



MONASH University

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF NARRATIVE-BASED VIDEO ON TEACHER THINKING AND PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

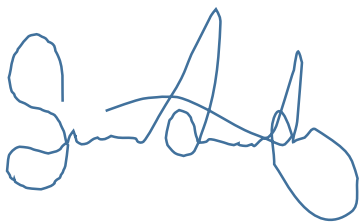
In the search for quick and measurable outcomes of teacher improvement, a common prevailing approach tends to frame teacher learning within a simple and linear “cause-effect” model, thus reducing the professional practice of teachers to a model of technical rationality. A key issue within the technical rationality model of teacher learning is the assumption that teachers take an *uncritical* view of their own practice, separate from the individual and specific contextual factors inherent in their local school and class context. Teacher reflection has been well recognized as offering a way for teachers to step out from their automatic routines and operate more within the present and critical state of their current context. This research explores the challenge of finding different and deeper routes into teacher practice and learning through the prompt of a narrative-based education video such that more contextualised and relevant teaching responses might be achieved.

The study aimed to explore: how participants responded to viewing narrative-based video; the features of the narrative-based video which influenced participant responses; and, how the narrative features prompted changes to teacher thinking and practice. Three in-depth case studies of teachers were developed in order to systematically explore the impact of a narrative-based video on teacher thinking and practice. The results identified and classified particular elements of narrative video, namely the features and sub-features within narrative elements of character and plot, and in particular a sub-theme of *humanness*, which influenced the thinking and practice of participating teachers.

The results suggested that the video’s influence affirmed the importance of integrated approaches to the professional learning of teachers which prompt critical reflection upon, and utilise teachers’ personal, social and technical contexts. The findings from this study situate the practice of teaching and teacher change as complex and sophisticated and contributes new knowledge to how and why narrative-based education video supports teacher practice. The study therefore has implications for the theory and practice of teacher professional learning.

DECLARATION

This thesis does not contain any material previously submitted for examination in any other course or accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except when due reference is made in the text.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Simon Lindsay', with a stylized, cursive script.

Simon Lindsay

Date: 15th November, 2019

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I'd like to acknowledge good fortune most of all. When you think about all the accidents over the last 4.6 billion years that had to happen in order for me to be sitting here writing this acknowledgment – it just boggles the mind. Some of the best fortune was to have Professor John Loughran as my main supervisor. I've been blessed with the leadership of a few great people in my life and I feel so privileged to have had your mentorship throughout this study and honoured to be your final PhD student. To my co-supervisor and long-time friend Kathy Smith who helped to bring the thesis home – your great education mind and encouragement added so much to the thesis, and it is such a great thrill to be sharing this achievement with you.

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I'd also like to thank the wonder of the natural environment for the inspiration in putting pen to paper on many occasions along the way. One of the only ways that I could find time to write while working full-time was to get away and sneak time on family holidays. When I reread the work now, I see the case study *Asha* being written in the steaming jungles of Ubud, *Sara* in the cool salt air of a wooden Bronte balcony, and *Lee* on the gentle sunsets of Kata beach. The natural world is imbued in the words and spirit of this adventure.

As David Mitchell put it, “travel far enough, you meet yourself.” Alongside meeting myself through this research, it was the encounter with participating teachers and their lived experience which was the most humbling and revealing. I'd ultimately like to thank these teachers who

allowed me to peel back the façade of the perceived teacher, and peek underneath at the complex, messy but marvellous reality of teaching and being a teacher. This fascination with the understanding of reality, graciously supported by these teachers, has driven me since I was a younger person, and has reminded me once again that:

*I just want to live in a world of mountains,
coffee, campfires, cabins, and golden trees,
and run around with a camera and notebook,
learning the inner workings of everything real.*

(Victoria Erickson.)

Chapter 1

Introduction

Once inside this alien world, we find ourselves. Deep within these characters and their conflicts, we discover our own humanity. ... we enter a new fascinating world ... a fictional reality that illuminates our daily reality. We do not wish to escape life, but to find life, to use our minds in fresh, experimental ways, to flex our emotions, to enjoy, to learn, to add depth to our days. (McKee, 1997, p.5)

Background

The knowledge that teachers possess is an essential element in improving educational practice (Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997). There has been much research on the multiple types of knowledge that teachers can and should hold, for example, arguments have been made about content knowledge (Ma, 1999), pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986), personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996), and teachers' emotional intelligence (Anari, 2012), to list but a few. The interplay between these bodies of knowledge highlights 'the exceedingly complex intellectual, personal, and physical environment for teachers' work' (Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997, p. 673).

Interestingly, some studies have illustrated that many of the prevailing approaches to building teacher quality tend to adopt a narrow focus, developing either practical teaching activities or specific curriculum content required for the classroom (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009) assuming that such considerations largely comprise teachers' professional knowledge of teaching. However, as made clear by Schön (1983), the disconnection of the action of teaching from the contextual nature of practice largely frames teacher learning within a simple and linear "cause-effect" model, thus reducing the professional practice of teachers to a model of technical rationality.

Although technical rationality has often been used by policy makers to achieve improvement in educational outcomes, it is prescient to be reminded of Day's (1999, p. 15) argument that, 'externally imposed reform will not necessarily result in teachers implementing the intended changes ... [as] a multitude of research projects in different countries have shown'. In terms then of finding effective approaches to teacher professionalism, external policy, which

positions teachers as implementers of technical solutions designed by others, does not result in substantially changed practice (McLaughlin, 1997).

In light of the limitations of traditional approaches to professional learning, this thesis explores an idea posed by Loughran & Northfield (1996) that, in order to achieve improvement in education outcomes, teacher knowledge needs to be made explicit - that is, for teachers to codify their rich knowledge in ways that might be both useful and meaningful in others' practice. However, ascertaining features of teachers' knowledge and practice which resonate across the profession is not necessarily so easy to do. Compounding this issue is the fact that not all teachers respond to professional learning in the same way. Therefore, creating sharable articulations of practice that carry meaning for teachers is difficult.

Despite this situation, there are potent examples of knowledge of practice that resonate with teachers. Many of these are based around teachers researching their own practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 2004, 2009), and subsequently through codifying it in ways which enable others to see benefit (see for example Berry & Milroy, 2002; Disting, 2002; Loughran & Northfield, 1996; Senese, 2000). Such codification of teacher knowledge, through means such as case writing (Shulman, J. 1992), illustrates a move beyond a technical approach to practice and ways of shedding light on contextual forms of knowing through doing.

Building on insights from research into knowledge development through case writing, this thesis explores the potential of video narratives as another way of helping to codify teacher knowledge and practice – i.e., a form of video case. The use of video, as Sherin (2004) noted, has existed for some time but has expanded in recent times as the ability to share video quickly and easily via the internet has opened up new opportunities and possibilities for teachers.

Sherin (2007) pointed out that much of the initial use of teacher video centred on the micro-analysis of individual lessons (harking back to application of video as a way to share “tips and tricks” and suggestive of a technical rationality view of development). Unfortunately, despite the extensive use of video in teacher education, there still appears to be a lack of understanding of precisely what it is about video that provides support for teachers in making meaning from their experiences and why it is sometimes seen as a “shareable form” of teacher knowledge (Janík & Seidel, 2009).

It seems reasonable to suggest that one of the enduring challenges in teacher learning is finding routes into teacher thinking that matter to teachers themselves, thereby creating a sense of agency through acknowledging and utilizing their own knowledge of practice. Reflective

practice, which has received much attention in recent years from psychologists and educators alike (see for example, Copeland, Birmingham, de la Cruz, & Lewin, 1993; Harrington & Hathaway, 1994; King & Kitchener, 1994; Liston & Zeichner, 1987; Schön, 1983, 1987), is recognized as a central process and benchmark disposition of teachers as they engage in the teaching/learning process. Reflection has been well recognized as offering a way for teachers to step out from their automatic routines and operate more in the “present and critical state” to enhance their understanding of their teaching and the concomitant learning of their students. It is within this context that the use of video narrative is examined through the research that comprises this thesis.

Video: A window into teacher learning

Connelly and Clandinin (1986) found that image and story can play an important part in influencing teacher thinking and behavior. Mayes (2003) argued that ‘in order for teachers to reflect deeply upon themselves, they need powerful models and images to guide their introspection’ (p. 81). Mayes (2003) argued that in teacher reflectivity, as in the therapeutic processes, psychic energy must ultimately be “contained” by models and modalities that enable one to make sense of their inner and outer experiences, enabling those experiences to ‘form the basis for the transformation of self, setting, and other’ (p. 81). Through such access to the inner self, Polkinghorne (1988) (as with others, e.g., Clark & Rossiter, 2008; Riessman, 1993) similarly argued that the articulation of self and practice can unfold through the construction of story. Thus, narrative can provide a means through which to codify and understand the complexity of teacher knowledge.

This research explores how humanistic prompts in the form of images and story, in this case through the video titled “Wright’s Law”, have potential to become more intertwined with the viewer’s own context and practice. In this way, such prompts may potentially be more relevant to teachers by going well beyond the technical competencies presented in traditional theory-based approaches to teacher professional development and learning.

As this thesis will illustrate, there is great potential for narrative of this form to facilitate greater contextual self-understanding for teachers. Developing such self-understanding supports teachers in making choices that are more conscious and deliberate in relation to their students, their own self influences and, importantly, their own further professional development and growth (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994). This thesis therefore sets out to explore and

better understand ways in which elements of video narratives may impact on teacher thinking and practice.

The research context

The use of narrative video sits comfortably with the ongoing interest in the quality of teachers and teaching as key determinants of student learning outcomes (Brophy & Good, 1986; Darling Hammond, 2000; Ferguson, 1991; Ferguson & Ladd, 1996; Fraser, Walberg, Welch, & Hattie, 1987; Hugener, Pauli, Reusser, Lipowsky, Rakoczy, & Klieme, 2009; Muijs & Reynolds, 2000; Seidel & Shavelson, 2007; Wenglinsky, 2002). Recognition of the influential role of teachers has highlighted the importance of providing them with educational opportunities that ultimately aim to further develop their professional competencies (Smith, 2017). This process, most commonly referred to as professional development (PD), has been widely linked to increasing teacher quality (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). However, it has been well argued that PD often tends to position teachers as passive receivers of information (Bunten, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 1990; Newcomer & Collier, 2015), creating a position where “effective practice” is mandated and passed down to teachers (Bunten, 2014). Yet recent research has provided empirical evidence to suggest that teachers are not passive policy followers; rather they are active agents, who interpret, negotiate, adapt, and/or implement messages in their own contexts and in their own idiosyncratic ways (Bunten, 2014; Coburn, 2001; Newcomer & Collier, 2015).

PD constructed in ways described as “doing things to teachers” (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009; Mockler, 2005) is often a consequence of a policy-driven approach to the improvement of teaching. This approach is often based on an assumption about what excellent teaching looks like, i.e., it presents and promotes ways of teaching that are assumed to be the right or best way to “do teaching”. But as Boyd & Tibke (2012) pointed out, such an assumption undermines the value of teachers inquiring, discovering or reinventing for themselves in their particular context.

A key issue for teachers within the technical rationality model of teacher learning is the view that teachers take an uncritical view of their own practice. Thus, in accepting the “right way” to perform, the individual and specific contextual factors inherent in teachers’ local school and class context are largely overlooked or ignored. Many studies have illustrated that PD based on such an approach has failed to do what it intended, i.e., to improve student outcomes

(see for example, Blank, de las Alas, & Smith, 2008; Meiers & Ingvarson, 2005; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007).

Recognition of the limitations of traditional approaches to PD has encouraged a serious push for the development of alternate approaches to support teacher change - such as the use of narrative based video which is at the heart of the research in this thesis. Korthagen (2001), amongst others, argued that to better understand teacher change there is a need to go well beyond a cognitive stance, as teaching is a profession in which feelings and emotions play an essential role (Nias, 1996; Hargreaves, 1998a).

Humanistic psychologists included the development of the self as a central aspect of teacher development (see for example Combs, Blume, Newman, & Wass, 1974). Hamacheck (1999) argued that in terms of mechanisms for teacher change, it is vital that teachers are not only cognitively aware of their internal state, but that they are emotionally in touch with their core qualities such that they begin to make conscious decisions and carry out those decisions within their practice. Thus, there is a need for approaches that attend to the growth of teachers by taking into account links between ‘cognitive, emotional, social and personal development in the journey towards expertise in teaching’ (Day, 1999, p. 69).

This research at the heart of this thesis aims to assist in better understanding the nature of teacher change through exploring routes into the complexity of practice that integrate these developmental links in a more holistic manner. This approach may support teachers in making personal meaning from their own experience and taking relevant action in relation to student learning.

Aims of the research

The challenge of finding different and deeper routes into teacher thinking and practice prompted this research into narrative-based education video for teacher professional learning. The main purpose of the research is to explore the influence of narrative-based video on teaching thinking and practice. The research purpose will be fully explored by addressing the following three sub-questions:

1. How did participants respond to viewing narrative-based video?
2. What features of the narrative-based video influenced how the participants responded?
3. How did the narrative features prompt changes to teacher thinking and practice?

About the video

The narrative based video used within the main study of this thesis is *Wright's Law* (New York Times, 2012). *Wright's Law* is a twelve-minute video published for the New York Times by filmmaker Zack Conkle - a former student of Mr Wright. The video contains strong use of plot, character, setting and theme - elements which are commonly considered to be essential elements of narrative (McKee, 1997).

Wright's Law focuses the narrative around the central character of the high school teacher, Mr Wright, a 45-year-old teacher at Louisville Male High School. The opening images show the veteran of 23 years, teaching through exciting experiments with students which involve air pressure and fiery chemicals. However, despite Mr Wright's engaging teaching with his students, the plot takes a twist as Mr Wright is shown going home to his own issues – his own son Adam, 12 years of age, who has Joubert syndrome (an extremely rare disease that renders a cognitively normally functioning brain encased in a body that won't physically respond to the brain's messages). The result is that Adam is trapped in a wheel chair without the ability to control any movements or to speak.

The short film is non-fiction and depicts real life events. The use of non-linear plot engages the viewer who is drawn into interpreting what is happening, to whom, and why. (The narrative elements which are present within *Wright's Law* are expanded upon in Chapter 3 – Method).

Significance of the study

The research underpinning this thesis holds significance for the field of teacher professional development and learning. As the thesis illustrates, narrative-based video may be useful in providing a different type of prompt for reflection and subsequent action in contrast to a more technical approach to teacher development.

The thesis makes clear how narrative video is able to capture both the human and technical aspects of teaching, assisting the viewer to see into the complex and sophisticated nature of teaching. *Wright's Law* effectively captures and portrays the essence of teaching and in doing so provides a form of shortcut to that which teachers value as the universal elements of teaching. The complex and sophisticated nature of teaching is exposed in a way which enables teachers to reflect upon their present and personal contexts and consider how these influence practice.

Through detailed analysis of three substantial and rich case studies (major chapters in the full thesis), the complexity of teaching comes to the fore and offers a way for teachers to reconsider the one-size-fits-all solution to improving practice they so often experience through PD. Seeing and appreciating teaching as complex is significant because it acknowledges the dynamic interplay of forces which ultimately shape student learning and subsequently highlights the sophisticated nature of expertise required to realize enhance student learning.

The layout of this thesis

The thesis is presented through 11 chapters as briefly described below.

Chapter 1 (Introduction) has offered a brief background to the study, the artefact used for the research, and the perceived significance of the research.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature and explores the thinking and action that has traditionally framed common approaches to teacher professional development. The chapter explores the limitations of these practices in terms of producing meaningful teacher learning and examines research associated with teacher learning, leading to an exploration of the narrative video as a prompt for reflection on practice.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the video artefact Wright's Law used in the research and fully describes the narrative features present within this particular video.

Chapter 4 outlines the research method and provides detailed information about what took place, how the data were developed and collected, methods of analysis and the epistemological and theoretical grounding of the research.

The next three chapters comprise the main data chapters of the thesis and provide extensive case studies. Chapter 5, the case study of Asha, outlines her background, her reactions to the video and her subsequent actions in response to the video after 3 months. Chapter 6 describes Lee, a mature age teacher in her second year of teaching. This chapter similarly provides an understanding of Lee's background, her initial responses to the video and her subsequent actions. Chapter 7 describes Sara, a first-year graduate teacher. The chapter follows the same organisational structure as the previous two chapters including Sara's background, her initial responses to viewing the video, and insights into the changes in her thinking and action after a period of 3 months.

Chapter 8 offers a detailed cross-case analysis of the three case studies, the result of which illustrates how the use of video acts as a powerful prompt for reflection on practice. In-depth

data analysis highlights how the video prompt led to key reflective outcomes which included participants developing attitudes for reflection, engaging in autobiographical reflection, naming their restraints and taking action. In addition, key narrative features of the video were revealed to be influential factors in developing these outcomes - which are detailed in chapter 9.

Chapter 9 establishes and classifies categories within the narrative video which influenced participants' thinking and action. The classic elements of narrative, plot and character emerge as having the most influence on participants' thinking and action. Further analysis of participants' reactions to plot and character also revealed sub-categories of features and sub-features that illustrated specific influences on participants, in particular the ways in which narrative features surfaced facets of humanness that connected with participants' own sense of humanity.

Chapter 10 highlights the implications of the research in terms of finding routes into teacher thinking and practice which uncover the complexity of teaching for teachers themselves. Through doing so, the humanistic prompt opens a space for developing more conscious and thoughtful teaching as teachers grapple with the multiple aspects of their practice within their own context. The Chapter illustrates how seeing and appreciating teaching as complex in this way is significant because it acknowledges the dynamic interplay of forces which ultimately shape student learning – a major driver of teacher change.

Chapter 11 concludes the thesis and does so by returning to the research questions and restating that which has been learnt. It also considers the implications of the study for teacher professional learning as a consequence of using narrative-based video.

Chapter overview

This chapter has introduced the thesis and set the context for the study. The following chapter offers an examination of the relevant literature in relation to teacher development, growth and learning, leading to a focus on the role of narrative and video as a prompt for change in teacher thinking and practice.

Chapter 2

Literature review

Defining the context

Teachers possess specialist knowledge about, and of, practice. However, an elusive goal for the profession is the attainment of ways to utilise such knowledge and practice effectively (Ovens, 2006). One of the issues associated with better recognizing and valuing teacher knowledge is that by its very nature it is practical, personal, situated (Clandinin, 1986; Elbaz, 1983) and, largely tacit. Hence it is embodied within teachers' actions (Schön, 1983). Consequently, it is often considered difficult to share and communicate teacher knowledge due to a lack of an explicit or shared language around teachers' thinking, largely because of the ways in which such thinking is manifested within learning interactions. Furthermore, for teachers busy with the everyday demands of teaching, there may seem to be little opportunity, time or obvious reason to express their implicit knowledge and expose the beliefs underpinning their practice (Hollon, Roth & Anderson, 1991; Loughran, Milroy, Berry, Gunstone, & Mulhall, 2001).

For the last hundred years, the development of teachers has been premised on the idea that knowledge about teaching and learning is "easily able to be transmitted" to teachers by others from outside the classroom (Johnson & Golombek, 2002). Over this time, teachers have been positioned largely as receivers of information, and as such, have been somewhat marginalised from the main reform agendas around improvements in their own profession (Naidu, 2011). One consequence of this approach, especially when considered in relation to Professional Development (PD) intentions and activities, is that teachers commonly do not participate in the codification of their own knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990).

The bureaucratic systems and concurrent expectations around the outcomes of PD, also create challenges for representing a perspective on teacher learning that captures the complexity of teaching which encourages teachers to think and work differently. Education systems often require neat, measurable outcomes in the immediate term, irrespective of the nature of the PD undertaken. It could also be argued that at present, a standards-based reform agenda and standardised academic achievement drive much of the PD currently offered to teachers (especially so for Victorian State education in Australia which is the context of this study). As such, the prevailing paradigm of PD tends to be largely functional or technical in design.

From a system perspective, it is common for PD to be designed to equip teachers with tools that can be used in the classroom immediately - to make teaching easier, quicker and ideally, better. But the extent to which such design leads to teachers thinking or acting differently, particularly in relation to impacting student learning, is questionable (Fraser, Kennedy, Reid, & McKinney, 2007; Groundwater-Smith, & Mockler, 2009; Smith, 2017; Webster-Wright, 2009). This situation is possibly due to the fact that behaviours and competencies are usually the only levels which are directly observable by others, thus can be measured and used to justify funding or accountability (Bradshaw, 2014).

Bates (2014) argued that a competency-based view devalues the intellectual rigor of teaching, shifting the focus toward the most basic, deskilled views of teaching. She argues that teaching, from that perspective, becomes a profession that is simply about taking direction and implementing it, noticeably without asking any questions. Therefore, teachers are removed from the process of designing and implementing curriculum even though they have the knowledge of their students and knowledge about their unique teaching contexts and communities. Bradshaw (2014) similarly argued that this simplified view of teaching is damaging and incorrect and creates a misconception of teaching as an almost non-intellectual practice. Further to this, Watkins, Carnell and Lodge (2007) noted that:

Sadly we hear stories that teachers are treated to experiences [in which]: they are talked at, on someone else's agenda, expected to comply and judged afterwards. This is what teachers' in-service training [PD] has become on too many occasions. (p. 71)

The expectations of teachers themselves around professional development also appear to contribute to this agenda. Teachers, too, can appear to desire functional professional development – activities, tasks, lessons which will help to make their busy lives easier and more manageable. One could hardly blame them - the reality of teaching is that it is a very demanding profession. Loughran (2010) stated that in the busyness of teaching, anything that draws teachers away from the immediate task of *doing* teaching is seen as an “unnecessary distraction”. He contended that it is not difficult to see why many teachers desire and look for PD that offers ideas and strategies that will work in their classrooms.

Schon (1983) described the technical approach to professional development as a context-free view of knowledge that overemphasises knowledge gathered through a scientific method in a

linear, often formulaic manner. This view of professional knowledge, he argued, emerged out of positivism and enlightenment assumptions of rationality.

From a technical rationalist point of view, teachers administrate someone else's knowledge, applying facts and data from other people's work to the problems they face in their own classrooms. This tendency leads to the mistaken notion that knowledge gained by scientific research and represented in abstract technical formulations is the only legitimate knowledge available to inform and shape practice (Tremmel, 1993). However, in the social sciences it is argued, and certainly by many who see education as a discipline (Loughran & Russell, 2007), that knowledge cannot be adequately explained, researched or advanced appropriately through such an ideology of instrumental rationalism (Beyer, 1988). (For example, from a sociocultural perspective, an alternative argument is that 'professional knowing' will always be a contested area (Blackler, 1995) and therefore an inquiry approach to teacher learning and development seems appropriate. It may also be reasonable to argue that teaching is so heavily based on relationships and on the identity of the teacher that this creates the need for a personalised and inquiry-based approach.)

A key issue for teachers within the technical rationality model of teacher learning, is the assumption that teachers take an *uncritical* view of their own practice, accepting the "right way" as unchallenged and given, and separate from the individual and specific contextual factors inherent in their local school and class context. It could well be argued that there is a personal and professional cost to this technical agenda for teacher learning. In British education for example, the consequences of an overly technical agenda have been well described by Alexander (2011) through the British government-funded Cambridge Primary Review:

... in many primary schools, a professional culture of excitement, inventiveness and healthy scepticism has been supplanted by one of dependency, compliance and even fear; and the approach may in some cases have depressed both standards of learning and the quality of teaching. (p. 267)

Mason (2002) was of the view that what matters most within PD was not necessarily technical functionality, but rather, the development of awareness. Indeed, Mason noted that a fundamental problem of the technical paradigm is that 'rationality is not the central feature of most people's psyche' (p. 7). Mason (2002), like many others in more recent times, was keen for the profession of teaching to be understood through the lens of professional learning which

he described as. ‘personal enquiry, stimulated and supported by work with colleagues, but essentially a psychological issue with a socio-cultural ecology’ (p. 5). According to Baxter Magolda (1999), such contextual knowing involves constructing one's perspective in the context of one's experience, available information, and the experiences of others. Similarly, Maher & Tetreault (1994) asserted that:

... if the learning settings can help teachers to understand the workings of positional dynamics in their lives then they can begin to challenge them and to create change. (1994, p. 203)

Bushnell & Henry (2003) argued that an over-reliance on decontextualised knowledge in teacher learning had the possibility of constructing ‘technically proficient but thoughtless teachers’ (p. 43). Hillocks (1999) argued that outside forces, such as the standards movement or changes to the curriculum, do not encourage teachers to develop new ways of thinking about knowledge. Instead, he asserted, change in thinking and reflective practice necessarily entail a need for teachers to reconstruct their knowledge - especially if they hold non-optimistic beliefs about students, and if they have adopted an objectivist epistemological stance. He was of the view that reformers needed to find new ways and means of helping teachers reconstruct their knowledge and stance (Hillocks, 1999).

Teachers matter

Hargreaves (1998a) and Salzberger-Wittenberg, Henry, & Osborne, (1983) amongst others, have argued for the acknowledgement of emotional contexts within teacher practice. Hargreaves (1998) stated that standards-based and cognitive driven reforms do not capture all of what matters most to developing quality teaching. He suggested that teaching and learning are not only about knowledge, cognition and skill, but that teaching and learning are emotional in nature; which has implications for practice. Further to this, Furlong, Campbell, Howson, Lewis, & McNamara (2006) stated that teachers who hold a social/relational paradigm of teaching are at risk of adverse personal and professional effects as they ‘swim against the tide’ (p. 43) of a technical-rationalist model of training.

Not surprisingly, researchers have argued the case for the *personal* development of educators (Fullan, 1991; Hargreaves, 1998b). Research conducted in New Zealand and England on the development of the person, found that although leaders knew that personal learning was important in respect of *who teachers are* in the classroom, professional learning designed in such a way as to enhance teachers’ personal learning (Robertson & Murihiy, 2005) was often

lacking. Leithwood (1990) purported that teacher development programs and school structures and cultures ‘do not acknowledge the interdependence of psychological and professional development’ (p. 159).

Gouldner (1970) suggested that teachers and leaders require opportunities to investigate themselves and their own values and beliefs in the learning process, stressing the importance of being able to ‘... acquire the ingrained habit of viewing your own beliefs as you view those held by others’ and, that ‘... to know others you cannot simply study them but must listen to and confront yourself’ (p. 493).

At least as far back as the research of Foster (1997) it was reported that a teacher requires imagination and enthusiasm, and both have to be renewed, and that for new teachers (in particular):

... continually developing themselves is the best route to becoming good teachers. Only after they understand the importance of self-development are they ready to teach. (p. 165)

In sum, as the literature consistently suggests over time, a technical-rationalist approach characterizes common PD structure and practice as less than effective in affecting change in teacher practice. Hence the growing focus on a change in consideration of development to encompass notions of Professional Learning (PL).

The importance of reflection in teacher learning

Since (at least) Dewey (1933), educators and psychologists have grappled with notions of learning from experience and the sophisticated and subtle problem of extracting meaning from experience (Reiman, 1999). Dewey contributed much to our appreciation of the importance of experience and the place of reflection in learning and his ideas have been revisited through the profession for decades. Boud & Walker (1991) described reflection as:

... a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations. (p. 19)

Reflective practice, which has received much attention from psychologists and educators (Copeland et al., 1993; Harrington & Hathaway, 1994; King & Kitchener, 1993; Liston & Zeichner, 1987; Schon, 1987) is recognized as a central process and benchmark disposition of teachers as they engage in the teaching/learning process. Dewey (1933) argued that developing

the attitudes that a person brings to bear on the act of reflection either open or curb the way for reflection. He identified three attitudes as important for engaging in meaningful reflection: open-mindedness; wholeheartedness; and, responsibility. Dewey (1933) also made an important distinction between human action that is reflective and that which is routine. According to Dewey, routine action is behaviour that is guided by impulse, tradition and authority. As long as everyday life continues without major interruption this reality is perceived to be unproblematic (Boeve, 2003; Dewey, 1933).

Boud & Walker (1991) argued that no matter how much formal education and training people received, they would not really be equipped for a position of responsibility unless they had the ability to learn from their experience. Donald Schon (1983; 1987), as a most articulate advocate of this position, coined the term “reflective practitioner” to describe those trying to make sense of their messy reality: to learn through reflecting upon it and by constructing schemas which might help to guide them through learning from their work.

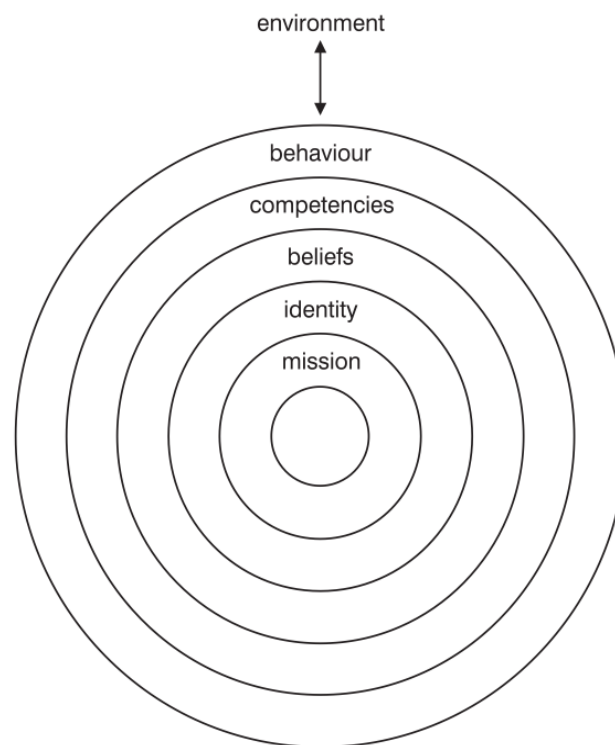
Schön (1983; 1987) described the development of (teachers’) reflection through two specific forms: *reflection-on-action* and *reflection-in-action* (1987, p. 25). While reflection-on-action was described as a more deliberate and explicit form of practice, reflection-in-action encompasses more metacognitive (perhaps even sub-conscious) awareness through which knowledge and action are linked.

Korthagen & Vasalos (2005) argued that traditional forms of reflection, which focus on teacher behaviours and skills, result in only limited change in practice. They proposed a more personal, fundamental form of reflection which they termed “core reflection”. The focus on core reflection aligns with the recent emphasis on positive psychology. Korthagen & Vasalos’ “onion model”, see figure 2.1, shows various levels which can influence the way a teacher functions.

In this model, the two inner most levels of teacher reflection are described as the mission and identity layers. Korthagen & Vasalos (2005) proposed that reflection on the level of mission triggers such issues as “why” the person decided to become a teacher, and what they see as their calling in the world. This level of reflection is concerned with what inspires teachers and gives meaning and significance to the work in their lives (Hansen, 1995; Korthagen, 2004; Palmer, 2004). It is referred to as a transpersonal level of reflection, which concerns an awareness of human relationships as part of meaningful wholes, particularly in terms of ‘super-

individual units such as family, social group, culture and cosmic order’ (Boucouvalas, 1988, pp. 57–58).

Figure 2.1: The Onion model of Core Reflection



Getting in touch with the levels of identity and mission has a very practical significance (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). By formulating the ideal situation, together with the factors experienced as inhibiting the realization of that condition, an individual can become aware of an inner tension or discrepancy that touches their very core. The essential aspect at that point is then being able to take a step back and become aware of choice, deciding whether to allow limiting factors to determine behaviour.

Sheldon, Williams, & Joiner, (2003) claimed that this awareness of “having a choice” is one of the most fundamental factors in a person’s development as it contributes to personal autonomy. (Prompts such as video narrative, which have potential to trigger such awareness of limiting factors within a teacher’s practice, is a central focus of this research.)

Reflection: Linking to self and experience

Loughran (2010) described “links” as making connections across ideas so that prior knowledge and new knowledge might interact in ways to develop new understandings. In practice,

according to Loughran, no item of experience is meaningful in its own right. It is made meaningful through the ways it is linked to other items. Linkage creates a context for understanding circumstance and mediates the understandings that linkage puts into play.

In teaching, linking learning to episodes and events in students' lives clearly helps to make learning more relevant (Loughran, 2010). Making personal connections gives "permission" for students to think in different ways about the work they are doing. In this way, learning progresses beyond mere remembering of information and becomes more intertwined and evocative through experience. In some circumstances, even unrelated events can be brought together to make sense of a situation. Along with students, teachers too can fall into the trap of paying too much attention to the everyday demands of schooling, and inadvertently shun the links that exist between these occurrences and their prior knowledge, experiences, ideas and events. Developing an awareness of such links could enhance their learning. Videos may therefore be seen to play a role in linking teachers to such personal experiences and ideas, and in so doing, bring greater relevance and mindfulness to the task of teaching.

Mason (2002) commented on the use of video as a linking agent. He stated that incidents within a video that strike a viewer usually resonate or trigger associations with incidents recalled from the past. Describing these to others vividly and briefly through video, to resonate or trigger their own recollections, can provide a database of rich experiences which can be accessed through the use of pertinent labels. By getting teachers to recount specific incidents briefly from a video with a minimum of evaluation, teachers soon recognised incidents from their viewing as being similar to those they had experienced in their own context (Mason, 2002). The videos therefore became a "way in" to participants' own past experience and hence enabled access to their lived experience.

Autobiography

Autobiography involves the learner's awareness of the relation between theory and lived experience. Bushnell & Henry (2003) suggested that autobiography can function as a bridge between the learner, educational history and theories, and the empowerment necessary to enact change. As a form of reflective knowing, autobiography may help teachers understand more fully aspects of learning, knowledge and education, by exploring various contexts that influence such understandings. Such reflective knowing explores some of the experiential and purposive contexts that influence knowledge creation.

Bushnell & Henry (2003) argued that intellectual maturity and self-awareness may arise from teachers reflecting on their past experiences, leading them to be more confident critical thinkers and problem solvers. Given that autobiographical reflection (according to Calkins & Harwayne, 1991), is mostly about rendering the ordinariness of our lives so that it becomes significant, this type of reflection has potential to develop greater self-awareness in individuals. The challenge of undertaking autobiographical reflection lies within the experience of discovering memories no-one talks about to understand how they shape who we are.

Korthagen & Vasalos (2005) were of the view that an important process in teachers' reflective practice involves tracing relevant past experiences associated with their success of achieving a desired situation. By immersing themselves in past experiences, teachers may be able to re-experience critical personal qualities and, by doing so, access the will to again mobilise these qualities. By recalling successful experiences from their histories, teachers can come into contact with an inner potential — for example, the core quality of self-confidence. Limiting beliefs or images may well repress important core qualities for so long that a stimulus from outside may be necessary to reactivate them (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005).

Autobiographical reflection represents the first of four lenses of critical reflection (Brookfield, 1995). By using autobiography to begin to investigate childhood, to start to uncover the assumptions which underlie practice, Brookfield noted that:

First we need to find out what our assumptions are ... To uncover these implicit assumptions, it is often helpful to involve other people (friends, family, work colleagues) who help us see ourselves and our actions from unfamiliar perspectives. Sometimes reading books, watching videos or having new experiences such as traveling to other cultures, going to college or being an intern help us become aware of our assumptions. (p. 14)

In a similar vein, Mason (2002) stated that what 'seem[s] to be helpful is prompting people to experience something which sheds light on their past experience and offers to inform their future choices' (p. 5). Clark & Rossiter (2008) noted that stories have an explicit role in linking to autobiographies:

Stories draw us into an experience at more than a cognitive level; they engage our spirit, our imagination, our heart, and this engagement is complex and holistic. Good stories transport us away from the present

moment, sometimes even to another level of consciousness. They evoke other experiences we've had, and those experiences become real again.
(p. 65)

Riessman (1993), in her book *Narrative Analysis*, also posited that the analysis of narratives becomes a way of analysing past experience. Because we do not have direct access to experience, our sense of who and what we are, as well as the character of our social worlds, is constructed by formulating these into stories. Through teachers reflecting autobiographically as a result of narrative, they develop a new awareness of their agency and the structural components of their lived experience (Hillocks, 1999).

The use of video as a stimulus for teacher reflection

Much research has focused on mechanisms by which teachers can be supported to reflect deeply into their practice. The use of video has been suggested as an approach to both capture practice and present it as a tool for teacher reflection and learning (Sherin, 2004). Codifying teacher knowledge and practice through video, although not new, has grown in recent times as the ability to share video quickly and easily via the internet has created new opportunities for teachers to gain greater access to others' practice. As early as the 1960s, micro-teaching was developed in parallel with the introduction of the portable video recorder (Olivero, 1965). Micro-teaching was largely based on a behaviourist view of teaching, the central tenet being that teaching is a well-defined activity consisting of a set of skills to be practiced and learned. Video footage of teaching enabled teachers to notice and attend to such "micro" aspects of practice. Sherin (2007) reported that micro-teaching maintained its status as a tool for teacher education for over two decades and effectively launched the use of video in teacher education. As behaviourism gave way to cognitive psychology in the early 1980s, researchers and teacher educators began to focus more on the ways in which "teachers think" rather than on the ways in which they behaved (Clark & Lampert, 1986; Day, Calderhead, & Denicolo, 1993; Elbaz, 1983; Zeichner, 1994).

The idea of teaching as a complex, ill-structured activity gained momentum. Expert teachers were seen as having rich resources to draw on during instruction (Berliner, 1986). One implication for teacher education was the idea that novice teachers could learn from studying the practice of more expert teachers. According to Sherin (2007) the use of video to model expert teaching illustrated the beginning of an important shift in research on teaching and in teacher education. The focus on expert teachers, reflected an attempt to look beyond teaching

behaviours and examine the "wisdom of practice" - how expert teachers made decisions in the classroom and the knowledge that served as the basis for those decisions (L. Shulman, 1986).

By the late 1980s, teacher education programs began to look for new models of innovation, and many chose to experiment with case-based pedagogy. Similar to the use of cases in business and law, teaching-cases were designed to provide novice teachers with rich examples of pedagogical dilemmas. Cases were presented as text-based narratives, and in some instances included commentaries. Both pre-service and PL programs were created and implemented whereby groups of teachers could participate in a series of "case discussions" guided by a facilitator. Cases raised a number of issues for teachers to explore through these discussions (J Shulman, 1992; Shulman & Colbert, 1987; Silerman, Welty & Lyons, 1992). Case methods reflected the field's growing interest in not only "what teachers know but in how that knowledge is represented. The role of narrative in cases, effectively illustrated context based dilemmas and sometimes captured teacher thinking in relation to such dilemmas. This this led cases to resonate well with other teachers (Sherin, 2004).

Sherin (2004) noted how the rise of case-based pedagogy through text-based narratives, throughout the 80s and 90s, provided novice teachers with rich examples of pedagogical dilemmas. Video-based cases were also offered up as a basis for pedagogical reflection and for the development of teachers' professional knowledge. However, over time, written narrative cases continued to be the most popular form of case methods in teacher education (Merseth & Lacey, 1993; J. Shulman, 1992). Sherin (2004) argued that, unlike video, written cases distilled what happened in a classroom in a story-based format, and in so doing, written narrative cases provided background and contextual information, as well as a first- or third-person reflection on the unfolding pedagogical dilemma.

By the mid-1990s, some teacher educators were developing teaching cases which were presented to preservice teachers through the means of video rather than in a written form. Yet, as Sherin (2007) noted, video-based cases were not developed with the richness of narrative and context that was found in the written cases of practice, and subsequently played less of a role in teacher development than the written cases. Interestingly, despite the extensive use of video in teacher education, a lack of understanding of precisely what it is about video that might provide support for teacher learning was lacking (Janík & Seidel, 2009). That situation may well be because the bulk of video used as teacher professional learning was ostensibly technical in nature.

Online video education sharing sites, such as *TeacherTube* or *Edublogs*, contain videos which tend to rely on external experts as the providers of functional knowledge. If teachers are present within the video, the nature of the content invariably shows only the “doing” of teaching, the lessons and activities, without the articulation of the beliefs underpinning those activities or teacher explanations about the pedagogical intentions of the lesson itself. Hence, it could well be argued that current approaches to sharing teacher knowledge through video fail to capitalise on the potential of the medium by overlooking more contextual or affective articulations of knowledge and practice. Such insights, if included, may lead to greater self-awareness and critical reflection.

Using narrative

Narrative is constructed as a mode of thinking (Bruner, 1986). Johnson & Golombek (2002) asserted that how we reflect on experience and how we make sense of our experiences are achieved through the stories we tell and are valuable for exhibiting the richness of human experiences. Through narratives, individuals play an active role in constructing their own lives by seeking to make sense of their experiences by imposing order on those experiences (Sarbin, 1986) and by seeing one’s self constituted as a story (Polkinghorne, 1988). It has been argued that narrative is how we craft our sense of self, our identity - the way individuals construct their identities as active agents of their own lives (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009; Rosenwald & Ochsberg, 1992).

Polkinghorne (1988) stated that narratives are taken to reveal “who we are” as persons. He described narrative as:

... the basic figuration process that produces the human experience of one's own life and action and the lives and actions of others. Through the action of emplotment, the narrative form constitutes human reality into wholes, manifests human values, and bestows meaning on life. (p. 159)

He argued that narrative is a conduit to, if not constitutive of, domains of social and psychological experience that are otherwise hidden. Stories represent a way of knowing and thinking that is particularly suited to supporting teachers to reconstruct their stance, and surface the issues underlying practice (Martin, 1986). Indeed, it is suggested that teacher knowledge is often arranged in images (Calderhead, 1989), stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Gudmundsdottir, 1997), cases and or events (Doyle, 1990). Connelly and Clandinin (1986)

stressed that images, in particular, play an important part in shaping teacher behaviour, while Carter (1993) contended that through constructing stories:

... authors attempt to convey their intentions by selecting incidents and details, arranging time and sequence, and employing a variety of codes and conventions that exist in a culture ... readers, in turn, seek coherence and causal connections among these incidents and conventions as they construct for themselves, often retrospectively, the meaning or theme of the story. (p. 6)

In this way articulation of practice can unfold through the construction of story, and thus may provide a means through which to understand and articulate teacher knowledge. Willingham (2004) stated that psychologists frequently refer to stories as being “psychologically privileged”, in that our minds treat stories differently to other types of material. Exactly what leads our minds to handle stories in such a privileged way is not fully understood, but it has been suggested that understanding the actions and characters in a story calls on the same processes we use in trying to understand the actions and intentions of people in the real world (Bower, 1978).

Classic elements of narrative

A narrative is described as the recounting of a series of events in a particular place in which characters move through, or cause, a series of chronological events - a *Fabula* (Bal 1997). McKee (1997), amongst others, distilled the narrative into the elements of plot, setting, character, and theme. Willingham (2004) stated that one key reason stories are easy to comprehend and remember is because we inherently know these structural elements, and that gives us a reasonable idea of what to expect. Guber (2011) was also of the view that “story format” is hardwired deep within our brain, with the mechanisms of plot (Obrien & Myers, 1987) theme (Merrill, 2002), character (Phelan, 1989) and setting (Sacks, 1995) acting to focus the viewer’s/reader’s attention.

Setting

If I could have said it in words, I would have. Then I wouldn’t have needed to make the picture. (Kurosawa & Cardullo, 2008, p. 8)

It has been suggested that in human perceptual experience, nothing conveys information or evokes emotion quite as clearly as our visual sense (Hesley & Hesley, 1998). Pound (1916) stated that the image is the word beyond formulated language, not an idea, but ‘a radiant node

or cluster ... a vortex, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing' (p. 106).

Filmmakers capture the richness of this visual sense in a moving form and combine it with auditory stimuli to create the medium of film. With this combination of moving imagery, auditory stimuli, and altered time sequence, the viewer is presented with images of a world which exists *elsewhere*. This "elsewhere world" Metz (1974) points to film, whether fiction or non-fiction being of "the imaginary" and Guber (2011) concurs suggesting that the brain does not distinguish between a lived image and an imagined one.

Within a visual narrative such as film, images of the setting, including the place and time of the film, adds to viewer engagement and believability (McKee, 1997). Whilst the visual image allows for the imaginary, it also allows for exposition of reality conveying information about the context, biography and characterisation – in essence what the audience needs to know; whilst 'skill in exposition means making it invisible' (McKee, 1997, p. 335). McKee (1997) went on to state that 'The camera is the dread X-ray machine of all things false. It magnifies life many times over, then strips naked every weak or phony turn ... (p. 6).

Good stories tend to imply rather than baldly state the eternal truth they are illustrating (Nair, 2003) with the visual image depicting honest natural scenes in which people talk and behave in honest natural ways, indirectly passing on the necessary facts without labouring the exposition. Significant pauses, emotional expressions such as cries and whimpers, or physical gestures, such as upturned or downturned hands and rolled eyes, can add recognizable meaning over and above what is actually said (Gubrium & Holstein, 1998).

Character

Character refers to a person(s) within a story and their characteristics (Keen, 2006). Characterization is the process by which the author presents characters in order to "bring them alive" to the reader (Chatman, 1993).

Good characterization gives readers a strong sense of a character's personality and inherent complexities; it makes characters vivid, alive and believable (Gerrig, 1993). The key to interesting characters is to allow the audience to observe them in action (Willingham, 2004). McKee (1997) argued that true character is revealed in the choices a human being makes under pressure - the greater the pressure, the deeper the revelation. Therefore, the only way to know the truth about characters and their values is to witness them making choices about taking action while under pressure.

Through rich portrayal of character, the viewer can see whether the character is, for example, loving or cruel, generous or selfish, strong or weak, truthful or a liar: ‘As he chooses, he is’ (McKee, 1997, p. 101). The viewer then “identifies”, or otherwise, with the character based on the values seen in the character evidenced through the choices the character makes.

Identification refers to the process by which an individual puts him or herself in the place of a character within a story and vicariously participates in the character’s experiences as if they themselves were the main character (Keen, 2006). Viewers tend to identify more strongly with characters whom they regard as similar to themselves (Hoffner, 1996; McDonald & Kim, 2001; Miller & Reeves, 1976). Viewers also identify more strongly with characters they like. Two main factors which contribute to identification with characters are similarity to the character and likability of the character (Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1982; de Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders, & Beentjes, 2011; Jose & Brewer, 1983).

There is considerable evidence in the research literature that the greater the degree of similarity and likability between the reader/viewer and the character, the greater the degree of identification that results (Altenbernd & Lewis, 1969; Andsager, Bemker, Choi, & Torwel, 2006; Eyal & Rubin, 2003; Perrine, 2002). Stacey (1994) and Cowie (1993), amongst others, found that identification with character is important as it can provide the viewer with role models to which they can aspire. Interestingly, in her long-term research into audience response to film, Stacey (1994) found that identification plays a role in aspiration and inspiration within the real lives of viewers, leading to changes in the viewer’s own identity through providing something for the viewer to strive towards.

Identification is suggested to be one of the mechanisms through which narratives can change attitudes (Green, 2006; Slater & Rouner, 2002). Identification with characters in narrative is a concept with a long tradition in the theory of the impact of media (e.g., Cohen, 2001; Oatley, 1995, 1999, 2002; Vorderer, Steen & Chan, 2006). Identification is an experience in which readers or viewers adopt the perspective of a character and see the narrative events through the character’s eyes (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Cohen, 2001). Oatley (1995, 1999) explained this as a viewer adopting the character’s goals and plans. The reader or viewer then simulates or imagines the events that happen to the character and experiences empathy or emotions related to the success or failure of those plans (Oatley, 1995; Zillmann, 2006). Readers/viewers imagine what it is like to be a character and can carry the illusion of being a character (Cohen, 2001; Tan, 1995).

It has also been argued that narratives can have effects on readers'/viewers' real-world beliefs and attitudes. The phenomenon of narrative impacting on viewers' real-world beliefs and attitudes has been termed "narrative persuasion" (e.g., Appel & Richter, 2007; Diekmann, Gardner & McDonald, 2000; Strange & Leung, 1999) and has attracted research interest from various disciplines such as health, communication (Green, 2006), entertainment, education (de Graaf et al., 2011; Morgan, Movius, & Cody, 2009; Moyer-Guse & Nabi, 2010) and cultivation research (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008).

Although the exact mechanisms through which narratives exert persuasive influence are not clearly established, generally, there is consensus that the extent to which a reader or viewer identifies with the main character and is engrossed in a story, plays a role in generating narrative effects (see, for example, Green & Brock, 2000; Moyer-Guse, 2008). In fact, according to Green (2006), when readers or viewers simulate the events that happen to a character in their imagination, they may come to understand what it is like to experience the described events and thus their attitudes may become more consistent with this vicarious experience (Mar & Oatley, 2008).

Through identification with character, Star & Stickland (2007) argued for the use of video viewing as a means to expand teachers' experience of being observers of classroom practice. Blume (1971) stated that teachers teach as they are taught and Ross (1987) similarly argued that beginning teachers select attributes and practices of their own former teachers and synthesize them into an idealized image or model of the teacher they want to become.

It has been well documented that preservice teachers strive to enact or play out their personal images of teaching despite contextual realities which are often at odds with them (e.g., Aitken & Mildon, 1991; Bullough, 1997; Cole, 1990; Knowles, 1992; Knowles & Hoefler, 1989). However, in the first experiences of teaching, many preservice teachers find these hopes, images, and expectations quickly confronted by exposure to certain realities of schools, classrooms, and teaching (Coles & Knowles, 1993). For example, Star & Stickland (2007) pointed out that many graduates may begin their teaching with few experiences of observing quality teachers and are initially quite weak in the critical skill of noticing the subtleties of how quality teachers manage effective learning. They contended that observation of practice is not always fruitful because many pre-service teachers are not able to focus their attention on key features of teaching while observing. Clearly there is potential importance in providing pre-service teachers with opportunities through which they have greater access to observe quality teaching in a variety of forms. The use of video may present an opportunity for them to focus

explicitly on their ability to notice a range of teaching behaviours and how these impact student learning.

Plot

Plot is described as the sequence of events that propels the story (Booker, 2004). The plot of a narrative enables the normal dimensions of time and sequence to be altered so as to highlight cause and effect relationships (Chatman, 1993). According to Chatman, by moving beyond the observation of day-to-day facts in a normal sequence of time, the viewer is moved beyond the direct observation of reality and placed in a position of having to interpret the sequence of events from their own context. This manipulated sequence of time and reality through plot, works to act as a metaphor for the viewer, where the viewer experiences ‘one kind of thing in terms of another’ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5). Bruner (1990) stated that these ‘emblems... resist logical procedures for establishing what they mean. They must, as we say, be interpreted’ (p. 60).

The essential value of metaphor lies in the transfer of meaning, the capacity to bridge concepts and the capacity to extend the imagination into recognizing new possibilities (Wagener, 2017). Schön (1979) argued that in the therapeutic context, metaphor can be thought of as referring to, ‘a certain kind of product – a perspective or frame, a way of looking at things – and to a certain kind of process by which new perspectives on the world come into existence’ (p. 254). Moon (2007) argued that metaphors present their messages indirectly, disguised by the images within the story. The indirect route allows for a more subtle, less confrontational delivery of messages such that through metaphor:

... we can concentrate on our emotions and reflect upon them in a safe place away from the ordinary world; this being so, we can come to a better understanding of their relation to our beliefs, desires, and actions. (Oatley & Gholamain, 1997, p. 267)

Metaphor within film allows viewers to see themselves reflected via another (Combs et al., 1974) through a process of “externalization” which allows for a more objective entry point into a person’s consideration of their presenting problem (White, 1988). The process of externalization is ‘an approach that encourages persons to objectify, and at times, to personify, the problems that they experience as oppressive’ (White, 1988, p. 1).

Externalizing allows the problem to be regarded as a separate and external entity to the person, or relationship, and opens the door for the viewer to view themselves and the problem in

relationship with each other (White, 1988). By experiencing themselves as separate from the problem, viewers begin to notice other possibilities spontaneously and begin to appreciate other self-narratives; allowing people to experience themselves differently as persons (Zimmerman & Dickerson, 1996).

Kuijpers & Hakemulder (2017) argued that the process of *absorption* in the plot of narrative film is critical in transporting the viewer's thinking into an external space where they can see themselves differently. Transportation, or absorption, refers to the degree to which an individual is immersed in a narrative, 'where all mental systems and capacities become focused on events occurring in the narrative' (Green & Brock, 2000, p. 701). Despite the concept of absorption having been described using different terms - *immersion* (Ryan, 2001), *engagement* (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009) and *entranced* (Holland, 2008) - nonetheless, the literature points to the significant role of plot absorption in influencing audience thinking and behaviour.

Van Laer, de Ruyter, Visconti, & Wetzels (2014) stated that narrative transportation occurs whenever the story receiver experiences a feeling of entering a world evoked by the narrative because of empathy for the story characters and imagination of the story plot. This enhanced state of engagement is dependent upon the appeal of the storyline, the quality of production, and the 'unobtrusiveness of persuasive subtext' (Slater & Rouner, 2002, p. 178). Complications and conflict within the sequence of events also add to the effectiveness of the plot to convey meaning and effect, 'Nothing moves forward in a story except through conflict' (McKee, 1977, p. 210). (Jean Paul Satre noted that conflict is our connection to reality, and therefore speaks to us about what it means to be human.)

Through transportation, the viewer experiences a sort of dissociative state in which ordinary existence is temporarily suspended, serving as a "psychological clutch" in which the individual escapes from their stressors and worries of the day (Butler & Palesh, 2004). Though the suspension of cynicism and belief in the tale holds only as long as we find it authentic (McKee, 1997). It is this suspension of cynicism and escape from ordinary existence through transportation that allows viewers to see themselves and their practice in different ways (Green & Brock, 2000; McKee, 1997; Slater & Rouner, 2002). As research has demonstrated, viewing a film can interfere with viewers' production of counterarguments as to why new possibilities couldn't happen, and in doing so reduce restraint thinking (Slater & Rouner, 2002) and an attitude of open-mindedness (Dewey, 1933) to new forms of thinking and action.

Theme

The theme is the central idea or belief in a story. The nature of the central theme helps to distinguish between genres of stories. Authors or creators couch their message in a certain genre in order to give the audience sufficient rules by which to decode that message. These hints guide the audience and provide clues for interpretation (McKee, 1997).

One such genre is that of folk narrative which utilizes simple “universal” themes such as compassion, generosity, love and humility and expresses such themes by means of using a concrete narrative which is easily understood (Atkinson, 2007). Folk story usually possesses a single principle or moral, and it is intended that this moral is experienced by the reader or viewer as applying equally well to his or her own concerns (Hutton, 1991). These principles or themes within folk literature, are usually serious and powerful with the intention of exploring the human condition as “universal preoccupations” rather than intending to instruct how one must behave (McGeer, 2007). They act to move the audience to contemplate how they might act if they were in a similar situation. Folk story frequently makes use of metaphor which allows people to make sense of complex ideas within a simple message.

A folk story becomes a kind of living philosophy that the viewers grasp as a whole, in a flash without conscious thought. (McKee, 1997, p. 115)

The universal nature of folk narrative can be contrasted to the expository or instructional genre of narrative where the audience is instructed to do something through a series of sequential steps based on real facts and information.

McKee (1997) argued that whilst the process of intellectual rigour in learning how to do something via instructional genre can be of practical assistance to those interested and motivated to act, the appeal of universal narratives is a reflection of ‘the profound human need to grasp the fundamental patterns of living. This is not merely undertaken as an intellectual exercise, but within a very personal, emotional experience’ (McKee, 2000, p. 52).

Universal themes and values

Story is about eternal, universal forms, not formula. (McKee, 1997 p. 3)

Universal themes are linked closely with what is important to us in our lives (Feather, 1992, 1995; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, 1990). Closely held universal themes, such as values, have been described as ‘the priorities individuals attach to certain beliefs, experiences and objects in deciding how they should live and what they should treasure’ (Hill, 1994, p. 7). The natural

way to live up to these values is by behaving in ways that express them (Torelli & Kaikati, 2009). Raths, Harmin, & Simon (1987) described seven general criteria for calling something a value:

- (1) choosing freely,
- (2) choosing from alternatives,
- (3) choosing after thoughtful consideration of the consequences of each alternative,
- (4) prizing and cherishing,
- (5) affirming,
- (6) acting upon choices; and,
- (7) repeating.

However, according to Raths et al. (1987), unless something satisfies all seven of the criteria, it was not called a value, but rather a “belief” or “attitude”.

Despite wide ranging definitions of values in the literature, what is common is that values are enduring over time and context and they motivate action in a particular way. The emphasis on choices for action is important in separating values from beliefs. One may hold several different beliefs, but values are most likely to appear when the individual makes specific choices. According to Lemin, Potts & Welsford (1994), the way we think and act exhibits our values, and teachers’ pedagogical practices illustrate their values.

Stevenson (2016) and Hildebrand (2007), amongst others, were of the view that there are different layers of values, with core values positioned at the centre driving our ideological worldview. Core values are said to be embedded during initial upbringing and create the way a person orients to the world - the filter from which one decides how to act and react to life’s daily challenges. Stevenson argued that when core values are not spoken or acted upon, it creates a nagging within us about something we should not have allowed to happen, or an injustice in which we participated. Stevenson further stated that when our core values are clear to us, we have a greater sense of self and how we orient to the world. When we have not clearly identified these core values, we often have powerful and surprising responses to situations that directly or even indirectly conflict with these values.

One of the core values important to many teachers is an emphasis on caring relationships with students (Davis, 2003; Hargreaves, 1998). Research has demonstrated that a caring relationship between teachers and students can greatly enhance students' educational experience.

Students who feel cared for by teachers exhibit greater academic success (Aultman, Williams-Johnson, Schutz 2009; Rauner, 2013; Rogers, 1994; Teven & McCrosky, 1997) and increased pro-social behaviour (Ang, 2005; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). A source of motivation for demonstrating caring dispositions towards students is *confirmation* of values, which Noddings (1986) described as 'the loveliest of human functions ... which "bring[s] out the best in [people]" ...to help the other to actualise that best image' (p. 505).

The beneficial role of confirming and affirming one's values is a psychological construct which is particularly suited to those teachers whose confidence or will-power is depleted through the demands of the profession (Schmeichel & Vohs, 2009). Studies have shown that participants who affirmed their values had significantly lower cortisol responses to stress compared with control participants (Creswell, Welch, Taylor, Sherman, Gruenewald, & Mann, 2005). This allowed participants to become less biased in favour of their own position, more discriminating in evaluating the strength or weakness of arguments made by others (Correll, Spencer, & Zanna, 2004), and less defensive about threatening information (Legault, Al-Khindi, & Inzlicht, 2012).

It has been proposed that genres of narrative which affirm the values of teachers may play a role in fostering resilience in the face of external and often demotivating demands of teaching (Collins & Abbott, 2004).

Values clarification

Teachers may not always be explicitly aware of the values which drive their teaching (Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1972). Values clarification involves individuals identifying their values and beliefs 'in an effort to enable them to be more self-directing' (Lipe, 2010, p. 6). According to Brady (2011) this clarification process makes the individual 'more purposeful and productive, less gullible and vulnerable, a better critical thinker, and more socially aware' (p. 60). Brady (2011) further argued that effective teaching involves more than simple deduction of qualities or values. It includes examination of the reasons for, and consequences of action, and the transposition of the demonstrated values into personal contexts.

The use of autobiographical approaches to values clarification has been one approach to providing data for discussion and reflection (Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1978). Rather than the

use of full biographies or chronologies of a person's life, Rath et al. (1978) argued that brief extracts from stimuli such as stories, speeches or video, which exemplify the desirable universal themes are useful. These brief extracts may be presented to teachers and provide defining moments upon which to reflect on their own reasons for acting.

Use of narrative in therapeutic contexts

Narrative has been used in numerous fields including law, science, economics and sport as an agent of change within organizations and in the lives of individuals (Abell, 2009; Posner, 1997; Shiller, 2017; Stride, Fitzgerald, & Allison, 2017). In psychotherapy, therapists have used film and books for many years as a way to surface and treat patients' underlying issues. Bibliotherapy involves the use of story to support individuals in solving the issues that they may be facing (Lehr, 1981). In fact, bibliotherapy, according to Lehr (1981), is a process of dynamic interaction between the personality of the reader and literature - an interaction which may be utilized for personal assessment, adjustment, and growth. The concept of the treatment is based on the human inclination to identify with others through their expressions in literature and art.

Bibliotherapy has been suggested to be useful because it allows individuals to step back from their problems and experience events from a more objective viewpoint (Pardeck, 1995). It offers the individual a safe avenue to investigate feelings and can provide a nonthreatening way to broach a sensitive subject. Hence, bibliotherapy is considered (by some) to be a conversation starter acting as a space in which emotion can be safely "held", while accommodation of the self is permitted (Honos-Webb, Sunwolf, & Shapiro, 2001).

Lenkowsky (1987) suggested bibliotherapy contained three components: identification; catharsis; and, insight. As a consequence, narrative can therefore be viewed as: a) promoting the exchange of information; b) enabling the person to make the connection to her/his life; and finally, c) validating one's feelings and responses to the crisis or issue at hand.

Cinema-therapy, which emerged as an outgrowth of bibliotherapy, is an intervention in which a facilitator uses a film as a metaphorical tool to promote self-exploration, personal healing and transformation (Powell, 2008). Gregerson (2010) suggested that by watching assigned movies with conscious awareness, people can identify and relate to situations and characters, leading to personal exploration and insight while keeping an emotional distance from stressful or frightening experiences or topics. He was of the view that movies are one of the most influential

rhetorical devices in the world as they can literally “stir the soul” as they generate hope and offer a fresh perspective on ourselves and our relationships.

Films can catapult us rapidly and effectively into states of fear, anger, sadness, romance, lust, and aesthetic ecstasy – often within the same two-hour period. It is undoubtedly true that for many people film relationships provide the most emotionally wrenching experiences of the average week.
(pp. 56-57)

Although there are reports of the therapeutic use of film from as early as the 1920s in the United States (Portadin, 2006; Powell, 2008), the practice of using a film as a technique in counselling and psychotherapy has only recently gathered momentum (Kuriansky, Vallarelli, DelBuono, & Ortman 2010).

Film is increasingly being utilized across a range of settings by therapists from all the major theoretical orientations with a diversity of client populations. Proponents of the use of film in therapy, claim the approach can have many benefits for a client (Hesley & Hesley, 2001) including validating the experience of identifying with a film character whose circumstances are similar to one’s own.

Film allows the exploration of a wide range of issues (Dermer & Hutchings, 2000; Karlinsky, 2003) allowing clients to ‘explore and experience new interpretations and solutions’ (Berg-Cross, Jennings, & Baruch, 1990, p. 141). The conceptual basis of Heston & Kottman’s (1997) approach was the notion of using film to provide a therapeutic metaphor. They pointed out the benefits to counsellors of using films as ‘intervention strategies’ (p. 92) and of being able to ‘recognize the metaphoric possibilities’ (p. 92) when a client spontaneously discusses a film.

Numerous case studies have been published (e.g., Berg-Cross et al., 1990; Byrd, Forisha, & Ramsdell, 2006; Christie & McGrath, 1987; Fleming & Bohnel, 2009; Hesley & Hesley, 2001; Heston & Kottman, 1997), and surveys conducted on the use of film by therapists (Lampropoulos, Kazantzis, & Deane, 2004). Despite a paucity of both qualitative and quantitative research (Schulenberg, 2003; Sharp, Smith, & Cole, 2002) a significant number of books offering movie guides and presenting the use of film as a self-help tool have been published (Grace, 2005; Peske & West, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004; Sinetar, 1993; Solomon, 1995, 2001; Ulus, 2003; Wolz, 2004) along with websites designed for use as both a self-help resource, and for practitioners wanting to access information about film as a therapeutic technique.

Narrative and self-change

Aspects of self-concept are extremely resistant to change, even in the light of facts that clearly contradict them (Swann et al., 1992). The classic, psychoanalytical explanation for this phenomenon is that it involves a mechanism designed to protect the ego (Freud, 2005). Understanding identity as a narrative construction is another way of conceptualizing personal change. Kenyon & Randall (1997) argued the choice of narrative we tell ourselves, the sense we make of an experience, determines how we respond to and manage that experience. They described this process as “restorying” our lives, which is to say that when a story of the self no longer coheres, no longer helps us make sense of our experience, then we must change it.

Randall (1996) described transformative learning itself as a process of restorying while Freeman (1991) described it as a process of “rewriting the self” and argued that it was fundamentally retrospective: ‘It is only after one has arrived at what is arguably or demonstrably a better psychological place than where one has been before that development can be said to have occurred’ (p. 99).

McAdams (1996), theorizing on the narrative we craft for ourselves, labelled such “self-narratives” as a *personal myth*, a type of story that each of us naturally builds to bring together the different parts of ourselves and our lives into ‘a purposeful and convincing whole’ (p. 12). Linde (1993) similarly noted that:

Given the stage that any person has reached in a career, one typically finds that he constructs an image of his life course— past, present, and future— which selects, abstracts, and distorts in such a way as to provide him with a view of himself that he can usefully expound in current situations. (Linde, p. 5)

Clark & Rossiter (2008) argued for the importance of coherence within the self-narrative, in that we make sense of experiences by constructing narratives that make things *cohere*, creating sense out of chaos by establishing connections between and among these experiences. Kenyon & Randall (1997) purported that when this story of the self no longer coheres, or no longer helps us make sense of our experience, then we must change it.

Clearly, the interplay between understanding oneself through narrative and identification with the experiences of others, is important in shaping how we see ourselves and our actions. This thesis explores such complex personal interaction through the use of a specific video and its influence on the research participants.

Chapter overview

This Chapter reviewed the literature pertinent to the central purpose of this research - exploring the influence of narrative-based video on teacher thinking and practice. The chapter examined themes such as teacher professional knowledge and practice, and the challenge of finding routes into surfacing and sharing practice. It also considered a policy context within which education systems seek “neat and convenient solutions” and so frame approaches to teacher professional development (PD) in ways that respond to the policy demand but not necessarily to teachers’ pedagogical needs or concerns.

The chapter concluded with an in-depth review of the literature related to the use of narrative and video as a mechanism for reflection and discussed how the particular elements of narrative may contribute to self-awareness and ultimately changes in teacher behaviour. The next Chapter provides a synopsis of the video artefact used within the research, *Wright’s Law*, and provides a specific description of its narrative features of plot, theme, setting and character.

Chapter 3

Wright's Law – About the artefact¹

Introduction

No one falls asleep in Jeffrey Wright's high school physics class. Exploding pumpkins, hovercrafts and an experiment involving a bed of nails, a cinder block and a sledgehammer, are some of the crazy stunts that keep the students enthralled. But it is a simple lecture - one without props or fireballs - that makes the greatest impression on his students each year. The class is about Mr. Wright's experiences as a father of a special-needs son - about love, family, and the meaning of life. (dailygood.org, 2014)

Synopsis: Wright's Law

Wright's Law (New York Times, 2012) is a twelve-minute video published by the New York Times by filmmaker Zack Conkle, a former student of Mr Wright – the teacher at the centre of the video. The short film begins with Mr Wright, a 45-year-old teacher at Louisville Male Traditional High School, in front of his Year 10 physics class teaching in his own wacky way. The veteran of 23 years teaching does odd experiments involving air pressure and fiery chemicals, and one in which he lies on a bed of nails with a cinder block on his chest. The film shows a student taking a sledgehammer and swinging at a block, shattering the block as part of teaching a physics lesson about force and energy.

One of Mr Wright's students, Richard Suh, remarks how he manages to fall asleep in every class *except* physics. Another student describes Mr Wright as the teacher he'll remember when he's 75 years old, stating that "He's the epitome of what a teacher should be." Chelsea Fox, a student, remarks how she'd been on her own since she was 15 years old until Mr Wright got to know her. She says Mr Wright is now a person she can go to with her problems, "It makes me feel like he really cares for me and I know he really does, he is a good man."

Many of the students at Louisville Male Traditional High School have significant family issues and come from troubled backgrounds. Mr Wright explains:

¹ [Wright's Law: Documentary Short Film \(Zack Conkle, 2012\)](#)

Schools have 'em for six hours a day then the kids go home and whatever atmosphere they have around for the other eighteen affects them. And so, you know, schools can change a lot, but we also have to realize that they go home to a completely different environment ... What I went home to when I was young was very different than what some of these kids go home to.

The story takes a twist as Mr Wright is shown going home to his own issues with his son Adam, a 12-year-old with Joubert syndrome, an extremely rare disease that leaves his brain encased in a body that won't respond to its own commands. Visually impaired and unable to control his movements, Adam breathes rapidly and doesn't speak.

The video shows Mr Wright sharing this part of his home life with his class, speaking of his experiences as a parent of a child with special needs. Mr. Wright says he decided to share his son's story when his physics lessons led students to start asking him "the big questions."

All those dreams about ever watching my son knock a home run over the fence went away," he tells the class. "The whole thing about where the universe came from? I didn't care. ... I started asking myself, what was the point of it?" ... When you start talking about physics, you start to wonder, 'What is the purpose of it all? Kids started coming to me and asking me those ultimate questions. I wanted them to look at their life in a different way — as opposed to just through the laws of physics — and give themselves more purpose in life.

The film shows Mr Wright explaining to his students in a whispered tone about the night he saw his daughter playing with dolls on the floor next to Adam. At that moment he realized that Adam could see and play — that his little boy had an inner life. He and his wife, Nancy, began teaching Adam simple sign language. One day soon after, Adam signed "I love you."

In the video, Mr. Wright signs it for the class: "Daddy, I love you ... There is nothing more incredible than the day you see this," he says, and continues. "There is something a lot greater than energy. There's something a lot greater than entropy. What's the greatest thing?"

"Love," his students whisper.

"That's what makes the 'why' we exist," Mr. Wright tells the spellbound students.

“In this great big universe, we have all those stars. Who cares? Well, somebody cares. Somebody cares about you a lot. As long as we care about each other, that’s where we go from here,” he says.

As the students file out of class, some wipe away tears and hug their teacher. Mr. Wright says it can be emotionally draining to share his story with his class. But that is part of his role as a physics teacher. “When you look at physics, it’s all about laws and how the world works. But if you don’t tie those laws into a much bigger purpose, the purpose in your heart, then they are going to sit there and ask the question, ‘Who cares?’”

Wright’s Law – narrative features

Wright’s Law, as a short film, makes specific use of McKee’s (1997) classic elements of narrative of plot, setting, theme and character as detailed below.

Setting

Wright’s Law makes explicit use of setting within the narrative. This is evidenced through the opening scenes which feature a busy classroom corridor within the school. The camera focuses on a hand-written sign outside Mr Wright’s classroom drawn by the students which says *We Love Physics*. The following scenes show Mr Wright standing in front of his class of students and quickly establishes the setting of the story, a school environment involving a middle-aged school teacher and his high school physics class.

Subsequent scenes of excited students performing experiments down corridors and explosions, point to a mood setting of engaged students enjoying their learning. The use of auditory stimulus, afforded by the medium of motion picture, is used prominently as explosions and sirens burst through the corridors of the school. The use of sound grows in importance in the setting as students begin to describe how Mr Wright “makes them feel”. They care about their teacher, expressing real admiration for him not only in teaching terms but also personally.

Another substantial setting within the film is that of Mr Wright’s home environment. The viewer is shown the family situation including his profoundly disabled son, and the daily challenges Mr Wright faces in supporting his family. Visual imagery is used pointedly to support the setting, such as images of Adam’s wheelchair being backed up into the aging family motor vehicle, the tears in Mr Wright’s eyes when he talks about his son, and the brutal scenes of his son Adam hitting himself until bruised and bloodied. The visual image is also used prominently within the school setting, through close-up images of student facial expressions as

they talk about their teacher, and the images of Mr Wright shaking hands with students that he doesn't even know. These visual and auditory elements of the setting combine to set the context and mood for the plot to unfold.

Plot

Wright's Law contains a plot structure which is non-linear. Non-linear narrative is where events are portrayed out of chronological order or in other ways where the narrative does not follow the direct causality pattern of the events featured, such as parallel distinctive plot lines, mirrored plots, dream immersions or narrating another story inside the main plot-line (Dibell, 1999). It is often used to mimic the structure and recall of human memory (Bucher, 2017).

Wright's Law contains two plot lines which are woven back and forth in a sort of a "braided" (Dibell, 1999) structure. The first plot line is introduced with the sequence of events which shows Mr Wright as an engaging teacher, performing exciting hands on experiments with students, but also as a very caring and nurturing teacher. The second plot line involves Mr Wright's role as a father of his severely disabled son, and the personal challenges that Mr Wright and his family embrace on a daily basis. These two plot lines develop separately for the first part of the short film, with their own timelines and chronology. In this way the author builds tension, assists in setting character motivation, and helps to elicit the often-multiple components of a teacher's life.

The two plot lines overlap when the film cuts to a scene of Mr Wright in front of his science class telling the story of his son to his students. The scenes then skip back and forth between Mr Wright assisting his son at home, and in front of his class teaching the genetics of his son's condition through the story. The scenes skip faster and faster until the climax is reached where Mr Wright's son is crying in agony and frustration, and at the same time Mr Wright tells his teary-eyed students he got to the point where he asked himself "What was the point of all of this?" The plot reaches a resolution when Mr Wright found the answer - love - and culminated in scenes of students embracing Mr Wright and of the peaceful scene of Mr Wright reading his son to sleep at night.

Although the short film is non-fiction and depicts real life events, the use of non-linear plot forces the viewer to interpret what is happening, to whom, and why. The altering of normal time and causality within the plot, requires intellectual effort on behalf of the viewer to "fill in the gaps" and construct meaning of the events through their own personal and social contexts.

In this way, for the viewer, the real-life plot acts as a metaphor to be interpreted in the context of their own lives.

Conflict within plot

Conflict is considered a necessary component of an effective plot (Coles 2016). Conflict is the source of change that engages a reader and is crucial on all levels for delivering information and building characterization. The foundation of character is how people choose to overcome obstacles – how they handle conflict (McAdams, 1996). The plot of Wright's Law develops a conflict between Mr Wright and the hands of fate which led to the challenges his son faces. This conflict of fate drives the development of Mr Wright's character in terms of how he reconciles the fate which has befallen his son while managing to maintain a positive approach to life and teaching. This conflict helps to build momentum and engagement in the narrative itself.

Character

The narrative is clearly focused around the central character of Mr Wright. The author develops Mr Wright's character through the capture of real-action scenes within the home and classroom environments which show him making decisions under pressure, and in doing so this allows the viewer an insight about Mr Wright's values and character as a person. From this outlook, the viewer makes decisions about whether they feel similar to, or in fact, like, the main character, and further, whether they feel inspired or turned off by the main character. As Stacey (1994) found, identifying with inspirational lead characters has, importantly, potential for impact on the viewer's identity.

Through the opening scenes of the film that portray Mr Wright teaching, the viewer gets a specific insight into Mr Wright as a teacher. The viewer is allowed to witness the particular pedagogical approaches he uses with his students and the type of relationships he fosters with them. As the narrative progresses, the author brings the viewer on a journey through Mr Wright's character arc (Marks, 2007), where his initial positioning as a simple but engaging teacher develops into the more complex character of a traumatized father grappling with the fate handed to his disabled son. The character of Mr Wright becomes progressively deeper and more complicated as he confronts the obstacles in his life as a parent and a professional, and this, according to Marks (2007), constitutes a prime source of viewer absorption within the plot.

The film makes specific use of a number of other sub-characters, including Mr Wright's son Adam and daughter Abbey, and two of Mr Wright's students: Chelsea Fox, a senior student who "had some stuff going on" and had been living on her own since she was 15 years old, and senior student Denaz Taylor who fiercely believes that Mr Wright is someone who will go out of his way for you. The deliberate use of characterization can be seen as a central narrative element within Wright's Law and becomes the driving force of the narrative.

Theme

The central theme in Wright's Law is one of love. The short film explores the love between a father and his family, but also his love for his teaching profession and his students. Mr Wright articulates this as part of the climax of the story when he addresses his students in relation to the condition of his son, and in his son's sign language, signs for his students:

Daddy, I love you. There is nothing more incredible than the day you see this ... There is something a lot greater than energy. There's something a lot greater than entropy ... What's the greatest thing?

"Love," his students whisper.

That's what makes the 'why' we exist.

The sub-theme of human relationships is again particularly revealed in images throughout the story. We see for example the scenes of the students as they file out of Mr Wright's class, some wiping away tears and some hugging their teacher. The film shows images of the concern on Mr Wright's face as he checks in on students that he was worried about the day before, and the pride on their faces as he looks at them respectfully, in the eye. He tells them "Somebody cares. Somebody cares about you a lot. As long as we care about each other, that's where we go from here."

The film also shows the often raw family scenes of Mr Wright with his daughter and son at home, as they struggle with their own relationships with each other in the context of the everyday challenges of supporting Adam in basic tasks of feeding and sleeping, and even going to the toilet. It is through these challenges that other human themes emerge; those of courage, obligation, overcoming the odds, and faith. These themes within Wright's Law are described as "universal" themes (Baldick, 2004) – themes that deal with the basic human condition and which transcend individual disciplines, groups or locations.

Universal themes feature strongly within Wright's Law, and whilst more specific education themes are present within the narrative, for example, the importance of student engagement, authentic learning and student-teacher relationships, it is the strong universal themes of love and human relationships which envelop the narrative as the prevailing controlling ideas.

Chapter overview

Wright's Law shows classic elements of narrative. It makes use of the particular elements of plot, setting, theme and character and combines these with the moving visual image to form a narrative-based video. This research explores how these narrative elements within the narrative-based video of Wright's Law impact teacher participants who viewed the video.

The following chapter describes the methodology of utilizing Wright's Law to explore how narrative impacts teacher thinking and practice.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Introduction

The methodological approach to portraying the data developed in response to the research questions was that of multiple analytic case studies (Merriam, 1998). The research approach consisted of two phases – a pilot study and a main study, with the findings of the pilot study crucial to refining the methodology of the main study. Six participants took part in the pilot study, and from this study four teachers volunteered to become participants for the main study. Data in the main study were gathered using a semi-structured interview protocol in multiple 2-hour interviews spaced approximately three months apart. The data were analysed using the constant comparative method both within and across case studies to develop categories which helped to answer the research questions. Three of the case studies are reported in detail in the thesis and comprise both data and analysis and are presented in individual chapters.

Philosophical foundation

The experience of research is a process of interpretation and of making sense of the phenomenon under study in order to develop deeper meaning and insight (Thorne, Kirkham, & MacDonald-Emes, 1997). This research is located within a constructivist/feminist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mertens, 2005; Smith, 1987) and acknowledges that social phenomena must be understood in the social contexts in which they are constructed and are guided by how people interpret and understand situations (Angen, 2000).

As this research set out to understand phenomena by accessing the meanings that participants assigned to the situation, a qualitative research approach was appropriate. In so doing, the researcher was a part of the process of discovering meaning, so an acknowledgement of that appreciation of subjectivity, carried with it the need for reflexivity on the part of the researcher (Flick, 2002).

Parry (1997) noted that interpretivism encourages the researcher to be the main data collection tool, which enhances the consistency of data collection and supports the researcher's engagement in the study. This leads to a more complete understanding of the phenomenon – and also provides affective information that could not be collected otherwise (MacNealy, 1997). Capturing, analyzing and portraying those understandings was through the use of rich

case studies designed to utilize informative and contextual data to interpret and understand: how and why the participants responded in particular ways within their context; the meanings and assumptions they assigned to events and practices in their work; and, the ways that these assumptions shaped their practice.

Research questions

The purpose of the study was to explore how narrative-based video impacts teacher thinking and practice. To address this aim, three sub-questions were apparent:

1. How did participants respond to viewing narrative-based video?
2. What features of the narrative-based video influenced how the participants responded?
3. How did the “narrative features” prompt teacher reflection and action?

Timeline overview

Table 4.1 shows a summary of the research period and activity for each phase of the research program. It outlines the 3 phases of data collection and analysis, the periods in which the data were collected and the type of data being collected at each phase.

Table 4.1: Research timeline

Phase	Period	Activity
1	Aug - Nov, 2013	Pilot Study semi-structured interviews (N=6)
2	Feb - Dec 2014	Full study data collection 52 weeks (N=4) 1 video (narrative) case study approach semi-structured interviews (spaced)
3	Jan 2015 – Dec 2017	Data Analysis & Case study writing transcriptions thematic groupings within-case analysis cross case analysis

Pilot study

A pilot study (with full ethics approval: CF12/1420 – 2012000761), was designed to assess teachers' initial responses to a range of video types. Teachers were shown one of four different video types of teaching, ranging from procedural-based education content through to highly narrative-based education content. The pilot study consisted of 2-hour interviews with six different teachers. The pilot study took place over a twelve-week period.

The pilot study was designed to assist with the choice of video type to be utilised in the main study. In attempting to address the purpose of the research (to better understand how narrative based video impacts teacher thinking and practice), it was important to pilot a number of videos in order to ensure that the video used in the main study resonated with teachers.

The pilot study also offered an opportunity to design, test and refine the interview protocol which, as Van Teijlingen & Hundley, (2001) noted, allows the researcher to pre-test specific research instruments, including questionnaires or interview schedules, or as (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 1996, p. 121), described it 'reassessment without tears'.

Through an initial analysis of the patterns emerging from the pilot study, the use of multiple analytic case studies emerged as a meaningful methodological approach to data capture and analysis.

Case study

Merriam & Tisdell (2016) defined a qualitative case study as an 'intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single bounded unit' (pp. 232). According to Yin (2009), the distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena in depth. Platt (1992) stated that in the classic case study, a "case" may be an individual and the primary unit of analysis. Yin (1994) suggested that a case study is particularly suited to situations in which it is impossible to separate the phenomenon's variables from their context. As case study research often addresses a contemporary phenomenon, the "how" and "why" questions (Benbasat, Goldstein, & Mead, 1987; Darke, Shanks, & Broadbent, 1998; Yin, 1994) take precedence and call on the need for thick and rich descriptions that allow for the development of detailed "portraits" (Lightfoot, 1983) of the phenomenon under investigation. Thick descriptions support development of understanding of complex phenomenon with multiple variables, particularly over long time periods (Huber & Van de Ven, 1995).

Ragin & Becker (1992) described the purpose of cases as twofold, first to understand the individuals or groups under study, but also to generate theoretical statements about the regularities of the individual, their social structures or processes. Thus, through the development of categories or themes both within and across cases, the use of multiple analytic case studies positions research to use categories to check against extant theory and nuance or build upon such theory in new ways.

Using *analytic* case studies

The type of case study approach used in this research could be described as an analytic or interpretive case study (Merriam 1998). Analytic or interpretative case studies contain the rich, thick description of descriptive case studies but additionally the descriptive data are used to develop themes or categories through analysis. Analytic case studies, according to Shaw (1978), are differentiated from descriptive case studies by their complexity, depth and theoretical orientation.

In the field of how teachers respond to narrative-based video, there is little literature describing how teachers respond in thinking or action. Analytic case study provides a method for thick description of a number of the bounded entities of this research in order to document and understand the research area. However, rather than just describing what was observed, or what was provided in interviews, the data in this study have been analyzed and developed into categories that represent the emergent findings. These categories also offer a structure to the case studies that applies across the data sets.

Thus, the type of case study approach developed and applied in this research can actually be fully described as a “building block” case study (Hancock & Algozzine 2006) – the development of case studies of particular types of phenomenon, that, when put together, contribute to a more comprehensive theory. These case studies can act as blocks which build theory around the types of prompts which support critical reflection of teachers.

Multiple Cases

The use of multiple cases was designed to increase the methodological rigor of the study through ‘strengthening the precision, the validity and stability of the findings’ (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 29), particularly because ‘evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling’ (Yin, 1994, p. 45).

The multiple case study design aimed to support analytical generalization, which according to Yin (1994), generalizes ‘a particular set of results to some broader theory’ (p. 36). In this research, the analysis of multiple case studies aimed to add insight to theories regarding the role of narrative-based prompts as a way of supporting teachers’ critical reflection.

Sample

The sampling design in this research followed a purposive, nonprobability sampling method (Chein, 1981) to select the sample from which the greatest discovery, understanding and insight into the research questions might be gained. Patton (2007) described the power of purposive sampling as emphasising the in-depth understanding of information rich cases. The sample size is determined by the capacity to generate rich information on the type of phenomena which need to be studied. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 34) phrased this in terms of whether the phenomena of interest in the research are likely to ‘appear’ in the observations.

Yin (2014) described the selection of cases to study as not governed by sampling logic and representativeness, but rather for the purpose of being “typical”, “critical”, “revelatory”, or “unique” in some respect. The cases were selected then because they were ‘not in any major way atypical, extreme, deviant, or intensely unusual’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 284).

Participants

As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) have argued, onsite observation allows informal discussions with participants in order for the researcher to assess their appropriateness for extended in-depth interviewing. For this study, onsite observation occurred during a two-day professional learning program for teachers, where the researcher had the opportunity to observe the teachers in action and conduct informal discussions with them about their interest and suitability as “typical teachers”. Following the professional learning program, 5 teachers were invited to participate and four replied confirming their involvement.

Reporting case studies

Following data collection and analysis, three cases were fully developed (the fourth case study was not developed beyond the initial analysis stage as it did not shed new light on any of the themes uncovered in the first three). There is no agreement in the literature on the number of cases in a multiple case study design (Patton, 2002), however, it is widely accepted that the number of cases determined is a trade-off between the breadth and depth of the case study inquiry. In-depth information is required for a small number of cases while less depth when the

number of cases increases. Thus, not surprisingly for this study, in order to adequately address the research questions three case studies were developed in depth.

The narrative video *Wright's Law*

The narrative-based video chosen to use with participants was Wright's Law, written and directed by Zack Conkle, published on the New York Times website, 2012. The duration of Wright's Law is 11 minutes 58 seconds, and freely accessible on the New York Times Website and via Youtube. At the time of writing up this study, the video had 2,520,844 views on YouTube. The video was shown to participants in the initial interview via the New York Times website <https://www.nytimes.com/video/science/100000001947354/wrights-law.html>

Data

Data gathering consisted of two interviews with each participant, spaced approximately 3 months apart. The face-to-face interviews were conducted over a four-week period and each interview lasted for approximately two hours. Bateson (1990) argued that interviews offer the best technique for conducting intensive case studies as they allow the researcher to attain rich, personalized information (Mason, 2002). Further to this, Patton (2015) noted that interviews allow the researcher to find out things that cannot be directly observed, such as 'feelings, thoughts, and intentions', and behaviours that 'took place at some previous point in time' (p. 426).

The semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix 1) used in this study was organized around a set of questions and issues to be explored, but 'neither the exact wording nor the order of questions is pre-determined' (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 136). The use of a semi-structured interview protocol allowed for follow-up questions designed to probe more deeply issues that arose, thus creating, as Merriam & Tisdell (2016) suggested, opportunities for the interviewer to 'respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic' (p. 110). The format also encouraged interviewees to express themselves openly and freely and to define the world from their own perspectives, not solely from the perspective of the researcher (Hancock & Alogizzine, 2006).

Interviews were conducted at the participants' place of work, normally in a quiet office space which was private and free from distraction.

The beginning of the interview followed Taylor and Bogdon's (1984) five important matters to address at the outset of any interview.

1. The researcher's intentions and the purpose of the inquiry
2. The protection of respondents through use of pseudonym
3. Deciding who has final say over the research content
4. Compensation (if any)
5. Logistics of the interview and interview schedule

Discussion on these five issues led to informed consent including confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, the option to withdraw at any point and details on the university's approval of the research (CF12/1420 – 2012000761). All of the interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. Interview transcripts were shared with participants as a form of member checking which allowed verification and any necessary clarification, amendments and changes. As Creswell (2009) noted, this approach invites confirmation and adds to the credibility of the research. The second interview focused on seeking to understand the development of any further thinking and action which may have occurred following the first interview.

The analytic stance of this research was founded in Merriam's (1998) view of qualitative analysis as being primarily inductive and comparative. The method for analyzing data and developing conceptual categories adopted Glaser and Strauss's (1967) constant comparative method. The data were analyzed in two main sections – firstly through individual within-case analyses and secondly through a cross-case analysis.

Within case analysis

As Shaw (1999) noted, the process of inductively analyzing data commences as soon as the researcher starts collecting data, that is, during the interviews. Interview transcripts were analyzed and the data were organized graphically using a conceptually ordered display, specifically a conceptually clustered matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This matrix enabled manipulation of a text table with rows and columns to cluster items that were related theoretically, thematically, or empirically (see Appendix 2).

Such visual displays can be designed to assemble organized information into an immediately accessible, compact form so that the analyst can see what is happening and either draw justified conclusions or move on to the next step of analysis the display suggests may be useful. (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11)

Each participant's transcript was carefully read in order to highlight particular words, phrases and passages. Using the conceptually ordered display, comments, queries and suggestions were recorded in a column alongside the interview data in an initial process of open coding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In reviewing the right-hand column, patterns and commonalities could be identified and grouped through a process of axial coding (Charmaz, 2014), or analytical coding - coding that interprets and reflects upon the meaning of the categories (Richards, 2015). For example, the initial data illustrated a broad category of Participants identifying positively with the teacher in the video, then sub themes emerged of liking the teacher, being similar to the teacher, and being inspired by the teacher.

As Tesch (1990) has described it, this approach to analysis (forming categories, establishing the boundaries of the categories, assigning the segments to categories, summarizing the content of each category, finding negative evidence, etc.,) is a process designed to discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns.

Cross case analysis

The data were further analysed using a cross-case analysis to seek out that which was common and that which was particular in the cases (Stake, 2005). This level of analysis can result in a unified description across cases, categories, themes, or typologies that conceptualize the data across all the cases (Merriam, 2009). Each participant's case study was carefully read in order to build abstractions across the cases (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Using qualitative content analysis, a systematic process of coding and identifying coherent and important themes and patterns across the data that was employed to examine 'examples of the same underlying idea, issue, or concept' (Patton, 1987, p. 149). Further analysis of emergent concepts and themes and their relationships to each other shaped the categories across the cases, which illuminated the research questions exploring how the participants were reacting, the narrative features that were influential, and why those features of the narrative video were influential for the participants.

This comparative analysis indicated commonalities in the way that, for example, each participant developed attitudes for reflection. Common patterns emerged in the ways each participant developed a sense of open-mindedness in the response to the video, as well as a sense of whole-hearted energy and an attitude of responsibility to act on their new thinking. These reflective attitudes were mapped onto an existing research frame (based on Dewey's

(1933) three attitudes for reflection – italicised above) and was subsequently refined into a category across the cases. Three other categories emerged in answering the research question describing how the participants responded to the video, namely engaging in autobiographical reflection, naming the problem, and taking action.

In the analysis of the relationship between the narrative and the development of these outcomes, four key narrative features of the video were influential factors in developing these outcomes, namely: identification with character; the visual image; metaphor; and, universal themes. Further cross case analysis revealed particular features of the narrative which influenced each reflective outcome, and these became categories of narrative features which assisted in explaining how the video led to the particular outcomes across the cases. In this way, comparing and contrasting across cases enabled a new ‘whole out of the parts to provide the emergence of novel explanatory frames’ (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008) covering multiple cases (Merriam, 2009).

Trustworthiness

Viewed from a qualitative perspective, it has been suggested the trustworthiness of the findings of a study with a small N are dependent on the internal validity, reliability, and external validity of the study (Merriam, 1995). Using an interpretive method, the qualitative content analysis in this study differs from the positivist tradition in its fundamental assumptions, research purposes, and inference processes, thus making the conventional criteria unsuitable for judging its research results (Bradley, 1993). This study utilized the criteria of dependability (reliability), credibility (validity), confirmability (objectivity), and transferability (generalizability) (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008) to establish the “trustworthiness” of the research.

Credibility

To address limitations of credibility and ensure that the findings are congruent with reality (Merriam 2002), the research utilised multiple sources of data to confirm emerging findings (Denzin, 1989; Merriam, 2002; Prasad, 2005; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009) through triangulating with other participants as well as with theories and studies as a means of cross checking and corroborating evidence and through the use of multiple cases across different sites to compare and contrast findings as they emerged. Van Maanen (1983) urged the exploitation of opportunities ‘to check out bits of information across informants’ (pp. 37–55) and such use of multiple cases to corroborate emerging findings can be regarded as equivalent to multiple

experiments - according to Yin (2009). The more cases that can be marshalled to establish or refute a theory, the more robust are the research outcomes Rowley (2002).

Member checks (Merriam, 2002) were performed by sending participants a copy of their interview transcript and asking them to verify the accuracy of the transcripts, and verification of the emerging theories and inferences. Debriefing (Merriam, 2002) of findings was also conducted as they emerged through debriefing sessions with doctoral supervisors which provided a sounding board to test developing ideas and interpretations, and which drew attention to any flaws in methodology or biases and preferences.

Dependability

To increase dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the study findings, an audit trail (Merriam, 2002) was created that listed the research steps throughout the study (see Appendix 3). The audit trail shows that the research systematically studied what it claimed to study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Confirmability

A limitation of the study was that information obtained during the interviews largely depended on the interviewee and what they were willing to share, that is, the nature of their information was limited to his or her own perspective and lived experiences (Patton, 2002). However, this study's triangulation of data across participants helped to support the accuracy of the themes derived from the interview transcripts. All evidence was systematically reported in order for the reader to confirm whether the findings flow from the data and experiences rather than from the bias and subjectivity of the researcher. Using the audit trail, the characteristics of the data can be confirmed by others who read or review the research results (Bradley, 1993, p. 437) by checking the consistency of the study processes.

Finally, the philosophical foundations underpinning the stance of the research, locating it clearly within an interpretive paradigm was clearly articulated for as Miles and Huberman (1987) suggest, a key criterion for confirmability is the extent to which the researcher admits his or her own predispositions.

Transferability

The scope of this study is limited to research of three participants at three school sites and therefore, results cannot necessarily be applied to other contexts. However, to enable other researchers to make decisions about the transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of results, rich,

thick description (Merriam, 2002) of data sets and descriptions that are rich enough for other researchers to be able to make judgments about the transferability of findings to different settings or contexts or are able to compare the instances of the phenomenon are described in the research report. The insights arising from such “case-based theory building” research can be used as hypotheses or propositions in further research (Ponelis, 2015). Clearly, further samples across different contexts and teachers would provide additional insight into the ways teachers respond to narrative based video.

Chapter overview

This chapter outlined the epistemological and theoretical grounding, the participants, processes and practices utilized for this study, as well the ways in which methodological decisions anchored the research design and the process of analysis. The interpretivist paradigm was described along with a rationale for qualitative research methodologies. The chapter also provided the rationale for the theoretical perspectives, methodology, and methods helped to illuminate the various complexities and experiences of the ways in which the teachers responded to narrative based video within this research. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the strategies that were used to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. Chapter 5 follows next and introduces the first of the case studies, Asha, and describes the impact of the narrative-based video on her thinking and practice.

Chapter 5

Asha

About Asha

Upbringing

Asha was born in Madras, India, as the eldest of four siblings. Asha recalls the “suffering, abuses, corruption and violence all around and I did think at the time that this was a God-forsaken place and I did not want to be here.” According to Asha, these early experiences of her childhood laid the foundation for her future career, recounting that “growing up in India, the seeds were sown for a career in social justice.”

Asha describes her parents as traditional people who adopted a harsh discipline approach, and that she was “not precluded from any of it.” She recalls fondly an Aunt Nancy who would intervene, spending time talking to her and reminding “me to be true to myself.”

Asha’s father worked long hours and undertook shift work, and when her mother was out in the evenings she had to look after her two younger sisters. Caring for her youngest sister was difficult as she always cried bitterly when her mother was gone and Asha, “would try to console her for hours.” Asha’s mother was a teacher, and her experience of her mother’s classroom seemingly had an impact on the way Asha would eventually approach her teaching.

... she was a very, very, strict teacher. I remember on the days I couldn't go to school I used to go with my mother to her class, and I'd be afraid for her students, just the same as us at home too. We were scared, we were frightened of mum. And there was pin drop silence in her classroom, no one was saying a word, and I just felt so sorry for them ... I told myself I would never teach like that.

Asha describes her sister Grace as being academically gifted, confident, well-known and well-liked by people. She was:

... the only one who really knew me. She was loyal, looked out for me and was very protective over me. No matter what happened and even when things were my fault, she stood by me and supported me. She always saw the good in me.

When Asha was 12, her sister became ill and passed away suddenly. After that, Asha recalls losing confidence, “I withdrew into myself.”

Schooling

Asha attended an all-girls’ primary school in India from Year 1. She described it as harsh, with strict, uncaring teachers and big class sizes. She remembers the teaching style as being predominantly rote-learning from notes on blackboards.

We had 66 children in our class, and there was no relationship with the teacher, I felt they didn’t know each child and they couldn’t relate to each child, and it was so harsh in terms of punishment.

Asha started secondary school in India but left school at the start of Year 8 and emigrated to Australia with her family. Asha began school at an all-girls’ Catholic secondary school in Year 9 in Melbourne, skipping a year of school. She describes it as, “not a very pleasant experience as I encountered some bullying and prejudice.” Asha was academically bright, but the emotional extent of shifting countries and the difficulty in breaking into established friendship groups was significant. But she also noted that:

There were three significant teachers at my secondary school, and they made a difference. They knew I was struggling and they went out of their way to help me. I was keen to learn. I wanted to learn. They’d meet at lunchtime, I could see them during free periods and they’d meet with me, they were so welcoming. I’d say, “I don’t get this” and they’d sit with me and go through things with me. I appreciated that so much - for the very first time, someone was connecting with me.

Post schooling

After completing an Arts degree in Psychology, Asha undertook work at her university teaching tutorials, and was convinced by lecturers to undertake a PhD. She also began studying teaching during this time. Whilst completing her PhD, Asha completed her teaching rounds after a period of time, and she described the placements as being uneventful.

Current school

Asha currently teaches Grade 3/4 in a medium sized primary school of 350 students in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. The school has a high refugee student population, with a low

socio-economic profile, and numerous traumatised students from war-torn countries. As such the school represents a challenging context for teachers.

Asha is considered a good teacher by fellow staff. Data from the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN²) reveal that she achieves high student outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy for her students and Asha has recently been awarded a position of leadership within the school.

School leadership

Asha considers herself fortunate to have a very supportive principal at her school. She talks of her principal as being focused on building teacher capacity in a very supportive way, stating that he has, “a strong moral purpose similar to the teacher in the video” and “is an inspiration to our community.”

Core values in teaching

Asha holds a core value of relationships with students as being fundamental to her teaching and to the role of teachers in general. Asha expresses a strong ethic of care for her students.

Relationships are everything in teaching. A positive regard for all students. I think when you respect and value students as individuals; I think that provides the best possible conditions for their personal growth. That's my secret.

Restraints

Lack of self-assuredness

Asha, by her own admission, lacks confidence in interactions with people, “I need to work on believing in myself.” Asha tends to keep to herself and not reveal herself to others, or in fact teach in the way that she would ideally like. She admits that, “speaking up is not the easiest thing for me to do.” Arguably one could point to elements of Asha’s upbringing as contributing to a lack of self-confidence and assuredness, which ultimately impacted the way she taught. Asha’s difficult upbringing in India within a harsh environment, suffering the loss of her sister, her experience of moving from India to Australia as a girl in her teenage years and encountering racism – there is little doubt that these factors contributed to Asha being withdrawn and somewhat isolated in her personal and professional life.

² National Numeracy and Literacy standardised testing conducted at both Primary and Secondary schools.

An example of how Asha's perceptions of herself impact her actions and behaviour is when Asha tells of not showing her PhD thesis to her own family, for fear of what they might think. "I didn't show my thesis to anyone in my extended family as they might have responded with strong words." Asha also did not allow her parish priest to read her thesis, "He is a very conservative person, I don't dare let him read it."

A perception that colleagues do not share her core value of relationships

Asha has a strong feeling that other teachers in the school do not share her philosophy of care for students. This presents an internal tension for her as she believes that fellow staff operate without the same sense of compassion and care for students as she does.

I haven't seen it. I just don't get the feeling that it is happening. That's just my general impression. Just the way children are referred to, and spoken to. It's annoyed me. Even at meetings people saying this is too hard for the children, these kids can't do this, I find that annoying as well. Because, I think, my children can speak four languages - they're not dumb.

A colleague remarked on one occasion to her that, "some people care way too much about the children. I don't." This had a marked impact on Asha and forced her to withdraw even more as she began to suppress her natural caring instincts as a teacher. This inhibits her practice as a teacher, stopping her from sharing aspects of herself and altering the way she teaches in front of others.

I don't feel comfortable talking about students very passionately in the staffroom because I know there are people who think differently. But other places I've felt very comfortable doing that, and courses I've been to and they're just as passionate as I am so I just open up there and talk about the children as much as I like. So I think having that like-minded people there helps.

First viewing: Initial responses to Wright's law

Asha expressed similarity to the teacher

Asha identified strongly with Mr Wright, frequently referring to their similarities. Mr Wright appeared to act as a mirror through which Asha could compare her values and teaching approach. Asha says that Mr Wright, "made me think about and reflect on my philosophy of

teaching and how similar it is, and what we want for kids.” One of the similarities to which Asha referred was his teaching beliefs.

I see a lot of similarities actually between that teacher and myself; it was nice to see that, to know that there are others also out there who value that relationship with the students and care about their students. I think he believes, and I believe the same as well, that you draw them in once you have that relationship.

Asha also referred to similarities in their practical approaches to teaching. She noticed the types of conversations that Mr Wright had with his students, and stated that, “those are the kinds of conversations that I have with my students as well - about family and values ... I think I could identify with what that teacher was doing because a lot of those things he did I try to do, with my students.”

In particular Asha drew immediate comparisons to how she approached caring for students, “like in the video one of the students says that he felt like his teacher cares about him, and that’s how my children feel as well.” On many occasions, Asha would refer to Mr Wright, and then immediately to herself in the same sentence.

I was thinking that we do want children to have an optimistic sense of the world, and like him, what he was doing, I think just building skills and developing in them those skills and values to prepare them for life, and I think that’s what I want for children as well.

Liking Mr Wright

Asha liked Mr Wright. She expressed numerous positive statements about Mr Wright, particularly relating to his caring manner and attention to the students:

Asha: I wish I had a teacher like that ... I think his students say that they’d remember him forever, so I think he has achieved his purpose.

Interviewer: What was it about him that you liked?

Asha: I think just his whole manner, the way he was with the children, I think in teaching you don’t get into it for the pay, I really think that teaching is a vocation, and its more than just teaching in the classroom, you’re building people, you’re building their capacity and I think he was

very passionate about that. He is someone that genuinely cares, and a very nurturing person.

Seeing a teacher with a similar teaching philosophy heartened Asha, in that it was “great to know that there are people who think of teaching as a vocation.” She said that, “kids need that these days because their lives are so complex. I’d love to shake that teacher’s hand, it’s the purpose of what we’re here for, you do want to see your students do well, you want to see them being able to face the challenges in life.”

Asha identified with Mr Wright to the point where she viewed him as a role model, and aspirational in terms of who she wanted to be as a teacher. She remarked that it, “inspires me because I feel that there is so much that I still need to learn. This is where I want to be, one day. I was watching it and I’m thinking, yes of course that works, I’ve seen it work, I’ve experienced it, and because that’s who I’m trying to be.”

Recalling her past

Asha frequently referred to her past in her responses to the video. She recalled her own schooling and experiences of learning, particularly in reaction to scenes within the video which portrayed the students and their communities. The video prompted Asha in particular to link to her early years, “It reminds me so much about my upbringing overseas. There wasn’t a lot of focus on relationship building there.”

Asha recalled events of being in one of her mother’s classrooms, her primary schooling in Madras, and her secondary schooling in Australia. She stated that she really enjoyed seeing the interactions of students within the video, possibly because it made her contrast her own schooling - which wasn’t so pleasant:

We had 66 children in our class, and there was no relationship with the teacher, I felt they didn’t know each child and they couldn’t relate to each child, and it was so harsh in terms of punishment. So I had those models, and then our family immigrated to Australia.

For Asha, Mr Wright was a major stimulus for the recall to her past. In reference to Mr Wright, Asha remarked, “I can only remember very few teachers who had certain aspects that I will remember forever, who in some small way made a difference in my life, and who have been part of my journey. Watching Mr Wright interact with his students caused Asha to reflect upon the types of teachers she had in the past. She recalled the ones who were like Mr Wright, and she remembered the impact that they had on her, still these years later.

... it was also here that I met four teachers who made a positive difference in my life. The first was my Year 11 History teacher, who came to know that things were difficult for me at school. She talked with me and encouraged me to see to the school counsellor. The second was my Homeroom and Religion teacher who always took the time to discuss all the assignments with me. One day she asked me to assist some of the younger students in her English class. I told her that I really liked helping them and she said that if I really wanted to help, that I should become a teacher. The third was my Health teacher. She was always happy to read through and give me feedback on as many drafts as I produced. The fourth was my Year 12 Psychology teacher. She once asked me, "What can I do to make things easier for you?" I asked her, "Can you read my work and give me some feedback?" She agreed. I remember at the end of the year she said, "You will achieve anything you want because you have persistence and determination."

Linking to herself

Asha used Mr Wright as a mirror to her own beliefs and values. Linking from the teacher to herself promoted insights into her inner self and practice. In the response below, Asha can be seen firstly reflecting on the values of the teacher, of being nurturing and caring, but then subsequently reflects on herself and how *she* responds well to nurturing and caring.

He is someone that genuinely cares, and a very nurturing person. That is who he was, which is why the students could connect and relate to him. Because I guess in some small way, I guess we all do. I respond well to nurturing - kids do too.

The video also prompted Asha to recall her own values of compassion, justice and self-worth; seemingly connecting with her own ideal state of being as a teacher.

I want my students to have a positive sense of self, because I think that all achievement flows from a positive self-concept. I want them to have an ethos of compassion, I want them to feel like they need to give back to the community, and I want them to have a sense of justice as well, and that was very evident from the teacher.

Seeing the teacher as person

Within the video, Asha paid attention to the human aspect of the teacher and teaching. By seeing the teacher portrayed so vividly as a *whole person* within the video, not simply a technician, it gave Asha a new insight into her own self and identity.

... letting the students see that he was human, that he had questions and he's a person that has things that frustrate him in his life, as well, I think that was great teaching because the way he brought it back that there is a purpose to life and I think students need to hear that message no matter how bad things can get, just to not lose hope that there is purpose to life. I think he brought a sense of humanness to what we do very well.

Seeing Mr Wright as being open and honest, Asha remarked, “you need to be that way when you are working with children, they need to see that you are human as well, and I just think that it brings integrity to the position if you are open and honest. It makes me feel like I can question too, and if I knew that, it would make me feel comfortable to take risks in a classroom situation and to be myself.”

Asha felt affirmed

Asha expressed on numerous occasions that she felt affirmed or validated by the video. Asha was affirmed through seeing her values reflected in the teacher in the video, and that she had chosen the right career.

It's reassuring. It helps me. I was thinking when I was watching that it was reassuring that this is the right job and I'm here for the right reasons and we all try to make a difference and that was good to see. I guess some days I even ask myself am I really making a difference. So it is nice to hear that students are actually saying that yes it does make a difference, so it is kind of validating.

The result of this affirmation and validation for Asha is a sense of perseverance, “it's good to know there are other teachers out there who feel the same. It tells me that that is working. To keep doing that.”

Recalling her teaching

Through the video, Asha recalled aspects of her current practice. One aspect was around the importance of getting to know her students. She agreed with Mr Wright in saying that, “you

need to connect with the students you need to get to know them as people, which is what he tried to do.” Asha also noted the need to build community and getting to know the students’ families as well.

I guess more so this year as our school has been trying to build community, I’ve been trying to think of other ways to actually connect with families as well, because I know that’s so important. I do get to know my students but I guess really getting to know their families, so I guess that has been a focus for me this year.

Various scenes within the video caused Asha to recall specific incidents from her practice. The scene in the video where Mr Wright talked about valuing the students as people stimulated Asha to recount similar incidents from her own school life.

At the end of last year a parent came to me, she thanked me for being the child’s teacher. She said I hope my child wasn’t too much trouble. She’s a wonderful parent. She used to come and see me all throughout the year and I remember at parent teacher interviews, she just wanted to know about the academic stuff, and when her daughter’s story writing would be at standard. She had made so much progress from being behind, she was 6 months behind at that time, and she was on her way there, but not just yet, but that’s all she wanted to know about, and I wanted to talk about how amazing her child is, and I was trying to tell her this child doesn’t have one mean bone in her body, she’s friends with everyone, and she’s so inclusive and caring, nurturing, I’ve never seen her get upset, angry or say a harsh word to anyone, and I wanted to tell the parent how special that was, and I tried to explain but the mum just wanted to know about the scores on the test.

Other incidents from school are recalled by Asha in response to the video.

I remember clearly last year a student, some students were talking about getting disciplined at home, and how it is in Iraq as well, he had his head down and he didn’t look up for the whole session, and so I called him over, and I said to him you know you are a friendly person, but I’ve never heard you talk about home, how are things for you at home? And he had to think about it, and he said, “Oh I get into trouble every day at home.” I spoke

to his parents at parent teacher interviews and they just expected him to do better. He was an outstanding student, and I told him so. And at the end of the year he told me he was going to miss me and he still comes back to visit. So the parents need to get that as well.

Noticing opportunities to act differently

In viewing the video for the first time, Asha saw things she could do differently, or more of, in her practice. One aspect of Asha's thinking involved continuing to work towards a more student-centred approach. She quoted a scene from the video, where Mr Wright talked about the way he tries to hook students in, and this resonated with her as she imagined modelling the sentiment.

I think the aspect that I'm really trying to work on with my team, is student voice and student interest, and trying to bring that into planning. And for students to have ownership of their learning. I think he [Mr Wright] was trying to cater for student interest very well. Because that was a way for him, he said he, "could rope them in that way and create the level of learning." So just continuing to work on that student interest and bringing that student voice.

Whilst Asha already had a focus on building relationships with her students, the video provided a stimulus to build on those strategies. She was particularly struck by a scene where Mr Wright stood in the school corridor and shook the children's hands as they walked past and noted it was one action that she could do more of in her practice.

It's applying, continuing to apply the same strategies - the building relationships, the smiling at students and calling them by name, and the way he shook their hand - it's all those behavioural, those interpersonal things - those behaviours, to just continue to do that because it works. And knowing your students, getting to know them as people helps them to engage with their learning.

In seeing the video, one of the things Asha recognised was that she had limitations that were impacting her practice. Asha credited the video for playing a role in helping her to see these. For example, she recognised the need to engage in dialogue with other staff, to communicate her views on learning and what was happening in the classroom, to become involved in a team

of teachers instead of staying “inside her own head” to meet the obstacles that came up in her practice.

It has actually been on my mind, to tell myself that I do need to say something, that I do need to speak up. If it's something I feel I need to say something about, then I need to do it. I need to confront challenges so I can grow in confidence. I can't let myself worry about what others might say or think, not just at work but also in my life, I need to be true to who I am and what I believe in. So I will try to build my confidence to enable my voice to be heard.

One of the major things that Asha intended to do as a result of watching the video for the first time, was to share the video with the rest of the staff. This represented a big step for Asha given her lack of confidence and worries about shared collegial values.

Asha: I was going to ask you if it was OK to show the video to the rest of the staff. I've told my Principal I'll send him a link to it and he seemed very interested.

Interviewer: How would that help you, showing the video?

Asha: I don't know, maybe I'd go down to that staff room more often than I do ... There are things in that story that every teacher should hear, it doesn't matter the ages of the students, I think we should all hear that we need to connect with our students, and we need to understand that they have lives outside of school that can make coming to school difficult for them. We need to get in touch with our purpose, so anything that can help us do that, help us to reflect and remember what we're here to do, and what really gets positive outcomes for them, and just being committed.

Asha also thought of showing the video to parents.

Oh, on that Tuesday a parent came to see me before school finished and I mentioned that I was presenting at the staff meeting and she wanted to know about it and I explained. She thought that was good and commended me for it. I am thinking to share the video clip with her and ask her what she thinks. My purpose for doing this would be that I think the message about building relationships is important for the parents too.

Second interview (3 months later): Impact on Asha's thinking and action

Asha shared more of self with colleagues and students

Asha took steps to share more of herself with her colleagues, and with her students. She did this as a means of building better relationships with her students in the belief that being more open with students developed better trust with them. Asha believed that trust built the conditions for students to respond to her with feedback and engage in meaningful dialogue about their learning. As the Grade 5/6 classes were doing a unit of work on biographies, Asha was invited by a fellow teacher to address all the grade 5/6 students in an autobiographical talk about her life, given her interesting and challenging upbringing in India. Asha was initially very reluctant, because she lacked the confidence in opening up in front of other colleagues.

I spoke to one of my colleagues about the video and I was saying how wonderful it was that this teacher was making a difference. And in a way I felt that I needed to go and do this biography thing with the Grade 5/6. I thought that this particular teacher for that grade - that she needed to hear some things as well and that it might help her with her practice. So I thought that by me going and sharing my passion for teaching and what makes a difference and the people that made a difference in my life that she might be able to see that this relationship building stuff works, it actually makes a difference.

Asha decided upon the initial viewing of watching the video that she would in fact share more of herself within the school. In summoning the courage to do the autobiography session, she recalled the video. "I thought to myself, that's what the teacher in the video does - he shares his life with his students. And I remembered how the students reacted to it, and they were very respectful and sensitive." She saw the dramatic and positive effect that it had on Mr Wright's students when he talked about his life and his own children with his students, and instead of turning the offer down, she chose to challenge herself and do the autobiographical session.

The year 5/6 students were learning about biographies and I was invited to speak to a class about my life. I was initially reluctant as I am a quiet and shy person but I thought the children could learn from my personal story and the teachers could gain some insight into connecting with students, building relationships and creating an environment of trust whereby students feel like they can take risks in their learning. I spent all

weekend thinking about what I would say, and what would be appropriate for that age and what they could handle hearing, and I wanted to be honest with the kids, so I went in. Most of them I knew because I had taught them previously, so it was an environment of trust and I felt like I could take risks. The day I went in, I had my notes with me, I said to them that those who have been in my class will remember how forgetful I am, and I saw heads nodding in the room. Then I let them know that I was nervous about talking about myself and I hoped they would look after me. And I spoke honestly, about a few barriers that I have managed to overcome in my life, so children could actually learn from my story. I brought in different examples and different times in my life. I was initially reluctant as I am a quiet person. I was just hoping that it would be meaningful to all of them. And they were so respectful and appreciated that. They gave me a big clap at the end. The teacher afterwards told me that she was amazed at how tuned-in, sensitive and respectful the students were. I told her that you can create that environment and not to underestimate what kids are capable of. She said she would think about sharing about herself with the students.

Showing the video to the rest of staff

One of the areas of action that Asha intended to pay attention to as a result of watching the video the first time was to show the video to the rest of the staff. The decision to show the video was difficult for Asha, given her issues with confidence, and issues with her feeling that the rest of the staff did not share her views around developing relationships with students. Asha was nervous about the reaction from colleagues. She was most concerned about:

... whether or not the video will be meaningful to them. But my main purpose for showing staff the video is to provide an opportunity for self-reflection – and that will be achieved. We all need to work together and towards bringing along our colleagues with us to realise our moral purpose and our school's vision.

Whilst she was nervous and apprehensive about showing the video, it was important to Asha. The video had awakened a need to reveal herself to her staff warts-and-all, to trust in her values in the hope that others might agree with her and operate accordingly.

The first step for Asha was to approach her principal to see if it was possible to show it at a staff meeting. The principal agreed, and two weeks later introduced Asha and the video during the staff meeting. Asha took the floor, very nervous, but battled on and explained proudly why she thought the video was important. She said it had made her “reassess her values” and made her “reconnect with why she went into teaching in the first place.” She laid bare her values about teaching - that care for the child, a relationship with the child and respect were core elements of teaching. She put herself in a vulnerable position, getting up in front of her colleagues and talking about her deepest values.

Asha led a process where staff watched the video, then reflected individually through writing down their reflections. The teachers then shared reflections in a group discussion. Asha led the session with poise and confidence. Interestingly there was overwhelming support for Asha, and her views about relationships with students as exemplified in the video. This was at odds with what Asha had perceived.

Through reflecting on herself via the video, and by taking action around it to share more of herself and her philosophy with her colleagues, she realised that the thing that was holding her back the most, the lack of shared values, was more her perception than reality. Because the reflection responses to the video were so positive around this type of teaching, Asha was genuinely surprised. If she hadn't tried something new, such as showing the video to others, she would have continued to function in the school in a way based on a major assumption about her colleagues; an assumption that was unfounded.

The other staff, I've often wondered if they needed to be reminded of why they got into teaching, so by showing them the video, I hope that that happened for them. It helped me to see people a bit differently. I started to see that they do care, and teachers in general want the best for their students, in the busyness of things, that gets lost sometimes, and you're just trying to get through things. That's what I used to see, people just getting through things. But in their responses to the video, I saw that they did care.

And they got to see a bit more of who Asha actually was, and that was empowering for her.

With the staff, just when they see me standing up and speaking at staff meetings, I guess there's that awareness of oh this is what she believes, this is what she stands for, so I think by standing up and putting myself

out there, that they can see more of who I am and what I stand for. I was inspired by the video. I wanted to show it to the other staff, hoping that they could get something out of it, that hopefully it would inspire them in their work with children.

Growing in confidence

One of Asha's limitations to her practice was confidence. Through reflecting on the video, and the subsequent things she tried as a result of watching the video, Asha moved forward and became more confident. A number of personal experiences also contributed to her growing confidence. The video appeared to give her reassurance that her values were matched by others and that she was not alone in believing they applied more generally in teaching. Asha gained a sense of poise around her practice and began to stand her ground in school situations where previously she would have retreated.

Yes, I know that it is possible to get too wound up in situations. Perhaps the more my confidence grows the less I'll worry. It has been a long, hard road towards rising above past experiences and living out what I believe. I thought a lot about whether I should respond to those three emails from that member of core leadership. I knew that if she thought she could get away with it that she would definitely do it again. I have seen what she does to other people and then she goes crying to the principal and they have had to apologise. I somehow needed to let her know that I can stand up for myself.

Asha saw her confidence growing through becoming more comfortable with difficult conversations with staff - the thing she used to have most trouble with. Whilst she still recognised that she had trouble in this area, she felt her confidence growing.

I had some difficult conversations with a couple of members in my team and a couple of staff members recently. Rather than worrying and getting anxious about it, I saw them as opportunities for growth and I was pleasantly surprised that I handled it all confidently and well. I was quite vocal today at our meetings about students getting upset in the yard and feeling like they are not being listened to and that we all need to be consistent in our approach. Surprisingly, I do feel ok about facing

challenges. I will hang in there and express my thoughts and opinions. I know that as my confidence grows that I will get better at it.

Before Asha watched the video and embarked on a journey of self-change, she did not have the confidence to challenge others, to speak up about learning and teaching matters within the staff room, to discuss important learning issues with her colleagues, to embark on open dialogue with fellow staff. By seeing her ideal self and values realised through Mr Wright, by seeing him and the way he spoke with students, the way he got to know them, and built their trust, it gave her reassurance and confidence to teach the way in which she ideally wanted.

I do think about the video quite often. I see that I do have some of his qualities and I am still growing and developing my confidence and skills. When I was having a difficult conversation with my vice principal last Thursday, in the moment, I thought about it, that I need to be true to myself in this moment, and that was empowering. I wasn't really sure how it was going to go, but I just knew I'd be OK. It was just this feeling that, you can do this, you'll be OK. I think previously I might not have been ready for it. I may not have felt ready. I guess I may not have believed in myself enough. Now I think I can do this. I was chatting with a colleague the other day about one of these conversations where she was present, and she told me that, "I said exactly what needed to be said, and what the other person needed to hear. It needed to be said and you said it." So I guess I'm getting better at it.

Clarifying values

The video helped Asha to clarify what mattered to her within her profession. Through this clarification, Asha found a greater sense of trust in herself.

I think the video helped me to bring them all together because now I think "well that's important and that's important" so it helped me bring it all together and make it clear ... it did reaffirm and strengthen my resolve, that what matters is my passion and sense of purpose. When it comes to making decisions about what's best for the children I know that I can trust myself.

In clarifying, then reaffirming her own values, Asha resolved to continue to push forward and challenge herself.

At the very core of me is my love for children and that's what drives me. We have a responsibility to our students to provide the best possible conditions for them to learn and grow, and to develop in them a positive sense of self, and the values and skills to prepare them for the responsibilities and challenges of life. So, I can't let myself worry about what others might say or think, not just at work but also in my life – I need to be true to who I am and what I believe in. So I will continue to build my confidence to enable my voice to be heard.

Recalling the video away from teaching

The video became a prompt for recall during Asha's own personal experiences quite away from teaching. The video transcended the doing of teaching to affect Asha during encounters that had seemingly little to do with teaching. In this way, the video helped Asha to see intersections between her personal and professional self, and the need for alignment between the two.

There were a few things that kept popping up on my own personal journey recently, and I was thinking about the video and some values became very clear to me, like love and forgiveness and compassion, so some values just came to the surface, yeah, it just made a lot of sense to me. I guess my thoughts sometimes are all over the place, and I always write things down and think about things. But I guess after watching the video it made me want to reflect on what my philosophy is about teaching, and so I had to organise my thoughts and think about what do I value and what do I want for my students? And so I started to jot things down and I'm glad I did that because now my thoughts are organised about it and I can more automatically speak about it.

Focusing more on students

Having surfaced her core values around building relationships within teaching and learning, Asha became more conscious of whether she was being true to these values in a practical way in her classroom. She pondered valuing students as individuals who deserved respect and care, then she realised that her teaching needed to reflect this. Asha engaged in a number of small conscious actions as a result of the video, as a way to live out her values in a more authentic way. She always believed that better relationships with children made for better learning, but that she needed to do more in that regard.

One small action that Asha took directly from the video was the action of shaking students' hands; as Mr Wright did with his students. This gesture within the video had a significant impact on Asha, seeing it as another way to build a connection between her students and herself, and to enable students to feel positive about themselves in readiness for learning.

I particularly liked that he did shake people's hands, and I took that away with me because it's something that I could do, because I'm always trying to connect with the students, and I was thinking that would be a nice way to do that. And I did try that in class, fairly quickly to watching the video – a child came in at lunchtime from another grade and he said, "Guess what I got my trust license to today" which means he can work in any area of the school unsupervised by a teacher, and I said, "Congratulations" and I shook his hand, and the next day he brought in the license to show me, and he was so excited, and he gave me a hug, because, yeah, um, yeah, because the previous day I was very excited for him and congratulated him he brought it in to show me.

Asha was influenced by the way Mr Wright showed an active interest in his students by looking them in the eye and giving them his full attention. Asha commented on her realisation that the little things like stopping to acknowledge children when they asked a question, even when busy, was a way of valuing the children in accord with her espoused values.

In the busyness of things, this sounds terrible, teachers sometimes don't get time to listen to children's stories and their news. I make time now. If they come running up, and they want to tell me about their weekend, or their dad's sick, I just stop and give them my full attention, so I want to be present for them.

Asha commented on the positive message emanating from the video in terms of remaining upbeat despite the challenges that may be presented. She particularly liked Mr Wright's use of his sense of humour in the video and she decided to try out her sense of humour on her students.

That particular afternoon after watching the video I used some humour and that worked well – the children were laughing and I felt like it cheered me up. So I decided that I will use more humour in the classroom. Furthermore, I am most happy when I am in the classroom, and seeing the

faces of my students does naturally make me smile as well. So it lifts everybody.

This positive message from the video influenced the way Asha spoke with her students. It compelled her to keep building positive relationships with students, to keep building the trust with them so that they were in a good position to learn. She changed the way she dealt with one student who had suffered trauma as a refugee and sometimes acted in a self-harmful and disruptive manner. Often this disruptive manner caused Asha to react to him with frustration and sometimes punishment. Recalling the positive message from the video, Asha chose to stop and talk to the student more deeply, instead of using the usual punitive measures. She took the child aside into a quiet space and spoke to him in a way different to normal.

I told him that I had a difficult childhood and that I grew up with very strict parents and that I couldn't wait to grow up and leave home. I told him that during my childhood I wasn't happy with myself and I had to change things. I learnt later to hold on to the good things from my mother and to let go of the negatives. I told him that he needed to do the same, no matter who he meets or interacts with, he should hold on to the good things and let go of the negatives. I told him that while I only learnt this as an adult that I believed that he could do this now. I also did tell him how lucky he was to have a clever teacher talking to him, that when I was growing up my primary school teachers didn't talk to me. He smiled and agreed. In speaking with him the situation was such that I had to speak about my upbringing and that was very personal. I had to be honest - he'd know straight away if I wasn't being authentic. I asked him to hang in there and I said that one day he could have the kind of life he wanted. I told him that I believed in him and if ever he wanted to talk about anything that I would be here.

Asha made a conscious effort to make her learning intentions more explicit to the children instead of keeping them to herself. Asha realised that a learning relationship with children involved them understanding what it was that she was trying to do.

I think my teaching now is more intentional. It has always been intentional for me, but not for the children. I make it now intentional for them. So that they now know why they are doing something - why now, why is it

important, and that they are able to make the links now, with what they are doing later, and to what we have done before, and I think I'm focusing more on the students as people, and building character. I used to do meditation with the kids, but it became less regular, and now I make a point of it and put it in the calendar to make it a regular thing.

Understanding Asha

Prior to the video

Asha presented at the first interview as an extremely quiet and shy individual. Her level of reservation was perhaps not surprising in the context of her upbringing. The combination of a harsh childhood in India, losing her sister tragically when she was 12 years old, moving countries and struggling to fit into social groups at school, all contributed to limiting perceptions of herself and the world around her. Whilst Asha could be seen to be a good teacher within her own classroom environment, Asha's restraints arguably limited her potential to grow as a teacher and grow into a community of teaching within her school.

Asha expressed a strong value of care for students within her teaching. This value could be seen to be suppressed within her teaching, and this represented a source of dissonance or tension within herself - a sense that she was capable of doing more within her teaching and being more within her school community. Asha knew at one level that she was bright, caring and intelligent (after all she had a PhD). But her experiences throughout her childhood had contributed to perceptions within herself that she should keep to herself, and that others didn't share the sorts of things that she valued within her teaching. In this way, this view of herself and others limited Asha in using these potentially effective traits (care, concern for others, strong focus on relationships) as effective instruments (Combs, 1964) for teaching and learning.

The impact of the video on Asha

Asha undertook two significant actions as a result of watching the video. Firstly, Asha showed the video to the rest of her staff during a staff meeting. Secondly, Asha presented an autobiographical session for all the 5/6 students in the school- and in front of her peers. At the same time, Asha also appeared to develop a greater sense of self-assuredness and resilience within her teaching practice:

I used to shy away from difficult situations but this time I decided to stand up for myself whatever the consequences might be. I also decided that if I saw that someone was being undermined that I would step up and support that person which I have now done. Some of these people hold grudges but I don't care – I will live my life with integrity and act on what I believe.

Asha also began to be more outwardly social and engaged with others within her school:

I feel a bit more OK about talking about myself with my class. I have never felt that easy to do. I know it is important to do, because kids also need to see that you are human, you do make mistakes, that when you rise above that I think they see that. And I think they respect you for it. After that sharing time with the 5/6's, I've had more people visit my grade than ever.

Causal features of the narrative for Asha

There were a several key elements within Wright's Law to which Asha responded.

Seeing a positive role model (character) within the narrative

Asha identified strongly with the main character in the video. She described him as being “open and honest”, “very nurturing,” “human”, “having integrity” and “inspiring”. Asha stated that “I loved watching him talk. He seemed real to me. A real person.” She added that a, “teacher like that is needed everywhere.” Asha also expressed on numerous occasions that she felt that she was similar to Mr Wright, and these two elements of similarity and likeability constitute the major factors leading to *identification* with character (Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1982; De Graaf et al., 2009; Hoffner, 1996; Jose & Brewer, 1983; McDonald & Kim, 2001; Miller & Reeves, 1976). It is argued that the greater the degree of similarity and likability between the reader/viewer and the character, the greater the degree of identification that will result (Altenbernd & Lewis, 1969; Andsager et al., 2006; Eyal & Rubin, 2003; Perrine, 2002).

Identification refers to the process by which an individual puts him or herself in the place of a character within a story and vicariously participates in the character's experiences as if they themselves were the main character. Seeing the narrative events through the character's eyes (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Cohen, 2001) externalizes the experience for the viewer, and it is this process of externalization which is proposed to be one of the mechanisms through which narratives can change attitudes and behaviours (Green, 2007; Slater & Rouner, 2002).

In paying particular attention to the personal qualities of Mr Wright of being caring and nurturing, Asha perhaps saw those desirable qualities within herself enacted through Mr Wright. Mar and Oatley (2008) found that when readers or viewers simulate the events that happen to a character in their imagination, they may come to understand what it is like to experience the described events and thus their attitudes may become more consistent with this vicarious experience. Hesley and Hesley, (2001) claimed that such an approach can have many benefits through the validating experience of identifying with a film character whose circumstances and values are similar to the client's own. Through engaging positively and safely with Mr Wright, Asha was able to see her ideal self-mirrored through the safety of another person. This identification allowed Asha to engage with the narrative more intensely and to see herself more vividly and safely through the metaphor of a character.

Identification arguably allowed Asha to engage with a positive role model for her teaching. Stacey (1994) and Cowie (1993), amongst others, found that identification with character is important as it can provide the spectator with role models to which they can aspire. In her long-term research into audience response to film, Stacey (1994) found that identification plays a role in aspiration and inspiration within the real lives of spectators, leading to changes in the spectator's own identity through providing something for the spectator to strive towards. Asha's upbringing appeared to offer her few role models of approaching teaching through a warm and relational lens. The prominence of Mr Wright within a very popular and well received video on the New York Times, appeared to legitimise Asha's value of care within her teaching, allowing her a sense of possibility to act in this way herself.

Hesley and Hesley (2001) referred to Epston & White's (1990) approach of externalizing the problem (p. 44) through film, as providing clients with a means to separate themselves from their problems. The notion of film has been seen to provide a safe emotional distance between clients and their issues and is a common theme in the related literature (e.g., Bierman, Krieger, & Leifer, 2003; Dermer & Hutchings, 2000; Fleming & Bohnel, 2009; Schulenberg, 2003). Carey and Russell (2002) argued that as people step back and separate from the problem and then consider its history and negative effects, they can find themselves standing in a different territory than the one they have become used to. Asha clearly reflects on her history frequently as demonstrated through her responses, and this process of externalization has arguably allowed Asha to step outside of her previous frame of thinking and into a territory where she is able to reflect more safely – and perhaps in turn objectively.

White (1988) argued that this different territory that narrative externalization affords is often a place free from practices such as self-blame and judgment. As the problem or restraint is de-centred, what becomes centred in the conversation are people's "knowledges" of life and skills of living that are relevant to addressing the problem as illustrated through Asha's growth in confidence - she begins to verbalize her restraint, and also sees new opportunities for the way forward:

I think that having passion and a sense of purpose will drive me to build my capacity to be the best person and teacher I can be. I can't live inauthentically anymore. I know my conscience won't allow it, so I will need to step up and overcome whatever I need to to fulfil my purpose. At work, that would include speaking up, having those difficult conversations.

Through this process Asha can be seen as moving from issue to possibility, from negative to possibility, White describes this as a process of *reauthoring* or *restorying*, where the preferred new narrative overthrows the previous narrative of restraint, and these new possibilities become the focus of exploration and change.

Thematic narrative - seeing deeper values

Story is about eternal, universal forms, not formula. (McKee 1997 pp. III)

The central theme in Wright's Law is a simple one – that teaching is a deeply human endeavour. This theme is particularly revealed in images throughout the story: Mr Wright shaking hands with students he doesn't know; the scene of him changing the nappy of his disabled son; or the images of his students' faces with their fierce loyalty to Mr Wright etched in their expressions. In utilising a strongly visual and affective approach containing universal themes of goodness and triumph over adversity, the video shares elements of the *folk narrative* genre. This style of narrative impacts Asha's restraints as it offers a means of reflection into her inner self - a way of reimagining her own context in a way that may not have been possible through other literal or technical stimulations.

Korthagen & Vasalos (2005) refer to these inner layers of reflection as layers of mission and identity. They argue that reflection at these levels enable changes in teacher behaviour to follow. Asha did not need instructional or technical stimulus on how to perform a particular teaching procedure or activity. Instead, for Asha, there was value in a narrative that provided an entry point into the layers of identity and mission where she could begin to uncover and

understand the restraints that were acting on her practice. When Asha noted pointedly that she was, “at a pivotal point in my life, where I am reflecting on who I am, what truly matters to me, and clarifying my values” the narrative can be seen as aligning with the type of reflection that mattered to Asha at this point in her life.

The general nature of folk narrative represents a contrast to the expository or instructional genre where the audience is instructed to do something through a series of ‘real facts and information’. This narrative genre of video can be seen to model dispositions and values rather than propositional knowledge, and in so doing reaches into the deeper levels of reflection for a teacher. It is within these levels of mission and identity that Asha’s restraints reside, and so this genre of video targets the challenges within Asha’s practice.

Asha noted that that the story was about deep things that mattered to her, and that she appreciated the fact that the story, “wasn’t just about the content ... it was also about preparing students for life and building character.” For Asha, that was something that was missing in the curriculum:

I think that sometimes we get wrapped up in covering the curriculum and we can forget our purpose. Watching this video is one way of getting us to stop and think and reflect on this purpose – why I went into teaching? Why I want to teach at this school? What are my values? What do I want for my students?

The strongly affective nature of the narrative itself had a significant impact on Asha. Fighting back tears at one stage as she viewed the video, she was inspired by the storyline as Mr Wright fought against huge odds to care for his son and family, all whilst caring for all the students in his classes.

Mr Wright had a story to tell. His has a story that inspired me. And I think in the years to come it will continue to inspire me. There’s so much there that’s inspiring to take from and to learn from and to be inspired by. The story certainly had that emotional hook I guess, because it touches people’s hearts. So I think when you can do that there’s that power to bring about the best in people.

Erickson & Rossi (1979) stated that themes in folk literature are usually serious and powerful, exploring the human condition, “universal preoccupations”, rather than intending to instruct

how one must behave. They move the audience to contemplate how they might act if they were in a similar situation.

Folk story frequently uses metaphorical language which allows people to more easily discuss difficult or complex ideas. Erickson & Rossi (1979) posited that ‘metaphor speaks directly to the unconscious’ (p. 195). According to Sharp et al. (2002), communicating with the client’s unconscious mind in this way circumvented any resistance that direct communication could create, thereby providing a path toward the solution of problems and the facilitation of change. ‘A folk story becomes a kind of living philosophy that the *viewers grasp as a whole* (italics added), in a flash without conscious thought’ (McKee, 1997, p. 115). McKee (1997) argues that intellectual analysis of practice will not nourish the soul - story instead triumphs in the marriage of the rational and irrational. Geertz (1973) described this process of interpreting the personal context through story and culture as ‘not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning’ (p. 5).

Asha reauthoring her own narrative

As Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & Giesler (1992) argued, aspects of self-concept are extremely resistant to change, even in the light of facts that clearly contradict them. The classic, psychoanalytical explanation for this phenomenon is that it involves a mechanism designed to protect the ego (Freud, 1986). Narrative, with its ability to externalise is effective in cases where the subject feels threatened or defensive through externalising restraints and creating space to allow a different story to occur (White 1993). Wright’s Law was useful in supporting Asha to look at herself and her beliefs about herself in a different way. The narrative helped Asha to reveal to herself that her perceptions of herself were her limitations – the way she viewed the world (Combs 1964).

Wright’s law provoked Asha to take action, to do something different in her practice. She already knew that she needed to reveal herself more, “to come out of her shell”. When she watched the video and saw Mr Wright teaching, in a striking moment of clarity she remarked, “This is who I want to be.” It allowed her to see herself through another - a very positive other. It affirmed Asha’s values, gave her clarity around her mission as a teacher, and an inspiration and motivation for actually trying something different. Her first response to the request for her to deliver an autobiographical session for the students had been to say no. After the video, she was motivated enough to say yes. The affective domain had “pulled the strings” of behaviour and supported her to act.

Asha found, through taking these actions, that in fact she and her colleagues did have similar values around care and relationships with children. Her perceptions of others' thoughts had been misguided, and until she tested it directly and openly, she did not know there was a more accurate interpretation. In this way, the video assisted Asha to adjust her perceptions about herself and others, and it is this change in self-perception which Combs (1964) argued is the fundamental element which leads to changes in behaviour.

Asha also discovered that sharing aspects of herself through her autobiography session was not so scary and in fact very liberating. She grew in confidence in having her authentic self-revealed to others; for better for worse. She became more comfortable as her personal and professional identities became more aligned. Through Asha's actions of showing the video to the rest of staff and conducting the autobiographical session, she felt a greater sense of authorship over herself and her practice.

Randall (1996) described this transformative learning as a process of *restorying*. This is when a story of the self no longer coheres or helps us make sense of our experience - we then feel compelled to change it. From Asha's initial fears of revealing herself to others, and limitations around speaking up for herself, Asha *restoried* her own narrative towards one of greater confidence and hope, "there was hope in this video, I was starting to see that." Freeman (1991) described this as a process of rewriting the self and argued that it is fundamentally retrospective. He stated that, 'It is only after one has arrived at what is arguably or demonstrably a better psychological place than where one has been before, that development can be said to have occurred' (p. 99).

As a result of being in a better "psychological place", Asha was liberated to use her natural relational focus to improve her students' learning. This led to her taking small actions to express her value of relationships with students, such as shaking students' hands, stopping to be more attentive to their stories, talking to students instead of punishing them, and making the students aware of her learning intentions during teaching. Using White's (1993) concept of re-authoring, Asha had replaced her previous narrative with a new narrative in which she held more agency over her perceptions of herself and her behaviours within her practice.

Chapter overview

This chapter presented Asha as a case study of a teacher's response to viewing a strongly affective narrative video of educational practice. The case study detailed Asha's background, upbringing and inner restraints which acted upon her practice as a teacher. The case study

described Asha's initial response to viewing the video, and the subsequent impact on her thinking and practice three months later. The case study explained how the narrative video enabled Asha to externalise her restraints via the use of metaphor, creating a safe place to reflect on her inner layers of mission and identity. Through this reflection, Asha was able to begin to reframe her thinking and perceptions of self in order to try new things in her practice.

The next chapter offers a case study of Lee, a second-year mature age teacher and will illustrate how the same video narrative enabled Lee to reframe a different set of inner restraints which were impacting significantly on her attitude and practice as a teacher.

Chapter 6

Lee

About Lee

Upbringing

Lee is a 30-year-old female teacher in her second year of teaching. She is a mature-age graduate to the teaching profession having worked prior to teaching in the health sciences industry at a leading medical research institute. Lee is the youngest of six children within a large extended family. She described her upbringing as “close-knit”, with a strong bond between the siblings. One of Lee’s siblings has a significant congenital disease which occupies much of Lee’s thinking and time.

We had the approach that if anything ever happened to anyone we’d look after them, didn’t matter if we were five or ten or twenty years old - if there was someone younger than you it was your job to look after them.

She credits her large family and close upbringing as a strong factor in her ethic of respect for her students, emphasizing that “it had a lot to do with it.”

Schooling

Lee attended a Catholic secondary girls’ school as a teenager. Lee found the school difficult, citing only two teachers throughout her schooling who she felt were effective.

I hated the school. The culture of the school I thought was appalling for a Catholic school, they were apologetic that they were Catholic, but I loved the music program there and I was in the orchestra, I played the clarinet - that was what probably kept me going at school.

Post schooling

Lee’s first choice of career was not teaching. After Lee left high school, she went straight to university and completed a double degree in arts and health science. Lee wanted to become a nutritionist as an outcome of the course, but upon finishing a double degree, found that the university had changed the pathway process and so required even further study to become what she wanted. This was “devastating for all of us, because that’s why we did the course.”

Lee chose not to undertake the further study in nutrition and worked for a number of years at a large medical centre as a project officer, interacting closely with doctors and medical professionals, before applying back again for university courses.

I applied out to occupational health and teaching, and they both came though on the same day. I had to choose, and it came down to occupational health was two years, and teaching was one year, so I did teaching. Teaching had always been on the cards, but because of the experience I'd had at school, and the experience I'd had of graduate teachers in secondary school, I was put off by that, and thought it would be better to go off and get some life experience.

Lee undertook three rounds of teaching during her teaching degree. The first school she:

... really liked, a big school, low socio-economic area, lots of refugees, families that couldn't speak English, so I found that fascinating, I loved it there. The parents had the utmost respect for teachers and held them in the highest regard, and basically let the teachers do what they do best.

Lee undertook her second teaching round (practicum) in the Cook Islands. Lee remarked about the close, family nature of education in the Cook Islands. Lee saw her ideal state of education in the Cook Islands, in terms of what teachers, students and the community could achieve if there was mutual respect for all.

The Cook Islands was really tough, but I still loved it. I think in terms of the actual teaching it was, you were thrown out there, and you just had to deal with it. We had no resources, but it forced you to think, "How am I going to do this, I know how to do it at home, but how would I do it here with these children?" It was probably the best experience I could have had for teaching, the relationships with students over there are amazing, everyone is family. After a week of being there we were considered family. Because we were teachers, we were really respected.

Lee spent her final two weeks "at a school that I absolutely hated, every single moment of that school I hated. The school was appalling, the teachers hated being there, the kids were revolting because the teachers didn't respect them, the principal didn't respect the teachers."

Current school

Lee teaches Grade 1 in a Catholic primary school in the southern suburbs of Melbourne. Lee's school is in a white Anglo-Saxon, middle-class environment with little diversity in culture. Lee describes the parents as having "a lot of money - they're used to getting their own way, and there's not that respect for the fact that you're the teacher."

What they perceive to be big problems, you know I feel like saying, "Go 10 kilometres that way and see some real problems" ... I perceive them to be quite precious, which is probably not very nice, but yeah.

Core values in teaching

It's so important to have respect for your kids, that's the biggest thing, and respect for other staff.

Lee is driven by a core value of respect - respect for her students, respect for herself, and the need for respect for her profession.

I just want to get the students to where they need to be. To give kids that opportunity and respect. To give the kids the best opportunity that you can give them. Because when I was at school, I know I had teachers that didn't think I was much.

On one of Lee's teaching rounds where there was a significant lack of respect for students and staff. She noted, "that was pretty soul destroying for me, those teaching rounds I absolutely hated it. I rang my mum in tears on the second day there at lunch time, and I was like I can't do this, and I'm normally pretty headstrong, but I just hated every moment of it."

Restraints

Lee's core value of respect is compromised within her current professional life in a number of ways.

Respect issues with parents

The parents at the school pose the most significant restraint for Lee. She feels they have a lesser view of her because she is a graduate teacher. Lee experiences the parents intruding on her professional space as a teacher, disrupting her teaching, and making her feel incompetent and uncomfortable.

I've found it particularly hard because when I first started, I didn't want the school to tell parents that I was a graduate, especially because I was post grad and had worked in industry. I'm not 21. I'm not straight out of uni. In my first year of teaching I had 30 parents in my room from 8:45 – 9:00am, you have parents coming into class supposedly to help, but they are there really just to observe you. And you know that they're there for that reason, so I think particularly as a graduate it's hard, people are watching you, in a small school, the youngest on the staff, it makes it really difficult.

Compounding this is the fact that Lee felt respected in her former workplace, in dealing with doctors and professors at a leading hospital who saw no reason to question her abilities. But Lee feels that as a graduate in the teaching profession, parents assume she lacks skills and knowledge.

They have their opinion of you, and they may only see you for five minutes every morning, but their opinion of you they've said to their children, and they come to school, and you know, I've got one parent who is very difficult, and she has said from the beginning that she didn't like me because I was a graduate and I wasn't old enough to be teaching.

As a result, Lee suppresses her natural care tendencies in front of some parents, and this has a significant impact on her teaching. She admitted, “I've changed my whole work program for that morning because of those parents - I did something completely different. Because I either don't want them to see what we're doing, because they are only going to go out on the playground after school and mouth off about it, spread rumours about you or whatever. It does ... it gets you down.”

Respect issues with colleagues

Lee also lacks a sense of collegial support around respect for students. She is expected by colleagues to work in a way at the school, which is not necessarily in line with her values.

Interviewer: Do your colleagues share the same ethic of respect for kids?

Lee: It is sometimes challenging, particularly if you have another person come into your classroom, and they don't have those same attitudes towards relationships with students, sometimes they'll want to tell them

off for doing something, but really, the kids know what they're doing, and the kids find that really difficult ... like this morning, somebody else was in my classroom for the first ten minutes of the day, and she came in and yelled at the kids because they were dismantling the Prayer Table. But the students were going to set up the prayer space. So that was the first thing I had to deal with when I came in the door. So sometimes when someone else comes in they have to take a step back and understand what's going on before they step in to do something.

Lee recently became part of the leadership team at the school, with responsibilities in curriculum. Lee has experienced a climate of negativity amongst staff, which she finds difficult.

It's hard when people are negative all the time, you can get bogged down in people being negative, and particularly as I've become part of the leadership team.

Respect issues with leadership

Lee feels she lacks support from leadership within the school, particularly at the principal level. She describes the level of leadership support for teachers and a caring approach to teaching children, as being “sort of 50/50.” Lee sees the role of the principal as driving the culture of the school, and as such, is responsible for the issues relating to the culture of the school.

Partly I think it's a culture that the schools built up because I think the culture of the school comes from the top, you can try everything you can as a classroom teacher, but I know at another school where the principal stands at the gate and greets every child as they come through the gate, parents just don't go into the rooms in the mornings. It works in big schools, it works in little schools. I think it really helps the culture of the school when you do have parent helpers, when they're selected, so that you don't have parents in the classroom that are going to put the children at risk, that are going to be a negative influence. So I think partly it's a school culture thing, and that you need really strong leadership to say, no this is not OK, this is what we expect at our school, so I think the school might have fed it to get to this point.

Respect issues from community

Lee experiences challenges with the public perception of teachers and how they feel teachers should behave. The values of care and respect which Lee has for students she feels is frowned upon by the community.

I did some of my teaching rounds in the Cook Islands it was quite confronting because we were told you can't touch children, all through uni. I was told you can't touch children, you can't have a relationship with them. When I stepped off the plane we had 30 children run and hug us – it was completely different, you know that kind of thing, and so I think that clearly shows different relationships and how important it is for some children that they need that.

The effect of this on Lee is that she feels unappreciated as a teacher, in her profession, and paints the picture of a young teacher struggling with the demands of teaching, parent expectations, and a public perception of teaching which has become a burden on herself and practice.

It is really easy to be unappreciated and people don't realise how much work you do, which is fine it happens in all occupations, but I think particularly in teaching, they think you only work from nine till three, so yeah... It's disheartening.

Initial responses to Wright's Law

Lee expressed similarity to the teacher

Lee felt that she was similar to Mr Wright. She noted that:

... our teaching philosophies are similar, in doing things a bit outside the square, not just doing things like everyone else does them because that's what's expected. I just wish I was that good.

When asked further if there was anything particular about his approach that resonated with her she remarked, "Probably more than anything that determination to keep going, despite what is thrown at you."

Liking Mr Wright

Lee expressed numerous positive statements about the teacher, Mr Wright. She liked that “he was different” describing him as “strong, amazing, honest.” She liked in him that tendency to follow his own path even when it appeared to be outside the norm. Most of all she liked that he had “that ability to reach out to different kids at different times ... I guess he’s that sort of teacher you aspire to be and whether you can ever get close to that is another thing.”

Perhaps Lee’s most recurring theme in relation to the teacher was that she saw Mr Wright as inspirational.

I could pick only three inspiring people, people that really inspired me to do much better, and people who said to me you can really do whatever you want to do. And I think too they were people that were really honest with me, and that guy in that video, I feel like he’s honest, so I think that’s part of why he’s inspiring, you don’t feel like it’s fake, you don’t feel like he’s putting his child, or his class, or anything at risk.

Lee took special notice of how Mr Wright interacted with his students, giving her an insight into his ability to relate to and engage his students.

You can just tell by the kids how engaged they are, and you can even see from the way he was interacting with them that they had that relationship, and you can’t fake that with kids, you really can’t, so it’s really good to see something inspiring like that.

Recalling her past

Throughout her responses to the video, Lee frequently recalled past personal experiences, her upbringing, and her experiences of learning and learning to teach. Most of the experiences she recalled were negative. Lee recalled her own schooling frequently, bringing back memories of the Catholic secondary school which she attended, recalling “hating” it, but finding some solace in playing the clarinet:

... that was what probably kept me going at school. I was at school at 7:00am each day for band practice and orchestra and all that kind of stuff, but as for the rest of the time, it was pretty bad.

Lee's teaching rounds as a pre-service teacher also held some negative experiences. Despite some positive experiences in the Cook Islands, Lee recalled an incident from her teaching rounds that was pivotal in forming her perceptions of the nature of respect for teachers.

One day I forgot my lunch and she didn't let me leave the school grounds so I could get something to eat. Lunch was for an hour and I wasn't on lunch duty. It was total disrespect. That put me off, that total disrespect for teachers, and then she offers me a job on the last day, because they couldn't get people to fill it. There was no way I was going to work at that school.

When Lee recounted one incident from her teaching rounds, her recall was accompanied by a realization about the impact of her moods and emotion on her students.

I remember one day when I'd had a workplace injury and I dislocated my shoulder. I'd been away for four days, and when I came back, oh my goodness, I was in a lot of pain. I didn't really want to be there, my tolerance wasn't as it normally was, and I must have turned around and given a child a curt response and they just looked at me and their face just crumbled, because they are used to you being that caring sort of person. It makes you realise the impact you can have I suppose.

This realization of the impact of her demeanour on students indicates that whilst some of Lee's recall from the past was quite painful for her, the process of recalling incidents from the past assisted her to surface and process some of the experiences and derive insights from them.

Together with past experiences, the video frequently prompted Lee to recall her current teaching practice. For example, the scenes of Mr Wright's students talking about their relationship with their teacher prompted Lee to link to her own practice of building relationships with students.

Relationships are so important in teaching, I've seen some big changes in a couple of my students with this approach. One in particular, who because of his family, had a negative relationship with me from the beginning of the year which I had to work at really hard. But now that we have a good relationship his learning has picked up across the board. So not just his reading or his writing - it's his maths, even his general approach to learning. Kids need to feel like you care for them so that they

can learn. And they know if you don't care and they'll even say that to you. And I think being able to be caring but firm when needed is also important, "look I think you're a great kid but you really need to do this, and you are doing this because it is going to help you, not just because I told you to do it, not just for some arbitrary reason it's to help you learn in the long run". And I think that our shift in focus in the last 12 months to learning goals and explicit teaching has helped as well, because they understand that yes you care about us, and because you care about us you are helping us to learn more.

Lee surfaced her teaching challenges

The video prompted Lee to become more aware of the challenges she was experiencing as a teacher. In expressing the frustrations she had within her own context in response to the video, Lee became more explicit about the type, and extent of, the challenges which were causing her concern. The parents at the school appeared the biggest challenge, because Lee felt their critical were eyes always upon her, particularly after some had openly disapproved of a graduate teaching their children. It meant that Lee was constantly second-guessing herself and questioning whether her own natural instincts of teaching through respect were actually useful.

I think when the parents are there. I think that's the hardest thing because there's all this thing about how you're not allowed to show affection for children, you shouldn't be hugging, you shouldn't be doing this and that. If I've got a child that is screaming because they don't want to be at school, I have to put my arms around them, and that gives them that security and sometimes. You have to do that, it's disrespectful not to.

Lee becomes aware that she is suppressing her natural tendencies towards respecting children, and how difficult that is becoming for her.

I think it makes it difficult, with young children particularly, because I'm teaching grade 1/2, the first thing they want to do is to come and hug you. And it's very hard. I've still got one child in my class that will come up every morning, race up to me - he's a child with learning challenges, and it's very hard for him to understand that it's not OK for me, as said by the school, as said by the CEO, to hug him or reciprocate in that way. So it's very difficult and it's hard for other parents to see that, and parents think

that because a child is doing that to you, you are asking that child to do it, and so I find that very difficult. And in a primary school you have parents standing there and watching, so I think it's hard for the children too.

Even seemingly small things within the school were causing Lee angst, such as not being allowed by the principal to use laminated cards in an activity due to the cost of the laminate. Lee contrasted that with the scenes of Mr Wright making explosions for the students with the seemingly abundant science resources of a secondary school. These small issues became issues of disrespect for Lee. She felt that if she couldn't even get approval to use laminated cards for her teaching, what motivation was there to come up with new ideas to transform student learning?

I think one of the big limiting factors of leadership is that they're so careful about spending money, like it's such a big thing like when you have a staff dinner, the leadership celebrate the fact that we only spent 20 dollars or something on the whole staff dinner, as though that's such an achievement. Thanks a lot. Like with your budgets, you really have to push so hard to get anything, like, we're trying to set up here an atrium, but they don't want to spend any money. I think in education you have to spend at least some money. We didn't have any science resources at the school, and I had to push so hard to get the primary connections books, we can't teach without some resources, so that's a big limiting factor. Money and culture ... like I did the maths PD that the system does, last year, and we went into Melbourne Uni and did the PD there, so I came back and did the think boards with the stuff I had in my classroom and I used laminated paper for it. I used it a lot, but the kids use it every day, but I got the call from the leadership, "now your use of laminated paper ..."

Lee was also disenchanted with the system in general. In her day to day teaching, she came up against frustrating obstacles which Lee interpreted again as being disrespectful to herself and the teaching profession as a whole.

It is very easy to feel unappreciated. For example I've worked very hard for the whole year to get this particular child assessed for autism, the mother is fantastic, the psychologist is in another world, but I suppose

she's just doing her job, and I had to fill out the paperwork, can this child do this, can this child do that, and rate it on a scale, I answered it honestly, no he can't read by himself, no he can't write a sentence by himself, and it came back in her report that none of data should be included, because my responses were too negative. The funny thing is I really like this child and his mum knows that. I've probably got the best relationship with that child compared with any other child because I've worked so hard with him, and because the father of this child has seen the report he thinks I now can't teach, and so you kind of think, what's the point? This stays on your file forever now that this child has a problem, and that you are negative about the child, it is so easy for others to tarnish your reputation as a teacher in education. The psychologist spent 10 minutes on the phone to me only, and said how the father doesn't like me because I'm young and inexperienced. It's so frustrating. Another thing is that the parents will come and complain to you, but they don't have time to spend five minutes of listening to their child read ...

The video affirmed Lee

Despite the video pointing out the many contrasts between what Lee did want to see in teaching, and how she perceived her present situation, the video helped to affirm Lee's core values of what a teacher should be and how they should interact with children. Viewing the way that Mr Wright interacted with children in such a respectful manner, helped to validate this preferred state, and in some way appeared to affirm herself as a teacher within the teaching profession.

*I think it's pretty amazing that someone can deal with that at home and be teaching as well. I think that it would be good for all teachers to see because we get caught up in what's happening at school and I think for beginning teachers especially we forget about what's happening at home or feel so overwhelmed by the combination between both. And the fact is that you can still have that relationship with your students and have that balance of being able to balance everything all at once, I think is pretty amazing. And I think to show that you **can** have these relationships with children is so important, like at uni. it is drummed into us be careful about relationships with children, be careful about almost too much these days, here you can see what it does for children.*

Noticing opportunities to act differently

The focus on respect for students within Wright's Law provoked Lee to think about how she could do more to value students within her own teaching. Lee saw opportunities to be more student focussed, to do and say those little things that Mr Wright did to make sure the students knew that they are respected and valued.

I think just remembering to say, 'Wow that's really great' or 'How are you going to improve on that?' is important, and just showing genuine care for them, showing that you are interested in what they are doing. Those things that you mean to always say, but maybe forget to.

Lee also saw opportunities to respect children more through her teaching behaviours in class. Seeing Mr Wright interact with his students, Lee noticed his respectful way of answering questions and providing students time to answer the questions that he posed.

One of the big things he does is he waits for the answers of the kids. That's something that I was really mindful of when I was doing my teaching rounds, and then once you get in the classroom, you get so wound up in wanting to get everything done, that you don't give students the time, and I have to remind myself, hang-on a minute, you've asked a question, just because there's some kids ready to answer before you've finished, you've got to wait and give them time to think about it. Because it's the same kids who are always answering the questions. So it's a good reminder to start doing that again.

At the end of the first interview, Lee imagined what it would be like to show the video to the rest of the staff. Lee believed that her colleagues did not share her values of respect for children, so she was hesitant about the idea, but it surfaced as a possibility nonetheless in Lee's mind as a way to connect with her colleagues on a different level.

I was actually just thinking before about showing them the video, because I run the professional learning team meetings, which I'm just learning to do. But that would be a great thing to show them and to talk about "how does it make you feel?" Exactly what we're doing now. So yeah I think it would be a really positive thing to do. If you had have asked me 6 weeks ago, I would have said I'll wait till next term, but now I kind of think that they need to be challenged, and as part of my role in stepping up to

leadership is to challenge them...challenging them when they challenge me, and being able to say, well, this is what I think is the right thing to do.

Second interview (3 months later): Impact on Lee's thinking and action

Lee developed insights about herself and teaching

The video gives you something else to think about. Like this is what we are aiming for. It gives you a clearer understanding of your purpose, to clear your mind and refocus you I guess.

Over the three months between the first and second interview, Lee slowly developed a degree of clarity around herself as a teacher and how she teaches. Through Lee's reflection on her past and her awareness of the challenges facing her teaching, Lee grew in an understanding of why she feels and behaves the way she does. For example, in recalling episodes from her past, Lee's memory of her teachers at school crystallised the notion that her experience of school had contributed to her current identity and practice as a teacher.

I was a fairly quiet sort of kid, and I know the teachers didn't think I was that smart, and I went through the whole of prep being able to read before I started, and they didn't really know that I could read and write. I think probably your own experience of school, whether you like it or not, probably shapes what you do in the classroom. It taught me not to be a teacher like that. It taught me to get to know your children. I think it taught me the value of being a good teacher. I had two really good teachers that I thought, how are these teachers so amazing when the rest of them are really below average. I had some OK teachers I suppose, but yes only two outstanding ones, and that's in seven years or something.

Lee gained an awareness of the tensions within herself as she tried to remain true to her value of always respecting the student. In recounting a part of the video where Mr Wright goes home after a long day of schooling to an equally challenging home environment, Lee articulates the conscious reminder to herself to try to remain consistent in her relationships with students no matter how challenging the context is.

I find myself too I have to be really careful about being complacent. And they said this to us at university, you can get lazy and fall back into what

your teachers did to you, and I think you have to be really conscious of that. Because if you're having a bad day, you might say something to students you normally wouldn't, and you think to yourself, hang on, that's not me, what am I doing? So I think it's very easy to revert back to what you experienced in your own learning, and I have to remember that.

Lee appeared to gain some perspective on where she was in relation to the stage of her teaching career, her challenges as a recent graduate, and whether these might be expected for a new teacher.

I think too, I'm in my second year of teaching now and I feel like I have more time. Not like you are cruising, but you've got more time to think about all the detailed things. In your first year, it's almost enough just to cope with the content and the assessment side of things, you try to do all those more sophisticated things, but you just can't do everything. So I think in the second year you probably have more time to reflect on it, so I think you are probably more open to things like the video, and more open to professional learning, trying things. The professional learning I've done in my second year, I've probably got more out of them because I've got the time to think about it a bit more, everything else is starting to work. You know how your literacy group runs, you know how to run your maths lessons, you know how to do those basic things, and now you've got more time to focus on those other more important things. And I think going through my second year, you learn which battles to fight, and which ones not to, you learn sometimes it's better not to say anything.

As Lee became more consciously aware of her own value of respect for children, it led her to think about how it might actually look within her teaching.

It helps to remind me of what's important to me. I think it's really important for the kids to feel like they're successful, they need to feel like they have the time to think about the question and respond, because otherwise you have the same kids all the time that are answering. The other kids aren't learning from it because it's too quick. Like this child in particular doesn't even have time to process what I've said, let alone the

answer that another child has given, or even their own thinking, so I think it's about giving each child an opportunity.

Growing confidence and perseverance

Through viewing Mr Wright's challenges, Lee felt more empowered to persist in battling against her own challenges, "When you see the teacher in that video, what he manages to do, you can't help but step up a bit yourself."

Lee spoke of becoming more inclined to stand firm in the face of her challenges. Whereas before the video she was most concerned about how others viewed her as a graduate, she remarked that she was now less worried about what others thought.

I think not being so conscious about showing affection for students, not affection but care. Not letting that restrict me too much. Like with this particular student that comes and hugs me, it's been totally doing my head in, and I think now, it's not really that big a deal. And while it's part of my role to teach him the right thing to do, that it's not the end of the world if he comes up and hugs me, that it's really about his learning that's most important. And the fact that he likes coming to school now is far more important than whether he comes up and gives me a hug.

Lee noticed herself making these small steps forward. In her remarks, she found value in the actual doing of things within her teaching "Every time you go and do something you feel a bit more confident. Just to try things and if it doesn't work, well it doesn't work, but at least I tried." Lee saw that these small actions to persevere with her core values was starting to show results for her students.

With the kid I was speaking about before, Daniel, I've been continuing to work on it, and finally it's paid off because the psychologist has come back to me, and said Daniel is finally going to be eligible for system funding, which means you can have another person working with this child. I mean that can change a whole kid's life, because if he had another year of the same, and I mean you can do as much as you can, but you can't be sitting next to one child for the whole year. So yeah, I think the video made a big difference because you kind of think you can persevere and maybe you'll get there, and in this case I did. And they've also said Daniel will probably

qualify for funding when he goes to secondary school as well, so yeah, perseverance.

Lee changed her perceptions of the parents

Lee began to take action around her challenges with parents in the classroom, raising the issue at a leadership meeting. Lee explained to the leadership group that there should be some parameters around when and how parents entered the classroom. But Lee herself was changing in her own perceptions of why the parents were entering the classroom, and after finding a degree self-assuredness over recent months, Lee gained some realisation that the parents weren't all that bad.

The parents are mostly just being friendly, and want to chat, but that's your time with the kids from 8:45am to 9:00am. I actually think it's the most important time for them, for them to tell you things they want to tell you. I've actually become more open to seeing parents. I've said to them, "look, I'm happy to talk to you briefly in the morning. If it's something that you need more than five minutes for, let's make a time so that I can give you the proper time to talk about things." That's so that you can give them that real relationship time, not just trying to listen whilst doing 50 other things.

Lee showed the video to friends

One of the actions that Lee took after watching the video for the first time was to show the video to a group of teacher friends from another school.

Lee: I haven't been able to show it in one of our meetings, but I have a lot of friends outside of here that are teachers and so I emailed it to them and we've all been talking about it. And some of them have shown it in their school, which is really interesting. And it's just been good to bring you back to what you are actually doing and why you're doing it. Because I think particularly for this term, term 3, everyone seems to be so flat out, you kind of get bogged down in it all, so to have a story like that that we've all been looking at and talking about, it kind of refreshes you a bit.

Interviewer: What made you show it to them?

Lee: I think we were all having a bad week. What we normally do is on a Friday night we go and catch up, so I emailed it on the Thursday night so we could talk about it on the Friday. And everyone was pretty inspired, and I think too, if you see something inspiring, you want to share it with other people. Because if it makes a difference to them, or one child in their class, it's huge. Particularly in a secondary school, because they often feel that because they have so many different kids, that it's hard to make a difference in 50 minutes a day.

Interviewer: You didn't show it to staff at your school?

Lee: No, there's something in sharing with likeminded people. You can get bogged down in people being negative, and it's hard when people are negative all the time.

Demonstrating more attentive teaching behaviours with students

Lee became more aware of her actions and behaviours in the classroom, particularly those behaviours which impacted her students. She became more attentive to her students and noticed when opportunities arose to give her students her full respect. One example was how she began to look at the way her students were answering questions. From the first interview, Lee had noticed how Mr Wright waited for the answers of his students, leaving all students with time to process and answer his questions, and that this was “one of the big things I got from the video.”

Interviewer: Did it ever cross your mind while you were teaching - that you had to be more conscious of wait time?

Lee: Yes it did a few times, I think particularly because we do have the composite classes, my very lowest child is so far behind my very highest. My very highest child is almost grade 4 level, even though he is in grade 2, and my very lowest, was reading level 0 at the start of the year, that's a big gap. He's been diagnosed with autism, so he needs that time to process, and for so much of the time, they don't even get the time to process something when someone else has already answered the question. And then you move off onto something else because there's all these other children answering the question at the same time, so you are not giving them that wait time.

Interviewer: Can you think of any specific examples?

Lee: Yeah actually just this morning, he was here, and he'd had a particularly difficult week, he'd been out of his tree, and I knew that he knew the answer - and it's a bit silly, but I went to a PD recently in the city, a "PD in the Pub" kind of thing, and they said what you need to do is actually physically move after asking the question, so that the teacher asks the question, then says to the students, "I'm just going to put this on my desk, and when I get back I'll look for responses." So it gives them some time, and they now know they've got that time to think about it. So yes I've started doing that again, which is really good, so I did that this morning. It makes a really big difference, but really it's just respecting all students, not just the bright ones.

Lee found other ways to respect her students. During class, one of her students refused to undertake a special reading program. Instead of simply stating that he had to go, Lee took the time to explain to the child why it was a great thing to be attending the special class.

This particular child didn't want to go to reading recovery. We had tears every single morning, and all it took was for me was to sit down with him, say to him, "this is a really great thing for you. It's so good that this other teacher loves to go and read with you, she looks forward to it and it will be fun." Those sorts of things, just to build up that relationship, and now he happily goes every day. So particularly with those children that respect is incredibly important.

Lee undertook some seemingly simple measures to respect her students more; measures which were effective in readying students for learning. Lee simply tried to give students more of her quality time and personal attention, in listening to them actively and showing real interest in them.

I think just giving children the time. And that time between when we open our doors at 8:45AM – 9:00AM should be about the children and not about the parents. That time is important to me with the children. Because that's the time when they need to tell you that they've hit their knee or they've hit their finger or something's happened or they're feeling sad because their pet goldfish died, things that we kind of think are trivial, but

unless you address that before the day even starts, then that's all they're thinking of and they don't get on to learning. So I'll encourage that talk, and tell them "oh sorry your goldfish died, what can we do to make it better? Maybe we can say a prayer this morning in our prayer time ..."
For me that's become really important in terms of giving them that time and attention at the start of the day.

Understanding Lee

Prior to the video – Lee's divided identity

Lee possessed a strong core value, or "core quality" (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005), of respect, which appeared to form a significant part of her mission as a teacher - and her identity as a person. Lee credited this value of respect to her family upbringing. (Lee is the middle child of six siblings within a very close-knit family.) This sense of the importance of respect is amplified by the fact that one of Lee's brothers has a congenital kidney disorder, requiring full time care, and she has seen first-hand the necessity for respect for all individuals, particularly those with special needs.

Lee's sensitivity to issues of respect was heightened through experiences of disrespect during her own schooling where she "hated the school". Lee also recounted instances where she felt disrespected and unappreciated as a teacher, particularly during her teaching rounds which were "soul destroying" and where "every single moment ... I hated".

These experiences of disrespect were contrasted with a very positive pre-service teaching round experience in the Cook Islands, where she had the "best experience I could have had for teaching" and where she was considered "family". The reference to family is probably significant here, illuminating Lee's underlying value system in believing that this "family approach" to relationships in the Cook Islands should be replicated in learning relationships at her own school. But initially this experience in the Cook Islands only appeared to heighten Lee's feeling of a lack of respect within her current role, commenting pointedly that in the Cook Islands, "We were more like this kind of teacher in the video (Mr Wright) than we are here."

The disrespect that Lee found in education was also highly contrasted with a very well-respected role within the medical industry prior to teaching. The stark difference in community appreciation, value and judgment of teachers as compared with when she was working with

nurses, doctors and scientists helped Lee to form an opinion of herself and the profession of teaching as being somewhat second-class.

The parents posed a threat to Lee's sense of respect, exemplified when Lee recalled the parent who stated she "didn't like me because I was a graduate and I wasn't old enough to be teaching". According to Lee, her colleagues showed different levels of respect for students, and also questioned her principal's level of respect for her staff. This school context, combined with Lee's negative past experiences of respect within schooling and teaching rounds, caused Lee, on occasions, to "completely change" the way she naturally taught. Lee arguably taught less effectively as a result, suppressing her natural tendencies, acting without confidence, without coherence within herself, or with a divided identity (Palmer, 2004): "Sometimes I wonder if I'm in the right profession."

As a 2nd year teacher, much of Lee's perceptions about the teaching profession and her own identity as a teacher can be seen to be heavily influenced by the community around her, whether it be the parents, the media, or even colleagues. This "assigned social identity" (Snow & Anderson, 1987), where the identity of an individual is imposed by others, can cause 'an anxiety about the adequacy of the narrative by means of which the individual sustains a coherent biography' (Giddens, 1991, p. 65). The negative, and often traumatic, feelings induced by these assigned identities – those of guilt, shame, fear, shock etc, Snow and Anderson (1987) argued need to be countered if the personal identity is to be salvaged. They further contended that the individual needs to take positive action in order 'to generate identities that provide them with a measure of self-worth and dignity' (p. 1336).

The video's impact on Lee

Through the process of viewing and reflecting upon Wright's Law, Lee became more aware that her core value of respect was being compromised. Furthermore, Lee realised that this compromise was impacting on her self-esteem and efficacy as a teacher. Through the autobiographical recall triggered by the video, Lee became cognizant of the challenges she faced in her teaching and the self-defining experiences from her past which have shaped her present situation. During the final interview, after recalling episodes of disrespect from her current and past learning experiences, Lee paused and in a moment of clarity remarked, "I sound negative, don't I?"

Hoole & Morgan (2008), White (1995) amongst others, described this "naming of the problem" as particularly important in the change process. Naming the problem is a shift in language that

gives the problem its own identity, whereby the person can take ownership of the problem and their relationship with it. This naming of the problem and the accompanying realization of her negative state of being, appeared to have a profound impact on Lee. When Lee said these words during the interview, she physically paused for some time to think about what she had said as it dawned on her that she was not content with her current situation. Lee realised she was not content with her compromised values, with herself, or with her profession. Korthagen & Vasalos (2005) amongst others, argued that it is only after this awareness of inner frustration, this dissonance within identity, that one can make decisions around addressing the dissonance. Hamachek (1999) noted that ‘the more that teachers know about themselves—the private curriculum within—the more their personal decisions are apt to be about how to pave the way for better teaching’ (p. 209).

Lee focused her attention on student learning - wait time

Through recognizing some of the issues within her professional identity and practice, Lee began to take small steps in line with her value of respect. Whilst Lee couldn’t necessarily control what others thought about her and her profession, she began to realise she had control over her own self within her own classroom. Lee focussed harder on the things that mattered to her, and the things which she could control - the most important of which was respecting her students and their learning within her classroom.

Seeing Mr Wright use wait time in his interactions with students, provided Lee with a reminder of how she had lapsed in performing this teaching behaviour. Lee noticed how her students were answering questions. She noticed that she wasn't giving all her students enough time to provide answers to her questions, instead realising she tended to reward only a privileged few who knew the answer immediately. Lee understood that some children needed more time to process their thinking, and they deserved the respect of being able to have that time and have the opportunity to answer questions as well. So Lee practised more wait time and this routine built trust with her students as they came to expect that Lee would wait after posing a question, thereby trusting that any thinking they might do would be respected.

Lee grew resolve and perseverance

Through small actions, Lee began to grow in confidence and show persistence in the face of her challenges. In the second interview Lee referred to the strength of the teacher in the video in the face of adversity, and this appeared to motivate Lee to persevere against her own difficulties.

It just gave me a renewed sense of hope, a bit of a sense that you can kind of keep going, because it's easy to think oh it's just not worth it. I think seeing other people do it, that there are some good teachers out there was good. Look I don't think I'm a brilliant teacher - I've got a lot to learn, and I know that I've got a lot to learn, but I think that it's very easy for teachers to get lazy. I'm not going to let that happen.

Sharing the video with friends

Lee shared Wright's Law with a group of teacher friends who worked in schools other than her own. Lee perceived that teachers at her own school would either not be interested, or in fact, hostile towards her if she imposed the video on them. In showing the video to her friends she could attempt to create a sense of community within a small group close to her. Instead of becoming frustrated and remaining isolated within her own school community, Lee acted to share the video amongst like-minded people - those who shared the same value of respect within their teaching. In this way, Lee could gain a sense of belonging that was missing in her current professional context. Lee acted to create her desired culture of teaching within her own circles. This indicated a growing agency and self-authorship (Britzman, 1992) of her own identity.

Causal features of the narrative for Lee

Narrative-stimulated autobiographical recall

To understand who I am, I must understand who I have been. I understand that I am a product of my experiences as a daughter, a wife, a mother, a sister, an aunt, a cousin, a niece, a teacher, a student, a vice principal, a friend, etc. I must examine each of these roles to fully understand my journey. (Godfrey, 2003, p.5)

The visual narrative provided prompts for Lee to re-live formative incidents from her past. Through recalling and re-enacting these critical moments which had impacted on her identity as a teacher, Lee was able to begin to unpack how those experiences were affecting her current teaching practice. From recalling the images of hating her own schooling, to having to undertake teaching as a second or third career option, from the dark memories of teaching rounds that were 'soul destroying' to not being let out for lunch when she had forgotten hers during teaching rounds, Lee was able to begin to see these moments as defining memories which had shaped the way she is now.

The role of autobiographical reflection is considered to be an important aspect within teacher education and development. Autobiography has been used in teacher preparation courses (Abbs, 1974; Grumet, 1976a; 1990) where students are asked to reflect on their personal and educational experiences in order to gain deeper knowledge of the kinds of influences likely to affect their present and future abilities as teachers. For Grumet (1976a), however, the ultimate significance of the personal narratives which emerge from autobiography is not found in their existence as ends in themselves, but rather as precipitates of a developmental process in which the telling, the revealing and the meaning-making are of the utmost importance. According to Kolbenschlag (1988) autobiographical reflection interrogates and examines both the joy and pain of our lives and forces us to look at the myths, reality frames, worldviews, biases that motivate us consciously and unconsciously. Nelsen (1997, p. 3) posited that by reviewing and interpreting one's life story '... accounts of transformative and emancipatory learning emerge.'

Lee's memories of much her education life, for example memories of the only two "decent" teachers she had at school, were very vivid. Pascal (1960) suggested that the chain of meaning in one's life is established mainly through memory, and thus one needs to unpack memory in order to understand the present. The autobiographical consciousness which makes explicit the dialectic between past, present and future moves below the surface of memory, requiring the dismantling of self-defenses in order to retrieve sensory experiences. In so doing, it does not just portray the past from the point of view of the present, instead as we see with Lee, it allows a re-entry into the past and a re-experience of past events (Pinar, 1976). We observe this in Lee as she re-experiences her difficult schooling years and episodes of disrespect in her teaching rounds and as a current graduate. Lee's subjective consciousness and self-knowledge emerge as these incidents are re-experienced.

Greene (1988) stated that autobiographical reflection objectifies occurrences in our lives so that we can become spectators looking in from the outside. It provides us with a space to explore our experiences and beliefs freely, to encourage a 'consciousness of possibility' (Greene, 1988, p. 16). In this way, Lee can begin to see how the social and cultural forces of her past and present have contributed to her current 'problem-saturated' (White, 1995) narrative.

According to Russell & Carey (2004), when it is understood that one's relationships with problems are shaped by history and culture, it is possible to explore how gender, race, culture, sexuality, class and other relations of power have influenced the construction of the problem. The narrative provided Lee with the opportunity to consider the social and historical elements

involved in shaping her identity, making it possible for her to develop new understandings of her life. These understandings are influenced less by self-blame and more by an awareness of how her life is shaped by broader cultural stories.

Lee's conception of her "problems" is situated in the realm of culture and history - exactly where they were created, in culture and history. This situating of the problem in context opens up a range of possibilities for action that are not available when problems are located within individuals (Russell & Carey, 2004).

Metaphor

The metaphor of Mr Wright within the video allowed for a process of externalisation to take place for Lee. Viewing another teacher instead of herself, provided Lee with a safer context upon which to reflect. Moon (2007) argued that metaphors present their messages indirectly, disguised by the images within the story. This indirect route allows for a more subtle, less confrontational delivery of messages. The narrative as metaphor allowed Lee a safe place in which she could consider her own approach to teaching. Oatley & Gholamain (1997) stated that through metaphor, '... we can concentrate on our emotions and reflect upon them in a safe place away from the ordinary world; this being so, we can come to a better understanding of their relation to our beliefs, desires, and actions' (p. 267).

By her own admission, Lee was already in a vulnerable mindset and so the metaphor of Mr Wright allowed her to look at herself more critically without the weight of threats to her self-concept. Lee is arguably able to reflect on her teaching more objectively as a result. For example, Lee's initial perceptions of the parents were that they were somewhat malicious and surreptitious in their actions towards her. This was her reality at the time. But her perceptions had been misguided, and it was only upon interpretation and reflection through story that she came to see this situation more accurately. As Karantzakis, (1961) noted, 'The truth which had been storing up anguish in my breast for such a long time was not the real truth; the real truth was this newborn creature of imagination. By means of imagination I had obliterated reality, and I felt relieved' (p. 174).

Both the metaphors of Mr Wright as teacher, and the narrative of teaching within the video, acted as agents for interpretation for Lee. Bruner (1990) argued that metaphors or 'emblems ... resist logical procedures for establishing what they mean. They must, as we say, be interpreted' (p. 60). The act of interpretation necessitates the viewing of a situation from another perspective and allows for personal meaning to be brought to the context. This freed

up Lee to imagine other possibilities, different possibilities via the metaphor. According to Brownlee (2004), the essential value of metaphor lies in the transfer of meaning, the capacity to bridge concepts and the capacity to extend the imagination into recognizing new possibilities. As Zimmerman & Dickerson (1996) suggested, metaphor allows one to ‘notice other possibilities spontaneously. They begin to appreciate other self-narratives. In fact, they begin to experience themselves differently as persons’ (p. 77).

Externalising problems

One of the influential aspects to metaphor in a therapeutic sense is that metaphor helps to externalise conversations which de-centre the problem in people’s lives (Russell & Carey, 2004). This means that space is created between people and whatever is troubling them. Externalising locates problems not within individuals, but as products of culture and history (Epston, 1989). Problems are understood to have been socially constructed and created over time. The aim of externalising practices is therefore to enable people to realise that they and the problem are not the same thing (Epston & White, 1990). Furthermore, once a name is found for the problem that is close to the person’s experience, it means that the skills and ideas of the person concerned become more available. When Lee came to the realization that she was not content with her current professional situation with the words “I sound negative don’t I?”, it then became possible for her to identify the practices that sustained this problem as well as particular practices that might diminish its influence.

As people step back and separate from the problem and then consider its history and negative effects, they can find themselves standing in a different territory than the one they have become used to (Morgan, 2000). This different territory is often a place free from practices such as self-blame and judgment. As the problem is de-centred, what becomes centred in the conversation are people’s knowledge of life and skills of living that are relevant to addressing the problem. We begin to see in Lee that these strengths become the focus of her exploration.

Narrative identification - Use of character

Lee identified strongly with the main character (Mr Wright) stating, “I guess he’s that sort of teacher you aspire to be” and our “teaching philosophies are similar.” These elements of similarity and likability contribute to identification with character within narrative (Altenbernd & Lewis, 1969; Andsager et al., 2006; Eyal & Rubin, 2003; Perrine, 2002).

At a time when Lee was disheartened with her profession, Mr Wright presented as an aspirational role model who was seen to make a difference in students’ lives. In this way, Lee

saw in Mr Wright the sort of teacher she wanted to be, and the sort of education she wished for herself and students. “It makes me feel like I want to be that kind of teacher. It makes me feel like going and teaching in remote communities where I can have that sort of impact. Somewhere where they really need teachers.”

Identification with Mr Wright thus helped Lee to shift to a more hopeful perspective on her current situation. This change in perspective aligns with Green’s (2006) contention that identification with character can lead to a shift in the viewer’s beliefs about a situation. This visual image of Mr Wright as an ideal teacher who represented the values of respect that Lee espoused, provided her with a glimpse of how her teaching and current experience might be different, and therefore an entry point into new ways of acting and being.

Opening up new possibilities for action

It has been argued that people create a personal narrative or dominant story to understand and give meaning to their lives and to themselves (Lambie & Milsom, 2010). These stories are often negative or “problem saturated” (Matthews & Matthews, 2005). Viewing the video and reflecting upon it and her past engaged Lee in a process of deconstructing her dominant narrative to understand how that narrative had influenced her thoughts, feelings, behaviours and communication. Lee then moved to a space where she was able to reflect on whether this narrative was the story she wanted for her professional life. She then worked to develop and actualise new, preferred stories for her life (Betchley & Falconer, 2002; Matthews & Matthews, 2005).

Some of Lee’s recalled experiences were positive, and she became able to reframe her view of these experiences to examine why the problems were less evident in these cases. For example, the frequent reference to a very positive respectful teaching experience in the Cook Islands reminded Lee of the possibility that such schooling was at least possible. She drew insight and resolve from this experience to focus on enacting her value of respect towards student learning, and overcoming challenges, such as with the parents of her students. Through safe reflection via the narrative, Lee reframed her view of the parents from one which was very problematic and damaging when first interviewed, to one where she actually began to see the possibilities in parents being engaged and present in their students’ learning.

Chapter overview

This chapter presented Lee as a case study of a teacher’s response to viewing a strongly affective narrative video of education practice. The case study detailed Lee’s background, her

strong value of respect, and the restraints which acted upon her practice as a teacher. The case study described Lee's initial response to viewing the video and the subsequent impact on her thinking and practice three months later. The case study explained how the narrative video caused Lee to reflect on key aspects of her past and present education experience, assisting her to understand how these experiences had contributed to forming her present teaching identity. The narrative as metaphor, situated Lee to enter this autobiographical reflection in a non-threatening way, leading to a franker and more objective appraisal of her current situation. Through this reflection, it then became possible for Lee to identify the practices that were sustaining the issues in her practice, as well as practices that might diminish their influence.

The next chapter offers a case study of Sara, a first-year graduate, and will illustrate how the same video narrative enabled Sara to reframe a different set of restraints which were impacting her practice as a teacher.

Chapter 7

Sara

Facilitator: What are your aspirations for your teaching career?

Sara: Survive the first year! No seriously I'm going take it as it goes at the moment and then we'll see how things pan out, because everyone's telling me teachers don't survive past the first five years. I'm like okay, my goal is to get five years done then we'll work out what happens after that. But at this stage as a graduate I'm just taking it one year at a time. I don't know what I'm going to be like five years from now. The way things are going, maybe I'll go, "Oh when's retirement?"

About Sara

Upbringing

Sara was born in Egypt and came to Australia when she was three years old. Sara maintained her Arabic language, and this has helped her in communication with parents, as many of the families in the school community in which she teaches are from Middle Eastern backgrounds.

Sara is the eldest of two siblings. She identifies with having a very positive outlook on life and is keen for her students to have a similar positive experience of life, school, and learning. Sara credits this positive outlook largely to her father's influence. Sara's father was diagnosed with cancer some years ago and this had a large impact on her. Whilst her father's battle with cancer was "excruciating", she found tremendous spirit in his attitude towards it. She was determined to continue his positive nature through her personal and professional interactions with others.

My dad is this really positive guy. It doesn't matter, you give him a cancer diagnosis and he's still like, "Nah, it's fantastic, doesn't matter, like we'll beat it, no problems." Regardless of what happens he's always happy, he always puts on a brave face. When he went to hospital, people would come in and say, "How are you feeling?" and he's like, "I'm all right. I don't know why I'm in here." And he's always, no matter what you're asking, "No, no everything's good." Even if he's got like the troubles of the world on his shoulders he's still just this really happy positive guy and always sees the good in everything so I think that he's rubbed off on me in a good

way. I think maybe subconsciously the teacher reminds me of my dad because yeah, my dad, he's just the best.

Schooling

Sara changed school four times during her schooling years, and this presented challenges for her in terms of establishing ongoing relationships with peers and teachers. Sara's final change of school in the middle of her teenage years was particularly difficult as she found it hard to fit in with the year 10 girls at a prestigious Catholic secondary girls' school. Sara remembers struggling to find a way to get through it.

The last time I moved it was really hard to adjust – everyone had their own little groups and you had to go and find a group that gelled with you, and not knowing anyone is was pretty hard. It was actually, yeah, I don't recommend it to anyone. Like from high school I only have one friend because I didn't actually get that chance to mesh with somebody - gel with them, and have that long lasting friendship because we only had three years together.

One of Sara's particularly vivid memories from school had a profound impact on the way she approaches teaching. Sara recalled asking for help from a year 12 teacher, only to be told she wasn't worth it.

Year 12 chemistry. I was terrible at chemistry and so when he asked the class, in the middle of the year, just before the exam, he asked the class "who wants some extra revision?" I was like, okay, I'm terrible, yes. I would like some extra revision – it was midyear and because I was like I'm going to need all the help I can get. And in front of half the class, he went, "No I'm sorry Sara, this is only for the students aiming to get As." And I went, "Okay", but then I worked hard and I got that A at the end so I don't know if he did that on purpose or if he was just a, just a mean guy. No, I was – yeah, because he said it in front of the class too so I'm like okay, this is my 'what not to do'.

Facilitator: And you still remember it?

Interviewee: Yes I sure do. Yeah, that's why I'm saying, I don't remember most of the teachers, but I remember the worst and the best.

Post schooling

After Sara's secondary schooling, she completed a Bachelor of Journalism and then undertook her teaching degree. Sara worked at Foxtel (Radio station) during her degree and also as a personal assistant in an Office, where she realized she couldn't be by herself in an office environment:

... that's not my personality, I can't do that. I have to have people around, and those people have to be little.

Current school

Sara is a first-year graduate teaching Grade 1 at an outer suburban Catholic school in Melbourne. The school is ethnically diverse and has a relatively low Socio-Economic Status (SES) school profile. Sara feels that the school community is very supportive and respectful of teachers, albeit coming from a traditional education paradigm.

The parents put teachers on a pedestal and whatever the teacher says, that's fact, that's law and so they don't really question it. Though they believe the best teachers give homework and so we have to break that battle down a lot.

Sara also feels that the leadership within her school is very supportive and poses no barriers to effective teaching within the school.

Core values within her teaching

Sara has a natural desire to utilize this positive approach to supporting young lives within her teaching.

I went into teaching because I love kids and also just that – because you know when you're talking to a kid and you're explaining something to them and they get that aha moment, "I get it now", that's like, that gives me the best feeling. I want to make sure that I have elements of fun in every lesson, that the students feel good about their learning and themselves. I know sometimes they go home and the parent goes, "But they said they were playing games all day." "Yeah, but they're educational games, they enjoy the learning, so they learn."

Despite Sara's still nascent approach to teaching, Sara maintained a deep interest in the wellbeing and success of every student. Sara wanted to make a difference in her students' lives, and to be remembered by them as one of those teachers who made them feel valued and special.

I think someone said that students don't remember what you taught them but they remember how you made them feel. I think that's the most important thing is that I want them to feel like that I care for them and that they're not just, numbers in my grade – one, two, three, four – they're people and they're all individual and I remember things about them and that I think that they're worthwhile and they're worthy of being liked.

Restraints

As a young graduate, Sara is hit by the demands and realities of teaching. Sara questions her own effectiveness as a teacher and whether she has chosen the right profession. Sara's inherently positive nature, which is arguably a potentially effective instrument within teaching, is tested on several fronts.

Behaviour Management

Sara found out early on that much of her focus was simply on controlling the students and making sure that they were not "running riot". The negative focus of constantly managing behaviour was a major concern for her.

I've been too afraid to do something out of the ordinary because I wasn't sure like what I'd do if the class acted up. When that chaos happens it comes with a certain pre-behaviour that I know is going to happen, you know, because they get really excited about the fact that we're making something or we're doing something really interesting, and then things just go out of control. So I know that that's going to happen but I've just got to, to deal with it because I still want to be able to make the play-doh or make the pancakes or plant the plants or whatever it is. I still want to use the dirt and the flour and the water and I don't want to change my lesson just because I can't control them or that they're going to be ratty after lunch because we did it before lunch - but at the moment I can't face it.

Sara felt unprepared from university to deal with classroom behaviour and teach effectively at the same time. And despite Sara's positive outlook, it caused her to reconsider teaching as a career.

I'm just hoping that next year will be easier than this year. At the start, that was, that was terrible. I'd go home and go, "My gosh I don't know what I'm doing here. McDonald's looks really good now." Next year I'm hoping I've gone beyond that. I still know it's going to be hard but I'm hoping that I have tasted the hardness and that it will only get better.

Managing her own expectations

Sara was determined to be a great teacher - a teacher who engaged her students and who made her teaching fun and positive for her students. She frequently commented on wanting to make an impact on her students in the same way as some of her own teachers had done for her. In valuing a positive experience of learning so highly for her students, Sara placed considerable pressure on herself to be a great and memorable teacher straight away, and so her ideal of what she should be as a teacher was a source of internal tension for her in this first year of teaching. In forming her identity as a young teacher, Sara found herself unsure of who she was and "how I'm supposed to be as a teacher".

Compounding her own internal demands, Sara felt the weight of the external demands and pressures of the wider community. Sara's positivity was tested in the first year with constant references to teachers being slack or ineffective.

Yeah, that external community, no they're terrible aren't they? Yeah if you're talking about just, yeah, any Joe Blow on the street who's saying, look at the teachers striking again, I don't know why they're just glorified babysitters, yada, yada, that's pretty unfair, ... you know what, even my family didn't know how much I did until they saw me and, just all the stuff that I have to do and things I have to do at night and they're like "it's not that easy is it?" and I'm like "no, no it's not".

Like, yeah, my cousin, because he comes and has dinner with me every night and he knows because he'll be like, 'Let me know when you come home' and so sometimes I'll be, 'I'm going to be late today' and he goes, 'All right, don't worry I'll come eat whenever'. So he knows, like at the start he was like, 'I didn't realise that you've got to stay that late' and I

go, 'Not everybody does - it's because I'm a bit ...' but, it's because I prefer to do it at school and then I can go home and I don't have to do anything. I just go home and watch TV or do whatever and I don't have to worry about it, so if I just get it done before I leave then that's great.

Facilitator: Does that annoy you at all that attitude from ...

Interviewee: Yes. I try not to let it – because you, people sometimes they say it to your face and I try not to like react because I'm like, all right, you have no idea and it doesn't really matter how much I argue in defence, you're never going to change your position until you like can see it for yourself. You have no idea. I just try to go, "Okay, yeah, that's great" – but then they go on with what about all the holidays you get, and just you go, "All right, whatever, you can just be jealous of my holidays, fantastic."

Facilitator: Does that affect your teaching?

Interviewee: Yes it does. But I try not to let that fester, or like think about that for too long so I just, yeah, try to ignore them. It doesn't make you feel that good. They have no idea. The people who matter in my life, they know what is going on in a teacher's life and they understand.

Knowing what and how to teach

Sara also had the practical demands of knowing the content of the curriculum and feeling the pressure of “covering” all the content in a meaningful and effective way. Despite positive and constructive teaching rounds, once Sara was in the role, she felt underprepared in terms of knowing exactly how to teach all the different children in front of her.

I thought after my teaching rounds that I was, like, ready to go, but it is way different when you actually have a grade of little people for the year and you're it, it's up to you, and you've got the curriculum and you have to get through everything, and they look at you and you're supposed to have all the answers, and I not sure that I do.

First viewing: Initial responses to *Wright's Law*

Sara expressed positive attitudes towards the teacher

Sara was inspired by Mr Wright. She was drawn to him as a person, as well as his approaches to teaching and the engagement of his students. Sara saw alignment between their values in the way they both approached teaching through a caring, fun, and experiential pedagogy.

I thought he was a pretty cool guy. At the start when he was doing his experiments, it just looked really fun and I was just thinking I wish that I had a teacher like that and ... you know ... I wish I was a teacher like that. He made them question without using textbooks so he was like – he's obviously still teaching them the, you know, physics and all the things that they needed to learn but instead of saying, 'Open to page whatever, read chapter whatever, answer the following questions' – he made it really fun and all those experiments and things they're going to remember and then maybe remember all the science behind it.

Sara frequently looked at herself in comparison to Mr Wright, seeing in him what she would ideally like to be as a teacher.

I think that he was amazing. I don't know if I'm amazing. I think that I'd love to be but I don't know if I would call myself amazing. Yeah I would love to be thought of as that but I don't know if my kids would agree with you. I think that in some lessons I may get closer but then there's always going to be the, 'Sorry guys but we have to learn about adjectives' and I don't know if I can make something explode ... Obviously I could learn a lot from him.

Sara saw the teacher as a role model

Sara viewed Mr Wright's teaching as something to aspire toward. She acknowledged that as a graduate teacher she was nowhere near Mr Wright's expert status, however Mr Wright provided a model of what she might strive towards.

At the start, I remember seeing the student say, 'I fall asleep in all of the other classes but I never fall asleep in Mr Wright's class' – and another kid who said, 'I know that when I'm 70 I'm still going to remember him' and I just hoped that, I was just thinking about myself thinking, I don't

know if I'm that teacher that they're going to remember when they're 70. And it's just something that I want. Something I hope to be at one stage, improving myself, and so maybe by the end of the year the kids might say, 'I remember Ms Sara, she was pretty cool'.

Sara commented on the lack of teachers she observed as a pre-service teacher and reflected on being able to see a quality teacher in action in the video format.

Including pre-service teachers and this year I think I've seen – about eight or nine teachers that I've seen all up and yeah, it's taken obviously over the two year degree plus most of this year to see those nine teachers whereas I got to see Mr Wright in about 10 minutes or however long that was. So if there's video in the pre-service course where you got to see different teachers and just how they deal with different situations or maybe just how they present their wow factor at the start of the lesson which is obviously a lot of what his experiments were then I think that that would be really worthwhile. Being a graduate, I've had to do a few observations of different teachers and it actually does help because you can pick out things from each teacher that will work for me, will work for my particular class this year.

Sara noticed Mr Wright's positive nature

One of things Sara noticed markedly was the teacher's positive attitude to teaching and to life in general.

Just that he's so happy and that – that regardless of what's happening at home or what's happening at school the kids just respond– and you can see that the kids they feel that energy and that they're happy to be there ... It makes me think "why am I concerned about things at home or in my class when there's, you know, there's always something out there that could be way worse" and just making sure that I am happy with what I've got rather than always focusing on the negative, yeah.

Sara's ideal vision for teaching affirmed

In questioning herself and her approaches to teaching in the early months of her teaching career, Sara felt affirmed by seeing a teacher teach with similar values.

Facilitator: How did it affect you watching the teacher?

Interviewee: It's something that's important to me ... Just a teacher who you can see is doing a really great job and he's using those values and those strategies and it's working fantastic for him and so it's shown me that that's great, I can use them and hopefully it will work fantastic for me too one day.

Sara found the teacher to be believable

The narrative within the video rang true for Sara in finding both the teacher and the story to be highly believable and authentic.

He just seemed so genuine ... I could see the reaction from the students – like even when they're videotaping his classes and stuff, you can see that the kids they're not just acting for the camera going – like they really were interested in whatever thing that he was doing or when he was just speaking to them they were all just –you could hear a pin drop. No one was talking because they were so interested in his story.

Sara notices the teaching and learning within the video

Sara focused much of her attention on the teaching within the video. In her responses to what stood out most for her within the video, Sara invariably recalled scenes where teaching was taking place and subsequently how the students reacted.

Facilitator: What's a scene that stands out in your mind?

Interviewee: I think it's the start when he's showing them all the science experiments and they look amazing. When he said one size fits all doesn't work. I just, I took notice of that. I remember thinking, I'll remember that ... He made it this really awesome experiment and the kids wanting to be there and asking that magic question, how and why.

Sara particularly notices the teacher's effect on his students.

Just the way they reacted to the teacher. I could see all the kids were focused on him. There wasn't anyone in the back, looking up at the sky or fiddling with something else, they all just were focused on whatever it is that he was teaching them. It was obvious they thought that it was

completely interesting – they were really engaged, and they thought it was really fun.

Stimulated recall

Sara recalled her teaching rounds

The video prompted Sara to think back to her teaching rounds and reflect on her experiences as a pre service teacher. Watching Mr Wright share his story with students caused Sara to think about how she shares parts of her life with students.

When I was a pre-service teacher, one of my associate teachers told me that I needed to make sure that I tell the students some things about my life. When the teacher was telling his story, even though I've never said anything like that before, but I thought at the time that not long ago I was telling students about when my dad was going through a really tough time. He was in hospital, so I was just saying to the students, "This is why the other day I wasn't here." And even this morning I was telling them that I wasn't here last week for a couple of days because they thought I might have appendicitis and so I was giving them those insights into my life so that they know that they can trust me – because we have news, so that way they know it's something that I will share with them and they will share with me so they're not afraid to tell me things because I tell them things. It helps to develop that relationship with them.

Sara recalled her own schooling

Sara was prompted to think further back to her own schooling. The inspirational nature of Mr Wright's teaching caused Sara to think about her own teachers, and whether they made her feel valued and special in the way that Mr Wright's students expressed.

... my last placement was with an awesome teacher and I went home and I said, "I've got teacher crush. I want to be Mr Dwyer when I grow up!" He was just so great with them and I could tell that he was going to be one of those teachers that they were going to remember and that's why I wanted to be that awesome with my class.

My favourite teacher was my grade six teacher... I think it's because I knew that she valued me as a person ... I remember that she made me feel

special. I know that I talked too much and I always got into trouble for talking but despite all of that she knew that I collected stamps. She got me her son's old stamp book albums that he no longer wanted and I thought ... wow that's so exciting I got to look through all these old stamp books that blew my mind ... I wanted to be Mrs Lee to my kids.

Sara recalled her current practice

Sara also links to her current practice through the video. Through watching Mr Wright teach, the video caused Sara to reflect on the pedagogical approaches she uses in her own classroom.

Just how he tried to make the learning authentic. I like to try to make things connect their learning with real things so making sure that they're getting these experiences, especially so because my kids are almost all ESL learners, so there's no use giving them too much text early. We were reading a book for example and it was about a salad. It was for my lowest group and some of them hadn't seen a salad before – like they didn't know what a salad was and so we made a salad the next day because I thought I couldn't believe that someone wouldn't know what a salad was and so we went, "All right, well let's make a salad" and so we did and did it in the classroom and they all really liked the salads ... It's so their learning is more authentic.

Recalling her own practice through the video, Sara reflected on why it was important for her students (Grade one) to have more authentic, engaging learning experiences.

You could see those kids on the video, fully into what they were doing. They're more engaged this way - if they're bored then they're more likely to just tune out. They might be writing, they might show me things but they're not actually understanding it, it's not sinking in or something like, "Okay, I have to do it because the teacher said I had to do it so I'm just going to finish this off and then she's going to move onto something better." So when it's fun and engaging then at least I know that not only are they completing the task they're enjoying it so it's more likely that they're going to remember that and remember the skills they needed to do to complete that task for next time.

Sara responded to the narrative

Sara was very moved by the video, becoming emotional at various stages through the viewing. The scenes showing Mr Wright and his own son were points of emotion for Sara.

Facilitator: You appeared to be moved by the video at various times?

Interviewee: Oh absolutely. Just the love of a father - that's probably what affected me the most. When he was talking about his son and he was saying that he was imagining all of those things ... that's the narrative, it brought out the emotions, because people were crying and I teared up a couple of times - it gives you that connection ...

Sara saw opportunities to act in new ways

Sara imagined new things to do within her teaching as a result of watching the video.

I'm going to show my students that they're loved and accepted every day. I want to keep thinking about the positives and making sure that there is a positive atmosphere in the class and rather than being reactive, being proactive and trying to notice ... [at the moment] I'm being reactive rather than proactive and I think that's what I want to stop ...

Sara was determined to keep developing her teaching so that it was exciting for students.

It's made me want to make more things engaging for my students. I'm thinking to myself ... rather than doing something abstract actually go out and make it so they can experience it rather than just read about it or watch somebody else do it.

Second interview (3 months later): Impact on Sara's thinking and action

Being conscious of her own core values

Sara is driven by a need to be positive and for her students to adopt a positive approach to learning. Whilst Sara implicitly knew this about herself, seeing Mr Wright on video and reflecting on her past enabled Sara to bring this value to the surface and see it reflected in a more conscious way. In the months after viewing the video, Sara continued to edge forward with a positive approach to supporting the learning of her students.

The teacher in the video was so positive the whole way through. Regardless of what's happening, he was just really positive and even in

telling his personal story ... So I think that was something that I've been trying to change, and to just stop thinking about what went wrong. Think about what went right today. That's a bit harder to do, but I've been trying to look at the positives more than just thinking about when I have a bad day and focusing on those negatives.

Sara's heightened awareness of her core value acts as a reminder to persist where possible in providing positive opportunities for her students, and particularly the vulnerable students in her care.

Most of these kids have come from pretty traumatic backgrounds ... I need to give them something to hang on to, otherwise who knows where they'll end up. I was lucky, I had a nice teacher who was looking out for me. It's really hard sometimes, but I just need to make sure I see something positive and comment on that and make sure that they know that ... I can see that when they're doing something positive or good in the class that's where I'm providing them their positives in the six hours that I've got them, where they might not be getting it at home.

Developing positive relationships

Sara noticed the marked response from the students in the video to Mr Wright's sharing of his personal story. After viewing the video, Sara made a conscious effort to share more of herself with her students.

I know that I've been trying to share bits of myself and just build that relationship with them. You can tell by seeing those kids in the video that it matters. I wouldn't say I've ticked that off yet but I'm still working towards that, but it's something that I'm conscious of because I know that I didn't do it as well at the start of the year and I'm trying to get better at that ... They know a lot of things now actually about what's going on in my life based on our news bit at the start of the day and I think that they enjoy that as much as I enjoy it for me, to hear about their lives as well. The students are starting to share some personal things about what's happening in their lives, and I don't know if they would share with me if they didn't feel like I would listen - someone trustworthy to share these things with. I think it lets them know I value them as a person ... A

relationship is a two-way street, so in doing that they can feel that they trust me enough for them to share stuff about themselves because I trust them when I share things about me. This way I'm more tuned into what's going on in their learning.

Sara noticed that when she invested time and energy into building relationships with her students it built trust and respect from her students.

It definitely helps with their learning - it's all about building relationships and so if I can build that positive relationship with the sharing of myself and listening to them sharing – then they will respect me as a person ... that's what I've achieved I guess.

Since viewing the video, Sara paid attention to the new students in her class. Being reminded of her past and moving schools four times during her own schooling years brought Sara's personal feelings to the surface as to what it is like to be the new student at a school.

I had a couple of kids who started new in my class and so I'm a bit more sympathetic to them because I know how hard it is ... I know how hard it is for them to make friends especially when everyone else has already made friends, they know who everyone else is but they don't know you and so for that one person I don't want them to walk around and be lonely outside. I wanted them to get straight into finding a friendship ...

Behaviour management

Prior to viewing the video earlier in the year, Sara admitted that she would lose her temper at times with students who were misbehaving. Sara resolved within herself to react in a more positive manner which respected the students and their learning.

I've had to just stop and go, "Okay, think about it Sara and relax" before reacting harshly. Making sure that it's still firm but still respectful. I don't know, there's one boy at the start of the year who for the life of me could not get him to face the front, he was always facing the back.

I was [always saying] "Marcelena turn around. Marcelena. Marcelena turn around. I can only see the back of your head. I'd love to see your lovely face." Then there was one time I turned around and I said, "Marcelena, do you know what? I can see your face!" And so every time

I could see his face from then I would sing Hallelujah. So I just sort of made it into a fun thing.

Sara developed greater confidence in managing student behaviour

As Sara tried new things within her teaching, she became more confident. Her successes in student engagement meant that her concerns about behaviour management were minimized.

I'm feeling better because I think at the start I was more scared to get them out of the classroom to do these activities because then everyone would see how crap the graduate is at getting the kids to line up in two lines ... I'm more confident about the kids' behaviour now because if they are engaged then they are not so much of a worry, now I'm able to take them outside for experiments and inquiry and still be able to know that if I tell them to stop that they will eventually stop.

Sara recalled the scenes in the video when Mr Wright's students talked about his personal support for them, and the difference it made to their lives. Sara linked from these scenes in the video to working with Marcelena.

It's like when the student in the video said that he knew Mr Wright really cared for him. You could see how much it meant to him. It's important for Marcelena to know that I like him. As a child if the person that's supposed to be looking after you for six hours every day is just growling at you non-stop, day in day out, you're just going to think well the teacher hates me. I don't want any of them to think that the teacher hates them and so I try to keep it positive even when they're driving me bananas ... So he's found that the Hallelujah is a good thing.

Sara saw the results of this more positive approach to behaviour support, and this reinforced the value of her positive teaching approaches with her children.

He is fantastic now, he doesn't turn around so I don't have to sing Hallelujah because he's great. We've stopped now because he's sitting in the front row and I've never seen him turn around so it's fantastic.

Knowing her students

As a result of the video, Sara started a news session at the start of each day where students could voice any concerns, ideas, or feelings that they might have. Sara enacted this as a way to

get past any negative feelings that the students may have brought to class, to give voice and respect to these and then be able to move on with learning. It also provided her with a greater understanding of the personal circumstances of each child –

so that she could modify her teaching approaches accordingly.

I've made sure that I have news every morning now so that I at least know something about them or what's going on. Before the video I was doing some news, but it was just when I had the time. I make sure I ask for news in the morning and get them to tell me what's happening in their lives. It's really interesting because sometimes they share unexpected things ... It's hard but I do try to remember that some of my kids – because they're from refugee backgrounds, they might be coming from trauma. There's also broken families and things like that. I'm reminding myself at the start of every day that there might be things going on at home and that's why I have to have that news in the morning because then if they wake up and come to school worrying that "My dad's been sick" or "I didn't sleep last night" then I can understand why through the day that they might be a little bit cranky.

Sara began to see the learning effects on her students of this approach within the classroom, in terms of better learning behaviours, and in particular, more focused listening as a result.

You can see now the way they behave in the morning because they know the routine, so now they know we have news, and they can tell me stuff then, and I notice they are more likely to listen for the rest of the morning session if we have news in the morning, just to be able to sit still for the first lesson, reading the book or whatever, than when I didn't have the news then they were a little bit more restless.

Sara noticed that introducing news in the morning as part of her teaching influenced how her students felt about and prepared for their learning, "I can see that it makes them feel important knowing that I'm interested and that I want to know about them and about their lives. They feel valued." As a consequence, she noticed that she was starting to get deeper responses in terms of oral language from the students as a result.

I found at the start of the year when I wasn't saying much I wasn't getting much from them anyway. I was just getting things like, "My aunty came

over” or “I went to my cousin’s house” but now I’m getting more personal things, deeper things, sometimes about their hopes or what they want to be when they grow up, or even “I woke up really upset this morning because ...” So they’re speaking more, which is important for these kids, giving more information because I’ve given them information.

Readying students to learn

Sara also introduced a meditation activity after recess and lunch to calm the children’s minds and to get them ready for learning for the other sessions of the day. She also used the meditation process herself to clear her mind for the next day.

I’ve started meditation to settle us into learning after recess and after lunch because I thought that that’s one of the things that we needed to do. I just wanted us to settle a bit after these breaks, because I was noticing that all sorts of issues were occurring in the playtimes that were spilling over into learning. I’ve been asking the students to think of positive things that happened in the yard. I don’t want to hear about any negative things so just tell me something positive that happened outside while you were in the yard. So just to get them into the habit of focusing on the good things that are happening around them. It’s helped.

Facilitator: Has that helped your teaching at all?

Interviewee: I think it has ... it helps to keep everything positive ... building that relationship and I think that our relaxing time after recess and after lunch has helped us with that. That’s what the teacher did in the video and what I’m hoping I can slowly, little by little, do myself in my class.

Being attentive to students’ learning

With a heightened focus on student engagement as a result of watching the video, Sara noticed herself becoming more attentive and more tuned to whether her students were engaged with their learning.

I think I’ve been more keyed in to when the children aren’t learning, because I find myself going, “Okay, the fidgeting has started. I have kept you on the floor for way too long. Let’s wrap this up,” there’s no point in

me continuing because I've lost them ... Just making sure that I'm aware of where everyone is. Like mentally. Not just, "okay, we've got to get through this anyway, let's just keep talking and they'll get it eventually," because they won't. Whereas I think at the start of the year, I was like, "Oh, God I've got to get through this curriculum, just be quiet for two seconds so I can get through this". I can see that growth in myself.

Sara reflected on her previous inquiry unit at the start of the year which was a forces unit about pushes and pulls and different types of energy. She explained how the unit was more about theory and facts rather than big ideas and tangible concepts that the students could grasp. She learnt from that in revisiting the unit later in the year.

Thinking back, I can still hear them, they were obviously disengaged, they were thinking at the start that it was pretty dry, they didn't know what to do. But as a graduate I was trying to get my head around the content myself. Yeah, that term one inquiry we did, I don't even think they learnt anything. The video just made me think I want it to be more fun in my classroom, I wanted it to be more engaging. I've realized just learning about something from someone else is not the same as doing it and learning it and experiencing it for yourself. So after watching the video I went back to the unit just because I did it so badly, we made cars out of lollies and straws and balloons and they worked and it was pretty cool. Learning about air power as a concept wasn't going to give them that same understanding as making the car and watching it go across the table. And that's when they understood, "oh yeah the balloon power is what moved it." And we had the lolly wheels and everything and they worked it out ... They were thinking scientifically, like inventors and innovators and trying to work out where they went wrong. And they learned the content better than when I'd given it to straight to them.

Insights into effective learning and teaching

Reflecting on the revised forces unit that she tried, Sara gained some new insights into her teaching, in that she could move the students beyond merely having fun and into deeper learning.

I think they really learned something this time. And it was more than just fun - I think it has to be - because if they're just going to be doing activities because it makes them busy and entertained – then you're just babysitting for six hours and then they go home ... Now when I have inquiry it's like "Yes we've got inquiry, what are we doing today"? They want to do the inquiry subjects because we're actually making things, we're inventing new things, and working out how to solve problems, we're learning, and they love it. They're actually using their thinking skills and working things out, making things and then writing about how they made them and what parts were what. So they're writing and they're linking everything all together.

Becoming consistent

Sara recognized that teaching in this way (above) still requires conscious cognitive effort, and that part of her ongoing challenge is to keep trying and doing the things she values so that it becomes a more implicit driver of her practice.

Facilitator: How are you finding teaching in this way?

Interviewee: I don't find it second nature [yet], I have to consciously think about it. I certainly haven't got it all sorted. It's not second nature and I know it's not going to be for a while; I'm just going to have to keep practising until it is.

Sara shared the video with friends

Sara shared the video further through social media with her immediate group of friends.

I put it on my Facebook page. I have a lot of friends who are teachers from Uni. I just said, "This is the teacher that I'd like to be one day. All of my teacher friends please watch it." I got a lot of good responses from teachers.

Facilitator: How did it make you feel to share that with your friends?

Interviewee: Yeah it was really good because they will share things that they see, links or whatever and because I saw somebody shared a link

about a teacher that put rap into science because they hated science; they made them rap out the things that they were learning.

Facilitator: You didn't share it with anyone at school?

Interviewee: No, I don't know if it's because you don't want to be seen to be a know it all, especially when you're a graduate, but in your social group, it's fine - there's no real judgement ... So far all staff emails have just been purely about what needs to be done rather than anything personal. So I don't know if I'll get more comfortable later on but at the moment I don't feel comfortable sharing stuff like that. I would maybe with my own team, but not with everybody.

Understanding Sara

Prior to the video – Sara's emerging teacher identity

Sara was a young graduate in her first year of teaching. She faced the typical challenges of a first-year teacher, how to teach, how to keep her students engaged, how to manage the classroom, the workload, and her own expectations of that to which she aspired as a teacher.

Sara is driven by a core value of positivity. She came to teaching because she “loves kids” and wants them to have the very best and most positive experience of schooling possible. This positive nature was largely derived from her father who showed great positivity during her upbringing, and then particularly through his battle with cancer. Sara's father loomed large as a pivotal person in her life, a person who “sees the good in everything.” In reference to seeing the caring father (Mr Wright) in the video, Sara reflected on the “love of a father” and the care and hope that her own father gave her as she grew up – which appeared to have a large influence on the character traits which she sought to bring to her teaching.

Sara's experiences of schooling influenced the way she came to teaching. She recalled her experiences of changing school four times and finding it difficult to fit in which sharpened her focus on supporting students who were new or having difficulties socially. She recalled experiences of a particular teacher who made her feel valued, and of another teacher who said that she wasn't capable of A grades; both of which were formative in shaping her aspirations of herself as a teacher.

Whilst Sara entered her first year of teaching determined to maintain a positive and optimistic outlook, the demands of first year teaching hit her hard, and at times she wondered if she had

chosen the right profession. She was working long hours trying to keep on top of preparing lessons and marking work, having difficulty controlling her students, and struggling to enact effective ways to teach. A central issue for Sara was that she wasn't exactly sure of how to engage her students in a positive approach to learning, or if indeed it was even the right aspirational goal. She did not feel as though she had observed many quality teachers through her teacher preparation experiences and therefore didn't really know how to teach in more positive way. She was told as a graduate, 'Don't smile in the first year. You need to show them *who's the boss*, then you can relax in your second year.' That advice initially made Sara wary of her own pedagogical intentions.

The messages that Sara was receiving from the external community about her profession being lazy, 'glorified babysitters', tested her at a critical phase in her identity formation as a teacher. In her own words, the start of her first year was so "terrible" that "McDonald's looks good right now." Sara was at risk of becoming disillusioned and potentially lost to the profession early into her career.

As the literature consistently demonstrates, the ability to be resilient and remain positive is an important quality in withstanding the challenges of being a first-year teacher (Bernshausen & Cunningham, 2001; Gu & Day, 2013; Knight, Balatti, Haase, & Henderson, 2010). Taking a positive outlook on the profession and one's future as a teacher can act as a buffer for beginning teachers as they struggle to positively shape their practice (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Le Cornu, 2009; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008).

Bernshausen & Cunningham (2001) argued that a sense of resilience and optimism builds from early encounters of teaching through which a graduate may experience a growing sense of competence. In particular, it is the positive outcomes that result from having addressed and resolved difficult challenges which promote effective and efficient rebounding from set-backs that inherently occur when valuable change is in process (Gu & Day, 2013). Thus, being able to build on her personal strength of being positive and to genuinely experience success, were important elements which supported Sara in the face of the early challenges to her teaching.

The impact of the video on Sara

Through watching the video, Sara became more conscious of her own core value of positivity. With this to the forefront of her mind, she began to initiate ways in which she would see such positivity more in her practice. Sara trialled the news session at the start of each day to build positive rapport with students and so that students could air any issues they had and move

forward with their learning for the rest of the day. She instigated meditation sessions after lunch with her students so that they could process any negative experiences from lunchtime and refocus their thinking on the possibilities and opportunities in their learning in the afternoon.

Sara became more confident to trial more experiential approaches to inquiry learning, noting that many of her students were ESL learners and often needed a more tactile approach in order to build and encourage their learning. Sara repeated a forces unit, changing her practice by setting a specific problem, having concrete materials to experiment with, and a scientific process for design and redesign. She noticed a marked difference in the level of conceptual understanding of the students, as well as students linking ideas and developing scientific skills through her changed pedagogical intentions and approach. As a consequence of trialing inquiry in this way, she further developed valuable insights into teaching and learning.

Even after all this research has been done sitting in rows and copying formulas with no context doesn't teach them anything, you still see it around. The kids might remember how to spell that word for that one week 'til they get the test, but being able to read it in a book or write it in another context, they're not going to be able to do that because they haven't made the connection that that's the same word. When there's no context to your learning, no meaning, it doesn't work. The students have to experience it themselves, they have to actually try it, work through it, I can't just tell them. Especially with these kids, some of them don't even have the language, so they have to experience it in a more physical way.

At the beginning of her teaching, Sara was focused primarily on the students having fun in their learning. Throughout the interview period, there was a deepening of Sara's thinking and practice regarding the use of fun within her teaching. Sara acknowledged that having fun was not enough by itself for deep learning, and that deep engagement with learning could come from challenging the students as well as having fun.

Sara showed a shift from a focus on herself as teacher to the students and their learning. She was initially occupied primarily with her own concerns and challenges in getting through the first year, but throughout the interview period she illustrated that she was making a shift to greater attention to her students and their learning. She began to notice the behaviours that highlighted when students were disengaged and also began to recognize the good learning behaviours indicative of learning deeply. The effect of the video in pointing out for Sara the

power of building relationships with students, and the images of deep student engagement, arguably played some part in triggering the shift from teaching to learning.

Sara began to see that as she acted positively in her teaching that it led to student engagement in learning; she came to see that she could release some control to her students without behaviour becoming an issue. Through her actions, and seeing success in her students' learning, Sara became more confident in teaching through the values she held strongly.

Yes, I think now having this experience with the kids of this type of learning, it's the way I want to be – the teacher that I want to be. Just the way that I want to run my class and the way that I want it to work .. it's [now] about keeping going to keep trying and keep practising because with time it will become second nature.

Key influences of narrative

Narrative identification - positive role models for graduate teachers

Sara strongly identified with Mr Wright describing him as “amazing”. Sara expressed likeability and similarity to Mr Wright, which represent the two main elements of character identification (Cohen 2001; Hoffner 1996; Kincaid, 2002). Through the identification process, Mr Wright acted as a mirror by which Sara could reflect on her own self, her values and her teaching.

Within the video, Sara was drawn to Mr Wright's positive nature, the positive teaching methods he used to engage his students, and his impact on his students. The alignment of values that Sara observed between herself and Mr Wright, and his obvious success as a teacher, provided Sara with a strong model through which she could affirm her core teaching values.

It has been well argued that identification with aspirational models leads to increased motivation in persisting and trying new things in one's practice (Bandura, 2001; Giles, 2002). Research indicates that identification with characters can have significant social and psychological consequences (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Caughey, 1986). For example, Bandura (1986, 2001) has described “psychological matching processes,” whereby an observer changes his or her thought patterns, emotional responses, and/or behaviours to match those of another person. Bandura (1986, 2001) contended that the modelling process via identification goes beyond simple imitation of behaviour, to include the changing of attitudes, values, aspirations, and other characteristics to match those of a model. This change in, or affirmation of, attitudes

and values has been shown in many cases to translate to positive social and behavioural change, in part because observers are motivated to emulate characters with whom they have strongly identified strongly (e.g., Brown & Cody, 1991; Papa, Singhal, Law, Pant, Sood, & Rogers, 2000). In the context of Wright's Law, Sara's strong identification with Mr Wright provides her with an aspirational model through which to trial similar practices to those that Mr Wright used, such as a process for students sharing their lives and events, sharing stories of herself, and leading fun, experiential learning tasks to engage her students.

Blume (1971) argued that teachers teach primarily as they are taught, not necessarily how they were taught teach. Ross (1987) similarly argued that preservice teachers select attributes and practices of their own former teachers and synthesize them into an idealized image or model of the teacher they want to become. It is well documented that preservice teachers strive to enact or play out their personal images of teaching despite contextual realities which are often at odds with them (e.g., Aitken & Mildon, 1991; Bullough, 1997; Cole, 1990; Knowles, 1992; Knowles & Hoefler, 1989). However, in the first experiences of teaching, many preservice teachers have these hopes, images, and expectations quickly shattered by exposure to certain realities of schools, classrooms, and teaching (Coles & Knowles, 1993).

Strong models of exemplary practice are thus important for developing teachers (Ducharme 1993, Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Placier, & Pinnegar, 1995; Korthagen, Loughran, & Lunenberg, 2005; Lunenberg, Korthagen, & Swennen, 2007; Regenspan, 2002). The importance of effective modelling, whether via mentors, teacher educators or fellow teachers, exists not only for the practical components of teaching but also in modelling the personal dispositions of resilience, hope and optimism (Bernshausen & Cunningham, 2001). Korthagen, Loughran, and Lunenberg (2005) stated that, 'Teacher educators not only have the role of supporting student teachers' learning about teaching, but in so doing, through their own teaching, model the role of the teacher' (p. 107).

Star & Stickland (2007) pointed out that many graduates may begin their teaching with few experiences of observing quality teachers and are initially quite weak in the critical skill of noticing the subtleties of how quality teachers manage effective learning. Such contentions highlight the importance of greater access for pre service teachers to observe quality teaching in a variety of forms.

Star & Stickland (2007) argued for the use of video viewing as a means of expanding teachers' experience of being observers of classroom practice. They contended that observation of practice is not always fruitful because many preservice teachers are not able to focus their

attention on key features of teaching while observing. Being a good observer of practice is a learned skill (e.g., Berliner, 1988), and the use of video in preservice teacher education presents an opportunity to focus explicitly on preservice teachers' ability to notice. They argued that videos of classrooms allow preservice teachers to witness a wider range of teachers, students, settings, pedagogies, and content than typical field experiences may enable.

Observing quality teachers in action

Willingham (2004) stated that the key to interesting characters within narratives requires the audience to observe them in action. McKee (1997) concurred stating that true character is revealed in the choices a human being makes under pressure - the greater the pressure, the deeper the revelation. The only way to know the truth about a character, their values, is to witness him or her make choices under pressure to take one action or another. 'As he chooses, he is' (McKee 1997, p. 101).

Seeing live action footage of Mr Wright interacting with the students in the classroom provided Sara with an insight into his character, values, and teaching repertoire, enabling her to observe strong, positive classroom teaching in practice.

The video begins with the viewer observing Mr Wright in a real classroom teaching with his students. The first scene shows the teacher enthralled his students through exploding experiments, and in a narrative sense.

Snyder (2005) suggested that film should always introduce the main character with an action that draws us to him or her. The video later draws the viewer to scenes of Mr Wright engaging in deep listening with his students, also sharing personal moments of his own life in looking after his severely disabled son.

Viewing Mr Wright in action allowed Sara to observe him making authentic decisions in a regular classroom environment which offered an insight into Mr Wright's character. These real scenes of the life of a teacher set within the narrative, contributed both to Sara's identification with the character of Mr Wright and also to her experience of the narrative as being genuine and believable.

As well as being drawn to the character values of Mr Wright, Sara was also drawn to the practical methods of how Mr Wright taught, with the video providing an opportunity for Sara to notice specific teacher behaviours.

You sort of see what things were really effective about the way he was teaching the lesson and it makes you think, okay am I doing enough of that

sort of thing? It just makes you stop and think, as a teacher, would that work in my class, would that work with my dynamics? It was good, as a classroom teacher, it was just a good thing to see how others do it.

The visual image

Sara frequently recalled visual scenes within the film in her responses, referring specifically to images and instances which had impacted on her. Sara recalled in detail the scene where Mr Wright told his students of when he learned of his son's untreatable condition, where "the image on the screen is him, you know, pulling out all the medications for his son." In reflecting on what she paid attention to within the video, Sara noticed herself being drawn to the imagery within the video.

I vividly remember the image at the start of the students and their expressions and what he was doing and how he was connecting with them. I was just looking at the students - like you could just see it on their faces, it's real, you can't fake that.

Sara connected many of the positive images of the teacher within the video with her own father, stating that Mr Wright "reminds me of my dad." Sara noted the images of Mr Wright shaking students' hands, patting them on the back, and catching their eyes to say hello. Sara also noted the tender images in the film involving the teacher and his son which reminded her of her father, recalling the "determined look on his face when changing his dirty nappy" and the "tears in his eyes when restraining his son from harming himself." These visual images which led Sara to associate the teacher with her father enabled a deep connection with the narrative and supported reflection on the core personal values which she brought to teaching.

With limited observation of teachers so far in her career, being able to see a quality teacher teach represented an opportunity for Sara to analyse and focus on what that teacher did and to see how the students responded to his teaching. The visual image of the students' positive reaction to the teaching was a concrete example for Sara, in seeing that "all the kids were focused on him" and that there wasn't anyone "looking up at the sky or fiddling with something else".

Such visual imagery and imaging are celebrated for their generative capacity to distil and increase reality (Davey, 1999; Stafford, 1996). Cevalco & Ramos (2013), amongst others, argued that visual narratives such as film provide access points for reflection through the use of gesture and facial expression, and the use of prosodic and paralinguistic features of

communication such as intonation, pitch, and voice quality which is not available through the written form. Being able to observe Mr Wright's prosodic and paralinguistic qualities added to the strong visual images of engagement, all of which served to confirm for Sara that an authentic, tactile, enjoyable teaching approach could work in practice.

Within the domain of neuroscience, the discovery of "mirror neurons" within the brain points to the power of the visual image to simulate physical behaviour within the mind (Coëgnarts & Kravanja, 2012; Gallese, Fadiga, Fogassi, & Rizzolatti, 1996; Rizzolatti, Fadiga, Fogassi, & Gallese, 1996). These neurons spread over the premotor cortex and posterior parietal cortex, 'activate when we perform a certain action, but also when we see another person performing that same action' (Freedberg & Gallese 2007, p. 200). The visual stimuli activating the neurons during the passive act of watching mirror the motoric activity when performing the action in question. The discovery of this mechanism suggests that, when we see another person performing an action, we are mentally performing the same action. In short, this means that each action we witness we repeat in our minds (Shimamura, 2013). In this way, as Sara observed the visual images of Mr Wright interacting with his students, she was simultaneously provided with a safe cognitive space in which to replay, imagine and ultimately enact similar functions in her practice with her own students.

Chapter overview

This chapter presented Sara as a case study of a teacher's response to viewing a strongly affective narrative video of education practice. The case study detailed Sara's background, her strong value of positivity, and the restraints which acted upon her practice as a graduate teacher. The case study described Sara's initial response to viewing the video and the subsequent impact on her thinking and practice three months later. The case study explained how the narrative video caused Sara to identify strongly with the main character - Mr Wright.

The strongly aspirational character drew Sara in to connect with her own father and her core values within her teaching, providing a model of positivity and resilience which emboldened her to continue to persist through the difficult first year of teaching. With limited observation of quality teachers to this point in her career, the strong visual imagery within the video and the authenticity of the classroom experience enabled Sara to notice aspects of quality teaching which she could first simulate mentally and then begin to emulate within her practice.

The following chapter reviews the findings from each of the case studies (chapters 5, 6 & 7) through a cross case analysis and offers insights into the findings that emerge when considering the cases as a whole at a big picture level.

Chapter 8

Cross case analysis

If teachers today are to initiate young people into an ethical existence, they themselves have to attend more fully than they normally have to their own lives and its requirements; they have to break with the mechanical life, to overcome their own submergence in the habitual, even in what they perceive to be virtuous, and ask the “why” with which all moral reasoning begins. (Greene, 1978, p. 46)

Introduction

This chapter offers a cross-case analysis of the case studies of the three teacher participants, the result of which illustrates well how the use of video can act as a powerful prompt for reflection on practice. Analysis of the data led to four key reflective outcomes across the participants, they were:

- 1) Developing attitudes for reflection
- 2) Engaging in autobiographical reflection
- 3) Naming the problem
- 4) Taking action

In addition to these outcomes, there appeared to be four key narrative features of the video that were influential factors in developing these outcomes. These were:

- Identification with character
- The visual image
- Metaphor
- Universal themes

Table 8.1 (below) offers an overview of the link between the reflective outcomes and the key influential features that are described in detail in the following sections of the chapter.

Table 8.1: Reflective outcomes linked to key influences

Reflective outcomes of the prompt	Key influential feature
Developing attitudes for reflection	Metaphor Identification Guided reflection
Engaging in autobiographical reflection	The visual image Guided reflection
Naming the problem	Universal theme Guided reflection
Taking action	Identification Guided reflection

Reflection

Reflective practice has been recognized for a considerable period of time as a central process and benchmark disposition of teachers as they engage in the teaching/learning process (e.g., Copeland et al., 1993; Harrington & Hathaway, 1994; King & Kitchener, 1993; Liston & Zeichner, 1987; Schon, 1987). A consistent challenge for educators and teacher educators has been to find ways for individuals to extract complex meaning from experience and use it to guide themselves and others through life and work (Reiman, 1997). Reflection has consistently been seen as a process important to that function.

It has been argued that what learners bring to a situation has an important influence on what is experienced and how it is experienced (see Brookfield, 1994; Kenyon & Randall, 1997; Pinar, 2012; etc.). This personal foundation of experience is largely derived from learners' previous experiences. It is partly acquired from the social and cultural environment, and partly forged by a learner's own awareness and effort. This foundation of experience contains the presuppositions and assumptions learners have developed over time which predispose them to the similar views in future experiences.

Boud & Walker (1991) argued that whilst this set of experiences and associations has a significant influence on teacher practice, it is not something about which a learner can readily

give an account for in the “normality” of everyday teaching. For genuine learning to occur, teachers need ways to surface the patterns which undergird their practice and become more conscious of the events which have shaped their teaching. In so doing, they can break out of routine behaviour and begin to examine the assumptions which (often tacitly) underpin their practice.

Boud & Walker (1991) argued that many teachers operate with little conscious intent or even commitment to being present and are not aware, or are only minimally aware, of the full extent of the interaction that is taking place and of the influences being brought to bear upon them. They contended that a greater awareness of what is happening in, and a more deliberate interaction with, the learning milieu, provides greater opportunities for a more fruitful learning experience.

Dewey (1933) made an important distinction between human action that is reflective and that which is routine. According to Dewey, routine action is behaviour that is guided by impulse, tradition and authority. As long as everyday life continues without major interruption this reality is perceived to be unproblematic (Boeve, 2003; Dewey, 1933). Ryan (2004) offered similar views on the importance of interrupting our routines:

It wakes us up to what we are doing. When we are alive to what we are doing we wake up to what is, instead of falling asleep in the comfort stories of our clinical routines and daily practice. We have profound learning difficulties when it comes to being present to our own moment to moment experiences. (p. 44)

The importance of critical reflection has been argued by many. The previous chapters have already illustrated that the video used in this study provided a means through which the teacher participants’ routine thinking and practice was interrupted - initiating reflection. As a consequence, the teacher participants began to “break out” of their automatic/routinized practice and develop a more critical stance in relation to their practice and their attention to their students’ learning. The first indicator of this change can be seen in the development of attitudes for reflection.

1) Developing attitudes for reflection

Dewey (1933) argued that the attitudes that a person brings to bear on the act of reflection either open or curb the way for reflection and that “the main office of education is to supply conditions that make for their cultivation” (Dewey, 1933, p. 28).

Dewey described three attitudes as important to engaging in meaningful reflection: open-mindedness; wholeheartedness; and, responsibility. It seems reasonable to suggest that the case study data in the three previous chapters illustrate that the video acted as a prompt in making those attitudes visible.

Attitude of Wholeheartedness: Narrative element of identification

A key attitude within Dewey's concept of reflection is whole-heartedness. Dewey described this attitude as the teacher bringing their whole character to teaching, of having a genuine desire for knowing and learning, and of possessing full energy and commitment – a “serious absorption” in the activity. Commenting on the importance of Dewey's attitude of wholeheartedness to productive teaching, Rogers (2002) stated that:

Without whole-heartedness, there exists indifference, and the energy to observe and gather information about learners and their learning, one's teaching and so forth is not there. (Rogers, 2002, p. 859)

The video brought forward the attitude of whole heartedness in each of the teacher participants. This was noticeable primarily through participants' response to Mr Wright. Asha for example was particularly inspired by Mr Wright: “I feel that there is so much that I still need to learn. This is where I want to be, one day.” Lee felt similarly motivated by Mr Wright and forged a reflective attitude which fuelled for her “... that determination to keep going, despite what is thrown at you.”

Sara also felt a sense of aspiration in viewing Mr Wright. She was particularly drawn to his approaches to engaging his students, reflecting on his experiments, how “fun” they were and how “I wish I was a teacher like that.” As a result of the video, Sara experienced a flood of ideas and thoughts about why she went into teaching and became excited and energetic:

I went into teaching because I love kids and also just that – because you know when you're talking to a kid and you're explaining something to them and they get that aha moment, “I get it now,” that's like, that gives me the best feeling. (Sara)

The energy and enthusiasm displayed by each participant when talking about their teaching in response to the video can be seen to characterise Dewey's conception of wholeheartedness as ‘questions occur to him spontaneously; a flood of suggestions pour in on him; further inquiries and readings are indicated and followed’ (Dewey (1933, p. 137). Rogers (2002) argued that

this attitude of wholeheartedness leads to a sense of curiosity and engagement with one's teaching and being alive to students' needs.

In a similar vein, Loughran (1996) suggested wholeheartedness is the most important attitude as it impacts not only on an attitude of reflection but on the whole reflective cycle including testing and taking action. He stated that:

Wholeheartedness seems to be the major indicator of the extent to which the reflective cycle is used. The greater number of entries for wholeheartedness [based his empirical study], the greater overall use of the reflective cycle. (Loughran, 1996, p. 95)

Thus, the surfacing of this attitude within the teacher participants, via their vicarious experience of Mr Wright, could arguably have been an important step that enabled them to create the conditions for meaning making through reflection.

His was a story that inspired me. And I think in the years to come it will continue to inspire me. There's so much there that's inspiring to take from and to learn from and to be inspired by. (Asha)

Identification is defined by demonstrating likeability and a feeling of similarity with a character within a film or book (Cohen 2001; Hoffner 1996; Kincaid, 2002). As the data illustrated, it was evident that the three teacher participants all identified strongly with Mr Wright. The significant effect of this identification was the development of a sense of inspiration and aspiration within the teacher participants, and this supported an attitude of wholeheartedness where the teacher participants felt a sense of vitality and commitment to their teaching.

It has been suggested that identification with aspirational models leads to increased motivation to persist and try new things in one's practice (Bandura, 2001; Cowie, 1993; Giles, 2002; Stacey, 1994). Bandura (1986, 2001) contended that the modelling process via identification goes beyond simple imitation of behaviour to include the changing of attitudes, values, aspirations, and other characteristics to match those of a model. This change in, or affirmation of attitudes and values, has been shown in many cases to translate to positive social and behavioural change, in part because observers are motivated to emulate characters with whom they have strongly identified (e.g., Brown & Cody, 1991; Papa, et al., 2000).

In the context of Wright's Law, Sara's strong identification with Mr Wright provided her with an aspirational model through which to emulate, trialling similar actions to Mr Wright such as sharing stories of herself and leading experiential learning tasks for her students. Sara

expressed that Mr Wright was the sort of teacher she wanted to be, and this indicated that Mr Wright acted as a prompt for Sara to persist with both a positive approach to teaching and attempts to engage her learners more effectively through her teaching.

Similarly, identification with Mr Wright also provided Asha with a positive role model for her teaching. Asha's upbringing offered her few positive role models of teaching through a relational lens. The prominence of Mr Wright within a very popular video on New York Times, appeared to legitimise for Asha her value of relationships within teaching. When Asha commented that the story would continue to inspire her for years to come, it was indicative of a level of vitality and drive that Mr Wright engendered in her (e.g., particularly so with Asha emulating aspects of Mr Wright's behaviours such as shaking hands with the students).

At a time when Lee was disheartened, Mr Wright presented as an aspirational role model who was seen to make a difference in students' lives. Lee saw in Mr Wright the sort of teacher she wanted to be, and the sort of education she wished for herself and students, "It makes me feel like I want to be that kind of teacher. It makes me feel like going and teaching in remote communities where I can have that sort of impact."

That sense of bringing her whole self to her teaching helped Lee to develop a more hopeful perspective on her current situation. Her change in perspective aligns with Green's (2006) contention that identification with character can lead to a shift in the viewer's beliefs about a situation. This visual image of Mr Wright as an ideal teacher that represented the values of respect that Lee espoused, provided her with a glimpse of how her teaching and current experience could be different, and therefore provided an entry point into new ways of acting and being.

Strong models of exemplary practice are considered important for developing teachers (Ducharme 1993; Guilfoyle, Hamilton, Placier, & Pinnegar, 1995; Korthagen, Loughran, & Lunenberg, 2005; Lunenberg et al., 2007; Regenspan, 2002). The importance of effective modelling, whether via mentors, teacher educators or fellow teachers, exists not only for the practical components of teaching but also in modelling the personal dispositions of resilience, hope and optimism (Bernshausen & Cunnigham, 2001). For example, Korthagen, Loughran, and Lunenberg (2005) stated that:

Teacher educators not only have the role of supporting student teachers' learning about teaching, but in so doing, through their own teaching, model the role of the teacher. (pp. 107-115)

It is these personal qualities modelled by Mr Wright that significantly inspired the teacher participants, and the video thus can be understood as playing an important role. The portrayal of an inspirational role model for young teachers could well be viewed as a catalyst for developing the attitude of wholeheartedness within the teacher participants.

Attitude of open-mindedness: Narrative element of metaphor

Dewey considered open-mindedness as being portrayed by one's openness to new ideas or possibilities and seeking 'expansion of horizons and consequent formation of new purposes and new responses' (Dewey, 1916, p. 175). Again, the video appeared to foster this reflective attitude of open-mindedness within the teacher participants. For example, Sara was functioning in a way that appeared to revolve around simply surviving the first year of teaching and doing so largely based on somewhat automatic responses derived of her own experiences as a learner and what she'd been "told to expect". The video offered an opportunity for Sara to pause from a somewhat reactionary approach in her teaching and develop an alternate view of her current context. The video supported Sara to be open to admitting the difficulties of being a first-year teacher, and subsequently seeing aspects of her teaching where she might be able to improve. Upon pausing to reflect on how Mr Wright interacted with his students, Sara began to actively question how she herself interacted with her own students:

I don't think I react as well as I should, or like as early as I should. I'm being reactive rather than proactive and I think that's what I want to stop, so that I don't have to put out spot fires all the time. (Sara)

The character of Mr Wright enabled Sara to see new perspectives on the struggles she faced, in that it was possible to face significant challenges like those facing Mr Wright, and still approach teaching in positive and constructive ways. Open mindedness became apparent when Sara began to question why she was so preoccupied with little things going wrong.

It makes me think, "why am I concerned about things at home or in my class when there's, you know, there's always something out there that could be way worse" and just making sure that I am happy with what I've got rather than always focusing on the negative. (Sara)

In a similar way, the video led Lee to contemplate her limitations as a teacher and consider that she may not have all the answers, "I don't think I'm a brilliant teacher - I've got a lot to learn, and I know that I've got a lot to learn." Such opening up for Lee illustrated a shift in mindset

from where the problems more often lay with others to an acknowledgment that whilst she may have been an expert in her previous profession, she still had areas to work on.

Lee's perceived lack of respect at the school led to a more close-minded attitude towards her school, parents, colleagues and leadership. Before the video, Lee by her own admission was relatively hostile and feeling "unappreciated", and without much of an interest or capacity to look at things differently. Interestingly, the video opened her to a new "hospitality" (Dewey, 1933) to new ideas and perspectives. For example, Lee thought through what it might mean to show the video to the rest of the staff:

I was actually just thinking before about showing them [staff] the video, because I run the professional learning team meetings, which I'm just learning to do. But that would be a great thing to show them and to talk about "how does it make you feel?" Exactly what we're doing now. So yeah I think it would be a really positive thing to do. If you had have asked me 6 weeks ago, I would have said I'll wait 'til next term, but now I kind of think that they need to be challenged, and as part of my role in stepping up to leadership is to challenge them. (Lee)

Asha was also prompted to be open to reflection in that the video provided her with "something else to think about". Seeing Mr Wright as being open and honest, showing his human side to the students made Asha state that, "I can question too, and if I knew that, it would make me feel comfortable to take risks in a classroom situation and to be myself".

Asha noted that on occasions she felt affirmed by the video. She felt reassured "that this is the right job and I'm here for the right reasons". Through affirming some aspects of Asha's practice she became open to more critical thinking and reflection on her practice (Gardner, 2009). As Colton and Sparks-Langer (1992) noted, a positive sense of self encourages the teacher to try new ideas and take risks. Through the affirmation that Asha felt, she became more confident and comfortable enough in questioning her impact on her students, "I guess some days I have to even ask myself am I really making a difference?"

The challenge for learners is to create, within the milieu, opportunities both for full engagement and for stepping aside from the immediate press of the tasks in which they are engaged. Sometimes a physical or temporal distance is required, on other occasions a psychological

distance may be obtained by learners while they may appear to others to be fully engaged. (Boud & Walker, 1991, p. 24)

The three teacher participants felt there were restraints on their practice that inhibited their best possible teaching. The restraints were different for each: Asha lacked the confidence to speak up; Lee felt disillusioned with teaching and seemingly unable to make a difference; and, Sara questioned her own abilities and values as a young teacher. To varying degrees these restraints included personal elements stemming from their own experiences, all of which contributed to unique assumptions about how best to teach. As Brookfield (1994) explained, assumptions about self and practice are often very well entrenched and can prove difficult for individuals to notice, access and confront. The use of metaphor through film as a mechanism for becoming more open to accessing deeply held assumptions, has been widely used in both therapeutic and education settings (Hesley & Hesley, 2001).

Schulenberg (2003) suggested that films were ‘visual metaphors’ (p. 37) and that positive change could be promoted through the ‘imagery, symbol, and metaphor’ conveyed by films (p. 36) and included the use of ‘myths, jokes, fables’ (p. 10). Helsey and Helsey (2001), in their clinical use of metaphor in therapy, noted the emotional distance metaphors within films provided, allowing clients to ‘rehearse potential solutions’ (p. 10). The metaphor, in this case of Mr Wright, could be described as a substitution of experience, allowing the viewer to communicate with the client’s unconscious mind in a way which circumvents any resistance that direct communication could create, thereby providing a path toward the solution of problems and the facilitation of change (Sharpe, et al., 2002).

The notion of film providing a safe emotional distance between a client and her or his issues is a common theme in the related literature (e.g., Bierman et al., 2003; Coombs, 2004; Dermer & Hutchings, 2000; Fleming & Bohnel, 2009; Schulenberg, 2003). Hesley and Hesley (2001) referred to Epston and White’s (1990) approach of ‘externalizing the problem’ (p. 44) through film, as providing clients with a means to separate themselves from their problems. Carey and Russell (2002) argued that as people step back and separate from the problem and then consider its history and negative effects, they can find themselves standing in a different territory than that to which they have become accustomed.

The emotional safety provided by a degree of separation from the problem itself, allowed the teacher participants in this study to become more open to the elements which were limiting their practice, and then to become more critical of or sensitive to, where necessary, their current

reality. For example, Asha began to engage in more open and critical conversations with herself and colleagues which highlighted the way in which metaphor can act to allow people to more easily discuss difficult or complex ideas (Sharpe, et al, 2002).

Further to this, Lee, by her own admission, was clearly dissatisfied with her teaching and her standing as a teacher in the profession. The metaphor of Mr Wright provided the emotional safety for her to step aside from her issues for a moment and become more open to different ways of seeing things and new possibilities. Thus, as Brownlee (2004) noted, the essential value of metaphor lies in the transfer of meaning, the capacity to bridge concepts and the capacity to extend the imagination into recognizing new possibilities. Lee came to imagine other possibilities via the metaphor, she began to show her students affection, more attention in their learning and actively developed ways for dealing with the parents in the morning. Just as Zimmerman and Dickerson (1996) stated, metaphor allows one to ‘notice other possibilities spontaneously ... and experience themselves differently as persons’ (p. 77).

The narrative as metaphor allowed the teacher participants to step back and create a sense of personal distance from the problem. In doing so they found themselves standing in a different territory than the one they have become used to (Russell & Carey, 2004). Within this different territory, the individual is often less burdened by self-blame and judgment, and as the problem becomes de-centred, what becomes centred in the reflection is a person’s knowledge of life and skills of living that are relevant to addressing the problem (White, 2002).

Attitude of Responsibility: Narrative element of guided reflection

The attitude of responsibility is illustrated when the teacher seeks meaning in what is being learnt and considers the consequences for the teaching that should follow. For Dewey (1933, 1986) a responsible attitude is one where people ‘consider the consequences of a projected step; it means to be willing to adopt these consequences when they follow reasonably from any position already taken’ (p. 138). Loughran (2002) referred to this intellectual responsibility as knowing why something is worth believing in. Dewey stated that in the attitude of responsibility ‘... there is a process of intellectualising what at first is merely an emotional quality of the whole situation. This conversion is effected by noting more definitely the conditions that constitute the trouble and cause the stopping of action’ (Dewey, 1933, p. 109).

The participants’ responses to the video demonstrated how it acted as a prompt for highlighting the attitude of responsibility. Asha developed a strong sense of responsibility to act on her beliefs as she began to feel affirmed in what she believed and that for which she stood. She

intellectualised, through reflecting on the video, that she had been too silent in her interactions with colleagues and that if she felt strongly about her relational approach to teaching, she therefore had a responsibility to act on these feelings.

It has actually been on my mind, to tell myself that I do need to say something, that I do need to speak up. If it's something I feel I need to say something about, then I need to do it. I need to confront challenges so I can grow in confidence. (Asha)

The prompt of seeing Mr Wright display the very qualities that she herself held strongly, encouraged Asha to act on her core driving values. She urged herself to not “let [herself] worry what others say or think – I need to be true to who I am and what I believe in. So, I will continue to build my confidence to enable my voice to be heard”. Asha accepted responsibility “to step up and overcome whatever I need to fulfil my purpose. At work, that would include speaking up, having those difficult conversations”.

Sara also considered the consequences of her new thinking in terms of the actions she should take. She concluded that if she wanted to have a more positive impact on her students then she needed to keep pushing herself to provide relevant, hands-on learning opportunities for her students.

It's made me want to make more things engaging for my students. So I'm thinking to myself where can I make things so that they can, you know, rather than doing something abstract actually go out and make it so they can experience it rather than just read about it or watch somebody else do it. (Sara)

Lee had issues with a lack of respect from colleagues, parents, leadership and the profession itself. However, through watching the video, she began to unpack the things that were causing her angst which led to her surfacing her driving value of respect for students. Bringing these values and beliefs to a more conscious state forged in Lee a sense of responsibility to do something about it. After Seeing Mr Wright interact with his students respectfully and attentively Lee reminded herself to give her students more wait time:

I have to remind myself, hang-on a minute, you've asked a question, just because there's some kids ready to answer before you've finished, you've got to wait and give them time to think about it. Because it's the same

kids who are always answering the questions. So it's a good reminder to start doing that again. (Lee)

The case studies illustrate how each teacher participant assumed responsibility for the consequences of their new thinking. The teacher participants showed similarities in the ways they assumed this responsibility. Firstly, they assumed a responsibility to see more evidence in their practice of their core driving value: Asha felt driven to open up to others and share; Lee felt responsibility for finding ways to demonstrate her respect for her students; and, Sara was encouraged to utilize more positive learning approaches. Secondly, they took responsibility for challenging the restraints on their practice: Lee in dealing with parents; Asha in having difficult conversations; and, Sara in overcoming behavioural challenges. Finally, each teacher participant felt a responsibility to share the video with others – albeit that each teacher ultimately shared it in a different way.

Evident within the data was that the process of engaging in dialogue with the Interviewer helped the teacher participants to talk through their lived experiences and this assisted each participant to clarify their challenges and goals as teachers. In this way, the interview itself acted as a prompt for reflection. In a similar way as the video acts as a mediator between the persons and their memories, the guided reflective process uncovered and supported access to thinking, schemas and memories within the teacher participants.

Reflection overview

This section of the chapter has described how the video linked to the attitudes necessary for participants to open up a safe but critical space for reflection so that personal issues could be surfaced, examined and challenged. The attitudes of wholeheartedness, open mindedness and responsibility supported participants to become more open to new possibilities, more wholly engaged in the learning, and assume responsibility for acting on their values and beliefs. Loughran (1996) argued that Dewey's attitudes matter because they 'are a substantial indicator of preparedness for reflection' (p. 94) and that without the attitudes for reflection, little meaningful change would occur.

The narrative element of metaphor within the video assisted teachers to think about their contexts and their teaching from a psychologically safe place, and this enabled them to reflect more critically on the limitations of their existing practice. The narrative element of *identification* provided a sense of inspiration and aspiration for them to seek to become better teachers, more energised in their work, and more responsible for the consequences apparent in

their values and beliefs. Through the development of attitudes for reflection, new possibilities for action emerged.

Dewey (1933) maintained that knowledge of the strategies and methods of reflective practice, were not of themselves enough, ‘there must be the desire, the will, to employ them. This is an affair of personal disposition’ (p. 30). In other words, knowledge is not enough if one wants to engage in reflective inquiry. Indeed, Dewey (1933) suggested that ‘there must be understanding of the forms and techniques that are the channels through which these attitudes operate to best advantage’ (p. 30). The following section of the chapter focuses on the development of autobiographical reflection within the teacher participants and illustrates how that can be viewed as one channel through which Dewey’s reflective attitudes led to benefits for the teacher participants.

2) Engaging in autobiographical reflection

Autobiography: Narrative element of the visual image

Brookfield (1995) argued that as both learners and teachers, autobiographies represent a most important source of insight. He was of the view that analysing autobiographies as learners had important implications for teaching because, when facing challenges, teachers tend to fall back instinctively on memories from their times as learners.

Boud & Walker (1991) similarly considered that what learners bring to a situation has an important influence on what is experienced and how it is experienced. They stated that learners possess a personal foundation of experience, a way of being present in the world, which ‘profoundly influences the way in which that world is experienced and which particularly influences the intellectual and emotional content of the experience and the meanings that are attributed to it’ (p. 13). The data from the case studies showed the video, and certain imagery within the video, assisted in providing the participants with access to their prior experiences as learners, and also assisted them to examine critically the ways in which these experiences had shaped their current thinking and practice.

For Brookfield (1995), reflection became critical when seen through the lenses of autobiography, students, colleagues and the research literature. Being critically reflective then draws on the influence of autobiography, as similarly highlighted so prominently through the video prompt used in the study reported in this thesis. As the attitudes for reflection surfaced, so too the teacher participants found themselves recalling aspects of themselves as past learners. According to Brookfield (1995), such ‘surfacing’ is the first stage of critical reflection.

The following section describes how the video prompted autobiographical development in the teacher participants and was therefore a powerful beginning point for critical reflection.

The video appeared to prompt autobiographical recall for the teacher participants in relation to three areas: their childhood, their schooling and their pre-service teacher education practicum experiences. Recall to these three areas brought strong feelings and emotions as their memories served to surface issues which had formed as a result of past experience. It was through bringing these issues to the surface that participants were able to begin to address them. For example, Asha returned to her experiences as a young child in India and her mother's strictness as a teacher, noting that "they were frightened of her", so much so that there was "pin drop silence". She remembered telling herself that she would never teach like that.

Asha also recalled her late sister and how through that loss, she lost confidence and "withdrew into myself." Asha was prompted to recall her experiences at an all-girls' primary school in India from Year 1. She remembered the teaching style as being predominantly rote-learning from notes on blackboards and, "having no relationship with the teacher, I felt they didn't know each child and they couldn't relate to each child, and it was so harsh in terms of punishment". Such recall was significant for Asha, as through such surfacing, Asha was able to notice how her experiences had formed her view of teaching and continued to colour her experiences as a teacher. As a consequence of making these formative experiences more explicit, Asha was then in a position to critique the effects of those experiences as unconsciously governing her practice and then challenge their accuracy and appropriateness in relation to her own work.

Lee similarly returned to her schooling years and her practicum experiences which clearly illustrated that they were formative aspects of her professional life. Lee recounted how she hated one school as it lacked the sense of respect, she considered central to a Catholic school. However, recalling her positive practicum experience in the Cook Islands juxtaposed against those less favourable memories, helped Lee begin to articulate the values she held in terms of the teacher she wanted to be.

The video prompted Lee to recall how she found herself in teaching in the first place. Lee chose not to undertake further study in nutrition, her first choice, due to a change in course pathways, which she noted as being "devastating" for her. Instead she worked for several years at a large medical centre as a project officer, interacting closely with doctors and medical professionals, before applying for university courses such as teaching.

Recounting her past enabled Lee to reflect on the fact that teaching wasn't necessarily her first option, and that she didn't have a profound calling as a teacher in the same way as some of her other colleagues professed, "I had to choose, and it came down to occupational health was two years, and teaching was one year, so I did teaching". Reminding herself that teaching wasn't her first option allowed Lee to unravel the decisions that she made when choosing to enter teaching at the time. She was then able to consider how that thinking may have impacted her current approaches to teaching. Being conscious of her decision-making process and confronting the assumption that 'everyone had to have a calling to be a teacher was a positive step forward for Lee. She came to see that she could hold this view alongside her own knowledge that she held a strong sense of values and professionalism as a teacher, irrespective of a particular sense of vocation.

The video prompted Sara to recall her father's influence on her and his diagnosis with cancer some years ago. Whilst her father's battle with cancer was "excruciating", she found tremendous spirit in his attitude. She was determined to continue his positive nature through her personal and professional interactions with others. Surfacing her father's great positivity in the face of challenge helped Sara put her own troubles in perspective in her first year of teaching,

Even if he's got like the troubles of the world on his shoulders, he's still just this really happy positive guy and always sees the good in everything. So I think that he's rubbed off on me in a good way. I think maybe subconsciously, the teacher [Mr Wright] reminds me of my dad because yeah, my dad, he's just the best. (Sara)

The video also prompted Sara to remember her schooling years and moving schools. She remembered struggling to find a way to cope and the teachers who helped her through it. She particularly recalled the incident of the teacher who gave her an old stamp collection which "blew her mind" and the teacher that bought her a swimming costume because she didn't have one of her own. Such formative memories had a big impact on Sara showing her the power of what a positive minded teacher can do for a child.

The data illustrate how the visual image has played a prominent role in prompting autobiographical memory for the teacher participants. Korthagen (2004) argued that teachers' 'practical knowledge usually takes the form of images' (p. 247), for example, the image of a teacher that many teachers will have stored from their own schooling: the teacher standing at

the front of the classroom and explaining things, or the image of the unmotivated student sitting at the back of the class.

Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) discussed the ways in which Gestalts (images, feelings, role models and incidents) drawn from autobiographies that teachers store of their own teaching and learning experiences, influenced their thoughts and actions. The strong visual and affective approach of the video (e.g., the theme of unconditional love and triumph over adversity is revealed in images such as Mr Wright changing the nappy of his disabled son; or the images of his students' fierce loyalty to Mr Wright) impacted participants in notable ways.

Korthagen (2004) also argued that reflection on mission and identity (i.e., who I am as teacher and what inspires me), leads to deeper levels of learning and behaviour. It has been suggested that reflection through autobiography is not only essential for teachers but is also the basis of self-understanding enabling teachers to be more conscious of their choices. Reflection enables them to break from the unconscious, automatic or routine teaching that so often drives practice (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994; Pinar, 2012; Tripp, 1994).

Sara frequently recalled visual scenes from the video, for example, "vividly" recalling the image of the students and the expressions on their faces as Mr Wright connected with them. She recalled in detail the scene where Mr Wright told his students about when he learned of his son's untreatable condition, where "the image on the screen is him, you know, pulling out all the medications for his son". In a similar way, she also noted the tender images involving the teacher and his son, recalling the "determined look on his face when changing his dirty nappy" and the "tears in his eyes when restraining his son from harming himself". These images reminded Sara of her father, enabling her to make a deep connection with the narrative. This connection supported Sara to connect her past experiences with her current practice.

The visual narrative provided prompts for Lee to relive formative incidents from her past. Through recalling and re-enacting critical moments which had impacted her identity as a teacher, Lee was able to begin to unpack how those experiences influenced her current practice. Through seeing images in the video that she considered illustrated a respectful teacher, as well as observing students feeling understood and respected, Lee recalled images of her own schooling, of not being let out for lunch during her practicum and other "soul destroying" experiences. Through bringing those images to the surface in her own thinking, Lee was able to begin to see these moments as defining memories which had shaped her teaching values.

The data clearly illustrate that visual images of students and teachers interacting within the classroom was a significant prompt for the teacher participants. For example, Sara remarked that she found she was “just looking at the students - like you could just see it on their faces, it’s real, you can’t fake that”. She paid particular attention to teacher-student interactions.

Just the way they reacted to the teacher. I could see all the kids were focused on him. There wasn’t anyone in the back, looking up at the sky or fiddling with something else, they all just were focused on whatever it is that he was teaching them. It was obvious they thought that it was completely interesting – they were really engaged and they thought it was really fun - I mean you could tell by their reactions, “Oh, my God look at that” and all the excited tones and stuff. (Sara)

Lee also took special notice of how Mr Wright interacted with his students, giving her insights into his ability to relate to and engage his students.

You can just tell by the kids, how engaged they are, and you can even see from the way he was interacting with them that they had that relationship, and you can’t fake that with kids, you really can’t. (Lee)

Willingham (2009) stated that the key to interesting characters within narratives is based on allowing the audience to observe them in action. McKee (1997) supported that view stating that true character is revealed in the choices a human being makes under pressure - the greater the pressure, the deeper the revelation. The only way to know the truth about characters and their values, according to McKee, is to witness them making choices under pressure in taking action: ‘As he chooses, he is’ (McKee 1997, p. 101). Thus, seeing live action footage of Mr Wright interacting with the students in the classroom provided the teacher participants with a visual insight into his character, values, and teaching repertoire, thus enabling them to observe and reflect on their own values within teaching.

The human lens, through which the video portrays images of teachers and teaching, is not the more common lens used to portray practice in education sharing sites. Most sites, as documented in Chapter 2, portray the technical side of teaching and show the practical mechanisms and activities through which teachers can instruct students. The narrative in the video used in this study deliberately constructs an image of teaching and learning as a relational endeavour which is strongly influenced by the personal qualities and human interactions of the persons involved. In this way, the reactions of the teacher participants to the “humanness” of

the narrative, created a view into an aspect of education that was fundamental to them as educators, but which is seldom published or talked about. By displaying the human side of learning in a very visual sense, the video acted as a trigger for teacher participants to associate images and events stored in their memories with those in the video. In so doing, the video facilitated gestalts and reflection on participants' being and practice.

Autobiography overview

...the most significant and deeply embedded influences are the images, models, and conceptions of teaching derived from our own experiences as learners. (Brookfield (2017, p. 153)

Brookfield (2017) contends that analysing our autobiographies as learners often helps to explain those parts of our practice to which we feel strongly committed. Recalling emotionally charged dimensions of our autobiographies as learners helps us to understand why we act in certain ways. As we progress through our careers, Brookfield argues it becomes harder and harder to recall these emotional dimensions of our initial experiences. Prompts which trigger the images relating to initial experiences become important in examining the effects of those experiences on our current teaching (Abbs, 1974; Grumet, 1976; 1990). Reflecting on personal and educational experiences allows a person to gain knowledge of the kinds of influences likely to affect their present and future abilities as teachers.

Autobiography acts as a precipitate of a developmental process in which the telling, the revealing and the meaning-making are of utmost importance (Grumet, 1976). Autobiography then affects what is noticed and that to which we pay attention (Boud, 1991). What learners bring to an experience, the personal foundation of experience and the intent, can significantly affect what is noticed. This is because, according to Boud (1991), noticing is a selective process, and the things to which learners are predisposed by previous experience or intent will be more easily noticed than others. Thus, the event is often interpreted according to the personal foundation of experience or intent.

It is common to read presuppositions into events and to interpret the event and its elements in the light of those presuppositions. Hence, the event can be experienced as an expression of, and reinforcement of, presuppositions. When that happens, taken-for-granted assumptions that may have unknowingly shaped past ways of knowing can make it difficult to consider other ways of viewing our experience (Boud & Walker, 1991).

Autobiographical reflection can provide a space to explore experiences and beliefs freely, to encourage a ‘consciousness of possibility’ (Greene, 1988, p. 16), an outcome of which can be greater consciousness of restraints – that are not inherently, fixed and immutable, but rather temporary and changeable, bound by context. According to Russell & Carey (2004), when it is understood that one’s relationships with problems are shaped by history and culture, it is possible to explore how gender, race, culture, sexuality, class and other relations of power have influenced the construction of the problem.

It could well be argued that the video provided the teacher participants with new ways to consider the social and historical elements that had shaped their own identities and therefore it became possible for them to develop new understandings of their lives as teachers as learners. In that way, the teacher participants began to see how the social and cultural forces of their past may have contributed to their current ‘problem-saturated’ (White, 1995) narratives, and were therefore able to start seeing different ways through or around their problems. Asha began to see how she could share her ‘personal self’ more, Lee began to find ways to respect herself and her students, and Sara began to see ways in which she could allow more ownership of the learning to students. Such openness to the possibility of acting towards addressing problems was a significant outcome of the video prompt.

3) Naming the problem

Naming the problem: Narrative element of universal themes

The data illustrate that participants developed a better understanding of themselves and some pivotal moments in their teaching lives. As well as becoming more open-minded to new ways of viewing themselves and their practice, the teacher participants became more “hospitable” to the reality of the issues which troubled them. Dewey (1933) referred to this realisation of issues as “naming the problem” and described it as a phase of “intellectualisation” where the person could locate the problem from a distance, being less governed by the first emotional reaction and noting more definitely the constituents which comprised the trouble.

Problem naming is an important aspect of the process of change (Hoole & Morgan, 2008; Matthews & Matthews, 2005; White, 1995). Naming the problem represents a shift in cognition and language that gives the problem its own identity, whereby the person can take ownership of the problem.

In “naming the problem” participants tended to more clearly notice the issues and restraints within their practice and subsequently an awareness of the core values that underpinned their

teaching. In so doing their reflection became more critical as they developed an awareness of the reasons underpinning their actions and became more observant and aware of the different forces acting on their practice.

Examples of naming

All three teacher participants became more able to finely notice the restraints on their practice and develop a more explicit realisation of the “root” problem within their teaching. As each participant shared this developmental stage in the reflective cycle (Rogers 2002), they saw their particular issue(s) emerge in different ways according to their unique histories and contexts. Parlett and Hamilton (1972) argued that this different expression of “problems” was a part of the “learning milieu”, the network of cultural, social, institutional and psychological variables that interact in complicated ways to produce ‘a unique pattern of circumstances, customs, opinions and pressures’ (Parlett & Hamilton, 1972, p. 17).

As the data make clear, Lee, who was arguably the most disaffected with her professional context before the video, became able to articulate several issues which had emerged for her through the prompt of the video.

Asha

Whilst Lee had several issues impacting her practice, Asha grappled with one central issue that influenced her teaching.

Speaking up is not the easiest thing for me to do. (Asha)

Asha became more explicitly aware that she lacked confidence in interactions with people, particularly in verbalising the things that were important to her. She came to see that she had real difficulties speaking up in front of others which influenced her confidence in making positive responses through her practice.

I need to work on believing in myself. (Asha)

Asha’s difficult upbringing in India within a harsh environment, suffering the loss of her sister, her experience of moving from India to Australia as a girl in her teenage years and encountering racism, contributed to her being withdrawn and somewhat isolated in her personal and professional life. She had a strong feeling that other teachers in her school did not share her philosophy of care and compassion for students which created an internal tension.

I haven’t seen it. I just don’t get the feel that it is happening. That’s just my general impression. Just the way children are referred to, and spoken

to. It's annoyed me. Even at meetings people saying this is too hard for the children, these kids can't do this, I find that annoying as well. (Asha)

Asha began to realise the impact that her perceptions of other staff had on her; she withdrew and began to suppress her natural caring instincts as a teacher which inhibited her practice.

I don't feel comfortable talking about students very passionately in the staff room because I know there are people who think differently ... At the very core of me is my love for children and that's what drives me. (Asha)

In naming her problem and associated challenges, Asha was better able to articulate that which she was actually striving towards as a teacher, she remarked that: “after watching the video it made me want to reflect on what my philosophy is about teaching, and so I had to organise my thoughts and think about what do I value and what do I want for my students”.

Asha clarified what mattered to her within her teaching and found a greater sense of direction and trust in herself and in what she wanted and valued. In clarifying, then reaffirming her own values, Asha resolved to continue to push forward and challenge herself to act in ways which would evidence her values and beliefs.

Lee

Sometimes I wonder if I'm in the right profession. (Lee)

Lee recounted many instances where she felt disrespected and unappreciated as a teacher, particularly during her teaching rounds which were “soul destroying” and where “every single moment ... I hated”. This issue was the beginning point for recognizing intertwined problems.

I think when the parents are there. I think that's the hardest thing because there's all this thing about how you're not allowed to show affection for children, you shouldn't be hugging, you shouldn't doing this and that. (Lee)

Lee described the parents as having “a lot of money - they're used to getting their own way, and there's not that respect for the fact that you're the teacher.” In Lee's first year of teaching she reported having 30 parents in her room from 8:45 – 9:00am supposedly to help, but “they are there really there just to observe you”. One parent who she found very difficult had said from the beginning that she didn't like her because she was a graduate and “wasn't old enough to be teaching”. She stated that it was “really easy to be unappreciated and people don't realise

how much work you do”. The consequence of this problem was that Lee was constantly second-guessing herself and questioning whether her own natural instincts of teaching through respect were useful.

Many of Lee’s issues merged in one moment of realisation, where she physically paused and the weight of all her frustrations became clear in a stunning moment of clarity.

I sound negative, don’t I? (Lee)

It was clear that this was a significant realization for Lee. She was visibly moved. The realization that she wasn’t happy in her work and that the way she was thinking and acting was not how she wanted to be was an “eye-opener”. This honest realization paved the way for Lee to assess where she was in her development as a teacher and what she wanted for her future teaching career.

Kids need to feel like you care for them so that they can learn. (Lee)

Lee began to notice that her sense of lack of respect as a teacher was a major restraint on her practice creating a negative frame of mind which limited her ability to see possibilities to demonstrate respect for her own students. Lee knew at one level that she possessed a strong core value, or “core quality” (Korthagen, 2004), of respect that formed a significant part of her mission as a teacher. Her realisation that her thinking and her actions were not congruent with her core value of respect caused her to reconsider her pedagogical actions and approach.

Sara

I’ve been too afraid to do something out of the ordinary because I wasn’t sure like what I’d do if the class acted up. (Sara)

Sara realised that much of her focus had been on simply controlling students and making sure that they were not “running riot”. Sara became more conscious that the negative focus of constantly managing behaviour was a major concern for her. She felt as though university had not prepared her to deal with classroom behaviour and at the same time, teach effectively.

In forming her identity as a young teacher, Sara found herself unsure of who she was and “how I’m supposed to be as a teacher”. She was determined to be a great teacher - a teacher who engaged her students and who made her teaching fun and positive for her students. She frequently commented on wanting to make an impact on her students in the same way as some of her own teachers had done for her. In valuing so highly the importance of a positive experience of learning for her students, Sara began to realise that she had placed considerable

pressure on herself to be a great and memorable teacher straight away. As a consequence, Sara became more aware that her ideal of what she should be as a teacher created a tension for her in her first year of teaching.

I thought after my teaching rounds that I was, like, ready to go, but it is way different when you actually have a grade of little people for the year and you're it, it's up to you, and you've got the curriculum and you have to get through everything, and they look at you and you've [got] a grade of little people for the year and you ... (Sara)

Sara also realised that she felt the pressure of the practical demands of knowing the content of the curriculum and “covering” all the content in a meaningful and effective way. Despite positive and constructive teaching rounds, once Sara was in the role she felt underprepared in terms of knowing exactly how to teach all the different children in front of her.

... to show my students that they're loved and accepted every day. I want to keep thinking about the positives and making sure that there is a positive atmosphere in the class and rather than being reactive, being proactive and trying to notice that, wait, no they're being a bit fidgety ... (Sara)

Sara became aware of her driving need to be positive and for her students to adopt a positive approach to learning. Seeing Mr Wright enabled her to bring this value to the surface. In the months after viewing the video, Sara continued to make progress in applying a positive approach to supporting the learning of her students, “... to just stop thinking about what went wrong. Think about what went right today.”

Naming the problem overview

The three teacher participants were able to name at least one significant problem which was impacting their practice. The nature of each teacher participant's challenges can be linked to aspects of their personal or social context. For example, Sara's challenges were largely related to being a beginning teacher and managing the demands of how to teach, Lee's challenges stemmed from shifting careers into teaching and struggling to see herself within a respectful profession, and Asha's challenge related to a difficult upbringing and a real sense of struggling to “fit in”.

In addition to becoming more aware of the problems which influenced their practice, the case studies illustrated that these issues created conflict with participants' core driving values and

this conflict was a source of internal dissonance (see summary in Table 8.2 below). Sara's challenges of "getting through" the first year contrasted with her value of providing a positive experience of learning for her students, Lee's challenges stemming from a new career in teaching clashed with affording her students the deep value of respect, and Asha's internal challenges of not being able to find her voice conflicted with her ability to develop relationships with students.

Table 8.2: Teacher participants' problems and values

Teacher participant	Named problem	Indicative quote	Clarified value
Asha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking up for herself • Sharing her values 	<i>I need to work on believing in myself.</i>	A strong sense of care and relationship with students
Lee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling disrespected • Trouble with the parents • Become negative and disillusioned 	<i>I sound negative don't I?</i>	A strong sense of respect for students
Sara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing student behaviour • Managing her own expectations • Knowing what and how to teach 	<i>I've been too afraid to do something out of the ordinary because I wasn't sure like what I'd do if the class acted up</i>	A strong sense of positivity for students

McKee (1997) states that 'Story is about eternal, universal forms, not formula' (p. 3). The narrative within the video Wright's Law could be described as a universal narrative, where the plot involves "universal themes" which are broad humanistic themes of love, triumph and tragedy characteristic of the folk genre. Erickson and Rossi (1979) stated that themes in folk literature are usually serious and powerful, exploring the human condition, "universal preoccupations" rather than intending to instruct how one must behave. They move the

audience to contemplate how they might act if they were in a similar situation. These universal human themes, according to Korthagen (2004), connect with the inner layers of the self, namely mission and identity, and enable reflection on the inner core levels of who a person is and that which is valued.

Universal themes are themes that many people can relate to for several reasons, whether it's because they incorporate common life experiences or are simply concepts of human nature that most readers or viewers can understand. Universal themes allow the spectator to connect to the story emotionally (Taylor 1998). Some of the more common universal themes found in literature include: the individual struggle towards a personal goal; a person's struggle with humanity; falling in love; life cycles; coping with tragedy; adolescence; and, discovering the world around us. According to Taylor, most people connect to these themes because they recall what it's like to be in a family, to go to school, to struggle through a career and raising a family, or a sick relative.

The video Wright's Law contained the universal themes of love, family, goodness and triumph over adversity, as well as highly emotional content, and vivid imagery. Boud (1991) argued that the affective nature of the universal narrative draws us into reflecting on aspects of ourselves which are not always readily available to us.

Feelings significantly affect experience ... they may foster the development of confidence and a sense of self-worth that can lead us to pursue paths which previously may have been inaccessible, and thus draw us more deeply into the experience. (p. 20)

These human values are often assumed to be an inherent part of our education and in particular part of the professional formation of teachers. The case studies reveal that this is not necessarily so, with teacher participants surfacing a range of restraints which are fundamentally human in nature - but not of the type that tend to be overtly addressed in the development of a teacher. Indeed, it could well be argued that there is an increasing neo-conservative emphasis on teaching becoming less human and more technical. However, in dealing with fundamental human themes, Wright's Law provides an alternate lens for viewing teaching where the restraint on practice falls within the levels of mission and identity, and as such the prompts which interrupt the technical routines of teaching actually connect (or reconnect) teachers to what they feel matters, or indeed inspires them and this results in creating conditions for change (Korthagen, 2017; Mayes, 2001; Pope, & Denicolo, 2001).

With reference to Asha as an example of resonance with a universal theme, Mr Wright's story highlighted deep things that mattered to her. She appreciated the fact that the story, "wasn't just about the content ... it was also about preparing students for life and building character." For Asha, that was something that was missing in the curriculum:

I think that sometimes we get wrapped up in covering the curriculum and we can forget our purpose. Watching this video is one way of getting us to stop and think and reflect on this purpose – why I went into teaching? Why I want to teach at this school? What are my values? What do I want for my students?

Asha, who was struggling with her confidence and lack of voice, found that the video provided an entry point to her inner layers of mission and identity. The universal theme she was drawn to helped her to reflect on her assumptions about herself and her practice. She noted pointedly that she was, "at a pivotal point in my life, where I am reflecting on who I am, what truly matters to me, and clarifying my values". The video can be seen as providing a tool to support the type of reflection Asha needed to surface and unpack deeply personal matters.

Brookfield (1994) noted that the significant experiences of learners are felt at a visceral level which allow access into levels of mission and identity that often elicit powerful insights and understandings of ourselves and the way we act. The strongly affective nature of the narrative itself had a significant impact on Asha, fighting back tears at the courage of Mr Wright, she commented, "The story certainly had that emotional hook, I guess because it touches people's hearts. So, I think when you can do that there's that power to bring about the best in people."

Within the video, Asha paid attention to the human aspect of the teacher and his teaching stating, "he brought a sense of humanness to what we do very well, and he brought it back that there is a purpose to life." By seeing the teacher portrayed so vividly as a whole person within the video, Asha identified with the importance of, "... letting the students see that he was human, that he had questions and he's a person that he has things that frustrate him in his life as well". This universal theme connected with Asha's core value of human relationships within teaching and thus initiated deep reflection.

As this overview illustrates, for each of the participants, the narrative genre of video depicted through Wright's Law helped them to connect with their inner levels of mission and identity. In so doing, the dissonance between the values participants held and their actions provided the motivation to act in ways that were more in line with their values and beliefs.

4) Taking action

Taking action: Narrative elements combining narrative features and guided reflection

Dewey (1938), noted that ‘we don’t learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience’ (p. 13). Taking action and learning from experience is important for teachers to develop their professional knowledge of practice. Loughran (2004) argued that if one is critically reflective in the act of engaging in a new experience, the dilemmas, issues, and concerns that arise as a result can assist practitioners to see their practice with new eyes. They come to challenge the unconscious assumptions that influence their teaching and the process supports the development of new insights into practice.

One of the consequences of viewing the video was that it prompted participants to see their practice with new eyes which opened up possibilities for action, largely as a result of seeing the misalignment between what they valued and what they actually did in their practice.

The case studies illustrated well how the teacher participants took action following their reflection on the video and their practice. Those actions were able to be categorised in the following ways:

- i. taking action which confronted their problem
- ii. taking action on student learning
- iii. taking action to share the video with others

(i) Taking action which confronted their problem

Through becoming more self-aware of their specific challenges and the values which underpinned their mission and identity as teachers, the participants engaged in action which attempted to bridge the gap between their core values and their current reality. An example for each participant follows.

Asha

Asha became explicit about her core restraint, she didn’t feel as though others on staff shared her value of relationships and she didn’t feel confident enough to speak up and share this value. She took active steps to address the situation through presenting an autobiographical talk about her life to the Grade 5/6 students and teachers. Asha was initially reluctant because she lacked the confidence to open up in front of other colleagues. However, she recalled the dramatic and positive effect that such ‘opening up’ had on Mr Wright’s students when he talked about his life and his own children, and that impelled Asha to commit to trying.

Asha wished to be seen, and heard after, many years of keeping to herself. When the opportunity presented, she was determined to say yes.

... when they see me standing up and speaking at staff meetings, I guess there's that awareness of oh this is what she believes, this is what she stands for, so I think by standing up and putting myself out there, that they can see more of who I am and what I stand for ... (Asha)

The naming of her issues and the clarification of the values important to her helped drive Asha to action. White (1988) stated that the different territory one arrives in after such interruption and self-awareness is often a place freer of self-blame and judgment. He argued that once a problem was named and de-centred, change was more likely to occur. As Asha's case study illustrates, she challenged her own assumption that she wasn't capable of sharing her values and took action by doing so publicly: "I have never felt that easy to do that. I know it is important to do, because kids also need to see that you are human".

Asha's confidence grew and, as a consequence, her actions more closely aligned with her values.

I had some difficult conversations with a couple of members in my team and a couple of staff members recently ... I used to shy away from difficult situations but this time I decided to stand up for myself whatever the consequences might be. (Asha)

Lee

One of Lee's core issues was associated with the parents within her school. She devised a different way to handle parent requests to be in the classroom in the morning. She suggested to them that she was, "happy to talk to you briefly in the morning. If it's something that you need more than five minutes for, let's make a time so that I can give you the proper time to talk about things".

This action provided her with a new way to interact with parents and build a new relationship. She discovered, contrary to her assumption, that the parents "are mostly just being friendly, and want to chat". This was a significant revelation for Lee, given the extent to which her perception of the parents was contributing to her feelings of lack of respect as a new teacher. Acting to confront this challenge resulted in Lee reframing her views about the situation and this led to her questioning other perceptions she held about teaching and learning.

Sara

Sara struggled with her student's behaviour and she resolved to act more in line with her values of displaying a positive manner based on respect for her students and their learning. She stated that, "I could hear myself snapping, and then I went okay, no I've got to stop this ... it's very negative".

One of Sara's assumptions was that students were ready to learn when she was ready to teach. But she increasingly noticed that many students were restless and disengaged right from the start of the day. To engage them, she started the day with a news item and began to find that the students behaved and learnt much better noticing that "they are more likely to listen for the rest of the morning session if we have news in the morning". As a result, Sara started a news session at the start of each day where students could voice any concerns, ideas, or feelings. Interestingly, she also instigated meditation sessions after lunch with her students so that they could process any negative experiences from lunchtime and refocus their thinking on the possibilities and opportunities in their learning in the afternoon.

Sara took these actions as a way of helping her develop a greater understanding of the personal context of each child so she could modify her teaching approaches to better cater for her students as individuals.

Sara: I just wanted us to settle a bit after these breaks, because I was noticing that all sorts of issues were occurring in the playtimes that were spilling over into learning. I've been asking the students to think of positive things that happened in the yard ... So just to get them into the habit of focusing on the good things that are happening around them.

Interviewer: Has that helped your teaching at all?

Sara: I think it has because then, when I'm just thinking of the positives then I'm not as like, upset or whatever when I come back from the following day and I go, "Yesterday was terrible because of blah, blah, blah." Now I think about ... this kid did something fantastic and so I'd just think about just that fantastic achievement by that one kid. That's what the teacher [Mr Wright] did was to keep everything positive and like to, make them trust him and I think that was, it's all that matter of relationship, building that relationship and I think that our relaxing time after recess and after lunch has helped us with that.

(ii) Taking action related to student learning

The three teacher participants undertook actions directly related to the students in their classes.

Asha

Asha made a conscious effort to make her learning intentions more explicit to the children instead of keeping them to herself. She realised that a learning relationship with children involved them understanding what it was that she was trying to do.

I think my teaching now is more intentional. It has always been intentional for me, but not for the children. I make it now intentional for them. So that they now know why they are doing something - why now, why is it important, and that they are able to make the links now, with what they are doing later, and to what we have done before, and I think I'm focusing more on the students as people and building character.
(Asha)

Asha was influenced by the way Mr Wright showed an active interest in his students by looking them in the eye and giving them his full attention. She commented on her realisation that the little things like stopping to acknowledge children when they asked a question, even when busy, was a way of valuing them and doing so in accord with her espoused values.

Lee

Lee became more aware of her actions and behaviours in the classroom, particularly those behaviours which impacted her students' learning. She became more attentive to her students and explicitly began to think more carefully about the way her students answered questions. She had noticed how Mr Wright waited for his students' answers, leaving them with time to process and answer his questions, and this was "one of the big things I got from the video." She stated the, "other kids aren't learning from it because it's too quick" and "the same kids keep answering all the time".

Lee became acutely aware of the range of abilities within her class and noticed that she was only offering opportunity for the brightest and quickest students to answer. In response to this awareness, she intentionally provided her students with extra processing time before she looked for responses and to respect those students who needed additional time.

Sara

Sara became increasingly confident with trialling more experiential approaches to inquiry learning, noting that many of her students were ESL learners and often needed a more tactile approach to build their learning. She repeated a forces unit by setting a specific problem, having concrete materials to experiment with and a scientific process for design and redesign.

As a consequence of her actions, she noticed a marked difference in the level of conceptual understanding of her students. She described how they became better at linking ideas and developing scientific skills through applying her different approach to teaching. By finding better ways to link the learning she wanted with her approach to teaching, she developed valuable insights into teaching and learning.

When there's no context to your learning, no meaning, it doesn't work. The students have to experience it themselves, they have to actually try it, like work through it, I can't just tell them. Especially with these kids, some of them don't even have the language, so they have to experience it in a more physical way. (Sara)

At the beginning of her teaching, Sara was focused primarily on the students having fun in their learning. Throughout the interview period, there was a deepening of Sara's thinking and practice regarding the use of fun within her teaching. Sara acknowledged that having fun was not sufficient by itself for deep learning. Deep engagement with learning could come from challenging the students as well as having fun.

Sara showed a shift from a focus on herself as teacher to the students and their learning. She was initially primarily occupied with her own concerns and challenges but illustrated a shift to greater attention to students and their learning. She began to notice the micro-behaviours of students when they were disengaged and also recognized their good learning behaviours (Baird & Mitchell, 1986) associated with deeper learning. The effect of the video in pointing out for Sara the power of building relationships with students, and the images of deep student engagement can be seen to play some part in triggering her shift from teaching to learning.

I'm feeling better because I think at the start I was more scared to like get them out of the classroom to do these activities ... I'm more confident about the kids' behaviour now because if they are engaged then they are not so much of a worry, I'm able to take them outside for experiments

and inquiry and still be able to know that if I tell them to stop that they will eventually stop. (Sara)

With a heightened focus on student engagement, Sara noticed herself becoming more attentive and more tuned into whether her students were engaged with their learning.

I think I've been more keyed in to when the children aren't learning ... Just making sure that I'm aware of where everyone is. Like mentally. Not just, "okay, we've got to get through this anyway, let's just keep talking and they'll get it eventually" because they won't.

So after watching the video I went back to the unit just because I did it so badly, we made cars out of lollies and straws and balloons and they worked and it was pretty cool. Learning about air power as a concept wasn't going to give them that same understanding as making the car and watching it go across the table. And that's when they understood, "oh yeah the balloon power is what moved it." And we had the lolly wheels and everything and they worked it out. Everything on the car had to be perfect otherwise it wouldn't move, like if there's too much blue tack, then it was too heavy, so it was a great problem-solving exercise. If they didn't put the masking tape around the balloon properly then there was air let out. They understood at the end that everything had to work perfectly for that car to move and if it didn't, you had missed something and you had to go back and work out what you did wrong. They were thinking scientifically, like inventors and innovators and trying to work out where they went wrong. And they learned the content better than when I'd given it to straight to them. (Sara)

(iii) Taking action to share the video with others

Asha

One of Asha's actions, as a result of watching the video the first time, was to show the video to the rest of the staff. The decision was difficult for her given her issues with confidence and feeling that the rest of the staff did not share her views around developing relationships with students.

The other staff, I've often wondered if they needed to be reminded of why they got into teaching, so by showing them the video, I hope that that happened for them. (Asha)

Asha led a process where staff watched the video, then reflected individually through writing. The teachers then shared their reflections in a group discussion. Asha led the session with poise and confidence. Interestingly there was overwhelming support for Asha, and her views about relationships with students as exemplified in the video. This was at odds with what she had previously assumed to be the case.

By taking action to share more of herself and her philosophy with her colleagues through sharing the video, she realised that the thing holding her back the most, the lack of shared values, was more her perception than the reality. Asha was genuinely surprised by the positive reflective responses of the staff to the video

It helped me to see people a bit differently. I started to see that they do care, and teachers in general want the best for their students, in the busyness of things, that gets lost sometimes, and you're just trying to get through things. That's what I used to see, people just getting through things. But in their responses to the video, I saw that they did care. (Asha)

Lee

After watching the video for the first time, Lee showed the video to a group of teacher friends from another school. She emailed the link to her friends and noted that they were engaged in enthusiastic conversation about it, and that some of her teacher friends had shared it at their own schools. She stated that it had been “good to bring you back to what you are actually doing and why you're doing it ... to have a story like that it kind of refreshes you a bit.”

It was interesting to note how Lee shared the video. She didn't feel comfortable enough sharing it with colleagues at her school and instead found a way to share the video with those whom she might be able to influence. Instead of getting “bogged down in people being negative” she decided to begin by “sharing with likeminded people.” That action (and the associated response) supported a shift from her previous more negative state and this shift enabled her to act in a more positive manner.

Sara

Sara shared the video through social media with her immediate group of friends.

Sara: I put it on my Facebook page. I have a lot of friends who are teachers from Uni. I just said, "This is the teacher that I'd like to be one day" or something like that you know. "All of my teacher friends please watch it." ... I got a lot of good responses from teachers.

Interviewer: How did it make you feel to share that with your friends?

Sara: Yeah it was really good because sometimes they will share things that they see, links or whatever and because I saw somebody shared a link about a teacher that put rap into science because they hated science and they were from America and they made them rap out the things that they were learning ...

Interviewer: You didn't share it with anyone at school?

Sara: No. I mean – I don't know if it's because you don't want to be seen like you're a know it all, especially when you're a graduate ... when you're talking to someone who you know, like your social group, it's fine - there's no real judgement. They're not going, "Oh, look at this one, she's sharing this crap, like who do you think you are" type thing, that you might get from school ... So far all staff emails have just been purely like what needs to be done rather than anything personal ... I don't know if I'll get more comfortable later on but at the moment I don't feel comfortable sharing stuff like that. I would maybe with my own team, but not with everybody.

It is interesting to note that findings ways to share the video was a challenge for all three participants. They were concerned about the sense of judgement from colleagues which may have accompanied the showing, particularly so for the two less experienced teachers who expressed concern about not having enough standing or confidence to share the video with other staff. Asha was the only teacher to show it to her colleagues, despite all three teachers expressing the desire to do so.

Clearly, they all thought the video important enough to share, which perhaps provides an insight about the types of stories that teachers find valuable to share with others.

Taking action summary

Assumptions are the taken for grant beliefs about the world and our place within it that seem so obvious to us as not to need stating explicitly. (Brookfield, 1995, p. 2)

The three teacher participants held assumptions about their capacities as individuals and about their practice. Brookfield (1995) suggested that what teachers think they are doing to support their students respectfully and intelligently can often be experienced in ways different to that which was intended. He argued that teachers are never fully aware of their motives and intentions and frequently misread situations and that effects their actions. An uncritical stance can lead to teachers accepting blame for problems which are not of their making - or that in fact are not real.

Frustration and blame can be seen in the three participants' initial responses to the first viewing of the video. However, through closer examination of both the challenges with their own practice and their engagement in new experiences which confronted their individual challenges, all three were able to see that some of their assumptions were unfounded. Importantly, in taking action in relation to their challenges they gained insights about themselves, their teaching and their students' learning.

Chapter overview

This chapter presented a cross-case analysis of the case studies of the three teacher participants, the result of which illustrated the power of the video prompt for reflection on practice.

Analysis of the data highlighted that the video prompt led to reflective outcomes across the participants, including developing attitudes for reflection, engaging in autobiographical reflection, naming the problem, and taking action. In addition to these reflective outcomes, there appeared to be four key narrative features of the video that were influential factors in developing these outcomes. The key narrative features were identification with character, the visual image, metaphor and the use of universal themes.

The next chapter provides a classification of the features and sub-features of narrative-based video which impacted teacher participants' thinking and action. The chapter classifies the ways

in which *character* and *plot* were utilised within Wright's Law to facilitate key narrative processes of *identification* and *transportation* within the story.

Chapter 9

Features of narrative-based video: Impacting teacher thinking and action

Introduction

The data from the three case studies showed that classic elements of narrative: plot; theme; setting; and, character (McKee, 1997) were represented in particular ways within Wright's Law. As the data demonstrated, these elements influenced the thinking and action of participants. Within these classic elements of narrative, data uncovered the presence of narrative features and more fine-grain narrative sub-features which influenced participant responses (see Table 9.1). The research found that the narrative elements of character and plot were the most influential elements and impacted on participants via narrative processes of identification and absorption respectively. The data showed that a theme of humanness ran through each of the features and sub-features of plot and character and this was a prime reason for the significant identification with character and absorption in plot. The classification of the key categories and subcategories of narrative which influenced participant thinking and action are explained below.

Table 9.1: Narrative elements and their relationship

Narrative element	Key Narrative Feature	Key Sub-Features	Core Narrative Theme	Key Narrative process
Character	Teacher as main character	Likeable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genuine Warm and caring Courageous 	Humanness	Identification
		Similar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions as Achievable 		
Plot	Cause and effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear causal outcomes Believability 		Absorption
	Visual image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student reactions Teacher student interactions 		
	Universal themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellbeing of children Triumph over adversity Love / Relationships 		

Core narrative theme: Humanness

... he brought a sense of humanness to what we do very well. (Asha)

Whilst the features of plot and character influenced participants in distinct ways, an emergent and persistent theme of humanness was elicited by the sub-features of both character and plot. This theme of humanness was shown to resonate deeply with participants. Wilson & Haslam (2009) described humanness as the fundamental attributes that all humans share, consisting of emotional responsiveness, interpersonal warmth, cognitive openness (e.g., imaginativeness), and agency/individuality. Riis, Simmons, & Goodwin (2008) described humanness as the essence of human nature and found it to be fundamental to personal identity. In their study of beliefs about human nature, Riis et al. (2008) found the most significant traits within humanness as being kindness, empathy, and self-confidence. Both definitions point to the core human attributes of emotional connection and empathy as being intrinsically human and it is these traits which appeared to resonate at a fundamental level with participants.

There was considerable evidence in the data demonstrating the participants noticed the humanness illustrated within the story of Wright's Law. The participants frequently expressed appreciation for the portrayal of teaching as not only a technical endeavour, but for its humanness as well. Asha, for example, expressed that "he brought a sense of humanness to what we do very well" and spoke of the importance of "letting the students see that he was human, that he had questions and he's a person that has things that frustrate him in his life, as well." Lee thought that "it's pretty amazing that someone can deal with that at home and be teaching as well. I think that it would be good for all teachers to see because we get caught up in what's happening at school and I think for beginning teachers especially we forget about what's happening at home or feel so overwhelmed by the combination between both."

Within the features and sub features of narrative, as outlined below, the data illustrated the ways the narrative features allowed the viewer to see the human side of teaching and the complex ways in which this interacted with the 'doing of teaching'. The data shows this portrayal of humanness assisted participants to become actively immersed in the plot, and this experience is identified and referred to in the data analysis as "absorption". Humanness also enabled the main character to resonate with participants in ways that were personally meaningful, particularly in terms of appeal, genuineness and affirmation. This relationship is referred to in the data analysis as "identification" with the character. Therefore, the portrayal

of humanness allowed participants to reflect upon how their strengths, flaws and fears, played out within their teaching environment.

The influence of character

According to Tchernev (2015), audience identification with a main character is the single most important determinant of audience engagement with a narrative. Furthermore, the research literature indicates that identification with characters in media can play a fundamental role in explaining the process of narrative persuasion (Cohen, 2001; Green & Brock, 2000; Slater & Rouner, 2002) and have significant social and psychological consequences (Austin & Meili, 1994; Austin, Pinkelton, & Fujioka, 2000; Boon & Lomore, 2001; Brown & Cody, 1991; Caughey, 1986; Harrison, 1997; Murray, 1999; Papa et al., 2000).

Key narrative feature: The teacher as the main character

The story positioned teacher Mr Wright as the main character in the video, with the narrative largely set around Mr Wright as the focus of the story. Given the emphasis on the main character, the story spent considerable time and effort developing the character of Mr Wright, paying attention to portraying him not only as a teaching professional but also aspects of his humanness by revealing his personal and family life as well. In the researcher's experience, this personal side of teaching is not often presented on screen within education videos, more often, the teacher is presented as a subject simply demonstrating the process of instruction. Whilst Wright's Law did contain elements of technical instruction, the video added a more developed sense of the narrative element of character, and the data illustrated that it did so in ways that influenced participants' thinking and action.

Key Narrative Process in the influence of character – Identification

The cross-case analysis showed clearly the participants identified strongly with Mr Wright. Cohen (2001) found that identification with character was caused by audience likeability of and similarity to the character. The sub-features of character and the ways in which these led to identification are explained below.

Teacher as Likeable

The cross-case analysis shows considerable evidence of all three participants expressing positive evaluations of the main character. Lee described him as "strong" and "amazing", Asha remarked that "I'd love to shake that teacher's hand" and Sara described him as "amazing" and "a pretty cool guy."

Liking is referred to in film and media literature as the positive evaluations of a character (Cohen, 2001; Giles, 2002; Hoffner, 1996). Zillmann (2006) found that identification with character could not be possible unless the audience likes the character, and furthermore that ‘affective dispositions toward persons or their personas virtually control empathy’ (p. 44) with a character. Snyder (2005) found similarly that audience liking of a character is a necessary precursor to identification: ‘Liking the person we go on a journey with is the single most important element in drawing us into the story’ (Snyder, 2005, p. xv).

The importance of this liking of the main character to being engaged in the narrative potentially holds considerable significance in the way we might understand how a teacher audience may react to education videos. The data from this research supports findings that engagement with a story may be enhanced by the development of a likeable character, in this case a teacher, as a prominent character within the narrative.

Evidence from the case studies indicates the presence of certain characteristics within the sub-feature of likeability related to the humanness of the teacher (Mr Wright) which resonated with the participants. These characteristics included: the teacher as genuine, the teacher as warm and caring, and the teacher as courageous.

Teacher as genuine

He seemed real to me. A real person. (Asha)

The data showed evidence that being genuine and honest was important to the likeability of Mr Wright. Sara, for example, commented, “He just seemed so genuine” and she believed “that he was as genuine as he appears because the kids trusted him.” Lee also commented the “guy in that video, I feel like he’s honest, so I think that’s part of why he’s inspiring, you don’t feel like it’s fake.”

When Asha remarked that Mr Wright seemed “real” to her, she said it in the context of watching him speak to his students, “I loved watching him talk.” She saw someone who was “authentic” and speaking their mind in an open and honest way, and this resonated with Asha: “I think it is who you are, and that is who he was, which is why the students could connect and relate to him.” This sense of being “real”, “genuine” “authentic” or “honest”, according to Riis et al. (2008), relate to core traits of human nature, and are seen to resonate with participants as reflected through Mr Wright as a teacher.

Teacher as warm and caring

One of the most prominent themes in the case studies relating to liking the main character was in participants seeing the teacher as warm and caring. We see this for example when Asha remarks on what she likes most about Mr Wright “I think just his whole manner, the way he was with the children ... he is someone that genuinely cares, and a very nurturing person ... I respond well to nurturing so kids do too, and he seemed to be the same at home as well.” Asha liked knowing, “there are others also out there who value that relationship with the students and care about their students.”

It was clear from the data that Lee similarly liked the personal nature of Mr Wright’s relationship with his students, “you can even see from the way he was interacting with them that they had that relationship.” Sara too, was also struck by the way Mr Wright interacted with his students, “I think they love their teacher. Like you could tell they were, that they thought he was – he is one of those teachers that when you grow up you go, ‘Oh’ I don’t remember his name but, I love Mr so and so and he was my favourite teacher’ and you still remember them.”

Participants took significant note of one student within the video when he remarked on the fact that he could go to Mr Wright with his problems, “It makes me feel like he really cares for me and I know he really does, he is a good man.” Asha drew immediate comparisons to how she approached caring for her students, “like in the video one of the students says that he felt like his teacher cares about him, and that’s how my children feel as well.” Lee too commented that “It’s like when the student in the video said that he knew Mr Wright really cared for him. You could see how much it meant to him. It’s important for Marcelena to know that I like him.” This affinity for the human traits of warmth and caring aligns with Haslam, Bain, Douge, Lee, & Bastian (2005) facet of interpersonal warmth, which includes kindness and empathy, as an essential component of humanness.

Teacher as Courageous

Recognising the teacher as courageous was seen in the data to be an important component of liking the teacher. Lee liked that Mr Wright had “that determination to keep going, despite what is thrown at you” and admired his courage in “not just doing things like everyone else does them because that’s what’s expected.”

Asha was inspired by his message that “no matter how bad things can get, just to not lose hope that there is purpose to life.” Mr Wright’s courage emboldened Asha “to feel like I can question

too, and if I knew that, it would make me feel comfortable to take risks in a classroom situation and to be myself.”

Sara in particular liked that despite Mr Wright’s challenges, “he’s so happy ... he doesn’t need that pity and was so positive the whole way through. Regardless of what’s happening, he was just really positive and even in telling his personal story. I didn’t see one bit of, you know, negativity.”

This sense of individuality and capacity to struggle to overcome obstacles is a classic narrative sub-feature of character and seen commonly across story genre but particularly within folk story. It is this ‘meta-grammar’ of story whereby main characters are presented with a problem to overcome that triggers a fundamental human response, which according to Haslam et al. (2005), is explained by the viewer feeling a sense of affiliation with an innate human sense of autonomy and agency.

Influence of liking on participant thinking and action

Data from the participants in this research study illustrates three subcategories for liking the teacher within Wright’s Law: the ability to perceive Mr Wright as genuine, warm and caring, and, courageous. These three qualities influenced participants’ thinking and action. There are instances in the data where such participant reactions become apparent, for example, Asha expresses positive sentiments about Mr Wright’s humanness and subsequently moves to act in a more human centred way with her students.

I’m focusing more on the students as people, and building character. I used to do meditation with the kids, but it became less regular, and now I make a point of it and put it in the calendar to make it a regular thing.
(Asha)

Asha also found her own strength in Mr Wright’s courage recalling, “I used to shy away from difficult situations but this time I decided to stand up for myself, whatever the consequences might be.” Lee too, in liking the courage of Mr Wright, remarked, “When you see the teacher in that video, what he manages to do, you can’t help but step up a bit yourself.” The data also showed that Sara, as a result of liking his “amazing and fun experiments”, attempted to add more engagement and hands-on experiments into her own teaching.

It’s made me want to make more things engaging for my students. So I’m thinking to myself where can I make things so that they can, you know, rather than doing something abstract actually go out and make it so they

can experience it rather than just read about it or watch somebody else do it. (Sara)

Another consequence of liking the main character is that the participants aspired to be more like Mr Wright. There was considerable evidence in participants' responses of their motivation to be like Mr Wright. Responses from Sara for example, "I wish I was a teacher like that" and "it's like the way I want to be – the teacher that I want to be. Just the way that I want to run my class and the way that I want it to work, you know, with me as that teacher" are a clear indication of this sub-feature of character within the data. This is reinforced in the other case studies with Lee similarly remarking, "I just wish I was that good" and "I guess he's that sort of teacher you aspire to be", and with Asha "This is where I want to be one day" and, "That's who I'm trying to be."

Bandura (1986) referred to this form of aspiration as wishful identification, which occurs when a viewer aspiring to be like the character, experiences an active 'desire to emulate the figure' (Giles, 2002, p. 12), and looks up to the character (Feilitzen & Linne, 1975; Hoffner, 1996; Van Aken & Lonial, 1985).

The case studies show that this desire to emulate characters can be seen to translate into action for participants. Asha emulates Mr Wright's actions when she observes Mr Wright undertake the simple action of shaking hands with students and subsequently adopts the same action with her own students.

*I particularly liked that he did shake people's hands ... and **I did try that in class**, fairly quickly to watching the video – a child came in at lunchtime from another grade and he said, "Guess what I got my trust license to today" which means he can work in any area of the school unsupervised by a teacher, and I said, "Congratulations" and **I shook his hand**, and the next day he brought in the license to show me, and he was so excited, and he gave me a hug, because, yeah, um, yeah, because the previous day I was very excited for him and congratulated him he brought it in to show me. (Asha)*

Teacher as Similar

The analysis of the case studies shows clear evidence of participants identifying with Mr Wright through perceiving a similarity with him. Lee for example found that "our teaching philosophies are similar, in doing things a bit outside the square" and Asha commented:

I see a lot of similarities actually between that teacher and myself; it was nice to see that, to know that there are others also out there who value that relationship with the students and care about their students. I think he believes, and I believe the same as well, that you draw them in once you have that relationship. (Asha)

Similarity, according to Hoffner & Cantor (1991), refers to a cognitive assessment of what one has in common with a character. This similarity can refer to physical attributes, demographic variables, beliefs, personality, or values (Eyal & Rubin, 2003; Hoffner & Cantor, 1991). The research literature has shown that perceived similarity is related to the desire to emulate the behavior and characteristics of others (Bandura, 1986; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2000; Hoffner & Cantor, 1991). The case studies showed this perception of similarity between the viewer and main character, can be seen to translate into action within the participants. We can see in the data where Asha, as one example of how perceived similarity leads to action, perceived a similarity in the way she and Mr Wright conversed with students. This prompted her to make additional time with her students for these conversations.

... those are the kinds of conversations that I have with my students as well - about family and values ... I think I could identify with what that teacher was doing because a lot of those things he did I try to do, with my students... so I make time now. If they come running up, and they want to tell me about their weekend, or their dad's sick, I just stop and give them my full attention. (Asha)

Teacher's actions as achievable

Now I think I can do this. (Asha)

One aspect of similarity that was important to participants was that the actions of the teacher in the video were achievable, that is to say, the participants viewed themselves and the main character as similar enough that they could both undertake similar actions within their own environment. Moyer-Guse (2008) found that the motivation to emulate the behaviour of characters is determined in part by the viewer's confidence in his or her ability to take action. Bandura (1986, 2001) further found in his theory of social cognition, that seeing similar others accomplish a challenging behaviour change increases one's own self-efficacy in relation to that particular behaviour.

This notion of increased self-efficacy in the language of participant responses is clear when they talked about the possibilities for taking action. Asha's comment (above) using the word 'can', according to Miller & Rollnik (2013), indicates ability language (p. 161) and is used when a person feels able to make a change. According to Miller & Rollnik, (2013), it doesn't mean a person necessarily will make a change, only that it signals that a person feels that the change seems possible. Lee's response indicated an identified achievability in Mr Wright's teaching, particularly in regard to the development of his relationships with his students. Lee who was cautious of building caring relationships with students, was struck that "you can still have that relationship with your students and have that balance of being able to balance everything all at once." As a result, Lee came to see the simple action of providing encouraging language to students when required was achievable and effective.

I think just remembering to say, "Wow that's really great" or "how are you going to improve on that" is important, and just showing genuine care for them, showing that you are interested in what they are doing. Those things that you mean to always say, but maybe forget to. (Lee)

There are other examples from the data which evidence the sense of achievability as leading to participants taking action. On the topic of shaking hands with the students, which Asha eventually emulated herself, she remarked that she did so primarily because it seemed achievable, and "took that away with me because it's something that I could do, because I'm always trying to connect with the students, and I was thinking that would be a nice way to do that."

Asha also saw the simplicity of Mr Wright using humour within his teaching, and so she decided, "That particular afternoon after watching the video I used some humour and that worked well – the children were laughing, and I felt like it cheered me up. So, I decided that I will use more humour in the classroom."

Lee also saw the opportunity to take to the simple action of waiting after asking a question before responding to the students. It led to a simple reminder for Lee:

I have to remind myself, hang-on a minute, you've asked a question, just because there's some kids ready to answer before you've finished, you've got to wait and give them time to think about it ... So it's a good reminder to start doing that again. (Lee)

The change talk of “I have to” represents a component of the motivation to change which Millner & Rollnik (2013) referred to as need language (p. 161). This need language indicates in the participant an internal urgency to change or take action, and in this case reflected the transition from seeing the action as achievable to acting on the motivation to change. This perhaps could be seen as a transition toward Dewey’s attitude of responsibility, and was clear in Asha’s talk of her:

... need to confront challenges so I can grow in confidence. I can't let myself worry about what others might say or think, not just at work but also in my life, I need to be true to who I am and what I believe in. So I will try to build my confidence to enable my voice to be heard. (Asha)

It is shown in the data that Asha does in fact end up acting on her change talk. To confront her challenges in the area of sharing more of herself and speaking up for herself, she felt she needed to be assertive. In this way, seeing the character’s actions as achievable appeared to support participants to firstly imagine what it would be like to act and then subsequently feel comfortable enough to take small actions within their practice.

The influence of character overview

The data illustrate clearly that the narrative element of character is seen to be a key component of narrative-based video which influenced the participants’ thinking and action. The character sub-features of likeability and similarity portrayed the humanness of the teacher and this contributed to the narrative process of identification with the teacher. These sub-features of character influenced the thinking and action of participants as they were compelled into action through identification via a sense of aspiration, emulation, or perceived achievability of outcomes.

The influence of plot

The story certainly had that emotional hook I guess, because it touches people's hearts. So I think when you can do that there's that power to bring about the best in people. (Asha)

According to Hakemulder & Kuijpers (2017) absorption in the plot of narrative film is a critical factor in influencing how the viewer is affected by the narrative. There is considerable research literature supporting this view, and although the concept is given different terms such as transportation (Green and Brock, 2000), immersion (Ryan, 2001), engagement (Busselle &

Bilandzic 2008) or entranced (Holland 2008), the literature points to the significant role of plot absorption to influencing audience thinking and behaviour.

Key narrative process: Absorption

The data from the case studies indicate that participants were absorbed in the plot and this engagement supported an openness to new ways of thinking and acting. According to Green & Brock (2000), this process of absorption is a construct linked to focusing viewer attention on the story, rather than in one's immediate environment, and operates by activating the viewer's mental images and emotional responses to the plot as it unfolds. The stimulation of new mental images and emotions transports the viewer out of their routine thinking and into an interpretive state from which they can see different perspectives and possibilities (Mazzocco, Green, Sasota, & Jones, 2010). The following features of the plot were seen in the data to contribute to participant absorption in the plot and subsequently influenced the thinking and action of participants.

Key features of plot: The use of visual image

The plot utilised strong visual imagery to support the viewer's engagement with the story. According to Jacobs & Shrott (2015) visual imagery allows viewers to orient themselves spatially within the plot and draws them into the story world through triggering visual associations and memories within the viewer's own cognitive and affective processing. The data from the case studies in this research indicated that this use of visual imagery influenced participants' thinking and action. An important sub-feature category of visual imagery emerged in the data, which related to the very human visual images of student reactions to the learning and teaching.

Seeing student reactions to the learning

Sara noted, "I could see the reaction from the students – like even when they're videotaping his classes and stuff, you can see that the kids they're not just acting for the camera."

She went on to say:

*You could see those kids on the video, fully into what they were doing ...
I could see all the kids were focused on him ... I mean you could tell by
their reactions, 'Oh, my God look at that' and all the excited tones and
stuff. (Sara)*

Sara recalled seeing that:

There wasn't anyone in the back, looking up at the sky or fiddling with something else, they all just were focused on whatever it is that he was teaching them. It was obvious they thought that it was completely interesting. (Sara)

Sara further talked about being struck by the image at the start of the video “when he’s showing them all the science experiments and they [the experiments] look amazing ... I took notice of that. I remember thinking, I’ll remember that.” These moments of noticing are what Dewey (1933) considered to be an interruption to routine thinking and a gateway into reflective thinking. In this way the visual images of students reacting to learning can be seen to enable participants to “break out” of their automatic practice and become more open to seeing new possibilities.

Seeing the teacher and students interact

Another aspect of the visual imagery that influenced participants, were the images of the teacher interacting with his students. The previous sub section on character demonstrated the influence of interpersonal warmth as an important trigger for reflection and action within participants. One of the prime ways in which this occurred was via the use of strong visual images of student reactions and interactions with teachers. The way these images were put together to support the plot, in terms of creating human emotion and conflict, further built the impact on participant thinking and action. Lee, for example, took special notice of the warmth and honesty in how Mr Wright related to his students, remarking she could, “see from the way he was interacting with them that they had that relationship, and you can’t fake that with kids, you really can’t.” This noticing of the way that Mr Wright related to his students, supported Lee to look for opportunities to be more student focussed in her own teaching, to do and say those little things that Mr Wright did to make sure the students knew that they felt respected and valued.

I think just remembering to say, “Wow that’s really great” or “how are you going to improve on that” is important, and just showing genuine care for them, showing that you are interested in what they are doing. Those things that you mean to always say, but maybe forget to. (Lee)

Sara also paid attention to the visual images of Mr Wright interacting with his students, recalling how “the kids just respond – and you can see that the kids they feel that energy and that they’re happy to be there.” These images of teacher and student interacting in genuine

learning relationships, also triggered Sara to reflect on her past, supporting her reflection of her own teachers and whether she opened up to them. “I’m just thinking back to high school and I don’t think I opened up to many teachers so, you know I believe that he was as genuine as he appears because the kids trusted him.”

Asha too, noted the visual imagery of Mr Wright interacting with his students, remarking at one point that what she liked most about Mr Wright was seeing, “just his whole manner, the way he was with the children.” One of the consequences was that this stimulated Asha’s recall of her own past relationship with her teachers, “I can only remember very few teachers who had certain aspects that I will remember forever, who in some small way made a difference in my life, and who have been part of my journey.”

Across the case studies, the visual image clearly appears to stimulate participant reflection on their past, and in so doing, assists them to unpack and clarify their own thinking and values. According to Wyeth (2015), the visual image triggers access to autobiographical information that has been formative for the individual, and in doing so creates a space for individuals to unpack those aspects of their past which may be restraining current practice. The case study data support this view, for example, Lee remembered the difficult teaching rounds that formed her views about respect, or Sara remembered the challenges of moving schools. Asha remembered the death of her sister and her harsh upbringing, and the subsequent realisation of how these experiences may have shaped her understanding of her present constraints.

For Asha, reflective thinking related to the humanness of both her personal and professional life and translated into action as she became more conscious that the little things, like stopping to acknowledge children when they asked a question, even when busy. This became a way of valuing the children in accord with her espoused values, “I make time now. If they come running up, and they want to tell me about their weekend, or their dad’s sick, I just stop and give them my full attention, so I want to be present for them.”

Key features of plot: The use of universal themes

The data show the participants were impacted by the emotional human themes within the story. Sara was affected by, “Just the love of a father” recalling, “the narrative, it brought out the emotions, because people were crying and like I teared up a couple of times, that’s what brought out the emotion in me.” Asha, who was struggling with her own confidence and “at a pivotal point in my life”, found the video’s themes caused her to think about the fundamental questions of “who I am,” and “what truly matters to me”.

This strongly affective impact on participants, is arguably surprising given the context of typical videos of education practice. It seems reasonable to suggest that the focus of capturing education practice through film, typically concentrates on teaching technique rather than the humanness of teaching and learning. It is apparent across the data that one of the consequences when teaching is portrayed through a plot which contains universal human themes, is that it acts as a stimulus for deep absorption in the story and deep reflection about its content. Screenwriting literature suggests that effective plots are constructed to evoke deep-seated needs or emotions that are common to all human beings, “The motivation for the hero to succeed must be a basic one” (Snyder, 2005, p. 54), “It’s because primal urges get our attention. Survival, hunger, sex, protection of loved ones, fear of death grab us” (p. 54).

In Wright’s Law, the compelling universal themes of a father protecting his son, of love, and of triumph over adversity are apparent. Through film studies, such themes are shown to be classic motivations stemming from fundamental human needs that resonate with an audience at a visceral level (Cohen, 2001). Pinker (1997) argued from an evolutionary perspective, the things which most motivate humans are those which enhance the odds of survival and reproduction. Fundamental to this advancement of survival is the wellbeing of children through the support of family, and it is this universal motivation of the plot of Wright’s Law which resonates with participants.

The cross-case analysis showed that one of the consequences of connecting with fundamental humanistic themes was a deeper level of reflection within participants. For example, Asha revealed she reflected on the video subsequent to viewing it, leading her to state that:

... some values became very clear to me, like love and forgiveness and compassion, so some values just came to the surface ... the video it made me want to reflect on what my philosophy is about teaching, and so I had to organise my thoughts and think about what do I value and what do I want for my students. (Asha)

This clarification of personal values emboldened Asha to action, she faced challenges she would normally avoid as explained when she took on:

... some difficult conversations with a couple of members in my team and a couple of staff members recently. Rather than worrying and getting anxious about it, I saw them as opportunities for growth and was pleasantly surprised that I handled it all confidently and well. I was

quite vocal today at meetings about students getting upset in the yard and feeling like they are not being listened to and that we all need to be consistent in our approach. Surprisingly, I do feel ok about facing challenges. (Asha)

This outcome for Asha corresponds with Boud's (1991) contention that the affective nature of the universal narrative draws us into reflecting on aspects of ourselves which are not always readily available to us, fostering 'the development of confidence and a sense of self-worth that can lead us to pursue paths which previously may have been inaccessible, and thus draw us more deeply into the experience' (p. 20).

The development of Dewey's (1933) attitude of open-mindedness was also illustrated by the cross-case analysis. This was a fundamental outcome of participants engaging with the narrative. Each participant reached some pivotal moments in their reflection where they became open to seeing their practice and their situation in its raw form. Asha openly reflected, "I guess some days I even ask myself am I really making a difference", and Lee reached the very sobering realisation for her that, "I sound negative, don't I?"

This openness to confront the reality of the restraints acting on their practice is an important outcome for participants. Knowles & Linn (2004) argued that individuals prefer not to change their attitudes, behaviours and beliefs, in order to keep their attitude system in balance and will resist persuasion based on the desire to avoid dissonance. However, Cohen (2001) argued that being absorbed or transported into the universal motivations within a plot supports viewers to be more open to considering dissonant perspectives, to imagine themselves doing, thinking, or feeling something they ordinarily would not. More specifically, the enjoyment associated with transportation into a narrative may allow individuals to process messages they would otherwise find too fear inducing. According to Green & Brock (2000), while the viewer is absorbed in the story's fundamental motivations, he or she may be less aware of pre-existing perceptions that contradict assertions made in the narrative, and this provides a subjective distancing from the normal reality of the individual. One example from the data which supports this view is where Lee, who prior to viewing the video was somewhat fearful and antagonistic to the presence of parents within her classroom, was able to distance herself from her automatic thinking to consider different interpretations of the parents' presence within her class. Lee eventually came to the realisation that "the parents are mostly just being friendly and want to chat."

Key features of plot: The use of clear cause-and-effect relationships

Bordwell & Thompson (2004) argued the essence of narrative is a chain of events in cause-effect relationships. Further to this, Oatley (1995) argued this clear chain of events leads to audience immersion in the plot as the viewer engages in the observation of key actions and the corresponding impact these actions cause throughout the story. As the data suggest, analysis of Wright's Law and participant responses shows the plot contained strong use of cause-effect relationships, and participants were able to recognise these within the plot.

One example from the data is from Sara when she noticed clearly the causal teaching interventions of Mr Wright and the effect these actions had on the students. This is arguably due to Sara being in the first year of her teaching looking to Mr Wright for noticeable clues on how to teach effectively. She noticed how Mr Wright, "made them question without using textbooks" and opened up "this really awesome experiment and the kids wanting to be there and asking that magic question, how and why". Sara notes the direct impact of this type of teaching on the students by recalling the students who say, "I never fall asleep in Mr Wright's class" and by noticing a teacher who is, "doing a really great job and he's using those, those values and those strategies and it's working fantastic for him and so it's just, you know, shown me that that's great, I can use them and hopefully it will work fantastic for me too one day."

It was clearly evident that Sara could see the cause and effect of Mr Wright's teaching. Her open-mindedness, enabled her to benefit from seeing, "what experienced teachers do so that I can see where I can learn from them," and, "where can I make things so that they can, you know, rather than doing something abstract actually go out and make it so they can experience it rather than just read about it or watch somebody else do it."

Seeing the cause and effect of Mr Wright's teaching arguably supported participants to physically act on their reflective insights. For example, Sara also acted on her reflective desire to engage her students more in their learning. Following Mr Wright's more student-centred approach to teaching, Sara acted to "make more things engaging for my students" stating that:

... now it's all investigations and inventions and stuff, so we're actually making things, we're inventing new things, and working out how to solve problems, we're learning, and they love it. They're actually using their thinking skills and working things out, making things and then writing about how they made them and what parts were what. So they're writing and they're linking everything all together. (Sara)

Seeing the causal relationships within the narrative led participants to openly reconsider cause and effect situations. Asha asked herself what would happen if she showed a biography of herself to grade 5/6 students? What would happen if she shook a student's hand? Sara considered what might happen if she let students have more control in a lesson, and Lee began to consider if the parents were really as bad as she first thought. What would the consequences be of hugging a child who was hurt? The narrative in Wright's Law appeared to transport the participants into a state where they could question their normal thinking and run simulations (or as Dewey (1933) might say, test new possibilities through thought experiments) to vicariously explore the causal consequences.

Asha too, in seeing Mr Wright's relational teaching (cause), could see the effects of that teaching directly on students (effect). She remarked, "I was watching it and I'm thinking, yes of course that works, I've seen it work, I've experienced it, and because that's who I'm trying to be." Seeing the link between cause and effect when Mr Wright was shaking hands with students and the impact this action had on students led Asha to, "try that in class, fairly quickly [after] watching the video" because, "I'm always trying to connect with the students, and I was thinking that would be a nice way to do that."

The research literature argues that narrative allows the viewer to examine cause and effect relationships vicariously. This has considerable benefits in instances where the viewer is unwilling or unable to test them in real life (Pinker, 1997). Bhalla (2013) argued that reflection through stories is a type of simulated experiment where the viewer is free from the normal limits of their own direct experience. Pinker (1997) described this mediated scenario as being able to watch what happens to characters as they attempt to overcome their obstacles and take mental notes on what happens to them as a result. This provides a way of exploring the consequences of certain actions and behaviours (i.e., Dewey's thought experiments). Van Laer et al. (2014) explained the role of plot absorption in this process as supporting the viewer to suspend current realities or restraints enough in order to run simulations of cause and effect relationships in relative safety; in so doing, becoming more open to different possibilities.

Believability

One of the consequences of seeing clear cause and effect relationships within the plot appeared to be an increased believability in the outcomes of the causal intervention. When Lee, for example, saw the effect of Mr Wright's teaching on the students, she remarked, "you can't fake that with kids, you really can't." Sara similarly remarked, "I believe that he was as genuine as

he appears because the kids trusted him.” One can speculate from such reactions that seeing interactions between teacher and student led to greater believability of the plot through observing clear cause and effect relationships between teacher and student. In other words, by seeing the causal intervention (i.e., the teacher and the teaching) and its direct impact on students, the action became eminently trusted and believable to the viewer.

As the pilot study data suggested, teachers may hold a level of scepticism when viewing other teachers within videos of educational practice. This was evident in such comments from the pilot group teachers as, “I think that teachers can tell you anything; they can paint what they’re doing in the best light and paint themselves in the best light”. This was a common thread, some teachers struggled to believe the plot unless they could directly see the reactions of students to the teaching. Seeing the images of students, their facial expressions, and their reactions to the teaching arguably assisted to overcome the scepticism of participants and become more open to believing the events of the plot as they unfolded in the case of Wright’s Law.

The influence of plot overview

Plot is shown through the data to be a key component of narrative-based video which influenced participants’ thinking and action. The sub-features of the plot which included the strong use of visual image, cause and effect and universal themes, operated through a process of absorption, drawing participants into the story world and the humanness of the teaching and learning process. The resultant reflection was an interpretative state of thinking that influenced the development of an openness within participants to naming the challenges in their practice, clarifying their values through autobiographical reflection, and to an openness to new possibilities within their teaching practice.

The strong use of cause and effect interactions within the plot allowed the participants of this study to see ‘with their own eyes’ the impact of Mr Wright’s approach to teaching. Due to this sense of ‘believability’ in the outcomes, participants were prepared to try similar things within their own practice.

Chapter overview

As data analysis illustrated, clear categories within the narrative video influenced participants’ thinking and action. Within the classic elements of narrative, plot and character emerged as having the most influence on participants’ thinking and action. Further analysis of participants’ reactions to plot and character revealed sub-categories of features and sub-features that

illustrated other influences on participants, in particular the ways in which narrative features surfaced facets of humanness that connected with participants' own sense of humanity.

The features and sub-features of the narrative video detailed in this chapter have relevance for the way educational videos are constructed, and the ways in which such videos set out to better capture and portray the essence and complexity of teaching. Through better understanding these crucial elements, it is likely that more powerful bespoke responses and actions might be elicited from individual viewers. Responses of this nature may be more likely to support viewers to frame a response relevant to their particular contextual challenges.

Chapter 10 outlines the significance of finding approaches to teacher professional learning which embrace the complex nature of teaching, including how prompts such as narrative-based video may contribute to teacher learning more broadly.

Chapter 10

Revealing teaching as complex

Introduction

This chapter explores the significance of this research in the wider context of national attempts at improving teachers' practice and learning outcomes for students. The findings from the case studies raise important considerations within the design of professional learning, particularly in terms of the mechanisms used to promote and support teacher change. Using prompts such as narrative videos designed to support critical reflection may result in more contextualised teaching targeted to the specific learning needs of students. The findings indicate that the specific ways the narrative was constructed within the video were influential in opening up new perspectives for teachers' thinking and practice. The usefulness of this construction of narrative within video appeared to be in the way that it surfaced the multiple and complex bodies of knowledge and influence which were "in play" within teachers' everyday experience, and that by doing so, the participating teachers could recognise the restraints which impacted their practice and at the same time opened up possibilities for ways they could act to redress them. This is significant information for policy makers and school leaders as a way of considering new possibilities for engaging with the complexity of teaching and to more effectively support teacher learning and development.

The complex nature of teaching

The research underpinning this thesis has explored teacher professional development and learning in interesting ways. The data indicate narrative-based video may be useful in providing a different type of prompt for reflection on enhancing practice, in comparison with the more functional approaches to teacher development more commonly employed by education bureaucracies and systems.

The Australian educational context shows that whilst considerable money and effort has been spent on the goal of improving outcomes over the last 20 years, students' learning outcomes have been declining - both relatively and in absolute terms - as described by international measures such as PISA (Thomson, De Bortoli, & Underwood, 2015). In attempts to redress declining student outcomes, policy makers (and some educational researchers) have been searching for an effective method of educating teachers that would positively influence their

daily practice in schools (Loughran, 2006). This search invariably sees policy makers favour ubiquitous or pre-packaged solutions which can be neatly implemented at scale, and through which measures of teacher skills or competencies can be used to account for the investment made.

An assessment of the Australian student outcome data against both national and international measures suggests that current approaches to improving teaching and student learning outcomes isn't necessarily working (Goss, 2017). This thesis offers another approach to understanding educational development and change. The detailed analysis of the three case studies offer a glimpse into the complexity of teaching, and thus into the limitations of a one-size-fits-all solution to improving practice. The findings of this research add to the body of literature which argues that teaching is substantially a complex endeavour, and this complexity needs to be recognised and addressed if sustained improvement in practice and student learning is to be better realised (Livingston, 2017).

Approaches to teacher learning which recognise this complexity hold that expert teaching is not only the attainment of a list of standards and competencies, but also necessarily involves a capability to be critically reflective on the multiple influences which shape teaching and student learning. Such a reflective capability includes teachers shaping and adapting their teaching using evidence from their colleagues, the research literature, their many and varied students, and, from the influences they come to recognize and understand as part of their own experiences. Seeing teaching as complex in this way is significant because it acknowledges the dynamic interplay of forces which ultimately shape student learning.

By illustrating the complexity of teaching, this research highlights the intellectual and professional aspects of teaching which, unfortunately, are seldom portrayed and codified in current educational debates. Rather, much of current education discourse and policy attempts to reduce teaching to a set of competencies or activities which can be simply and easily transmitted to the teacher, and, consequently easily delivered to students. Such a view is possibly due to the fact that behaviours and competencies are usually the most common facets which are directly observable by others and thus can be measured and used to justify funding or accountability measures of professional learning (Bradshaw, 2014).

Bates (2014) asserted that a competency-based view of education devalued the intellectual rigour of teaching, shifting the focus toward a most basic, deskilled view of teaching. She argued that teaching, from that perspective, becomes a profession that is simply about taking

direction from “more senior others” and implementing it, notably without asking any questions. Teachers are therefore removed from the process of designing and implementing curriculum even though they have knowledge of their students and their unique teaching contexts and communities – the main drivers for understanding change in the first place. Bradshaw (2014) suggested that such a simplified view of teaching was damaging and was based on (and/or helped to reinforce) a misconception of teaching as almost a non-intellectual practice.

Narrative based video

The findings of this research suggest the potential value of the narrative video as a way of accessing the dynamic and complex interplay of elements which comprise teaching. By exploring teaching in this way, the data showed that the use of the video supported participants in recognizing and responding to multiple influences.

Participant teachers came to see that their teaching was partly influenced by themselves (their experiences, values, personalities, background, etc.), the context in which they operated (the school, the parents, location, etc.), and the demands of the learners they teach (content, pedagogical approaches, and the learners themselves with different social, ethnic, intellectual backgrounds).

The data illustrated the significance of teachers knowing themselves and being conscious of their past experiences (such as Asha becoming aware of the impact of the death of her sister and her harsh upbringing in India) and how such knowledge influences teaching. The data also made clear how participants’ context mattered (e.g., Lee’s parent community acting as a restraint on her practice; Sara’s context as a first year teacher shaping how she taught), as well as the varied nature of the learners and how their contexts shaped their subsequent practice (as in Asha’s student who had suffered trauma as a refugee, who needed deliberate teaching procedures to enable the greatest gain in their learning; Lee’s student undertaking reading recovery and needing specialised teaching approaches; and, Sara’s classroom when working with student Marcelina). As the participants reflected on the multiple aspects which shaped their teaching, the data from the in-depth analyses of each case study revealed the complexity of responding effectively to the varying cognitive and social demands of learners, the contexts for learning and discerning appropriate pedagogical strategies in order to respond appropriately.

The data also showed that by going beyond the technical aspects of teaching, to reveal the human and social aspects of quality in teaching, Wright’s Law appeared to capture and portray

an essence of teaching for participants, a codified image or set of images which represented the multiple aspects of what helped to shape being an effective teacher. The recognition of this multi-faceted nature of teaching crystalized an awareness in participants that effective teaching is much more complex than the simple delivery of fun activities in the classroom.

More relevant and responsive teaching within teachers' own contexts

The research shows how the story in the video of Wright's Law invited a level of autonomous reflection and action within participants' own context, as opposed to "telling" or instructing teachers about the "right" way to "do teaching". Through such reflection, the video appears to have paved a way for reflection on these teachers' present and personal contexts, and in doing so, helped them to frame a teaching response relevant to their students' learning requirements. The complex nature of teaching, as illustrated through the three case studies, hints at the possible limitations of professional development approaches which do not consider the personal and social contexts in which teachers continually operate.

Researchers such as Lowyck, Clark, & Halkes (1986) stressed that teaching behaviour can only be understood when the original context of the specific teaching behaviour is included in the interpretation. This amalgam of the influences of the school context, the learners' context and the teachers' own personal context, suggests a sophisticated reliance on a teacher's capacity to be actively mindful and aware of these influences concurrently, and in such a way as to be able to choose teaching strategies and procedures which progress students' learning. The data from this research support the view that it is this level of sophistication within teaching which is required to prompt meaningful personal change in teachers.

Revealing the human component of the complexity of teaching

The findings of this research show that it was the presence of human elements of teaching alongside technical aspects within the video which supported participants to see new possibilities for action within their own context. The socialising role of the school context is a crucial factor in how teachers learn (Lortie, 1975; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). However, as Darling-Hammond & Richardson (2009) noted, often the person of the teacher and the practice in which he or she works, receives too little attention.

In the literature on teacher change, Korthagen (2004) has argued that relatively little attention has been devoted to interventions aimed at the level of teachers' professional identity and mission. In capturing and portraying the complex nature of the human aspect of teaching,

narrative-based videos such as Wright's Law highlight the potential of tools and prompts which connect with teachers' own sense of humanness within teaching.

A significant aspect of the findings from this thesis was that the teacher participants increased the level of conscious awareness about themselves and their teaching which supported them to take meaningful action through their practice. It has been well noted that an issue with traditional professional development is that it tends to focus on technical aspects of teaching without supporting teachers to see, and grapple with, the links to their own individual classroom challenges and practice (Smith, 2017), hence, the benefits for pedagogical development are not fully realised.

Through linking to participants' attitudes for reflection, and thus into the personal contexts of each participant, these teachers appeared to find new ways to support student learning. For example, Asha became more conscious of acknowledging her students when they asked a question: "I just stop and give them my full attention, so I want to be present for them"; Lee enacted more wait time when asking students questions so that all students had time to process the question and provide a response; and, Sara changed her unit of work on forces to provide a more open ended, student centred task in order to encourage greater engagement in learning. Through these actions, each participant developed specific and concrete ways into better understanding and addressing the challenges they faced within their own practice.

Hamachek (1999) argued, 'the more that teachers know about themselves—the private curriculum within—the more their personal decisions are apt to be about how to pave the way for better teaching' (p. 209). To that end, it is vital that teachers are not only aware of their internal state, they also need to be emotionally in touch with their core qualities such that they begin to make conscious decisions, and then carry through on those decisions, within their practice.

Attema-Noordewier, Korthagen, & Zwart (2011) found that humanistic approaches to professional learning touch the person, and teachers become enthusiastic and experience more autonomy and self-efficacy which leads to enhanced learning. These findings further support Korthagen's (2004) view that triggering visceral responses connected with the inner layers of a teacher's mission and identity may assist in supporting teachers to both recognise and name the dissonance in their current practice as well as unpack ways in which their past experiences have shaped them as a teacher. In this way, the use of narrative-based video as a trigger or prompt, may assist teachers to look at their practice in new ways, or from a new perspective,

and in so doing open up a more conscious and mindful approach to their teaching. Through better understanding these crucial elements of their own mission and value, more personally meaningful and bespoke responses and actions might be elicited by individuals (in this case, as viewers of video prompts such as Wright's Law).

The confronting implication for policy makers is that effective professional development is in some part value-based (Biesta 2010), which means that it must start from what practitioners themselves value in their own work. More precise, discerning teaching developed through critical reflection on practice is arguably the type of professional learning that is required to address much touted political issues of teacher quality and declining student outcomes. As this study has illustrated, the use of narrative based video adds weight to Postholm's (2012) view that educationalists need a more integrative view of teacher change which focuses not only on practice, but most of all, the human beings working in the contexts of their schools.

Breaking routine thinking and practice: Prompts for critical reflection

A significant aspect to the narrative video prompt in the context of quality professional learning, was its capacity to promote a more conscious and critical state of teacher awareness about practice. The data from participants in this study suggest that such prompts may be useful within professional learning to support teachers to step outside their normal patterns of thinking and view their practice from a different perspective - to reframe pedagogical situations (Schön, 1983). This is especially so in relation to becoming open-minded enough to recognise, name and attend to aspects of self and practice which may be difficult or limiting. This research shows that by confronting problematic aspects of their own practice, participants began to make changes to their thinking and practice.

As the data showed, participants each held assumptions about their teaching or their context and was limiting in terms of their practice. Through the video prompt they became more able to view their assumptions from a different perspective. For example, Asha was able to see a different perspective on the way her colleagues viewed the responsibility for developing relationships with students, and when Lee remarked, "I sound negative, don't I?" she became conscious of her present mindset; something she had not actively confronted before. This revelation eventually encouraged her to challenge the assumption that the parents of the children in her classroom were undermining her. Likewise Sara was able to see that she could give more intellectual control (Mitchell & Mitchell, 2008) to her students in the learning process. Thus, one of the significant aspects of the findings was the fact that a prompt was able

to assist participants in gaining insights into their own internal state, and subsequently awaken their subconscious awareness to the realities and possibilities within their current situation (i.e., framing and reframing their own practice).

By laying bare some of the taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning how they viewed their teaching, the participants began to see their current teaching context differently. Indeed, their assumptions, upon critical reflection, revealed some views that they came to see as unfounded. Thus, the findings show that prompts which support teachers to challenge the assumptions implicit within their thinking and behaviour, can help to break them out of routine thinking in ways that can help them to respond to their pedagogical needs and concerns and ultimately, their students' learning needs. The research illustrates how a reflective prompt can assist teachers in developing a more mindful and critical stance about their practice and the way that that might be enacted in their own context.

The significance of story and images

The findings from the three case studies illustrate the significance of codifying teacher practice through story and image as a way of triggering access to past experiences, and come to recognize one's mission and core values (Korthagen, 2004). The data demonstrated that it was particularly the humanistic images of teacher-student interactions that resonated deeply with participants.

The significance of image and story, as way of triggering reflection, aligns with considerable research that suggests the codification of human themes within images and stories resonates with people at a deep level (e.g., Booker, 2004; Kopping, 2005; Keysers, 2011; Wyeth, 2015). Bastian's (1871) theory of *elementargedanken* and later Jung's (1969) theory of archetypes purports that the human mind is organised around basic elemental shapes and images, and are patterned into the unconscious of all humans. According to Bastian and Jung, it is from these universal images that we recognise the essential elements of humanity. According to Booker (2004), 'These structural sequences of imagery are in fact the most natural way we know to describe almost everything which happens in our lives' (p. 2). He argued that although this recognition occurs below the level of conscious awareness, the recognition of the elemental ideas, stimulates an assemblage of images relating to a person's own series of mental models or *gestalts* (Koffka, 1935) from the past. It is perhaps for this reason that the recognition and subsequent stimulation of the viewers' own mental models, through the fundamental human imagery within the narrative video, provides access into the personal contexts of the viewers.

The significance of images and stories in relation to teacher development suggested through the findings of this research is congruent with the work of Mayes (2003) who was of the view that 'In order for teachers to reflect deeply upon themselves, they need powerful models and images to guide their introspection' (p. 81). He suggested that in teacher reflectivity, as in the therapeutic processes, psychic energy must ultimately be "contained" by models and modalities that enable one to make sense of one's inner and outer experiences, thus enabling those experiences to 'form the basis for the transformation of self, setting, and other' (p. 81).

The significance of greater self-understanding according is that teachers are able to make choices that are more conscious and deliberate in relation to their students, their own self influences and their own further professional development (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994). Such a view of teacher learning and practice values self-understanding and constitutes a markedly different approach to teacher development than those which tend to focus more on the technical competencies of teaching separate from a teacher's own experience and context. Humanistic prompts in the form of images and story (as in Wrights Law) appear to trigger gestalts of teachers' own experiences and values. As such the prompt is able to be more intertwined with the teacher triggering their own reflective practice, thus potentially being considerably more relevant to them.

According to Nias (1996), teacher change should encompass the mix of "the personal and the professional" and help teachers arrive at an all-encompassing view of what it means to be a good teacher. Such an integrative view may not yet be common in the field of teaching and teacher education, but clearly has consequences for professional development.

If an integrative view of teacher learning was to be taken seriously, it might mean that a teacher's capacity to be critically reflective about themselves and their practice is more than just an interesting addition to a traditional view of development, it could be the basis of genuine teacher professional learning (Korthagen, 2017). As such, the importance of a strong reflection-based approach may represent another inconvenient truth to many policy-makers in education - namely the need to focus on individual teachers and support them in their idiosyncratic learning processes.

Such an approach necessitates a focus on the development of teachers where the emphasis is less on the transfer of scientific knowledge (or 'formal knowledge', as Fenstermacher, (1994), described it), and more on becoming conscious of one's own 'personal practical knowledge' (Clandinin, 1986). As a consequence, reflection can be seen as an indispensable element in

professional learning (Schön, 1987; Vermunt & Endedijk, 2011). Therefore, supporting teacher learning would mean that facilitators of teacher learning should be equipped with tools and strategies that foster the surfacing and integrating of both the human and technical aspects of not only becoming but also being a teacher (Kim & Greene, 2011).

The data from this study indicate that the presence of strong human imagery within the narrative prompt was significant in triggering the viewer's sense of teacher identity. The research highlights the potential benefit of using prompts within teacher professional learning that image the fundamental elements of humanness in teaching as a means of providing pathways into the specific elements that matter in a teacher's own context.

Implications for the design of videos of teacher practice

The research findings pose implications for the design of narrative elements with education videos, such that the narrative elements specifically capture and portray the things that prompt teachers to look at their practice in new ways. The research found that two main narrative elements, namely plot and character, as well as further features and sub-features of these elements, were influential in the way that they facilitated the engagement and reflection of participants.

As the literature review (Chapter 2) outlined, the design of education videos has traditionally centred on capturing and analysing the “doing of teaching” - that is to say, focussing on the analysis of actual classroom lessons or presenting instructional pieces on how to teach a classroom activity. However, the benefits of such an approach are likely confined to those teachers who are teaching that specific content at that year level in a similar socio demographic context. Furthermore, the purpose of instructional teaching videos is most commonly for teachers to replicate the activity, and this seldom leaves much space for teachers to reflect critically upon how and why that activity might be used to enhance student learning in their own context. The findings from this research indicate the potential of a different route into influencing teacher behaviour through the portrayal of the human and social elements of teaching. Such a narrative can provide a route into critical reflection on the multiple elements that influence the learning and teaching of particular content with particular students.

Thus, in terms of the design of narrative videos of practice, the findings place importance on the narrative feature of character within an education video. In particular, the data showed the significance of the deliberate use of a teacher as a main character who demonstrates attributes of humanness (such as genuineness, warmth, and courage) which resonated with the teacher

participants of this study. Indeed, the data revealed that this strong human element was a significant factor within the narrative because it acted as a trigger for teacher reflection about their personal mission and values. The findings therefore highlight the potential impact within teacher professional learning of using character to reveal the humanness of a “regular” teacher, providing a sense of inspiration as that character faces the myriad of challenges associated with leading the learning of groups of young people. In this way, the narrative provides a mechanism for the viewer to reflect on that which matters to them as an individual professional.

The research findings also place emphasis on the importance of the narrative feature of plot within an education video. The data showed the importance of presenting how the teaching was achievable and believable, through strong visual imagery of students and teachers interacting and the subsequent impact on students captured through a humanistic teaching approach. The data also showed the significance of universal themes within the plot that triggered viewers’ own reflection on their values and mission as teachers, and the valuable insights triggered about the ways in which an individual’s past and present can influence their future teaching.

The specific use of the narrative elements of plot and character, and the ways in which that visual imagery represents these elements, is fundamental to the narrative processes of identification with character and absorption with plot respectively. In this way, the findings from this study are significant in terms of the design of education videos of practice, such that the specific and particular use of narrative elements (including plot and character) offer access to the multiple and complex factors influencing perspectives on, and actions in, teaching.

Chapter overview

The findings from this research highlight the potential of approaches to teacher learning which can be owned and refined by teachers themselves. The data show the significance of finding routes into teacher thinking and practice that uncover the complexity of teaching for teachers themselves, and in so doing, open up space for developing more conscious understandings of practice as teachers actively work through the multiple aspects of quality teaching within their own context.

The findings contribute to the view that teachers’ learning processes are complex and dynamic (Hargreaves, 1998a; Hoban, 2005; Hoekstra, 2007; Jörg, 2011; Nias, 1996); multi-dimensional, multi-level in nature and often sub-conscious. Seeing and appreciating teaching as complex in this way is significant because it acknowledges the dynamic interplay of forces which ultimately shape student learning within a pedagogic environment. In doing so, recognition of

this complexity highlights the sophisticated nature of teachers' pedagogical expertise (Berliner, 1988; Loughran, 2010; Shulman, 1986).

The research reported through this study supports the view that teaching is a profession in which human elements play an essential role, yet more often than not 'the more unpredictable passionate aspects of learning, teaching and leading ... are usually left out of the change picture' (Hargreaves, 1998b, p. 558). Hence, if efforts to promote teacher learning are to be meaningful for teachers themselves, teachers' thinking, values and motivations need to be seriously taken into account. Moreover, these dimensions are inevitably influenced by the social context (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Illeris, 2007), which means attempts to positively influence teacher behaviour demands recognition that teachers function as individuals working in varying educational contexts.

The detailed analysis of three case studies offers a glimpse into the complexity of teaching and learning and emphasises the significance of prompts that can invite a level of reflection and action within a teacher's own context, as opposed to "telling" or instructing them about the "right" way to teach. Through such reflection, teachers can then be seen to be better positioned to make informed professional decisions about the most appropriate teaching procedures and strategies to use at particular times for their particular students, 'because through experience, the teacher has come to understand how teaching in that way leads to enhanced student learning' (Loughran, Berry, & Mulhall, 2012, p. 2).

The final chapter of thesis which follows next provides a conclusion to the research by revisiting the purpose of the research, the three main research questions and their findings, together with the implications of these findings for pedagogy and teacher learning.

Chapter 11

Conclusion

Introduction

This Chapter provides a conclusion to the thesis by revisiting the aim through the research questions, briefly considering the findings and implications of these for teacher professional learning, and a brief personal reflection from the researcher as a consequence of the personal learning realized through conducting the study.

The study was concerned with finding routes into the thinking and practice of teachers and how it might be built upon and shared with others. Whilst the prevailing paradigm from policy makers for improving teacher quality appears to favour quick outcomes through simple and universal solutions, the literature review outlined alternate routes into teacher learning that elicit more personally responsive approaches to teaching and learning. Within this context, the purpose of this research was to explore the impact of *narrative-based video* on teacher thinking and practice. The aim was examined through three sub-questions.

1. How did participants respond to viewing narrative-based video?
2. What features of the narrative-based video influenced how the participants responded?
3. How did the narrative features prompt changes to teacher thinking and practice?

To answer these questions, the research used the methodology of multiple analytic case studies (Merriam, 1998) in order to produce thick descriptions of the ways in which each participant responded to a specific narrative-based video. The data were analysed both within and across case studies. Three of the case studies were reported in detail in the thesis and comprised the main data chapters.

Research findings

The findings from the three teacher case studies offered insights into the impact of narrative-based video on teacher reflection and practice. The outcomes are briefly considered through reviewing each of the research sub-questions.

Sub-question 1: How did participants respond to viewing narrative-based video?

Analysis demonstrated the video prompt led to specific reflective and practical outcomes by each of the participants. These outcomes included: the development of attitudes for reflection;

autobiographical reflection; participants naming and confronting their problems; and, participants taking action in relation to addressing the perceived restraints on their thinking and practice.

Sub-question 2: What features of the narrative-based video influenced how the participants responded?

Analysis illustrated clear categories of narrative features and sub-features within Wright's Law that influenced participants' thinking and action. Data analysis showed that the narrative elements of character and plot were the prime mechanisms of influence within the story. In terms of the narrative element of plot, the features shown to be important were the strong use of visual image, cause and effect and universal themes throughout the narrative. Within these plot features, the sub-features of seeing student reactions, interactions between the student and teacher were important, together with universal themes of love and relationships and a believability of outcomes through clear causal relationships.

The key narrative element of character within Wright's Law was influential as portrayed through the use of the teacher (Mr Wright) as a main character within the narrative. The further sub-features of character shown to be influential were likeability and similarity, through the character being genuine, warm, and courageous, and displaying actions which were achievable.

Sub-question 3: How did the narrative features prompt changes to teacher thinking and practice?

Analysis demonstrated the narrative elements of character and plot impacted participants via narrative processes of identification and absorption respectively. The data further showed that an emergent and persistent theme of humanness ran through each of the features and sub-features of plot and character. This theme was significant in enabling participants to identify with character and their absorption in the plot.

The plot sub-features were shown to operate through the process of absorption which drew participants into the story world and into the humanness of the teaching and learning process. The resultant reflection was a more interpretative state of thinking which influenced the development of an openness within participants to naming the challenges in their practice, a clarification of their values through autobiographical reflection, and an openness to new possibilities within their own practice. The strong use of cause and effect interactions within the plot allowed the participants of this study to see 'with their own eyes' the impact of Mr

Wright's approach to teaching. Due to this sense of 'believability' in the outcomes, participants were prepared to try similar things within their own practice.

The character sub-features were also shown to be influential in portraying the humanness of the teacher and this contributed to the narrative process of identification with the teacher. These sub-features of character influenced participants' thinking and action via a sense of aspiration, emulation, or perceived achievability of outcomes through identification with the main character.

The findings of this research highlight how narrative-based video facilitated participants in reflecting on the challenges that limited their practice and enabled them to consider possible new responses to their students in their context. The narrative-based video's (Wright's Law) use of plot and character was shown to influence the way that participants reflected on themselves and their intentions for, and actions in, practice.

Clearly, the results of this study highlight the influence of certain narrative elements (noted above) within educational videos, particularly when these videos are constructed to purposefully support teacher reflection. By better understanding narrative elements within education video design, it is possible to utilise these elements to provoke more powerful and bespoke responses from viewers who can then be supported to frame a response or actions relevant to their contextual challenges.

Implications

The research underpinning this thesis holds significance within the field of teacher professional development and learning. The data indicate that narrative-based video may be useful in providing a different type of prompt for reflection and subsequent action in comparison with a solely technical approach to teacher development. This represents a contrast to much of the current approaches to professional development, in particular approaches which tend to favour the development of teacher competencies as the prime measure of action for change. Whilst teacher competencies are important, the detailed analysis of the three case studies showed that by capturing the human, social and technical aspects of teaching, the particular narrative-based video (Wright's Law) assisted in revealing the complex and sophisticated nature of teaching and that it moved beyond the mere "doing of teaching" into a more contextually responsive mode that facilitated meaningful teacher professional learning.

It seems reasonable to assert that recognition of the complex nature of teaching offers a valuable glimpse into the limitations of the one-size-fits-all solution to improving practice

through traditional professional development. The story of Wright's Law invited a level of reflection and action within viewers' own context. Seeing and appreciating teaching as complex is significant because it acknowledges the dynamic interplay of forces which ultimately shape student learning. This complexity subsequently highlights the sophisticated nature of the expertise teachers require to purposefully seek to enhance student learning.

The research found that when the narrative-based video captured both the human and technical aspects of teaching, it portrayed a kind of essence of teaching for participants - a codified image or set of images which represented multiple aspects of teaching expertise. In this way, the codified story provided a form of shortcut to that which teachers value as the universal elements of teaching and paved a way for detailing teachers' present and personal contexts. This supported teachers in framing a teaching response relevant to their students.

Whilst there is currently considerable interest in the idea of "high impact teaching strategies" (Hattie, 2015), the data in this research indicate that the functional strategies within the "doing of teaching" are mediated by the contextual elements (human, social and technical) of the teaching and learning environment. As a consequence, this research points towards a more sophisticated approach to understanding quality teaching, where expertise is apparent when teachers are able to demonstrate why they choose particular teaching procedures at particular times for particular reasons (their pedagogical reasoning). They do so because they have come to develop and know, through experience, what impacts student learning in productive ways in that context (Loughran, et al., 2012).

More responsive teaching

This research suggests that a more contextual, responsive approach to teaching and learning enhances teacher professional learning and ultimately enhances the quality of student learning. Such contextual pedagogical practice is important because it is a window into the thoughtful and deliberate acts of teaching that are responsive to a teacher's particular situation. This approach challenges the assumption of teaching as a generic approach to practice and highlights that a teacher's ability to adapt, modify and make appropriate professional judgments is crucial in shaping appropriate responses to their students' learning needs.

It is important for policy makers and education systems more generally to understand teaching as complex, interwoven, and problematic rather than as simplistic and technical if teacher professional development is to become more meaningful and genuinely grasp the promise of professional learning.

Personal learning

Reflecting on my own role within a system policy context, the findings have clear relevance to supporting the quality of teaching across the 18,000 teachers and ancillary staff within the system of schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Given that I have the responsibility for overseeing “Improved Learning Outcomes” for one of the biggest Catholic dioceses in the world, I am acutely aware of the external pressures associated with delivering quick and positive education outcomes for families and their students. I feel the pressures of achieving such outcomes to justify government funding and accountability. There is also the pressure of achieving outcomes in time for the annual rankings of schools and systems against each other. I am also acutely aware of the pressure from families to achieve good academic grades for their children so that they can gain access to university and/or the further courses and learning opportunities they desire.

The temptation to reach for neat and universal solutions to improve learning outcomes is therefore strong. As a consequence, I’ve invariably searched for the quick fixes that are relatively cost effective and that can be delivered across the 334 schools (in my Diocese) in order to create a spike in the learning outcomes across the system of schools.

The options for these fixes are usually in the form of pre-packaged resources and programs built around a particular pedagogical approach, curriculum planner or assessment tool. However, in my 15 years of working in teacher professional learning I have seen little sustained positive impact from these universal solutions. This has inevitably led me to question the different places teachers are situated in regard to their professional, personal and social contexts, as well as those of their students – a great diversity of educational and social development is readily apparent if only one chooses to look. Accepting that situation makes it difficult for a pre-packaged solution to be effective across different contexts, learners and situations.

My experience has also led to another issue which is difficult to address, that pre-packaged solutions can often appear to deprofessionalize teachers because such programs minimize the need for teachers to consciously think about their teaching and their students’ learning. In fact, it can appear as though many of the packaged resources require an implementation fidelity which discourages teacher thinking and modification. That situation stands in stark contrast to professional learning initiatives which aim to support teachers to actively notice and reflect on

teaching and learning, and modify their teaching according to the conceptual, social and personal needs of their students in their context.

Bushnell & Henry (2003) stated that an over-reliance on decontextualised knowledge in our professional learning had the potential to support “technically proficient but thoughtless teachers” (p. 43). When I embarked on this research project, it felt like a unique opportunity to draw together the knowledge and experience that I had gained through these attempts at supporting teacher practice through a systematic and rigorous research approach. It was an opportunity to investigate alternate ways to support teachers through capitalising on the relevance of their own contexts in order to help them focus on their teaching of their students.

As a result of undertaking this research my understanding of the nature of teacher change and how such change is impacted by the learning and teaching context has been impacted. I have gained a greater appreciation for the complexity of teaching and the sophisticated nature of supporting teachers to surface, recognise, and utilise the complex amalgam of knowledge and practice they possess. It has raised my awareness of the importance of prompts that spark teachers to question their set routines and to be more conscious of their professional knowledge and how it might be developed and utilized.

Although it is not to be expected that generalisations can be drawn from the case studies of the limited numbers of participants in this project, it is arguable nonetheless that the findings of this research illustrate a complex understanding of the potential of video narratives to meaningfully prompt, surface and utilise teachers’ personal and contextual knowledge. This understanding was made possible through the use of case studies as a research methodology, whereby the opportunity to delve deeply into the lives of individual teachers was enlightening. Case studies provided a way to describe the various factors which impact teacher change and co-produce meaning through semi-structured, purposeful conversation with teaching professionals. To make judgments about the transferability of the findings to different settings or contexts, other researchers will need to draw on the thick descriptions to compare the instances of the phenomenon described in the research with those they have seen emerging within their situations in case-based theory building. In this way, further samples across different contexts and teachers could provide additional insight into the ways teachers respond to narrative-based video and to build up from that to take the learnings to a new level to inform and influence educational policy and practice.

In addition to the theories related to educational change and those theories that informed my methodology, it was valuable to bring together literature from the field of cinema therapy with relevant literature from communication theory, film and media studies, various branches of psychology, and the sub-discipline of philosophy of film. Not only did this approach provide a valuable source of research literature, it has created an expanded space in which to consider the effectiveness of teacher professional learning initiatives over and above the usual educational instructional approaches.

As such, I am now in a more informed position to approach the development and construction of education videos as resources to support pathways into teacher change. My understanding of the key narrative features and sub features which may trigger the surfacing of important elements of practice and experience and which impact teacher thinking, will directly facilitate the construction of teacher education stories. As is now clear, the selection of the teacher as main character, the way that the humanness of the character is developed throughout the narrative, the universal themes within the plot, and the importance of using visual images of students and teachers interacting within the learning environment is significant.

The findings have also prompted new thinking for me in terms of the different ways in which video narratives could be practically utilised within teacher professional learning to open up new possibilities for practice, and professional learning. Video stories could be well utilised during school-based professional learning team meetings, as a stimulus to engage in deeper dialogue about ideas underpinning teacher practice. Within such planning meetings, the narratives could support teaching teams to develop and articulate the pedagogical reasoning that shapes their teaching within a unit of work. Alternatively, given the findings highlighted the importance of unpacking the video through a guided reflection process, the videos could be used as an artefact for coaching to support teachers to reflect and unpack problematic aspects of their past or present practice.

In light of the potential of video narratives as a practical tool within teacher professional learning, the research findings have provided me with new insights related to the targeting of system-wide funding and resources for professional learning, especially so for resources designed to support teachers to reflect and act within their own context. The research has highlighted the limitations of universal pre-package solutions and has encouraged me to see the value of teacher professional learning designed to support the careful and deliberate surfacing and sharing of teacher professional knowledge and practice. Finally, and more broadly, the study has provided me with greater clarity into my own internal decision making

in response to the external pressures of quick fixes aimed at improving learning outcomes in schools. This thinking together with a new knowledge of, and language pertaining to, teacher change will assist me better communicating and promoting the complexity of teaching, learning and the inextricable links of both to teacher professional learning.

Conclusion

In this research, three in-depth case studies of teachers were developed in order to explore the impact of narrative-based video on teacher thinking and practice. The findings from this study contributes new knowledge to how and why narrative-based education video can support the development of quality in teaching and learning. The study has helped to identify and classify specific aspects of narrative video that influence and affirm the importance of integrated approaches to the professional learning of teachers by embracing more than the technical by incorporating their personal and social and contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Semi-structured interview protocol

1st Interview

- Interview introduction
- Length: 2 hours
- Verbal Consent & Confidentiality
- Questions

Initial reactions

- What are your initial reactions to the video?
 - *How did it make you feel?*
 - *What struck you the most about the video?*
 - *What was the most powerful moment for you?*
 - *What did you find yourself taking notice of as you were watching it?*
 - *Was there anything you didn't like about the video?*

Narrative

- What did you think of the short film itself?
 - *What it moving? / Boring?*
 - *Were you engaged in the story?*
 - *Did the story ring true for you? Why?/ Why not?*
 - *What was the basic plot?*
 - *What elements of the story stood out the most to you?*
 - *Did you recognise its story form?*
 - *How was it similar / different to other videos you may have seen?*

The teacher

- What did you think of the teacher?
 - *What did you notice the teacher doing?*
 - *Did you think he was effective? Why?/ Why not?*
 - *Did you think he was believable? Why?/ Why not?*
 - *What did the teacher value most?*

- *Do you think you are similar to the teacher in any way?*
- *What was it like seeing another teacher teach in a video? Is it useful? Why?/ Why not?*
- *Have you seen another teacher teach like that? Do you get to see many other teachers teach?*

The students

- What did you think of the students in the video?
 - *What struck you the most about the students?*
 - *What did you notice them doing / saying? How does this make you feel?*
 - *What did you notice how the children responded? What did you learn from how they responded?*
 - *Did the students make you think differently about teaching and what teaching is effective for children?*
 - *What do you notice about the students, what they are saying?*

The interviewee

- Tell me about your experience of school
 - *Do you recall any positive / negative/ formative experiences?*
- What were your teaching rounds like?
 - *Do you recall any positive / negative/ formative experiences?*
- How would you define effective teaching?
 - *What is important to you about teaching?*
 - *What do you value most in your teaching? Where do you think you got these values from?*
 - *Where would we see these values in your teaching?*
 - *What do you like the most about teaching?*
 - *What frustrates you the most?*
 - *What would you like to be doing within your teaching but aren't?*
 - *What holds you back?*

Going forward

- Is there anything you might do as a result of watching the video?
 - *Has the video prompted any new thinking for you?*
 - *Is there anything you might do differently as a result of watching that video? What impact might this have?*

- *If x is limiting you, what steps could you take to overcome this?*
- *Have you thought about sharing the video with anyone?*

Semi-structured interview protocol

2nd Interview

- Interview introduction
- Length: 2 hours
- Verbal Consent & Confidentiality

Since the previous interview

- Since the last time we met, have you thought about the video at all?
 - *Which bits? How often? When would you think about it, what situations would prompt it?*
 - *What image has stayed with you the most?*
 - *What do you remember most about the video?*
 - *What remains important to you from the video?*
 - *Were there any things from the video that you consciously took with you into your teaching?*
 - *Can you think of any moments within your teaching when you thought back to the video?*

Restraints and challenges

- How are you feeling about your teaching?
 - *Last time we spoke, you were having difficulty with x, how is that going?*
 - *Have you approached these challenges any differently since watching the video? How?*
 - *Were you aware before watching the video that these were your challenges? Did the video help to surface / clarify / adjust these challenges?*
 - *Did you reflect on the conversation from the initial interview at all? Did any of your reflections impact on your teaching?*

Changes

- Did you notice yourself doing anything differently?
 - *you said that you might try these things (x)*
 - *Did you do them? Why? Why not?*

- *What led you to try doing these things?*
- *Is there anything you wanted to do but didn't? What stopped you?*
- *What are you noticing about your teaching?*
 - *Do you think the video affected any decisions you have made within your teaching?*
 - *Can you recall a time when your decision making in class was different to normal?*
 - *Were you more conscious of the things you did in class or how you treated your students?*
 - *Have you noticed any changes in the way children responded?*
 - *Has it made you more aware of your effect on students?*
- *Are you conscious of the things which are important to you in your teaching?*
 - *Did value these things before the video?*
 - *How clear were these values in your own mind before watching the video?*
 - *Did the video help you to clarify your values? / make you more aware of them; strengthen them; challenge them; crystallize, surface them?*

Going forward

- *Where would you like to go next within your teaching?*
 - *How do you feel about your teaching at the present time?*
 - *How far do you think you've come since watching the video for the first time?*
 - *What would you still like to do more of?*
 - *Do you see any other opportunities to act?*
 - *What in your context is still limiting?*

Appendix 2 – Conceptually Ordered Display (example), *initial category formation*

Participant – Asha	
Theme (a) Participants identifying positively with the teacher in the video	Notes / sub-themes
I like the way that he shook the students' hands	Liking
That's who I am trying to be, so I could relate to that	Aspiration
Because I think he believes, and I believe the same as well, that you draw them in then, once you have that relationship, and your classes are engaging and he used real life examples, and it's of interest to the students, yeah you draw them in.	Similarity
It makes me feel like I can question too, and if I knew that, it would make me feel comfortable to take risks in a classroom situation and to be myself.	Inspiration
It's reassuring. It helps me – I was thinking when I was watching that it was reassuring that this is the right job and I'm here for the right reasons and we all try to make a difference and that was good to see. .	Affirming
I'd love to shake that teacher's hand, it's the purpose of what we're here for you do want to see your students do well, you want to see them being	Liking

able to face the challenges in life. In your own way you are preparing them for life.	
I like the way he conducts his classes, and that's the way that I conduct my classes as well.	Liking, similarity
It makes me feel like I can question too, and if I knew that, it would make me feel comfortable to take risks in a classroom situation and to be myself.	Inspiration
I was thinking when I was watching that it was reassuring that this is the right job and I'm here for the right reasons and we all try to make a difference and that was good to see.	Affirming
Yeah, I wish we could chat. It's great to know that there are people who think of teaching as a vocation. And kids need that these days. They have to deal with so much more than we did growing up, their lives are so complex.	Liking
He is someone that genuinely cares, and very nurturing person - I think it is who you are and that is who he was, which is why the students could connect and relate to him, because I guess in some small way, I guess we all do I respond well to nurturing so kids do too , and he seemed this to be the same at home as well.	Similarity
You're building people, you're building their capacity and I think he was very passionate about that.	Liking

I really liked the video, it wasn't just about content, it was also about...it's that preparing students for life and building character, I think that is what is missing in the curriculum, and we need to... I guess those incidental moments in teaching help us to do that.	Liking
Schools are busy places and it's great to see something which reaffirms what you are trying to do and what you believe in, and it lifts the day a bit.	Affirming

Appendix 3 Research steps and audit trail

The physical research audit trail

-
- Identify the research problem
 - Develop the research proposal
 - Review the literature
 - Design a research framework
 - Create the interview schedule
 - Select case studies
 - Collect evidence
 - Manage and analyse the empirical evidence
 - Form categories
 - Synthesise and recommend