more as time went by – symptomatic of the growing influence of the college itself (merger with FE) – i.e. began taking a class register, college wanted to increase assessment and regulation – also began to be timetabled – symbolic of it becoming more mainstream - increased when we merged with St. Bedes.”

2) **SWOT and PEST**: “Pathologies in Learning”

Learning Strengths and Pathologies

- “Not just restricted to Eng Literature” – notion of restriction
- “Go beyond the restrictions of one’s discipline’s opinion”
- “Bombardment of ideas which he or she must make sense of by themselves” – Cartesian ...

Learning Weaknesses and Pathologies

- “Discussion progressed rapidly we could not always go in real depth with an issue... however this was only a small hindrance to learning”
- “A weakness in m/class style learning is the same weakness of masterclass teaching. It could overwhelm a student” - not a personal view but an omniscient view
- “People may be too shy to attend, even if it is just to listen”...“this problem would not exist of m/class style teaching +learning was integrated into the curriculum as attendance would be compulsory”
- “learning wasn’t regulated one could argue that standards are not attained. It was only once a week...time was a restriction”
- “is essentially the brainchild of you” (the teacher, myself). I imagine it collapsed at Park since you left, as masterclass depended on one person. It wasn’t very stable & too dependent” --- I tried to build institutional capacity in ways
- “few notes were taken and so we only took away what we could remember”

Learning Opportunities and Pathologies

- “(This was a bit(sci-fi, ‘1984’) irrational. I’m not suggesting that this is a possible development)” – check source for this comment

Learning Threats and Pathologies

- “learning has as much power as teaching to change nature of mc”
- “I think the government poses a great threat to masterclass. It seems to be constraining learning or at least moving towards it (those silly what-we-are-going-to-do-today blue forms) You can kind of see this developing until the government begins to out guidelines for what we shall be taught, (if you don't funds(until it has control over what is essentially a recreational activity)” – a voluntary, recreational activity being colonized by systemworld
- “specific people were more vocal than others - but everyone was encouraged to speak out”
- “because learning wasn't standardized there were pupils who were at higher level than the rest and able to participate more effectively in the class-room ... intimidating other students”. “ After merge with private sector ... a structure imposed which threatened the ‘imaginative learning’ of the masterclass (which was equally as important as the raw knowledge I've acquired”
- “not sure if this is correct” – use of Aristotle to explain the sharing of ideas and debating with others in masterclass – ARISTOTLE: believed that the way in which man developed knowledge was by sharing ideas and debating with others....this kind of forum was reflected in the masterclass ...v. affective” – meant effective I think (affective is more emotional ...)

Learning and Political Pathologies

- “I think the recent political attitude to education is a threat to learning – there is increased elitism and censorship of learning (and teaching). For instance (and I don't know whether I misconstrued the original aim of masterclass) masterclass was meant to be a forum for interested students to expand their learning beyond the classroom, but recently it seems masterclass is more about increased education of the brightest (you could argue that the brighter* ones are the only interested ones, or naturally attracted / but this argues against the picked-out students). Also the government seems keen to control such learning i.e. – you fill in these forms we give you increased cash”. * 2this sounds awful – like people consider themselves superior, naturally not what I meant or think about the m/c”

Learning and Economic Pathologies

- “The possibility of greater financial support may help the learning in the masterclass because more resources can be purchased – books in particular (and Steve will have more money for photocopies!). There may be more opportunities to expand the masterclass by making links with other colleges – even universities (with extra money for travel – or for new communication technologies to be explored)”. “Trips – museum / theatre / exhibition may also be possible”
- “not sure about this, sorry”. ..”I think you should have a masterclass with a newspaper, some isms and some people though and NOT the latest copies of ‘King Lear’ or whatever (however, saying that it is surprising the English block even had electricity)”

Learning and Sociological Pathologies

- “compared with force-feeding element of mainstream learning that stems from a singular focus on the teacher”

Learning and Technological Pathologies

- “I don’t think that masterclass learning would benefit in any way from greater use of technology. (Although the trees might!). Unlike subjects such as science, technology has a limited value to the study of English, which relies on the study of text. The use of technology could be incorporated in learning through ... Powerpoint presentations ... but such forms of learning would change the nature of Masterclass into a less dynamic force – it would slow the interchange of ideas and be a pointless exercise”
- V.little opportunity for pupils to use technology within the class” “But was it necessary?If it was made compulsory, it would be a clear sign that the masterclass was being used as a means by which to attain alternative goals i.e. improving the school’s profile”

Revised SWOT/PEST Teaching Data

‘Emancipations’

Teaching Strengths and Emancipations

- Fully encourages students to challenge and argue with other views and accepted learning. Learnt how to be critical
- Students involved in the sessions tend to have a desire to learn and consequently it is possible to use a wider variety of teaching methods and techniques. Relaxed style of teaching help students engage. There is a sense of information coming from all around. In masterclass sessions there iseveryone gets taught the same. M/class teaching enables the development of ideas to take place. Everyone understands before we move on to something else*
- Teacher had a position as more of a facilitator - the group would be introduced to a topic / article/ picture / issue , and everyone had the opportunity to develop the discussion - it was not lead, and unplanned (the course of the discussion) RESULT – Empowerment of the students – we developed the confidence to put forward our views & debate each others & debate each others – even the teacher’s
- Flexible teaching approach, subject matter can be matched to group desires rather than dictated by a iron syllabus
- **Students can teach students and bring in new approaches**
- At times I felt the teacher was learning just as much as the pupils - a two way process. What made the teaching process so exceptional was that the teacher did not have complete autonomy . – the pupils were leading the discussion as much as the teacher. Teacher more of a regulatory force rather than merely dictating knowledge. The teacher had no alternative objective but to stimulate the mind – the teacher was separate from the institution he usually represents
- The teaching in depth, and the teacher had a great interest in his subject. This interest was transferred to the students through his teaching. The teaching challenged the students to think about things we may not otherwise have thought about

Teaching Weaknesses and Emancipations

- Teacher’s role limited / taking more of a democratic role
- An initiative (does not have to be English teacher or teacher at all)
- Masterclass does not require a complete absorption of all available knowledge
- The lack of structure which made the class so unique – it was up to the individual to apply the structure

Teaching Opportunities and Emancipations

- You tend to reach a greater number of people in m/class. Also through the individuality of each session, much more original thought is created with some students forming their own ideas and moving away from the reproduced ideas of normal class teaching where classes can often end up thinking the same, having been taught the subject from only one viewpoint. Also the viewpoint is often that of the person teaching, which means students struggle to retain an open mind. The m/class style of teaching ensures students keep an open mind. The opportunity to explore ideas outside the constraints of the National Curriculum – which can be seen as giving little room for radical thought
- Detailed explanations of new theories and ideas are coupled to basic introductions allowing a rapid development in knowledge of previously unexplored areas
- Opportunity to create and share with others – a microcosm of a work environment. The teaching always provided further opportunities for learning, through introduction of new vocabulary, new texts / articles, new theory which could then be applied to our college courses (even non-english related)
- We had the opportunity to take control of the class and take the debate in a direction we wanted it to (not restricted by teacher or by the syllabus objectives). Because the teacher wasn't such an authoritarian figure we felt more comfortable questioning and deconstructing his views – an opportunity only brought about by the relaxed environment

Teaching Threats and Emancipations

- Wide range of topics being introduced to me from many different standpoint, & also from both the teacher and fellow students
- The teacher made himself an equal within the rest of the group - he didn't presume to have the greatest opinion or the final say, allowing everyone else to develop their points freely ...had the opportunity to reach their own conclusions in discussion and be confident in their
- Provide motivation to acquire more knowledge

Teaching and Political Emancipations

- Masterclass teaching and learning seemed to become more important for education on a wider political scale while we took part – this influenced financial support & the increasing links with other schools / colleges ... to bring this forum to more people and encourage intellectual discussion
- The teacher was careful not to influence our opinions; only to help us consider different ideas and viewpoints
- DEMOCRATIC – the control was not in the hands of the teacher and certainly did not have the final verdict on the issue we were discussing (legalistic / juridical term)

Teaching and Economic Emancipations

- None – look again – resources

Teaching and Sociological Emancipations

- There is an aspect of community in masterclass sessions stemming from the fact that although often led by the main or central teacher m/class are fed into by all involved and the result is a situation whereby you both give and receive information and thus accumulate knowledge from everyone in the m/class. This relaxed manner of teaching in turn creates a relaxed learning environment that I think for both teachers and students is quite different from the majority of mainstream classes. What we learned – the list is endless

Teaching and Technological Emancipations

- Masterclass teaching is **fulfilling** in the respect that classes reach a more **wholesome** conclusion and do not leave students with a feeling that they have scraped the surface of the topic
- Masterclass allowed us to connect with the material on an emotional level and then to delve into more theoretical issues in our discussions (affective education....)

Learning

Learning and Strengths Emancipations

- Masterclass broadened my mind. It helped the students to think critically in many different ways (not in a formalistic logical critical thinking / sophistic way butin a way thatevery masterclass built on the last **(yet some say that each session was individualistic – explore this contradiction further)**)
- Learning was not forced upon us It was a happy outcome of the class. The individual chose to learn.
- To be put in a situation (where people had the same dedication and interest in the subject was invigorating . it was quite an accumulative process i.e. learning was done through the other students as well as the teacher ...the debating style was done through the other students ...allowed others to voice opinions and force people to see a different
- The skills and knowledge one acquired were not just tangible things such as work or verbal skills ..one gained the confidence and inspiration to formulate new ideas and gain the courage to openly articulate these views
- A wonderful part of the masterclass is how it challenges students with new material – they learn ...you learn to look beyond. Learning on many levels
- Encourages background reading (personal initiative)

- Much of the masterclass learning agenda can be transferred favourably on other subjects
- Masterclass teaching encourages individuality in students and therefore students create a stronger sense of what they believe in and understand. Also in comparison with mainstream classes, m/classes give students better all-round knowledge of the subject. It encourages interaction which is more intense than in normal classes. As a result students are able to develop more acute skills. Keep the interest of the student longer ... evoke a desire to learn more

Learning Weaknesses and Emancipations

- More important than the topics themselves was the way in which approached them (& the way we each learned to develop our opinions and arguments

Learning Opportunities and Emancipations

- Students are able to develop the ideas they are interested in which encourages original thought which puts students in good stead for exam situations where they will be under pressure to produce something by themselves. Chance to learn from a wider variety of teaching methods... more enriched version of events ...see things from many angles consequently understanding the topic better. Relaxed teaching styles more ways of communicating information are used i.e. different typessee original for more ... cant read it
- **Looks good on a university personal statement**
- The intellectual learning certainly helped me progress to university level
- Furthered cooperation between state and private schools
- How to quickly develop their own opinions in group discussion and are motivated to express them
- Analytical skills improve, as do skills in interaction and argument
- "Pupils from other disciplines even were allowed into the masterclass which did much to open-up the debates that took place and create a 'melting pot' of different views and opinions – especially between the arts and sciences (V.Imp)"

Learning Threats and Emancipations

- Confidence certainly improves
- Threat of bias Counteracted by the involvement of other members of the m/class in shaping what the m/class discussions are about

Learning and Political Emancipations

- It is an excellent opportunity for students. I hope that it the m/class will continue to get itself noticed until such time when it may be used more widely in education, thus reaching a the potential that it has. (I have noticed since being at university that the seminars are based on a teaching style similar to that of masterclass
- The dialectic was studied

Learning and Economic Emancipations

- More money for photocopying

Learning and Sociological Emancipations

- Masterclass was great practice for university
- linking a virtue
- Largely based around the interaction between different members of the group. I n masterclass students were able to establish a position based on less pressure and more mutual respect. (less externally imposed intensification but generated their own intensity) This means that the learning experience is a more general gathering of knowledge compared with force-feeding element of mainstream learning that stems from a singular focus on the teacher
- Skills and knowledge gained in the masterclass I applied to classroom learning

Learning and Technological Emancipations

- The aim of the class was to develop and explore ideas – I don't believe that our learning was assisted or hindered by using technology
- A benefit of masterclass which can be seen under the technological category is that its freedom allows greater experimentation with various forms of learning aid. This is clearly advantageous as students are able to discover what methods are most conducive to learning for them and consequently use this knowledge to enable them to get the most from each session

Include data on what was studied and how it was studied

- What – content of masterclass – topics reflected the interest of students , their A level issues , topics i.e. c/w, their university course choice etc – took it terns to help others follow their interests an needs – mutually supportive intellectual environment – English Lit , Social Policy and Psychology, Medicine,
- I loved the way in which learnt about the great linguists, theorists and philosophers; something I would not have had the chance to in my mainstream A-level classes

- There were discussions about the government and especially about the education system – looking at issues as choice and consumerism (link to the activism within the group relating to the participation in the Student Voice - analysis of Government documents / policy etc)
- What we learned – the list is endless.... In my mind every discipline can be related to sociological theory – what is derived from society (politics and economics) cannot be separated from it
- There was a very broad range of topics covered; from a feminist analysis of Zulu to discussions about the education system
- Plato = the dialectic (v. largely in 1st year in uni)
- Political dimension of the UK (Labour v Conservative)
- Ideologies of Romanticism, enlightenment, Marx, liberal humanism – feminism
- Neo-liberal economics – affect on social policy and its roots in globalization
- Issue of class in relation to education (Steve Bassett ...)
- Neo-colonialism –stemming from initial colonialist ambitions! (Zulu)
- Theory – through the masterclass I could apply my knowledge of social theory on a literary level - this was great practice for university where I now usually approach texts with sociological perspective (i.e. looking at the presentation of feminine roles in Dickens' Bleak House) and research
- Social Institutions discussed in the masterclass - such as the Education system, and aspects of society – e.g. – politics and the Mass Media, linked with my own studies in sociology
- Wider Issues – I found our discussions about self-identity and the nature of beauty very valuable - I even followed links in my A level
- The sociology of beauty and aesthetics – how it is socially and culturally defined, which led to the meaning of art (which we eventually found to have political affiliations - how is art used? Is it politically or sociologically manipulated? – should art or literature be seen as “words on the page” or should the context be considered? – Can we be objective when assessing art? Do we have the authority to criticize it? – Is history art as well (a manipulated story)

Appendix 9**Revised Pedagogy Questionnaire**

Please read the verbatim summary of the raw data taken from the Pedagogy Questionnaire. I have extrapolated from this data some initial and basic interpretations in terms of “pathologies” and “emancipations”. I should be grateful if you would comment on these initial interpretations i.e. please feel free to contest/challenge, elaborate/refine and/or add to anything I have written.

Contest/Challenge**Elaborate/Refine****Add**

Appendix 10

Habermas' Typology of of the Relationship Between Individual Lifeworld Zones and categories of Social and Cultural Reproduction Processes

142 *Intermediate Reflections*

<div style="text-align: center;">Structural components</div> <div style="text-align: right;">Reproduction processes</div>	Culture	Society	Personality
Cultural reproduction	<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Interpretive schemes fit for consensus ("valid knowledge") </div>	Legitimations	Socialization patterns Educational goals
Social integration	Obligations	<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Legitimately ordered interpersonal relations </div>	Social memberships
Socialization	Interpretive accomplishments	Motivations for actions that conform to norms	<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Interactive capabilities ("personal identity") </div>

Figure 21. Contributions of Reproduction Processes to Maintaining the Structural Components of the Lifeworld

ments within each of these dimensions vary according to the degree of structural differentiation of the lifeworld. The degree of differentiation also determines how great the need for consensual knowledge, legitimate orders, and personal autonomy is at any given time. Disturbances in reproduction are manifested in their own proper domains of culture, society, and personality as loss of meaning, anomie, and mental illness (psychopathology). There are corresponding manifestations of deprivation in the other domains (see Figure 22).

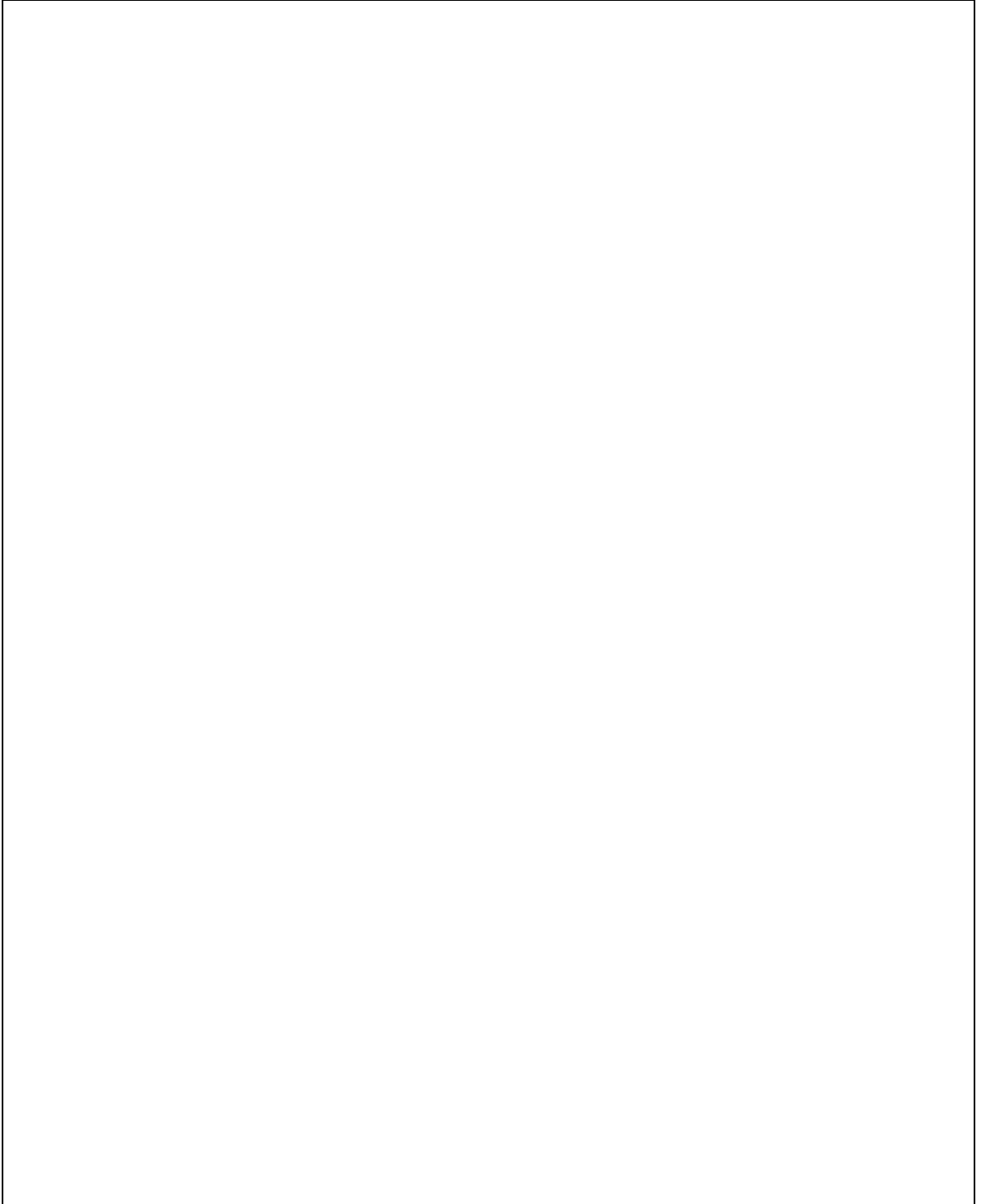
On this basis we can specify the functions that communicative action takes on in the reproduction of the lifeworld (see Figure 23). The highlighted areas along the diagonal in Figure 23 contain the characterizations with which we first demarcated cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization from one another. In the meantime we have seen that *each* of these reproduction processes contributes in maintaining *all* the components of the lifeworld. Thus we can attribute to the

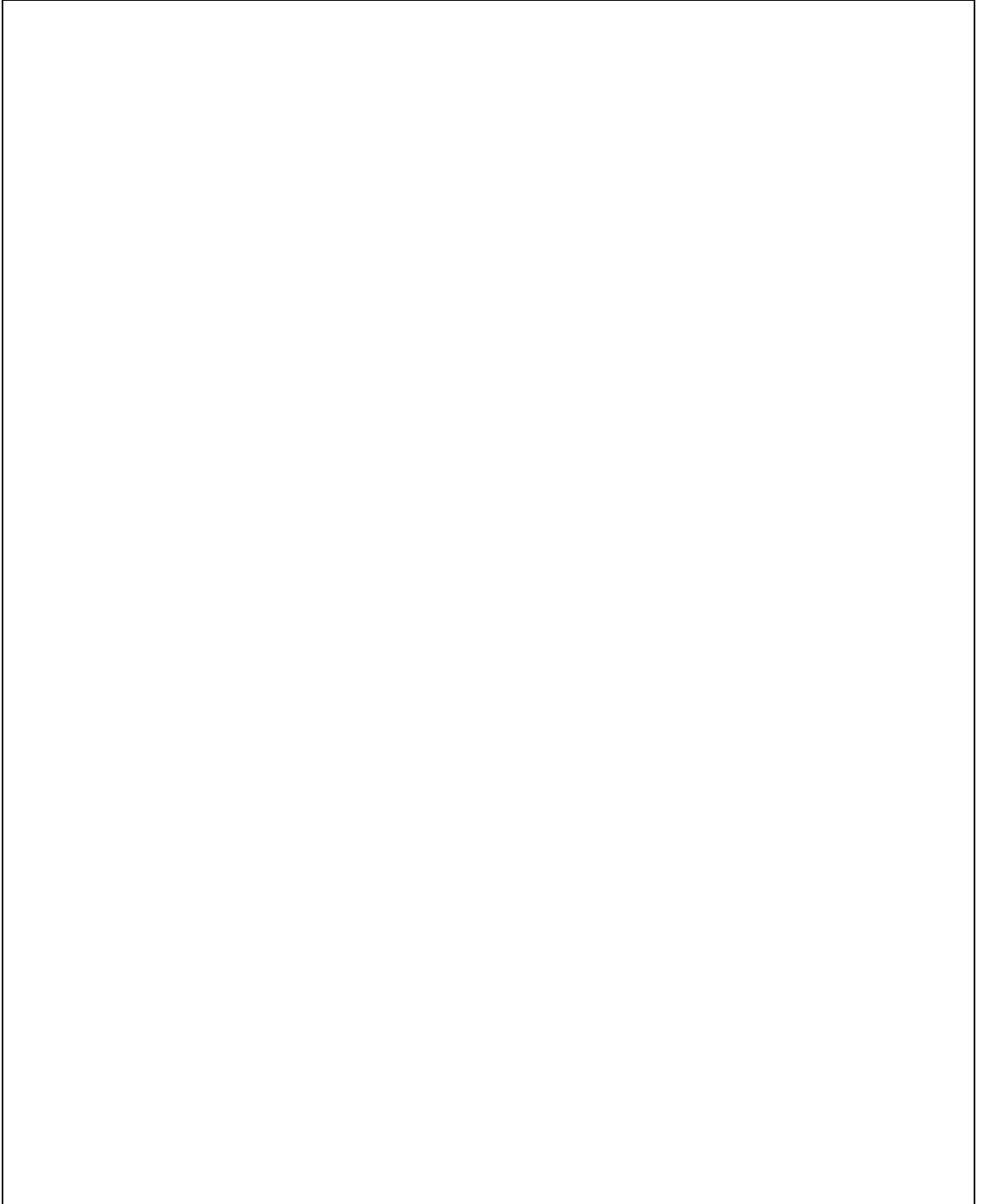
Structural components Disturbances in the domain of	Culture	Society	Person	Dimension of evaluation
Cultural reproduction	Loss of meaning	Withdrawal of legitimation	Crisis in orientation and education	Rationality of knowledge
Social integration	Unsettling of collective identity	Anomie	Alienation	Solidarity of members
Socialization	Rupture of tradition	Withdrawal of motivation	Psychopathologies	Personal responsibility

Figure 22. Manifestations of Crisis When Reproduction Processes Are Disturbed (Pathologies)

medium of language, through which the structures of the lifeworld are reproduced, the functions set forth in Figure 23.

With these schematically summarized specifications, our communication-theoretical concept of the lifeworld has not yet attained the degree of explication of its phenomenological counterpart. Nonetheless, I shall leave it with this outline to return to the question of whether the concept of the lifeworld proposed here is fit to serve as a basic concept of social theory. Despite his many reservations, Schutz continued to hold to the approach of transcendental phenomenology. If one considers the method developed by Husserl to be unobjectionable, the claim to universality of lifeworld analysis carried out phenomenologically goes without saying. However, once we introduce the concept of the lifeworld in communication-theoretical terms, the idea of approaching any society whatsoever by means of it is not at all trivial. The burden of truth for the universal validity of the lifeworld concept—a validity reaching across





Appendix 11

Masterclass SWOT/PEST Pilot Data: 1997-1998

STRENGTHS

- **staff** - high ability staff – academic and professional qualifications and experience. Emphasis on defining own coursework tasks. Value student enthusiasm and intellectual ambition. Establish a culture of acceptability of academic work which will spill out from the group. Staff willing to consider and embrace new teaching strategies. Staff interested in FE / HE links. Improve quality achievement A-C grades. Raise status of English (subjects) too many students choose the subject as a third A Level.
- **students** - improve English skills and enable students to specialise in subjects for projects / university applications and meet other students with the same enthusiasm. 'Broad range of genre covered, Shakespeare very in-depth, learning more background information about authors. willingness to listen to alternative views. Cultural awareness. Extra time in which to ask questions. Develop ideas without feeling hinder or be too cooperative. Getting the students to really focus on taking the formal approach to writing essays

Weaknesses

- **staff** – over-emphasis on teacher-selected learning resources / teacher controlled text selection– no set text books for student exploration of conceptual issues in literature. Insufficient guidance. Dated library stock / limited range /availability of independent learning resources (critical thinking capacity better). No differentiation in teaching – divisive within the group. Limited opportunities to devote to extra time – intensification of work / more accountable work = Scarce staff time given to relatively few students / limited extra curricula opportunities to develop high level English Skills. Work pitched at the middle range only – mediocrity / average ability the focus. Weak students also need help. Danger of streaming students?
- **Students** – students “outside” the project may feel resentful of others and towards the teacher – favouritism. Criteria for inclusion in the special group not generally promoted – elitism. Getting everyone together at the same time because of the timetable. Take up too much time which could be spent on other subjects. There has never really been any interest shown in pupils who want to take English at degree level. End up a social misfit??

Opportunities

- **Staff** - staff development / inset training on differentiation. Enable students to have greater freedom in selecting texts rather than fixed groups and the use of the tutorial model to encourage high ability students to select more challenging texts. Move to more open coursework text selection – less teacher-centred. More students to 'good' universities . materials prepared for masterclass could be used for occasional lessons – student –driven curriculum development opportunity. Ensuring all students achieve as much as possible via grades and routes into HE – good for students and college. stimulated and inspired students / smoother progression to high education. Develop college as a centre of excellence for English.

- **Students** – increase in communication between students, teachers, local colleges and university. Field trips to expand experience rather than knowledge. Application of subject to other areas of life – interlinking rather than segregation (interdisciplinarity). Write about your own literary interests. Attend seminars with undergraduate students. / here poets talk about their works. To participate with those have greater ability and knowledge – wealth of knowledge.

Threats

- **Staff** – staff motivation to change. Time consuming in terms of preparation and marking. Over-emphasis on the bright (can be ignored?). Inappropriate course content doing the work of undergraduate. Inappropriate influence upon students in terms of choice? Perceived as a 'swot' group what is wrong with this in a sixth form college - selection of the brightest – anti-intellectualism dumbing down / liaison influence.
- **Students** – too much workload on students and teachers. Not enough time / money to do the intended projects. More pressure on colleges to prove their abilities: pressure from the principal (or high up powers!) to do well – seen as an institutional expedient even though voluntary. Might not fit in with the timetable. finance – detract from other A levels. May oblige me to see how far English can go?

Break down class barriers by making attending a top university for everyone – not seen as elitist but egalitarian??

to talk to other English enthusiasts. Similar groups throughout the country.

improve English skills and enable students to specialise in subjects for projects / university applications and meet other students with the same enthusiasm. 'Broad range of genre covered, Shakespeare very in-depth, learning more background information about authors. willingness to listen to alternative views. Cultural awareness. Extra time in which to ask questions. Develop ideas without feeling hinder or be too cooperative. Getting the students to really focus on taking the formal approach to writing essays

Weaknesses - students "outside" the project may feel resentful of others and towards the teacher – favouritism. Criteria for inclusion in the special group not generally promoted – elitism. Getting everyone together at the same time because of the timetable. Take up too much time which could be spent on other subjects. There has never really been any interest shown in pupils who want to take English at degree level. End up a social misfit??

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Political

- Staff agenda– funding pressures in FE /HE. Providing more for students who could get A grades regardless are not seen as a high political priority – the lower / mid end of the ability range – no excellence apart from voluntary initiatives.....or private tuition – less to say than the students on the political
- Students – saw the following as political issues - low ability students need help. Problem of appearing favoured by teacher and college – affect their work. Saw it as streaming / elitist – must not be promoted as this ? / jeopardise the chances of others even though it was a purely voluntary learning forum after college – interesting. Improve the college's academic record help secure college finances if the project is successful. Gives students a higher level of education to aim for. – motivational factor to achieve higher than normal expected standards. Helps those who are keen to do well whilst not detracting from anyone else in terms of teaching time as it is outside standard A Level course. Too few students would mean the initiative would have to be stopped - lost sight of the voluntary principle because of college constraints on teaching and learning - “the subject will have to be stopped” – awareness of the ... no power to innovate by student - numbers game / uneconomic.

Implications for studentship and curriculum issues

Economic

- staff – the purchase of additional resources – inset on differentiation could be a cross-college expense
- students – fitting into timetables – interference with proper A Level study? part-time work issue. Teachers doing this should get more money “higher wages”. Would be willing to pay a small cost for a course involving computers. Costs from links / trips associated with the initiative. Suggestion of government funding for these special classes – interesting that it was not seen as a political issue - separation of politics from economics? “Who has the money to do it. Everyone (students, colleges, authorities) doesn't have the money to help finance the extravagant field trips”.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTSHIP / CURRICULUM ISSUES

SOCIOLOGICAL

- staff – Park College must not be seen as the master race – change of title to enrichment
- students – students will be able to talk and exchange ideas and fears with other students who also want to study English further / being able to talk and socialize with like-minded people – debate serious issues. The A level course is too exam based – may have a bad day in the exam which is unfair - injustice. Break down class barriers by making attending a top university for everyone – not seen as elitist but egalitarian?? Problem of finance related to the initiative – problems relating to class inequality very apparent in student views – still a dominant issue in their lives and consciousness, not teachers? More time needed for the further (higher) level to social activities. Less time to socialize but worth the sacrifice. Social time will lower and spare time to relax.

TECHNOLOGICAL

- staff – needed to support high ability. Computer cataloguing needed for independent research
- students – want to see more teachers influencing pupils to use more computers – wordprocessing essays. Computers not really needed for English Literature. Do a special course in using computers for English studies. Use Internet to talk to other English enthusiasts. Similar groups throughout the country.

students

1997 / 1998 Strengths - students will be able to talk and exchange ideas and fears with other students who also want to study English further / being able to talk and socialize with like-minded people – debate serious issues. The A level course is too exam based – may have a bad day in the exam which is unfair - injustice. Break down class barriers by making attending a top university for everyone – not seen as elitist but egalitarian??. to talk to other English enthusiasts. Similar groups throughout the country. improve English skills and enable students to specialise in subjects for projects / university applications and meet other students with the same enthusiasm. 'Broad range of genre covered, Shakespeare very in-depth, learning more background information about authors. willingness to listen to alternative views. Cultural awareness. Extra time in which to ask questions. Develop ideas without feeling hinder or be too cooperative. Getting the students to really focus on taking the formal approach to writing essays

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1997 / 1998 Threats - too much workload on students and teachers. Not enough time / money to do the intended projects. More pressure on colleges to prove their abilities: pressure from the principal (or high up powers!) to do well – seen as an institutional expedient even though voluntary. Might not fit in with the timetable. finance – detract from other A levels. May oblige me to see how far English can go?

Appendix 12

Park College

Masterclass Curriculum Initiative in English Studies

An Up-Date: 22/10/97

Methodology

Distribution of Fax's/SWOT/PEST analysis sheets (copies enclosed) to local school heads of English inviting them to give their views on the initiative and the extent to which they would like to be involved in its creation and possible evolution into a permanent local educational provision:

Sent: 5
Returns: 0
Total Returns %: 0%

Bishop Bell expressed an interest (by telephone) in establishing a masterclass link between themselves and Park College.

Distribution of the same SWOT analysis sheets to all English Team members of Park College:

Sent: 4
Returned: 3
Total Returns %: 75%

SJH spoke to most classes and asked the English Team to generally promote the initiative over a two week period. SJH also arranged a meeting via the College Bulletin for all interested students which was held on Wednesday 8th October 97 at 4.00 - 4.50pm. At this meeting SJH explained the rationale of the initiative and invited the students to complete the same SWOT analysis sheets as those given to the local school heads of English and the English Team at Park College.

Summary of Swot Analysis Sheets

Strengths: (staff views)

- high ability staff
- the establishment of a genuine academic learning culture/promotion of excellence (opportunity)
- provision for the full range of ability
- exploitation / development of the LRC (opportunity)
- staff interest in FE/HE links (opportunity)
- staff development (opportunity)

Strengths: (student views)

Opportunities: (staff views)

Threats: (staff views)

- work overload
- timetabling difficulties
- staff motivation to change
- budget implications
- inappropriate course content
- overemphasis on the bright

Threats: (student views)

- extra costs/expense
- extra workload (written)
- time management
- overemphasis on English to the detriment to other A Level subjects)

Conclusion

There is enthusiasm for and commitment to this initiative from both students and staff at Park College but unfortunately local schools seem uninterested. SJH is attempting to widen participation through the Sussex English Literature Support group network for sixth form colleges and JGF is considering ways of establishing links with universities. The common preference is for an interdisciplinary/baccalaureate style structure that enables choices of topics and opportunities for creative work and trips/visits to universities and places of literary interest and worth. Students prefer minimal essay writing but are reasonably keen to sit S Level. If the issues of timetabling/staff working hours are resolved this initiative could be successful within Park College. It is unlikely at this stage that it will be successful with local English departments as a local collaborative venture. The project at this stage is likely to attract students who are interested in the subject and those who are simply enthusiastic but not necessarily very able. It seems that there are very few very able students wanting to study English at university at the present time. Some students see it as an opportunity to merely improve their A Level grade. The most urgent priority regarding the planning and rationale of this curriculum provision is to define clearly the target group and its purposes.

Appendix 13

Masterclass Transition Questionnaire and Data: learning links between masterclass and degree study

Please would you comment in detail and with specific examples if possible on the ways in which and the extent to which your participation in and experiences of the English Masterclass programme has been useful / not useful in your degree studies (in years 1, 2 & possibly / potentially year 3). Please consider the term “usefulness” in the context of the following:-

1. Masterclass / degree content / material / topics
2. Masterclass / degree teaching/learning (methods, topics, essays / dissertations written / to be written etc)
3. Other (e.g. social / pastoral / work / employment – paid or voluntary etc)
4. Can you give some suggestions for masterclass ‘improvement’/‘development’ in terms of increasing its “usefulness” for higher education preparation and transition

N.B. I should be particularly grateful if you differentiate, wherever possible, between masterclass ‘usefulness’ and the ‘usefulness’ of mainstream A Level education. Thank you very much for giving up your time to complete the questionnaires.

Q.2. First Year Degree

Masterclass/Degree: content / material / topics

Masterclass/ Degree: teaching/learning

Other: (e.g. social / pastoral / work / employment – paid or voluntary etc)

Suggestions for masterclass improvement/development in terms of increasing its “usefulness” for higher education preparation and transition

Q.2. Second Year Degree

Masterclass/Degree: content / material / topics

Masterclass/Degree: teaching/learning

Other: (e.g. social / pastoral / work / employment – paid or voluntary etc)

Suggestions for masterclass improvement/development in terms of increasing its “usefulness” for higher education preparation and transition

Q.2. Third Year Study

Masterclass/Degree: content / material / topics

Masterclass/Degree: teaching/learning

Other: (e.g. social / pastoral / work / employment – paid or voluntary etc)

Suggestions for masterclass improvement/development in terms of increasing its “usefulness” for higher education preparation and transition

APPENDIX 14

MASTERCLASS / DEGREE TRANSITION DATA

Degree Year 1

Degree Year 1 Content / Topic Links - Liberal humanism, liberal conservatism, conservative liberalism, de-colonization, especially South Africa (Zulu), symbolic nature of politics and lack of substance, having to read copious amounts, extract relevant data and present your ideas in an articulate manner. I found that the content of Masterclass best served as an introduction to the topics and theories that I would come across in my first year. The fact that I had already considered material such as feminist theories gave me confidence when first studying it at degree level. Masterclass was hugely useful for the first year of my degree. We did a module called 'Culture and Criticism' where the things I learned in Masterclass about (amongst other things) Marxism, Feminism, Structuralism etc. were very useful. In this module I had a head start, as a lot of my peers, who had only done A Levels, were struggling with these concepts, while I knew the basic already. This was also partly because I did sociology A Level as well. Medical course – 1st year – very restricted – no link with masterclass. In the first year, one of my core modules was 'Approaches to Criticism' and in many seminars unseen material (such as poetry or prose extracts) was shown to the class for discussion. We were not told the author or the period in which the piece was written and had to analyse the words on the page – with little reading and preparation time. I did not feel too intimidated or unprepared for these exercises (though they were different to A level English in which the title/author is often known) because I had useful preparation in Masterclass sessions (similar exercises). We studied T. S. Eliot (The Wasteland) and Sylvia Plath (Daddy) in the first year. I was introduced to the works of these authors in the Masterclass.

Degree Year 1 Teaching and Learning - The teaching of seminars at my university is very similar to that of the Masterclass. I was so glad I had Masterclass experience – the leap to HE was not so great in that sense. Did not feel like I had been a 'spoonfed' student. I was capable of independent thought. The teaching and learning methods were incredibly similar to those at degree level. I certainly found it encouraging to be familiar with the seminar format. Significantly the idea ingrained into us in Masterclass that even the opinions of the most highly regarded people can be fallible is invaluable. It applied not only when challenging academics' views in essays but was essential to my realization that no matter how people dress views up with fancy words, when you stop being intimidated and really listen, more often than not they are talking rubbish. I found it far more useful than mainstream A level teaching because there was no text book, no right way and no relaying of other's views. At degree level there is certainly no-one telling you what the right answer is. Masterclass was also useful as I knew how to apply critical theory to different kinds of texts. Others on my course wondered what Marxism had to do with literature, but thanks to Masterclass, I could see the point in studying it. Seminars are also very similar to the Masterclass environment so I was prepared for the more egalitarian approach than traditional lessons. It encouraged – gave me confidence to be openly curious – questioning everything. Heightened awareness of roles of new institutions that I was introduced to – university, medical school, hall of residence. What do they want me to do? Expect? Do they want me to be a consumer? The teaching style in the Masterclass – facilitating learning by introducing / suggesting issues for discussion – is very similar to seminar teaching at university level. So the teaching style in the Masterclass was useful for preparing me for seminars. Lecturers rarely give their own opinions in seminars and they would never present a certain argument as objective or correct, which encouraged me to think for myself and to feel more confident about criticizing them as just another participant in the room – not a figure of authority. Steve's role in Masterclass was similar and prepared me for this.

Degree Year 1 Social / Pastoral / Work / Employment Links – EF language schools – teaching English, teaching English in an imaginative, creative way, presenting English language in a positive light – I even did a class devoted to poetry and Shakespeare! Travelling to Thailand met up with another Masterclass student.... Each evening we sat and analysed it and

applied it to our own experiences! Could never have done that without the 'open mind' obtained from Masterclass. It made me appreciate what I saw so much more – being able to look at the world so differently.

Degree Year 2

Content / Topic links - philosophy and psychology – the psychology of racism – 'Zulu' came up again. Family policy – work done on conservative ideology helped a lot (Yelena). Probably by the second year masterclass stopped having much continued impact. Although perhaps themes and ideas would still arise occasionally which had been covered. By this point I had become settled in with the ways of my university – if a topic from masterclass did arise I dealt with it in the manner which my first year had taught me to. Saying that, masterclass content continued to be relevant in my personal life, particularly the work on aesthetics and art I still contemplate (Jo). The second year of my degree had more traditional subjects than the first year and masterclass, and probably linked more closely to the main A Level classes (especially as we studied 'Beloved' again – great book; it was good to revisit it!). However, critical theory is always useful, as well as the way masterclass taught me to look for hidden meanings. I remember a poem you gave us about thinking in broken images – very useful in my module on modernism and postmodernism! (Anna). I chose medicine and Literature as my special study module. It was often like a science- arts masterclass. We dissected in great length what exactly a 'science' or an 'arts' subject was and examining boundaries. Ethics – autonomy, democracy, government (Julianne).

Year 2 Teaching and Learning Links

By now I think we had gone above and beyond the teaching style of masterclass. However, all my teachers were professors, so there was definitely no democratic exchange of knowledge – all specialists in their field (Jo). The rapid turn-over of texts and ideas that characterized the masterclass sessions was useful in preparing me for university. Whereas in A Level English Literature we'd take weeks, even months, on one text, at degree we're studying several a week and so have to get to grips with them fast. Masterclass has helped me in this respect, as I learnt to go deeper more quickly than in A Level (Anna). I became a strong/bold contributor to the ethical debates suggesting lots of different interpretations – even if they conflicted just to get everyone thinking and develop the discussion. CYNICAL input – critical reading "renews-problems" etc. Who benefited / who caused it. (Julianne). Because of the relaxed, democratic atmosphere of the masterclass most students felt the confidence to voice their opinions and challenge others – even the teacher – so that every participant could be both teacher and learner, and everyone can be criticized. This atmosphere is also present in seminars – (especially in the 2nd year as students in the department became more familiar and comfortable with each other) where I can be criticized by anyone in the room – not just the teacher. Masterclass was definitely useful because it prepared me for this – otherwise I would have felt very intimidated(Christianne) link to myself as an A LEVEL STUDENT (mature / etc – no confidence and feeling hopelessly prepared for Sussex Uni – far too much indifference and assumption about transitions - a strong feature of my teaching - stand up and speak out.

Year 2 Social / pastoral / Work / Employment

Citizens Advice Bureau – did a project on the Housing Act 1994- it was a rather politically neutral piece of work – necessary to listen to repressed voices – the importance of which was emphasised in masterclass – humanitarianism and "context" are vital in social policy (Yelena). I hope to go into gallery work eventually so ideas we discussed (e.g. how do we define art?) are still important (Jo). Romania – went for a month – lived in as orphanage and worked voluntarily as an English teacher. I arranged the tables in masteclass shape, used first name, asked the children which topics they were interested in – great results – found their English greatly improved as their interest was captured. Encouraged them to help each other (Julianne). In the 2nd year I became involved in UCL's Voluntary Services unit (VSU) and I have been participating in a book club with 6th form students. My aims for this project link closely with the masterclass because I was inspired / enabled this way through my participation: Aims: 1) to inspire students with an enjoyment of literature beyond their curriculum – (and their culture) 2) to enable them to increase their confidence and social skills by taking part in group discussions (informal and unstructured) and voicing opinions. I loved how the direction of the masterclass could sometimes seem like a stream of consciousness for the group. (Modernism..)

DEGREE YEAR 3

Content / Topic Links - Working at a higher standard than that of the masterclass. Actual knowledge becoming less relevant but tools / skills of engagement, debate and communication learned from masterclass will always be relevant (Yelena). Not having started my third year I don't have much to say other than that my dissertation topic is pretty much a product of the resounding impact of the masterclass. I developed a bit of an obsession with theology (from a critical point of view) and although I'm studying history I have found a way of incorporating it. Steve, I can honestly say that your repeated references to Calvin are what set me on course to be writing my dissertation on the Reformation (Jo). This year I'll be doing a module on Contemporary Cultures, which I imagine will relate more closely to what we did in masterclass than A Level. This is because we'll be looking not just at literary texts, but also at films, TV programmes etc – a broader scope, and something I learnt to deal with in masterclass (Anna). I am doing a government health module – info may link up with – resources – government function – “isms” approaches (Julianne). I hope that experiences in the masterclass and my introduction to critical theory will now really come together with my learning of textual analysis and close readings at university level, as I go into my third year and begin to concentrate on my Special Subjects Essay (dissertation) (Christianne).

Year 3 Teaching and Learning Links -masterclass has probably helped prepare me for my dissertation, too, where I get to choose what I want to study. In masterclass, the students had a say in what we looked at, and in A Level Eng Lit we formulated our own essay questions for coursework, so the idea of choosing a topic for a dissertation is not as daunting as it might otherwise have been (Anna). Research paper that I will analyse – I will have my 'critical thinking' hat on (Julianne).

Year 3 Social / pastoral / work / employment - Worked for an NGO in India – the work I had done at uni, which originally stemmed from masterclass, helped me appreciate what the meaning of “development” meant to the people in the Indian context – something that we from the west cannot assume or impose. (Yelena). I plan to do some voluntary work next summer (Julianne). I hope to develop the bookclub this year (now that I have become project leader) by expanding to include more volunteers from UCL (even from different departments as I know they will have interesting and different perspectives on the texts – inspired by their learning experiences). More schools and different age groups. I want to introduce the democratic, cooperative, community-like environment of the masterclass and the VSU bookclub to younger students who so far have only experienced the restricted, structured environment of their curriculum and classrooms.

Appendix 15



PARK COLLEGE STUDENT VOICE

PROGRESS REPORT- SUMMER 2003



ORGANISATION AND SUPPORT

HOW WE WERE FORMED

The Student Voice Group was formed by Steve Hobbs, our groups' co-ordinator. He approached a number of students he believed would be interested in working in this kind of initiative. We began with six students, of which Rachel Carn, Julianne Mogford, Christianne Loizou and Miranda Wilkinson are still active members. Steve held the first meeting, in order to explain the initiative. It was in this initial meeting that our regular meeting times and format was discussed. In this first meeting it was decided that meetings should be twice weekly, during lunchtime, and that the role of nominee, or chairperson, and someone to take the minutes of the meeting should be rotated on a regular basis. However, we soon noticed two meetings a week was unnecessary, as it did not allow much time for tasks to be completed between meetings and the group was not achieving anymore through more regular meetings. As a result, it was decided that meetings should only be held weekly.

Our research topics have been decided on by us, the students, while Steve and the other members of staff involved in the initiative have been involved in an advisory role.

OBJECTIVES

INITIAL AIMS

Our first project was to look how the tutor system in our college could be improved. Apart from improvements made, this project had the added advantage of enabling the research group to work closely with our colleges' senior management. Coincidentally, they happened to be looking at changing the Tutor system at the time so this enabled us to have an influence in its change.

It was important in this initial project to differentiate ourselves from the Student Council as, although on appearance our roles may seem similar, the Student Voice Group is more concerned with policy where as the Student Council looks more towards student's life whilst at college.



HOW WE ACHIEVED OUR AIMS

Firstly, we looked at the results of the questionnaire that the management had issued to all the students. However, due to the closed-question nature of it, as a group we felt it failed to find out the real opinions of the students. They were just given a list of topics and purely asked which ones they would prefer to do. We felt it would be more effective to find out the students real opinions with a series of open questions, and asked students at random what they would like to change. We also asked the tutors what changes they thought necessary as we felt it was important to have their opinions as well as the students to enable middle ground to be found so the tutor lessons could be made as effective as possible. A number of meetings were held with Mike Dixon, the assistant principal, and as a result, a number of changes were made to the Tutor System and its programme. The two most significant changes were stopping the compulsory General Studies and adding a weekly one-to-one opportunity for students and their tutors to discuss any issues.

After the new programme had begun, the Student Voice group were invited to a tutors meeting so we were able to see the changes take place. We also saw it necessary to follow up our project with a series of 'mini interviews' to find out how the changes were received with the following results:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Year 2 Males – Teaching session pointless and a waste of time, which could be better spent. Interview sessions a good idea – helpful especially with UCAS and general organisation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Year 2 Females – Teaching session is pointless as nothing is taught, time could be better spent. Needs structure to lessons with an over all aim and standardisation so that tutor lessons if they are to exist are taught in a similar manner and order. Interview session is good, should be only session. Good for university but a good relationship with tutor must be built up. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Year 2 – Majority of students were pleased to have got rid of General Studies. However, they were unaware of what they were working for so thought General Studies A2 should have been kept so they were working for something. Many were annoyed at the varying ways in which the tutors teach the “syllabus” – not only does there seem to be no general aim, but everyone was doing different things dependent on who their tutor was. It was suggested by those asked that the teaching sessions should become ‘#drop-in’ sessions for those having problems with work and there was a general feeling that the one-to-one interviews were good as it allows opportunity to discuss issues with someone ear 1 Males – Teaching session has no point and here has been no transition between tutor at school and tutor an college. Interview session is a good idea. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Year 1 Females – Teaching session needs an aim. Tutor system is worse than school as it has no structure. University of job search could be started earlier as 'looking back' to school is not beneficial. Interview session is a good idea. |

- Year 1 - Students concerned that there seems to be no point to what they are doing. They felt that the interview sessions was a good idea although many had not had one and it was thought that more of a concerted effort should be made at the beginning of the year for tutors and students and tutor groups to get to know one another. Many students felt that what they learnt in tutor lessons at school had more relevance.
- N.B. Students had only recently, of at all, been told of the qualification they are working towards in the current tutorial program.

The results of our questionnaire was passed on to the tutors so they were able to take note of issues which still needed to be resolved.

CONTENT ANALYSIS- "THE COLLEGE MISSION"

In considering the issues raised in our research, the Student Voice also had the opportunity to analyse an important document entitled "The College Mission", created by management at Park College to illustrate their ideal objectives

Important issues emphasised here were:

"Our mission is to provide high quality general education that enables students to progress in terms of gaining qualifications and in their personal and social development".

"Our business is providing general education that has the following characteristics:

- High quality of learning experience, which is stimulating and challenging"
- High success rate in terms of qualifications achieved
- Wide range and breadth of provision
- Focus on individual progression,
- Holistic emphasis on all-round educational, social and personal development"

"Our aim is to be a centre for excellence for this kind of provision. Most of our students will be drawn from the local community and a substantial proportion will be in the 16-18 age group."

Our responses to these objectives lead us to create "Our views on the College Mission"

"OUR VIEWS ON "THE COLLEGE MISSION"

"We like the small, community atmosphere of Park. With breaks at the same time for everyone, and most classrooms in the same building it's easier to make friends and settle in to the college. It is a small progression from the school atmosphere- rather than other colleges, where each department has its own building, segregating students."

OUR AIMS

- "Park College should be a centre to provide high quality education that enables students to progress in their chosen fields, both in terms of qualifications and in their personal and social development. We were provided with a more general education at GCSE level, and now need the opportunity to focus at AS/A level. This may be why so many students were unhappy with General Studies.



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A focus on individual progression is important. In every classroom, students are at different stages of understanding, and do not usually progress at the same rate. When the teacher says “Do you know what I mean?” and everyone nods, some may agree and want to move on to more stimulating and challenging activities, while others are left confused, but embarrassed to ask. Teaching should be more flexible to accommodate this.

We are aware that courses are constricted for time and most teachers are under pressure, but there are some courses where teachers are especially supportive outside lesson time, for slower progression- for example with catch up revision sessions, and for those moving at a faster rate- e.g. with extra work opportunities/ master classes. These are great initiatives, but we think that they could be even more beneficial to students if they were conducted as part of the timetable. (So that students and teachers do not miss their lunch breaks!)

If there were scheduled sessions (for example Wednesdays from 1-2pm), where all teachers are available, or even just teachers for a specific subject, then students could drop in with any problems, catch up on work that they didn’t understand, revise, or progress with extra help. More students would attend these timetabled sessions than miss their lunch for shorter bursts of work.

At Park College it is easy to settle in to the new routine- moving from school level, but progression to further education or employment is more difficult- with so many options. We think that students would be better prepared to make the right choices if they had more assistance- earlier in the year- for example in tutor sessions (which were usually taken over by General studies). The “Moving On” period is providing help- but is it “too little, too late”, as many students are missing university open days that are taking place now, because they have not yet narrowed down options.

There is also an assumption that most students will progress to university, when in fact some individual will enter employment, or take a gap year. There should be more advice available for these students- possibly in separate tutor sessions.”



METHODOLOGY

METHODS USED, PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED AND HOW WE ARE OVERCOMING THEM

When we began investigating the effectiveness of our tutor system, it was already going through evaluation by senior management. Questionnaires were being distributed to students by Mike Dixon, the assistant principle, with an aim to reform the tutoring and General Studies programme, and the survey was designed to find out which aspects of their tutor sessions students found most helpful and informative.

QUESTIONNAIRES are a useful method for reaching a large sample- such as the student population of Park College- and Mike Dixon's questionnaire had a number of methodological advantages:

- It was relatively cheap and simple to create- with "closed questions" and a rating scale that could generate clear quantitative responses- these could then be converted to statistical data for analysis.
- The questionnaire was standardized, therefore easily replicable and more reliable.
- It could be easily distributed- in tutor sessions so not as time consuming as interviews.
- It could be completed and returned anonymously- so students may have been more likely to tell the truth because they did not have to face an interviewer (there was less chance of experimenter/ researcher bias).

By meeting regularly with Mike Dixon we followed the progress of his questionnaire, but we had reservations concerning the validity of his results because the questionnaire method had a number of disadvantages:

- Questionnaires can be problematic because the terms used may be interpreted differently by different people- so answers may not be valid because they reflect different understanding.
- "Closed" questions could only provide fixed answers that did not accurately gather and communicate the real meanings that students had on the issue; because their responses were so limited- they were not able to elaborate, or to explain their responses. For example, they were allowed to give their preferences- but had no opportunity to write about the aspects of tutor sessions that they did not like. This means that the method was lacking in validity because it may have not really obtained their views at all.

We also thought that the management's questionnaire was too predictable and similar. It was not radical enough, in our opinion, to reform the concerns and problems of the tutor system, and ineffective for substantial change. With this in mind, we decided to develop alternative methods to obtain more valid accounts of student's opinions.

FOCUS GROUPS are put together to get a quick overview of the opinion of a group of people on a particular issue. The opinion is then taken to be representative of a larger part of the same constituency.



For us, the focus group would consist of between 4 and 12 informed students with an interest in the issue of the tutor system, who would provide a form of sounding board for the college. We would give the group prepared criteria to consider, with points of entry questions such as:

- Was General Studies worthwhile?
- What do you think the aims of tutor should be?
- What do you want from your tutor?

A member of the research group would be there to observe and record (by audiotape) the discussion. There are a number of strengths in this method:

- Questions and discussion seek to elicit the view of the group, with as much detail and honesty as possible- this should generate more valid, qualitative results than the questionnaire method, because students are not restricted, they are free to elaborate and explain their views.
- Because there are no strict boundaries for discussion- only the outline, the focus group may provide new and radical ideas for reform that the management has not even thought of- this is the sort of data they should be looking for from students.
- Because the focus group- gathered by a self selecting sample- are volunteers, they are involved because they have an interest, and so may provide more valuable suggestions- introducing ideas they believe to be worthwhile.

But there are also weaknesses in the focus group method:

- Though participants in the focus group volunteer to take part, they are aware of the activity only when informed by researchers, and the decision of whom to approach is at their discretion, so may be affected by researcher bias. For example, we may have only approached people we knew, and so the sample may not be representative of students at the college.
- Another concern with the representativeness of the sample, and the results generated, is that students wanted to take part because of a specific interest in the issue. This may mean that the discussion in the focus group may comprise only extreme views- that may not be a fair representation of other student's opinions.
- Because a researcher does not control the proceedings of focus group discussion, participants may veer off the subject, and so the responses recorded may be very difficult to later compile and analyse.
- The discussion within the group is not controlled-so cannot be replicated. This means that the results collected may be unreliable.
- The presence of a member of the research group may affect the behaviour of participants.

Though we were aware of sampling problems with focus groups, because of the validity of the method, we felt that it would be worthwhile to carry out, to compare the data with the questionnaire- a more representative method. The research could benefit from this "triangulation" (using more than one method to balance strengths and weaknesses) because compiling and analysing the data would give us a wider understanding of the issue.



However there was a major problem with this because:

The timing of the focus group clashed with exams, making it difficult for us to arrange time to set up a focus group discussion, and difficult for students to attend.

We were still undecided about the focus group procedure and sampling methods, and due to the difficulty of finding people to take part so close to the exam period, the focus group has been put on hold. But we do hope to use this method in the future.

To assess the success of the changes to the tutor system last year, we also carried out follow up research by interviewing second year (upper 6th) college students and asking them how they responded to the new changes. This was another way to achieve triangulation. We asked:

- What do you think of the tutor system?
- How does it compare with last years structure?
- What do you think of the tutor interview period?
- What do you want to get from your tutor system?
- How many tutor sessions do you have to go to each week?

First year students (lower 6th) arriving from their secondary schools were also included in our research sample, and we interviewed them to obtain their first views of their new tutor system, asking:

- What subjects are you taking?
- What do you think of your new tutor system?
- How different is it compared to your old (school) system?
- How do you feel about the tutor interview sessions?
- How many tutor sessions do you have to go to each week?

In total, we carried out 25 unstructured interviews.

Like focus groups, INTERVIEWS are helpful in getting more detailed, qualitative results about issues on a personal, face-to-face level, and the unstructured method offers a number of advantages:

They are high in validity, because the rapport between interviewer and interviewee can generate more honest responses.

Respondents reply to questions in their own words, expressing information that is meaningful to them- not just giving facts like with the questionnaire.

Standardised questions are still used to keep reliability and reliability.

However, there are also disadvantages with interviews, which we needed to consider:

Unstructured Interview are very difficult to replicate- and so may not be reliable

It would be very difficult to try and convert the results collected into statistics for analysis.

Though we interviewed 25 students, this is still a small sample-may be unrepresentative.



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- Different researchers may interpret the answers they are given differently- this may damage the validity of the results because interviewer bias could be affecting the findings.

As researchers we do not just represent the student body, so in order to achieve a more objective picture of the tutor system, we also approached the college tutors, leaving them with "open" questions such as:

- What do you think of the recent changes in the tutor system?
- Do you think that the interview sessions are worthwhile?
- How enthusiastic are your students? Can you empathise with any loss of faith they have in the tutor system?
- However, due to constraints on their time, we received no replies.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

ALTERNATIVE METHODS

On Tuesday 4th February 2003, the Park College research group went to a Student Voice Training Day at Sussex University to share our experiences as researchers with other colleges and to develop our research skills. We found the day valuable, and learned about a number of newer, non-traditional methods to expand our "research repertoire". For example:

STORYTELLING-

To convey personal experiences and opinions

ROLE PLAY-

To enact experiences and convey feelings.

PHOTOGRAPHS-

To involve a sample of students who may not feel comfortable expressing their views in interviews or questionnaires. They can take pictures and explain the rationale behind them to researchers and other students to convey their views.

We hope to explore some of these methods in the future.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

- Publicity and promotion- letting students and staff know what we are doing through visual display? Through "Into-Park life" taster days?
- Communication- presently is slow due to time restrictions (exam period)-but we hope to work more closely with students, teachers and management next year.
- "Capacity building" is a major consideration for next year- we need to publicise the research group to the new lower 6th students to encourage participation.



PRESENT AND FUTURE

STUDENT VOICE PROJECT

Consortium:

The Student Voice Project at Park is currently in a state of limbo as the majority of its members prepare to move on to University, highlighting one of the biggest problems we have faced since the group was formed almost two years ago, **recruitment**. Finding a way of publicizing the Student Voice Project has caused us a lot of trouble, as we have been unsure as to how the names "Student Voice" or alternatively "Student Research Group" would be perceived by the college student body. We had initially had a struggle to find an identity, as we have remained resolute not to become either a branch of or another form of, the current Student Executive system that Park offers. We now see ourselves very much as part of the nationwide Student Voice Project and are slowly managing to publicize ourselves more efficiently within Park College.

In terms of the work we are doing and have been doing, below are the initial three aims we had when we started out:

- 1) The reform of the tutor system – particularly with reference to the relevance of General Studies towards a students learning
- 2) Creating a better link between students, staff and management
- 3) The election process of the Student Union

A couple of months ago we finished reviewing our research into the tutor system and assessing how useful it was both to us as the Student Voice Group and to the college itself. For the most part our work was hugely successful. The tutor system at Park is now much improved on last years format and more accessible to students due to the creation of the opportunity for individual sessions to be undertaken with your tutor with greater ease and the abolishment of General Studies as a compulsory qualification. There is still work to be done though, and we have made suggestions to the management on these issues. Our work on the tutor system has helped the Student Voice form firm links with management as well as with key members of tutorial staff. We attended a number of meetings with management staff, tutors and principal teachers, and encouragingly, received feedback from most of these meetings. We had supportive comments, suggestions and requests for future collaboration with Student Voice, from many staff that wished to get involved with the project.

However, we also experienced problems. Maintaining the link with management etc from the tutor system issue to a new issue has proved difficult. Happily though, in the last 6 weeks, there has been increased awareness within the college and we have had a consistent offer of aid from Park's Principal Teachers in making the Student Voice Project much more prolific to ensure that



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next year we get the support we need from both students and staff. We feel that despite the stop/start situation at the moment, considering the relative “new-ness” of Student Voice, what we have achieved so far will provide a very firm basis from which future years of Student Voice are to work from.

Despite the current outside pressures of exams on all our members we have begun to look at the proposed Government paper on Education and Skills by Charles Clarke in order to establish our position on how useful it is.

After looking at the paper, a number of issues came up for discussion:

- Should the International Baccalaureate be offered at Park College so that students can develop a wider range of skills than those currently offered at A-Level?
- Should a system of part-time courses be developed to enable students to work whilst studying? (For example, over 3 years rather than two?)
- It should be easier to mix GCSE's, A-Levels and Vocational courses to allow students to develop more naturally to their abilities, rather than age. (Possibility of Advance Extension Awards?)
- How well does the current system of key- skills work- how could it be improved?
- Could the range of extra-curricular activities at Park be improved? Or participation encouraged?
- Could lesson notes be made available on the Internet for students who are absent, or for those who may have gaps in their notes?
- The Government paper suggested that schools and colleges should have more contact with businesses and independent schools- how is this beneficial?
- Is there too heavy an assumption that all students want to go on to higher education? Official choices should be made earlier in the year so that the correct path can be followed with more supervision. For example, separate tutor programmes could be organised for higher education and for those students who want jobs or gap years after college.

We aim to ascertain which of the proposals we think would be most beneficial at Park and use this information to help us in improving teaching and learning.

As a group, our place in the nationwide scheme is very important, and we have valued our links with Sussex highly. The Student Voice Training Day in February 2003 was immensely useful, not only providing us with many ideas and suggestions of how to continue but also presenting us with an overview of ours and other colleges situations, which gave us a greater focus and enthusiasm.

We see the Student Voice Project now as being only in its very early stages. In future years, we believe, and hope, that the Student Voice Project will ensure greater communication within educational institutions, ensuring a more beneficial experience for students and teachers alike. Park has gained from the work the Student Voice Project has done so far and the college is

beginning to see the benefits of what the Project wants to achieve at all levels. Through our work we have seen how easy it is for Student Voice to become a quality assurance group and it is vital that we do not become this. We have done our utmost to ensure that the management at Park do not consider us to be a quality assurance procedure and it is here that we feel college Unions come in. Issues to do with facilities and maintenance etc of the college should be kept separate, as they are for a different type of project to Student Voice entirely. The focus of Student Voice at Park has been on teaching and learning. From a student perspective, Student Voice is an educational experience.