Exploring the ontological nature of teachers' conversations

within a dominant ideology:

A hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry

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Attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Sharyn Anne Schubert

Date: April 2017

Acknowledgements

This study is a purposeful showing of being human. I use the words, thank you, to all who have been part of my lived experience, as a response to having received something gracious from others that shows their humanity in conversation and from which, I receive a fuller understanding of who I am and how I am, as a human being.

I have gained insight into how openness in dialogue is important because from this context, an ideology based on grace rather than law can develop. The law, being crafted rules, defines deficiencies in me and gives the lawmaker dominance over me; while grace relates me in you; the image of you in me. In dialogue we can exchange and give of ourselves in ways that show care and concern for all living things. We can move towards questioning our ways of being and our potential to be in service for others.

I am grateful to many people who saw me through this journey and to the teaching fraternity who continually inspire me with ways of being human, counterculture to an ideology that dominates conversations through systematic control and surveillance commodifying a systematic human, a product designed and controlled.

I thank my family and friends who see the importance of relationships and our interdependence on all living things, for just being there. I am particularly grateful for my long-standing collegial friendship with Carolyne Williams, an inspiring teacher, who I thank sincerely for her encouragement and advice during this research. As humans it seems often those closest to us contend with our greatest angsts, so it is my supportive, loving husband Paul, of 35 years, I personally want to thank for being you and for your care.

Abstract

Ideologies operate in and through language to influence change. Conversations change over time and open questions relating to educational policy and practice. While current technocratic conversations associated with professional standards, professional development, strategic plans and performance accountability, are being heard, the ways of being a teacher in this conversation, situated in their day-to-day lived experience, is largely overlooked.

This hermeneutic phenomenological research explores, through teachers' stories, the ontological nature of teacher's conversations within a dominant ideology, and their sense of being-involved-with the things of their lifeworld. Everyday lived experiences of being a teacher are described and interpreted against the philosophical writings of Heidegger in particular, with reference to his book, 'Being and Time'[1].

This research addresses the question: What is the ontological nature of teachers' conversations within a dominant ideology? Conversation *as* dialogue opens 'something' living between us. Dialogue has no starting or ending point, only space in-between words allowing us to 'see' the other in conversation, not as objects but human beings. The teacher's way of being involves a sensitivity which is felt beyond the physical, to involve noticing, looking and hearing others. The teacher's conversation in this space shows itself in support, creativity, hope, inspiration and understanding. This 'seeing[2]' in conversation is beyond what is said; the conversation has a seeing intentionality embodied in being a caring and concerned teacher. This seeing appears in the teacher's response, where in relationship with others, openness and closeness shows changing conversation. In this translation, teacher's ways of comporting, leaps in and leaps ahead in conversations showing practical wisdom.

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[1] Page referencing of Heidegger (1973 edition) in his notable text, 'Being and Time', written in German in 1927, for this study follows APA6 convention and not the pagination of the later German editions shown in the outer margins of the text

[2] Unless stated in this thesis, seeing is not a physical sight but an illumination

There is a call for seeing, conversation as dialogue, for seeing intentionality as changing conversation, and for seeing the danger inherent in conversation as context, when context moves towards the annihilation of the human spirit, edifying the machine, with its managers and technicians.

This research is consistent with other critical and humanistic approaches that question current educational practices favouring economics over other dimensions of human existence. This ideology of competition and individualism creates negative ways of being, seen in fear, distrust, alienation and felt structural barriers, limiting ways of being human. The research explores whether instrumental business models introduced into educational practice underpinning neoliberal ideology, inspire hopeful ways of being a teacher.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study is about conversations in the context of secondary schools in Australia. Conversations matter as this is the way we communicate as humans. The act of conversing is multi-faceted and while there is an appearance of meaning for the other in the expression of words, there is also 'taken for granted meanings' and concealments in those exchanges. The phenomenon of conversation has power to transcend beyond the immediate, for while there is engagement in time, words and ideas can have a continual presence and movement having seemingly no starting or end point. In conversation we find the rational and irrational human being. The average everydayness of life is found in conversation.

The focus of this study is the ontological nature of teachers' conversations existing within the current neoliberal educational system in Australia (Connell, 2013) . In an increasingly technological age where human redundancy appears more prevalent than even a decade ago, the need for furthering our understanding of how teachers are experiencing these times becomes critical. This process is actually fundamental for increasing our understanding of being human. The importance becomes even more urgent when one realises this study is one of a kind.

As the researcher, I have taken the findings from the literature seriously. In the first instance, ideology has a hegemonic hold on how we think and act. "Even the knowledge base of education is impacted, with technicization of professional knowledge and a growth of cultural fakery around education" (Connell, 2013, p. 99). Secondly in regard to teachers' ways of being, findings show teachers feeling sub-ordinate within structures, feel tension and may be forced to act in ways that are limiting the student-teacher relationship in the learning process (Lasky, 2005).

I have assumed from the literature that the current ideology limits and hides teachers' ways of being. Teachers are known to have a powerful influence on the lives of others and it is in the everydayness of their lived experience, a showing of who they are and how they are in relational play that makes an appearance. In these stories is an essence of the nature of teachers' ways of being and the profession of their calling.

Outline of the thesis

The first section in this chapter, 'Awareness and awakening,' sets the initial influences that I had about conversation. Only after attending a Postgraduate Scholars Conference and working on my proposal did the 'problem' underpinning this research appear. This appearance showed itself in the literature on neoliberalism, looking at historical and language shifts in policy and practice. 'Pre-understandings' are my entry into the initial understandings I held about conversation. The 'Neoliberal context' views the literature defining neoliberalism, the dominant ideology over the last 30 years in our politico-economic-social lives (Boas & Gans-Morse, 2009; Kelsey, 2014). Several examples are chosen to show how engrained ideologies are within our lives and how this impacts on ways of being and ways of doing. I have noticed a shift in conversation in this positivist paradigm over the last three decades of my teaching career with so much of our lives regulated. I wondered how teachers could sustain inspiring and hopeful ways of being.

The next section, 'Neoliberal language' outlines changing language within the education system. I was wondering how teachers' conversations experience such changes. I suspect word nuances were consciously noticed by teachers but used by them according to their perceived practical understandings. The words are translated to align with managerial and curriculum expectations, though soon forgotten, being part of the language of their existence, and taken for granted as part of normal living. I have observed through my teaching and in

anecdotal conversation that we interpret from our own perspective, and can, on the surface appear to support each other's position. However, under the surface, our understandings and re-interpretations may open tension, restraining, containing and dividing relationships. This part concludes with the 'Challenge and difficulty' which considers how this intuitive inquiry goes under the surface of our appearance through a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to explore the ontological nature of teachers' conversations within a dominant ideology. Sub-questions relate to this pursuit being: What do such ways of being in conversation look like? How does a teacher's conversation sustain, inspiring hopeful ways of being?

This chapter considers the 'Purpose of the study', 'Methodology' and 'Structure of the thesis'. The structure of the thesis is presented in eight chapters, summarised at the end of Chapter 1 to sign-post for the reader important influences shaping the research approach and subsequent insights.

While this study may be unconventional in its style of presentation and the order of chapter sections, this is a purposeful way of showing phenomenological research, as well as demonstrating my way of thinking as the researcher.

Awareness and awakening

The thinking in this study is a response to wondering how changes over the last 30 years in my teaching, within a neoliberal context, have affected ways of being in conversation as a teacher. What consciously began this process of inquiry had to do with seeing teachers I work with, exhausted but cheerful. During the busyness of one day, I was struck by a comment made by my colleague, "I feel like a doormat. Anyway, I'm off to Year 11's and looking forward to the lesson". I thought, in the blink of an eye, something so encapsulates ways of being that conversation appears irrational; that a teacher can feel mistreated and yet be also eager to teach. From this encounter questions sprang; what is it about the teaching profession

that so endears me? How do we cope with the reductionism of our lives by other people as it appears such a mystery? What is it about such irrationality that gains a nod from a fellow-teacher? What is it about the what-ness of all these things I cannot see, only feel? If I can only feel then, how can I express what I perceive? Is there an interpretative method to gain further understandings of being a teacher?

What disturbed me further though was my colleague's comment had a familiar feel as a fellow teacher. I did not understand this feeling. I was awakened to new possibilities of understanding when at a Postgraduate Scholars Conference at Flinders University (24 June, 2013), Professor David Giles, a keynote speaker enlightened me about Phenomenology and Appreciative Inquiry. I thought a strength based approach would be a direction to follow to show the positive ways of being a teacher. I agreed with the speaker that the focus on economic rationalism blinds organisations to the synergy of a collaborative good existing within schools. What I did not understand at the time was that I was moving in a direction where I would see the problem underpinning the research. The realisation came to me while undertaking a literature review on neoliberalism. Being in the ideology is like being a fish in water; the fish is unaware of the water until it is taken out.

On a personal level I have seen and felt the growing state of frustration in the teaching profession in Australia driven by economic priorities handed down with limited, if any consultation and which overrides local curriculum design and implementation and social needs that are ever present. In addition, the last decade has seen the discriminatory nature of the business model promote a culture of entitlement where it is taken for granted individuals earn their worth and the contribution of others is devalued (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011).

Pre-understandings

Our views on schooling and curricula are social constructs we can articulate. These are the technocratic conversations and background practices regulated into our language and communication. We have taken for granted the ways teachers are being in conversation and being reflective beings who are thinking about improving. There is value in stating the pre-understandings I have about teachers' conversations so I can later revisit these in Chapter 8, the concluding chapter of this study.

1. Teachers' conversations are essentially transactions with others (i.e. students, parents and management).

   A teacher's role is a prescribed job within an educational organisation with defined expectations in rules and regulations. Teachers' conversations as transactional relationships between others presuppose equitable outcomes and mutual respect.

2. The nature of teachers' conversations is determined by what others expect to see.

   Governance structures in schools means conversations are directed and fixed. Teachers reflect on their ways of doing their work to meet their work-place expectations.

3. Conversation matters to teachers.

   Teachers have a heightened sensitivity towards others in conversation as they are involved in caring work. Teachers take care in their conversations because they are seen to be transactions with power, for some conversations create joy and others sorrow. In this capacity, conversation seems to draw some emotional pull when I am in contact with others.

4. A teacher's conversation is about talking with Others and also talking to one-self.

   This talking can involve personal sharing time or seeking advice about professional matters or planning and personal matters. I am also aware of the reflective nature of

teachers towards their classroom activities and engagement with others. I know myself, I reflect on conversations I have had, and heard, or are experiencing at the time. There is a silence at times about my inner thoughts, which can hold tensions and uncertainties.

'Problem' identified

As part of professional learning I enrolled into the education doctorate at Flinders hoping to gain answers to why the language of conversation had changed within schools to a business model. What I did not expect to find was how I had taken for granted the use of language and in particular the meaning of words. I realised words have multiple meanings, so words create worlds. I also did not expect to find in the literature such an invasive technocratic ideology, managing to fix ways of seeing and ways of doing things within legislated system design so making any other alternative, unthinkable. Neoliberalism as doxa, operates according to Bourdieu, "as if it were the objective truth" (Chopra, 2003, p.419).

The key findings of the literature review opened up questions about the ontological nature of teachers' conversations and related to how ideologies are theorised and practised.

Neoliberal context

Researchers found Australia, having identical capitalist rationalities to other OECD countries, cast their school improvement reforms into economic terms (Brady, 2014; Levin, 1998). The dominant neoliberal ideology politically and socially implanted business rationalities within the practical workings of the school environment (Laitsch, 2013). The current dominant ideology saw a new basis for "ethical decision-making and moral judgements erected by the incentives of performance" (Ball, 2003, p. 218). With a managerial structure in place and a performative priority, the impacts of this ideology create tensions and conflicts (Mockler, 2013). The managerial structures of schools have shown increasing commodification of their

practices and intensified performance surveillance through mandatory monitoring. International student testing regimes (OECD, PISA[3]), National student tests (NAPLAN 2008[4]) and Professional Teaching Standards (AITSL[5]) are now established measurements of quality schooling (Connell, 2013; Santiago, Donaldson, Herman, & Shewbridge, 2011). In addition, a teacher's self-assessment tool (2014), supplied by Australian Curriculum Assessment Authority (ACARA) provided an elaborate self-improvement schema. Strathern (2000) comments, an audited culture, "has no language to talk about productive non-productivity and no ability to recognise experimentation in teaching" (p. 318). Indeed, there is abundant research evidence that objective measures placed on teachers and their work, privilege certain dimensions of human doing, over the more complex and less manageable aspects of being human (Lingard, Mills, & Hayes, 2000; Mockler, 2011).

Neoliberal language

Ideologies operate in and through language to bring about change. In the education sector critical researchers outlined the mandate of the Coalition of Australian Government Ministers (COAG) in 1992, providing policy advice for the implementation of National Competition Policy (Hilmer's Report, 1993) linked to the Productivity Commission, as creating a network, functionally embedding the neoliberal paradigm within Australia (Connell, 2013; Kelsey, 2014). With an agenda of three major reform initiatives; improving the quality of teaching in schools, equity of outcomes for all students and improving the decision-making and accountability of schools (and their management of structures at all levels), the commodification of people and their assets to market forces were galvanised (Santiago, et al., 2011).

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[3] PISA -Programme for International Student Assessment, a tri-annual international survey which tests skills and knowledge of 15 year old students across OECD economies
[4] NAPLAN - National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy, an Australian annual assessment of skills at years 3,5,7 and 9.
[5] AITSL (2012)- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership provides professional standards and training for teachers across Australia

Implementing policy to practice has seen conversation change. The following from the literature considers some aspects of this impact. In Special Education, for example, the strangulation by the business model in schools has been felt. The document, 'On the Same Basis' [6] contains legislative requirements for schools to access their funding with subjugated criteria to provide equality of opportunity. In my experience, schools interpret this Federal document at State level and contextualise this into their local inclusion programs to access funding. Studies in New South Wales show a shrinking conception of normality in school environments (Graham & Sweller, 2011). The rhetoric is couched in language of equity, fairness and transparency giving the appearance of moral responsibility towards others innate to the system. Some argue underlying the use of this language is the belief that goodness and happiness are an outcome of such market theory (Bauman & Yakimova, 2002). Whereas others have shown with limited funds available from government and stringent criteria, Special education remains poorly resourced, failing to provide equitable outcomes (Daly, 2015).

Digital software is invaluable for administrative purposes and deemed necessary in an education market to ensure efficiency and so enhance a strong market image for clients. Since resources are packaged and prioritised according to market determinants, libraries in schools have felt the suffocation by economically-driven local agendas. The Federal government, while promoting digital resourcing for the Australian curriculum and initiating digital devices, left Principals to integrate technology in the schools. For some, like Henley High School (Adelaide), the library was deemed an unnecessary expense and was closed (Smith, 2011). The impact has meant a forced acceptance of technology as a user pays privilege and such practices are acceptable. Those affected, however argue that library closures rob access to those who most require the service. Educationalists also consider such economic activity

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[6] On the Same Basis is a documental tool for education staff to implement the Disability Standards for Education (2005)

may play into the hands of those who would like to sell education online which is an increasingly competitive market (Allen & Seaman, 2013).

Another area feeling the discriminatory nature of the business model has been seen in the promotion of the elite teacher. The creation of the elite teacher requires implementing evidence-based performance criteria (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership standards - AITSL) and lacing it with merit pay in a graded progression (Connell, 2013). The Australian Teacher's Union attributes wage increases to their community arbitration. Researchers argue that the impact of merit pay is to oversell being a quality teacher as a prescribed skill and undervaluing the benefits inherent in collegial support (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Leana, 2011). The other side of merit pay impacts the contract teacher. Insecurity of employment has grown as neoliberal policies weaken employee unions resulting in the adoption of individual contracts in the name of flexibility (Connell, 2013).

The language of the teaching fraternity has changed; where once teaching was a vocation and service industry, now it is an industry provider with associated activities, further strengthening individualism and competition (Ball, 2003). The conversations around professional learning have morphed from negative connotations associated with professional development, to being central to quality teaching policies (Mockler, 2013). Two-thirds of teachers in a recent study saw professional learning as an administrative requirement forcing evidence-based learning on teachers (Hay Group Australia, 2012).

There is evidence, however, in the literature that the influence of this ideology has not been negative for all, with principals having increased status as CEOs, teachers as neoliberal entrepreneurs and line management increasing within schools (Ball, 2007; Connell, 2010). The literature on digital technology shows teachers branded neo-liberal entrepreneurs in their

uptake of technology. Yet how do teachers engaging in you-tube educational productions and other shareware, really see their use of technology?

The literature review exposed not only the historical transactional conversations of this ideology but how the current situation is woven into schooling through means of language. This language whether in paradigms or schemes or 'foreconceptions' in Heideggerian (1973/1927) terms, was formed in linguistic repertoires "laced with historically embedded conventions which anticipate and condition what is taken to be true or valid and to a large extent govern what we as theorists and lay persons are able to see" (Cooperrider, Barrett, & Srivastva, 1995, p. 167). A dominant ideology implements word-meanings, which become part of the language taken for granted as the acceptable word usage.

Whilst the literature outlined the impact of neoliberalism into policy and practice, I too have experienced, as an Australian teacher, a contractual ideology, where the government provided curriculum, teaching standards and funds for a devolved system. The outcome was to enable permissible spheres of government activity like audits and performance indicators to emerge as normal requirements of living (Kelsey, 2014). A large part of any day in the life of a teacher is increasingly being taken up with fulfilling administrative requirements. In my experience there is felt a deep sense of injustice being done to the student-teaching relationship and a sense of injustice to the humanity of the teacher. The current ideology is not one of an egalitarian society caring for each other but one that promotes surveillance, competition and individualism as a norm (Strathern, 2000). I think it should not be surprising that we are becoming more distrustful of each other!

In being in the world "we learn to think and act as 'they' do", as being a typical average, accepting of what is happening as just normal (Dall'Alba, 2009, p.26). 'They' referring to social constructions. I was hit by this realisation of context, I see what others want me to see

and this is only partial seeing of what is happening. As a researcher I felt an urgency to explore other ways of being human.

Where was I to look and trace such movement of conversation? It was seen both necessary and timely to recognise and appreciate the tenacity, resilience and strengths of teachers' ways of being in a dominant ideology, whether they were aware of the ideology or not. The phenomenology of conversation explores the perceived reality of life ontologically through teachers' stories. My initial intention was to find hopeful, inspiring ways of being within this managed and controlled profession. Described in the next section is the challenge and difficulty of such a study.

The challenge and difficulty

Working with my supervisors I became caught up in phenomenology and the philosophical works of Heidegger, in particular, 'Being and Time'. Heidegger develops the idea of language as always being a form of showing (Heidegger, 1973/1927; Malpas, 2005). Further wonderings led me to an interest in Gadamer and his notion of the fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 2014). I then saw the possibility of exploring the ontological nature of teachers' experiences through 'hermeneutic consciousness'. I understood what Malpas (2005) meant when he stated, "the questioning brings the significance of the statement into view, the dynamic and indeterminate character of conversation" (p. 14). Hermeneutics, as a method of interpretation involves trying to understand the human being. I sought to remain open to meanings and so coming to understandings that might present a showing of the phenomenon of conversation in our lived experience (Cubukcu, 2012; Malpas, 2005).

My challenge as the researcher was how to work out a medium to present the findings and as I am neither familiar with the artist brush, nor song-writing, language and text were chosen. In the use of language and words I am aware of its technical limitations for expressing

insight; this is problematic and further complicated, when the task is to unveil teachers' ways of being hidden over and only sensed by observing and noticing shifts in conversation.

I was aware, we perceive the world largely through our eyes and what is physically seen is only a tiny fraction of light in the visible spectrum. Our sight is taken for granted. Light passes through the cornea to the lens and the brain flips the image for the right orientation of an object. Our eyes take in the whole view but when speaking about the experience, we find only partial seeing occurs for we narrow our focus on what is important to us. This is a useful analogue to apply to conversations. "Being in the world directs our attention to what is relevant; it determines our perspectives whilst limiting our view of the world" (Greatrex-White, 2008, p. 1845). So in our ways of being, our conversations use language to express what is important to us.

In the use of words, covered over with meanings, there is so much more seeing than is seen.

> Much of what we do, say and are is supported in its correctness by an ethos, which, in its hidden effectiveness is more practiced and applied, than actually known consciously; constituting our being beyond our willing and thinking (Grodin, 2001, p. 48).

I am also aware of the multiple use of a word having related meanings within contexts. Words can cover deeper meanings, dwelling within the home of human beings and in their situated meaning in the world (Krell, 1993). "Central to the character of language is that it always extends beyond that which it itself is" (Malpas, 2005, p. 12). Words are living, their use by humans create meaning and worlds.

Words can remain within the thought pattern as threads needing to be picked up and sewn into our lives so we have a sense of life in all its wholeness. Heidegger contends,

> In discourse the intelligibility of Being-in-the-world (an intelligibility which goes with a state-of-mind) is articulated according to significations…..... They are existential characteristics rooted in the state of Dasein's Being, and it is they that first make anything like language ontologically possible. In the

> factical linguistic form of any definite case of discourse, some of those items may be lacking, or may remain unnoticed (Heidegger, 1973/27, p. 206).

What Heidegger is pointing out is that our conversation is linguistically structured so we play according to the conventions of language. In conversation we choose things important to us. In the course of what is talked about; talk is not just the property observed from language. In the exchange of words, a hearing of who we are as human beings is often lost as we align our words in the channels of the dominant ideology. When we are true to our own being, which remains unnoticed, we reveal something of our primordial Being.

We also need to realise that the "state of the world can urge thought into silence" (Vlăduțescu, 2014, p. 49). The researcher's difficult and sensitive task is stepping outside oneself, to step back into ourselves to uncover the essence of who we are. The tension is that in the turning towards a phenomenon, the bias and prejudices of one's own meanings remains and can be appropriated, while the voice of the teacher resonates awaiting the hermeneutic to consciously bring it out (Cubukcu, 2012; Giles, 2008).

Gadamer views language as conversation and the nature of language as conversation; a "relatedness" between conversational context and also a "relatedness" to a particular subject matter that is ongoing (Malpas, 2005, p. 9). In this relational conversation as opposed to a technocratic conversation the intuitive question emerged: What is the ontological nature of teachers' conversation within a current ideological context?

Aim

The specific aim of this study is to uncover characteristics of the ontological nature of a teacher's ways of being in the conversations within a neoliberal context. Beyond the specific, this process involves orientating myself towards self-understanding inspiring, hopeful ways

of being a teacher so I can write myself in a "deep collective sense", through a knowing that has a significant, experiential connection with being human (van Manen, 1990, p. 132).

Purpose of the study

This study is a hermeneutic phenomenological response to the positivist paradigm whose technical and economic rationalism are made visible in the dominant ideology. Ideologies are never value-free. Neoliberalism has directed and defined what is possible, what teachers do and how they interact in ordered structures with each other (Mockler, 2013). The representations created through language categorisation and judgements have blurred an understanding of Being, having been caught up with things to which worth and value have been assigned in the worldliness of a situational existence. Take for example the Australian Teaching Standards (AITSL) where individuals are placed on a graded system of competency and their value lies in evidence gathered against measureable developmental criteria. It has been stated that ideology is a tool of the powerful and truth is not what the powerful say it is (Barthold, 2010; Lemke, 2001). "The truth may be looked upon as that which is un-concealed, that which gets discovered or uncovered" (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 57). This field of praxis cannot be subjected to idealised scientific method as its immanent purpose cannot be made technically; its meaning is in the characteristic experience of truth, which presents a universal genuine experience. "This research has practical important effect restoring the credibility of the field of praxis and regaining its autonomy" (Dobrosavljev, 2002, p. 613). In other words,practical experiences reveals truths beyond what scientific theory designs, so denouncing methodology as an alternative to truth.

Significance

The study is unique because it is different to the way in which conversation has been previously researched. This inquiry involves a *presencing* of the intentionality embodied in

teachers' ways of being, living in a managerial world that directs their activity, but in which Being itself presents in care and concern. Such a study opens alternative ways of Being made visible in phronesis and factical existence (Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson, & Spence, 2008). Phronesis referring to practical wisdom and factical existence to an inner knowing. Dreyfus sees our mode of engagement with the world is neither linguistic nor conceptual, it is embodied and non-conceptual (Dreyfus, 1991). Truth is within the experience of being.

As stated in the introduction, the research is significant because it uses teachers' stories; valuing the authority of the participant's experiences. It is an appreciative and celebratory way of recognising a more holistic sense of the lived experience (Preskill & Tzavaras Catsambas, 2006). "Ontology is primary", fundamental to being human (Giles, 2008, p. 59). "Meaning lies in the individual's transaction with a situation such that the situation constitutes the individual and the individual constitutes the situation" (Annells, 1996, p. 708). This meaning of the lived experience has an inner relationship to life itself.

The research also aligns with people who are internationally rethinking education and challenging the dominant ideology that the technical matters more than the social (van Manen, 2007; Wheatley, 2007; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). Having lived through and with, and having experienced the alienation of 'our-selves', my thinking is directed towards giving understandings and new insights of teachers' ways of being from the inside-out.

Finally, as hermeneutic phenomenological research explores the world that now is and the researcher's engagement and connection with teachers as they are, the research is a rare privilege. The research through teachers' stories affirms the authority of teachers' everyday lived experiences as a means of evoking and opening possibilities for transformative change in ways of thinking and understanding Being itself (Giles, 2010; Munby & Russell, 1993).

Methodology

I am inside a paradigm looking at the nature of everyday lived experiences of being in conversation with teachers within a dominant ideology. Phenomenology is not a construct because "to see anything you must be the thing you see" (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 52). I am a conversation; humanity is a conversation. Levinas (1999) states, "it's impossible to put an idea into thought without it already having been found there" (p. 85). The phenomenon of conversation is about something exchanged beyond the words spoken. Hermeneutics is an interpretative approach, not an instrument, enabling meanings to be shown in teachers' conversations. The method starts with the lived experiences and from the interview with the participants moves to descriptive writing about the stories, interpretative writing, and on to reading of existential philosophers' writings to gain reflective insight. In addition to interviews I also maintained a personal journal on my reflections of the interviews and any patterns I was observing. This process of contemplative analysis, cycles back and forth from descriptive stories, reading and interpretative writing.

> This phenomenology of practice operates in the space of the formative relations between who we are and who we may become, between how we think or feel and how we act (van Manen, 2007, p. 26).

As such this research is significant, focussing on modes of being and seeking understanding of how the dominant ideology shows itself in the ontological nature of conversations occurring between, with and to teachers, whose intentionality is towards inspiring, hopeful and sustainable ways of being.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is presented in eight chapters.

Chapter 1, 'Introduction', outlined the thesis with sub-titles. In the sub- title, Awareness and awakening, pre-understandings of the phenomenon of conversation were given. The Problem identified, was about the influence of neoliberal ideology on conversation through policy and

practice. Neoliberalism looked at the findings from the literature. The impact of Neoliberalism was seen in examples under the sub-title, Neoliberal language. Challenge and Difficulty, posed the complexity of hermeneutic phenomenological research. The Purpose of the study showed the unique and significant nature of the research, exploring differently the way in which conversation had been previously researched. The Methodology was explained as an approach and finally the Structure of the thesis was broadly summarised.

Chapter 2, 'Philosophical Understandings', describes philosophical ideas that are foundational for an understanding of phenomenology. Central to the thesis are the writings of Heidegger on ontology and Gadamer's notion of the hermeneutic circle.

Chapter 3, 'The Researcher's Journey', describes the fore-grounding of my own traditions and prejudices as the researcher. From this perspective the chapter then follows my realisation of how much of conversation is 'taken for granted' in the meanings and use of language. Here the contribution of Heidegger's notion of concealment was pivotal for me in seeing anew how we are as humans.

Chapter 4, 'Interpretative Challenges' considers a contemporary take on a Heideggerian view of objectivity and subjectivity as variants to studying the holistic human being. In addition, the ontological nature of a phenomenological inquiry is seen as paramount.

Chapter 5, 'Contemporary Understandings of Conversation', contextualises the research by providing a literature perspective considering teachers' ways of being complex and not amenable to quantitative analysis. My insight gained from the literature identifies this kind of research as unique and so adding to the current body of literature.

Chapter 6, 'Method', provides the pathway of ethical considerations and documents the research process for others to see. In this section the challenges of the interpretative writing are outlined. The functional purposes of my Memoirs are explained and the Trustworthiness of the research highlighted.

Chapter 7, 'Phenomenological themes', are the researcher's interpretation of the essence of the phenomenon within teacher's conversation. There are three mega-themes.

'Conversation as dialogue' considers dialogue as the living space between human beings where openness allows for 'meeting' the other to inspire and support. 'Conversation as seeing intentionality', looks at broken conversations and positive forms of solicitude in teacher's ways of being. 'Conversation as context', sees context in macro (being those conversations of ideology) and context in micro (being local and situated).

Chapter 8 'Conclusion' further shows the influence of the research on deepening contemporary understandings of ways of being a teacher and the continuing impact of the nature of this research approach on myself. The Thesis of the thesis, revisits my initial pre-understandings and further recommendations for research are provided. In addition, limitations and delimitations of the research are stated with concluding remarks given.

Chapter 2 Philosophical Understandings

In this chapter, philosophical understandings are presented which I have described as foundational for understanding phenomenology. Central are the writings of Heidegger on ontology and Gadamer's notion of the hermeneutic circle.

Researcher's position

Since the 1980's the logical-empirical research methodologies for inquiry into ways of Being have shown a need for methods that increase an understanding of Being itself (Laverty, 2003). For example, data collected to transpose a strategic vision for a school will deploy ways of measuring and categorizing the activities and ethos of a school. The data though, however sensitively designed, remains incomplete and inadequate requiring research into lived experiences to more fully disclose the rooms of this dwelling. The school dwelling has many rooms and like in a house, it is the front room where visitors are invited and quantitative data is more readily accessible.

Phenomenology is concerned with the practical lived experiences of people's worlds and reality, familiar and appearing as normal, common sense. This common sense is often spoken in conversation, as "…just the way we are …that's how the system works… and if you don't like it, bugger off" (Personal communication, March 2016). Metaphorically, we can liken ourselves to a home. Carefully managed are the front rooms of the house. The hermeneutic-phenomenologist seeks to look beyond the front room for further understanding of the Being.

What is 'seeing' in phenomenology?

Phenomenology is an organised attempt to unveil and describe the lived experience in the internal meaning structures of the human. In the process interpretation opens questioning the ways humans' experience meaning in context (Laverty, 2009). The purpose of interpretative phenomenology is to "awaken the significance of experiential meaning in a fuller way" (van

Manen, 1990, p. 10). For me this was to wonder what it is to live and sustain inspiring and hopeful ways of being in a social world of human construction.

In the naming of things through words, labels and dualistic segmentation and categorisation (like mind and body, theory and practice), we conceal the web of significant relations that give vision to the factuality of our existence. As Heidegger (1973/1927) points out, if through the eyes of others, we see ourselves, what is essential to us, withdraws from us and we lose sight of Being itself (p. 178):

> Publicness, as the kind of Being which belongs to the 'they'…State-of-mind not only discloses Dasein in its throwness and its submission to that world which is already disclosed with its own Being; it is itself the existential kind of Being in which Dasein constantly surrenders itself to the world and lets the world matter to it in such a way that somehow Dasein evades its very self…

Watching a young child experience the world, it appears learning occurs through observation and response. As they notice things in their environment, or hear words, a 'seeing' connection between things occurs. So the small child laughs when told they have bare (i.e. bear) feet! Or the excited Year three child finishes a game of netball oblivious to having lost the game. In time they forget the joy and fun of such events because language and immersion into a historical-social context gives different perspectives. The original humour and naivety becomes lost.

As language first speaks, appearance and withdrawal of Being begins. In conversation, things and activities are noticed, rather than the ontological nature of the Being. The school student on an iPhone is learning to 'see' connections in a cyber-world so that revisions in software add to the learning. What is being learnt feels ordinary and is just what we do, taken for granted. This is our practice in the world. However, there are ways of seeing things beyond sight and consciousness, concealed and hidden. The following example illustrates this. I can hold a tile 300mm x 600mm and see it as a 3D object. At the same time, I can see a scaled tile from another perspective in a drawing or even imagined on my old bathroom floor. What is

amazing about this seeing is that unconsciously trigonometry has been applied without me realising it. The realisation of this phenomenon occurs consciously only when I draw the tile using an isometric perspective. What I find is that primordial Dasein has been covered over with layers and layers of paint. On the canvas of our lives are layers of paint creating the 3-D form of Dasein with its equipmentorial ability to find knowledge and apply that knowledge. How we perceive Dasein and what we see in Dasein is important to our life and when we 'see' further by contemplating, it is not the appearance of what happens but what the experience does for uncovering the nature of Being in conversation, we understand a little better about who we are and how we are (Giles, 2011).

The way into the ontological world is through phenomenology where phenomenology is ontology and ontology is phenomenological (Giles, 2008). Ontological inquiry seeks taken for granted understandings in a process where stories and experiences mattering most to teachers are privileged. These experiences unfold in a motion in time and place, evoking the nature of uncertainties and shifting the intentionality of teachers' ways of being (Withy, 2014). The journey is remarkable because the find is yet hidden and the partial capture of reality for the lifeworld is complex because of this motion. Being, hidden in the historical-social-linguistic ways of being-in-the-world; hidden by the perspectives of interpretation in the meaning of words and hidden because meaning is co-constructed in relation with others and so in a state of transformation, requires a "discipline of questioning and inquiring, a discipline that guarantees truth" (Gadamer, 2014, p. 506). This discipline is revealed in and through the hermeneutic approach.

Hermeneutic approach

Hermeneutics, as a disciplined interpretative 'method' provides a frame of mind which opens towards ontological understandings withdrawing from calculative thinking, only to be uncovered in contemplative moments of seeing. While we work with the processes of social

constructionism (for these are the constructions we live in), the interpretation leaves the 'door' open for moments of surprise where taken for granted thoughts find us.

The assumed interpretative understanding of the researcher is about seeing how human intentionality towards that which is essential, allows a seeing of openness and the nature of this openness, as it is revealed to the seeker. The inquiry sees beyond the words spoken, or the logic of conversations, to gain insight into the nature of teachers' conversation, pointing to Being itself, embedded within temporal - historical time and space so "understanding, interpretation and application are always in an unbreakable unity" (Dobrosavljev, 2002, p. 611). This unity co-exists within a fusion of horizons, "dialectic between the pre-understandings of the research process, the interpretive framework and the sources of information" (Koch, 1995, p. 835).

The hermeneutic approach understands the everyday lived world as having a taken for granted attitude and this is revealed in the spoken, experiential movements within teacher's stories and captured in part by those stories. In these stories given by teachers is both the appearance of daily requirements but also an essence, "a 'something' what it is-and-without which it could not be what it is" (Husserl 1982; Merleau-Ponty, 1962 cited in van Manen, 1990, p. 10). This something is essential to our Being.

To make sense of the essence of conversation requires hermeneutic ability to see below the surface of appearance to the ontological core of this inspiring, hopeful way of being, in spite of the words, and seeks to understand the significance behind and within the words. The human being, "is not what something you are automatically but something you try to be" (van Manen, 1990, p. 5). The Being is always in the process of becoming. The borrowing by the researcher of experiences in conversation is not an unethical intrusion but an invitation through story for interpretative writing to explore teachers' conversations in context as a

means of understanding modes of being human. Careful reading of existential philosophical texts, speak to the hermeneutic researcher who is 'in service' to the text given in the teachers' stories. Cukukcu (2012) suggests that the interpretative hermeneutic process of this discipline is a virtuous act of Being stating, "Gadamer clearly sees trust, humility, modesty, fidelity and carefulness as the hermeneutic virtues" (p. 111). He continues to state and I have experienced this, that the "unmasking of the text is understood only by someone who shares knowledge of the subject" (Cukukcu, 2012, p. 112).

Heideggerian terms, thrownness and uncertainties provide ontological understandings in the analysis for making sense of conscious experiences (Withy, 2014). Heidegger describes part of the human condition as being thrown and uncertain. Heideggerian phenomenological ideas were further continued to be opened by Gadamer and others (Giles, 2008). They saw the interpretative process achieved through a hermeneutic circle (Dobrosavljev, 2002; Quirk, 2000). The metaphoric representation of a circle shows the movement in this carefully cultivated thoughtfulness, representing the art of understanding (van Manen, 1990). The interpretation of the text moves from parts of the experience, to the whole experience and back and forth (questioning and interpreting), always on the way, to increase not only a deeper engagement with the text but further understandings, meanings and application (Annells, 1996). In addition, Gadamerian insight gives this research further trustworthiness as the study attempts to establish "the principles of historical effect, temporal distance, prejudice, and fore-structures integral to the development of a hermeneutic consciousness" (Cubukcu, 2012, p. 115).

In summary I have sought to show those philosophical ideas that are foundational for an understanding of phenomenology. In the next chapter I will describe the researcher' journey.

My historical fabric, with traditions, bias and prejudices will be shown inherent to the transformation of being a hermeneutic researcher.

Chapter 3 The Researcher's Journey

Uncovering my DNA without science

The purpose of this section is to lay bare the prejudices and historical-social threads of my life and journey as a researcher. Unavoidably, we weave ourselves into the fabric of our interpretation of factical existence. This positioning of the researcher serves to point the reader to that which is important, to faithfully interpret teachers' given stories in ways that keep open new understandings and insights of the ontological nature of teachers' conversations within their temporal-situational context.

During the winter of 2016, I met Heidegger in Being and Time (Heidegger, 1973/1927). The language had a sort of familiarity that made me feel uncomfortable and restless. Around this time, I had also gained insight into a story where distance within and between the teacher-student relationship revealed unexpected, surprising closeness. The closeness was not dependent on physical presence or absence. The Heideggerian notion of 'bringing close' struck a chord with me, releasing at the time, a rush of adrenaline.

In this adrenaline rush I realised the quest to remain open to this interpretative process. I began questioning and further reading other sources to find out more about Heidegger's life and works. I was troubled with how to understand and clarify what Dasein is, "when it is whole and focussed rather than dispersed and muddled in the turmoil of everydayness" (Guignon, 2009, p. 134). I have since come to understand Dasein as referring to the "self-interpreting way of being" (Giles, 2008, p. 61). At the initial outset of this research my burning questions came from what I was later to understand as traditional and rational ways of framing the world. In my questioning, my supervisor was emailed (personal communication, Sharyn Schubert 30th August, 2016):

> Is being drawn to Parker Palmer and Heidegger blurring the difference between metaphysics and ontology? Is ontology concerned about the specifics only of existential-everydayness of the human grounded as beings-in-the-world? What does this mean for the spiritual being of experiences for humans? Is it that the spiritual in humans exists in the emotions and senses and transcends the epistemological representations that form the framing of words in the world?; But are not these representations also borne as words from our emotional experiences gathered in part also from our senses and being-together in the world! Is the referring entity of God specific to faith?

The flood-gate of questioning seemed out of control. The supervisor replied in an email (Personal communication, David Giles 30th August, 2016):

> Metaphysics, axiology, epistemology are terms associated with traditional philosophical approaches, terms conceptual in nature and tending to focus on a person's values and beliefs within these fields.

I felt cognitively trapped preoccupied with the conceptual meaning of Being and the knowledge that essences do not arrive through designed criteria, rather existing undetected:

> syncretistic activity of universal comparison and classification… If an ordering principle is genuine, it has its own content as a thing, which is never to be found by meanings of such ordering, but is already presupposed in it (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 77).

What was I trying to do when looking at the ontological nature of teachers in conversation? The insight came, unexpected and succinctly from within my supervisor's emails (Personal communication, David Giles 30th August, 2016):

> Phenomenology is not a conceptual framework, nor does it have a method, rather as the researcher you are immersing yourself in experiences, saturating yourself in a quest to understand the nature of our being in the world.

The words in this sentence were life to me, as I was struck by the freedom they delivered. I had experienced that quest and received illumination from 'concealment' to 'disclosure' for I had not seen the taken for granted experience of a teacher, until I became immersed in the story, then closeness as an entity was uncovered. Closeness, an essential nature of the phenomenon of conversation matters to Beings.

But, what was it that drew me to Heideggerian thought and tore at my *soul* throughout the night? I continued my reading and found a clue in a study by Yfantis (2009 cited in Adluri, 2013, p. 130). Here Yfantis (translated by Adluri, 2013) stated,

> How powerful the influence in particular of the young Luther and his understanding of early Christianity was on the thought of the young Heidegger lets itself, however, only be assessed through a direct comparison of the central termini, concepts and intellectual motivations of both thinkers, which provides detailed testimony that the conceptuality and use of language in the early (Heidegger) Freiburg lectures…arose, to a great extent, out of translations and reinterpretations of concepts and termini that Heidegger already found in Luther's writing.

I had made a discovery that the summer of 1923 Heidegger meeting with Luther's writings had an influence on 'Being in Time' published in 1927. I later found Capelle (1998) had drawn this same conclusion, though earlier.

The discovery of Heideggerian thought as acquainted with Luther opened my eyes to my own existence, which I had to explore before I could proceed as a researcher. I had never considered my life had prepared me as a contemplative thinker that such thinking was in my blood (Adluri, 2013). This latter sentence might be an extraordinary statement until you learn that I was born into a Lutheran manse. I was brought up on understandings like I cannot by my own reason or strength believe, but the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel. The hiddenness of the cross to those who have no faith and the everydayness of bread, wine, water and living Word are part of my understanding of who I am and how we are to be in the world. They are heavily layered words of meaning and significance in theological terms but also transposed into my way of relating as a Being-in-the-world. Whilst for me this connection requires further investigation, this is not the purpose of this research. Suffice to say though, for me it seems that Heidegger did have an understanding of Luther's writings in regard to law and grace. What stands out for me in 'Being and Time' is this:

> When something no longer takes the form of just letting something be seen, but is always harking back to something else to which it points, so that it lets something be seen as something, it thus acquires a synthetic-structure, and with this it takes over the possibility of covering up (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 57).

What Luther saw harking back to something, was salvation from the law of judgement through Christ. All of scripture for Luther pointed to Christ and His redemptive act to gain back humanity from the Fall. Luther saw this while interpreting Scripture, through faith. It

made me think, is this similar to how we see the study of phenomenology, where faith in the lived experience and thoughts find us as text is interpreted?

Stanley (2007) states,

> For Heidegger, the earlier Luther simply failed to finish the radical divide between metaphysics and theology which he initiated in his early deconstructive theology. As such, the early Luther offers an incomplete breakthrough which Heidegger realises and seeks to carry forward (p. 41).

Such a conclusion I feel is unwarranted towards Luther, whose 'Theology of the Cross' and understanding of the influence of law and grace on the human condition was to do with soteriology and not metaphysics. For Luther the truth of a proposition lay in the truth of the person who holds the proposition (i.e. Christ), so there is no science of Being. I agree with Heidegger, outside of theology, Being as an entity in its wholeness has been forgotten or conceived as self-evident, "some idea of the Being of the whole must be presupposed" (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 74). For Heidegger, metaphysics in its insistence on rational thinking had 'abandoned the question of Being' and forgotten Being itself.

> State-of-mind not only discloses Dasein in its thrownness and its submission to that world which is already disclosed with its own Being; it is itself the existential kind of Being in which Dasein constantly surrenders itself to the world and lets the world matter to it in such a way that somehow Dasein evades its very self....(Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 178)

What appears to me from my readings as a novice scholar of Heidegger is 'Being and Time' (1973/1927), was in part responding to Luther's critique on Aristotelian's Theology of Glory and Luther's interpretations of Paul's primordial Christian experiences, as Heidegger sought ways of understanding the temporality of existence, facticity and eschatology (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2005). The 'Theology of Glory' sees outward appearances in power and influence, defining what it means to be human, while Paul looking inward sees the suffering and fragility of being human. Heidegger seeks ways of understanding being human within the thrownness and uncertainties of living.

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Phenomenology

The study of phenomenology is about opening the essences of being human. Here we find "Being-true is in the manner of taking entities out of their hiddenness and letting them be seen in their unhiddenness" (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 261). Luther saw two essences, the essence of Beings as personal and the essence of Being as substantive (i.e. divine essence) and yet one Being, the constituted unity of mutually communicated properties of the Being, both co-existing as sinner (i.e. fallen) and saint (i.e. redeemed). And the sinner-saint is appropriated for the individual and the collective of which the union forms the Body of Christ, a restored context into which Being is to be.

Heidegger is withdrawn on the subject of salvation though he has "some form of authentic experience, a form of life that runs counter to the despair and fall-ness of factical existence" (Adluri, 2013 p.134). Heidegger is concerned about how life is lived as Beings-in-the-world. There is little acknowledgement by scholars, except in his earlier years, that Heidegger is a theologian, for he seeks to define the temporality of existence from within the human experience running towards death, not eternity (Adluri, 2013; Westhelle, 2014). These findings meant a fresh re-reading of Heidegger and a break from my tradition of the human condition. A way forward in the research was to see concealment as part of human existence and disclosure as a possibility of Dasein, drawn from interpreting text. As Heidegger (1973/1927) states in Being and Time,

> the undifferentiated character of Dasein's everydayness is not nothing, but a positive phenomenal characteristic of this entity … that which is ontically closest and well known, is ontologically the farthest and not known at all; and its ontological signification is constantly overlooked (p. 69).

The virtuous characteristics of being human in context remain hidden unless sought after; such is the phenomenon of conversation!

Heidegger in focus

A large part of my interpretation of stories required insights from reading, 'Being and Time'. It is important for me to establish for the reader what I gained from these readings and to have an understanding that phenomenological research grew out of philosophical literature. Heidegger is seen as one of the note-worthy philosophers of the twentieth century having contributed to theorist thinkers (like Gadamer, Ricoeur, Habermas, Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze and Bourdeiu) and in so many areas of human existence, with volumes having been written on him by researchers (Phillips, n.d.; Rae, 2014). Limited by time constraints and the richness of Heideggerian works, 'Being and Time' (1973/1927) by Heidegger, became a major part of my hermeneutic consciousness.

For me Heidegger's life sketched out biographically by others is a telling conversation about Being as conversation (Phillips, n.d.). What intrigued me are the struggles in his life with-in and between the rational and the irrational human. As I too have found in my own life, to be an authentic being, it is 'in' the imperfect, we meet humanity; in the irrational and unseen, in the taken for granted, insight is gained about the nature of Being.

Is it any different to live in a world of crass consumerism, than it is to live through the Great Depression and a Fascist regime, to make mistakes of judgement and undertake human activities that blind us to the needs of others? Giles recognised that there are mixed feeling towards Heidegger, some having charged him with fascist sentiment, insensitivity to the Holocaust and misguided beliefs in German nationalism (Giles, 2008). I am not here to judge, but know like Boss (2001), human existence in the world means being in and of the world with all its uncertainties and thrownness, so that truth lies covered until a showing occurs. Heidegger's Zollikan Seminars are said to provide unshakeable proof of his concern for fellow human beings (Boss cited in Heidegger, 2001, p. xi).

My affinity with Heidegger is not about judging, commenting or supporting the person but rather in his thinking about what it means to be Beings-in-the-world seeking to stay close to the ontologic experience (Smythe, et al., 2008). Heidegger's understanding of solicitude, (modes of being in the world with Others) provides some direction. Solicitude can be both open to or closed to Others. "Dasein maintains itself proximally and for the most part in the deficient modes, 'passing one another by' and 'not mattering' to one another" (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 158). In the scenarios above we find Beings, live, thrown within their context, 'always already' situated, looking to find themselves, only to lose themselves in the uncertainties of the world and restless to a call. What is interesting is that Heidegger did not write a political, social, religious, environmental or economic agenda but insights in his search for the meaning of Being provide illumination into all of these fields. Most influential thinkers in humanities and social science give credence for their philosophical development from reading Heidegger (Dreyfus, 1991).

Heidegger did not see himself as a poet, though he saw this conversational medium as giving depth to language and further insight into authentic being. This was also his belief in art. In 1930 Heidegger experienced an exhibition of van Gogh's work, in which the subject, the 'Pair of Shoes' caught his attention (Hornton, 2016). However his ontic representation has been criticised as 'mistaken'. Heidegger described the pair of shoes as belonging to a peasant woman and in which such shoes showed the toil of humans towards the earth (Wilber, 2001). Others argued van Gogh wore the shoes to nurse back a miner badly burnt who miraculously recovered. In Heidegger's thinking about what it means to be Beings-in-the world, such contesting about interpretation of the painting does not withdraw from the ontological message of what the art shows; what 'stands out' is the constitutive nature of Being. Each of the ways interpreted, opens the insight of a given reality in a different manner; interpreting from their own being in the world and fore-structure of understanding. Being is such only

insofar as 'it gives' itself. If Being gives 'itself', thinking is the mode of apprehension bringing this relation to Being. There are various ways of thinking for Dasein. Understanding the gift; 'it gives', that is, thoughts; glimpses what it means to be a Being. Dalle Pezze (2006) elaborates on this gift considering Heidegger's concept of glassenheit, meditative thinking, found in his works, 'In Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking':

> the field of vision is something open, but its openness is not due to our looking…an enchanted region where everything belonging there returns to that in which it rests', for thinking 'is not intended as representing, as self-determining, but is conceptualised as 'meditative thinking' (Heidegger, 1966 cited in Dalle Pezze, 2006, p. 1).

Thoughts find us. Thoughts open thinking and unfold language (Nadal, 18th Nov 2010). The critical understanding that arises from these different kinds of thinking is that "ways of thinking are ways of being" and the "call to thinking lies in the mystery of a knowing that comes" (Smythe, 2005 cited in Giles, 2008, p.67).

Heidegger experienced fear, weakness, failure and depression. I feel for Heidegger's struggles, "tormented both by philosophy and his ambiguous relationship to his faith" (Phillips, n.d., p. 45). Heidegger struggled with questions about the genesis of Being and the meaning of Being. As a contemplative thinker I do not see the concept of God limiting human questioning; rather it is the questions themselves that limit understanding and in so doing limit the extent to which we can fully know what it is to be human.

In summary I have sought to show my own traditions and prejudices but also the contribution of Heidegger's notion of concealment allowing seeing anew how we are as humans. The next chapter, 'Interpretative Challenges' I describe the Heideggerian view of objectivity and subjectivity as variants to studying the holistic human being.

Chapter 4 Interpretative Challenges

This chapter on interpretative challenges considers a contemporary take on a Heideggarian view of objectivity and subjectivity as variants to studying the holistic human being. I also present the ontological nature of a phenomenological inquiry as paramount.

The purpose of this chapter is to show that every situation is characterised by certain horizons or perspectives. Humans are complex beings not readily amenable to scientific analysis which can cover over and reduce the meaning of being human in our factical lives, giving pre-eminence to human doings rather than human ways of being. Gadamer shows that in the techno-analysis of art there has been distortion and diminishing significance in understanding art, with aesthetic consciousness requiring experiential consistency, undermining human self-understanding and ways of being human (Dobrosavljev, 2002). Just as art speaks to us, words speak to us. In conversation words are interpreted to give meaning to what is being said and the meaning of the words are re-interpreted by others. Hermeneutic-phenomenology opposes the monopoly of scientific methods.

Theoretical Understandings

We seem to live for bread and circuses or at least currently for food and football, if the context of our consumer world is any reflection! If we are so basic in our behaviour, is there any difference between a car and a person? What is a car? A car is the material componentry of its design. Yet in order for it to function as a car, (a vehicle transporting a person from origin to destination) we find the scenario is more complex. A car requires the input support of petrol, battery, oil and air to get it moving and it requires mechanics to adjust or fix brakes and belts etc. So a car is not the sum of its material components, it is much more than the object described by its components. The behaviour of the car is due to how its components work but also attributed to the skill of the driver and the context in which the car is driven.

An experienced driver attends to the car differently to an inexperienced driver, while the car's responses to environmental hazards vary on the skill of the driver and the maker of the car.

When we objectify a human applying the same logic as the car, the physical components are itemised and the functions of that person are supported both by equipment and other people. The behaviour of the person is influenced by the context that they find themselves in, the people who they are with, and their own unique experiences. In the end we are drawn to see the human as no-thing, for even with human reasoning they are dependent on the support and environment around them to function.

> "We generally ignore the fact that nothing [i.e. the no-thing that is being itself] supports our practical [pre]-understanding of being, that our practices are the 'groundless ground' of our being-in-the-world" (Quirk, 2000, p. 5) [added].

What then is a human, if it is neither an object nor a subject, if transposed into either of these perspectives, it becomes no-thing? Yet to be no-thing it must be some-thing, for even no-thing is something.

To consider "Dasein as an one object amidst a collection of other objects…obscures Dasein's unique character as a Being which can consider its own Being" (Hass, 1988, p. 82). The Heideggerian notion has Being-with, Being-with self, Being-with Others and Being-with things as modes of being. A being is also a Being in-, Being-in-the-world and a Being-in relationship.

An object like a car has human support to design, repair and transform its purpose and hence its physical properties; so its existence is the sum total of all these conditions. The car, the object (and also the subject of this discussion) with its function has a relationship with support but it does not have 'as' signification about itself; for it is passive, fixed without supporting life with-in, unless attributed to the human, the maker of the car. Self and Others stand out, not lodged like things, but can a car be self-giving of itself? (Garrett, 2010).

A human is not the sum total of their experiences but has a transcendent relationship which in conscious and unconscious ways glimpses potential possibilities beyond the context of their environment and lies mysteriously in naivety. Naivety sees Being 'as' being important; 'as' questioning, 'as' emotional, 'as' spiritual', 'as' indeterminate, 'as' futuristic. Does naivety allow us to see ourselves different from an object because in naivety, 'seeing' is questioned? Can naivety prevent us from 'seeing' or accepting that we are naïve? Are clearer understandings of who we are as humans 'lost' or forgotten because of non-attribution or non-apprehension of a Creator?

Science seeks to understand the origin of the universe and how things work, so that the process objectifies and subjectifies all things, including humans, as the way of the world. Is the search for understanding Being not also a search for the ontological nature of humanity and so, a search for a fuller understanding of the possibilities of creation and the meaning of Be-ings (not end-ings) 'our' quest? This research assumes such a quest.

In this discussion a car as an object was used. Heidegger considers in 'Being and Time', a stone, animal and humans. All three can be objectified and subjects of conversation in them-selves. But what is so important about contemplating a car? A car is not a natural thing but some-thing made by Beings. It is a piece of equipment. Yet the car in society takes on an essential essence for most Westerners in our technological age. The car, as a vehicular mode of transport, has the designer dependent on its capability; it has become an essential mode of travel. A reliance on equipment conceals the need for more beings and so builds human redundancy and with it negates exploration of the Being itself outside their equipment. Though we share a world with other people for the most part we go about activities as familiar, as 'they'. 'They' meaning, what one 'typically' does as a Being, "when one is acting properly, that is, in accordance with norms and expectations" (Warfield, 2016, p. 69). The

Being, having been thrown is lost in everydayness, in the 'inauthentic'. Yet the Heideggerian notion is that "Be-ing is something about which it cares... from Latin 'ex-sistere', meaning, standing out'' (Warfield, 2016, p. 66).

Care is the ontological structure of Dasein and the primary mode of Being-in-the-world is concern. Becoming aware of our facticity (i.e. always-already context of our individual lives) enables interpretation and understanding of the factical possible ways of Being (Warfield, 2016). This encounter is where the uncovering of the concealment begins to unfold. Heidegger speaks of Being as "es gibt as there is, it gives" (Nadal, 18th Nov 2010). This assumption is to be considered in the research as one looks at the stories given by teachers as they experience their everydayness of being in conversation.

In summary this contemporary take on the holistic human being leads into the next chapter on contemporary understandings of conversation from the current literature perspective. It shows a gap in our current understanding of the ontological nature of teacher's ways of being in conversation, so identifying this kind of research as unique and contributing to the existing body of literature.

Chapter 5 Contemporary Understandings of Conversation

In this chapter I have sought to contextualises the research by providing a literature perspective showing teacher's ways of being complex and not amenable to quantitative analysis. The insight I gained from the literature identifies the ontological nature of a phenomenological inquiry as unique in secondary schools in Australia and adds to the current body of literature.

This literature review provides insights into where the dominant ideology has led educational thinking and the aspects of dialogue that shift the teachers' ways of being as they interact within that ideology.

 The 'top-down approach' in filtering neoliberal policies into schools is well documented in the research literature in Australia (Caldwell, 2010) and overseas (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). Political intervention as educational reform is integrated in the "policy technologies; the market, managerialism and performativity" (Ball, 2003, p.215). Since the 1990's educational policy and practice shifted the language and priorities of the educational sector and through coherent policy and regulatory institutional regimes, consolidated neoliberalism (Kelsey, 2014). The New Right ideology, derived from public choice economists, had a major impact on the thought and practice of the Hawke and Keating governments in Australia. This new managerialist approach emphasized outputs, centralised control over finance, decentralised the authority of resource allocation and introduced corporate principles of management into public institutions (Orchard, 1998). The promotion of a neoliberal ideology corresponded to a shift in strategy of owners of capital, from welfare-state class compromise to market-centred discipline (Connell, 2013). Managing, measuring, accounting and fitting constraints of a market were not considered to give life to teachers' passion, imagination and creativity (Caldwell, 2010). Talk can become about doing enough to count,

doing the right thing, doing as much as others and trying to improve self to establish seen worth (Peters, 2001). The appreciation of living as embodied in relation with Others and Otherness, is silenced. For the individual is seen as a self-agent and what is seen and able to be measured for its effect size, is valued (Shotter, 2005).

There has long been a growing field of researchers that considers teachers' ways of being complex and not amenable to quantitative analysis (Carlgren, 1999). Here the concern is that neoliberal policies focus teaching toward system development, productivity, system scores, and instructional technologies that change not only the dialogue with students but notions of what it means to be learners together. Yet acknowledging such administrative issues are present, it is teachers' practical concerns with pedagogical practice, knowing and sensitivities, and the complexity of relational, personal, moral, emotional aspects with the children they teach which occupies their thoughts and actions (van Manen, 2007). The teacher teaches with the head and the heart. The argument posed is that when schooling is dominated by material success, the soul is lost and "we disappear into our roles" (Palmer, 2009, p. 15). In other words, human capital development, competition and taken for granted ways of practising enterprise in schools, can leave a sense of hopelessness in the human condition. For others though the opportunity to be instructional leaders, aspiring to leadership is to see themselves as technicians of transformation (Ball, 2007). Such leaders having access to data, find it informs and enables action to be taken, giving hope in providing strategies for improving student learning and market ranking.

How do teachers communicate within the local context?

Research has found that to inspire hopeful ways of being as a teacher is to awaken the senses. According to Lasky (2002), teachers are more likely to endure vulnerability and risk taking when they feel safe enough to risk themselves being embarrassed for the "sake of relationship

building and student learning" (Lasky cited in Reio, 2005, p. 986). In this process it matters, "knowing who they are and how they are as relational beings" (Giles, 2011, p. 60).

What have researchers found that affects feelings and thoughts in the teachers' way of being? Professional learning as a reflective process undertaken with other teachers may facilitate the growth of new knowledge and a means of growing professional learning cultures using action research (Jeon, Kim, & Koh, 2011; Vescio, et al., 2008). Both overseas studies note the paradigm shift in regard to professional development. Reflective and reflexive practices from daily practice are believed to have a positive impact on teacher learning and teaching (Lieberman & Mace, 2010; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2008). On the other hand, research and anecdotal evidence suggest that reflective practices are not widespread and most educational environments do not function as places of change, research and innovation (Levy, Thomas, Drago, & Rex, 2013; Reid & O'Donoghue, 2004). Meanwhile reflection is seen as having a central role in professional development but the complexity of structures and supports, makes it difficult to capture how this is applied to teachers' productive practices (Day & Sachs, 2004).

What has research found that influences a teacher's way of being? Strathern (2000) maintains system-based audits (like keeping records of professional standards) can easily become a kind of ritual, concerned with process rather than substance and may foster a compliance mentality. Aspland (2012) agrees, stating that "educators across Australia risk working within a 'check-box' mentality, a form of technocratic training rejected during the Dawkins era" (p. 27). Thrupp (2006) maintains stress associated with, "jumping through the compliance hoop, increases the likelihood of fabricated evidence" (p. 3). Researchers have also documented the invisible, intuitive and improvisational nature of teachers' ways of being (Connell, 2013). Birmingham (2004) noted that "experienced teachers learnt how and when

to trust certain feelings and developed habits of attitude enabling good judgments that did not follow a procedure" (Birmingham cited in Giles, 2010, p. 1518). Canadian researchers have also found in their study of professionals that participants' experiences of 'spirit at work' involved "a sense of connection to something larger than self…and some employees seek more than economic reward from their jobs" (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004 p. 28).

My insight gained
What has become evident through this literature review is that ideology and practice are not synonymous. Gadamer draws us to the 'in-between' space existing in the theoria-praxis tension (Barthold, 2010). The dominant ideology permissions a particular nature of conversations and this can be explored through an ontological consideration. In conversation human beings swing between authentic and non-authentic ways of being because being in the world means being subjected to renegotiations within an inescapable common existence. In this common existence, latent, partial, and empty intending in conversation (as those found in feelings), remain empty until they delineate and seek other spheres of consciousness in spoken and unspoken dialogue.

Heidegger (1973/1927) makes us aware that meaning is built out of the representation of things in the world, a givenness of things to perception and experience (Wrathall, 2010). In this sense there is an awareness of conversation as appearance, having a relationship between the phenomenon (conversation) and the being. From Heidegger we learn that humans are 'thrown' into a world not of their making and come to conversation with a past that constrains their doing and moods. Conversation thus shows the 'thrownness' of our being as shaped in conversations with others and the given-ness of a particular context. While there is an appearance at play, there is also concealment hidden in the taken for granted lived experiences, appearing unexpectedly, only in the conscious loss of its absence. Gadamer

(1960) also assumes humans as virtuous beings capable of integrity and openness so conversation is seen in the experiential phronesis of particular moments (Cubukcu, 2012).

In summary the insight gained is the gap in the research. There is no hermeneutical phenomenological study on the nature of conversation between teachers in secondary schools in Australia. The next chapter I describe the 'Method' in regard to the challenges of the interpretative writing, functional purposes of memoirs and the major concerns of trustworthiness.

Chapter 6 MethodPhenomenology is challenging, without an ending. The phenomenon of conversation has to do with the way we are in the world; the kind of human beings we are and the nature of that reality. There is always questioning and interpretations between methodological considerations and philosophical readings which are to the fore in our everyday-ness.

This section shows the journey involved in becoming aware of being a hermeneutic researcher, a contemplative thinker, rather than a researcher with a "specific, pre-determined process by which findings can be pinned down" (Crowther, Ironside, Spence, & Smythe, 2016, p. 1390). It is a quest for understanding meaning in everyday existence. In addition it is shown, opening my prejudices and being attuned to the phenomenon of conversation requires a holistic approach to living experiences.

A context

I have been a full-time teacher for nearly three decades with a continuing passion for curriculum and classroom teaching. In the early years I co-authored with Don Harris, 'A Geography of South Australia', supported by the South Australian Geography Teacher's Association (Harris & Schubert, 1984). In this pioneering textbook, Mr. Clear had four students to whom practical examples of being a geographer were outlined and linked with building models and field work. Mr. Clear was a fictional character whose name was intended to focus attention on what is being studied. Continuing in this same practical area of being a geographer, 'Venture into Geography – Introducing Physical Geography', was published (Harris & Schubert, 1988). In the interim years' extensive curriculum programs were written for teachers within my four schools of service. In 2000 I was awarded the Advanced Skills Teacher (A.S.T.) certificate in the Catholic sector. A.S.T. a government incentive was a recognised arrangement to reward quality teaching and I retain this title to

this day. In 2010 when the Research Project was introduced into the SACE[7] course, a compulsory subject for all students completing Year 12, I provided the first teacher exemplar for the SACE web page. This was made possible by my school choosing to trial the subject a year prior to its compulsory mandate and my commitment to the practical processes involved. The following year a video was made available to all teachers through SACE where my class was filmed and I spoke about how to implement the new subject. This video appeared on the SACE website for the first two years of inception. For me there has been always been a missing link between theory and practice when we consider how children learn. Practice is not applied theory. I see living experiences as more deeply informing our understanding of ourselves and the world. Practice is closer to life than theory and through conversation we represent meaning in words, as well as presencing our discoveries in ways that show in our theories and actions.

Journeying back into academia began tentatively in the latter part of 2011 as I was accepted into the Doctor of Education at Flinders University. Here I reconnected with theorists and began thinking about how I could use my experience as a teacher to give further insight into the profession now so deeply entrenched in neoliberal ideology. An experience already identified in Chapter 1, where Professor David Giles was a key-speaker enlightened me and I subsequently enrolled into the Master's course on Appreciative Inquiry and Leadership. In 2014 Dr. Michael Bell informed Professor Giles of my likely suitability for a phenomenological study. I had difficulty establishing a research question driven more to questioning my context, than having a question but knowing I wanted somehow to present teachers in a new light, away from conversations of the media and management regimes blaming poor quality student outcomes on teachers (Connell, 2013; Mockler, 2013).

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[7] SACE South Australian Certificate of Education – the Research Project is a compulsory subject with students requiring a C- grade or better to complete the certificate which allows entry into University.

I later learnt my difficulty to establish a question was not an uncommon experience but part of the sustained open scholarship of Heideggerian hermeneutic research (Smythe, et al., 2008).

The next step involved participation in a circle of trust as exemplified in the book, 'A Hidden Wholeness' (Palmer, 2009). During a 12-week period I was involved in writing about my own teaching experiences and reflecting on these. Palmer identifies ways of being in conversation that are not judgemental or threatening. I wrote about my experiences, reflected, and dot-pointed my learning and further thoughts that emerged from that experience (See Appendix 1: Dot-point summary 18/2/2015). My supervisors each month would provide an interpretation of my experiences to which, if I identified with their understandings of my experiences, I was to nod. After completing ten stories I was asked to read, 'A Hidden Wholeness' and to briefly respond in writing as to how the experience had been for me. After reading this book a number of questions appeared that I was keen to follow. These are some taken from my notes in February:

> Do my own experiences show that there is a gap between our onstage performance and backstage reality? That is, what is learnt in one mode, can it check and balance what we learn in the other, still leaving us inspired? How does this gap felt by teachers enable us to support both personal integrity and the common good? What is the teacher's way of being, in the space between their 'vocation' to children and being 'ruled' by management? What are we taking for granted about teachers' behaviour, influence, experiences and lives?

Upon further discussion with the supervisors the notion that teachers have an ontological identity, a created self-hood or 'inner teacher' became clearer. How was one to find a way of looking at this structure? What appeared were the first inklings of my research question that was to later develop more fully: Tell me, what is your idea of a good day at work? As one supervisor said to me, "You don't ask a person how your ontology is today", yet this question does! Indeed, as I reflect back over this journey as a researcher, this was a turning point, now I was moving towards the ontological nature of being and a research question. I had arrived

as a hermeneutic. The experience was transformative and like any big shift in our thinking lent itself to a metaphor expressed in a Memoir.

> **23 May Memoir**, 2015 Yesterday I engaged in an interpretative process where 'words create worlds'. In silence, as my circle of trust reflected on my journey that had been told in text and dialogue, I saw anew my way of being as a teacher. The experience was akin to gently prying open my inner self but with a grace that left me feeling cared and valued. There was no judgement of my words, rather, an affirmation of me as human, someone with passion, emotion and intellect. The words chosen by this circle mirrored back my own reflections and matched well in my mind as to how I was experiencing my life. While there were several ways of interpretations (all of which overlaid and intersected the other) of how I am as a being, it was the comment, 'you live your questions' that planted new insight into my two-sided being. This two-sided interpretation of being which emerged at the time was a useful metaphor. This being an inseparable entity, and like a coin having two parts; a front and a back. However, I was thinking for the human, these parts are not inanimate. It is between and within these parts, the sense of living occurs. I also thought, much like the coin, an object of exchange; it is in the giving of the coin to others in need, the real 'value' of the exchange appears.

The journey into hermeneutics phenomenology had begun along with an entry into a community that made me feel at home. At this time, it became clearer that what troubled me for so long were conversations around the front line of education, bent on imposing quality teaching. In my angst my supervisors connected for me, the phenomena I was 'looking through' instead of 'looking at', was the phenomenon of conversation. What a weight I felt lift when the phenomenon was named. My concern now was to follow the nature of conversations occurring between teachers within a technocratic system to gain understandings of their inspiring, hopeful ways of being. I later found out this feeling of relief is a common trait for new phenomenologists "who having sorted methodology are then faced with choosing the method by which the study will be completed" (Caelli, 2001, p. 29). The Gadamerian sense of conversation as non-linguistic was adopted. I also wanted to stay close to the ontological priority of lived experiences from Heidegger.

The research proposal was presented and ethics obtained from the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Ethics Committee in March 2016 (see Appendix 2). An Information sheet (Appendix 3), a Letter of Information (Appendix 4) and Consent form were provided to participants inviting their involvement and use of their stories (see Appendix 5). Personal confidentiality of participants was assured through the use of pseudonym.

Gathering the story

The first story was gathered from a pilot study (27th January 2016) with a colleague that I knew was a respected teacher and was now working in another school. Reflecting upon this interview revealed a way in which I could better my approach to participants. I saw having an interview more akin to a being in a conversation, a semi-structured approach, as a way to presence the other. The person, not my questions, was central. In addition, I realised listening for ways of being were prejudiced by my knowing the person as I kept hearing, what I wanted to hear and they, I felt, tried to guess what I wanted to know. The pathway forward was to simply ask: Tell me a story about your everyday experiences as a teacher: a semi-structured interview with prompts (see Appendix 5).

The "snowball technique" was a method by which my colleague from the pilot study, aware of my selection criteria, would provide details of one or more potential participants they might know who meet the criteria (Seale, 2012, p. 145). This selection criterion called for teachers known to be enthusiastic, passionate educators in secondary schools in metropolitan Adelaide, South Australia, having a minimum five years' full-time experience in the classroom, and drawn from any of the various education sectors, private, public or Catholic schools. While the proposal estimated a small sample, three teachers were interviewed and taped with a total of 39 stories gathered.

Phenomenological interview

I found teachers were very eager to speak and in their story telling were grateful to be able to share their stories in this way. The hour interview passed very quickly and I recall how drawn they were in describing their experiences, so prompting seemed imperceptible to the participant (Appendix 6 outlines the main prompts). It was important to me that I listened carefully to the participant, indeed this turned out to be a gracious privilege. Though 39

stories were gathered, 26 were transcribed and 13 of those stories used for deep analysis, having reached saturation point.. The recording and writing of participant's semi-structured interviews involved storing files on a personal computer, password protected and further backed-up on a portable hard-drive. The back-up was placed also on the Flinders University site to avoid any contamination of the stories as well as meeting audit requirements. After typing the transcripts of these teachers I felt inspired to write poetry. Two of these poems are shown in Appendix 7. The nature of the data (the world of lived experiences) and the gathered stories were the origin and focal centre of the research (van Manen, 1990).

Working with the stories:

Trustworthiness is paramount in qualitative research. Being trustworthy involves showing diligence and honesty in an authentic and rigorous study (Golafshani, 2003; Tracy, 2010). As already mentioned, my practices as a researcher are available in the audit trail. I personally transcribed all interviews. This process allowed me the flexibility of adding notes in the margins associated with transcript like the time certain things were said (for ease of re-entry back into the story) and to assist auditing. This process can be seen in Appendix 8 e.g. 2mins. 39 sec. (2.39) and shows the introduction to the interview and prompts used. From the Transcriber, the interview was copied into a Word document and erased from this site. The 'cut and paste' crafting occurred subsequently for the purpose of crafting the stories as shown in Appendix 8. As can be seen, only minor edits were made related to grammar. The participants were asked to review the information, delete or amend any parts of the data and verify their stories (see Appendix 9 Authentication - email sent).

Having received the approval and verification of the stories from the participants', the interpretation of the phenomenon required becoming very familiar with the stories. This process took some time because the words themselves were so much part of my own

experience it was difficult to see beyond the words, to the essence of the conversation. To assist me my supervisors reminded me of the hermeneutic 'circle', not a theory but a practical method, reading the story and then re-reading aloud the same story. This was followed by reflecting on the story and writing a description of the story in two or three sentences, including a title. The same process was done for each of the stories gradually 'melding' an immersion. I found the following two questions useful to keep in focus: What is this story telling me about teachers' conversations? What is being taken for granted? I followed the process for hermeneutic interpretation and analysis as described by Giles (2008).

As I thought about and re-read the stories may times, it became clear, if I underlined words, and addressed those words with questions related to the phenomenon, I could further immerse myself in the story (Appendix 10: Thinking technique for interpretation). The following formative questions assisted me to let go!

> What is the conversation showing? What is the ambiguity in the conversation? What view of the world of conversation haven't I seen? What have I not noticed in the silence of talk or in the feelings expressed? What is being taken for granted? In the conversation what is felt? Delighted in? What is feared? What really matters? Is there multi-vocality? and Is the human indeterminate?

This process took time and patience because my cognitive being wanted to control the process rather than 'allow', or be open, to meanings within and across the participant's stories. I seemed to be questioning the participants' answers, rather than exploring their understanding of questions. I began to see meaning beyond the words spoken and escape the first person I-trap; seeing with and from, the Other's perspective. I felt an immersion, for my writing flowed rather than feeling manufactured. This was the start of the interpretative process and was most deeply experienced during the writing phase. In the writing phase, (which was not a phase in the sense of being one-off, for it was continuous), I wrote a Memoir weekly, sometimes daily as I turned to the philosophical writings of Heidegger (1973/1927) in 'Being and Time'. This circle of reading and re-reading stories, writing and a focus on Heideggerian's notions of thrownness, uncertainties and being-together in the world,

fused together to deepen the immersion. I began to see what was given by the teacher was of utmost importance and this experience wanted to be shown.

In the deconstruction phase there is an awareness of repeated familiarity in stories and the emergence of themes, again requiring patience and time for revelation. When I tried to force a theme, such as 'conversation as journey', I became aware of trying to fit the story to the theme rather than seeing or momentarily glimpsing the essence of conversation. It was times like this, a bike ride or taking a break enabled time-out for thoughts to flow and show. After five, one hour monthly discussions, with my supervisors, three mega-themes (see Chapter 7) repeatedly appeared: 'conversation as dialogue', 'conversation as seeing intentionality' and 'conversation as context'. I remember the excitement of seeing the themes in each story; and how a theme often showed a stronger presence in one story, than another.

The quest to find further meanings had catapulted me into understanding what immersion meant for a researcher. Saturation occurred because the phenomenon was repeatedly recognised as powerful themes across the stories, "with no added insights gleaned from the raw data" and looking at stories in my own life (through my Memoirs) I started to see, the themes appeared to be universal (Seale, 2012, p. 369). Indeed, I agree with van Manen (1990) when he said, seeing the significance of such themes placed the researcher, part of the event, "an incarnation of this presence" and shone insight into being human (p. 133). I realised we take for granted, our emotional movements and translations, unless we are open to contemplative thinking about how we are together in conversation.

Challenges of interpretative writing

One of the tough challenges was being patient with the research methodology and techniques. If I tried to rush my thinking I found I 'trapped' myself. I saw a 'trap' when looking at findings as knowing and findings as being (Giles, 2008). In phenomenological writing there

is a constant tension between how I am living experiences of the phenomenon and the awareness of my biases, prejudices and traditions (Giles, 2008). In an email to my supervisor I wrote how I was experiencing this dilemma (Sharyn Schubert to David Giles, Personal communication, 15 September, 2016)

> I feel I am in danger of seeing findings as an intellectual idea rather than an essence across humanity – I particularly felt this when I first used story 1 to show conversation as journeying. I felt I was using the word journeying as an intellectual idea to create a metaphorical understanding of the characteristics of being on a journey.

However, it was playing around with ideas and in this instance as seen in the above email, conversation not as journey but 'conversation as dialogue' (see Chapter 7: Story 1 on p.65), when the reading of the 'text' exposed a distance between human beings and a realisation that closeness, not distance, remains 'concealed' and taken for granted.

Related to the issue of patience was trust. I had to trust that thoughts would find me. I had to trust the methodology, letting go of my own prejudices (which seem to re-occur and needing others to be seen) as well as my traditional ways of seeing, Being, had to be released in writing and reflecting on the stories and Heideggarian terms.

Another challenge in the research was how to deepen further meanings and understandings of my interpretation through Heideggerian text. The challenge was not only related to the English interpretation of German philosophical writings but also these writings contained 'new' language and words. These neologisms required contemplation and questioning.

Finally, hermeneutic circling is a rigorous, all-consuming process and yet the researcher's definitive interpretation is never likely to be possible (Richardson & Adams, 2005). There is always a movement of human thought as towards, as be-coming, for the researcher is bound to the historicity of times and finite questioning:

There cannot be a finite set of procedures to structure the interpretative process, because interpretation arises from pre-understandings and a dialectical movement between the parts and the whole of the texts of those involved (Laverty, 2003, p. 30).

Looking into the Memoirs

Writing is combined inextricably into the research activity and reflection itself; therefore, writing is the method (van Manen, 1990). For Heidegger as I found myself, the "activities of researching and reflecting on the one-hand and reading and writing on the other, are indistinguishable" (van Manen, 1990, p. 126). Writing decontextualizes thought from practice, but its very nature as a thinking process, returns thought to praxis, subjectifying understanding towards an essence of 'something', a particular mode of being.

Contemplative thinking lies at the core of my Memoirs. In the Memoirs we find pre-understandings of the researcher essential to the interpretative process. Through memoir writing I am able to question my biased assumptions and take positions from the philosophical literature of Heidegger. Frequently I anguished over the meaning of words or concepts, like prejudices, spirit, worth, value because I could create my own world or shift to see how others were using the same words. I wrote about my experiences reading 'Being and Time', finding some comfort in the neologisms of Heidegger's language, for the historical effect of word meaning is nullifying and freeing for new insights to emerge.

Memoirs assist me in processing how we are together in conversation because hermeneutic circling is such as immersion process that I cannot automatically and intelligently process. I must write about my experience as a researcher. I write about what I experience when I read participant's stories or read 'Being and Time', and as I write I am temporarily placed outside myself writing in third person, as the Other.

This memoir on 19/11/2016 of my experience is selected because it illustrates how writing in the third person, writing about the Other enables one to step back, only to step forward into understanding being a human, a little clearer. I also realised this approach enabled me to understand that what is available to see and what we see and give meaning to, is not the same thing. I initially saw leadership failing to see what I had to offer in terms of skills but taking a third person stand, it was not, I, they were concerned about, or even considered, for their way of being was system-focused, not individual-focused. In this story ways of seeing, ways of thinking and ways of doing are inter-connected.

> Memoir on 19/11/2016. Recently an experienced teacher in the use of technology in the classroom was surprised to learn that leadership had offered some staff, all day PD training in IT and they had not been included. An email from the teacher to leadership contained the following comment: "This is a short note to congratulate leadership in finding a solution to the problem of co-ordinators largely disinterested in using technology by providing an all-day Microsoft PD." What appears from the outset is a teacher noticing coordinators not taking up leadership and leadership noticing this and offering a solution. The reply was cordial: "Thanks. I thought that our Teaching & Learning Coordinators should be aware of what is available and enthused by the newest offerings."

What is seen as the focus for leadership is using technology within the school. The leader's way of being is contextually structured in the conversation. The hierarchy sees, 'doings' coming from the top-down and then disseminated. The leader's way of being in dialogue takes the position, "you can't have uninterested leaders and enthusiastic non-leaders". This paradox is true. So our human activities are organised on an understanding of being (Dreyfus, 1991). The teacher's way of being is to notice. In the noticing there is seen a way to act with intent. The intention of the email was to affirm the leader's action but also to alert them as to how they are being-enthusiastic. Grodin (2001) considers "rituals in our lives… as more encompassing than what science and language can objectify" (pp. 48-49). Further interpretation into this story, the complexity of conversation is seen in the silence of the over-look. I felt over-looked, taken for granted, not seen. What I saw through this placement of myself, was a teacher showing the empty, lifeless space 'between' us, when

the intentionality to do the right thing by the teacher, but not being in the right context, now was lost from the conversation.

Conversing is how we dialogue with each other. What is important is how we see and how this influences our openness to each other. This requires understanding ourselves better and recognizing openness to the Other; "I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one else forces me to do so" (Gadamer, 2014, p. 369). By writing in the third person I can look beyond the conversation to absorb rather than be reactive. Thoughts are imbued with who I am, "thinking in humility…yet lacking" because it's all I have! (Smythe, et al., 2008, p. 1391).

Trustworthiness

I would often ask myself when entering a Memoir: "What is it about conversation that can be so life giving; so integral to our existence?" By November, 2016 I was following my own conversations with the same intensity I had addressed participants' stories, and surprisingly, I received affirmation of the research approach. The affirmation came quite unexpectedly. I was speaking with the Deputy to obtain permission to use some written student data. I realised I would have to explain how the student's words were not being analysed but what interested me was the conversation 'beyond the words'. A thought popped into my head and I said,

> Everyday I say, good morning to you. In fact, I really mean to say to you, I hope today you are not too stressed, that you find time to enjoy the day, that you have good health and that you will be a blessing to others. There is a lot of meaning in that good morning because we have a connection. However, you and I don't have the time for full explanations of how good I hope the day is for you.

She nodded and then replied, "Others though, might just see this greeting as a civilised way of acknowledging another's presence" I nodded. This engagement was a graced moment. I felt a sense of oneness of spirit with the Other (Smythe, et al., 2008, p. 1396). Trustworthiness of

one's research is surely first known by the researcher. However in this example, we can also see the "phenomenological nod" (van Manen, 1990, p. 27). I am noticing in myself and noticing in others, ways of being, a Being in conversation. This illustrates trustworthiness of the research.

As seen above in the story, and will be shown in the exploration of the mega-themes in Chapter 7, hermeneutic phenomenology "enlists orientation, strength, richness and depth as major concerns of trustworthiness" (van Manen 1997 cited in Kafle, 2013, p. 195). Orientation is the placing of the researcher in the world of the participants and their stories, strength as the ability of the text to represent the essence of meaning, richness of the narrated perceived meanings and the depth of the text to drill down for the intended meanings (Kafle, 2013).

In summary the method provided the pathway of ethical considerations in documenting the research process for others to see, as well as the insights gained from using memoirs as journaling and reflecting. The next chapter, 'Phenomenological themes' reveals the three mega-themes which are the researcher's interpretation of the essence of the phenomenon within teacher's conversation.

Chapter 7 Phenomenological themes

This section consists of three powerful themes and shows each theme by using a set of stories given by participants. In each mega-theme nuances of those stories reveal subtle differences about the teachers' ways of being in conversation. Each mega theme, 'conversation as dialogue', 'conversation as seeing intentionality' and 'conversation as context' has an analytical introduction to the theme followed by a set of stories revealing ways of being a teacher in conversation.

Conversation as dialogue

In this research, I see communication as a term denoting a coercive use of dialogical conversation as in, "Let's have dialogue so we can write up our strategic plan", and thus having a structured, binding way of seeking agreement; while on the other hand dialogue, the essence of conversation, is understood as non-coercive, "seeks to inform and learn rather than to persuade" (Maiese, 2003, p. 1). In other words, "what is the essence is, not what is, but what will be" (Florin, Göranzon, & Sällström, 1991, p. 20).

Dialogue involves a way of seeking, being drawn, seeing something that moves in 'places' unintended and unexpected. Other conversations are less authentic, some being felt even before words are spoken, as empty, transactional dealings. If dia-logue is seen as the word which is living, (i.e. between us), then dialogue is an essence of conversation, not the reverse.

We live in a world of things, of ontic dealings, of people's experiences, and what they take for granted. What is being considered in dialogical conversation is what is happening between 'us'! Existential ontology is not about the words spoken or unspoken but how people are together in the conversation that gives any dialogue, life and depth (Sallstrom, 1991, p. 29). Dialogue occurs between people and the between impacts those people in ways that are hidden. These ontological 'things', are deeper than beliefs, they are genuinely not part of

consciousness; much like intuitions. The nature of the dialogue between people occurs unscripted having, "no set goals, it has no end, and it is pure movement, movement which cannot be frozen and translated into formula, a rule or a programme" (Sallstrom, 1991, p. 28).

Buber (2003) sees the between as the "plane on which two beings can fully meet, open to each other" (Buber cited in Jewula, 2013, p. 334). "What happened to I and what happens to Thou is not identical but as Thou acts upon I, I by its response acts on Thou" (Jewula, 2013, p. 334).

Heidegger states the Being does not turn up in every case by reason of the occurrence of Others; "Being-with is an existential characteristic of Dasein even when factically no Other is present-at-hand or perceived" (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 156). Dasein takes its own-most kind of Being and by doing, relates to the Other according to its way of Being, Being-with. Dasein, meaning the site of openness, is Being-with the Other in their openness. Giles (2008) suggests the term between to be more than the interaction of two people for "there is a holistic nature to teachers and students relating" (p. 96). Gadamer draws us in 'between', where openness involves "recognising that I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one else forces me to do so" (Gadamer, 2014, p. 368). Understanding is always interpretation and occurs through the fusion of horizons, "which is what mediates between the text and its interpreter" (Gadamer, 2014, p. 385).

In 'conversation as dialogue', the first two stories are about student-teacher conversations. Conversation as dialogue, exists in the exchange between us, appearing silent but when closeness 'meets' that space, conversation is sustained bringing hope and inspiring ways of being that build relationships, creativity and life. For the teacher a Being-questioning also becomes a way of being, a letting-learn that strengthens the bond of being-together. In the

third story, life and creativity are given to teachers as they engage in dialogue where trust, honesty and mutual respect are shown. Here the notion of 'being safe' also appears.

Story one

This story is about a teacher's inspiring moments during the day. The inspiration and joy of teaching appears to come from the students unexpected responses as they interact with their teacher. This engagement is momentarily glimpsed by the teacher, in a student spontaneously sharing her improved mental state, in a student sharing an important event in their life, in students seeing value in their learning with the teacher, in one-off kind compliments given from students to their teacher, and in the teacher being surprised by the creativity shown in her student's work.

> There was one girl who was struggling with her work load and needed some mentor help. She doesn't reply to email so when I got an email the other day that she was coping at the moment I kind of got the message and felt "uoo!!" (excited and beaming). 'She's ok, she's ok at the moment!!' you know, that kind of moment when you feel you may have had an impact. The same feeling as when a student goes, "Oh I get it now!" or when you introduce an assignment and student's say, "I'm so excited!!" It's those moments when you're enthused and it kind of translates and when you see them go, "Oooooohh!! I can do this!" That's lovely. I love that and when they say something nice to you. Or they want to share a story with you; they feel able to share something that's big in their life with you because they feel comfortable with you to do that! The moments when a kid surprises you with their work and you're like uuhh, "I don't know they had it in them". It's that lovely moment when you go, "uuhh" when you are marking a piece of work and you know they have really listened! "They really listened, what a wonderful piece of work". That's lovely.

In this story, the caring, intentional communication of the teacher towards the students; both personally and through curriculum planning, does not appear to open dialogue. The teacher is anxious about a student's welfare, worried that her teaching material might not be relevant to the students, feels upset that she knows so little of about their lives, and concerned that the students are not paying attention; not listening to what she feels is of value for them.

When the students engage with their teacher, the teacher is momentarily surprised, taken back by the personal warmth and openness in their dialogue. The teacher's response to the student seemingly unexpected dialogue is initially expressed as excitement, without words. What has

been taken for granted by the teacher is the 'closeness' that exists in their relationship whether students are physically absent or present.

In this story Heidegger speaks of a particular ontological opening in the dialogue, a 'bringing-close'. Temporally thrown, the caring and concerned teacher, not knowing about her student's ability to cope, not knowing whether her curriculum is relevant, feels a distance from her students, for if it were not the case, how can her joy at 'hearing' from her students occur with such sensitivity? Closeness as an entity makes itself known, forgets the waiting and embraces the invisible bond between the teacher and her students, as she enjoys the experience.

> Bringing-close makes possible the kind of handling and Being-busy which is 'absorbed in the thing one is handling; and in such bringing-close, the essential structure of falling – makes itself known. In falling, and therefore also in the bringing-close which is founded 'in the present', the forgetting which awaits, leaps after the Present; this is what is distinctive in the existential-temporal Constitution of falling" (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 420)

Closeness matters to Being. Dialogue lives on in the closeness of teacher-student relating and "takes space in" between them for care and concern to grow (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 419).

Story 2

The teacher in this story is interested in student research that is a collaborative inquiry. The teacher notices, that student-led research opens conversation between teacher-student and between students. Such a context feels 'freeing' for the teacher and 'freeing' for the students. The teacher moves around the classroom with intention, encouraging questioning, facilitating conversations and opening conversations.

> I think teaching is much more collaborative. It's kind of what I think is much more powerful when a student comes with a question and they know why they need to know the answer. They are really invested in the answer because they have a need for that piece of learning, so the students are differentiating themselves. People think it's a lot of work and don't quite like it. It does take quite a lot of work in planning what it will look like, so you front load as a teacher designing the task and structuring how it is going to work. You introduce it and it takes a lot to make sure that their understanding is clear and then you let them go providing them what they need, which requires a lot of flexibility. I have seating plans at the beginning of the year when getting to know the girls but when

they are doing those long term projects that can be on a bean bag, or lying on the floor or they can sit where it best suits what they need to do. There's a lot more movement and there's probably a lot more discussion about learning and there's certainly more of their voice in those sorts of classrooms.

When conversation supports; as when the teacher encourages learning through questioning, when relationships between us are valued, where ideas are exchanged between us; where opportunities present between us and where space in the classroom morph its boundaries between us, dialogue flows undirected and unimagined. The students feel comfortable with their choices and space opens to their requirements. The teacher is surprised by the way students differentiate their learning needs, the invisible good that appears with some students teaching others and the freedom and responsibility taken by the students. What is taken for granted is the openness between teacher-student and between students as they engage in collaborative inquiry; open to one another and open to learning.

A particular Heideggerian notion states that,

> the human being is not a thing, but rather the process of approaching things …being is not what is made, but that vastly wider sense of being as the one not yet made, in which we bring forth anything that is made (Gendlin, 1967, p. 282).

Heidegger suggests that to "teach is to let-learn" (Sturm, 2011, p. 49). In the teacher-student relationship both the teacher and the student can influence the learning. The teacher and students are open to learning. Closeness strengthens with student-student interactions and teacher-student interactions. Physical space expands for inner reflection but questioning brings close their Being-with and Being-alongside of each Other. Ontologically it is not the teacher's doings that matter but the be-ing of the teacher; be-ing available, be-ing there, open to the students in the conversations.

Story 3

This next lively story is about the energy and life given between teachers engaging in conversation. The open relationship brings trust, honesty and freedom in sharing ideas.

> I have always found a colleague who is like minded, who is equally creative, who fires me off or who is better than me. They inspire me to be better myself. We just make each other better and I really value those relationships with those people and I can go, "No! that's not a good idea", and they can say the same to me. Or she'll say, "No, no, I don't agree with that and I think this is would be better" and to be blatantly sort of honest, both looking forward in the best interest of our students, and how we can make the best engaging learning experiences for them. I'm lucky enough to have a couple of those colleagues here which I really value. The fact we can be so honest and our intentions are always from a really good place; and I feel safe with saying, "that's rubbish" and she also tells me that something is "rubbish".

There is a creative energy given by their engagement that allows the conversation to be blatantly open so that feedback is exciting, unrestrained and welcoming. In this story, the teachers risk telling each other anything as they feel safe, confident that the Other, like themselves, has the students' best interests at heart. The freedom in the dialogue grows confidence and joy in each other's presence. It is as if being alongside each Other, recognises the Other's journey of humanity, and open dialogue has a given-strength to creatively inspire each other. What is being taken for granted in the conversation is the safety felt between teachers.

Heidegger is critical of communication as transportable or like-mindedness; with like-mindedness bringing about the same thinking of ideas (Blattner, 1999). He considers that conversation is a shared being-toward some phenomenon.

> Assertion is letting someone see with us what we have pointed out by way of giving it a definite character...That which is 'shared' is our Being towards what has been pointed out – a Being in which we see it in common (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 197).

In the dialogue between teachers, assertion allows for mutual respect and closeness. From an ontological view inspiration between teachers occurs when the context for their learning comes not from judgement but dialogue challenging each Other in mutual respect.

Conversation as seeing intentionality

In science objectification involves comportment turned into an object (Klaskow, 2011). The commodification of teachers through a standardisation of their ways of doing things turns people into products having certain characteristics of their function that can be investigated.

However, the ontology of phenomenological comportment is a seeing of intentionality as "looking away from any kind of content…allowing something to stand over against it", allows the uncovering of the essence of the phenomenon (Klaskow, 2011, pp. 107-109).

Heidegger considers the human condition as thrownness because we are beings in a world already existing and struggling with the nature of our uncertainties. We have intentions but we depend on others to make them happen. Intentionality is the strength to which we stay pointed to things that really matter to us as Beings.

Heidegger sees intentionality embodied in the Being, a characteristic of a mode of being (McGovern, 2007). Being-intentional having a self-showing toward which it is being directed; not a reflection but a 'seeing' that is not materially seen. It is not a directedness to, but towards what we are directed. Intentionality is not a structure of consciousness for that would confirm seeing what we expect to see in a conversation. Rather it is in the seeing of broken conversations; the essence of Being-intentional is disclosed. The following example illustrates this. One wintry evening last year (2016) I made my favourite pumpkin soup at my parents' place. I expected my parents would like the soup. When heating the soup my father took a spoon and sipped from the pot stating, "I don't really like the taste". Taken back, I replied that effort had gone into making the soup. Upon retasting the soup though, my father commented it was nice and would like a normal helping. My father had expected an inferior pumpkin soup because for him my mother is the best cook. The 'seeing of intentionality' occurs in this story, as it allows 'something' not seen, to be seen and the seeing relates not to the soup but a seeing 'something' located in Being itself. My father was directed towards repairing a broken conversation. My father's intentional act of repairing the relationship was a structure of his consciousness, but the intentionality of a good bond with his daughter was always-already dwelling within the relationship.

The Heideggerian notion of the comportmental Dasein is always-already within a context much the same way as the relational nature of participants in the soup conversation or as "water is in a cup" (McGovern, 2007, p. 55). Awareness of the world against which the object of knowledge can make itself apprehended, lies within circumspective 'seeing' which is not the narrow view of looking around before one decides to act, but a looking to get something done. However the mode of intentionality is a "detached theoretical mode of apprehension" when orientated towards a practical activity (McGovern, 2007, p. 57).

For Heidegger intentionality has the structure of self–showing, to "show itself in itself" (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 51). The embodied structure of intentionality having a transcendent existence recognises the temporality of care. Caring as a comportment of Being exists beyond its expression, a thrown entity, ahead-of-itself- and Being-alongside the life world:

> Likewise, with the 'already' we have in view the existential temporal meaning of the Being of that entity which, in so far as it is, is already something that has been thrown. Only because care is based on the character of 'having been', can Dasein exist as the thrown entity which it is (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 376).

In 'conversation as seeing' intentionality, the first story is about a teacher's comportment towards intentionality, looking, noticing and having sensibilities towards the students. The second and third story are a sub-set of comportment, looking at positive solicitude and ways of being showing 'leaping in' and 'leaping ahead' in conversations.

Story one

This story is about how a teacher sees her job as consuming and a way of life. Here the teacher finds in conscious and unconscious ways the significance of things and how they are not proximally limited to the physical location of her work. For this teacher there is a positive synergism and comfort in being-together with other colleagues and living towards their students.

I don't think it's certainly not a job, it's a vocation and I think if you want to teach you have to be willing to be consumed much of your life. I think even when you don't want to think about it you go "oogh! that would be really good for my classroom" or you see something on line that could go in your classroom. Or even when home I think it will come into my head about what I could do for my job. It's certainly not a job in which you go for a 9-5 experience; you are really invested in people especially the children. I think about them a lot especially if they aren't having a good time or if they need help. I do think of them a lot especially in a school like this which has really high demands from parents and from the school in terms of what we do as the teacher. I think we need each other. The people at work are not just my colleagues they are my friends and I need them because they are there to support me in my job and to bounce ideas off.

Being a teacher is not just a job, it is a way of life. There is a felt movement in the teacher's doings, an attune-ment to a calling. The teacher hears, sees, knows of her students' presence even in their physical absence and continues her self-talk to them. The teacher sees the concrete things of the world through a lens of practical, purposeful relevance of 'things', popping into the head and these surprising moments stay continuously in her conversational dealings with the world. For the teacher, daily conversations are ongoing and appear to be inseparable to the head and heart. The teacher's colleagues are friends and relate to this way of life, supporting each other with ideas. What is taken for granted in the conversation is the teacher's willingness to be consumed with the practical nature of teaching, knowing students need to be linked to actual events.

The Heideggerian notion of "circumspective seeing" is a way of being for this teacher, drawn into 'world' conversations, always already present-at-hand to bring relevance to students' lives (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 93). The teacher is a living entity having their authentic and inauthentic being-there, conversing with things related to their equipment and paraphernalia existence. In this existence empathy arises. "Empathy does not first constitute Being-with; only on the basis of Being-with does 'empathy' become possible" (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 162). The positive comport-mental mode of Being towards concern 'sees' beyond the present and makes closeness felt with relating to Others and Things in their environment. According to Heidegger, "circumspection', a special kind of sight, looks around for a way to get something done" (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 98 foot-note 2). Circumspective concern

provides a way of looking around, giving skilled possibility of concerned discovery and concerned 'seeing', looking ahead and looking back (Cerda-Walker,2004.). Being-alongside, sees circumspective concern awaits things in "determinate" interpretedness (McCarthy, 1997, p.93). This purposeful seeing and intent is characteristic of their mode of Being, there is always a feeling and living-in situation; that my being towards others is "always-already involved in any situation, [having] …myself [been] thrown" (Gendlin, 1967, p.287). The teacher sees, not a reflective knowing but a seeing as, "I see the world through my realisation of self" (Saevi & Foran, 2013, p. 60). The teacher is aware that bringing the world to the students is an act of giving one-self and this way of being is always at hand.

Conversation as solicitude
Care is not fully knowable to our Being and is only implicitly sensed in Being-with Others. This comportment of intentionality to Others involves solicitude, "a concern-for the other, as opposed to the concern with objects and things which are more of a pre-occupation" (O'Brien, 2014 p.544). Heidegger considers two forms of acting with intent; 'leaping in' and 'leaping ahead'.

> ...solicitude has two extreme possibilities. It can as it were, take away 'care' from the Other and put itself in his [sic] position in concern; it can leap in for him. In such solicitude the Other can become one which is dominated and dependent, even if this domination is a tacit one and remains hidden from him…. In contrast to this, there is …not so much a leap in for the Other as leap ahead of him …, not in order to take away his 'care' but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time...; it helps the Other to become transparent to himself in his care and to become free for it. Everyday Being-with-one-another maintains itself between the two extremes of positive solicitude – that which leaps in and dominates, and that which leaps forth and liberates (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 158).

Furthermore, comportment towards intentionality in stories 2 and 3 shows the teacher noticing 'things'. And they do not just notice. They notice with the view to be intentional. Being-alongside they notice and think of what to do next because they will seek to act with intention. Being-there and Being-with 'opens' sensibilities towards Others in the world.

Story 2 looks at conversations that are insensitive to being a teacher, straining and tensioning relationships and limiting conversation. This story reveals a phronesis in the teacher's ways of being in these particular conversations.

Story 2

This story is about a teacher taking action when pedagogical practices are seen to be challenged by management. It shows what it feels like to be excluded in a conversation about one's practices. The story shows how frustration and indignation can change a teacher's practices, even when they are overlooked by management.

> I do think there are groups of people who don't like change that much and they can feel overworked here. I think sometimes people are also inflexible and they find the rate of change is too fast for them. I learnt very quickly in my career you have to be completely flexible. If I'm asked to do it generally I am happy to do it unless it something I'm morally and ethically opposed to then, "No! I'm not doing that!" Or if I've been asked to do something and it is a complete waste of my time, and I can't see the value in it. Sometimes I might be opposed to it as a complete waste of my time, not improving the learning for the students or improving communication. For example, we have a learning management platform that we had to use; it's beautiful so I put all my stuff on there, hours and hours of putting my resources on to a program called, Canvas. When we introduced Sector, a good pastoral care organiser, there was a bit of a talk of getting rid of Canvas but Canvas is much better for organising what I'm doing in my classroom. When they were saying there were murmurs of that, I was quite vocal in saying actually that's not worth my time getting it to swap to theirs, "it is an inferior product to what I'm currently using and a waste of time". So that's an example when I kind of go, "err tell me, why that's beneficial to anybody! It would have been hours of my time down loading links and reloading links and massive modules of work.

In this story the teacher is upset, noticing that management has placed teachers under the radar in terms of valuing their time and commitment to students. Aware of this situation already there, this teacher has an attentive 'ear and eye' to changes that could be made. She feels justified in taking action to change management's thinking, when their actions are seen to have occurred without knowing or caring about teacher's time and hard work. The way of being a teacher is influenced by this felt gap between teachers and leadership. The seeing and noticing disturbs the teacher and aware of the disruptive nature of their intentions, the resourceful teacher speaks out.

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This story also reveals in the tone of the experience that this teacher speaks out but not without reading the other person. There is wisdom in the way leadership is approached and resoluteness of purpose to have access to such important issues to her work. The teacher sensed leadership could hear teachers. This teacher regardless though, wasn't going to remain silent, even if they had 'forgotten' to consult teachers, rather than their decisions being an intentional act. While the motive for the absence of communication is not known it was painful and caused anxiety and frustration for a teacher.

In this story, the Heideggerian notion of leaping ahead, reveals a positive mode of Being-with.

> This kind of solicitude pertains essentially to authentic care-that is, to the existence of the Other, not a 'what' with which he [sic] is concerned; it helps the Other to become transparent to himself in his care... (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 158).

The teacher leaps ahead when told her current use of technology will be made redundant. She is able to leap ahead because of her seeing 'considerateness' and knowing the intentionality of the Other to be able to listen in a way that can receive her perspective to reverse an impending bad decision. This is a strong way to speak out but a way of showing that Others matter to us simply in as far as we lead our own lives, as "solicitude marks one mode of opening oneself up" (Warfield, 2016, p. 75).

Story 3 involves a teacher's ways of being in the conversation planning beyond the content and engaging students in open, safe, caring conversations, bringing hope and inspiration to the whole being of the student.

Story 3

This story looks at students' ways of being when graded and a teacher's way of being in seeing, conversing and caring about the impact of negative self-talk on their learning. The

teacher's experience calls into play a counter-culture speaking about tolerance, relationships, mistakes, and growing through failure.

> I think where I work changes the conversations that happen. I have never seen people so driven and such high expectations. Or such high expectations the students have of themselves, they so want to get an A. They are so driven. The conversations here are sometimes, "it's enough, that's fine you need to stop". These girls in year 7 are doing hours and hours of homework and I say to them, "20 minutes for 3 subjects a night and then you need to stop, if it's more than that, you are doing too much". But here a lot of conversations are oddly enough about saying, "it is ok! it is alright!" It's a lot about growth mindset talk to them and what growth means and in time you can improve and what you can do to improve. So I have been doing some growth mindset stuff and looking at some self-talking in maths particularly because that's one of the 'wrongs' kids learn very quickly. They learn to label themselves good at maths or bad at maths. It's really about letting them know they can make a mistake and failure is not the end of the world. To fail a maths test in year 7 isn't really disastrous in their lives. It's kind of putting things into perspective for these students.

The teacher sees in her workplace the influence of competition on students' ways of being. In the classroom there are disturbing conversations happening and heard by the teacher which makes the teacher feel uncomfortable and upset looking for a new direction to lead the students. There are also conversations sensed subliminally originating outside of the classroom affecting both her way of being and the student's way of being. In a competitive culture of high expectations, the teacher notices and feels the pressure placed on and between students. It appears competition shifts the conversation. Squabbling over grades affects the way of being of a student and affects the way of being a teacher. The teacher is concerned about conversations that grow out from students' responses to be graded. There is care, as in compassion and sensitivity in conversations about mistakes made and a grade not defining them as 'who they are' as human beings; only a measurement of learning still to come. Generally, teachers have something making them sensitive to the mood, a care and concern for the whole child not just the academics. The teacher's way of responding is to shift the conversation to personal growth and mending the whole embodied student.

The teacher's communication with the student has a caring sensibility within and in response to what the teacher was seeing and feeling about the audible and silent conversations between the students. In the silence the teacher listened for confidence, self-worth and self-respect

and where these were silent, she speaks out against words of self-pity, failure and fear. The teacher 'hears' the ambiguity of their conversations, the uncertainty of what is expected of them, the fear of failure and anxiety that a grade can be a lifelong sentence. The students' way of being is hampered by an imagined perfectionism that has them thrown. The students' way of being is only concerned with the short term, for they are unable to see the future. The teacher appears to be struggling with what she is hearing and seeing because she is seeing out of concern and the dilemma is: what do I do? The students do not seem to understand how serious their thinking is and the teacher feels giving platitudes about test results is not right, for life has highs and lows. The teacher knows that how the students' see and deal with highs or lows in life is really, really important.

In this school the student-teacher relationship is open and communication is less charged for both feel comfortable and safe being together. In the students' pro-active ways of asking for help; the relational nature of a sensitive, caring teacher addresses the negativity within and beyond the classroom. This teacher's way of being, leaps in, circumspective in 'seeing' with concern, that systematic grading and student conversations have a life of their own, burdening the learning and feeding negative thoughts and thinking. The teacher's way of being in the conversation is positive and wise, seeing learning as becoming, not yet realised. The real test in the teacher's caring conversation to the student is overcoming their negative self-talk, releasing their anxieties and self-doubt. There are two ways of being together; safe, personal engagement alongside a competitive mode.

In the teacher's engagement with assessment responses by students, the students experience the world as always-already enmeshed within a framework. The character of the students is lost in the collectiveness of 'they'. "In fearing as such, what we have thus characterised as threatening and allowed to matter to us", as in assessment grades (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p.

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180). Solicitude marks the teacher opening up, leaping in for students, taking over in monologue seemingly unaware of the to-and-fro dialogue, to care for students lost in the publicness of 'they'; labels fixed and based on their test scores. For the teacher, assessment is a social construct from which the students need to see beyond its restrictive boundaries and "fear is a mode of state-of-mind" (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 181). In leaping in, Heidegger writes,

> This kind of solicitude takes over for the Other what with which he [sic] is to concern himself. The Other is thrown out of his position; he steps back so that afterwards, when the matter has been attended to, he can either take it over as something finished and at his disposal or disburden himself of it completely…. This kind of solicitude, which leaps in and takes way 'care' is a large extent determinative for Being with one another, and pertains for the most part to our concern with the ready-to-hand (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 158).

The teacher has leapt in taking responsibility for the students' welfare, noticing the disturbance and anxiety of students' ways of dealing with life, with the intent to shift perceptions that are harmful and restrict learning.

Conversation as context

Since industrial times it was realised that a child is influenced by their environmental context. In a brutal environment children are vicious and education was seen as the means to civilise the savage (Miller, 1986). I suspect this political-economic way of meeting capitalist characteristics of the past, enabled neoliberalism to appear in educational practice as a kind of natural progression or common sense approach.

The six stories in this section reveal the richness of situated involvement and have in common, a showing of teachers' wisdom and a tension in 'conversation as context' which can divide and restrain life. In story 1 the teacher's ways of being are future focussed. They leap ahead to influence conversations in ways that give dignity and vision to Others. The nuances show, an openness, closeness, trust and safety appearing within the context of student-teacher relational conversations. Story 2 considers a context that is over-regulated by

content showing how ways of being change. Story 3 shows how accountability impacts the context and how the sense of life experienced changes the conversations. Story 4 looks at a teacher's ways of being in conversation with parents and how the teacher's phronesis plays out to widen the meaning of care in conversations. Story 5 reveals an uncanniness felt by teachers in their engagement with leadership and how this shows in their ways of being. Story 6 sees how conversation can presence someone without them being in attendance and the judgements made, even if positive, fix ideas about a person's way of being, robbing Being of itself.

Story one

In science the teacher looks, sees and notices a direction or particular way to engage students in certain conversations. It appears in that 'look', the conversation is about how the Science curriculum can open to real life situations in wise ways.

> Science is actually more freeing because there is less in it, so when you have a look at it, it is literally two statements for each unit. It's actually a lot of it is on science skills, the scientific method and science as a human endeavour. Science skills happen naturally when doing any of the investigations so it's freed us up to be way more creative. I love being creative… so the science curriculum, "Uooh!! so many options now". We do lots of things. The students have all just pretended that they have won a Nobel prize having invented a discovery and given an acceptance speech where they got medals. I think our job is no longer content deliverers; it's about teaching our students to be creative and critical thinkers. It's about being able to problem solve and thinking in a way, that is my job, to get them to be able to solve problems and to think creatively. STEM was new in 2014 so that's looking at Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. The whole idea is really making the students aware that there are so many science-related jobs out there that they can do, that pay big money and are going to be there when they finish school. So it's hoping they kind of get a bit interested. So in year 8 what I have been doing are 'passion' projects. And the conversations have been around links with a University. The students have got mentors so they are writing a research project question and designing a practical. The students are actually digital natives and way clever at technology. So conversations for teachers are a lot about projecting into the future, which is kind of hard. It's not even about you knowing it but being on top of what is available. It's that kind of predicting conversations saying, "where can we go to next for the students?"

In this story the teacher 'seeing' the nature of student's conversing, looks at the curriculum and sees particular contexts already-at-hand as beings living in the world. The teacher's way of being in the conversation with students is to let-learn through practical inquiry involving hands-on experimentation for as the teacher said, "Science skills happen naturally when

doing any of the investigations". The teacher's openness in the conversation intentionally shapes conversation, encouraging a dialogue of pretending and imagining what can be and what is possible in their dramatisation of being Nobel Prize winners. The teacher's way of being is attuned to their curiosity and experimentation finding projects that link their sense of fun and enjoyment to learning. The teacher's way of being is to push the students' questioning to the foreground and in the background look, hear and find projects ready-at-hand and familiar to being in the world. There is a sense of the teacher pre-knowing activities which interests the students. At the same time the teacher's way of being in the classroom is learning alongside their students and leaping ahead to influence conversations in ways that give encouragement, dignity and respect for what the students are able to do.

The freedom of shared conversation with others feels safe for students working in this context and seems to energise their enthusiasm for learning. In a shared context, students enjoy using and sharing their information technology skills with the teacher. In what appears a mutually shaped context, learning is experienced as 'we' are doing it together in a fun way.

In the latter part of this story, the teacher senses the need for science conversations to look at the future with the students but experiences this as daunting and challenging. The future is taken for granted to be same as the present and so 'seeing' beyond the comforts of what is currently possible brings anxiety. In the teacher's conversation is an awareness that uncritical ways of seeing workplace activities as secure employment is dangerous, and knowingly or not, they leap ahead to influence fixed views students have of science jobs.

In this story the teacher is open to being ready-at-hand connected with the present having mentors for students and directing future imaginings. The teacher's way of being in the conversation builds the context for future directions in a seamless flow of interaction. This relational play is what Giles refers to, "as a reciprocated embodied experience having a fluid

nature…Indeed, Heidegger (1987) would suggest everything is in flux…Everything 'is' becoming" (Giles, 2008, p. 146).

Heidegger notes that the primordial existence of Dasein is as 'being-open' to the movement of what is mattering as beings-together-in-the-world. This involvement 'calls' to the teacher playing in context (whether consciously or unconsciously), a way of taking up a direction towards, circumspective concern (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 402). This 'call' as a Heideggerian notion is a mode of discourse; "an appeal to Dasein to its own-most potentiality for Being-its-self within the connectedness of life" (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 315).

Story 2

In some conversations teachers have with students there is a way of being in the context that silences openness. In these conversations teachers feel panicked, anxious and stressed with the content overload and its seemingly burdensome demands on students' learning.

> Mathematics on the other hand is a nightmare. It's so full, so for me, loving creative things, when you look at the maths curriculum because it's so full, you literally start from the beginning of the year and you say to the students, "hold onto your seats". There are eleven topics we have to cover in maths. Maths is one of those subjects that you have to teach them how to do it before they can apply it in a really fun way but most often you only have time to teach them before you have to move onto the next bit. So professionally as a teacher that's probably the biggest conversations we have together is about the frustrations of what we don't get to do and what we cut out, "what are we going to cut out this year"? "What's not as important because we can't fit it all in!" I teach a couple of subject areas but maths is the worst.

In this story conversations appear one-directional for the teacher in mathematics where there is felt anguish with over-loaded content and is seen to restrict students' dialogue about their learning. It appears teacher-student talk is about how it is to be done and what has to be learnt.

In this context teachers can feel victims of a system and their way of being takes on a comradery of pity for the subject and a bemoaning for an alternative. The historical reminiscence in unconscious thought of a governance-mentality already existing appears

present-at-hand. There is distaste for the teaching methodology imposed and a reticence to make the most out of a bad situation for-the-sake-of the students.

Talk in conversations with other mathematics teachers is stressful and frustrating. Aware of time constraints, fearing letting the students down and fearing system failure they do not see an alternative. Being-together and collaborating about the frustrations of an overloaded curriculum shares the stress but leaves accountability heavily weighted in the conversation. The weighing up of which mathematical options to adopt in the conversation is painful and unrewarding. Options are chosen on the basis of a teacher's best intent to benefit students' perceived future learning. The way of being a student, is to trust that their teachers have the best intentions for their learning and being compliant to the particular way it is done.

Heidegger states we are thrown into a world not of our making and a 'fallen' inheritance which does not recognize Being itself, only its social construction. The context of the workplace, controlling time and behavior, limits itself from ideas and practical insight that comes from open conversations. In this story the teachers having been 'thrown' lose their confidence and self-awareness. In this context their defense is to retreat to what they already know works to get students over the line. Dasein exists undifferentiated, "neither authentic nor inauthentic where what one does and who one is, taken at face value, is a means of protectively molding through life" (Quirk, 2000, p. 7). In a disconnected context, what the teacher does is what they understand well.

The ambiguity of the conversation is, while the teachers have lost confidence in one context, there is still confidence in another, in their mastery of mathematics to have a flow-on effect for their students. There is an attempt to create a context within a context, a protective way of being, involving leaping in with theoretical understandings they see, options to save students' future learning in this subject. Their way of being is hopeful in what appears a temporal

impasse of overloaded content, for they see beyond the "mis-givings" of the current ways of practising mathematics (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 396). This hopeful way of being sustains their practice.

Story 3

This story is about how a teacher views the intervention of the Australian National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) an annual national assessment for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. All students in these year levels are expected to participate in tests in reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy. Teachers are often frustrated and annoyed by this disruptive contextual change in the learning environment since being introduced in 2008. This change requires school and teacher compliance.

> I hate NAPLAN with a passion. We teach about growth minds and all of that is completely against putting a stamp on a child. I'm not usually that political but in English I hate taking up a whole lot of my time preparing for the NAPLAN. We are told to prepare; we have pressure because results come out. It frustrates me because its valuable time I could be using and they are learning those things in my regular teaching and would be learning those things anyway when they are ready. The maths ones they are deliberately putting in questions that they know test common misconceptions and they write the common misconceptions into the test to catch children out; a lot of them are multi-staged as well. They have done part of the question but the partway answers are included in the answer so some stop there and think they have the answer; they are tricky the maths ones. That annoys me because if it's a benchmark test it shouldn't be about tricking them. It's about seeing whether they can reach the benchmark. I hate it so much that my own child who is in year 3 last year did not do them. I wrote a letter philosophically opposed to my child doing them and she's never going to do NAPLAN; cos, "I don't want you to stamp my child with that number, my child is doing what she can do at the moment, I trust her teachers in their ability to monitor my child and let me know if she is not managing". She is not ever doing NAPLAN – that's how much I hate NAPLAN.

There is ambiguity in the conversation, 'passionate hate', not terms usually associated together. Hate here is seen to be directed at an object, NAPLAN (a standardised mathematics and literacy test that aims to create an objective picture of students', teachers' and schools' performance ranked on a league table). The term 'passion hate' tends to show itself as part of the teacher's active reflection. The teacher notices NAPLAN testing is about others coming into already existing Mathematics and English classrooms, demanding their particular way of

learning that dominates how things will be done. The teacher feels anxious, annoyed, frustrated and emotionally upset as expressed, "It frustrates me because it's valuable time I could be using and they are learning those things in my regular teaching anyway, when they are ready". The teacher has the institutional context in mind, seeing NAPLAN as a condition of a wider issue, labelling and commodifying children. In addition, the teacher opposes learning as, knowing how to get the right answer.

The institutional context is an angst felt by the teacher, having to administer NAPLAN. As angst, ways of being, express themselves as fear and anxiety. Fear has an objectified NAPLAN and presumably its discontinuation could remove the fear. However, anxiety brings to light the depth of the angst because anxiety attunes self to being aware of the 'ways' of the world. Heidegger sees Dasein individualised and self-aware and says of this experience of anxiety;

> …we shall take the phenomenon of falling as our point of departure, and distinguish anxiety from the kindred phenomenon of fear…anxiety together with Dasein itself as disclosed in it – provides the phenomenal basis for explicitly grasping Dasein's primordial totality of Being. Dasein's Being reveals itself as care (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 227).

Story 4

This story is about a teacher's ways of being in conversation with parents about their children. As teachers and parents play in this relational space, conversation is sensed as pre-knowing and protective towards the student.

> I have found the parents excellent. I think providing you are upfront with them by letting them know when a problem arises. I think being a parent really helps it. When you realise it's their baby and you love them. You know it can skew your view of reality! All sorts of things happen when you parent a child and change your perceptions of what to do and you love them fearlessly. That helps a lot because I kind of know where they're coming from, a place of love for their child. So that definitely helps and to be really open with them and to make them understand it's a shared relationship; we are bringing their child up. I call myself their school mum all the time because that's how I feel. I help bring them up and we are bringing them up together and helping them learn together. So it's that kind of shared concern, shared relationship in getting the girls through difficult times; in my role as head of the house it's my pastoral care role. A lot of the time it's about their mental health and what that means. I think as long as they know you have true concerns for their child and want to work with them; I think most parents are very grateful and willing to work with you. They are involved parents here. If you are not

doing your job properly you'd hear about it pretty quickly. I do my job properly and let them know if I have concerns and they'd do anything to support you here.

This story shows the teacher open to the possibility of different parental perspectives about their child and this is welcomed. The way the teacher is, as a caring being, is felt by parents, affecting the way they respond to the teacher. The teacher sensing the needs of the Other shifts formality and in conversation is able to be honest and frank without injuring the other. In this way safety in relationships is conversed through being empathetic. The teacher's way of being is to expose the internal 'school mum' perspective to bring closeness within the conversation. The teacher's metaphor for her way of being, a 'school mum' is an intuitive sense of willingly responding to a call of loving service.

Taken for granted is the notion that teachers are substitute parents, this opens the context for dialogue but also the context for accountability. Perhaps in the story there is a hint of communication as accountability, that the teacher is aware of duty of care, "if you are not doing your job properly". Yet this teacher sees herself as "school mum", "want to work with them", "love them" and "I help bring them up," is a way of being caring and loving. There is in the conversation to parents a sense of teacher privilege in teaching their child, rather than any sense of duty. There is a sense that both the parents and teacher have protective eyes towards their child, for-the-sake-of their well-being. Trust and respect is shown to each other.

Heidegger refers to 'distancing', that is de-severance from an environment which can occur when what we see and hear does not build a good relationship between parent and teacher. Distancing occurs when problems about the student are not shared and neither is 'upfront'. Both sense alienation and the teacher sees and is attuned to the impact of this on future conversations. It appears in conversation that the teacher has a sense of pre-knowing the other's thoughts, noticing things upfront or not; and predicting what can and cannot be said.

The teacher leaps ahead to what is important in regard to the student's well-being and does this out of concern.

This account shows that conversation is about changing our perspectives, when teachers see conversations alienating they are deliberate on how they can shift the conversation, thinking about different perspectives at play and protecting the unspoken voice of the child to whom the conversation has been directed. There is felt a sense of mineness. Heidegger states,

> Furthermore in each case Dasein is mine to be in one way or another. Dasein has always made some sort of decision as to the way in which it is in each case mine. That entity which in its Being has this very Being as an issue, comports itself towards its Being as its own most possibility (Heidegger, 1973/1927, p. 68).

The teacher's way of being is to see the human inside the child, to see the need for love, support and understanding and though not something perceived as mineness, mineness is "an intrinsic feature of the experience" (Escudero, 2014, p. 9).

Story 5

The story is about teachers' concerns about workload pressures. The intentionality of leadership to converse needs to reconsider the expectation of professional engagement knowing the stresses felt within the teaching context.

> Last year there was a really interesting process that came out of our industrial relations agreement discussions. Workload came up a lot so what our Principal did, which I think was incredibly brave, she got us all together and we had to identify where our workload pressures were. Now what she did, she gave them back to us and we had to think about possible solutions. She's taken that on board and now she's slowly working on fixing those things. She has made a real commitment so that was incredibly brave for her because it put herself and leadership on the line letting us have a say. Our professional learning involves around our plps (personal learning plans) and they evolve around what they decide is the strategic plan for the school. Last year it was a bit more structured. We were told which professional development program we would do. But people didn't like that they were told they have to do it and said, "It is not personalised to me, I don't want to spend my time this way". Now this year we have a menu we can choose from so it was in direct response to our conversations about workload and what we felt we would like changed. I do feel we are supported; our leadership is very good at listening; we have a structure, if it's a subject thing you go to your head of department and anything a big bigger you go to the head of the school. If you want to speak to the Principal she's very happy to open her door and she listens, she really does listen. I think she's very reasonable but you do have to go in armed, this is why and with evidence. "Fair enough!" she can't say 'yes' to everyone without good reason. But providing you go in with that evidence they do listen.

The Principal in this story has noticed teachers feeling stressed and noticed there is pain and anxiety around issues related to their work-load. There is more than noticing occurring, the principal is seeing, hearing and listening to the concerns. Her empathetic concern invites further dialogue and actually demands a collaborative response in requiring all staff to attend a meeting. The principal intends to shift the conversation. The leader having listened has sensed a decline in morale and felt compelled to act forcibly to re-open communication. In this context the leader's way of being takes teachers' concerns seriously. In the leader's way of being conversation involves a working together; where releasing pressure opens blockages between 'staff'. This wise way of being a leader opens conversation with teachers, listening and acting to give practical choices for teachers, like choosing their personal learning requirements.

The way of this leadership is providing opportunity for direct conversations to occur between management at various levels. The leader in this context is seemingly aware of the complexity of human relationships and her finite existence. The leadership structure in the school is seen as supportive to teachers' concerns and working in particular ways.

For the teacher it was considered "incredibly brave" by leadership to do the right thing; to offer something hopeful in reducing unrealistic expectations on work-loads. In communicating with the leader the teacher is aware, 'sees' and senses how to be with leadership. The ambiguity felt in the conversation by the teacher is that while there is intentionality towards listening, interpersonal dialogue is limited and an unspoken permission in the conversation distances relationships. The teacher does find the intelligibility of open conversation mysterious. Withy (2015) commenting on Heidegger's use of the word uncanniness states, "uncanniness is the mysterious self-grounding of our openness in its own finitude" (p.1). The door of communication only feels half-open, "you have got to go in

armed". In the teacher's way of being, there is wisdom in knowing what to request of a leader and how to question leadership decisions.

Story 6

This context shows how management can fail to recognise the need for human kindness and thoughtfulness towards the Other. On the one hand, the teacher wants to be noticed by management for her excellent work but on the other hand feels judged when it is acknowledged. In the teacher's way of being, self does not want to be judged but effort wants to be appreciated.

> One area that's not so good is that you only hear if you are not doing the right thing; so sometimes they are not particularly good at going, "you are doing a particularly good job". No-one really says well done; sometimes that would be nice if more often people sort of acknowledged you; though my Head's very good at doing that. I don't like people noticing me but I'm generally happy just to work away but occasionally it's nice for someone to notice and say well done. The Head of Science's very good at advocating for me on my behalf and getting credit to people when it's due. I guess it's really hard in management to know what everyone is doing in their classrooms. I think we all need people to look up to. I don't have an official mentor but definitely there are people I go to when I need help for certain things. I think it's part of the conversations and networks you provide for yourself. Finding your own mentor; not to think you need other people to learn from is arrogance. It kind of assumes that you know everything, but the more you teach, the more you learn what you need to know and you don't know; it keeps growing. I have lots of mentors I seek and I get help from when I need them myself, sometimes as a sounding board.

We speak and we hear. To hear but not to speak means that some conversations happen without our speaking. It is others who speak for us or speak about us. When a teacher hears they are not doing the right thing, the conversation throws them. Communication based on hearing uses negative types of conversation, gossip and rumour. The comment made, "I don't like people noticing me", gives voice to a felt and hidden judgement. It appears in this story, that in conversations people have together about other people's doings, a silent index is being made, placing labels and expectations on individual teachers to which they are not privy to. Judgements made from hearing things about another, shifts particular ways of being with others in conversation and what they see or hold opinions about the Other. Conversation presences another; gossip and rumour conceals Being. Yet there does exist those who do

notice the teacher and bring this acknowledgement and their gratitude into focus for the teacher. The teacher sees gratitude as more than summarising effort but a personal accolade of who they are as a Being. For the teacher conversations are about being active and setting up relationships and connections yourself; not waiting for the conversation to come to you. The teacher's way of being is to see gratitude for other people and acknowledging their worth is a reciprocal part of being-in-the-world and being true to self.

Heidegger comments that idle talk and chatter of others carried through hearing, obscures Being itself, trapping one's Being alongside public opinion to give an inauthentic understanding of self (Escudero, 2014). To Heidegger, "thankfulness and gratitude precisely help connect people to a more meaningful understanding of being in the world" (Carr, 2016, p. 185).

In summary 'conversation as dialogue' sees dialogue as the living space between human beings where openness allows for 'meeting' the other to inspire and support. 'Conversation as seeing intentionality', looked at broken conversations and positive forms of solicitude in teacher's ways of being. 'Conversation as context' saw authentic and inauthentic ways of being in conversation. In the next chapter, the 'Conclusion' further shows the influence of the research on deepening contemporary understandings of ways of being a teacher and the continuing impact of the nature of this research on myself.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

Introduction

The thesis has shown the importance of gaining an understanding of how people are together in conversation. To be doing hermeneutic conversations the researcher needs to notice conversations, not just words, but beyond words, how teachers' conversation in context changes and can be covered over by the language of a dominant ideology. In this chapter, I summarise the Thesis of the thesis, revisit my pre-understandings to show how I have changed and propose recommendations for further research in understanding teachers' ways of being. The concluding remarks point the reader to how teachers' openness and giving of themselves in conversation, has been taken for granted, when it is a gift of teachers' ways of being, changing conversations**.**

Thesis of the thesis

Conversations matter in education. Technocratic conversations command our attention but the ontological nature of teachers' conversations, whose intent it is to give, is largely ignored. There appears to be no wondering about the inspirational, hopeful ways of being a teacher as something gracious, rather an expectation that compliant teachers, doing things in structured, regulated ways, achieve sound, measureable results. This latter thinking is only seeing what was designed to see, not the deeper meanings of who a teacher is and how they are.

We live out our ideas through our language in policy and practice. As professionals and humans we need to develop a closer attune-ment to noticing, looking and seeing how we are in conversations together, so our actions and behaviour open, to care and concern for all things, combats an ideology seeking to fix conversations, standardising the human being through controls and management.

Pre-understandings revisited

Neoliberal policy and practices have so pervaded our educational structures we can take for granted technocratic conversations, created by the dominant ideology, as dealings best for our needs, until we encounter thrownness and uncertainties. Since the study has now looked at the ontological nature of teachers' conversations under an ideological domination, I return to my initial pre-understandings.

Firstly, teacher's conversations are transactions with Others (i.e. students, parents and management) for structured relationships determine what is being said and how words are said and chosen. There is a technical, business conversation occurring, as the language of the dominant ideology but the findings show the ontological nature of teacher's conversations is not transactional. Conversation changes in context. 'Conversation as dialogue' sees teachers' ways of being in conversation as being-relational, of 'something' living between us and is felt, taking in care and concern for the other. This 'safe' space gives showing for letting-learn, questioning and being assertive without fear. The teachers' way of being shows being-available, being-with, being-there, open to students in their inner and outer living. Conversation is seen to translate invisible, growing bonds between students and teachers, shown in openness and a closeness transcending even physical location. For the teacher, daily conversations are inseparable to the head and heart, shown in caring actions as they worry and feel anxiety for their students. Dialogue, occurring between teachers, through mutual respect and trust, grows an understanding of themselves, as teachers, shifting aside formalities. In the exchange of conversation is the transfer of an openness (being-available, being-alongside, being-with) bringing life and showing itself in trustful and honest relationships. This way of being sees a freedom felt in the relationship, as teachers give each other, largely unconsciously, support and feedback in ways that attune to the other's journey of living towards their students. Their way of being is to see the world through their own

realisation of self and its needs; an act of giving oneself. It is a way of being always at hand, felt but not noticed as important. This sharing and giving has a way of comporting, showing itself in practical wisdom, leaping in and leaping ahead in conversations. The teacher's way of being in the conversation builds the context for future directions sustaining life and giving hope.

In conversing with parents, distancing can be felt by teachers when concerns about students are not shared or upfront. The teacher's way of being is an attune-ment towards their students and shows itself in protective ways. Being-alongside, a circumspective way of seeing, means concern awaits things in determinate interpretedness. What appears is that teachers' conversations show a sense of pre-knowing the other's thoughts and predicting what is most appropriate. The teachers' way of being shows practical wisdom and resolution in their concern for the whole being of the student.

Transactional managerial structures are shown not to inspire, hopeful ways of being a teacher. In regard to management it was found that intentionality of leadership to converse makes an appearance inviting professional respect and dialogue, however in the recognition of working together, there is a felt uncanniness about the conversations. The translation of words in-between the talk is silence. There is shown a felt distancing in the teacher-management exchange where frustration and indignation over decisions close conversation. Yet teachers' ways of being reveal a positive mode of being-with, a solicitude opening and showing that conversations change for Others matter. The relational nature of a sensitive, caring teacher addresses negativity within and beyond the classroom. This involvement, 'calls' for a way of being, (largely unconsciously) of taking up a direction towards circumspective concern within the context. This attunes the teacher to 'seeing' how the other

is in conversation and to act in their phronesis. The teachers' way of being is a relational dialogue showing anticipation in giving and sharing.

Secondly, the nature of teachers' conversation is significantly influenced by what Others 'expect' to see. Governance structures in schools means conversations can be directed and fixed. Findings in 'conversation as context', see the dominant ideology intrude into pedagogical practices, without invitation. NAPLAN, a disruptive contextual change in the learning environment, brings no joy or freedom to let learn. The learning outcome is measureable but counter-productive to teachers' ways of being, intent on bringing the joy of learning to their students and seeing learning as a process of becoming. The teachers' ways of being in relational play are to let-learn through practical inquiry, promoting thinking and creativity working with projects ready-at-hand with circumspective concern. The teachers' ways of being are indeterminate, seeing beyond sights, to notice, to feel, to sense, to hear and with circumspective seeing, responding to shifts in student conversations to reduce harmful and negative impacts on students' well-being. So these teachers do not see, with the mind's intent to make rules and regulations, as is the way of the dominant ideology, but 'see' a purposeful intentionality in moving ways of thinking to connect with ways of the heart, to be more caring and concerning for themselves, others and the world. Their way of being is to see thankfulness and gratitude as part of daily living shown in the ways in which Others in conversations matter.

Thirdly, conversation matters to teachers. Conversation seems to draw emotions when in contact with others. Conversation as seeing intentionality shows the strength of emotions to focus on positives, lies in the ability of the teacher to draw on the senses, with deliberate intent to bring about wholeness of life to themselves and others. Teachers' ways of being in their planning goes beyond content, setting and building a context for being in conversations

that give holistic meaning to life. The teacher changes conversations. The imagination and creativity that springs up from this intent, sustains life.

Fourthly, teacher conversation is talking with others. Findings show conversation is more than talk; it is noticing the way we are together in the world and sensing the shifts in conversation and use of language. The teacher's way of being is to hear ambiguity in the conversation, to shift conversations in ways that open conversation between us. Their way of being is a felt being- there, being-alongside and being-with the other. This way of communication strengthens bonds with others. Talk can be empty words but the teacher's empathetic way of being, presences the other as important, worthy of consideration and shows dislike of labelling, judgements and assessments that limit the potential of another.

Finally, conversation is more than just talking to one-self. A teacher's way of being is to notice in reflective practice the life between us. As the researcher in this inquiry I have been shown through phenomenological practice, contemplative thinking is rigorous and does give indeterminate insights into our lived experiences. How much of life is taken for granted, unless we stop to contemplate and think?

The impact of the research on my practice

The significance of this study is realised in my personal life as I reflect on conversation. Here the mega-themes found are 'seen' as integral to living and transformative to my thinking. The research has impacted on me as a person because phenomenology does this; it's about revealing the essence of being human. This insight was illuminated in a memoir written in late November, 2016 on a short trip to Northern Queensland: In the Cairns Post, the Ulysses butterfly's plight was outlined as threatened. In the same paper, a nursery was selling, Melicope elleryana, the only bottlebrush used by the female butterfly on which to lay her eggs. In offering to purchase this plant for my friend the response was, 'I would not have that

bush in my garden, it's unattractive'. This conversation left feelings of alienation and hopelessness shown in ways of thinking that disconnect humanity from other living things and from Being itself. Further north at Cooktown looking at the public display of history in Guugu Yimithirr country dotted with colonial buildings, statutes of explorers and retailing a small mint tin inscribed to Captain James Cook, (with the slogan, 'the world is yours to discover') was a conversation I found uninviting and representative of hegemonic ways of being that limit humanity. Both conversations shared an underlying ideology, a 'seeing' of intentionality pointed away from relationships (with each other and nature); a life-less dialogue. What I learnt was in seeing the other, and how parts interconnect in the world, this opens conversations. In opening conversations, this changes conversation allowing for continual growth of people as caring and concerned beings.

The phenomenological mega-themes are not separate but integrate to give a widened perspective of how conversation changes. Heidegger sees language as an act of discovery unveiling behaviour which human life sets in motion in relationship with the beings it encounters in the world. Was this not done in this study in the pursuit of unveiling the conversation changes of teachers' ways of being?

Significance

The significance of these findings in practice for teachers and administrators is to notice how we are together in conversation, so mind and heart can engage in respectful dialogue that values the other. The findings also show how teachers' ways of being in conversation are inspiring and give new understandings of how they are and who they are as practitioners. The humanity of the teacher is shown in a willingness of Being-with, Being-alongside, Being-open to the Other in conversation. This openness, changes conversations and sustains the teacher through the challenges and difficulties of being-there and being-available to and for Others.

Recommendations for Future research

There are links between the findings of this study and other practices that open further research areas. In this section I propose research inquiries that have arisen from this phenomenological study.

This research has shown the need to think more deeply about what is taken for granted in schooling and life. In reading my Year 11 responses to how they would encourage others to choose Society and Environment I was enlightened to see not just the content as important but how they felt and sensed the purpose of the subject. My students live in a consumption paradigm and when taken from outside this paradigm I could see the experience opened different ways of being. I had also previously collected student responses from other years too because I had been inspired by students' thoughtful and sincere feedback on their privileged lives. I sensed they were wondering whether being can exist elsewhere other than in 'our' requiring minds wanting wealth, the best education, new fashion and latest technological devices! Once again led by the phenomenon of conversation it would be useful as a post-doctoral study, to undertake a case-study of the ontological nature of senior student experiences in a subject, within our current dominant ideology that favours individualism and competition. The research would use a hermeneutic phenomenological approach with student stories.

This research has shown teachers noticing and sensing the multiple meanings of words in conversation. As shown, this research has identified some teachers, whose ways of being in conversations can influence perceptions, harmful to student wellbeing. Researchers in effective schooling literature when looking at socially just forms of schooling argue "classroom interactions can affect unconscious and dysconscious forms of oppression" (King (1991) cited in North, 2006, p. 524). These researchers argue unjust social realities appear when teachers critically reflect on their pedagogy (Mills & Gale, 2002). Further

phenomenological inquiry, could consider stories about the ontological nature of teachers' conversations with students in socially diverse classrooms. Looking at my notes from my memoir 7/12/2015 reminded me of a story where a teacher stated: "it is not that children remember what you did that counts, but how you made them feel that is so important." It would not surprise me if the distillation of stories showed ways of being a teacher revealed compassion, love and respect as central.

This research has shown that 'conversations as dialogue', is living between us. If we use the same method and methodology as this phenomenological study, we could also consider the ontological nature of teachers' conversations within the dominant ideology in early child-hood learning, in primary school and at the tertiary level.

A hermeneutical phenomenological research into the relational nature of our exchange in the conversations of I- it, I-you and I-Thou stories of teachers working in the dominant ideology would also open further understandings of ways of being a teacher. Insight was gained by looking at Buber who posits ontology based solely on relating: all actual life is encounter. Buber "privileges the mutuality of the relation between the two subjects, all the while aware that this ideal mutualism can degenerate into a monologic objectification and instrumentation of an I-it" (Garrett, 2010, p. 77). The thinking behind this research is based on a brief literature review and my personal experiences found in one of my memoirs. This example is drawn from my memoir on 20/11/2015 and I prefaced the entry:

> In an 'I-it' experience what happens? The dedicated teacher is reprimanded by a supervisor because a poorly behaved student does not like the tone of her voice, complains to the parent, who complains to leadership. The teacher had never been spoken to in this manner by the supervisor and prided herself on being a dedicated teacher. The supervisor objectifying the 'it' experience, as her tone of voice, showed a lack of awareness that tone of voice is more than the sound produced. Voice is a communication tool embodied with being a teacher. The voice is not separate to the person, but part of the holistic make-up of being a teacher. To criticise the voice, is to criticize the way of being a teacher. Below the surface damage is done. The teacher loses confidence in their own practice with emotions replacing logic. The relationship between teacher and supervisor becomes a barrier to the teacher and the teacher-child relationship remains in tension.

What does my research mean for the application of conversation into personal practice? As professional development, teachers could journal or blog their own stories using them as sources for contemplative thinking. Through self-reflection using the phenomenological themes, the teacher's way of being and so their ways of thinking shows. This transformative process may allow further insight for self and others to see conversation not as fixed and challenge a dominant ideology without fear.

This research showed teachers' conversations taking the form of dialogue, sharing, experimentation and feedback. When we consider teachers' conversation the literature on technology makes us aware of virtual-reality conversations. There has been growing interest and numbers in teachers' participating in self-generated communities but a lack of research on such communities (Hur & Hara, 2007). Literature on digital technology shows teachers being labelled 'neo-liberal entrepreneurs' in their uptake to technology but is this designed way of seeing the teacher, really 'seeing' the nature of teachers' ways of being in the use of technology? Phenomenological research into this area of digital conversations would also reveal more about the teachers' ways of being in a dominant ideology where technological dominance is seen to be the solution for problems (McCarthy & Wright, 2004). Such a study could consider, how do teachers engaging in you-tube educational productions and other shareware, really see their working with technology? Or as I gained insight from a memoir on 29/1/2016:

> There is no manual to show how best to use pen and paper or a manual on how best to use digital technologies. Yet children can be taught skills and protocol that enable them to use imagination in ways that benefit the world. We naively take for granted being able to use digital technologies means students know how to use their material/physical objects in ways that benefit themselves, society and the environment.

A study could consider the ontological nature of student-teacher ways of being in the digital classroom as they engage together using technology.

Limitations and delimitations

There are limitations to this research imposed by personal circumstances and the nature of the research. Firstly, the self-funded research was required to be carried out within twelve months while the researcher worked part-time as a teacher. Secondly the format of the EdD with its constrained period reduced the sample size, number of participant's stories and the word count. Thirdly, the study favours Heidegger's existential writings and in particular, 'Being and Time'. Dwelling in the writings of Heidegger was purposeful because not only is he considered one of the greatest philosophers of our times (with his influence felt across most fields of human endeavour) but his understandings influence other great existential thinkers like Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) and Hans- Georg Gadamer (1900-2002). I believe choosing Heidegger meant looking at understanding the foundations for humanism. In addition, the use of language and ideas in 'Being and Time' are so rich in meaning, there is always so much more to gain over time. While in terms of delimitations imposed by the research, the location of participants was drawn from teachers in Adelaide, South Australia. These choices enabled the study to be manageable.

Concluding remarks

Schools are places of regulatory practice and this is not to say regulations do not have some value. This study calls into question how conversations in our regulatory situations impact on our living, as people connected to each other and linked within the world. What is revealed is that our everyday conversations show the relational nature of education in practice and conversations change, giving or taking 'life' from the teacher.

Inspiring teachers are often not consciously aware of how their being-there, in noticing, seeing, feeling shifts in conversations, 'seeing' intentionality; are ways of Being a teacher. Teachers, whose conversations show support, safety, wonderment, questioning, passion and understanding towards the Other extend the positive experiential connections of being

human. These teachers become experienced in living life accepting of challenges, open to letting-learn and open to Others mattering, showing wisdom and sensibilities towards relationships, vital for being learners and Being human.

The significance of the study has been transformative for my thinking; seeing how teachers' ways of being in conversation, being-open to the relational Other; gives hope and inspiration for living and for being more truly human. The 'seeing' of Others in conversation through teachers' eyes, from the inside-out, glimpses a little more of the human spirit and hope for changed conversations largely covered-over by language of a dominant ideology.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Dot-points summary of file 18/2/2015

- We are being formed as professionals every day, what does this look like?

- Do the same experiences that affect you as a teacher affect you as a researcher?

- Playing around with texts and playing around with speech; we are using words but forming meaning

- What is the existential nature of professional learning? What is this particular type of experience that is life-centric and affects our formation?

- Professional learning is framed up with terminology but what's happening to the nature of our forming as learners that gives a sense of life and into which this meaning can be found within our stories?

- We are formed in relationship; it's who we are and how we are that's important to our being in play with the other, rather than what we do

- What is the phenomenological nature of professional formation that gives a sense of life?

- Some things are always in formation like our identities; but others are blind-spots.

- We do not know how the nature of blind-spots determine our actions; though, we know that blind-spots (like logs in our eyes), can be removed in relationship; for the nature of relationships has the capacity to grow our understandings of seeing those things which are important to us

- Our sense of life is highlighted when blind-spots are revealed;

- It is the meaning of words not the use of right words that create the phenomenological nod

- The nature of relationships means that we are placed in play with our formation as beings. The relationship enables the play space to free each other to explore possibilities.

- Does asking the question; what is the essence (intrinsic nature) of your learning, enable relational play into the existential nature of our being?

Rebirth is a strange metaphor for a new beginning. One can't be reborn in the literal sense. What then does this mean? I find an understanding more clear when I think of a line in Sophie's World by Jostein-Gaarder, you can't re-step into a stream in the same step as you entered for the first time; it's still the same stream but the moving water changes conditions. Is this the nature of life, constantly adjusting to changing conditions? Every time I step into the classroom I feel excited because it's like stepping into the stream, I expect change. As a teacher I have a sense of anticipation as I enter the classroom that learning will occur in new and unexpected ways. It is this anticipation of different ways of teaching and learning that moments do bring that re-energises and re-invigorates re-entry into that classroom.

Is being formed the same as being shaped or is it more about a transformation? Are all these words life centric? Do I really know the meanings of any of these words including life-centric; is this where my life is centred, or from the centre of my life is there a sense of my existence that energises me? Can it only occur in relationship that I can be formed, shaped, transformed and know of my existence? How then do I know of my purpose?

Nature of professional learning is it the same as the nature of professional formation or the nature of professional development? Is 'nature' about inborn tendencies, the tendency to want to share, to want to know, to want to pass on ideas, tendency to care or the tendency to know suffering, anxiety and sadness and feel the compulsion to align with it in ways that bring healing, happiness and hope; What is the portrait of a teacher? Forgiving, loving, joyous, hopeful; a being imperfect but refined through the flames of her own experiences and wanting to pass on life-source learning for the child.

I have been introduced to the notion that we can have blind-spots. What really are blind spots? I think they are parts of our life that hold us back from being more fully ourselves, they narrow our field of vision but to open light on them, to expose them is to gain new insight. Knowing that I am a social constructionist was insightful for me because it opened my understanding of how I am as I practice my teaching and learning. The life world is constantly formatting out of words meanings to which I attach my own previous ways of doing things. Yet it is my relational ontology that creates a receptive mind to valuing other perspectives as important as my own that enables exposure of blind-spots and the opening of insight.

Appendix 2: Ethics approval

6419 SBREC modification No.1 approval notice (9 March 2016)
Human Research Ethics <human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au>
Wed 9/03/2016 11:23 AM

Dear Sharyn,

The Chairperson of the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (SBREC) at Flinders University has reviewed and approved the modification request that was submitted for project 6419. A modification ethics approval notice can be found below.

MODIFICATION (No.1) APPROVAL NOTICE

Project No.:	**6419**

Project Title:	Exploring the ontological nature of teacher's conversations within the dominant ideology

Principal Researcher:	Mrs Sharyn Schubert
Email:	sschubert@sac.sa.edu.au

Modification Approval Date:	9 March 2016	Ethics Approval Expiry Date:	**20 December 2018**

I am pleased to inform you that the modification request submitted for project 6419 on the 12 February 2016 has been reviewed and approved by the SBREC Chairperson. Please see below for a list of the approved modifications. Any additional information that may be required from you will be listed in the second table shown below called 'Additional Information Required'.

Approved Modifications	
Extension of ethics approval expiry date	X

Appendix 3: Participant Information sheet

Ms. Sharyn Schubert
School of Education
Flinders Drive, Bedford Park SA 5042
schu0297@flinders.edu.au

Dr Michael Bell
Educational Leadership & Management
School of Education
Flinders University
Box 2100
Adelaide SA 5001

Tel: +61 8 8201 2266
michael.bell@flinders.edu.au

CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

INFORMATION SHEET

Title: Exploring the nature of teacher's conversations within the dominant ideology

Date Information Sheet Produced: 25 July 2015

Researcher: Sharyn Schubert

Flinders University, S.A.

Description of the study:

This proposal is interested in the ontological nature of conversations occurring between, with and to teachers, whose intentionality is towards inspiring, hopeful and sustainable ways of being a teacher as they practice their craft in a professional environment. This project is supported by Flinders University School of Education department.

Purpose of the study:

This project aims to uncover characteristics of the ontological nature of conversations with teacher's ways of being within the current ideological context.

- To explore how the political-economic agenda of the current dominant ideology permissions conversations that occur within everyday experiences of teachers
- To show authentic stories of teacher's experiences living with rules and regulations
- To discover what teacher's intentionality towards hopeful, inspiring ways of being means in their situational, relational spaces

What will I be asked to do?

You are invited to a 60 minute semi-structured interview to share how you experience living within a professional environment at a place and time of your choosing. The researcher will ask you to think of a specific story that describes an everyday experience of being a teacher, which may be a situation, event or personal encounter within your teaching context. Such specific stories may involve experiences with leadership, or with a parent, or with a class or individual student or working with other teachers or working with policy documents. The researcher may give further prompts to you during the story to assist in gaining a fuller description of your experience. The engagement will be recorded using a digital voice recorder. Once recorded, the story will be crafted from the interview

and returned to you for verification by email. This story will require the 'nod' from you as the story of your experience.

In other words, once the crafted story has been read, (that is cut and pasted from other interjections you may have said at the time) an email, yes or no, will confirm the correctness of the story. This crafted story will be stored as a computer file and may be used in whole or part of the thesis.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

The project allows for the teacher's voice to be heard in a unique way that seeks to show the strengths of being a practitioner living within a dominant ideology beyond the taken for granted ways of being. Your stories are vitally important in showing how teacher's ways of being are relational and affected by engagement with others. Being involved in this process means you will be contributing to an increased understanding of the essence of being a teacher.

Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?

We do not require your name so that anonymity is granted. Once the story has been crafted and saved as a file, your voice file will be deleted. Any identifying information will be removed and the typed-up file stored on a password protected computer that only the supervisors will have access to. Your comments will not be linked directly to you.

Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?

The investigator anticipates negligible risk from your involvement in this study. If you have any concerns regarding anticipated or actual risks or discomforts, please raise them with the investigator.

How do I agree to participate?

Participation is voluntary. You may answer 'no comment' or refuse to answer any prompts or questions and you are free to withdraw without effect or consequences. A consent form accompanies this information sheet. If you agree to participate please read and sign the consent form. Please bring the signed consent form to the interview.

How will I receive feedback?

Outcomes from the project will be summarised and given to you by the investigator if you would like to see them.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.

Appendix 4: Letter of Introduction

Dr Michael Bell

Educational Leadership & Management

School of Education

Flinders University

Box 2100

Adelaide SA 5001

Tel: +61 8 8201 2266

Dear [participant]

This letter is to introduce Sharyn Schubert who is a Doctoral student in the School of Education at Flinders University. She will produce her student card, which carries a photograph, as proof of identity.

She is undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis or other publications on exploring the ontological nature of teacher's experiences within the current dominant ideology.

She would like to invite you to assist with this project by agreeing to a 60 minute semi-structured interview where the purpose is to tell an everyday story about life as a teacher. The project she is interested in is the nature of conversations that occur between teachers while living within rules and regulations.

Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and none of the participants will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis, report or other publications. You are, of course, entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time or to decline to answer particular prompt questions during the story telling.

Since she intends to make an electronic recording of the semi-structured interview, she will seek your consent, record your narratives and cut and paste from that interview the crafted story of your experience. These crafted stories requiring your verification (via email) are to be stored only on file (deleting the original recording) for use in the thesis or other publications, on condition that your name or identity is not revealed.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above or by telephone on 8201 2266 fax email Michael.bell@flinders.edu.au

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Yours sincerely

Dr Michael Bell

Flinders University

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project number 6419). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

Appendix 5: Consent Form

Flinders
UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Exploring the nature of teacher's conversations within the dominant ideology

I …...

being a secondary teacher hereby consent to participate as requested in the Letter of Introduction for the research project on narratives.

1. I have read the information provided.

2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.

3. I agree to audio recording of my information and participation.

4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.

5. I understand that:

   • I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.

   • I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions.

   • While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, I will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.

   • I may ask that the recording/observation be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage.

Participant's signature…………………….……………Date…………………....

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher's name………………….………….……………………....................

Researcher's signature………………….……………..Date…………………….

6. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read a transcript of my participation

and agree to its use by the researcher as explained.

Participant's signature…………………….……………Date…………………....

Appendix 6: Semi-structured interview prompts

Research Question: What is it like being a teacher in conversations that happen in your life?

Tell me an everyday experience of being a teacher:

What is it like?

What happens?

How do you feel?

Who is important?

Appendix 7: Poems

DWK's – A teacher's way of being
The being is restless with monotony

Driven by intent to engage in new ways of doing

Loving and caring for learning

For continuing the work of creative impulses

And the demise of labels and stereotypes

Living a life not bound by walls

Nor having connections without fortitude

Not lessened by the pain of ingratitude

Alive to grace

Translating precious moments

With inner callings from children in unconscious space

Existing for their good before the thought

Compassion ingrained in the skin itchy for relief

Keeping alive a better world in word and deed

SCL's – another teacher's way of being
Finding life in rewards

Measured by social design

In relationships and connections

Struggling for voice in the midst of change

Aware that intent needs planning

That cultural change requires collaboration

Compliance snow screens reality

Narcissism swallows the good

Individual matters

Vision matters

Action matters

Other matters

Appendix 8 Extract from the transcript with DWK, showing how the crafting occurred

Strike-through is deleted in the crafted story. Those in black are the participant's comments (crafted). Story analysed see page 71, 68.

~~I'm here to today because I'm really interested in what's it like living in a school what its like actually being a teacher? Can you tell me any story about what its like being a teacher. You know lots of us can be a fireman or we can be a police officer but what's it like being a teacher?~~ I don't think it's ~~not certainly its not~~ a job, it's a vocation and I think if you want to teach you have to be willing to be consumed much of your life. ~~I think~~, I think you even when you don't want to think about it you ~~you~~ go, "oogh!~~oh~~ that would be really good for my classroom" or you'll see something on line that could go in your class[room] ~~or see a student.~~ Or even when I'm home ~~I think~~ it will come into my head about what I could do for my job. It's certainly not a job in which you go for a 9-5 experience; you are really invested in people ~~um~~ especially the children.~~um~~ I think about them a lot especially if they ~~are~~ aren't having a good time or if they need help. I do think of them a lot especially in a school like ~~w....~~ [this] which ~~is really um~~ [has]high demands from parents and from the school in terms of what we do as the teacher. I think we need each other. The people ~~so the people~~ at work are not just my colleagues they are my friends and I need them because they are there to support me ~~um~~ in my job and to bounce ideas. ~~off,~~ yea. ~~Do you feel that the conversations you have been having with teachershave changed in recent times because of how things are in the workplace?~~ ~~I think we have. I think~~very ~~much life journey~~ I started being in a State school in which no one really cared what I was doing and I kind got primary schools in the UK. ~~and~~ I've worked at primary schools here and so I've been in lots of different types of schools ~~um~~ and [had] different kinds of demands from those places. ~~as well so~~ I think the conversations have changed depending on where I have been. ~~i think here and~~ I think the way of teaching has so evolved we are much more accountable for things and we do need [to] have [to] ~~to make sure~~ people ~~Ive always been ok with people~~ knowing what I am doing. ~~so~~ ~~interms of making sure~~ I've ~~doing~~ [always] cross~~ing~~[ed] my I's and t's. I have always done that but ~~its~~ now it's that kind of making sure it is done in the way they want us, to which is ICT heavy. ~~Um~~ So it's learning that stuff and lots of support and conversations around, "Do you know how to put this on Sector? Do you know how to do this here? It's that kind of conversation (laugh). I've always been secret- interested in curriculum ~~(2.39)~~ ~~um~~ so those conversations have been able to change me. Those conversations have always been, how can I make it really engaging and exciting? ~~and~~ I've always found a colleague who is like minded whose equally creative, who fires me off or who is better than me. They inspire me to be better myself. ~~so~~ and Every school I've been in I've found that person. Sometimes I'm lucky enough that its more than one person.~~.(3.02)~~ We just make each other better and I really value those relationships with those people which I can go, "No! that's not a good idea", and they can say the same to me. Or she'll say, "No, no, I don't agree with that and I think this is would be better", and to ~~able~~ [be] blatantly sort of honest, both having the same looking forward in the best interest for our girls and how we can make the best engaging learning experiences for the girls. ~~and um~~ I'm lucky enough to have a couple of those colleagues here ~~um~~ which I really value. ~~and um and~~ The fact that we can be so honest and that our intentions are always from a really good place and I feel safe with saying, "that's rubbish" and she [also]~~feels~~ tell[s]~~ing~~ me that something is rubbish.

Appendix 9: Authentication

Authentication of story

Dear………. (participant)

This email is to express my sincere thanks for your stories relayed to me. I want to express my joy and thanks in narrating experiences of your life that show an amazing richness and sensitivity to being a teacher. The interview transcript has provided me with substantial material.

The purpose of this email is to authenticate the crafted stories of your experience. In this email are attached the crafted stories transcribed from our meeting together. Please note, that for anonymity purposes I have changed any reference to names mentioned in the interview, including your own. Would you mind reading these stories with the view of: (a) confirming the information and (b) allowing me permission to formally work with these stories of your experience in an interpretative way as outlined in the information sheet?

If you are in agreement, please initial each story as a sign of your permission

If you wish to edit any story please make your notes on the particular story

If you have any concerns over a story, can you note this on the particular story so I can contact you and discuss this.

I would be grateful if you could return the stories in the stamped addressed envelope provided at the interview.

Finally please feel free to contact me over any matter outlined in this email. Again, many thanks for your willingness to be part of a project which allows a glimpse of the challenging life of a dedicated teacher.

Yours sincerely,

 Sharyn Schubert

Appendix 10: Thinking technique for interpretation

Another screen shot to show the process of highlighting words and thinking about the meaning- dates are also detailed

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