

# **An Examination of Philosophy with Children as a Materialdiscursive Practice in a Year 7 Classroom**

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## **Declaration**

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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### **STATEMENT 1**

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## **Abstract**

The research reported on in this thesis examines whether Philosophy with Children can support teachers and students to bring their own ways of knowing to classroom practice. It began from my concern that dominant neo-liberal educational discourses and deficit models of the child limit students' and teachers' ability to be heard as knowers in schools. The research was set within the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which affords young people the right to participate, and Wales where I work as a headteacher, and where the UNCRC is expected to underpin all work with young people.

I facilitated weekly Philosophy with Children enquiries with one Year 7 class over an academic year, examining the Community of Enquiry as both a material and a discursive space, influenced by an agential realist theoretical perspective. Observation, the Community of Enquiry, and focused enquiries were employed as methods of engaging with the participants. In my thinking about the material and the discursive, I moved from a traditional qualitative approach to a diffractive methodology. Diffraction also supported me to plug data with the key ideas I engaged with, namely: childism, epistemic injustice and neo-liberalism; and competency narratives of young people provided by the New Sociology of Childhood and the Philosophy of Childhood.

At the start of the research, epistemic relations and practices in the class seemed to limit both teacher and student in their ability to share their meaning making voices. Knowledge was presented as already decided, with the job of the teacher to transmit, and the job of the student to absorb. I argued in this space both the teacher and the students were epistemically harmed.

Through the introduction of Philosophy with Children, as a participatory practice, teacher and student experienced each other differently. The teacher learnt to hear and value the students' knowledge, and the students learnt the teacher was genuinely interested in their ideas. Teacher authority/responsibility changed to distributed/shared responsibility between teacher and students. These changes evolved as the teacher critiqued her beliefs about young people, and her understanding of how neo-liberal priorities impacted on her ability to teach and listen in ways that supported the students as epistemic agents. However, the teacher continued to feel constrained by the accountability culture she works within, and consequently suggested that the things she had learnt about her students, and about herself, were unlikely to have any lasting impact on the way she taught.

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## **Glossary of terms**

**Agency** – The ability to act. Refers to both material things and humans (Barad, 2007)

**Agential realism** – A posthumanist theoretical framework, which understands that matter is entangled with discourse in the enactment of phenomena (things) (Barad, 2007)

**Childism** – A prejudice against young people based on the assumption they are inferior to adults (Young-Bruehl, 2012)

**Diffraction** – A method of reading different texts, theories and data through one another with the aim of finding creative and ‘unexpected outcomes’ (Barad, 2007:30)

**Epistemic injustice** – Where someone is wronged in their capacity as a knower (Fricker, 2007)

**Epistemic justice** – A virtue a person can develop in order to address epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007)

**Epistemic Trust** – An epistemic virtue discussed in the context of the classroom (Murriss, 2016)

**Hermeneutical injustice** – When a significant area of a person’s social experience is not understood in society because of a structural identity prejudice against that person (Fricker, 2007)

**Intra-action** – people and things working with each other in the creation of phenomena (Barad, 2007)

**Lacuna** – A gap in society’s understanding about something that is significant to a person/s social identity (Fricker, 2007).

**Materialdiscursive** – Recognition that the material and the discursive are mutually entangled in the creation of phenomena (Murriss, 2016)

**Testimonial injustice** –When a speaker receives an unfair deficit of credibility from a hearer because the hearer holds prejudices against the speaker (Fricker, 2007)

## **Dedication**

*I dedicate this thesis to my dad, who we very nearly lost, to my husband who I love unconditionally, and to Isaac and Charlotte who are everything.*

## Acknowledgements

Completing this thesis has enabled me to grow as an educational practitioner, as a parent, and as a human being. I am therefore extremely grateful for all those who have inspired me and empowered me to complete it.

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Isaac and Charlotte your voices and our shared experiences are interwoven into this thesis. I have written it for and with you, in acknowledgement of everything that you have taught me to be, and enabled me to be since becoming a parent. Your coming into the world, and into my life has been the most humbling and joyous experience; I hope that you will grow up in a world where you are respected and treated as the beings that you are.

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# **Chapter 1 – Learning to Listen with Curiosity**

## *Introduction*

This thesis arose directly from an action research project that I undertook with my Year 6 class, as part of my master's degree work. The research suggested that Philosophy for Children (P4C) is a powerful tool to support the enactment of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989). It had sprung from my interest in human rights for young people, my commitment to democratic education, and my desire to examine how P4C may support students to exercise their right to a voice under Article 12 of the convention. However, both during and after the research, I reflected on how enquiring together did more than increase opportunities for the students to influence both what and how they learnt, it also significantly changed us: me as teacher, as adult and as researcher, and the students as knowers and as learners. I came to recognise that before undertaking this work, I had often positioned the students I taught in ways that largely undervalued their claims to know, and I had employed teaching techniques that prevented meaningful opportunities for them to express their thinking. When I enquired with my students through P4C, I learnt to listen to them with curiosity, and to be changed in my own beliefs and practices by their ideas. The students were repositioned as genuine knowers, enabling us to learn alongside each other as epistemic agents, and as fellow philosophers – teacher/adult and student/young person learning from the other.

One aspect of my master's work that particularly interested me was what happened when I responded to the students' ideas about how and where they wanted to learn. The physical space of the classroom became a real focus for the young people, and we would often find ourselves beginning an impromptu enquiry around stimuli such as the grouping of tables. Over the course of the academic year, the students' ideas resulted in dramatic changes to the material world of our classroom. Most of the tables and chairs were removed, replaced by cushions and beanbags, and our learning spilled out into the corridor, where students



would work unsupervised, independently and in groups. I got rid of my teacher table and chair, as I found myself using them less and less, and they became a waste of precious space. Resources became accessible to all, and at the students' behest, a large role-play area was constructed where the students could play, imagine, write, talk, draw, experiment and enquire. Reflecting on how our classroom evolved, I found myself intrigued by how material changes had been as significant as the dialogue we engaged in, in supporting me to critique my beliefs about the students as knowers. I became aware of how in my privileging of my adult knowledge over the young people's before undertaking this action research, I had set the classroom up and used stimuli in ways that supported transmission styles of teaching, and behaviour management techniques. In questioning the practices I had previously used, I developed a deeper awareness of how I as teacher was largely curtailed in my ability to enquire with the students in my class, because of concerns about fitting everything that I *must* do in, and worries that I would be judged to be a poor teacher if I did not.

This thesis began as a response to my many questions and increasing frustrations. I wanted to research with a class that was not my own, in order to see whether P4C (or PwC as I later came to call it) may support another teacher to learn alongside her students as epistemic agents, and as rights holders, as I found happened to me when I enquired with my Year 6 class. The aims of this research were therefore:

1. To examine student and teacher epistemic relations
2. To examine epistemic relations and practices intra-acting with student and teacher
3. To examine PwC as a materialdiscursive practice that may create new and different epistemic relations and practices

In this chapter, I introduce the key concepts: childism (Young-Bruehl, 2012), neo-liberalism (Ball, 2013), and epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007), and the theory of agential-

realism (Barad, 2007), as the ideas that came to be most significant in this thesis. I explain how the research is couched in my emerging ontological belief that young people represent a marginalised and oppressed group in society, and my concern that the participation rights for young people, accorded by the UNCRC, are unlikely to become a reality within dominant deficit understandings of young people, and the current curriculum and neo-liberal agenda. I go onto present an overview of how I introduced PwC as a materialdiscursive practice into one Year 7 classroom, in order to think about how it may create different epistemic relations, relations where teacher and students are empowered to know in the classroom.

### *Beginning from Human Rights*

In the roles that I have undertaken in education: teacher, advisory teacher, deputy headteacher, and now headteacher, I have become increasingly concerned by the way that students and teachers are largely prevented from bringing their own testimonies to learning in schools. In particular I have become dissatisfied by teaching methods and behaviour management techniques that largely assume young people are naturally unruly, are on a developmental trajectory, and that teaching performs the function of transmitting already decided knowledge. These concerns led me to think about human rights of participation, and how these may translate into rights for teachers and students to work in ways that empower them to bring their own ways of knowing to learning.

History has witnessed many groups having to fight for the same basic human rights that have been accorded to white, male and middle-class persons since modern conceptions of human rights began in the Enlightenment period (James, 2007; Wolfe, 2010; Wall, 2010). Qvortrup (2015) argues that young people continue to form a group within society that are not given the status of full human persons, and consequently the same human rights that are accorded to adults. This is because they are seen as on a path to maturity, to adulthood,

and this positions them as less than adult (as *becomings*), with adulthood being presented as the archetype that child is aspiring to (full human *beings*) (Davies, 2014). Sharp (1997) draws parallels between the experiences of women as an oppressed group, and the experiences of young people, in order to show how both have been treated in society in ways that undervalue their claims to knowledge. Similarly, Haynes and Murriss (2012) suggest that young people's "ways of expressing their thinking" are generally devalued in much of society.

The Enlightenment theorists John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant have been particularly influential in creating the foundations of today's understanding of young people as *becomings* (Wall, 2010). Locke understood children as starting life as *tabula rasa* (as blank slates or as white sheets of paper), and thereby needing understanding to be gradually written upon them (Wall, 2010). Rousseau believed that young people have innate rationality, but that they need to be protected and nurtured within the private sphere of the home until they are mature enough to use this rationality wisely in a corrupt and public adult world (Wall, 2010). Kant argued human beings are partly driven by natural desires, and partly by reason, but that young people are swayed more by nature than reason, by their immediate needs and impulses (Wall, 2010). Kant believed left to their own devices young people would quickly turn violent or savage, because they lack the self-discipline to use rights justly or responsibly (Wall, 2010). What each of these theorists have in common is an understanding of young people as deficient, as lacking attributes that fully rational adults are understood to have, and these deficit understandings remain "woven into the Western cultural fabrication of the child" (Stainton-Rogers and Stainton-Rogers, 1992:27). Consequently, when rights have been accorded to young people, they have traditionally been about protecting them or providing for them, rather than about empowering them to contribute to society as young people (Archard, 2004; Wyness, 2006; Stables, 2008; Mohr Lone and Burroughs, 2016).

The UNCRC represents a dramatic shift in thinking about human rights for young people, by also according them participation rights (Lansdown, 2001; Kellett, 2010). By including the right to participate the UNCRC represents a symbolic and moral acknowledgment of young people as full human beings, whose ways of knowing are just as valid as other members of society (Cohen and Naimark, 1991; Doek, 2008; Stables, 2008). I understand that the right to participate has real significance for the educational experiences of young people, as it requires that their voices be listened to in the classroom. Classrooms are full of student voices, but in this thesis I examine whether classroom relations and classroom practices intra-act in ways that prevent meaningful opportunities for young people to bring their own ways of knowing to their classrooms. I argue that in classrooms where young people are not seen as valid epistemic agents that they are denied their human right to participate.

Although the UNCRC has become “the benchmark and rallying call” for young people to be validated as full human persons (Wall, 2017:62), the reality is that young people continue to be understood through deficit discourses in much of society, including in many schools (Lansdown, 2001). Consequently, rather than being recognised as rights-holders with agency, as beings, young people continue to be understood as other and thereby as less than adult (Lundy, 2007; Freeman, 2012; Fitzpatrick, 2013). Young-Bruehl (2012) argues that this is because deficit understandings of young people are so deeply engrained within society, they continue to appear as natural and normal. This may explain why many have argued young people’s right to participate has largely been paid lip service to in schools, with young people being consulted on tokenistic issues such as school toilets and uniform (For example see, Whitty and Wisby, 2007; Robinson and Taylor, 2013). Consequently, rather than the UNCRC challenging the positioning of young people as knowers in schools, their ideas and experiences continue to be generally overlooked in a society that values adult over child (Murriss, 2013a).

I wanted to examine why deficit understandings of young people and childhood continue to dominate, and to examine the impact such beliefs have on the opportunities for students to exercise their right to participate as knowers in school. This led me to the idea of childism, as it is conceived by Young-Bruehl (2012).

### *Childism*

James (2007) argues that the key barrier to young people being accorded human rights of participation is adult attitudes towards them. Similarly, Pohlhaus (2012) suggests that adults are more interested in training young people to become useful future citizens, as adults, rather than being interested in who they are now. Young-Bruehl (2012) states that when adults fail to recognise the importance of young people's lived experiences, and when they privilege their own desires and needs over young peoples, they are prejudiced towards them. Young-Bruehl (2012) calls this prejudice childism, comparing it to racism, sexism and homophobia because it results in young people being treated as sub-species of humanity. However, Young-Bruehl (2012) states that although childism is widespread and deeply embedded in society, unlike other prejudices such as sexism and racism it remains largely unrecognised. Reform for young people is only likely to occur if childism is acknowledged, and if the motives and cultural forces that continue to drive it are addressed (Young-Bruehl, 2012).

Engaging with P4C/PwC helped me to critique how my views about the capabilities of my students influenced the epistemic relationships that we entered into, and the pedagogic practices that I used. As I challenged what I had thought and done before, I became increasingly aware that the way I had positioned students previously, particularly as learners who need to learn the knowledge of the curriculum, had influenced my ability to understand their efforts to make sense of their world. I was interested in how childism may influence the epistemic relations of other teachers and students, and how it may cause

schools to become structural embodiments of prejudicial stereotypes about young people. My concern that childism may negatively impact on students' ability to know in their classrooms was enriched by Fricker's (2007) concept of epistemic injustice. I read together the ideas of Fricker and Young-Bruehl (2012) in my attempt to better understand the impact that childism may have on young people in schools.

### *Epistemic Injustice*

It is widely recognised in the literature on human rights that one's ability to reason, and to give testimony is fundamental to what makes someone human (Fricker, 2007; Wall, 2010; 2017). It is in the giving of knowledge that people can negotiate meaning with others, and influence social thinking (Wyness, 2006; Freeman, 2012). Fricker (2007) argues that when someone is not heard they are discriminated against and in this discrimination harmed as a person, a specific type of epistemic harm that she calls *epistemic injustice*.

Fricker (2007) identifies two forms of epistemic injustice, testimonial and hermeneutical. She suggests that testimonial injustice occurs when a hearer discounts or affords less credibility to what a speaker is saying, on the grounds that they are prejudiced against that person (Fricker, 2007). Hermeneutical injustice occurs when an individual cannot properly articulate their experiences or interests, because the interpretive resources that exist in society are orientated towards the experiences and interests of others (Fricker, 2007). Fricker (2007) suggests when someone is a victim of testimonial injustice they are harmed in their ability to contribute to the collective production of and dissemination of knowledge, and when they are a victim of hermeneutical injustice they are harmed in their ability to understand an important part of their societal experience.

Fricker (2007) asserts that in society some groups of people are understood through deficit stereotypes, and that these stereotypes cause hearers to make unduly deflated judgments

about a member of that group's credibility. I consider how childism creates negative stereotypes about young people, and argue these stereotypes influence how adults listen to, recognise and acknowledge their ways of knowing. In addition, I argue that childism is a type of lacuna, what Fricker (2007:3) describes as "a gap in collective, interpretative resources [that] put someone at an unfair disadvantage of making sense of their social experiences". This is because, as Young-Bruehl (2012) asserts, childism remains a prejudice that is largely unrecognised within society. I suggest this lacuna makes it hard for the impact of childism to be recognised, considered and addressed.

Thinking about teachers and Fricker's (2007) theory of epistemic injustice, I also examine how epistemic relations and practices in schools intra-act in ways that largely prevent teachers from bringing their own meaning-making voices to their classrooms. In particular, I suggest that neo-liberal political priorities have made teaching about getting students to pass tests, rather than about using their own knowledge to engage them in meaningful learning experiences. I consider how this may cause teachers to also be victims of epistemic injustice.

In summary, reading together the notions of epistemic injustice and childism, I suggest that childism renders young people susceptible to deficit stereotypes, which can cause teachers to fail to recognise the validity of their students' voices. I consider childism as a form of structural hermeneutical discrimination that is deeply embedded in schools, making them places where adults control young people, both their minds (through the curriculum) and their bodies (through behaviour management techniques). I also think about how school practices intra-act in ways which create epistemic relations and practices that may make teachers victims of epistemic injustice if they are curtailed in their ability to bring their own ways of knowing to the classroom.

Fricker (2007) argues in order to address epistemic injustice people need to develop the virtue of epistemic justice. This virtue allows people to first become aware of how a stereotype may negatively impact on the credibility they afford a speaker, and then to address the impact this has on how they hear them (Fricker 2007). Although I was not aware of Fricker's (2007) notion of epistemic injustice at the time of writing my masters, in engaging with her writing for this thesis I realised that it was through enquiring with my students that I had become aware of how childism had unconsciously caused me to underestimate my students' epistemic authority. In this realisation, I believe I developed the virtue of epistemic justice. I was interested in examining whether introducing P4C/PwC into another teacher's classroom, may support her to experience her students in ways that positively challenged her understanding of their ability to know and supported her to develop epistemic justice.

Murriss (2013b) further engaged my thinking about epistemic justice in the context of the classroom. Murriss discusses teachers developing 'epistemic trust' in their students. In recognition of how my thinking about teachers developing epistemic virtues was influenced by the writing of both Fricker and Murriss, in the rest of this thesis I refer to epistemic justice/trust.

Despite P4C/PwC showing me how deficit assumptions about young people had influenced my beliefs about them, I continue to feel constrained in the ways that I am able to teach because of educational priorities that put pressure on me, like other teachers, to teach in ways that are for the purpose of imparting set knowledge to young people. Apple (2006) and Ball (2013) assert that neo-liberal political discourses have been particularly influential in creating educational priorities that focus on the importance of individual success and performance in standardised tests and examinations. I introduce neo-liberalism in the following section, as another theory that is key to my thinking in this thesis.



### *Neo-Liberalism*

Neo-liberalism is a political discourse that profoundly influences dominant educational policies and practices (Apple, 2006). Neo-liberalism encourages the belief that human beings are naturally competitive, and that competition is a good thing because it creates a successful and enterprising society (Hicks, 2012). The importance of individual success and competition can be seen in education systems that judge someone's success against how well they absorb and regurgitate information in examinations (Benjamin and Echeverria, 1992; Goodwin, 2007). Consequently, neo-liberalism has resulted in the production of successive school curriculums in Wales, and the rest of the United Kingdom, that set out the knowledge young people are expected to learn (Heilbronn, 2008; Ricci and Pritscher, 2015).

Neo-liberal educational discourses encourage mechanistic and transmission style teaching practices, and behaviourist views of learning because compliant students are understood to be easier to transfer knowledge to, rather than enquiring ones (Hicks, 2012). Ricci and Pritscher (2015) and Kizel (2016) argue that providing schools with a curriculum of already decided knowledge, and encouraging transmission models of learning, leaves little room for teachers to bring their own ideas and experiences to their practice. Similarly, Harlen (2014) suggests that neo-liberalism limits teachers' ability to use their professional judgment to influence what and how they teach.

Childism, epistemic injustice and neo-liberalism are the key concepts that I work with in this thesis. I brought these different theories together through Barad's (2007) theoretical framework of agential realism, and through the methodology of diffraction (Barad, 2007). I go on to introduce these in the following section.

### *Agential Realism*

When I first decided to undertake this PhD I began from a social cultural theoretical framework, because I thought I would be thinking about the linguistic turn (the relationship between the social sciences and language), in line with other research on P4C/PwC, where the focus has mainly been on dialogue (for example see, Gregory, 2006; Jenkins and Lyle, 2010). Similarly, I envisaged that I would be using qualitative methods because this was the methodological approach I had used in my master's work, and the paradigm that I had come to recognise as good practice when undertaking research with people. However, I documented in my master's work that it was both dialogic and material changes that had impacted on the way that our classroom developed, how relations between myself and the students became more participatory, and thereby more democratic, and how my understanding of the young people as knowers evolved. I was therefore as interested in the material as the discursive in this research.

My interest in the agency of material things was further deepened by an incident that happened when I was nursing my first baby. Walking up and down my hallway trying to sooth a baby who would not settle, and feeling quite desperate, I caught sight of the two of us in the hall mirror. Our reflection created an instant bond between us, and any feelings of inferiority at not being able to settle him instantly melted away. The mirror, as a material agent, intra-acted with my identity as parent, woman and human being, and I was changed in that moment (Barad, 2007).

In my search for a theory and methods that would help me to recognise the importance of both the material and the discursive, I came to Barad's (2007) ontoepistemological framework of agential realism. Agential realism ascribes agency not only to humans but also to matter. In doing so it recognises that the material and the discursive are mutually constitutive of one another, reconceptualising material things from passive and waiting to

be acted on, to things with agency (Barad, 2007). This thinking disrupts the privileging of the discursive over the material, as is usual in traditional interpretative research (Lenz Taguchi, 2012), and in doing so recognises that “the linguistic is necessary, but no longer sufficient” (Lyle, 2017:1). Barad (2007:112) discusses *agency* in terms of how things intra-act, rather than being “something that someone or something has”. The material and the discursive are understood to intra-act as “mutual entanglement[s]” (Barad, 2007:33). Barad (2007:33) argues that the concept of “intra-action” is different to ‘interaction’. Interaction denotes the idea that things are separate and pre-existing entities that engage in an encounter with one another, whereas intra-action focuses on the inseparability of entities, recognising that each is involved in an on-going becoming with the other (Barad, 2007). Thus the idea of intra-action recognises that reality is not composed of separate things, but rather that things exist in relation to and with each other, all things acting on each other, both material and discursive (Barad, 2007).

Agential realism also supported my thinking in this thesis in the way it encourages the disruption of binaries (Barad, 2007). It was important to the aims of this research that I work with the participants in ways that enabled me to challenge binaries that have been associated with child and adult, namely: deficit/rational, becoming/being, yet to know/knower.

Barad (2007) challenges traditional science that sees the researcher as separate from that which is being researched, encapsulated in the third person voice in scientific research. Drawing on her feminist sensibilities, and informed by the discipline of physics, Barad (2007:49) argues that data collection should be understood as an ontoepistemological space of encounter, an understanding that “knowing does not come from standing at a distance and representing but rather from a direct material engagement with the world”. This thinking presents the researcher as necessarily entangled within that which they seek to

research (Mazzei, 2013). Barad (2007) argues this means that researchers need to recognise their connected and embodied involvement in knowledge production. In consideration of this, I did not seek out pre-existing truths in this research but rather recognised that the way I intra-acted with other things in the classroom, including the participants, brought new things into existence. I recognise, therefore, that what I came to know in this research did not happen because I stood at a distance from the classroom I researched in, but because I was already entangled in its world (Barad, 2007), including through my decision to facilitate the PwC enquiries myself.

Agential realism influenced the methods that I chose in this research, and the way that I worked with the participants in ways that empowered us to think with the data that was created together. Agential realism encourages the reading across different disciplines and theories with data, as Barad (2007) asserts this creates opportunities for new ideas and ways of thinking to emerge. Barad (2007) asserts that reading data *with* theory is a different way of thinking about data. Rather than looking for how data can demonstrate the realities of what is talked about in the theory, the reading of data with theory is with the aim of highlighting what new meanings may come from the data, in order to better understand what and why things are. Building on the ideas of Haraway (1988), Barad (2007) created a new type of methodology in order to support researchers to think with theory and data, which she calls diffractive methodology.

### *Diffraction*

Diffraction as a method supports the recognition of the entangled state of matter and discourse (Barad, 2007). It does this by not privileging language as the key measure for describing and representing interactions, but by also finding ways to understand how the material world both creates and acts on what takes place (Kuntz and Presnall, 2012).

Diffraction is also about the researcher reading data and theory alongside each other with

the aim of making “visible new kinds of material-discursive realities” (Lenz Taguchi, 2012:265). Diffraction is therefore about creating new ideas across different theories, by seeing what each can tell us about the other (Barad, 2007).

From an agential realist and diffractive stance, I sought to engage with literature from different disciplines in order to illuminate my understanding of a classroom where the material and the discursive intra-act with teachers’ and students’ ability to know. In recognition of how I understood the material and the discursive as necessarily entangled, I adopt Murriss’ (2016) way of referring to the material and discursive as the ‘materialdiscursive’ in the rest of this thesis. I engaged with the philosophical notion of epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007), the psychological and social idea of childism (Young-Buehl, 2012), and the political concept of neo-liberalism (Ball, 2013) in my search to illuminate what materialdiscursive practices and relations intra-act with student and teacher as knowers, and in order to think about P4C/PwC as a materialdiscursive practice that may support both teacher and student to recognise and welcome the epistemic agency of the other.

Barad (2007) suggests that researchers should be guided in their thinking with data and theory by questions that emerge from their reading. In my engagement with the literature the following questions emerged:

1. Do childism and neo-liberal educational priorities create materialdiscursive classroom spaces and practices that make it hard for teacher and student to know in the classroom?
2. Are teacher and student victims of epistemic injustice if they cannot bring their meaning making voices to the classroom?
3. If students and teachers are victims of epistemic injustice what types of epistemic injustice are they victims of?

4. Can the materialdiscursive apparatus of PwC support a teacher to develop epistemic justice/trust in the agency of her students?
5. Do epistemic relations and epistemic practices in the classroom intra-act in ways that create difficulties for teachers to engage with the practice of PwC?

As a primary school teacher I was interested in what happens next as students move on to their secondary school education. Moving from primary teacher to advisory teacher provided me with opportunities to work in a number of secondary school settings, and here I encountered the same concerns with the way young people seemed to be understood and treated as deficit becomings, rather than as full human beings. I was particularly drawn to material differences between the majority of primary classrooms I had worked in or observed in, and secondary classrooms, including the layout of student chairs and tables (primary normally in groups and secondary normally in rows). I thought a lot about what messages these layouts conveyed to both teacher and student, and what epistemic relations and practices they encouraged. The differences in the material realities of primary and secondary classrooms influenced my desire to undertake this research in a secondary school setting. I provide an overview of how I worked with one Year 7 class over the period of an academic year below.

#### *Overview of the Research Process*

I undertook this research in a classroom setting with one Year 7 class and their teacher, in a large inner city school in Wales over the period of one academic year. I decided to work with just one class in this research because literature on P4C/PwC (for example see, Haynes, 2009), and my own experience suggest that creating a philosophical community with a class takes time.

I began the year by looking at and listening to the class teacher teaching, with the aim of bringing the materialdiscursive aspects of the classroom into my awareness. I recorded using an audio-recorder, and I made notes in a research diary (see Appendix 1 for an example of a page from my diary). This provided me with a written transcript and notes that I could keep returning to in order to think about how materialdiscursive aspects of this classroom intra-acted with who could know.

Following this, I worked with the class for two weeks, creating rules to support the building of a Community of Enquiry (the pedagogic practice of P4C/PwC), and working together to develop some of the tools and techniques of P4C/PwC. I then facilitated my first enquiry with the class. The transcript of this enquiry became the stimuli for two focused enquiries, the first being with the class teacher, and the second with a group of 6 students. In these focused enquiries we engaged in thinking about what took place in the classroom. The focused enquiries supported me to generate deeper understanding of classroom relations and processes.

After the initial PwC enquiry, I facilitated a further thirty-one enquiries with the class. The class teacher was asked to stay in the classroom during these enquiries so that she may experience them as enquirers and knowers. I recorded and transcribed the final enquiry, and again used the transcript as stimuli for one focused enquiry with the class teacher, and one with the students. My final act of data creation was in the class when the teacher was teaching.

In the following part of this chapter, I introduce PwC as the practice that I used to enquire with the students in the class, and to model ways of being to the class teacher that invited the students' ways of knowing.

*Introducing Philosophy for Children – and Shifting from P4C to PwC*

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is a practice that was created by Columbia University philosopher Matthew Lipman in 1969 when he wrote *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*, a novel which was designed to make philosophy accessible for school aged children (Golding, 2010). Lipman founded the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) in 1974, where he worked with Anne Sharp to create a series of philosophical novels and teacher materials to support teachers to implement philosophical enquiry in ordinary classrooms (Gregory, 2008). Lipman and Sharp's motivation for creating P4C came from their concern that young people's natural sense of wonder and curiosity for learning new things was quickly crushed by much practice in schools. P4C, in contrast, supports young people to be *creative* and *critical* thinkers in *collaboration* with others, thinkers who *care* about the progress of the enquiry (Wegerif, 2010). These skills are often referred to as the 4Cs of P4C (Splitter and Sharp, 1995).

P4C/PwC is now 'practiced, interpreted, debated, researched and recreated in more than 60 countries around the world' (Gregory, Haynes and Murriss, 2017:xxi). It takes place in a community of enquiry (COE) (Lipman, 2003). In the COE members are exposed to and internalise the skills and habits of enquiring together (Fisher, 2013; Lipman, 2003; Kennedy and Kennedy, 2011), and the classroom becomes a space that is founded on dialogue, trust and respect (Hannam and Echeverria, 2009; Haynes, 2009). Members of the community learn to make good judgments about the quality of their own and others' thinking (Murriss, 2000).

As will be examined in Chapter 3, the P4C/PwC movement has been a major contributor to the field of Philosophy of Childhood (for example see, Matthews, 1980; Kennedy, 2006; Kohan, 2011). This is a movement that recognises that young people have valid things to say now, as young people (Matthews, 1980).



Thinking from an ontoepistemological stance (Barad, 2007), I found myself questioning the nomenclature of P4C. This resulted in me shifting from referring to philosophical enquiry as Philosophy for Children (P4C) to Philosophy with Children (PwC). This is despite the fact that P4C remains the dominant means of referring to philosophical enquiry through the COE (as demonstrated by the recently published Routledge Handbook of Philosophy for Children, Gregory, Haynes and Murriss, 2017). However, I felt that a change in preposition from *for* to *with* symbolised how I conceived of philosophical enquiry being something that is done *with* rather than *for* young people, in recognition of young people as rights holders, and how in this research I wanted to use enquiry as a means of challenging perceptions of young people, a largely different way of using P4C than it was originally designed to do. Throughout the majority of the rest of this thesis I therefore use the abbreviation PwC rather than P4C.

Much has been written about the dialogic nature of PwC (as examined in more detail in Chapter 3), but thinking with agential realism I found that very little has been written about it as a material practice. In my consideration of PwC as a materialdiscursive practice that may intra-act identities of teacher and student as epistemic agents, I consider how the different layout of the furniture in a COE, moving from traditional rows of student tables and chairs (Zophy, 1982), to a circle of chairs (Fisher, 2013), and moving from developmentally appropriate stimuli to intriguing stimuli (Murriss, 2016), may intra-act with who can know, and how they can know in the classroom.

From an agential realist perspective I understood that as researcher I am necessarily entangled within the research (Barad, 2007). This means that my ontological beliefs and values acted on what I did, and how I understood things. I therefore felt it was important to provide a more detailed account of my beliefs about young people, and my motivations for undertaking this research, and I do this in the following section.

### *Myself in the Research*

I first began to think about young people's ability to participate as knowers in the classroom after a comment that was made by one of the students who participated in my master's research (Dolton, 2008). During a P4C enquiry at the end of the year, one of the young people said: "We will never learn like this again". He was talking about secondary school, and I realised that he was probably right, and that this would quite possibly be the last time he might play a role in his classroom in a way that respected his human right to participate as a knower, at least until he was much older. This comment had a profound impact on me and I knew that I wanted to undertake further research to understand the reasons why young people may be seen as deficit rather than agentic in many classrooms, and to challenge the way that this positions young people as less than and as other than adult. Consequently, I acknowledge and make clear to the reader that I had an emancipatory agenda in this research (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007).

I was also interested in undertaking this research because of living and teaching in Wales, a country that has adopted the UNCRC as the basis for all policy making for children and young people. The Rights of Children and Young Person's (Wales) Measure (2011), the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014), and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015), all establish duties on public authorities that contribute towards the realisation of children's rights in Wales. This means that young people's rights form an intrinsic principle of devolved governance in Wales (Fitzpatrick, 2013), and therefore schools should put the UNCRC at the heart of policies and practices that concern young people (Lyle, 2014). However, my experience of working in schools in Wales does not fit with the rhetoric of a rights-based framework. Instead I have found a disjuncture between the theory of rights and the practice of rights for young people in schools, and this has concerned me. In the role of headteacher, I have also become increasingly aware of

how the neo-liberal gaze acts on teachers' ability to bring their meaning making voices to their practice.

In the final part of this chapter I discuss how I hope that my research will contribute to knowledge.

### *My Contribution to Knowledge*

In this thesis, I add to understanding on epistemic injustice, childism and neo-liberalism in the context of schools and classrooms, by bringing to life ethical and political dimensions of the epistemic lives of teachers and students. I argue that dominant educational practices prevent students from being heard in classrooms, and lead to teachers being positioned as technicians, considering whether consequently both may be victims of Fricker's (2007) epistemic injustice. I also think about childism as a hermeneutical lacuna (Fricker, 2007), and in doing so add to consideration of this prejudice against young people in order to bring it further into the public consciousness, particularly in relation to the experiences of young people in schools. I consider PwC as a useful on-the-ground tool to create the materialdiscursive conditions to support a teacher to develop epistemic virtues that challenge the dominant positioning of young people as deficit. In this way PwC, through the COE, becomes both pedagogic practice and method. As a method, I argue that the COE is a viable approach in research, particularly when, like in this research, the focus is on beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and the values of the respondents.

This thesis also adds to educational research in the emerging field of Barad studies in the context of schools. This is because agential realism, "has yet to *bite* into current educational research and policy discussion" (Martin and Kamberelis, 2013:670); it has therefore yet to make its "presence felt in educational studies" (Snaza, Appelbaum, Bayne, Morris, Rotas, Sandlin, Wallin, Carlson and Weaver, 2014:40). I do this by introducing

focused enquiries as a diffractive methodology, by examining the classroom as a materialdiscursive space, and by diffractively thinking about data and theory together. In addition, I highlight my own ethical entanglement as researcher in enacting practices of knowledge production. I argue the findings in this research can help us to think about implications of the UNCRC for classroom practice.

### *Conclusion*

In this chapter I have introduced my aims for this research and I have set the research in the context of my master's work, where I examined P4C as a practice to support students to bring their meaning making voices to the classroom. Building on this earlier research, I explained how I think about young people's right to participate in the context of the UNCRC, with the theories of childism and epistemic injustice, and in the context of neo-liberalism, in order to consider how the materialdiscursive intra-acts with epistemic relations and practices in the classroom. I explained how I introduce PwC into one Year 7 classroom with the aim of disrupting these relations and practices, and encouraging participatory engagement of both teacher and student, and the development of virtues of epistemic justice/trust.

Agential realism was introduced as the theoretical framework that most influenced my thinking, and I explained how I aimed to diffractively engage with the ideas of the participants in this research through focused enquiries. I wrote myself into the construction of this thesis by laying bare my epistemic and ontological beliefs about young people, and I described my reasons for undertaking the research, contextualising them within my experience of working as an educationalist in Wales.

The following two chapters present my thinking with the research literature. In Chapter 2, I examine childism, neo-liberalism, epistemic injustice and agential realism in more detail.

In Chapter 3, I think further about PwC as a participatory practice, and how epistemic relations and practices may intra-act in ways that make it hard for teachers to introduce PwC into their practice. In addition, I examine competency narratives of the child, as provided by the New Sociology of Childhood, and the Philosophy of Childhood, in order to think about how these may support the disruption of deficit understandings of students. In Chapter 4, I position the research within a diffractive methodology, and explain how I used observation, focused enquiries, and the COE as a method, in order to think with the participants, and with the theories that I engaged with. Chapters 5 – 7, contain my diffractive analysis of the data, and in Chapter 8, I provide a summary of my findings and suggestions for further research, in particular in light of childism and the epistemic lives of teachers and students.

## Chapter 2 – Reading *With* Theory

### *Introduction*

When I began to read for this thesis, I engaged with many different ideas and theories, as is the usual practice when trying to find a focus for research. Following the linguistic turn, my theoretical framework began as social cultural, with an emphasis on dialogic engagement and practice between teacher and student. My focus was on the rights of the child, and the practice of Philosophy with Children (PwC), and my thinking was taken further when I engaged with Young-Bruehl's (2012) concept of childism, Fricker's (2007) theory of epistemic injustice, and Ball's (2003, 2013) writing on neo-liberalism.

In Chapter 1, I explained how agential realism supported my thinking about both the material and the discursive, what I refer to as the 'materialdiscursive' following Murriss (2016). Agential realism also calls for the disruption of binaries. In my aim to disrupt binaries of student/teacher, child/adult, becoming/being, I was drawn to literature that supported me to do this.

In Chapter 2 I examine how and why in classrooms students are often positioned as deficit. I argue this positioning is a consequence of the prejudice childism, and consider how this creates a social identity for young people that makes it hard for them to bring their own knowledge to their learning, or for teachers to recognise them as epistemic agents. Building on Chapter 1, Chapter 2 begins with a more detailed examination of how the prejudice childism acts to perpetuate dominant social, historical and cultural understandings of young people as deficit. I consider what implications deficit models of the child and childhood have on dominant educational practices, practices that I suggest serve to discriminate against young people in ways that cause them to be systematically and epistemically harmed.

The chapter continues with an examination of how neo-liberal priorities in education impact negatively on teachers' ability to bring their own knowledge to their practice. Applying Fricker's (2007) theory of discriminatory epistemic injustice, I think about how teachers and students may be victims when dominant educational practices require teachers to be technicians in the classroom, and students to be passive learners. I also consider how there is a lacuna surrounding childism, and whether this lacuna creates classroom relations that make it hard for teachers to recognise their students as other than deficit, and thereby for them to miss out on learning with their students.

The chapter begins with a consideration of how young people are generally treated as deficit to adults in much of society.

### *Young People as Other*

Wall (2017:15) argues that society understands young people through "implicit adult biases", which favour adult over child. These biases are so pervasive that people are largely unaware they exist (Fletcher, 2015). They have resulted in young people being regarded as less than adult simply because of their age – as *becoming* human rather than as *being* human (Davies, 2014). Discrimination against young people is therefore a form of paternalism whereby adults, and adult led organisations, act to control young people in the name of protecting them (Fletcher, 2015). In reality, paternalism makes adults lives easier because it allows them to control young people (Fletcher, 2015). Paternalism can be seen in dominant models of young people and childhood that have persisted in societal thinking about them since the Enlightenment period – Locke (*tabula rasa*), Rousseau (naturally innocent and needing protection), and Kant (naturally unruly) (Wall, 2010). Jenks (2004) argues that the thinking of these Enlightenment theorists has created a legacy of childhood as a period where adults either need to provide for or to protect young people. Davies (2014) suggests this legacy is largely responsible for popular perceptions of young people

as needing to be controlled and guided by adults as they move towards rational status as adults themselves.

This thinking about child as deficit to adult, and the idea that it is the job of adults to give young people what they are lacking in order that they may become rational at some point in the future, has enabled adult society to control young people (Wall, 2017). Fricker (2007) suggests that denying someone rational status creates negative identity stereotypes about such persons, and leads to these persons being discriminated against. Prejudice against young people as a group has been described in different ways. I touch on some of these below in order to provide a context for how an understanding of prejudice against young people as a group has started to evolve. I also explain that I understand the prejudice through the term ‘childism’, as it is described by Young-Bruehl (2012).

### *Childism*

Childism was first described in 1975 by Pierce and Allan as:

... the automatic presumption of superiority of any adult over any child; it results in the adult’s needs, desires, hopes and fears taking unquestioned precedence over those of the child (Pierce and Allan, 1975:15)

It is only relatively recently that further discussion of the existence of a prejudice against young people has been taken up again. Like Pierce and Allan, Young-Bruehl (2012) uses the word childism to describe how young people are seen as inferior to and naturally subordinate to adults. Treating young people in this way, creates a hierarchy in which adults’ voices, experiences and desires are seen as more important than young people’s (Young-Bruehl, 2012). Childism therefore creates necessary binaries of child/adult, childhood/adulthood, and deficit/rational, and it is these binaries that are used by adults to justify their control over young people, whilst also prioritising their own needs and desires (Young-Bruehl, 2012).



Wall (2017:17) argues that prejudice against young people has led to them facing “unique depths of structural injustice”. However, although Wall (2010; 2017) also talks about childism, he uses the term differently to Young-Bruehl (2012). He uses it in a positive sense, in analogy to feminism, as a means of describing ways that young people’s lives can be taken into fuller account (Wall, 2010, 2017). Wall (2010) argues that childism should be a movement that aims to liberate child from its subordinate status. Kennedy (2006) and Fletcher (2015) also write about prejudice against young people, but they call it adultism, rather than childism. Kennedy (2006:63) asserts that adultism describes a bias towards adults based on the idea of “empirical differences – in anatomy, neural development, ego-structure, psychoculture, size, and physical strength”. Kennedy (2006:63) states that adults use these differences as justification for regarding and treating children as a deficit “sub-species” of humanity. In a similar way, Fletcher (2015) describes adultism as a bias towards adults, whereby adults frequently dismiss young people.

In this thesis I use the term childism in line with the way that Young-Bruehl (2007) uses it, to refer to young people’s oppression. I therefore understand that childism is the systematic mistreatment and disrespect of young people, and that it occurs when the opinions, beliefs and experiences of adults are prioritised over those of young people, simply because they are not yet adult. I also understand that childism acts to continue to normalise discourses of young people as deficit, because presenting young people and childhood as deficit to adult supports adults to exert power over them in the name of providing for or protecting them (Wall, 2017). I believe that a recognition of childism does not mean that young people’s desires and interests should always prioritise over adults, but rather that young people’s ideas should always be considered, in the same way as all persons’ ideas should be considered, in a manner that is in line with democratic principles of participation, fairness and equality.

In considering the impact of childism on young people's lives, I found the following quote from Hendrick particularly helpful:

...childism is a malign force in human affairs, quietly and unobtrusively polluting our relations with those whom we have brought into the world (Hendrick, 2016:19)

Hendrick (2016) suggests that childism is a 'force' that impacts negatively on the relationships between young people and adults, with little societal understanding or acknowledgment of its existence. In addition to young people being prejudiced against because of childism, they may also find themselves victims of other prejudices including: racism, sexism, classism and homophobia (Fletcher, 2015). Consequently, young people may be discriminated against in many ways linked to their identity in addition to being discriminated against because of the fact they are young (Fletcher, 2015).

Schools prioritise raising academic standards in order that young people become fit for the labour market, and control young people's behaviour in order that they will comply with the rules of adult society (Ball, 2013). Those students that try to fight against this system are held out as deviant (Fletcher, 2015). I recognise this prioritisation of social investment in children, to ensure that they will be useful future adults, as a form of childism.

Consequently, if childism is to be addressed, schools need to become places that facilitate young people's participation as agentic actors, and where young people are able to enter into shared and meaningful dialogue with adults.

In Chapter 1, I explained that my interest in how young people are regarded and treated in society stems from my belief that young people's ways of knowing are generally not recognised in schools. I introduced the UNCRC as an important political intervention in the human rights agenda for young people, as it is the first international convention to accord young people the right to participate (Freeman, 2012). I suggested this should impact on the way that they are able to bring their own meaning-making voices to their education. However, I examined how the UNCRC has as yet largely failed to change much

for children in their educational experiences (for example see, Lansdown, 2001; Lundy, 2007; Freeman, 2012; Fitzpatrick, 2013). In the following section, I examine how this may be because the UNCRC is constructed within childist prejudices. I argue that this makes it hard for the convention to challenge dominant deficit understandings of young people, and therefore the impact of structural childism on dominant educational policies and practices.

### *Childism and the UNCRC*

Children's rights have traditionally been associated with protection and provision, rights associated with supporting their wellbeing and healthy development (Fletcher, 2015). However, Fletcher (2015) argues that the best way to ensure young people's wellbeing, is to engage them as full members of society. The UNCRC makes positive steps in supporting young people to be empowered members of society by according them participation rights (Lansdown, 2001).

Thinking about the theory of childism with the UNCRC, I was interested in how childist assumptions may be embedded within the convention. Although the UNCRC provides children with participation rights, these rights seem to exist within a number of caveats. Article 3, for example, asserts that the right to participate is reserved for those young people who are deemed to be capable of forming their own views, with due weight in accordance with age and maturity. This article gives the power to decide to adults, rather than to young people, and assumes a developmental, and thereby deficit, view of young people; a view that they are progressing towards being able to make more rational decisions as they mature. Stainton-Rogers (2015) asserts that Article 3 means that the UNCRC, although couched in terms of rights for young people, is based on a paternalistic discourse that allows adults to continue to control when and what young people can participate in. James and James (2001) argue that the UNCRC continues to promote an

idea of young people as becomings rather than as beings. Such arguments suggest that the UNCRC actually adds to the conception of the normative child with a universal end goal of, “the formation of an adult citizen competent and capable of living individually and contributing productively to a Western-style liberal democracy” (Cregan and Cuthbert, 2014:17), rather than supporting their human right to participate as knowers with much to add to society as young people. Fletcher (2015) suggests that well-meaning social reforms over the past thirty years are unlikely to have any impact when childist assumptions about young people remain so prevalent.

Even though the UNCRC is a human rights measure that is specifically for the purpose of according young people rights, I assert that it will fail to have any meaningful impact on the lives of young people until their social positioning as deficit is critiqued. This concurs with the views of Young-Bruehl (2012) who argues that the prejudice childism needs to be brought into the public consciousness, and then critiqued, in order to develop a collective understanding of how it negatively impacts on young people’s ability to be treated with equal regard to adults in society. It follows that until this happens that attempts to legislate for the rights of young people remain within the control of adults, and therefore continue to be conceived of in ways that benefit adult over child.

In this thesis I was interested in examining how prejudicial views about young people are embedded in traditional educational practices and neo-liberal priorities. More specifically, from an agential realist perspective, I wanted to examine how a classroom may be a materialdiscursive space that structurally embeds childist assumptions about young people. I consider how dominant deficit understandings of young people translate into teaching practices and teacher student relationships that enable society, through its teachers, to control what and how young people learn, and come to know. I think about how dominant

educational practices privilege adult knowledge and make little room for young people's ways of knowing (Matthews, 1992).

### *Dominant Educational Practices*

In considering what traditional classrooms are like, I found Watkins' (2005) summary of the dominant models of learning currently available to schools useful. Watkins (2005) identifies three models of learning: the transmission model – where learning equals being taught; the construction model – where learning equals individual sense-making; and the co-construction model – where learning equals creating knowledge as part of doing things with others. The first model is the one that is most frequently observed in classrooms, particularly in secondary schools (Watkins, 2005; Coben, 2007). When classrooms are places of transmission, teachers largely deliver knowledge to students, and learning tends to be an individual activity where students try to imitate the teacher. I argue that this model is the one that is most likely to create material-discursive practices that leave little room for student or teacher to be meaning makers. What knowledge is shared is largely predetermined by the content of the curriculum, and it is the job of the teacher to transmit this knowledge to the students, and for the students to absorb it so they can perform well in tests and national examinations.

When teaching is presented as transmission, a particular form of talk tends to dominate in the class. This is the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) pattern of talk (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). Under this model, the teacher initiates talk, the student responds, and the teacher provides feedback on their response (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). The IRF model allows the teacher to control classroom talk, and to communicate to the students which comments are valued (Robinson and Taylor, 2013). It is rarely used for the purpose of developing student curiosity or shared enquiry (Murriss, 2013b). Therefore this pattern of talk does not encourage or leave much room for students to contribute their own ideas;

instead students try to work out what information the teacher is expecting them to feedback (Cazden, 2001). Students quickly learn that they will be praised if they feedback the *right* information (Robinson and Taylor, 2013), a practice that Davies (2014:25) describes as teachers “listening-as-usual”; that is repetitive listening that requires little thought and serves to reiterate that which is already known. In contrast when students do give their own ideas, they may be shut down or even treated as deviant, particularly if their contributions do not specifically link to the lesson’s often predetermined learning objective, or if their ideas are perceived to challenge the teacher’s authority (Howe and Abedin, 2013). Recent research suggests that most classroom talk continues to revolve around the IRF structure (Howe and Abedin, 2013).

I suggest that the IRF structure of talk also limits teachers’ ability to bring their own knowledge to classroom practice. This is because when teachers are told what knowledge must be shared (in the curriculum), this leaves little space for them to bring their own ideas and experiences to the construction of meaning in the classroom. In addition, Mohr Lone and Burroughs (2016) argue when teachers seek what they already know from students, they miss out on potential opportunities to learn from and with their students.

Consequently, when schools focus on the importance of getting young people to acquire set knowledge, little room is left for either teachers’ or students’ individual ways of knowing. Teachers may be reluctant to move away from transmission patterns of talk because of concerns that if they deviate too far away from what they are expected to teach, as determined by the curriculum, that they will be unable to assess how well students have understood the information that they are expected to deliver.

In summary, when teaching is about transmission, the job of the teacher is to deliver and the job of the student is to memorise and reproduce facts on demand – what Freire (1998:53) describes as a banking theory of learning, with the teacher being the “depositor”

and the student being the “depositories”. When education is set up in this way, I argue there is little room for either student or teacher to be creative, or to enquire together.

In contrast to transmission models of teaching, which seem to limit young people’s and teachers’ ability to bring their own knowledge to the classroom, or for teachers to recognise the validity of their students’ own thinking, Watkins’ (2005) second and third models of learning, teaching as construction and teaching as co-construction, create more space for students and teachers to bring their own ideas and experiences to classroom practice. Teaching as co-construction, in particular, creates opportunities for teacher and student to generate knowledge together, and therefore recognises both teacher and student as learners. This model creates opportunities for class members to exercise their right to participate in the classroom.

When the UNCRC calls for participation rights for young people, I wondered why the model of teaching as transmission continues to persist as the main model of classroom learning. I suggest that the continued domination of transmission models is two-fold. First, I argue that it is a consequence of schools being underpinned by childist assumptions about the capabilities of students, and secondly because teaching as transmission suits neo-liberal priorities. I further argue that deficit models of young people as naturally unruly continue to dominate the relationships between teacher and student in many classrooms.

### *Transmission Styles of Teaching and Childism*

What knowledge should be transmitted to students in schools is contained in the curriculum, a curriculum that is heavily influenced by what is regarded as suitable for the age or stage of the students (Cregan and Cuthbert, 2014). A developmentally appropriate curriculum has been attributed to the work of Piaget (Burman, 2008). In fact, Piaget developed a constructivist theory of learning, which is a learner-centered and experiential

approach that seeks to take account of each child's individuality (Burman, 2008).

However, the main part of Piaget's theory to persist in educational thinking is an ages and stages view of child development, and it is his work in this area that has been used to justify the creation of a developmentally appropriate curriculum, and consequently the encouragement of transmission models of learning (Cregan and Cuthbert, 2014).

Piaget's developmental theory saw child development as a series of predetermined stages tied to age and maturity, leading towards the eventual achievement of logical competence, adult rationality (Oates, Sheehy and Wood, 2005; Cregan and Cuthbert, 2014). Piaget understood these stages to be linear and hierarchical, and this has created the idea that young people learn along a universal trajectory (Lyle, 2008; Cregan and Cuthbert, 2014). I argue that a developmental understanding of how people learn perpetuates childist assumptions that young people are deficit to adult, because development "as a metaphor positions adults as 'developed' and children as 'developing'" (Lyle, 2017:28), thus reinforcing the idea of adult as superior to child.

Piaget's ideas on child development have been widely critiqued for underestimating what young people are capable of (for example see, Donaldson, 1978; Burman, 2008; Gopnik, 2016). In Donaldson's research (1978), a number of Piaget's tests were repeated and researchers found that even very young children can be remarkably competent thinkers when their thinking takes place in an embedded context. Similarly, and more recently, experiments undertaken by Gopnik (2016) demonstrate that young people are capable of complex and creative thinking from a very young age. Despite such criticisms, much educational thinking continues to be based on developmental assumptions about how young people learn, and this has created an idea that it is the job of schools to guide young people from ignorance to enlightenment (Matthews, 1994; Prout, 2003; Biesta, 2010). In this rubric the ends of education is the successful adult and the means is the curriculum



(Prout, 2003). The curriculum includes the official knowledge that young people are expected to learn at different ages in order to gradually reduce the gap between what young people and adults know and understand (Biesta, 2010; Whitebread, 2012). Consequently the curriculum contains assumptions about “the range of thought children are capable of” (Gazzard, 1985:11).

Murris (2016) and Kizel (2016) suggest that developmental theories continue to prevail in much educational thinking because schools are structural embodiments of age-related prejudices. The official knowledge of schools, the curriculum, is decided by adults, based on what they think will enable young people to understand and act intelligibly within adult society (Handel, 2005; Sargeant and Gillett-Swann, 2015). Young people are therefore expected to acquire the knowledge and skills for the continuation of society as it is now (Kizel, 2016). This creates the idea that the purpose of schools is to support the transformation of children into adults (Kennedy and Kohan, 2017).

Just as Piaget’s work on stages of development has left a lasting legacy on dominant educational practices today, the work of Skinner on behaviour management continues to have a dominant influence on relationships between teachers and students. I go onto examine this in more detail in the following section, and argue that the continued dominance of behaviour management techniques is a consequence of structural childist assumptions within schools, which understand young people as naturally unruly (Wall, 2010).

### *Behaviour Management*

Whilst other models of behaviour management have been offered to teachers, this is not the place to discuss them. The dominant model still draws on behaviourism (Hendry,

2009). Developed in the early 1960s by Burrhus Frederic Skinner, behaviourism refers to how an adult responds to a child's behaviour (Black, 1995). Skinner argued that if behaviour was followed by reinforcement, either positive or negative, that this increased or decreased its chances of occurring again (Black, 1995). If a young person's behaviour was followed by something pleasurable, it was likely that they would act in that way again, or if it was followed by something unpleasant then it was unlikely that the young person would act in that way again (Black, 1995). This idea has been used to create a number of behaviour management techniques for the classroom, where students quickly work out how their teachers want them to behave, for example the use of certificates, stickers or house points, or the denial of break times or treats (Hendry, 2009). Hendry (2009) suggests that there is a lack of evidence that such techniques are successful in reinforcing behaviour, either positively or negatively, but that behaviourism remains a dominant discourse in most schools.

The continued popularity of behaviour management techniques in schools can be seen in the high regard that is afforded to the work of Bennett (2010). Bennett, a prominent voice in teacher training, an author recommended by the NUT, and a government advisor, is a firm supporter of behaviourist approaches, and actively encourages the use of punishment as a means of controlling naturally unruly students. Bennett (2010) advises teachers that they must establish their dominance over students so that they are compliant and thereby ready to learn. Bennett recommends the use of commands and threats, and in doing so seems to endorse childist prejudices, where adults can act in ways that control young people so that they are compliant to adults' wishes and expectations. This idea seems to be reflected in Bennett's (2010:19) suggestion that "children are instructed by adults, until they become adults themselves, then we will let them do what they see fit – as long as they can take the consequences. They can shut the hell up and listen to us until that point". As

Bennett is an advisor to the government in England, I argue that this quote exemplifies childism embedded in government education policy and practice.

In thinking about behaviourist theories of punishment with young people's right to a voice in the UNCRC (Article 12), it seems hard to align them. In addition, Articles 28 and 29 of the convention are concerned with the need to develop dignity and respect in schools, values that are not, I argue, encouraged by behaviour management techniques such as those recommended by Bennett. For example, I fail to recognise how the practice of moving a child up and down a peg-board, or along clouds and rainbows to inform them about how their teacher judges their behaviour, is respectful to young people, yet this is a practice of behaviour management that I have seen used regularly in primary school classrooms.

In summary, dominant educational practices seem to be based on childist assumptions that young people are developing towards being full human beings as adults (*a tabula rasa* argument), and therefore that they need to be provided with an education that is developmentally appropriate for them. Adults have decided what is appropriate for them to learn, at different ages and stages, and this is presented as the official knowledge of schools in the curriculum (Burman, 2008). It seems that transmission styles of teaching continue to dominate because they are the easiest way to disseminate a fixed body of knowledge. In addition, behaviour management techniques that are based on understandings of young people as naturally unruly, and thereby needing to be controlled, continue to dominate in schools

The continued prevalence of developmental theories of learning and behaviour management techniques to ensure student compliance, takes place within a neo-liberal political context that exerts a huge influence on how educational policy and practice is

enacted (Ball, 2013). I turn now to a consideration of how neo-liberalism has impacted on how teacher and student can know in the classroom.

### *The Neo-liberal Agenda and Education*

Neo-liberalism has been the dominant political discourse in Wales, like the rest of the United Kingdom, for over 40 years (Ball, 2013). Neo-liberalism is based on the idea that competition and individual success leads to a highly productive society (Hicks, 2012). A consensus on the impact of the neo-liberal agenda in education is emerging from educational researchers (for example see, Heilbronn, 2008; Ball, 2013; Ricci and Pritscher, 2015). It is under neo-liberalism that the first and subsequent national curriculums were created, curriculums that not only decide what young people are required to learn in schools, but also necessarily what teachers must teach (Burman, 2008; Woodhead, 2008; Sigelman and Rider, 2009). Successful students are those that absorb and regurgitate the knowledge of the curriculum in appropriate tests and examinations, and successful teachers are those whose students get the highest grades (Stronach and MacLure, 1997). This has resulted in teacher identities becoming “dominated by a race to cover the curriculum, tick the boxes and get the children through the tests” (Lyle, 2009:36). If their students do well then they have performed their identity of teacher successfully (Ball, 2003). Ball (2003), Web (2007) and Kizel (2016) argue that neo-liberal priorities in education have resulted in teachers being enacted within a culture of blame, where they are judged negatively against their peers if the students they teach do not do as well as the students in other classes, and in other schools.

Walkerdine (2004) and Mohr Lone and Burroughs (2016) argue that this culture of accountability to the curriculum has positioned teachers as technicians rather than as practitioners who are encouraged to bring their own knowledge to the classroom.

Similarly, MacNaughton (2005:26) explains that neo-liberal priorities in education require

teachers to work in “normal and desirable ways”, and this acts to silence the voices of teachers that want to think or act differently, what Jasinski and Lewis (2017:48) describe as splitting “the voice of the teacher from her word”.

Considering the impact of neo-liberalism on schools helped me to understand my own frustrations as a teacher, and as a headteacher. I have found myself becoming increasingly concerned by educational priorities that seem to dictate what and how I must teach, or require me to expect teachers to perform in certain ways, and to implement successive reforms that often seem to contradict each other. More and more seems to be added to teacher workload, and this acts to squeeze out any opportunity for creativity or deviations away from the lesson plan in order to follow ideas coming from the students or teachers (Lucas, 2001). Haynes and Murriss (2012:202) describe successive neo-liberal initiatives as creating “a kind of white noise in the world of education”, noise that hampers teachers from getting on with teaching. It seems, therefore, that neo-liberal priorities in education have created a situation where teaching has become an “inauthentic practice” (Ball, 2003:222), and where teachers are largely prevented from influencing the way that they teach (Jasinski and Lewis, 2017). Mohr Lone and Burroughs (2016) argue that this has resulted in teachers becoming de-professionalised, and in them having little power to change anything in their practice, even if they want to (Haynes and Murriss, 2009; Jasinski and Lewis, 2017).

Just as many teachers use behaviour management techniques to control the way that students behave, Urban (2008:141) suggests that knowing that they are accountable to student success in tests and examinations can become “an effective means of control and regulation of diverse individual practice” of teachers. Thinking about this, I was interested in how the classroom as a materialdiscursive space may act to normalise the teaching practices that teachers engage with. This led me to Foucault’s account of the panopticon.

### *The Neo-liberal Gaze*

Although not a Foucauldian thesis, in thinking about how a teacher may be made accountable to the curriculum within the materialdiscursive space of the classroom, I was drawn to Foucault's conception of the panopticon. Foucault describes the philosopher and social theorist Bentham's design of the Panopticon, as a design that allows a single watchman to observe inmates in a prison, as a permanent, omnipresent means of surveillance (MacNaughton, 2005). The behaviour of those that are observed is shaped by the knowledge that they are always within the gaze of the panopticon (MacNaughton, 2005). Surveillance is therefore a technique of power that works by people regulating themselves in fear that they may be being observed, and this gives those that watch the power (Schmelzer, 1993).

Leading educational theorist Stephen Ball (2003, 2013) argues that when success in education is reduced to achieving set standards, a culture of surveillance is created. Teachers watch over their students and in turn teachers are watched from outside the classroom by senior leaders, parents, other teachers, the government, and so on, and this may make them insecure in their practice, unsure of whether they are "doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as much as others, or as well as others" (Ball, 2003:220). I was interested in how teachers and students are positioned in the knowledge that they are constantly being observed and monitored, and how material things in the classroom may act as panopticons in order to observe, and thereby control how teachers teach and how students behave, and how this may create a form of self-regulation (Vinson and Ross, 2003).

Ball (2003) suggests that teachers may resist the neo-liberal discourses that they find themselves working within by performing in one way when they think they are being watched, in order to try to control how others see them, but then acting in different ways

once they think they are no longer being observed. However, Webb (2007) asserts that this resistance has limited impact when teachers are aware that they continue to be judged in ways that equate their success with how well their students perform in tests. This argument seems to suggest that teachers' awareness of neo-liberal priorities of accountability creates a panopticon that acts to control how they teach in the classroom. The prevalence of developmental models of learning, behavioural management strategies, and a neo-liberal focus on the importance of accountability, has made it hard for both students and teachers to bring their own meaning making voices to the classroom. Neo-liberal educational priorities have resulted in classrooms becoming places of pre-determined answers, which leaves little room for "problem-centered" (Holt, 1982:152), or enquiry-based (Lipman, 1998) learning. Agential realism supported my thinking about a traditional classroom as a materialdiscursive space that perpetuates childist assumptions about young people, and acts to limit students' and teachers' ability to bring their own knowledge to learning.

### *Agential Realism*

Research traditionally adopts an anthropocentric gaze, "a gaze that puts humans above other matters in reality" (Hultman and Lenz-Taguchi, 2010). Such a gaze assumes that language constructs reality and "reduces our world to a social world, consisting only of humans and neglecting all other non-human forces that are at play" (Hultman and Lenz-Taguchi, 2010:526). In contrast, Barad's (2007) theory of agential realism ascribes agency not only to humans, but also to matter. Agential realism recognises that "Matter and meaning are mutually constituted in the productions of knowledge" (Barad, 2007:152). Neither has privileged status over the other, and neither can be understood in the absence of the other (Barad, 2007; Hultman and Taguchi, 2010; Taylor and Ivinson, 2013). Therefore, Barad (2007) states that it is not enough to just focus on language when we research, we must think about how the materialdiscursive intra-act with one another; to acknowledge how the production of "knowing" is a "two way track" between matter and

discourse (Dolphijn and Van der Tuin, 2012:110). Intra-action recognises that phenomena do not precede each other but rather emerge through their entanglement with each other (Barad, 2007). Understanding that matter and meaning are both important allowed me to extend my thinking of what is found beyond the realities of what I could learn through language alone (Merrell, 2003).

The theory of agential realism helped me to think about how the classroom intra-acts with and creates identities of student and teacher, helping to determine who has epistemic authority. This is because agential realism offers a way to look at how students and teachers are constituted through “the materialities of bodies, things and spaces within education” (Taylor and Iverson, 2013). I thought about how a classroom is not just a physical space containing objects that are passive, awaiting use by human intervention, but rather things that intra-act with humans, such as the furniture and teaching materials, in order to do crucial but often unnoticed things in enacting teacher and student identities as knowers (Taylor, 2013). Consequently, materialdiscursive things and practices in a classroom offer certain possibilities for teacher and student and prevent other possibilities (Alaimo and Heckman, 2008). For example, in a traditional secondary classroom, tables and chairs are often set out in such a way that the teacher is positioned at the front of the class, facing the students. This creates a culture of knowledge transmission and reinforces the idea that the job of the teacher is to tell (Mohr Lone and Burroughs, 2016). When tables are in rows, students are discouraged from sharing their ideas with anyone other than the person next to them (Wegerif, 2010). Eye-contact with the teacher is easy, almost forced, whilst eye-contact with anyone else does not seem to be encouraged; rather the idea is reinforced that it is the student that remains attentive to the teacher who will be successful (Wegerif, 2010). Therefore, the way that furniture is set out is an example of the material culture of the classroom, a culture that is active and constitutive in creating inequalities between adult teacher and child student (Taylor, 2013). In thinking about the



material culture of a classroom, Taylor (2013) writes about gender inequalities, however I argue that her thinking is equally applicable to the experiences of student and teacher as epistemic agents. I argue, like Lenz Taguchi and Palmer (2013), that teacher and student are positioned as knowers, not just through what is said in the classroom but also through intra-actions with material things including the furniture, and the teaching materials.

Disrupting the traditional materialdiscursive classroom, with the aim of challenging childist and deficit understandings of young people as naturally unruly and as *tabula rasa*, and challenging political priorities that focus on the importance of performance in tests, can provide an opportunity to rethink the identity of teacher and student as epistemic agents. I therefore argue that if we are to attribute human rights to young people in schools, we must first critique the epistemic relationships and practices that are created through materialdiscursive practices in the classroom. In the following section, I examine Fricker's (2007) notion of epistemic injustice, suggesting both student and teacher may be victim of this injustice when classroom relationships and practices deny their human right to contribute to knowledge production.

### *Epistemic Injustice*

The ability to “give knowledge to others” is one of the capacities that is “significant in human beings” (Fricker, 2007:44). When someone offers their testimony they present themselves as possessing knowledge of the propositions that they seek to share.

Consequently, when someone fails to recognise the force of a person's testimony, they fail to recognise them as capable of both obtaining and transmitting knowledge (Fricker, 2007). As rationality is central to conceptions of human value and identity, when someone is denied as a knower, this undermines them in “their very humanity” (Fricker, 2007:44; Anderson, 2012; Dotson, 2012).

When someone is not heard, Fricker (2007) states that they may suffer from epistemic injustice. Fricker (2007) identifies two forms of epistemic injustice: distributive epistemic injustice, which occurs when there is an unfair distribution of epistemic goods such as education or information; and discriminatory epistemic injustice, which is a more specifically epistemic kind of wrong which comes in two kinds – testimonial injustice (a reduction in the credibility of a speaker due to the hearer being prejudiced against persons like her), and hermeneutical injustice (a reduction in the intelligibility of the experiences of a person who belongs to a marginalised group, due to a lack of hermeneutical resources). I go onto explain how I understand childism to be a form of discriminatory epistemic injustice, and think about the impact of this in the classroom. Before doing this, I aim to explain in more detail how epistemic injustice is both an ethical and political harm that is done to people.

Fricker (2007) asserts that two things must follow in order for an injustice to be epistemic. The first is that a hearer must make an unduly deflated judgment of a speaker's credibility, because the hearer is prejudiced against people like them; and secondly the speaker must suffer as a result of being prevented from using their own experiences to add anything new to knowledge. Fricker (2007) therefore asserts that epistemic harms are both ethical and political because they impact on a person's human rights as a rational being, and consequently their political rights to participate within society. Applying Fricker's (2007) conditions for a harm to be epistemic to my thinking about childism, I argue that if a young person is not heard because childism causes a hearer to regard young people's ways of knowing to be deficit to adults, that they suffer from epistemic injustice, and thereby are harmed in their ability to bring anything new to knowledge. When teachers, as adults, do not hear young people's meaning making voices in the classroom, because of childist assumptions about them, then this prevents young people from being able to participate in

knowledge production. I therefore recognise that childism causes students to suffer from Fricker's (2007) testimonial injustice.

My thinking about childism as a form of epistemic injustice was supported by Fricker's (2007) assertion that the way a person is positioned within society, their social identity, leads to someone either possessing or lacking epistemic credibility. Some people have social identities that give them social power, what Fricker (2007:4) refers to as "a socially situated capacity to control others' actions". Those with social power, "identity power", have the power to exert identity prejudice against those that do not have identity power (Fricker, 2007:4). They have the power to withhold credibility when someone from a group that has low identity power, such as young people, try to offer their testimony, resulting in testimonial injustice (Fricker, 2007). Fricker (2007) provides a useful example to describe how someone with high identity power may withhold credibility from someone with low identity power. She discusses the novel 'The Talented Mr Ripley', where the testimony of a female character, Marge, receives low credibility because the hearer, Herbert Greenleaf, is prejudiced against women. Rather than seeing her as a credible informant, he assumes that the evidence that she gives is down to female intuition rather than based on facts. Due to the time the novel is set, a time when women were historically marginalised as a group, Marge is not believed by Greenleaf, a person with high identity power as a man, whilst Marge, as a woman, has low identity power.

In thinking about social identity and testimonial injustice, Fricker (2007) discusses the experiences of women, people of colour and different classes. She does not apply her thinking to the experiences of young people, but I argue that they also form a social group that has little identity power, and consequently that they are also vulnerable to testimonial injustice. I argue that childism is a form of identity prejudice and that it is this prejudice

that causes young people to have a social identity where they are understood in much of society as deficit to adult.

Considering childism as a form of identity prejudice in the context of schools, the teacher seems to be the one who has identity power in the classroom, whilst the student has very little identity power. This is because prejudicial stereotypes about young people are based on “collective naturalized conceptions” of young people as “unknowing, irrational and immature” and these conceptions influence teachers’ perceptions of students as lacking epistemic credibility and agency (Murriss, 2013b:249). Murriss (2013b:248) argues that identity prejudice against young people can be seen when, “Teachers do not believe a child, because it is a child who is speaking”. When a young person tries to bring their own knowledge to the classroom, it may be met with responses such as “s/he is not telling the truth, or is immature” or “endearment: smiling, laughing, or expressions such as ‘oh, how sweet’” (Murriss, 2013b:248). Similarly, Murriss agrees with Haynes, that when students do try to share their knowledge they are often ignored by their teachers, because teachers do not expect them to be able to add anything new or novel to knowledge (Haynes and Murriss, 2012). Murriss (2016) states that when adults do not hear young people simply because they are young, this is a form of epistemic injustice. Consequently, I argue childism leads to young people being epistemically harmed and acts against the realisation of their right to participate under the UNCRC.

Fricker (2007) states that when someone is not acknowledged as a knower that this can negatively impact on that person’s self-identity. For example, a form of self-fulfilling prophecy may occur in that a person comes to believe that their ideas will not be heard and therefore they stop trying to give their testimony, or even stop trusting in the validity of their own ideas; “so the subject of the injustice is socially constituted just as the stereotype depicts her” (Fricker, 2007:55). In the context of schools, I consider how students may stop

offering their ideas, or lose confidence in the validity of their ideas, in classrooms where the teacher does not seem to hear them (Murriss, 2013b; Mohr Lone and Burroughs, 2016).

In wondering about who may be a victim of epistemic injustice in the context of a classroom, I was also interested in how neo-liberal political priorities, which dictate what and how teachers must teach, may cause teachers to also suffer from epistemic injustice. In addition, I think about childism as a lacuna that could cause teachers to suffer when they are not aware of how it acts to prevent them from learning from and with their students.

### *Teachers and Epistemic Injustice*

When teaching is about transmission, it seems that teachers have high identity power, whilst students have low identity power. It is the teacher that transmits the knowledge to the students, accepts or rejects student feedback, largely controls who can and who cannot talk, and when. All the power seems to lie with the teacher. However, I question whether this seeming position of teacher is actually a mirage. Neo-liberal priorities in education mean that teachers appear to be in charge when actually they have little power over knowledge in the classroom, because the curriculum tells them what to teach. In addition, political pressures to deliver content as efficiently as possible largely dictate how they teach. If teachers are told what to teach and how, this makes it very hard for them to bring their own testimonies to their practice, and therefore I think about whether teachers may also be victims of epistemic injustice.

In consideration of teachers as potential victims of epistemic injustice, I think about both of Fricker's (2007) forms of discriminatory epistemic injustice – testimonial and hermeneutical. I turn to Fricker's (2007) criteria for a harm to be testimonial first. Fricker (2007) states that when a person is not heard they may be a victim of testimonial injustice. However, in order for the harm to be epistemic, Fricker (2007) provides the condition that someone must not be heard because of a prejudice against that person. Applying this to the

experience of teachers in the classroom, I argue that any potential argument that they are testimonially harmed falls down. This is because people in society are not generally prejudiced against teachers as a group of people. Consequently, I argue that teachers may be harmed by neo-liberalism by being de-professionalised, but that this is probably not a case of testimonial injustice.

I do not leave my argument that teachers may be victims of epistemic harm in the classroom here. I turn now to think about Fricker's (2007) hermeneutical injustice. In considering whether teachers may be hermeneutically harmed, I think that there may be a stronger case. I turn to my reasons for thinking about how childism may cause both student and teacher to be victims of hermeneutical injustice next.

#### *Childism and Hermeneutical Injustice*

Fricker (2007) argues that hermeneutical injustice occurs when an individual cannot properly articulate their experiences or interests because the interpretive resources that are available in society are orientated towards the experiences and interests of other social groups. Fricker (2007) gives the example of sexual harassment in the 1950s to help explain hermeneutical injustice. She describes the experiences of a woman who left her job because her boss was sexually harassing her. After leaving, the woman found she was unable to claim unemployment benefit because she was deemed to have left her job voluntarily. At the time there was no societal understanding of sexual harassment, there was a lacuna, so there was no way for her to argue that she has been treated unfairly.

I apply Fricker's (2007) concept of hermeneutical injustice to the idea of childism. Unlike prejudices such as sexism and racism, which are widely accepted realities, and where there exists a large body of research documenting the effects of oppression on affected persons, and societal movements devoted to illuminating and eliminating oppressive practices, the

existence of a prejudice against young people remains largely unrecognised in society (Young-Bruehl, 2012; Hendrick, 2016). I therefore argue that it remains a lacuna in society. The existence of this lacuna may be because young people occupy a unique position in comparison to other marginalised groups in that as young people they are accorded subordinate status, but as they become adults they become a part of the mainstream culture, and so lose this subordinate status (Young-Bruehl, 2012). They are not understood to be discriminated against, but rather the way that they are regarded and treated by adults is considered to be simply part of growing up – something that is done to all of us as we all started as children (Hendrick, 2016). It seems clear how this lacuna may cause young people to fail to recognise that the way they are treated in society, including the way they are treated as knowers in schools, is a consequence of prejudice against them as a group. However, if childism causes teachers to understand their students as unknowing, irrational and immature, and to behave towards them accordingly, the students are likely to be epistemically harmed (Murrin, 2013b).

Moving to the case of teachers, Fricker (2007) states that when there is a lacuna in society, that this impacts on everyone because it stops people from understanding the experiences of another person or persons. Returning to the example of sexual harassment, the lack of understanding of sexual harassment impacted on both the harasser and the harassed because neither was able to fully comprehend the consequences of what took place. However, Fricker (2007) is clear that she thinks that this lacuna does not epistemically harm everyone; she states that only those that suffer as a consequence of the lacuna may be victims of hermeneutical injustice. In the case of the sexual harassment, Fricker asserts that only the woman was a victim of hermeneutical injustice, because only she suffered as a consequence of her harasser's actions. In contrast, although the harasser was also impacted by the lacuna, in that he did not recognise that what he was doing was sexual harassment, he did not suffer as a consequence. In fact his ignorance can be seen to have worked in his

favour, as it allowed him to behave towards his female colleague in a way that gratified him. Applying Fricker's (2007) argument that it is only people that suffer as a consequence of a lacuna that are victims, it would seem that teachers are not victims of hermeneutical injustice. However, I wonder what Fricker (2007) means by harm. In her example of sexual harassment it seems clear that the woman was harmed both physically and emotionally when she was sexually harassed by her colleague, and I agree with Fricker that it is hard to argue that the person who harmed her was also a victim, as he acted towards her in a way that benefitted him, and he received no negative consequences as a result. In the case of childism, I think that teachers may be victims of hermeneutical injustice because I recognise that they are harmed by the prejudice of childism because it may prevent them from learning from the experiences of their students (Mason, 2011). Beeby (2011) suggests that when there is a gap in communal resources, that everyone is vulnerable to failures of understanding about those persons to whom the lacuna applies. I consider how I believe that I was hermeneutically harmed when I did not understand how childism impacted on my ability to learn with my students. When I came to recognise them as having valid things to say when we learnt to enquire together, my own thinking was enriched by their ideas. I therefore believe that I was cognitively handicapped by childism. Engaging with Young-Bruehl's (2007) theory of childism, gave me a name to help me to better understand how I had previously allowed deficit stereotypes of young people to influence my thinking about them, and thereby the educational practices that I engaged with, practice I had deemed appropriate for the age of the students that I was teaching.

Fricker (2007) argues that we need to change our gaze in order to fully understand the injustice done to other human beings in everyday epistemic practices, particularly as these prejudices are often structurally embedded.



### *Structural Epistemic Injustice*

McCollum (2012) develops Fricker's idea of the structural element of epistemic injustice.

McCollum (2012) focuses on how organisational structures influence the decisions that are made by agencies, and the way that they deal with individuals and groups of people.

McCollum (2012) also argues that the interests of those who are dependent upon the operations of these large bodies are often subordinated, because there is no easy way in which the views of these groups or individuals can be taken into account. This raises the question of how the organisation of schools can change so as to minimise the possibility of injustice, and how the voices of students can become audible in order for them to influence the way that schools develop. Fricker (2007) suggests that in order to challenge how a stereotype may impact on the way we understand someone as a knower we need to develop virtues of epistemic justice. This allows a person to become sensitive to clues relating to the sincerity and competency of a speaker. I wonder about how teachers, as classroom practitioners, and schools, as institutions of education, may be supported to develop virtues of epistemic justice/trust, in order that young people's ways of knowing can be recognised as valid in schools. I go on to consider this in more detail in the following section.

### *Epistemic Justice*

Fricker (2007) argues that in order for someone to address how negative identity stereotypes may impact on their ability to recognise others as epistemic agents, that they need to develop the virtue of epistemic justice. She suggests that this allows hearers to think about how negative stereotypes may impact on their ability to recognise the validity of others' voices. In order to develop this virtue, a hearer would need to assume that the person that is talking has valid things to say, until some other information suggests otherwise. Applying this thinking to the experiences of adults listening to children, Murriss (2013b) calls for adults to develop epistemic trust in the voices of young people, stating

that when a teacher opens themselves up to young people they can learn to trust them as knowers.

Fricker (2007) acknowledges that it is not easy for people to develop epistemic virtues. She suggests it is particularly difficult because many of the stereotypes that we hold are not easily recognisable to us as prejudices. Stereotypes “can operate beneath the radar of our ordinary doxastic self-scrutiny, sometimes even despite beliefs to the contrary” (Fricker, 2007:40). Biesta (2013) argues that we develop the ability to make wise decisions only by doing and experiencing new things that challenge our current views and beliefs. This suggests that just asking teachers, senior leaders in schools, and educational policy makers, to reflect on “entrenched patterns of classroom discussion is obviously insufficient to change those patterns” (Alvermann and Hayes, 1989:333). Following this, I was interested in seeing whether experiencing students differently in a COE may support a teacher to bring to her awareness how childism may negatively impact on her ability to recognise her students as epistemic agents, and whether reflecting on this experience would support her to develop the virtue of epistemic justice/trust. I also thought about what may happen if a teacher does develop epistemic justice/trust in a school that remains structurally childist. Fricker (2007:8) seems to recognise this problem when she argues that in order to contest injustices there needs to be “collective social political change”. It was not the purpose of this thesis to think wider than the classroom, on both a whole school and a policy level, but I suggest here, and later again in Chapter 8, that the structural impact of childism on schools, and educational policy makers, is an area of work that needs to be undertaken.

### *Conclusion*

In this chapter I thought with the ideas of childism, epistemic injustice, neo-liberalism, deficit models of the child, and dominant educational practices, and behaviour management techniques with the aim of developing my understanding of how classroom

relationships and practices intra-act with who can know in the classroom. Wondering about why certain educational practices and ideas continue to prevail, I surmised that they seem to be underpinned by childist assumptions that young people are deficit in comparison to their superior other – the adult.

In thinking about childism with Fricker's (2007) notion of epistemic injustice, I considered how both teacher and student might be a victim of epistemic injustice, presenting my argument that students may be victim of both testimonial and hermeneutical injustice, but that teachers may only be victims of hermeneutical injustice.

In Chapter 3, the second literature review chapter, I think with the theories of the New Sociology of Childhood, and the Philosophy of Childhood, considering how they supported me to think about what a materialdiscursive classroom might be like that supports students and teachers as epistemic agents. The chapter continues with an examination of PwC as a practice that can help create such a classroom, and my thinking about what materialdiscursive relationships and practices may act against the introduction of PwC.



## Chapter 3 – Philosophy with Children

### *Introduction*

In Chapter 2, I examined how childism intra-acts negatively with societies' understanding of young people as agentic, despite the rhetoric of the UNCRC, which requires that their voices be listened to. I argued that childist assumptions are embedded in schools, and that this can be seen in the continued prevalence of theories of learning, and behaviour management strategies, which understand and treat young people as deficit – as *tabula rasa*, or as naturally unruly. Applying the ideas of Fricker (2007), the chapter continued with a consideration of whether students and teachers are victims of epistemic injustice when they are not heard as knowers in the context of the classroom.

It is the aim of this second literature review chapter to examine competency narratives of young people, to consider how PwC may support teachers to recognise their students as epistemic agents, and to think about how experiencing students in this way may help teachers to develop virtues of epistemic justice/trust. The chapter also presents my thinking about how childism and neo-liberalism may create materialdiscursive practices that intra-act with a teacher's decision or ability to bring PwC to their practice in the classroom.

The chapter begins with an examination of competency models of the child from the New Sociology of Childhood and the Philosophy of Childhood, and goes onto examine the historical roots of Philosophy for Children (P4C), in order to establish its epistemic context and ontological foundations.

### *The New Sociology of Childhood*

Emerging in the 1980s and 1990s as a reaction against prevailing views of the child in developmental psychology and traditional socialisation theory, Allison James and Alan Prout (1997) set out a new paradigm for the study of childhood. Often referred to as The New Sociology of Childhood, this field of study drew parallels with feminist studies to

assert that, just like women, young people are regarded as a minority group, and thereby subject to marginalisation and exclusion from being full participants in society (Mayall, 2002; Shanahan, 2007). Advocates (for example see, Mayall, 2002; Alanen, 2004; James and Prout, 2015; Qvortrup, 2015) call for deficit understandings of children and young people to be critiqued and replaced with competency models.

Rather than treating deficit models of young people as a matter of fact, advocates of the New Sociology of Childhood argue that they are a product of history, society and culture, and thereby they can be changed (Qvortrup, 2015). In thinking about the UNCRC, I was drawn to Smith's (2014) model of the Athenian child. Smith (2014) describes the Athenian child as active in the construction and determination of its own life, and the lives of others. Such a model of child is supported by cognitive science, whereby Gopnik (2016) and her team have found that even very young babies actively construct their worlds. The Athenian child presents a narrative of young people and childhood which is inconsistent with deficit models; the Athenian child is not *tabula rasa* or naturally unruly, but rather has ways of knowing that are valid and relevant to society now. I argue that the UNCRC calls for society to rethink how it sees young people and childhood, and that it calls for new models to support this re-thinking, such as the Athenian child model.

In addition to questioning dominant models of young people and childhood, James and Prout (2015) suggest that the New Sociology of Childhood can help us to problematise the traditional binary of adult being and child becoming. Rather than adult being regarded as the archetype that young people are developing towards, if all persons are constructed as both being and becoming, this acknowledges the fact that everyone has much to learn from the other, regardless of age. Disrupting the binary being/becoming calls into question the traditional position of teacher as holder of knowledge, and student as *tabula rasa*, a model encapsulated in Friere's (1998) banking analogy (see Chapter 2). I was interested in how

PwC may support this disruption, because in PwC knowledge is provisional and there are no final answers (Mohr Lone and Burroughs, 2016). Instead people come together as becomings, searching for truth together, and as beings with valid things to share (Kennedy, 2008). Therefore, in PwC students and teachers can learn to listen *with* each other rather than teachers listening for what they are already expecting to hear (Haynes, 2002; Haynes and Murriss, 2012; Ndofirepi and Cross, 2015).

The Philosophy of Childhood has also emerged as a discipline that questions dominant deficit constructs of young people and childhood that are held in society. This relatively new field considers changing conceptions over time about childhood and attitudes toward young people (Matthews, 1980). Of particular interest to this thesis are questions of children's rights, the moral status of children, the place of children in society, and children's agency and autonomy. In the following section, I explore how the Philosophy of Childhood helped me to think about these things because it recognises that childhood has integrity in its own right (Matthews, 1980).

### *The Philosophy of Childhood*

As early as 1980, Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan (1980) argued that we need to rethink the models through which we understand young people, so that we can recognise them as rational agents who already have the capacity to reason philosophically. This thinking opened up a space for the field of what is now referred to as the Philosophy of Childhood (Kennedy, 1992). The Philosophy of Childhood aims to problematise and to challenge the idea that childhood is simply a prelude to adulthood (Kennedy, 2006, 2008; Vansielegem and Kennedy, 2011).

Matthews (1994), a pioneer of the philosophy of childhood, argued that in the process of problematising who the child is, we must also critique the idea that education is for the

purpose of transferring knowledge from an adult to a child. This thinking challenges deficit understandings of the child as *tabula rasa* (Mohr Lone and Burroughs, 2016). Matthews (1994) critiques stage theories of learning derived from Piaget, arguing that they create a perception that young people's cognitive abilities are more primitive than adults, with little value in themselves except as a stage on the way to reaching adulthood. Matthews (1994:12-13) states that developmental theories create a sort of adult blindness to the actual cognitive abilities of young people, a blindness that "encourages undeserved condescension toward them". More recently, Kohan (2011), another leading writer in the field, critiqued the idea that education is an instrument for forming young people into what adults think they should become. The Philosophy of Childhood calls for schools to become places where the contributions that young people make are recognised as equally valuable to those which adults might offer (Kennedy, 2006; Kennedy and Kohan, 2017). Matthews (1994) suggests that schools should aim to create spaces in which young people can articulate and explore their own interpretations of the world, and bring these ideas to dialogue with others, including with teachers. Young people can then become "fellow traveller[s]" in meaning making (Kennedy, 2006:11), in spaces that recognise that society has much to learn from young people, just as young people have much to learn from adults (Matthews, 1994).

The Philosophy of Childhood does not state that young people's thinking is the same as adults, rather it recognises it as different but as of equal value (Matthews, 1980; Kennedy, 2006). Kennedy (2006) asserts that conceptualising child and adult thinking as the same is the fundamental mistake that developmental theorists make, because they compare in philosophical enquiry young people's ways of knowing to that of adults, and judge it as deficit rather than as different. Murriss (2000) gives a useful metaphor to explain the difference between adult and child thinking; the metaphor argues that we would not



compare apples and pears, but rather apples with other apples. Therefore, we should not compare young people's thinking with adults' thinking, because they are different.

Rather than adult knowledge being presumed superior (a childist assumption), Matthews (1992) and Haynes and Murriss (2012) argue that young people's ways of knowing may actually be better than adults, because their thinking is less stale. Similarly, Kennedy (1992) argues that adults may be limited in their thinking by being specialists in the epistemologies of their culture. In extensive research, Gopnik (2016:104) has shown that adult brains tend to default to "exploit" learning, where they try to quickly find the solution that is most likely to work right now, whilst young people are more likely to "explore" lots of possibilities, including unlikely ones, even if they may not have an immediate pay-off; adults tend to stick to the tried and tested, whilst young people "have the luxury of looking for the weird and wonderful". Such research suggests that young people may have a chronological advantage, because of the fact that they are new to the world. In my consideration of teachers being victims of hermeneutical injustice if childism causes them to miss out on the potential to learn from their students' ideas, the thinking here that children's ways of knowing may be superior to adults' ways of knowing is relevant to my argument. This is because if young people think differently to adults, adults may miss out on valuable knowledge if they do not recognise that they can learn both from and with young people.

The New Sociology of Childhood and the Philosophy of Childhood provide theoretical support for the recognition of young people as competent, however Qvortrup (2015) suggests that women's experience of oppression can help us to understand how challenging deficit models of young people and childhood, and replacing them with competency models, will not be easy. Qvortrup (2015:76) suggests that this is because thinking of child in anyway other than deficit "cuts across prefigured conceptions of

children as subordinates”, much in the same way as historically women have been perceived as subordinate to men. Thinking with Qvortrup’s (2015) idea that it will be hard to challenge deficit models of young people, I argue that before teachers may come to understand young people as competent, they will need opportunities that support them to critique any deficit epistemic and ontological beliefs they hold about young people. Rinaldi (2006) and Lyle (2014) suggest that one way that teachers can learn to question their beliefs is by experiencing pedagogic practices that actively encourage young people’s ways of knowing, and thereby model different ways of listening to and working with them. Michaud and Valitalo (2017) argue that PwC can act as such a pedagogic tool because as students and teachers come together through enquiry, teachers experience young people’s ideas and ability to philosophise in ways that may challenge their understanding of the capacity of young people to know.

This chapter continues with an examination of how PwC may act as a pedagogic practice that can create a space where teachers can experience their students’ ways of knowing, and in doing so open themselves up to developing the virtues of epistemic justice/trust. I begin this part of the chapter by giving a brief history of the roots of P4C/PwC in order to contextualise it.

### *The Beginnings of Philosophy for Children*

Lipman and his colleagues, in particular Margaret Sharp, first developed the idea of P4C in the late 1960s and in the 1970s, largely in response to their concern about the apparent lack of reasoning and dialogic skills amongst undergraduate students (Lipman, 2003; Gregory, 2008). They recognised that education in America at this time was mainly about transferring knowledge, so that “an educated mind” was understood as “a well-stocked mind” (Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan, 1980:14). Lipman wanted to design a programme that could support students to develop the skills of self-criticism, deliberation and judgement in order that they could learn how to become more reasonable, and become

more competent in forming better judgments (Kohan, 2002). Lipman and Sharp therefore created P4C as a means of introducing philosophical enquiry into schools, and as a tool to support students to become better thinkers (Lipman, 1998).

P4C is largely based on the Socratic tradition of dialogue and the educational ideas of philosopher John Dewey (Haynes and Murriss, 2012). Teachers use a Socratic style of questioning to encourage students to, amongst other things, test out their ideas, seek clarification, and explore other people's views (Fisher, 2013). The influence of Dewey in P4C can be seen in the way that the practice is not about delivering knowledge, but rather is about young people coming to ideas themselves. This reflects Dewey's (2012) argument that knowledge needs to be arrived at rather than being something that can be received. Dewey (2012) argued that when we try to abstract knowledge from enquiry, it results in a readymade version of knowledge that students are expected to attain, rather than to create. P4C therefore shifts the focus from classrooms that are full of answers to questions that are already worked out (as is common practice in many classroom), to classrooms where the content of what is learnt is constructed within enquiry (Mohr Long and Burroughs, 2016).

Lipman recognised that most teachers do not have a philosophical background and therefore he created a series of purpose-written philosophical narratives and accompanying instruction manuals, to support teachers to enquire with their students (Lipman, 2003).

Lipman (1998) argued that without a specifically designed curriculum that the chances of young people being able to learn how to philosophise were greatly reduced. The manuals contain discussion plans and exercises that aim to support teachers to develop philosophical themes around the young people that feature in the texts (Gregory, 2008). In addition, the novels model to young people how to behave and think as if they were philosophers (Lipman, 2003).

When enquiring with young people before this research, I had always called it P4C.

Therefore, in the next section of this chapter I aim to articulate my reasons for moving from P4C to PwC in this thesis.

### *From Philosophy for Children to Philosophy with Children*

As described earlier in this chapter, the practice of P4C was developed by Lipman and colleagues with the aim of supporting students to develop their thinking skills using specially developed philosophical novels and teaching materials (Lipman, 2003).

However, the practice has diversified in many directions, and different practitioners have used a variety of different approaches and materials in order to engage people in philosophical enquiry (Vansieleghem and Kennedy, 2011). Vansieleghem and Kennedy (2011) refer to these different approaches as a second generation of P4C. They describe this second generation as a movement rather than a method of teaching, and rename it PwC to represent this change. Therefore, PwC refers to a range of philosophical approaches, each with its own methods, techniques and strategies (Vansieleghem and Kennedy, 2011). In PwC, the focus is not only on developing students' enquiry skills, it also supports students to ask questions that are relevant to their own experiences (Vansieleghem and Kennedy, 2011). Kennedy (2013) argues that PwC is not an attack on what came before, but rather that it builds on the original practice of P4C in a way that is in keeping with the changing circumstances of the global and educational environment, where deficit models of young people are starting to be examined.

Vansieleghem and Kennedy (2011) list academics that they argue have been particularly influential in this new movement: Ann Margaret Sharp, David Kennedy, Karin Murriss, Walter Kohan, Michel Sasseville, Joanna Haynes, Jen Glaser, Oscar Brenifier, Michel Tozzi, Marina Santi, Barbara Weber and Philip Cam, consequently I was drawn to the work of a number of these theorists and practitioners when thinking about how

philosophical enquiry may support a teacher to rethink the relationship between philosophy and who the child is. I recognise that a shift from *for* to *with* supports my thinking about classroom practice being done with students rather than to them.

In this thesis I engaged with the practice of PwC as both a pedagogic practice and as a method. As a pedagogic practice, I was interested in how PwC might support students to develop their ability to exercise their right to know in the classroom, by supporting them to develop enquiry skills so they were better equipped to bring their own ideas to classroom thinking. As a method I was interested in how PwC, through its pedagogic practice of the Community of Enquiry (COE), may support a teacher to develop the virtue of epistemic justice/trust in the ability of her students to know. In my aim to develop a COE as a research method, as well as a pedagogic tool, a largely new way of thinking about the COE, I planned to use PwC in different ways. Therefore a shift from P4C to PwC seemed to be the right approach in this thesis.

Following theorists such as Lyle (2008) and Haynes and Murriss (2011), in the following part of this chapter I discuss how it is not enough to introduce PwC as another tool in a teacher's repertoire of teaching techniques in order for it to support young people to participate as meaning makers in the classroom. I consider how the values and practices of PwC, through the COE, must become a part of the classroom culture before the practice will impact on teacher/student relations, where each might come to recognise the agency of the other.

### *Community of Enquiry as Classroom Culture*

Haynes (2009) suggests that when she began to practice P4C/PwC she realised that it was more than just a method of teaching she could just apply, and instead was a way of working that she internalised. PwC is therefore much more than just introducing a once a

week lesson, it is a practice that requires teachers to question power relations between themselves and their students, question who is allowed to know in the classroom, and question developmental theories of when young people are able to engage in abstract thinking (Haynes and Murriss, 2011). This resonated with me as I felt that this is what happened when I engaged with P4C with my Year 6 students (Dolton, 2008). When the research began, we found ourselves enquiring together and developing the dispositions of a community on a weekly basis. However, we soon found that as a class we began to internalise the values and methods of the community in much of our practice, and enquiring together, respecting each other's voices and building on each other's ideas became the way that we approached all aspects of learning together in our classroom (Dolton, 2008). In the next part of this chapter, I examine what takes place within a COE in more detail.

### *The Community of Enquiry*

The pedagogic method of P4C/PwC is the COE (Golding, 2010). Lipman (2003:13-16) described a COE as a space where members can build on each other's ideas, and where values of trust, respect and reciprocity develop between students and teachers. In the COE, everyone has an equal opportunity to participate, and therefore I argue that it is a democratic way of teachers and students working together that can support the implementation of the UNCRC. Students are expected to provide reasons for their opinions, and to draw out inferences from what has been said, in order to support each other in their thinking (Lipman, 2003). The COE is therefore a space of collaboration (Rogoff, 1994). Golding (2010) argues that in a COE, students enquire together using shared philosophical moves with the aim of developing arguments, and then putting their ideas to the community to be tested and refined. I consider how the COE creates the opportunity to rethink neo-liberal values that position individuals as more important than the community (Ball, 2013).

In the next part of this chapter, I think about how the role of teacher is often one of managing student bodies and minds, as encouraged by developmental and behavioural theories of learning, and how this role may be challenged and changed in a COE. This is because in a COE the teacher takes on the role of facilitator, a role where they encourage and support everyone to participate in enquiry (Lipman, 2003).

### *Teacher as Facilitator in the COE*

Teachers as facilitators support students to develop critical, creative, caring and collaborative thinking (the 4 C's of P4C/PwC, which will be explored in more detail at a later point in this chapter) (Sharp, 1997). These different ways of thinking help students to build upon and challenge their own ideas, as well as the ideas of others (Sharp, 1997). The facilitator also supports students to develop “intellectual virtues, such as courage, modesty, honesty, respect, patience, awareness and constructiveness in giving and receiving critical challenge” (Quinn, 1997:116). Facilitators, therefore, help students to extend the enquiry by encouraging them to clarify their thinking by giving reasons, offering examples and making connections (Haynes and Murriss, 2009). As a facilitator, the teacher must also ensure the philosophical integrity of an enquiry by not just accepting ideas offered by young people unconditionally, but rather challenging students to justify their ideas (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009; Mohr Lone and Burroughs, 2016; McGall and Weijers, 2017). This multiplicity of roles makes the job of the facilitator a hard one (Murriss, 2008; Wegerif, 2010).

I argue it would not be possible for a teacher to successfully support their students' ways of knowing as a facilitator if they hold developmental and behavioural management theories of learning. As examined in Chapter 2, these theories create assumptions that young people need to learn what is developmentally appropriate for them, and in ways that assume they do not possess innate motivation to learn, theories that do not fit with the

notion of a facilitator working with their students on things that are intriguing for all, regardless of age. To move from a transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator of knowledge suggests a need to become open to the opinions and beliefs of young people, as happened to me in my own practice. Through enquiring with young people I have not only critiqued my own beliefs and values about what they are capable of, I have also learnt to act without adult epistemic privilege because I no longer assume that my knowledge is superior to the students' knowledge, simply because I am older. Therefore, I would argue, like Reznitskaya (2012) and Stanley and Lyle (2017) that when teachers become facilitators they learn to refrain from presenting themselves as in possession of all the right answers. Splitter and Sharp (1995) and Kizel (2016) all argue that when teachers become facilitators they open themselves up to the possibility of changing their own mind, and to the possibility of being affected by the ideas of their students (Splitter and Sharp, 1995; Kizel, 2016).

Biesta (2013) has a word of caution when he suggests it is important that the word facilitator is not used as a means of re-positioning the teacher from one who is at the heart of education to one who stands on the side-lines. PwC is not about excluding the voice of teachers; rather it is about creating the conditions where both teachers and young people can co-create together (Mohr Lone and Burroughs, 2016). Therefore, the teacher continues to be central to learning, but rather than transmitting knowledge they present stimuli in ways that encourages students to do something with it; to interact with it and to manipulate it in order to support them to make meaning with their students.

The role of facilitator in the COE therefore places different demands on teachers than the role of transmitter (Murriss, 2008; Wegerif, 2010; Kennedy, 2013). Consequently, the COE requires many teachers to place what they know and understand of teaching (the familiar) at risk (Haynes and Murriss, 2011). For example, many teachers are used to teaching in



ways where they largely know in advance what questions are going to be pursued in their lessons (Haynes and Murriss, 2011), and what the learning outcomes should be. When teachers do not know where the enquiry will go, they may not be able to plan lessons in ways they are used to (Haynes and Murriss, 2011), and in ways the neo-liberal agenda requires them to. Such changes involve “emotional labour” (Trifonas, 2003:128), and may cause teachers to experience challenge from senior leaders if they go against normalised teaching practices. These things may cause teachers to be reluctant or unable to take on a facilitator role. In addition to difficulties teachers may face with adopting a facilitative role, there remains disagreement amongst theorists and philosophers about whether it is necessary for a teacher to have a philosophical background in order to successfully facilitate enquiries. I consider some of the opposing arguments below.

#### *Facilitator as Philosophical Expert*

There is much discussion in the literature on whether teachers need to have a philosophical background, or training, in order to be able to facilitate PwC enquiries, with academics taking up opposing arguments. McCall and Weijers (2017), for example, argue that a facilitator either needs materials to guide them or a background in philosophy. McCall (2009) suggests that teachers without a philosophical background would at best be able to enact instrumental versions of the COE, because they would not know how to use philosophical tools and techniques to enquire in any ways other than superficial ones.

In contrast, Murriss (2000) argues that an academic background in philosophy can actually hinder a facilitator’s ability to listen to a child’s philosophical contributions. Similarly, Baumfield (2017) suggests that having knowledge of formal philosophy may make it hard for teachers to listen out for and recognise young people’s less formal ways of philosophising.

Whether someone needs a philosophical background or not is of fundamental importance when considering whether PwC can act as an ‘on the ground tool’ to support teachers to question childism and deficit models of the child, and to potentially develop epistemic justice/trust. If it is only teachers that have a philosophical background that can do this, PwC becomes something that is out of reach for most teachers. Therefore, when introducing PwC into the classroom I worked with, where the class teacher did not have a background in philosophy, I needed to consider whether this impeded her ability to engage philosophically with her students, or whether she was actually more open to her students’ ideas as a consequence of not studying philosophy.

Just as there is disagreement amongst academics on the importance of a teacher having philosophical training, there are also opposing arguments on who should decide on the questions to be discussed in an enquiry. I turn to this now.

### *Choosing the Question for Enquiry*

There is disagreement in the literature on who should decide on the question that will drive the enquiry in a COE. In her COPI (Community of Philosophical Inquiry) approach, McCall (2009) argues that it is the teacher that should decide on the question because they are more likely to choose the question that has the greatest philosophical potential.

Similarly, Fisher (2008) suggests especially in the early stages of the development of a COE, it is better the teacher chooses the question for enquiry, to ensure the enquiry’s philosophical potential. In contrast, Mohr Lone and Burroughs (2016) state that the transformative potential of philosophical enquiry comes from student engagement in dialogue grounded in the questions that most appeal to them. They question the idea that students are less likely than their teachers to choose philosophical questions, arguing instead that students soon learn how to discern the most philosophical questions, and consequently that adults need to trust their ability to do so (Mohr Lone and Burroughs, 2016). In

addition, Watkins (2005) and Hannam and Echeverria (2010) all suggest that students are more likely to be engaged in an enquiry when they have decided on the question themselves, as their questions will focus on things they have a genuine interest in.

Murriss (2013b) argues that the decision of who should generate the question to be discussed in the community depends in part on how one recognises the voice of the child. When young people create the focus and direction of an enquiry, this is a powerful means of challenging who is allowed to know in the classroom (Kizel, 2015). When I engage with young people in a COE, I always follow the questions that the students create and democratically decide they want to discuss as a community. This is in recognition of my belief that young people are able to make wise philosophical judgments about what they want to discuss. Therefore, I adopt the approach that it is the students that will determine which questions are discussed in my practice.

Just as following the students' questions is a good way to demonstrate epistemic justice/trust in the validity of their knowledge, working with students to create the rules that are necessary to govern enquiry is another means of recognising the young people's integrity and agency, and thereby supporting the democratic nature of the COE.

### *Choosing the Rules Together*

When classrooms become communities, young people are encouraged to take an active role in classroom governance (Watkins, 2005; Chetty and Suissa, 2016). One way that a change in the governance can be communicated to the students is for them to generate the rules for the COE together. Deciding on the rules together gives a joint sense of ownership and responsibility to the community (Kennedy, 2008). Haynes and Murriss (2009) argue that community rules may be concerned with things such as respect for one another's ideas, and rules about how someone will offer a contribution to the enquiry.

Despite creating the rules together, Chetty and Suissa (2017) warn that a COE may be underpinned by prejudice. They discuss racial assumptions and argue these may influence what and how things are said and interpreted, particularly by the teacher. Applying this idea to the notion of childism, I argue that what is discussed in a COE, how things are interpreted, and the connections that may be made, could all be underpinned by childist assumptions about young people. This suggests that it takes time to develop a community that recognises the contributions of all its members. I argue that the more opportunities a class has to come together; the more opportunities there are for teachers to think differently with their students.

One way that communities develop is through the development of the 4Cs of PwC. I examine these below in order to think about how in the development of these dispositions, teachers can learn to develop epistemic justice/trust in the voices of young people.

#### *4Cs of PwC*

In a COE the facilitator supports students to develop critical, creative, caring and collaborative thinking (Splitter and Sharp, 1995). These multi-dimensional aspects of thinking are known as the 4Cs of PwC (Echeverria, 2007). Each aspect of these thinking skills has been discussed extensively in the literature, and it is not my intention to rehearse these definitions here. Instead I provide a very brief description of each of the 4Cs to establish context, and make a distinction between them, and in order to develop my argument that these dispositions may support a teacher to develop virtues of epistemic justice/trust in the voices of her students.

#### Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is responsible thinking that facilitates good judgment because it relies upon criteria, is self-correcting and is sensitive to context (Lipman, 2003; Echeverria, 2007).

## Creative Thinking

Creative thinking helps the community to generate new ideas, and to explore existing knowledge in ways that help them to understand things differently (Lipman, 2003).

Experiencing students as critical and creative thinkers may act to disrupt a teacher's usual expectations of what young people are capable of (Lipman, 2003).

## Caring Thinking

PwC is underpinned by the importance of care (Graham and Fitzgerald, 2010). In the COE students develop “care for the procedures of inquiry, care for one another as persons, care for the tradition that one has inherited, care for the creations of one another” (Sharp, 1987:43). It is care that allows for the development of collaborative enquiry and dialogue across differences, and I was therefore interested in how it may break down differences, and perceived barriers between adult and child. Golding (2010) argues that it is care that allows for collaborative enquiry, and it is through this enquiry that students become reasonable, and give the COE the features of an ideal democratic community. In a COE, all members of the class can learn to listen to each other, and to appreciate each other's contributions (Moss, 2014). Members of the community not only care about their own ideas and ways of thinking, but also the ideas of other members of the community and they care about getting closer to the truth, rather than about winning arguments (Golding, 2010). This allows for an ethic of openness and respect for the other to develop in the classroom (Woodhead, 2010), and for classrooms to become places based on principles of mutual respect, a common quest for understanding, inclusion and cooperation (Kizel, 2015). Therefore, caring thinking is about developing empathy and respect for the ideas of others, and being loyal to the process of enquiry (Noddings, 2002; Lipman, 2003), as well as about taking responsibility for one's own thinking (Fisher, 2013; Sharp, 2007).

The principle of care is particularly essential in supporting the development of more symmetrical relationships between teacher and student (Noddings, 2002; Thayer-Bacon, 2012). In caring classrooms, all members of the class listen to each other and appreciate each other's contributions (Moss, 2014). Classrooms are not based on the authority of one (the teacher) over the minds and bodies of the others (students) but rather places that are based on principles of mutual respect, a common quest for understanding, inclusion and cooperation (Kizel, 2015).

I argue that developing values and practices of caring thinking holds the biggest potential for teachers to develop epistemic justice/trust in the knowledge of their students, because for teachers to care for their students' ideas, they must first learn to trust in their ideas. I suggest when they do this teachers and students enter into epistemic relations that contrast with authoritarian teacher/passive student ones.

### Collaborative Thinking

In Chapter 2, I examined how neo-liberal principles act on classrooms to make them places where individual success is what is judged to be important (Ball, 2013). Students compete to be regarded as the most successful, mainly judged by who can accumulate the most transmitted knowledge in order to perform well in tests and examinations. In a COE the importance of the individual is replaced by the importance of the development of the whole community (Kizel, 2015). All members of the community work towards the truth, and its success is judged on how the community progresses collectively, rather than on the development of individuals (Lipman, 2003). The 'C' of collaboration seems to be a powerful means of disrupting neo-liberal priorities in the classroom, in its focus on the relational over the individual.

In Chapter 2, I suggested childism creates materialdiscursive practices and epistemic relations which intra-act students within deficit identities. In the following section, I think

about how encountering students in a philosophical COE may act to challenge childist assumptions that teachers may either consciously or unconsciously hold.

### *PwC and Childism*

PwC calls the teacher to start with young people's perspective because it actively seeks their ideas as starting points for enquiry (Murriss, 2008). This suggests that experiencing students in ways that acknowledge their voices, results in what Baumfield (2017:122) describes as a radical shift in "their perceptions of those students' abilities". When teachers experience young people in philosophical enquiry this may cause them to enquire into their own practice, and in doing so unlearn how society has taught them to regard young people (Walsh, 2002; Baumfield, 2006; Kohan, 2011).

PwC questions many assumptions about age as it involves young people in ways of thinking that have traditionally been reserved for adults (Haynes and Murriss, 2017). The COE enables teachers to develop "an appreciation for children's philosophical insights and unique perspectives, involving pedagogical and interpersonal strategies that manifest a commitment to making space for all children's voices" (Mohr Lone and Burroughs, 2016:209). PwC can therefore be seen to have a potentially emancipatory role, as it is an opportunity for adults to see that young people can exceed adult expectations (Kohan, 2002). Consequently, Ndofirepi and Cross (2015:234) argue when teachers learn to listen to young people, they learn young people "possess a body of experience and knowledge that is unique to their situation", and that they have views and ideas because of that experience. If PwC becomes an integral part of classroom practice, different relations develop between the teacher and students, relationships based on mutual respect for each other as fellow philosophers who are all working with questions that can be perplexing for everyone (Mohr Lone and Burroughs, 2010). Both can experience each other as active thinkers, respectful of each other's ideas, which in turn can develop young people's

confidence and ability as meaning makers (Haynes and Murriss, 2009). This has clear implications for dominant theories of learning in a neo-liberal society. In consideration of this, I wonder what may act against the introduction of PwC into classrooms.

### *PwC and Dominant Theories of Learning*

Developmental and behaviourist theories of learning have influenced thinking that PwC is not developmentally appropriate for students (for example see, Kitchener, 1990; Wilson, 1992; Fox, 2001). Fox (2001), and Wilson (1992), for example, argue that children do not make systematic progress in philosophical thinking until they are around 15 or 16 years of age, therefore engaging young people in enquiry before this age is not appropriate (a deficit developmental understanding of how young people learn). In contrast, Murriss (2000) argues that developmental theories misunderstand how young people come to philosophy, and asserts that when young people philosophise they may do so differently than adults, but that this is no reason to exclude them. If this was the case, then the same argument could be applied to other disciplines such as mathematics. Murriss (2000) argues when people say that young people are not ready to engage in PwC, they are confusing young people's ways of philosophising with adults' ways of philosophising. Returning again to her metaphor of apples and pears, as introduced earlier in this chapter, Murriss (2000) states that we would not compare apples to pears, but rather to other sorts of apples. In the same way we should not compare young people's ways of philosophising and adults' ways of philosophising in order to conclude that young people are deficit when they are, in fact, different. Therefore, when young people are denied access to philosophy on the grounds that they are not ready for it, this assumes social participation is about including the voices of the most experienced or rational rather than the fullest possible diversity of human voices (Wall, 2010).



Even if young people are capable of philosophising, deeply entrenched understandings of how young people learn (cognitive development as a process through set stages – see Chapter 2), can cause teachers to find it difficult to experience a different way of working with young people in the COE (Haynes and Murriss, 2011). Haynes and Murriss (2011), for example, found that some teachers reported frustration when dialogue in PwC did not seem to progress in a linear direction. Some teachers may find this hard to adjust to, especially when the neo-liberal agenda has socialised them into expecting learning experiences to satisfy learning objectives, objectives that can be measured.

In Chapter 2, I examined how behaviourist theories continue to dominate behavioural management techniques, creating classrooms where teacher is positioned as authoritarian. In thinking about PwC, I wonder whether it can create a different type of classroom relation, one based on mutual respect rather than one based on teacher power over student. Bingham (2010:25) states that when authority is relational that, “one person’s use of authority depends on another’s participation in that authority”. In PwC students may become more open to the authority of their teachers, because they see they are engaging in learning with them, rather than dictating how they must come to learn (Rogers, 2002). PwC therefore encourages mutual respect to develop between the teacher and the student (Matthews, 1992). However, a teacher’s own self-identity as an epistemic authority figure may intra-act with their ability or willingness to engage with PwC (Murriss, 2013b). They may feel threatened by the practice, and concerned it could cause them to lose authority (Lyle, 2013). Teachers will need to learn to think differently about behaviour management if they engage with PwC, in order to realise that their authority does not disappear but is transformed (Michaud and Vålitalo, 2017). It becomes shared authority for learning, as enquiries start and progress from the young people’s interests. Consequently, power does not reside in one person but rather moves among individuals participating in the discussion

(Kennedy and Kennedy, 2011). Teachers need to feel empowered by students who enquire, rather than seeing the COE as a threat to their identity as teacher (Fisher, 2013).

The transformative potential of PwC can only be actualised if participants are allowed to follow the enquiry where it leads. Kennedy (2006) argues that this may not be possible within current educational systems that focus on the importance of the transmission of knowledge. When teachers are told they must teach certain things and meet certain standards then they may be reluctant to implement a more engaging pedagogy such as PwC, in fear there may be no time for it, or that enquiring with their students will cause them to digress from what they are expected to teach (Cazden, 2001; Fisher, 2013). In addition, political priorities that focus on accountability can lead to parents having a narrow perception of the function of schools, and consequently teachers may fear parent complaints if they deviate away from transmission styles of delivering the curriculum (Ball, 2013). Therefore, even when teachers are committed to developing participatory practices with their students, the structural systems in schools may limit their ability to change their practice (Wegerif, 2010). Consequently, Murriss (2008) asserts that we cannot expect teachers to learn how to listen to young people's voices when they are expected to work in a climate of right and wrong answers, rather than in a climate where knowledge is treated as contestable. This suggests that in order for teachers to introduce PwC into their classrooms, there needs to be a fundamental shift in the structural expectations of teaching in schools (Haynes and Murriss, 2011). Without such a shift, it is unlikely that teachers will be able to change their practice (Haynes and Murriss, 2011). This can be seen in research undertaken by Baumfield, Butterworth and Edwards (2005). They conducted a systematic review of the literature on thinking skills in order to investigate the impact of programmes, including philosophical enquiry, on teachers' practice. They found that teachers did see the benefits of adopting participatory practices, but that most made no changes to the way that

they taught because of concerns about meeting the expectations that are placed on them by the government, and the senior leaders in their schools.

A further concern is that a prevalence of neo-liberal discourses in schools can cause PwC to be introduced for instrumental reasons. As discussed in Chapter 2, neo-liberal discourses prioritise measurable outcomes. Consequently, studies that link PwC to cognitive development (for example see, Trickey and Topping, 2004; Topping and Trickey, 2007; Gorard, Siddiqui and Huat, 2015) have resulted in PwC being introduced in schools for reasons such as improving reading results, rather than for developing young people's opportunities to develop their enquiry skills (Vanseilieghem, 2005; Murriss, 2008; Biesta, 2009). When PwC is introduced for instrumental reasons, as a technical fix to a perceived need, it is often reduced to lesson plans where the outcome of an enquiry is decided in advance, in similar ways to transmission models (Vanseilieghem, 2005; Murriss, 2008; Biesta, 2009). In such contexts, PwC is little more than "poor practice passing as philosophy for children that is no more than disconnected thinking 'games' and an 'airing of opinions'" (Haynes, 2011:5). If PwC is introduced in this way, it becomes just another educational innovation (Tiffany, 2008), and is, therefore, unlikely to impact on teachers' perceptions of their students' ability to know.

Neo-liberal priorities can also cause teachers to feel that they are in competition with other teachers (Kizel, 2016), and this knowledge can act as a powerful panoptic gaze, that acts as a constant reminder to teachers that that they have little power to change anything in their practice, even if they want to. Teachers may be concerned about introducing PwC if other teachers in their school are using more traditional teaching methods that are perceived to be good practice for helping students to learn the content that they need to be successful in examinations. I consider how such pressures intra-act with teachers' ability or willingness to introduce PwC into their classrooms, or to introduce it in ways that can support the

development of different epistemic relations. I am interested in examining whether introducing PwC into one classroom over the course of an academic year may create different intra-actions that challenge these normalised educational discourses, or whether such discourses will continue to act on the impact that PwC may have on the epistemic relations and epistemic practices that develop in the classroom. I also want to examine whether PwC is a powerful practice for supporting a teacher to develop the virtue of epistemic justice/trust in the students as epistemic agents.

### *PwC and Epistemic Justice/Trust*

In Chapter 2, I introduced my argument that childism is a form of discriminatory epistemic injustice that acts on students' ability to bring their knowledge to the classroom, and on teachers' ability to recognise the agency of their students. Fricker (2007) states that in order to recognise and then to question how a prejudice may influence our understanding of someone else, we must first develop the virtue of epistemic justice. When someone develops this virtue, Fricker (2007) claims they become sensitive to clues relating to the sincerity and competency of the speaker. As I introduced previously, Murriss (2013b) relates Fricker's idea of epistemic justice to the experiences of teacher and student, calling it a form of epistemic trust. Murriss (2013b) states when a teacher opens themselves up to young people they learn to trust them as knowers. Mohr Lone and Burroughs (2016) suggest that the best way to illustrate the benefits of engaging in philosophical enquiry with young people is for teachers to actually engage in philosophical enquiry with young people. Similarly, Baumfield (2017) suggests it is when teachers experience PwC in their classrooms that there is often a radical shift in their beliefs about students as epistemic agents. This may be because PwC enables teachers to experience moments of disequilibrium between their own ideas of young people as epistemic agents, and what they are actually capable of when they are provided with opportunities to enquire about things that are important to them (Watkins, 2005; Lyle, 2008; Murriss, 2008; Kohan, 2011);

and support them to be impacted by the ideas of their students (Kohan, 2002). Therefore, PwC gives teachers the opportunity to question who the child is (Murriss, 2008), and therefore supports teachers to unlearn how their own experiences may have taught them to regard young people (Kohan, 2011).

In thinking about agential realism, I was interested in how the COE may create a materialdiscursive space where students are enacted within discourses that recognise them as rights-holders. Much has been written about the dialogic nature of the COE, and I briefly think about this below. I then consider how PwC is not just a dialogic practice, but also a material one, and argue that both need to be understood in order to develop an understanding of how PwC may create classrooms that intra-act positively with opportunities for students and teachers to be epistemic agents.

### *PwC and Dialogue*

The importance of dialogue is central to the pedagogy of PwC (Alexander, 2009; Golding, 2010). PwC is based on the belief that we learn to think through engaging in dialogue (Splitter and Sharp, 1995). Lipman (1998) recognised that dialogue is the means by which P4C/PwC students both engage in and learn to engage in philosophical enquiry. Dialogue captures the spirit of collaboration, rather than being about individuals arguing for and against their individual positions (Golding, 2010), and neither teachers' nor students' voices are privileged, as both are seen as contributing to the construction of meaning with others (Graham and Fitzgerald, 2010; Wegerif, 2010; Davies, 2014). Consequently, truth is recognised as provisional, so that the purpose of dialogue is not to reach a convergence of self and others but rather to open up a space between participants in which differences are held in tension, and where new ideas can be created (Wegeriff, 2010; Barrow, 2015).

When students interact with their peers and the teacher in a COE, they have the opportunity to exchange their ideas, to collectively make sense of their experiences, and to

solve problems (Mercer and Littleton, 2007). It is therefore through dialogue with others, that the participants appropriate and internalise the metacognitive tools of philosophy (Fisher, 2013).

### *PwC as a Materialdiscursive Practice*

In this thesis I was interested in how the material aspects of PwC are entangled with the discursive in creating changes in who can know in the classroom. Drawing on posthumanist theory, Murriss (2016) suggests that it is not enough to think about dialogue alone in order to understand how PwC, through the COE, can act to create transformational classroom practices. Instead Murriss (2016) suggests we also need to focus on the agency of material things, and to develop an understanding of how the material, alongside the dialogue, impacts on who can know in the classroom. Murriss (2016) asserts that when material objects are considered, it is usually only in light of how they can be used as objects to learn from. Therefore considering the material world alongside dialogue, and the role that both play in learning (Braidotti, 2013), represents a different way of thinking about what happens in a COE.

In thinking about what material things may be particularly significant in the PwC classroom, I thought about what mattered in altering my own epistemic and ontological beliefs when I introduced P4C into our Year 6 class. This included how we changed the layout of the furniture, how we used different types of teaching resources, and the way that planning became a shared endeavour, rather than the following of a scheme or a lesson plan. I was interested in whether these things may matter in someone else's classroom, and what other material things may also be significant.

In considering the importance of the material, I focused much of my thinking on the teaching materials that are used in PwC. Murriss (2013a) suggests that when teachers select

teaching materials they tend to pick things they think are developmentally appropriate for students, rather than stimuli that are ambiguous and intriguing. Therefore experiencing young people working with stimuli that shows they can think in ways other than what is expected of them, can act as a powerful means for teachers to question deficit beliefs about students' capabilities (Murriss, 2013a). This suggests that thinking about the stimuli that are used in a traditional classroom, and the stimuli that are used in the COE is important when considering how both may intra-act on students' and teachers' being able to know in the classroom.

I also thought with the ideas of Fisher (2013) who states that the changing of chairs from behind tables in rows, to a circle in a COE, is important because it allows everyone in the community to easily make eye contact with and to hear each other, and therefore supports discussion. I also thought with the way that Lipman (2003) always expected his novels to be read around the circle, with everyone having a copy. This seemed to signify that everyone was equal, equal in their ability to have access to resources, and equal in their ability to bring their ideas to the enquiry. In my own practice I rarely have enough resources to have a copy for everyone to hold, so I have to be creative in thinking about how everyone can have equal access to a resource, for example by handing a picture book around the circle so that everyone can experience it physically, and have the opportunity to read a page if they want to. This is with the aim of demonstrating that I do not have more right as the adult teacher to access a resource.

### *Conclusion*

In this chapter I have thought about how classrooms can be transformed from places of transmission to places of enquiry through PwC, and its pedagogic practice of the COE. Thinking with the theories of the New Sociology of Childhood and the Philosophy of Childhood, I thought about how PwC is unlikely to change what happens in a classroom

unless deficit and neo-liberal dominant educational understandings are first challenged. I suggested that in experiencing young people in a COE, that teachers have the opportunity to critique how childism may either consciously or unconsciously influence their beliefs about young people, and thereby their teaching practice. I also thought about how the transformative potential of PwC can only be actualised if participants are allowed to follow the enquiry where it leads, but that this may not be possible within the neo-liberal priorities in much educational policy and practice today.

I also explained why I use the term PwC rather than P4C, in light of seeing that my research is in keeping with the second generation of philosophical enquiry with young people (Vansieleghem and Kennedy, 2011). In particular, I explained that I aim to think about PwC in new ways by considering how it is a practice where not only dialogue is important, but also the material conditions in which this dialogue takes place: in particular the set up of the COE furniture and the material resources that are used as teaching stimulus. I thought about how in the COE teachers may develop Fricker's (2007) epistemic justice or Murriss' (2013a) epistemic trust, and how this may support them in seeing their students through competency models.

In the next chapter I introduce and examine the methodological approach that was used in this research and the reasons why these methods were chosen. I also explain how I used the COE as both pedagogic practice and as method, and explain how I focus on the materialdiscursive in analysing the data that was produced, through a diffractive approach, and in light of Barad's (2007) theory of agential realism.



## Chapter 4 – Methodology

### *Introduction*

In this chapter, I explain how this is an ontoepistemological study (Barad, 2007) because I understood that what is in the world (ontology), and what we know about the world (epistemology), cannot be treated as two separate things; rather they are necessarily entangled with each other (Barad, 2007). I therefore recognise as researcher that I am constituted in the production of knowledge, and that data and theory can be read *with* each other in order to create new ways of seeing and understanding. I aim to encapsulate my emancipatory desire to create epistemic relations and classroom practices that support young people as agentic. This is in order to support my feminist ontological beliefs that young people are, like women, often treated as sub-persons, and consequently may be understood as having little of real value to add to society now.

I present my journey from qualitative to diffractive (Barad, 2007), an evolution that resulted from my pursuit of new understandings of student and teacher as epistemic agents. I explain how I diffractively read the data created in this thesis with childism (Young-Bruehl, 2012), neo-liberalism (Ball, 2013), and epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007), within the context of the UNCRC, following the advice of Tierney (1998:68) who states that if we are to think differently about data that we should “chart new paths rather than constantly return to well-worn roads”. I explain how this thinking influenced the methods that I chose: observation, COE and focused enquiry, and the way that I thought with data that was created with the participants. I also introduce the research setting and the participants and discuss ethical concerns and principles that came to be important.

I begin the chapter by reminding the reader of my research aims, and the research questions that came from my engagement with the literature.

### *Research Aims and Research Questions*

The research aims for this research were:

1. To examine student and teacher epistemic relations
2. To examine epistemic relations and practices intra-acting with student and teacher
3. To examine PwC as a materialdiscursive practice that may create new and different epistemic relations and practices

As I engaged with the literature, different questions began to emerge. These helped me to engage with data and theory together. These questions were:

1. Do childism and neo-liberal educational priorities create materialdiscursive classroom spaces and practices that make it hard for teacher and student to know in the classroom?
2. Are teacher and student victims of epistemic injustice if they cannot bring their meaning making voices to the classroom?
3. If students and teachers are victims of epistemic injustice what types of epistemic injustice are they victims of?
4. Can the materialdiscursive apparatus of PwC support a teacher to develop epistemic justice/trust in the agency of her students?
5. Do epistemic relations and epistemic practices in the classroom intra-act in ways that create difficulties for teachers to engage with the practice of PwC?

These questions supported me to diffractively engage with data that was created with the key theories that became important to my thinking in this research. In the following part of this chapter I examine how in my desire to think about the classroom as both a material and a discursive space, I moved from traditional qualitative practices to Barad's (2007) method of diffraction.

### *From Qualitative Approach to Diffraction*

As previously explained in Chapters 1 and 2, my interest in young people as rights holders in the context of the classroom began during my master's research. On being introduced to the UNCRC by my master's tutor, I began to think about how young people's right to participate in their learning, under Article 12, was being translated into my practice as a teacher. I found myself questioning how much of what I did as a teacher actually empowered the students that I taught to enquire about things that were important to them, and to influence how they learnt. I undertook a piece of action research with my Year 6 class, in order to think about this further. I introduced P4C into the classroom as a pedagogic tool that might support us as a class in enquiring together. This began as a once a week *process*, P4C was timetabled for a Tuesday afternoon, and this was therefore when we did P4C. However, as a class we quickly realised that it was through the tools and practices of P4C that we could lay the classroom bare. We found ourselves working as a community in everything that we did, and what evolved through our enquiring together was a classroom space that allowed Article 12, with its focus on the voice of the child, to become a meaningful reality. As our community evolved I became open to the students' voices in ways that I had not experienced before. I learnt to trust them and they learnt to trust that I was genuinely interested in what they had to say. As a consequence of this, I came to understand that most of the classroom practices I had observed and been taught as a student teacher, practices that continued to be encouraged by my school, largely positioned students as deficit.

As a school we had just undergone an inspection, and having been judged to be doing everything that we *should* be doing well, my headteacher seemed confident to let me experiment. Our Year 6 classroom became a very different space than the one I had originally set up. In *my* classroom tables were set out in groups of four where students sat opposite each other, allowing them to easily communicate with each other, but also to

easily observe me at the front of the class. Resources such as glue sticks, rulers and pens were positioned behind my desk so that the students needed to ask me for permission to use them, as I did not trust that they would not waste them. Around the edge of the classroom was furniture where books and resources were neatly stacked, the way that I liked them, a busy and full classroom with little space to move around, and with students neatly contained behind their desks. Through enquiring together, *our* classroom evolved both materially and discursively. This included changes to the way the classroom furniture was set out, and talk changed from a largely transmission style where I would initiate a question or discussion in the expectation that students would give me the answers that I was looking for, to one where we came to enquire about most things together.

My master's research was in the style of an action research project. I made use of qualitative research tools, including sociograms, interviews and questionnaires, in order to investigate how the students felt they could bring their own voices to the classroom both before and after the introduction of P4C. In the methods that I employed I focused on dialogue as the means of illuminating what took place in the classroom. I initially thought I would build on this in this research: introduce P4C into a Year 7 class to see whether it could support the students to be rights-holders in the context of a secondary school, and therefore I had planned that I would use similar methods to those that I had employed in my masters, and in similar ways. However, in my mutual interest in the material alongside the discursive, I became concerned that these traditional qualitative methods would not necessarily support me in thinking about both of these things. This is because traditional qualitative methods focus on the human subject at the expense of the material (Gerrard, Rudolph and Sriprahash, 2016), because they rely heavily on language for discovering reality (Maclure, 2013; St. Pierre, 2011). In addition, St. Pierre and Jackson (2014) and Koro-Ljungberg and MacLure (2013) suggest that traditional qualitative methods act to limit what it is possible to know from data through an overreliance on thinking about how

data fits within categories or themes. I found myself connecting with a growing body of feminist theorists who have argued that data is limited when we try to code it into themes (see for example, Lenz Taguchi, 2012; Sellers, 2013; MacLure, 2013). In particular, I related to MacLure's (2013) suggestion that when we try to code data we reduce difference to sameness, and this fails to recognise the dynamic reality of data. I thought about how coding practices can stand in the way of developing new ideas as researchers look for commonalities rather than differences, leading to researchers sometimes missing "the texture, the contradictions, the tensions" in data (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012:12).

I therefore wanted to find an approach that would support me to move away from thinking about language alone, and allow me to think differently about the classroom, to "enliven rather than report, to render rather than validate, to rupture and reimagine rather than to faithfully describe, to generate possibilities of encounter rather than construct representative ideal types" (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000:15). This was with the aim of producing new understandings of the classroom as a materialdiscursive space that intra-acts with students' and teachers' as epistemic agents.

Diffraction, as both method and as a means of data analysis (Barad, 2007) became the right method to do this. Diffraction allowed me to focus on both the linguistic turn and the material realities of the classroom, in order to better understand how each constructed the reality of the other (St Pierre, 2011). It does this by not privileging language as the key measure for describing and representing intra-actions, but by finding ways to understand how the material world also creates and acts on what takes place (Kuntz and Presnall, 2012). Diffraction also encourages the researcher to read data and theory alongside each other in order that each may illuminate and help explain what takes place (Barad, 2007). I go onto examine diffraction further in the following part of this chapter.

## *Diffraction*

Haraway (1992) introduced the concept of diffraction with the aim of contesting reflexivity. Reflexivity is often used as a critical analytical tool by qualitative researchers, but Haraway (1992:16) argues that reflection “only displaces the same elsewhere”, like a mirror. This suggests that reflexivity mirrors essentially fixed positions. Haraway (1992) argues that these positions are largely based on hierarchically dominant ideals from majority identities: male, white, human, and so on. Diffraction, in contrast, is about interference and difference (Haraway, 1992). Lenz Taguchi (2012:269) explains that diffraction supports thinking about “differences as *positive* emerges as an effect of connections and relations within and between bodies”. Therefore, diffraction is about finding productive connections rather than about reflecting on how data may fit within pre-existing categories (Haraway, 1992). Also central to diffraction is the idea we should think about how relations are not meetings between separate entities and texts, but rather all things are intra-acting together with each other, including with the researcher, and likewise that the researcher intra-acts on them (Barad, 2007).

Barad (2007) built on the work of Haraway (1992) in order to think about diffraction as a method. Barad (2007) suggested that diffraction allows for attention to fine detail, and for the reading of one text together with another, in order to make different transdisciplinary practices talk to each other. Diffraction is therefore a method that brings together multiple realities in order to create new concepts (Ceder, 2015). In addition, rather than diffractive analysis focusing on what the researcher does with data, the focus is on being open towards what the data does to the researcher (Ceder, 2015). So diffractive analysis recognises the intra-active forces of data and researcher (Mazzei, 2013).

In the following section of this chapter, I introduce the research setting where this research took place.

### *Research Setting*

I undertook this research in a classroom setting with one Year 7 class and their teacher, in a large inner city school in Wales, over the period of one academic year. The school had just introduced a Year 7 Curriculum, which they had created themselves. Under the curriculum, form teachers took their classes for all lessons, apart from maths and PE. The curriculum set out what the teachers were expected to teach, through lesson plans that had been designed by each of the subject leaders in the school. The lesson plans contained learning objectives for the lesson, the resources that were to be used to support teaching, and the questions that the teacher was expected to ask to generate learning. The school's rationale behind this new approach was two fold: firstly to aid transition from primary to secondary school, as the students would spend a substantial amount of their time with the same teacher, as normally happens in the primary school setting, and secondly that it would provide consistency in teaching because all of the teachers would follow the same set lesson plans and would use the same resources.

The main reason that I chose this school was pragmatic. I had initially sought written permission to undertake the research from the relevant director of education, as an institutional gatekeeper (Morrow and Richards, 1996). When the director responded to say that he gave permission, he asked whether it would be possible for me to work in a particular secondary school, as it had recently been inspected by ESTYN (the Welsh inspectorate), and judged to be in need of significant improvement. The Director indicated in his response that he felt that my research would be beneficial for the school, as they wanted to explore different ways of improving teaching and learning. One of the areas for improvement recommended in the ESTYN report was that students needed to be given more opportunities to direct their own learning, and this suggested to me that this was a school where transmission models of teaching may be evident in many classrooms. It therefore seemed to be a school that it would be useful for me to examine the aims of this

research in. However, I was concerned that being directed to a particular school raised ethical implications including that the senior leadership team of the school may feel coerced into agreeing to the research because the director of education had recommended that they did so. I therefore felt that it was important that I met with the senior leaders in order to discuss my research before seeking their consent for the research to be undertaken in their school.

I made initial contact with the school by phone, and arranged to meet with the headteacher and one of the assistant headteachers. In this meeting I shared my research proposal and gave the headteacher and the assistant headteacher time to ask questions. It was agreed that my research proposal would be taken to the next Governing Body meeting, and that a decision on whether the school would agree to participate in the research or not would then be communicated to myself and to the director of education. The Governing Body gave their consent for the school to participate in the research. Decisions about which teacher, and which class I would be working with then had to be made. I explain how these decisions were made below.

### *Research Participants*

Before the research began, I met with all of the Year 7 tutors in the school to present my research proposal to them, and to give them the opportunity to ask me questions. As Alderson and Morrow (2011) argue, it is better to talk to potential participants and to provide time for questioning rather than providing written information, which may be misleading. The aim of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for them to make an informed decision about whether they wanted to volunteer to participate in the research or not. I met with them again the following week in order that they had time to reflect on the proposal, and to give them time to consider if there were any further questions that they



wanted to ask. Out of the 9 Year 7 tutors, 6 put themselves forward as being interested in taking part. Random selection was then used to select one form tutor for me to work with.

Once the form tutor was selected, this necessarily dictated which class I would be working with. I met with this class at the start of the new academic year in order to provide them with an overview of the research, and in order to give them an opportunity to ask me questions. I provide further details on how I sought informed consent in the ethical section of this chapter. In the following part of this chapter I examine how my ontoepistemological beliefs about young people being oppressed and marginalised in society led me to consider how I could employ methods in ways that would support both the students and the teacher to bring their own meaning making voices to what was found in this research, both in its collection and in its interpretation.

#### *Working with the Participants*

Traditionally research has acted to silence young people's voices (Prout and James, 2015). It has been undertaken *on* young people rather than *with* them, in keeping with the idea of young people as becomings rather than as beings (Qvortrup, 2015). Reasons for this include the belief that young people are too immature or not developmentally ready to contribute their own experiences in research (Mayall, 2002). The UNCRC highlights the "importance of providing them [young people] with the opportunity to give voice to their own experiences, meanings and interactions" (Trussell, 2008:166). In consideration of young people as rights-holders, it was important that the methods that I employed in this research gave them the same opportunities to bring their ways of knowing to the research, just as the class teacher, as the adult participant, was afforded opportunities to do so. In this way I hoped to disrupt disempowering traditional methods of researching on young people, methods that have acted to silence their voices in research. I present the methods that were used in the following section of this chapter.

*The Methods*

	Methods employed
Exploring the classroom before PwC	<i>Sociogram</i> Classroom observation
Exploring the classroom after the first enquiry	Facilitate and transcribe first PwC Enquiry Focused enquiry teacher Focused enquiry 6 students
Exploring the classroom after the last enquiry	<i>Sociogram</i> Facilitate PwC enquiries over the course of the academic year Facilitate and transcribe final PwC enquiry Focused enquiry teacher Focused enquiry 6 students Classroom observation

Although the data from the sociograms was very illuminating, particularly, as Leung and Silberling (2006) suggest, in thinking about how relationships in the class changed over the course of the academic year, I found myself confronted with too much data to consider in one thesis alone, and therefore I had to make decisions about which data to focus on. I decided not to include data from the sociograms but rather to focus on what took place within the COE. By deciding that some data produced from some methods was the most important, I recognised that what I selected to think about was an agential cut (Barad, 2007). I examine the concept of agential cuts in a later part of this chapter.

Data was recorded in two ways: using an audio-recorder, which I then transcribed, and in a research diary where I wrote memos to capture first impressions or to make connections to theoretical ideas (See Appendix 1 for an example of a page from the diary). I revisited these transcripts and my diary over and over again, laying different parts alongside each other, and with different theories, in my search for new connections and new ideas.

The following transcripts were created:

- The transcript of my first observation of Sophie teaching the class (Appendix 2)
- The transcript of the first PwC enquiry I facilitated with the class (Appendix 3)
- The transcript of my first focused enquiry with Sophie, following the first PwC enquiry (Appendix 4)
- The transcript of my first focused enquiry with the 6 students, following the first PwC enquiry (Appendix 5)
- The transcript of the last PwC enquiry I facilitated (Appendix 6)
- The transcript of my second focused enquiry with Sophie, following the final PwC enquiry (Appendix 7)
- The transcript of my second focused enquiry with the 6 students, following the final PwC enquiry (Appendix 8)
- The transcript from my second observation of Sophie teaching (Appendix 9)

Jackson and Mazzei (2012) argue that we should not think of transcripts as just a verbal exchange but rather we should think of them as an event. Otherwise there is a danger that the transcripts are treated as objects that abstract voices, and ignore material aspects of the discourses that take place (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). I therefore understood that the transcripts were only a starting point for thinking (MacLure, 2009) and when thinking about them I thought with my notes on material things made in my research diary.

Despite choosing methods that I believed would support me to think differently with what took place in the classroom, in particular by focusing my attention on how material things mattered as much as dialogue, and following my emancipatory desire to research with the young people in ways that respected them as epistemic agents, I was very aware that how I researched would continue to be heavily influenced by how I had researched in the past. In the final chapter of this thesis I discuss how I may have used photographs as a research

method if I was to undertake this research again because of their ability to capture the material in the moment. This is because although I made many notes on how the material intra-acted with the discursive in my diary, the methods I chose continued to be influenced by the qualitative methods I had been used to using, in particular my use of transcripts which create data on dialogue. As the research year evolved, and I became more aware that the methods I had chosen continued to favour dialogue over the material, I found myself making more copious notes on the material in my diary in order to support my thinking about how both were equally important in understanding how things intra-acted with epistemic relations and practices in the classroom. I turn now to a more detailed consideration of each of the methods that were employed in this research.

### *Observation*

Early on in the process of data creation, I observed Sophie teaching in the classroom. This was in order to develop a better understanding of the classroom as a materialdiscursive space that intra-acts with the identities of teacher and student as knowers. In traditional qualitative observation methods, the researcher is concerned to provide an outsider's view of what takes place, and consequently puts in place measures to make themselves as invisible in the classroom as possible. This is so their presence has minimal impact on the environment in which they are observing, with the aim of increasing the validity of their findings (Hopkins, 1985). However, from an ontoepistemological stance I did not see myself as separate from the observation. Rather I understood that my presence in the room necessarily intra-acted with what took place, and, therefore, rather than looking to present an objective account of what took place I aimed to present the classroom through my own eyes. I made notes in my research diary about how I felt in the classroom as an observer, how I thought the participants may feel about being observed by me, how I felt my presence may intra-act with what happened in the lesson, what materialdiscursive things seemed to me to be particularly intra-acting on epistemic relations and classroom practices

including the layout of the room, the classroom door, the furniture and the displays. All of these things came from me, from my perspective intra-acting with the identities, experiences and values that I bring with me as observer, and I wanted to lay these things bare not only in an effort to be transparent but also because I was a part of what took place and therefore I was important.

At all times when observing in the classroom, I tried to look and listen in ways that Clough and Nutbrown (2007:50) describe as “radical looking”, and “radical listening”. This involves an observer in “looking critically, looking openly, looking sometimes knowing what we are looking for, looking for evidence, looking to be persuaded, looking for information”. This helped me when observing to not only look to describe what was happening, but also to make notes on the reasons for why I, as observer, thought they may be happening. I therefore not only looked to create an account of what happened but also to seek meaning in what I observed – the glance at a clock, the way that a chair was occupied, the way that things were recorded, for example, all intra-acting and all relevant.

#### *Community of Enquiry as Research Method*

In my aim to think with the participants, to think with data and theory together (in line with a diffractive methodology) and to disrupt binaries of teacher/student, adult/child, researcher/researched, deficit/rational, I felt that the COE would be a useful method. This is because PwC has been shown to create a space for new relations, and ways of being to develop between a teacher and students (Kohan, 2002). Secondly, I felt that a COE would support me in becoming a necessary part of what took place in the classroom, as I would facilitate the enquiries myself. When the researcher becomes a part of the enquiry, they open themselves up to experiencing with the participants (Golding, 2015).

A COE is normally understood as a pedagogic practice, not as a research method. I was only able to find one comprehensive account of how the COE can be used as such by Golding (2015). Golding (2015:205) argues that the COE “provides a new method for collecting and testing data”. Golding (2015) further suggests that in a COE the researcher is able to gather in-depth information about the participants because of its dialogic and collaborative nature. In this way, Golding (2015) states that a COE, as a research method, blends collaborative philosophical enquiry and empirical data collection and analysis methods. In developing the COE as a means of both classroom practice and research method, I aimed to add to thinking about developing a COE as a way of researching in the classroom.

I recorded the first and the last PwC enquiries. I did this with the purpose of thinking about how epistemic relations may change in the community over the course of the academic year. In order to help me to think about the philosophical nature of the enquiries I facilitated, I found Kennedy’s (2013) toolbox useful. Kennedy identified different philosophical moves that participants of an enquiry might use and these include: asking a question, agreeing or disagreeing, offering a proposition, hypothesis or explanation and offering an example or counterexample, and I looked for examples of these moves when I thought about the transcripts. I turn to the structure of the PwC enquiries now.

### *The Structure of a PwC Enquiry*

Although there are slight variations, there is a general structure to philosophical enquiry in the COE. For the purposes of this research I followed the ten-step sequence recommended by the Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERRE, 2007). This was in order to provide a clear model for the enquiries. When I am enquiring with young people in my own practice, I often deviate from this model, however

for the purpose of this research I felt that it was important to be able to model to the teacher a way of *doing* PwC that may be more easily absorbed into her own practice.

I set out SAPEREs 10 steps of the COE below:

#### Step 1 – Getting Ready

A short activity or game is used to ensure that students are ready for an enquiry. This brings the community together.

#### *Step 2 – Presentation of the Stimulus*

A stimulus is used to generate the community's interest. Haynes and Murriss (2012) suggest that this can be a number of things including a story, a poem, a piece of music or a set of photographs.

#### Step 3 – Thinking Time

This gives participants in the community time to reflect on the stimulus on their own. After a few minutes of private reflection the community are encouraged to share their thoughts in pairs or small groups.

#### Step 4 – Question-Making

Young people work together in small groups, with the support of the teacher, to generate questions that come from their considerations of the stimulus.

#### Step 5 – Question Airing

The questions are recorded and displayed so that everyone can see them. Any assumptions, ambiguities, connections and distinctions within the questions may be identified and discussed.

#### Step 6 – Question-Choosing

Sometimes the teacher and sometimes the students decide on what question will be chosen for the enquiry. When I enquire with young people they always pick the question; this is in recognition of my belief that they are capable of making wise decisions about the philosophical potential of questions. Choosing the question ensures that the young people are complicit in the construction of what they learn (Kennedy, 2004). When students pick the question, a range of democratic voting tools are deployed.

#### Step 7 – First Thoughts

The students that created the question that is selected are asked to share their thinking behind it.

#### Step 8 – Building

The participants enquire together, supported by the teacher's use of questioning and facilitative moves, with the aim of co-constructing meaning and developing judgment. The teacher encourages and supports the development of the 4 C's (see Chapter 3).

#### Step 9 – Last Thoughts

This gives the participants the opportunity to express any final thoughts about what has been said during the enquiry.

#### Step 10 – Review

This step provides the community with an opportunity to assess cognitive and social progress that has taken place during the enquiry.

Through these 10 steps, Splitter and Sharp (1995) and Kennedy (2013) argue that students and teachers are exposed to, model, learn, use and internalise philosophical skills. These skills include the ability to give reasons, to distinguish good reasons from bad ones, to use analogies and to recognise contradictions. When students show they are able to use these skills, both with the support of the facilitator and independently, they demonstrate they are



more than *tabula rasa*, and they are internally motivated to learn rather than being naturally unruly. I argue, therefore, that the 10 steps of the COE support teachers and students to be different with each other, and in doing so to develop more participatory epistemic relations.

### *Focused Enquiries*

I engaged with a total of four focused enquiries with the research participants, two with the class teacher, and two with the same 6 students. Before each of the focused enquiries the participants were given the transcripts and asked to think about and highlight five sections of the transcript they felt were interesting. These highlighted sections became the stimulus for us to engage in enquiry together about what took place in the COE. I hoped the focused enquiries would create a dialogic space where new ideas could emerge. The discussions were very informal; we talked about the transcripts to see what ideas would come out of our reading and thinking about them together, with the aim of improving my own thinking about the PwC transcripts and to see what I may have missed or failed to understand in my reading of, and thinking with them alone (Hultman and Taguchi, 2010; Kuntz and Presnall, 2012). I did not have a set of questions to ask the participants and no clear direction for where the discussions may go. What was to be discussed was within the power of all of the participants, including myself, and this acted to disrupt the traditional binary of researcher/researched.

All the focused enquiries were audio-recorded, with the participants' consent. I arranged for the enquiry with the teacher to take place during her non-contact time in school, and met with the students during their extended assembly time. I hoped this would inconvenience them the least. I decided to speak with 6 students as a group as Gibson (2007) recommends this is the optimum number of young people to work with in discussion groups. Working in groups has also been shown to be less intimidating than a

one-to-one interview with an adult, and I hoped that this would help the participants to be confident to share their ideas with each other and with me (Morgan, Gibbs, Maxwell and Britten, 2002). However, I was aware I needed to support the group so everyone felt they could talk, and to ensure no one member of the group dominated the discussion (Gibson, 2007).

Thinking with the participants in the focused enquiries meant that the analysis of the transcripts was not “an authoritarian monologue” (Mitchell, 1993:55). Instead my voice was just one contribution alongside the participants. This fits with feminist thinking, which has long advocated the integrity of self and research participant in research (Oakley, 1993).

Despite the informal nature of the focused enquiries, I was still concerned that the participants may say what they thought I wanted them to say, or what they thought would reflect them in a good light (Alderson and Goodey, 1996). For example, the teacher knew I would be sharing any findings with the senior leadership team (SLT), and I was concerned that the young people may not say anything that they thought the teacher might perceive as negative. These things were considered when I came to think about the transcripts created from the focused enquiries.

By deciding that these methods were the most useful for the aims of this research, and by focusing on some aspects of the data at the expense of others, I realise that I perform what Barad (2007) described as an agential cut.

### *Agential Cut*

Barad (2007) argues the way a researcher gathers data, and what they do with it, forms a necessary agential cut of what takes place. Therefore, agential cuts materialise certain worlds and becomings whilst at the same time making other ones impossible (Barad,

2007). In recognition that this study is an agential cut, I do not argue that this research provides the truth of the data, or that our experiences as a classroom community can be generalised to other classrooms, or to other student/teacher relations or identities. Instead I hope that it will open up possibilities to think differently about students' and teachers' identities as knowers, acting as a provocation for further questions and further research.

As data was created in this research over the course of the academic year I returned to it many times, sometimes on my own, sometimes with some of the participants. In particular Sophie became key to supporting my thinking. We often met after school to talk about what had taken place in an enquiry, or to discuss notes I had made in my diary. At all times I was very open with her about what I was thinking. To start with I think both Sophie and I found this challenging, and uncomfortable at times, particularly as at times what I was thinking or writing reflected her in a negative light. However, just as epistemic relations developed in the class between all of the participants as we enquired together, so too the relationship between myself and Sophie changed as we shared more, and as she recognised that I was open to critiquing and challenging my own practice. We would often find ourselves engaged in informal discussions where we would talk very openly about how we both felt we were developing as practitioners through what was taking place in the classroom. In this way, our identities as visitor, observer, participant, teacher, researcher, amongst others, intra-acted less and less with our ability to work together as participants and co-researchers.

#### *Analysis of Data: Diffraction*

Barad (2007) suggests that when we think about data using traditional, qualitative research there is a strong focus on the importance of reflexivity. As examined earlier in this chapter, Barad (2007) states that reflectivity emphasises sameness and separateness, it is about being able to represent what is already there and is seen as something that goes on in the

mind of the researcher who is separated from the data. This suggests that reflexivity is an inner mental activity in which the researcher supposedly takes a step back and reflects at a distance (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010). Building on the ideas of Haraway (1988), Barad (2007) developed the theory of *diffraction* as both a methodology and as an alternative method of analysing data. Diffraction emerges from quantum physics and feminist theorising about difference (Barad, 2007). Barad explains that when two waves encounter one another they are able to occupy the same point in space and time, and that the new emergent wave has properties that result from the combination of the two (Barad, 2007:76). Thinking with this metaphor, I understood that diffraction is about reading insights through one another in ways that help illuminate differences as they emerge, and therefore it is about “making connections” between seemingly different things, both material and discursive, and different theories and disciplines. Applying this idea to the experiences of teacher and student in the classroom, I wanted to examine what material and discursive things come together, like Barad’s two waves, in order to create (or to *intra-act*) teacher and students as knowers. I wanted to further examine how introducing PwC into the classroom, may create new materialdiscursive relations and practices where students and teachers are empowered to bring their meaning making voices to the classroom.

In thinking about how diffraction supported me to research in the classroom in ways that moved me away from traditional qualitative approaches, I found Barad’s (2007) argument that a researcher cannot simply observe and reflect on what is already there helpful. A diffractive analysis recognises that observation is not about a researcher objectively gathering information and reflecting upon what is already there, because a researcher affects and helps create the reality of what is observed (Barad, 2007). Therefore, diffractive analysis relies on a researcher’s ability to make matter intelligible in new ways and to imagine other possible realities in the data (Barad, 2007). In doing so a diffractive

reading allows the researcher to wonder around the data in ways that may help them to think about it differently (Sehgal, 2014). As I wanted to redress social inequalities in the classroom, diffraction became the right way of thinking about the data, as it enabled me to “make visible new kinds of material-discursive realities that can have transformative and political consequences” (Lenz Taguchi, 2012:265), realities I argue that were important to understanding the epistemic lives of the teacher and students I worked with.

I found Jackson and Mazzei’s (2013) idea of plugging in particularly useful in thinking about the data that was created with the ideas of childism, epistemic injustice and neo-liberalism.

### *Plugging In*

Jackson and Mazzei (2013) borrow the idea of plugging in from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) in “A Thousand Plateaus”, in order to capture the process of thinking diffractively. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) talk about being confronted with multiple texts, data, theory, things they had previously written, and so on when undertaking research, and they argue that in trying to bring all of these things together they came to thinking about the idea of ‘plugging things in’. Jackson and Mazzei (2012:1) describe plugging in as a method of reading multiple things across each other with the aim of producing something new. Plugging in is a constant and continuous process of making and unmaking “It is the process of arranging, organizing, fitting together” in order to understand how things are connected. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) state that plugging in moves researchers away from traditional methods of coding used in qualitative research. This is because the focus is on opening the data up to see what new things might emerge in order to create new knowledge, rather than seeing how the data can exemplify or build on what knowledge may already exist (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012).

Jackson and Mazzei (2012:2) suggest that plugging in involves at least three maneuvers:

1. disrupting the theory/practice binary by de-centering each and instead showing how they are constitutive of one another;
2. understanding that the way that theoretical concepts and research questions are used makes different things possible;
3. suggesting that we need to work the same data repeatedly to see what new knowledge may emerge.

Drawing on these three things, I aimed to plug the data that was created in this research into the theory that I engaged with in order to see what each could tell me about the other. In the process of doing this, I found myself returning again and again to the data, reading different parts next to each other, with different theories, and with Sophie, in order to look for new ways of thinking about student and teacher as epistemic agents (Mazzei, 2013; Bozalek and Zembylas, 2016). I therefore read the data in ways that Barad (2007:170) says make it “perpetually open to rearrangements, re-articulations, and other reworkings”. My aim in doing this was to write something that was new (St. Pierre, 2011; Bozalek and Zembylas, 2016). Therefore, similar to the philosophical enquiries (Lipman, 2003), my thinking about the data did not happen in a linear way, but rather it went back and forth as I, and Sophie, re-visited the data and theory many times.

Writing in this way took a long time and commitment from not just me, but also from Sophie. This became an ethical concern that I had not really appreciated at the start of the research. I move onto consider other ethical considerations that were pertinent in this research in the following part of this chapter.

### *Ethical Considerations*

In thinking about my ethical responsibility to the students and Sophie, and to other members of the school community, I applied the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011:14) guidelines, which state that an “ethic of respect and freedom from prejudice regardless of age” should be applied. Similarly, Christensen and James (2008) state that the ethical relationship between the researcher and the participant is the same whether the research is undertaken with an adult or a young person. Therefore, all of my ethical considerations were the same for all the participants, except for in terms of child protection, whereby I followed the school’s policy.

I began by focusing on my ethical responsibilities in terms of what is usual to consider in research: protecting participants’ confidentiality and anonymity, seeking consent and respecting participants’ right to withdrawal, minimising any potential risks or harms, and representing the participants’ voices in the research (BERA, 2011). However, influenced by the ideas of Barad (2007), thinking about ethics as a set of principles to follow was not enough. Barad (2007) argues that researchers should take responsibility and accountability for the “lively relationalities of becoming” of which, as a researcher, we are necessarily a part. This means as a researcher I recognise that I am responsible for the agential cuts that I make, and that I have an obligation to be responsive to the participants whom I am not separate from (Barad, 2007). This way of thinking considers that ontology, epistemology and ethics are already combined as ethical matter. In thinking with Barad’s theory of agential realism, I therefore recognise that what I do, how I decide to create data, how I behave in undertaking this research, and my own multiple-identities are all important ethical considerations. Although I understand that these considerations are entangled, rather than separate, I set my main considerations out one-by-one below in order to provide an overview of how I thought about them.

### *Informed Consent*

In considering informed consent I took steps to ensure all participants in the research understood what the research was for, what would be required of them, and how findings would be reported and used (BERA, 2011:5). This is in keeping with what Pascal and Bertram (2009:253) argue that, “if all our children are to enjoy the rights enshrined in the UNCRC, then research and practice ... needs to fundamentally reshape its paradigm to become more inclusive and participatory”. I also made it very clear that participants could withdraw their consent at any point during the research, and reminded them of this right throughout the research process (Gallagher, 2008).

Even though I sought informed consent, I was concerned about issues of power. Issues of power are particularly pertinent when the research involves marginalised groups (Robinson and Taylor, 2013). I therefore acknowledged that any consent that the students gave was in the context of a power imbalance between adult and child. I was concerned that the students may feel coerced into providing consent simply because I was an adult asking for it (Gallagher, Haywood, Jones and Milne, 2010). I felt this may be particularly true in the context of a school where young people’s conformity and compliance to adult requests is a given (Morrow and Richards, 1996). In schools, many practices serve to maintain and enforce unjust power relationships between teachers and students, and students are therefore used to having their credibility discounted by adults (Murriss, 2013). Furthermore, Dotson (2012) claims that if young people believe their testimony will be misheard or discounted by adults, they may choose not to ask questions about the research and will say that they are happy to participate because they do not think they will be taken seriously if they decline. It was important, therefore, that I provided the students with more than one opportunity to find out about the research, and to ask questions. I hoped this would allow them time to reflect on whether they wanted to be involved, and to see that by providing them with information I was genuinely interested in their ideas.



When seeking informed consent from young people there is the added issue of gatekeeping. This assumes a best interest principle that it is the adult who should decide whether or not young people should engage with research (Kocher and Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2011). The purpose of seeking the views of gatekeepers, for example parents, is therefore for the purpose of protecting young people, but it can also lead to young people's own views about participating in research being superseded (Kocher and Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2011). Hood, Mayall and Oliver (1999:18) suggest that "researchers generally have to accept the status quo, that adults control children's lives, and so they collude with adult permission-giving". However, Coyne (2010) states that this view does not sit well with the idea of young people as beings who are capable of making decisions for themselves, and as having the capacity to exercise their right to participate within the UNCRC. I felt this caused a dilemma as my principles told me that it was enough just to ask the young people for their consent, and to respect that they had voices of their own, and therefore could make their own valid decisions, however, as this research was taking place in a school I also felt it was important to follow research guidelines and seek permission from gatekeepers. As a PhD student I also had to conform to the University requirements on informed consent. I therefore sent a letter to parents/guardians with an overview of the research. I sought active consent from them by asking them to complete a slip at the bottom of the letter indicating whether they consented to their child participating in the research or not. I felt this would avoid potential problems such as them not receiving the letter. Once I had gained consent, I then sought the young people's consent. I felt that this would respect their ability to control their own lives (Alderson and Goodey, 1996). If any child were to not give consent I decided that this would override any consent given by any of the gatekeepers. Therefore the consent of caregivers was not regarded as sufficient.

I had similar ethical concerns about power with Sophie. I felt particularly worried that my role as an advisory teacher for the authority, and her knowledge that I had been

recommended to the school by the director of education to support with ‘improving teaching and learning’, may cause her to feel she could not say no to consenting to be a part of the research. To try to alleviate this concern, I spent time discussing my role with her as both an advisory teacher and as a researcher. As will be explored in more detail in the following three chapters, where I discuss the data I created with the participants, my identity as an advisory teacher did initially make it difficult for me to build a trusting relationship with Sophie. She discussed with me later in the academic year how she had initially seen me as a threat, and as someone who was coming to tell her how to teach. However, as she started to join in the enquiries herself, and as we engaged in many discussions, Sophie explained to me that she developed a different understanding about my role, and saw that we were practitioners who had much to learn from each other. It was only when we started to talk together in this way, and to develop mutual respect for each other, that I felt Sophie really gave informed consent to be a part of the research.

### *Confidentiality*

BERA (2011:7) guidelines state that, “The confidential and anonymous treatment of participants’ data is considered the norm for the conduct of research”. Therefore it was important that I put in place practices to protect the identity of the participants, including asking them to choose pseudonyms. The young people voted to be named after their favourite animal. These animal names are included in the transcripts that are discussed in Chapters 5 – 7, and that can be found in their entirety in the Appendix section. I had to explain that although I could try to protect their identity outside of the school, that in the school context people might be able to work out who they were, particularly the form tutor (who adopted the pseudonym of Sophie), as a number of staff knew I was working with her.

### *PwC as Ethical Practice*

By participating in the PwC enquiries, the students that I worked with would be missing out on one lesson from the new Year 7 Curriculum every week. Although Gorard, Siddiqui and See (2015) suggest that participating in PwC causes no harm to participants, I was concerned that they would be missing out on lessons that the other students were participating in. This was something that the SLT decided to monitor. I was also concerned that the other students in Year 7 would not have the opportunity to participate in any PwC. Therefore, I agreed with the assistant headteacher that I would facilitate enquiries with all of the Year 7 form groups on a rotation so all students would have the opportunity to take part in some enquiries, and all form tutors would have the opportunity to experience their students enquiring together, and this was carried out.

### *Diffraction as an Ethical Tool*

Diffraction is an ethical way of analysing data because it acknowledges that as researchers we take responsibility for making knowledge (Barad, 2007). A diffractive reading of data seeks to do justice to a detailed reading of the intra-actions of different viewpoints, and how they work together to create new ideas (Bozalek and Zembylas, 2016). Choosing to analysis data using a diffractive methodology creates opportunities for ethical and political connections and transformations to come about that were previously unimaginable (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010).

My ethical acknowledgment that I was necessarily a part of the production of knowledge, as I was intra-acted within its creation, recognises the role that the researcher plays in creating what is observed. Barad describes this as an understanding of how “knowing does not come from standing at a distance and representing but rather from a direct material engagement with the world” (Barad, 2007:49) – an ontoepistemological stance. I therefore recognised that it was important to consider how I came to the research with all my

previous and ongoing experiences, and my own beliefs and values (Lenz Taguchi and Palmer, 2013). I therefore recognised that in the production of knowledge, my many identities – teacher, researcher, mother, female, white, heterosexual, and so on, mattered (Lenz Taguchi, 2012; Lenz Taguchi and Palmer, 2013).

### *Conclusion*

In this methodology chapter I have introduced the research setting and the research participants and explained how we worked together in order to create and think about data. I examined how I used methods of observation, PwC, and focused enquiries as diffractive methods in order to think about what took place in the classroom in creative and different ways.

I introduced Jackson and Mazzei's (2013) idea of plugging in as the means through which I came to think about the data and theory alongside each other, and with the participants. In the next three chapters, I present this diffractive analysis. This analysis did not take place at the end of the research process, but rather during the academic year, as a 'wandering amongst' the different transcripts with my research diary, with the participants and with the theories that I found myself drawn to.

## **Chapter 5 – Who Can Know in the Classroom?**

### *Introduction*

In the following three chapters I present my diffractive reading of data created in this research. A diffractive reading allowed me to think about both the linguistic and the material aspects of the Year 7 classroom where the research took place, and to think with childism, epistemic injustice and neo-liberalism.

There are many other areas of the data I could have focused on, therefore what is presented in these three chapters enacts a particular reality at the necessary exclusion of others, what Barad (2007) calls an agential cut. Consequently, I do not aim to provide a narrative of what took place in the classroom over the course of the academic year, but rather to present mine and the participants' thinking about what 'glowed' (MacLure, 2013), what materialdiscursive things seemed particularly important in intra-acting with epistemic relations and classroom practices.

In this first data chapter I focus on my thinking with the first observation. This observation provided me with the opportunity to immerse myself in the classroom as a materialdiscursive space (Lenz Taguchi. 2010). I thought about the identity of teacher and student as phenomena, as emerging through the entanglement of different educational discourses, models of the child, childism, and materialdiscursive classroom practices. I was particularly drawn to Sophie's seating plan, the layout of the furniture, the clock on the wall, the window in the door, the lesson plan, the PowerPoint, Sophie's behaviour management style, and her IRF pattern of talk.

In considering different materialdiscursive intra-actions, I argue that the classroom I observed at the start of the research was largely a space of adult authority and child submission, where there were few opportunities for the young people or Sophie to bring

their own ideas to meaning making. It seemed to be a space where young people's own ways of knowing were not valued, and where the expectation was that good learning is about absorbing content that has already been decided (Matthews, 1980). I thought about how the lesson plan, from the school's Year 7 Curriculum, dictated what Sophie should teach and how, what questions she could ask, and the resources she must use, and how these plans largely prevented her from bringing any of her own knowledge to her practice.

In considering how it was hard for either Sophie or the students to bring their own ideas and ways of knowing to the classroom, I thought about how they may be victims of Fricker's (2007) discriminatory epistemic injustice. I apply Fricker's (2007) criteria for a harm to be epistemically unjust to the experiences of both the students and Sophie in these data chapters, thinking about both testimonial and hermeneutical injustice.

In conclusion, in thinking about this initial observation I consider the classroom as a materialdiscursive space, a space that intra-acts with Sophie's and the students' ability to know. I recognise that all things work together in order to create the whole, but I focus on the intra-actions between 'door-window-desks-chairs-clock-lesson plan-PowerPoint', as these things seemed to be particularly significant in supporting or prohibiting the participants' ability to contribute their knowledge in any meaningful way in this classroom.

### *Navigating the Extracts*

Over the next three chapters, I include extracts from the different transcripts and from my research diary. In order to support the reader to know which extracts are being referred to, I include the date of the transcript/diary entry at the start of each one.

### *The Classroom as a Materialdiscursive Space before PwC*

Observing in the classroom at the start of the academic year helped me to think about it as a materialdiscursive space that intra-acts with the students' and Sophie's ability to bring their own meaning making voices to the classroom. Certain materialdiscursive things stood out as being particularly important. These were:

- The seating plan
- Teacher and student chairs
- The classroom door and the classroom clock
- The Lesson Plan and the PowerPoint
- Classroom Talk

Although I recognise that these things were entangled, and intra-acted teacher and student identities through these entanglements, rather than acting in isolation, I go on to deconstruct them in this chapter in order to think about how each one contributed to the whole.

#### *The Seating Plan*

One of the first things that I was drawn to when I first observed in the classroom was a handwritten seating plan, created by Sophie. It was displayed on the classroom wall, at the front of the class, and was for the purpose of telling the students where they must sit during lessons. Its prominent position at the front suggested its importance in this classroom. The front of the class was lineated by the direction of furniture: a teacher table facing one-way, towards the students, and rows of student desks facing the other (what we have come to regard as a traditional classroom layout that constructs teaching and learning as transmission from teacher to taught (Zophy, 1982)). The seating plan made me think about how Sophie understood her students. It suggested to me that she understood them to be naturally unruly, a deficit understanding of the child, and thereby as incapable of making *good* decisions about where they sit. It also suggested she may hold childist beliefs because

she seemed to feel it was her right as adult to control the young people's bodies by deciding where they would sit. After the lesson I asked Sophie about the seating plan and noted her response in my diary:

**Diary 17.09.10** – *Sophie tells me that she always has a seating plan. She says that she thinks boy-girl-boy-girl works best because she thinks it stops them being able to talk to anyone when they don't get to sit by their friends, and this allows them to get on with what they need to do. She also comments that it is best to keep the 'naughty' ones at the front of the class as it makes it easier to 'keep an eye on them'.*

Sophie's comments suggest that the seating plan is a material representation of her understanding that young people are naturally unruly, and therefore need to be controlled. Sophie talks about seating the students in a way that they might not like, 'boy-girl', and this suggests both a lack of respect for their wishes, and seems to reflect sexist views about how persons of different genders behave towards each other. It also suggests a traditional approach to behaviour management, whereby it is the teacher's role to keep students under control. The seating plan therefore seems to represent Sophie's belief that it is her responsibility to control the students so that they can learn effectively. The idea that they need to be controlled in order to learn suggests that young people are apathetic and disengaged in their learning. This seems to indicate that Sophie holds deficit models of the child, and childist assumptions that justify her in controlling how they occupy the room.

Sophie's comment also indicates that she does not equate student talk with learning. Rather she suggests she believes students learn best when they are quiet as this "allows them to get on with what they need to do". Consequently, this creates the idea that students are not encouraged to share their ideas in this classroom, and that Sophie does not recognise that collaboration is an important way of learning. It seems likely that Sophie has internalised a neo-liberal understanding of learning, seeing it as a largely isolated activity, with success being equated with a race to obtain the largest amount of knowledge (Benjamin and Echeverria, 1992).



The prominent positioning of the seating plan at the front of the class acts as a constant reminder to the young people that they are being controlled. Where they sit and whom they sit by, as well as their physical distance from Sophie, is determined by a plan on a piece of paper; *naughty* children at the front, *good* children at the back – compliance is valued, a clear binary of good/bad student. The seating plan seems to reflect what Wall (2017:15) calls “implicit adult biases”, as reflected in her assumption that the students will misbehave if they are not tightly controlled.

Control is a discourse that I return to a number of times when thinking about this classroom.

After the lesson, I ask one of the students about the seating plan in order to develop a clearer understanding of how the students feel about it, and how it may act on the way that they behave and learn in the classroom. His reply suggests that he recognises that the seating plan acts as a means of controlling him and the other students:

*Diary 17.09.10 – Lion tells me that loads of teachers have seating plans but he thinks that they stop him from being able to learn things from different people. He also says that he feels that teachers always put you next to someone that they know you don't like, or a girl, and this stops you wanting to work with them so you are more likely to just sit there and get on with your work. I ask him what he feels about this and he comments that seating plans may be a good thing because if you are not next to someone you like you are more likely to be quiet and get on with your work.*

Lion makes a number of observations here that help me to understand how the seating plan intra-acts with the way that he is able to behave and learn in the classroom. He seems to recognise that the plan prevents him from learning from his peers because it creates a material barrier between those people that he wants to sit and learn with. By suggesting the seating plan stops him from learning from others, Lion seems to contradict the idea that the students are naturally unruly, and therefore unlikely to make good decisions about who they sit by. In contrast, Lion seems to have a very good understanding of who he learns best with. However, he also seems to understand that there is official learning that takes place in the

classroom, and that he is more likely to learn this when he is not sat beside someone he wants to talk to. I find it interesting that Lion recognises there are two types of learning, learning that is done with others and learning where he is expected to listen compliantly to the teacher. I ask him how he feels he learns best:

*Diary 17.09.10 – Lion tells me that he likes to work with others when he is doing group work because then you can help each other, but when in normal lessons he thinks its best to sit where the teacher says because ‘if you get bored when the teacher is talking you are likely to end up talking to your mates’.*

His comments suggest to me that he recognises the value of collaborative enquiry, a way of working that the construction of the Year 7 Lessons do not seem to create many opportunities for. He also seems to talk about transmission styles of teaching here, which he does not seem to engage with as much, as suggested by his comment that he is more likely to be distracted by someone when the teacher is leading learning, rather than when he is working with his peers.

I find it interesting that Lion sees the seating plan as a potential barrier to him learning collaboratively, whilst Sophie sees it as enabling the students to learn. The creation of the seating plan indicates that Sophie has one understanding of the students’ identity, which seems to be based on an assumption that they are naturally unruly, whereas Lion understands that he learns effectively when he is working with his peers. This seeming contradiction fits with Stables (2008) argument that deficit understandings of young people are so deeply engrained within educational discourses, it is difficult for teachers to think about students in any other way. I wonder, therefore, whether encountering young people through PwC, as persons with much to bring to enquiry, will have any significant impact on Sophie’s beliefs about the young people’s willingness and openness to learning in her class.

A further material thing that I am drawn to are teacher and student chairs.

*Teacher and Student Chairs*

When I sat in the classroom I found myself drawn to the differences in the teacher and the student chairs. In considering the chairs, I think about how the type of chairs, the positioning of the chairs, and the space around the chairs denotes a sense of who has power in this classroom and who is important.

The student chairs are plastic, and many are cracked or defaced with graffiti. They are not very big, and appear too small for some of the students in the class. In contrast the teacher chair is leather, large and looks comfortable. Sophie can sit on it and swivel around, making it easy for her to move about the class. The obvious material differences in the chairs creates the impression that her status is superior to the students. She seems to occupy an identity that the chair suggests makes her more deserving of being comfortable in the classroom. I wonder whether this is because she is the adult in the classroom, or because she is the teacher, or maybe because she is both. Her desire to be comfortable seems to be more important than the students. The difference in chairs therefore seems to be a material representation of childism (Young-Bruehl, 2012) in practice. Sophie's desire to be comfortable in the classroom is met whilst the young people are expected to sit on chairs that look uncomfortable, and are at times inappropriate because of their size.

The student chairs are positioned behind rows of desks that all face the front of the class. The tables are close together and this makes it hard for the students to move around. This set up does not encourage enquiry with anyone other than the person/s that the student is directly sat next to. There is not room, for example, to turn the chairs around so that a student could talk to the person behind them. I argue that the cramped spacing of the tables and chairs intra-act with the students' ability to engage in enquiry with others. They remain largely contained within the spaces that the seating plan has provided for them.

Consequently, the set up of chairs and tables acts to control the students' bodies in a

similar way to the seating plan, and again creates an assumption that students are naturally unruly and therefore need to be controlled.

Sophie's chair faces the opposite way to the students' chairs, and, unlike the student chairs and tables, which are tightly grouped together, Sophie's chair is surrounded by space and is some distance away from the student tables. The positioning of her chair away from the young people acts to distance her from them, and seems to create a sense of them and us. I find myself thinking about the binaries of child/adult and student/teacher and how they are visible in the way that Sophie can freely move around the classroom, whilst the students remain largely contained behind their desks; adult superior to child.

Thinking with the ideas of Foucault on panoptics (MacNaughton, 2005), I also think about the teacher chair as a type of panopticon in the classroom. This is because its position at the front of the class, facing the student desks and chairs, allows Sophie to cast her gaze over the students at all times. Foucault argued that panopticons shape people's identities by the fact they are aware they could be watched at any time. Returning again to the discourse of control, it seems that the seating plan, the close lay out of the student tables and chairs, and the positioning of the teacher chair all intra-act in order to create identities of teacher as authoritarian and students as passive.

Despite having a superior chair to the students, I found the way that Sophie occupied her chair interesting. This was because the way she sat in the chair seemed to contradict her identity as authoritarian. Here I argue that she may appear to the students to be the authoritarian figure, or to have lots of what Fricker refers to as 'identity power', but that the way she sits in her chair suggests she does not feel in control herself. Although the teacher chair was visibly more comfortable than the student chairs, Sophie sat on the edge of it at all times during the lesson. I

considered how this made her appear to be uncomfortable, and literally ‘on edge’. I wondered why this was, and this led me to think more about how she may feel she is intra-acted within this classroom space. Just as the layout of chairs and tables in the classroom allowed her to watch over her students, I thought about how different things in the room may act as a form of surveillance over her. I wondered whether Sophie presented as one thing to the students, as in charge in the classroom, whilst actually being constructed within an identity where she was unconfident in her teaching practice, largely because she was aware that she was being constantly observed and checked up on. I turn to my thinking about how different material things in the class may have intra-acted with Sophie’s identity now.

### *Material Panoptics*

The longer the observation went on in the classroom, the more I became aware that Sophie and the students seemed to be subject to many gazes apart from each other’s. In thinking about what may be surveying Sophie, I became particularly aware of how the lesson plan may act as a form of checking up on what she was doing. As explained in Chapter 4, the Year 7 Curriculum was something new that had been introduced the year that I undertook the data collection. The Year 7 form tutors taught their form group all subjects, as discreet lessons, apart from Maths and PE, for the whole year. Each head of subject had created a series of lesson plans, most of which began with an introductory PowerPoint, and the expectation from the senior leadership team was that these lessons would be delivered by the form teachers so all students across the year group had the same learning experiences. The lesson plans were, therefore, prescriptive; they included the learning objectives the students were expected to meet, the questions that teachers should ask, and the activities that should be undertaken. Watching Sophie teach an RE lesson, sitting on the edge of her chair, I became aware of how she seemed to be out of her comfort zone,

teaching a subject area and content that she was unfamiliar with. Sophie is a modern languages teacher, and I wondered whether she might occupy her chair more confidently if she was teaching a subject that she was familiar with teaching. The fact she was expected to teach someone else's lesson, with someone else's planned resources, and her having the knowledge that the SLT wanted the Year 7 Curriculum to be a success, as they had spent a lot of time, money and resources on it, seemed to place a lot of pressure on her. I became aware of how the lesson plan came with the gaze of many: the expert teacher that had prepared the lesson, the expectations of the senior leadership team that oversaw the Year 7 curriculum, her Year 7 colleagues who were delivering the same curriculum, and ESTYN, and the local education authority who had identified problems in the school. I argue that the lesson plan therefore created a culture of surveillance in the classroom (Ball, 2013), with many people checking up on whether Sophie was delivering the lesson correctly and successfully, and judging her success against other Year 7 teachers.

The lesson plan intra-acted with Sophie's ability to bring her own meaning making voice to the classroom. I considered how the gaze of others, judging her ability to deliver the plan successfully, might cause her to stick to the plan rigidly – as she did in the lesson I observed her teaching. It seemed that Sophie's ideas were not important as what was important had already been decided by the subject expert, constructing Sophie as a deliverer of content. The lesson plan seemed to me to act as a panoptic over Sophie, through her knowledge that people would be expecting her to deliver the lesson as it was set out. I also noted more visible material panoptics in the classroom, including the classroom door and the classroom clock, and I think about these further now.

### *The Classroom Door and Clock*

The classroom door had a round window at eye height and I wondered do people look in to check what is happening in this classroom, observing teacher and taught?

I ask Sophie about it:

*Diary 17.09.10 – Sophie tells me that she thinks that the SLT look through the door window to check that she is teaching in the ‘right’ way.*

I find it interesting that Sophie sees that the hole is a means of checking up on her but not the students, this seems to suggest that she is insecure in her practice, and I wonder whether this is only when she is teaching a subject that she is unfamiliar with, or whether she feels like this even when she is teaching a modern language, her subject specialism. I wonder whether being expected to deliver a subject that she is not an expert in causes Sophie to feel that her professional judgment and practice is being questioned and, as Harleen (2014) suggests, that this make her unconfident and more aware that she may be checked up on to ensure that she is delivering the lesson correctly.

Just as the window in the classroom door seemed to be a visible panoptic in the class, I was also drawn to the clock in the classroom. I noted that throughout the lesson Sophie regularly glanced at the clock on the wall. The clock was large and, like the seating plan, it occupied a prominent position in the classroom at the front. Its size and position indicate time is important in this classroom. The clock seems to act as a constant shadow over everything the participants do, and a constant reminder that everything must happen within a given time. Sophie must deliver the lesson objectives in a set time, and the students must complete their work in a set time. This creates a feeling that there is no time to deviate away from the official knowledge of the lesson plan, no time for enquiry and for the students’ and Sophie’s meaning making voices.

I argue that the clock is also a visual representation of the idea that what is happening in this classroom is a means to an end; an instrumental view of education. What the students learn is for the purpose of them becoming successful adults in the future, and therefore their contributions from their own experiences and ideas, as young people, have no real place or value. Instead, anything that happens in this classroom is for the purpose of more important future events (Stronach and MacLure, 1997), to support the students to *become* adult.

In thinking about how the clock intra-acts with the identities of student and teacher, it seems to act as a visual barrier to both Sophie and the students bringing their own knowledge to the classroom. Sophie presents the content that she is expected to from the lesson plan but gives no time to the students to explore ideas. This may be because she does not recognise the value in seeking their ideas, because the lesson plan does not provide time to do so, or a combination of the both. I think about this further when I observe Sophie introducing the section of the lesson plan where she is expected to go through a PowerPoint slide, which talks about the features of a mosque:

***Observation 1 Sophie*** – *There are a lot of famous mosques around the world for example, the Blue Mosque in Istanbul. Right finally we can move on.*

Sophie makes a statement here, for the purpose of delivering a fact to the students; she does not ask them any questions, or ask them to volunteer any ideas – they are just told that there are lots of famous mosques around the world. The lesson plan does not seem to give her time to intra-act with the students in any other way.

Sophie's presentation of facts from the PowerPoint seems to resonate with Kennedy's (2006) argument that in classrooms where there is a set amount of knowledge that must be delivered there simply is no time for exploration or enquiry.



The constant visual reminder of the clock seems to put pressure on Sophie. I argue that this can be seen in the way that she blames the students when she believes that they are wasting time:

***Observation 1 Sophie*** – *Come on I'm waiting now. I said I am waiting.*

I find it interesting that despite blaming the students for time-wasting a number of times through out the lesson, Sophie does not apologise to them when her actions seem to cause the young people to be waiting for her. At the start of the lesson the students come in and move to their seats, according to the seating plan. They sit in the seats for nearly five minutes before Sophie talks to them. During this time she seems to be having trouble with opening the PowerPoint for the lesson on her computer. When she talks to the students for the first time she begins by telling them to be quiet, because she is now ready to begin she also expects them to be:

***Observation 1 Sophie*** – *Come on everyone settle down, stop it Lion I can see what you are doing. Come on everyone, I have so much to get through in this lesson and you need to concentrate.*

A number of things strike me as interesting in this extract. The first is that Sophie states that the students need to settle down, even though they have actually been ready to start the lesson for the last five minutes. This seems disrespectful and unfair to the students who she blames for her own lack of readiness. I wonder whether she would have blamed other adults if, for example, she was late for a meeting. Her feeling justified in blaming the students again seems to exemplify that childist assumptions impact on the way that she behaves towards them. Sophie seems to feel justified as an adult to blame the young people because they are young people. In contrast, the students do not point out that actually it is she who has wasted their time, and they do not complain when she blames them. This suggests they are used to adults being disrespectful to them in this way.

The second thing that I think about in the above extract is the way that Sophie picks out one student, Lion. This seems unfair to me as I am in the room and I can see that all of the students are talking, and I do not consider that Lion is talking anymore than anyone else. As the observation continues, I realise that Lion is often held out as the *naughty* child in the class. Although he does often seem to be off task, he never seems to be doing anything more than any other student, yet it is him that Sophie nearly always holds out as behaving inappropriately. I examine this in more detail at a later point in this chapter.

Finally, I am interested in the pronouns that Sophie uses in this extract. Sophie talks about how much she has to get through in the lesson. I wonder why she does not use the pronoun 'you', which may indicate that she recognises the students have a lot to learn in the lesson, or 'we' which would suggest they would be learning together. By using 'I', Sophie seems to demonstrate that she feels the pressure of getting through everything that is expected of her in the lesson plan, and also that she sees that the students will learn because of her input. The expectation she places on them is to concentrate, assumedly on what she delivers to them. In this extract, Sophie suggests she sees it is her job to deliver the lesson, and it is the job of the students to listen, absorb and comply with her behaviour expectations.

When thinking about the way Sophie sits in her teacher chair, I suggested that she presents as unconfident in her practice. I argue that this is further exemplified in the way that she sticks rigidly to the lesson plan, rather than deviating away from its prescriptive content when it seems clear to me as an observer, that times given for an activity to be completed are not appropriate. An example of this can be seen when the lesson plan gives the students five minutes to complete a task. The task actually takes most of the students less than a minute to complete; yet Sophie

persists with maintaining the allotted time. She seems to be a technician of the lesson plan, and to be thereby caught up in doing exactly what is expected of her. I argue that this constrains Sophie in exercising her professional judgment to decide when it is important to move away from an activity that does not take as long as the lesson plan allows. Ball (2013:222) talks about teaching having become an “inauthentic practice”, and similarly Jasinski and Lewis (2017:47) call teaching an “empty form of life for the teacher” – both of these commentaries ring true here. Sophie’s identity as teacher seems to be enacted within a discourse of accountability to ensure she does what she is supposed to do, and she seems incapable or unwilling to deviate from what is expected. Nevertheless, to the students her identity is epistemically strong; she is the guardian of the curriculum, charged with dispensing knowledge in their eyes, when in reality the questions she asks and the content she delivers is dictated by the lesson plan. I argue that Sophie’s identity as holder of knowledge is a mirage, she appears as one thing to the young people when actually she has very little power to bring any of her own knowledge to what she teaches and how she teaches in the classroom. This is demonstrated when she introduces the lesson objective for the lesson. Sophie asks one of the students to read the objective out from the PowerPoint on the board, she then says:

***Observation 1 Sophie*** – *Right so that is what we are doing today.*

She does not give time for discussion of the learning objective, rather it is presented as a given for both students and teacher. The lesson objective tells them both what must be taught and what must be learnt, taking away power from both Sophie and the students to add any new ideas to what may be learnt in the lesson. Both Sophie and the students are aware that they will be judged successful in this lesson if the students achieve the lesson objectives. Therefore, there is no need for discussion of the lesson objective or for negotiation by either the student or the teacher as the

lesson plan presents knowledge as something that is fixed and incontestable. I ask

Sophie what she thinks about the lesson plan after the lesson has ended:

*Diary 17.09.10 – Sophie tells me that all teachers must follow the lesson plans because the expert teachers have written them and they know what is best to do in their subjects.*

Sophie talks about the ‘expert’ who has written the lesson plan. I find it interesting that she seems to be equating expertise with holding lots of knowledge about a subject area rather than with being an expert teacher. Being an expert in content knowledge of a subject seems to be important to Sophie. I wonder, therefore, whether her being asked to teach a subject where she says she is not an expert in its content, has impacted negatively on her own understanding of what it is to be a teacher.

Nearly all of the Year 7 Curriculum lesson plans use PowerPoints as a means of presenting information to the students; they are therefore seen as an important learning tool in the school. However, in this classroom the PowerPoint seems to intra-act with Sophie’s capacity to listen to the young people’s ideas, and creates a distance between Sophie and the students. Rather than moving around the classroom, Sophie positions herself in her teacher chair, behind her desk, so that she can use the computer mouse to click onto the next slide. At one point in the lesson, the PowerPoint tells the young people to discuss a picture with the person next to them, and I feel that any pretense that Sophie is in charge of learning in this lesson is dispensed with at this point. Sophie remains in her chair as the students discuss the picture, reading the next slide on the PowerPoint to herself. From where I am sitting I can hear some of the students’ discussions and they raise some interesting ideas and ask each other questions, but Sophie misses this in her pre-occupation with the PowerPoint. Rather than engaging with the students’ lines of enquiry, she is concerned that she knows what content is coming next in the PowerPoint. I wonder

whether Sophie may also fail to listen to her students' ideas and questions because she is afraid that they might ask her something that she does not know the answer to, and that rather than seeing this as an opportunity to learn together she may perceive it as a threat to her perceived authority as expert in the room.

Consequently, Sophie misses the opportunity to learn with the students here. I argue this is an example of Sophie suffering from hermeneutical injustice. She fails to listen to her students, and thereby potentially to learn from and with them, because she is caught up with the PowerPoint that tells her what content to teach, and possibly because her understanding of the students as naturally unruly, might cause her to perceive their questions as a threat to her status as the adult in charge, rather than as a genuine interest in learning.

So far in this chapter I have suggested there is little room for either student or teacher to bring much of their own thinking to meaning making in the classroom I observed. The lesson plan tells Sophie what she must teach, and this dictates what knowledge the students are presented with. The pressure of the classroom clock, and the various panoptics, all seem to prevent any deviation from the lesson plan; there simply is not time, and someone may be watching or checking up that what should be being delivered is being delivered. In addition, Sophie seems to hold deficit understandings of the young people and childist assumptions that she as adult can control how the students behave in the classroom, and what knowledge is shared with them. This classroom appears as a place of transmission of set knowledge, control and childism. I now move onto think about how the pattern of talk between student and teacher further indicates this.

### *Classroom Talk*

I find myself returning to the transcript of this first observation a number of times, and this helps me to come to the conclusion that talk in this classroom seems to be for two main purposes: first for Sophie to maintain control over the students' behaviour, and secondly for Sophie to transmit factual information to the students. Good behaviour is associated with students being quiet and compliant and giving factual answers when nominated to speak; the 'right' answers that Sophie has been primed to look for as listed in the lesson plan. I return to the idea of Davies (2014) who talks about the practice of "listening as normal"; Sophie seems to be listening out for what she is supposed to be listening for, as she delivers content from the lesson plan and then expects the students to be able to give this content back in the form of an answer. This classroom seems to be a place of pre-determined answers, rather than a place for enquiry. Sophie's questions are therefore not for the purpose of starting a dialogue, but rather are in line with an IRF pattern of talk. As examined in Chapter 2, teachers often use the IRF pattern of talk when they are adopting a transmission style of teaching. This pattern of talk is for the purpose of a teacher initiating a question, choosing a student to respond, and then for the teacher to provide feedback. The talk allows Sophie to tightly control what is discussed in the classroom. An example of how Sophie uses an IRF pattern of talk can be seen below:

***Observation 1 Sophie*** – *So what is it Fox? (Initiation)*

***Fox*** – *Wudu miss. (Response)*

***Sophie*** – *Excellent, well done. Thank you for your answer. (Feedback)*

I wondered at the time I undertook this observation what was excellent about Fox's answer. I recall thinking that all Fox had done was repeat a fact which is readily available to anyone in the class, as it is written on the PowerPoint slide. I wondered whether Sophie praises such answers because they do not require anything of her,

and therefore, as Mohr Lone and Burroughs (2016) argue, and as I considered earlier in this chapter, do not challenge her authority as knower.

The IRF pattern of talk creates little space for the students to initiate any dialogue, or to bring anything new to the discussion. However, some of the students do find opportunities to raise their own questions:

**Observation 1 Fox** – *There are only men there as well Miss, where are the women washing their feet?*

**Sophie** - *Come on we discussed this earlier, what did I say? Hands up. What do you think Rabbit?*

**Rabbit** - *Um, well I think you said something like women and men had to do things not together in the mosque and so maybe that is the same or everything because ...*

**Sophie** - *That is a really good answer.*

Despite asking for Rabbit's opinion, which suggests that Sophie is interested in what she has to say, Sophie then shuts any potential enquiry down by interrupting Rabbit, even though she indicates that she has something new to add to the discussion by using the casual connective 'because'. Sophie seems to have taken the first part of Rabbit's answer as the whole, a largely factual answer that refers back to something that Sophie has talked about earlier in the lesson. By closing down Rabbit's voice here, we seem to have an example of epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007). Fox asks a question that suggests he is interested and wants to know why, and Rabbit begins to give a response where she seems to want to give a reason for her ideas. Yet these tentative steps towards enquiry are shut down by Sophie's talk. Rabbit is therefore prevented from offering her testimony to the class, and is, I argue, a victim of epistemic injustice. Again I wonder whether Sophie does not recognise that the students have anything of real relevance to add to the discussion, and therefore once she has heard the answer that she is looking for, when Rabbit gives her a factual response linked to the PowerPoint, she thinks her answer is complete. I think with the ideas of Kocher and Pacini-Ketchabow (2011) who argue that if teachers see young people through childist prejudices, then they are unlikely

to see that they have anything of any real value to bring to knowledge production. Rather they are likely to regard young people as needing to be given knowledge by the expert other, the adult, who can, thereby, guide them to maturity. I also consider how Sophie may interrupt Rabbit because she feels there is no time to talk about anything other than what is set out in the lesson plan. I suggest the lesson plan which sets out what the young people should be learning, intra-acts with Sophie's ability to enquire with her students and causes her to have low expectations of the students' ability to engage with higher order thinking.

Much of Sophie's talk is also for the purpose of behaviour management. I find it interesting that most of the young people seem to accept her position of authority by largely complying with her requests and thereby playing the identity of *good* student. Students who do not comply are treated as deviants, and held up as examples of how students should not behave in the class. Sophie's expectations for behaviour seem to fit with Michaud and Väitalo's (2017) argument that if teachers see teaching as transmission then they want to create students who are quiet and passive in order that they will more readily absorb facts. Sophie praises those that behave in a way she expects, and this makes her expectations clear to the other students:

**Observation 1 Sophie** – *Well done Cat, I am really pleased with the way you are working.*

In the act of making examples of students who exhibit what she recognises as bad behaviour, Sophie resorts to humiliation and threats:

**Observation 1 Sophie** – *Right, come on, ok I think Lion is finally ready to let us start.*

And later:

**Sophie** – *Right, Lion I won't tell you again be quiet now or be warned.*



And later:

**Sophie** – *I have told you once Lion, next time you will be standing at the back of the class.*

I find her tone to be rude and abrupt, and her comments to be sarcastic, judgmental and threatening. Sophie uses threats to dominate Lion, and again I find myself concerned that this student, in particular, seems to be singled out. As I explained earlier in this chapter, I observe that there are a number of times that Lion is off-task during the lesson, and there are times when he interrupts Sophie when she is talking to the class. He is not the only one that does this, yet it only seems to be Lion who is reprimanded. I consider what would happen if peers behaved to each other in this way, blaming one person for the behaviour of a collective, and the word bullying springs to mind. It is common to think of peer to peer bullying – child to child or adult to adult, as can be seen in bullying policies in schools, and professional conduct policies, yet there does not seem to be much understanding of adult bullying child. When an adult teacher uses threats and punishments towards students this is largely regarded as normal. However, Sophie's behaviour towards Lion seems bullish in nature to me. As adult, and particularly as adult teacher, it seems that she can get away with this. Lion, in contrast, has no ability to challenge the way that she speaks to him. When he tries, she responds by punishing him:

**Observation 1 Sophie** – *I have had enough Lion, just get on with what you are supposed to be doing now or you will be moved.*

**Lion** - *That's not fair miss, everyone else is talking too.*

**Sophie** - *You are being very cheeky now, go and move next to Cat she can show you how to behave.*

Lion is not denying his behaviour here, but stating he was not the only one who was talking. Rather than finding himself engaged in a discussion about it, Sophie exerts her authority and punishes him by moving him. Adult authority over child again being demonstrated, even when this authority is being exercised unfairly because Lion is treated differently to others that have behaved in the same way. This

inequality in status of child and adult can also be seen when Sophie talks to the students about respect. Sophie seems to expect respect from the students as her right, whilst it seems that they have to earn her respect through behaving in the compliant way that she expects them to. This seems to reflect childist assumptions that adults naturally deserve respect from young people whilst young people should not expect the same (Young-Bruehl, 2012).

The dominance of adult over child can also be seen in how Sophie's talk dominates in the lesson. In the transcript Sophie says a total of 1,242 words whilst the students say only 189. This shows that there is little space for the children to talk in this classroom, let alone to enter into meaningful dialogue. Time, childist assumptions, deficit models of the child, authoritarian gazes, and the lesson plan all seem to intra-act negatively with the young people's ability to know.

In sum, by being required to teach from the Year 7 lesson plan, I observe Sophie as a teacher who is unconfident in her teaching practice. She is not teaching her area of expertise in this classroom, rather she is delivering someone else's knowledge, and this seems to impact on her confidence as a teacher, as demonstrated by the way that she constantly refers to the lesson plan and the PowerPoint, and also in the nervous way she occupies her chair. The intra-action of the clock and the lesson plan seem to intra-act with Sophie's identity as teacher in a way that, as Lyle (2009:36) contends, is "dominated by a race to cover the curriculum, tick the boxes and get the children through the tests". In the epistemic relations and practices I observe, I argue there is little or no room for anyone to bring their own voices to their learning.

Consequently, I think further about whether both Sophie and the students may be victims of epistemic injustice in this classroom in the following part of this chapter.

### *Teacher, Student and Epistemic Injustice*

Reading my data through Fricker (2007), and considering her argument that an important part of being a person is the ability to share one's own knowledge, suggests to me the presence of epistemic injustice in this classroom, as there is no time for either teacher or student to bring their own meaning making voices to bear on the practice being enacted. I wonder, therefore, whether both Sophie and the students are victims of this form of injustice. As examined in Chapter 2, a condition of Fricker's (2007) first form of discriminatory epistemic injustice, testimonial injustice, is that a person is not listened to because of a prejudice against that person. Therefore it is important to consider whether there exists an identity prejudice against Sophie and/or against the students. If there is no identity prejudice, then Fricker's (2007) criteria for testimonial injustice is not met.

I think about Sophie first. In this classroom, she seems to be positioned as a 'deliverer' of someone else's subject knowledge from the curriculum. The many panoptics in the room, for example the clock and the lesson plan, seem to largely prevent her from bringing anything to the process of teaching and learning, she delivers what she is expected to do as it is set out in the lesson plan. In positioning her as a technician she seems to be stripped of her identity as a professional. Fricker (2007) argues that people are damaged when they are not seen as epistemically trustworthy by others, and I wonder that in telling Sophie what she must teach, whether she has been epistemically damaged in her identity as teacher. However, she is not treated in this way because teachers as a group are the subject of prejudice in society, she is treated in this way because neo-liberal priorities require her to teach the set knowledge of the curriculum, in order to deliver the knowledge that has been decided students need to be successful, enterprising, future adults (Ball, 2013). Rather than being a victim of epistemic injustice, Sophie seems to have become de-

professionalised by the culture of accountability that she finds herself working within. Although she is denied a meaning making voice in this classroom, I argue that she is not a victim of testimonial epistemic injustice.

In thinking about the students and testimonial injustice, I consider how childism causes many teachers to hold stereotypical deficit views of young people, which underestimate what they are capable of bringing to knowledge production. I argue that when Sophie shuts down the voices of the young people, or engages in talk and teaching practices that do not actively encourage the young people to use their voices, that this is partly because she fails to recognise how childist beliefs about young people impact on her ability to recognise them as knowers. This leads me to conclude that the students are victims of testimonial injustice in this classroom.

A consequence of testimonial injustice can be seen in the way that students normally provide minimal answers to Sophie's questions. This seems to mirror the idea that when students are asked closed questions they normally do not invest their time in providing thoughtful feedback, because they have learnt that it is short and factual answers that gain praise from their teachers (Zophy, 1982). In addition, Fricker (2007) argues when people are used to their voices not being heard, they will often stop sharing their ideas. I note that very few students do offer their own opinions or ideas, and I am interested in whether this is because few opportunities are created for them to do so, or because they do not feel that their ideas are relevant or valued, and therefore they choose not to share them. In considering this, I think about whether the young people have learnt that their knowledge is not linked to the real work of the class. Real work seems to be understood by both the students and Sophie as about learning the content that is given to them by the teacher, in this case what is contained within the Year 7 Curriculum lesson plans.

I turn now to a consideration of Fricker's (2007) second form of epistemic injustice, hermeneutical injustice. Hermeneutical injustice occurs when someone is unable to make sense of their experiences because there is a gap in the collective social imagination. As I examined in Chapter 2, Fricker (2007) uses the example of a woman who was sexually harassed. The woman left her job as a consequence of the harassment but found that when she tried to claim benefits that she was unable to because there was no understanding of sexual harassment at the time, and therefore she was deemed to have left her job voluntarily. Applying the idea of hermeneutical injustice to the experiences of young people, I argue that childism represents a lacuna in society's understanding, because as Young-Bruehl (2012) acknowledges, it is a prejudice that continues to remain largely unknown in much of society. Fricker (2007) argues that although a lacuna may impact on all persons, because of a lack of understanding of it, only those that suffer as a consequence of the lacuna are victims of hermeneutical injustice. Consequently, it would appear that only the students who suffer from hermeneutical injustice in this classroom, as it is only young people that may be victims of the prejudice childism. However, Mason (2011) and Beeby (2011) disagree with Fricker and argue that anyone can be a victim of hermeneutical injustice if the lacuna that exists causes them to have a gap in their understanding. Thinking with Mason and Beeby supported my understanding that Sophie may also be a victim of hermeneutical injustice if childism intra-acts with the epistemic relations she enters into with her students. I argue if she holds deficit assumptions about what young people are capable of, she misses out on opportunities to engage them in practices where she could learn with and from them. It is in missed opportunities that I recognise Sophie may also be hermeneutically damaged.

### *Conclusion*

In this first data chapter I have focused on data created in the first observation in the classroom at the start of the academic year. I considered that it is difficult to see how a rights-discourse can be enacted here. Sophie controls the students' bodies through her seating plan, and their minds through what knowledge she shares with them and by failing to follow their own lines of enquiry. I suggested that her teacher chair acts as a panopticon, allowing her to cast her gaze over the students at all times. The young people are positioned as subordinate, her talk to them is often disrespectful, and at times threatening, and she blames them when they run out of time to do things, even though it is often her own conduct that leads to wasted time. Submissive behaviour and factual answers are rewarded, whilst students who question her or challenge her own knowledge are treated as deviant rather than seeking to exercise their right to know. The students' subordinate status is also suggested by the allocation of chairs in the room, whereby the students are expected to sit on uncomfortable, broken chairs that are too small for many of them, and in a space where they have little room to move, whilst Sophie sits in the only comfortable chair in the class. I have suggested these material-discursive things intra-act to create a classroom space that is saturated with childism: the furniture, the way the classroom is set up and the way that Sophie speaks to the young people all suggest that she sees herself as more important than them. Her identity appears to be one of authoritarian and knowledge keeper.

In this classroom I have argued the young people are not able to be epistemic agents as there is no room for their own meaning making voices; and I have suggested that this makes them victims of Fricker's (2007) testimonial and hermeneutical injustice. I have also suggested that the students have internalised this injustice so that they rarely provide extended answers to questions because they recognise that their

thoughts are not welcome, or that there is no time to share their ideas. The way the materialdiscursive things in this classroom intra-act, serves to enact the identity of most students as passive. Students that try to challenge this identity by challenging her comments on their behaviour, are shut down or punished, and this creates a clear binary of good and bad student.

I thought about how the identity of authority that the students see Sophie as occupying may not actually be the identity that she perceives for herself in this classroom. Like the students Sophie also seems to be controlled. She does not feel able to deviate from the lesson plan, and therefore she delivers set knowledge rather than bringing her own meaning making voice to the classroom. Sophie appears unconfident in her identity as teacher which is understandable as she is teaching a subject that she has not taught before, using someone else's teaching materials, and because she sees the teacher's role primarily as a knowledge giver. I have suggested the way she occupies her chair by sitting on the edge throughout the lesson indicates this lack of confidence. She also seems to feel constrained by the limitations of time, as suggested by the way that she constantly looks at the clock throughout the lesson, and by the number of times that she refers to time when talking to the young people. Her sense of being continually observed comes from her belief that the window in the classroom door acts as a means of checking up on her, rather than on the students. I have argued that this intra-acts with her ability to bring her own meaning making voice to the classroom, in a similar way to the students. Like the students, she is constrained in what knowledge she can share as this is dictated by the lesson plan. I have suggested that a lack of understanding of how childism impacts on her practice, and her beliefs about the young people, may cause Sophie to be a victim of hermeneutical injustice because it may cause her to miss out on learning opportunities with the young people.

In the following data chapter, I focus on the first PwC enquiry, both as a transcript and as a stimulus for dialogue in the focused enquiries with Sophie and with 6 of the students.



## Chapter 6 – Enquiring Together

### *Introduction*

In Chapter 5, I presented my diffractive thinking about the first time that I observed in Sophie's classroom. I 'plugged together' data from the transcript of the observation, notes from my diary, and theory that I had engaged with in Chapters 2 and 3, in order to think about the classroom as a materialdiscursive space that intra-acts with the phenomena of student and teacher as knower. In my thinking about the materialdiscursive, I focused on desks and chairs, the classroom clock, the window in the classroom door, the IRF structure of Sophie's talk, and her behaviour management talk, the lesson plan and the PowerPoint. I argued that these things were entangled in the intra-action with both Sophie and the students as largely passive in the classroom. I found Sophie told the students what they needed to learn, whilst at the same time being told what to teach them by the lesson plan. I discussed how Sophie's identity as teacher appeared to be constructed within her belief of the importance of the expert, and how this influenced her behaviour management talk, and her willingness to engage the students in dialogue.

The classroom was presented as a space filled with panoptics that acted on the students' and Sophie's ability to bring their own ideas to the classroom. These included the classroom clock, the lesson plan, and the window in the classroom door. Focusing on Sophie's talk, I considered how it seemed to be for two main purposes: to impart knowledge to the students, and to set behaviour expectations, and thereby control the students. The IRF pattern of talk could be seen in teacher/student dialogue, and I considered how this seemed to intra-act with the students' opportunities to bring their ideas to the classroom, and their willingness to do so, and led to Sophie missing opportunities to hear the young people's ways of knowing.

Thinking with Fricker's (2007) notion of discriminatory epistemic injustice, I thought about whether Sophie and the students were victims in a classroom where the materialdiscursive largely prevented them from bringing their voices to learning. I considered both forms of Fricker's epistemic injustice, testimonial and hermeneutical, and in doing so, I argued that Sophie was not a victim of testimonial injustice because her seeming inability to bring her own knowledge to the class seemed to be a consequence of neo-liberal practices, rather than owing to identity prejudice, which Fricker argues must be the case in testimonial injustice. In contrast, thinking about Young-Bruehl's (2012) idea of childism with the notion of epistemic injustice, I argued that childism was materially and discursively enacted in this classroom and this caused the students to be victims of testimonial injustice. I identified that childist assumptions of the superiority of adult over child could be seen in the comfortable teacher chair and the uncomfortable student chairs, the use of teaching resources that were based on ageist assumptions about what young people are capable of, Sophie's use of threatening behaviour management talk, and the unfair treatment of some students. I recognised that the presence of childism within the collective social imagination, as translated into dominant theories of learning and models of the child (naturally unruly and *tabula rasa*), corrupt Sophie's judgement of her students' credibility because it creates prejudicial stereotypes of them. These prejudicial stereotypes result in the students receiving a credibility deficit that makes it hard for Sophie to recognise the validity of their voices. In considering hermeneutical injustice I argued that both Sophie and the students might be victims because of the existence of a lacuna around the prejudice childism. I argued the lacuna caused Sophie to miss out on opportunities to learn with and from her students, and caused the students to fail to recognise how childism may act on their ability to bring their meaning making voices to their learning, and thereby that all members of the class may be hermeneutically harmed.

In this second data chapter, I think about the first PwC enquiry. This is in order to think about materialdiscursive differences between Sophie's classroom and the PwC classroom. I also consider extracts from my research diary, the transcript of my first focused enquiry with Sophie, and with the 6 students. In the focused enquiries, the participants were asked to select five extracts from the PwC transcript that they found interesting. These extracts acted as stimuli for discussion between the participants and myself.

I begin with a consideration of how teacher and student chairs were positioned differently, and occupied differently, in the classroom I observed Sophie teaching in, and the classroom I facilitated in.

### *Teacher and Student Chairs*

As I examined in Chapter 2, in a traditional classroom students sit behind rows of desks facing the teacher (Zophy, 1982). This arrangement creates a classroom culture of knowledge transmission, the teacher tells and the students listen and absorb (Mohr Lone and Burroughs, 2016). The teacher is able to cast her gaze over the students at all times, keeping an eye to ensure that they are behaving as she expects them to (Ball, 2013). This layout of furniture was the arrangement that I found when I observed in Sophie's classroom. Wegerif (2010) argues when a classroom is set up in this traditional way it does not encourage enquiry because when students sit in rows that all face the same way they can only easily engage with the person that they are sat next to. Therefore, before beginning our first enquiry together as a class, I needed to rearrange the furniture in order that we could sit in a way that would enable and encourage enquiry. Before the start of the lesson, I pushed all the tables to the side and rearranged the chairs from rows to a circle. A circle of chairs is the normal arrangement in a COE; this arrangement allows for all members of the class to respond to each other face-to-face, and thereby encourages members of the community to enquire with each other (Fisher, 2008). At the end of the

lesson, three of the students came up to me and talked to me about the change in the layout of the classroom and I made a note in my diary as it seemed from their comments that they saw the change from rows of chairs to a circle of chairs to be important:

*Diary 8.10.10 – Penguin, Butterfly and Koala came and spoke to me at the end of the lesson. They said that they wanted to tell me how much they liked sitting in a circle. Penguin told me that it was really good to be able to have time to share their ideas together and to not be stuck behind tables where you “always feel cramped in”.*

I found it interesting that these three students approached me about the change in the furniture layout, rather than me going to ask them about it, suggesting that they saw the change as significant. From their comments they recognised that sitting in a circle helped them to share their ideas. I considered, therefore, how changing the chairs from rows to a circle, was an important material change that supported the students to bring their own knowledge to the classroom. I was interested in what Sophie may think about the change, and so I asked her after the enquiry, and I made a note of her response in my diary:

*Diary 8.10.10 – Sophie told me that she thought it was going to be hard work if I have to move the tables and chairs every lesson, and commented that it made a lot of noise.*

In contrast to the students who talked about the change in the layout of the chairs and tables as having a positive impact on their ability to enquire together, Sophie focused on the logistical process of moving the furniture around. I wondered whether this difference indicated that Sophie was less aware of the difference in student talk when chairs were moved from rows to chairs, than the students were. This seemed to fit with what I found in the first observation, where I examined how the students seemed to have a more in-depth awareness of how enquiring together supported their learning, whilst Sophie seemed to equate students talking together with off task behaviour.

Not only was it important to the enquiry that we re-arranged the chairs in a circle, I also felt that it was important that we all sat in the same type of chair. In Sophie’s lesson, Sophie had occupied a superior chair to the students, both in its material status and its position, and this seemed to be a material representation of her elevated status; childism in

practice. I hoped that sitting in the same type of chair might, therefore, help the students and Sophie to recognise that I was not coming to the enquiry with any preconceived ideas that my knowledge was superior to theirs. Instead I wanted to make it clear to all participants that my status was as a co-enquirer, and thereby that I was open to their ideas and to changing my own.

I had assumed that Sophie would also sit in the circle, and I had ensured that there were enough chairs so that all members of the class were accommodated. Therefore I found it interesting that rather than joining the circle, Sophie sat in her teacher chair behind her desk until the last part of the enquiry. I considered whether Sophie sat away from the circle as a nervous observer, intrigued observer, or disinterested observer. I found myself writing down the following in my diary:

*Diary 8.10.10 – Did Sophie sit outside of the circle rather than with us because:*

- *this would enable her to observe what was going on, in the same way that I had observed her;*
- *she wanted to denote her status as authority over me, the visitor in her class, and over the students in her identity as teacher;*
- *she saw that PwC was only for the purpose of supporting the students, not also her;*
- *she wanted to learn and felt that she would learn more by observing than by joining in;*
- *maybe she did she not feel welcome in the circle, and if so what could I do differently to make her feel welcome?;*
- *she did not see that what was happening in the circle was relevant to the real work of the class; and therefore that it was not relevant for her to join in.*

Alongside considering these thoughts, I wondered what message Sophie was giving to the young people by choosing to sit apart from them in the enquiry, and in the ‘teacher’ chair that had so obviously marked her out as different, and as superior, when I had observed her teaching. I wondered whether the students might believe that her position in her teacher chair had been taken as a means to intimidate them to behave in the way that she expected them to in *her* classroom, a panoptic reminder of her expectations. I did not ask them about this at the time, but reflecting on this part of the transcript with my thoughts in my research diary at a later point, I wished that I had.

In Chapter 5, I discussed how Sophie sat on the edge of her chair when she was teaching. I suggested that this indicated that she was nervous and unconfident, in her identity as teacher, or unconfident in her ability to deliver someone else's lesson (from the Year 7 Curriculum). When Sophie sat in her chair during the PwC enquiry I noted that she sat back fully and this made her appear to be comfortable and confident. I include the note that I made about this difference below:

***Diary 8.10.10** – When I observed Sophie teaching I noticed that she never sat back in her chair. Instead she sat on the edge of it at all times. This suggested to me that she was not relaxed and maybe not confident. In contrast, during the enquiry she sits back in her chair. This suggests to me that she is more confident observing and I wondered whether this seemed to resonate more with her understanding of her role as authoritarian. I also thought about how she may not see that what I was doing was relevant to the real work of the class, and therefore was not of any threat/challenge to her. Maybe she is interested or maybe she is disinterested in what takes place in the circle.*

I noticed that Sophie had a pad of paper and a pen in front of her on her desk. After the enquiry I asked her about this. She said she was happy to show me the pad and I made a note in my diary of what she had written:

***Diary 8.10.10** – There was a list of three children's names on the pad. I asked her why she had written down these three names and she explained that they had all been talking when they shouldn't be and that therefore they would need to miss their break.*

I have returned to this diary extract many times. When I had noticed that Sophie had the pen and pad on the desk I had assumed that she wanted it so that she could make notes on what was happening in the enquiry. In contrast, it seemed to be for the purpose of observing any student that was not behaving as she expected them to, in order to punish them. I wondered, therefore, whether the importance of students being *good* is deeply engrained within her ontological beliefs about young people, and whether this belief acts to blind her to what else may be happening in the classroom. Sophie seems to enact in her practice the thinking of people like Bennett (2010) who, as I examined in Chapter 2, suggests that it is important that teachers establish their dominance in order to seek compliance so that they can teach more effectively. This diary extract demonstrated again that Sophie failed to recognise the value of enquiring with the young people in her class.

She did not write down anything the students said, any questions or anything she wanted to follow up with the students, instead just three names.

Returning to thinking about the arrangement of chairs in a circle, I think about how the students spoke to me and to each other. In my first observation, I noticed that whenever the students talked that their talk was always directed towards Sophie. Her IRF pattern of talk, where she initiated a question with the expectation of student response, seemed to encourage this. The way that the tables and chairs were arranged in rows facing forward also made it hard for the students to direct their answers to anyone other than Sophie, or the person sat next to them (Wegerif, 2010). By re-arranging the chairs in a circle, where participants could make eye contact with any other member of the class, I expected that the students would direct their talk to a range of different members of the circle. I was therefore surprised that every time someone spoke they directed their questions or responses to me. I wondered whether this indicated that they had internalised an understanding of learning as being something that happens with the teacher's approval. I considered how their seeming deference to the teacher/to me may be a consequence of childism, that is a belief that their ideas as young people need to be validated by an adult before their relevance is acknowledged. I also wondered if this indicated that they recognise that she has all the answers and, therefore, that they have nothing to teach her. As the adult in the room they seemed to regard me in the same light, and I wondered whether the classroom routines (as I observed when Sophie was teaching) have caused them to be unconfident in their own ideas, and caused them to have taken on deficit stereotypes of themselves as learners.

Another material aspect of the class that I kept returning to in Chapter 5, and now in my diffractive reading of the data selected for this chapter, was the classroom clock. As previously described in Chapter 5, the classroom clock was large and positioned at the front of the class. I suggested that its size and position made time seem important in this

classroom. In the next section, I think in more detail about how the clock intra-acted with the identities of teacher and student when I enquired with them, and also thought about how it acted on me in my role as facilitator.

### *The Classroom Clock*

In Chapter 5, I examined how the clock seemed to act as a panopticon, as a constant reminder to Sophie that she must complete everything on the lesson plan within a given time, and to the students that they must complete the tasks they were expected to on time. I also suggested that the clock acted as a means of de-professionalising Sophie in her identity as teacher, as she stuck rigidly to the times specified in the lesson plan, even when it seemed clear to me as an observer that the students had completed a task much more quickly than the lesson plan allowed for. I noticed that Sophie glanced at the clock many times in the lesson, and this, in particular, seemed to suggest that she felt accountable to its gaze. The clock also seemed to act on how much time there was for the students' own meaning making voices in the lesson, because Sophie shut down talk if it deviated them away from the content of the lesson plan; there simply was not time.

I found it interesting that I also found myself feeling accountable to the clock when I enquired with the students. Sophie had told me before the lesson began that the enquiry must end by 10:30, as this was when break time began. In my own practice as a primary school teacher, I have never stuck rigidly to lesson times, often carrying an enquiry on after a break/lunchtime. Therefore, I found myself quite flustered by having to stick to a rigid time slot for enquiry. I felt that I had to draw the dialogue to an end before students were able to make all of the contributions that they wanted. I became conscious that just like Sophie, I kept looking at the clock throughout the enquiry. I felt that being tied to the clock in this way stopped me from following the enquiry to where it may have gone and I found myself becoming frustrated. Consequently, the clock acted on my identity as



facilitator, largely preventing me from enquiring in the way that I was used to. My frustration influenced my thinking about whether Sophie teaches in the way that she does because this enables her to cover what she must in the neo-liberal structure of a lesson plan, or whether it is because she does not value enquiry as a means of learning. I talked to Sophie about this in our first focused enquiry. I found it interesting that she actually did seem to recognise the value of enquiry, which is not what I had thought when I first observed her teaching. However, she also stated that there is no time for enquiry within the lessons that she is required to teach:

***Focused Enquiry Sophie*** – *I think they like having time to discuss things and to talk about things they are interested in, it a good opportunity for them to do this because with trying to fit everything into the school day there is not much time to do this really, which is a shame.*

***Me*** – *Do you think they learn anything from discussing things as a group that they are particularly interested in?*

***Sophie*** – *Well I think they develop confidence in their own ideas and they are able to think about whether their ideas are similar or different to their friends and this is important because if they think that their friends think the same as them then they are more likely to trust in their views. It is just um a shame, really, that there is not time to do this more. I do agree with them doing more discussing but we have to be realistic, you know.*

Although Sophie seems to recognise the importance of enquiry for learning here, she clarifies this within the context of the classroom, where she indicates that it is the way she is expected to teach that make it very difficult for her to give time to enquiry. It seems here that it is not childist assumptions that influence Sophie's willingness to engage with her students in enquiry, but rather the way she is expected to teach (neo-liberal educational priorities). However, Sophie goes on to talk about how she sees her role as a teacher, and here, I argue, we see how deeply embedded childist assumptions impact on her understanding of her role. Rather than recognising that her job is to support the young people to use their own meaning making voices, she seems to recognise that she should help them to learn what adults have determined is appropriate for them to learn (the knowledge of the curriculum):

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie*** – *Well um you know you have to be realistic, you have a lot to fit in and nice lessons like philosophy are really in addition, they can't be the main way that the children learn because that isn't what happens in schools. There is certainly a lot*

*that they need to learn and this requires them getting on with it to a certain extent and I don't think that philosophy is about getting them to know things although I do think that it is very interesting.*

In Sophie's answers it seems that there are two things that act on her ability or willingness to enquire with the students: the constraints of time and her understanding of the purpose of schools as being to help young people to learn what "they need to learn". She returns to the idea that she feels limited by time to enquire with the students when we talk about training that the school has provided for her and the other Year 7 teachers. Sophie explains that they have had training on using open questions, and states that they are encouraged to not ask questions which require a yes or no or short answer:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie*** – *They said you shouldn't ask questions when the answer is only yes or no or another one word answer, a closed question, that type. But we did try to explain that there isn't really time to ask lots of different questions which have got long answers because you have got an awful lot to get through in every lesson and if you wasted too much time asking questions then you would never get past the first part of the lesson. I think that the teachers who are not that competent are the ones that focus on these longer answer type questions because then they can waste time while the children just talk and then they don't get onto doing anything in their books so there is less to mark.*

I find it interesting that in this extract, Sophie seems to equate the use of open questions with poor teaching. This further indicated to me that she equates her role as teacher with supporting the young people to learn content, a transmitter of pre-determined knowledge. I considered how this intra-acts her as an epistemic agent in the classroom. If Sophie understands that it is her role to deliver pre-determined content, and in the case of the Year 7 Curriculum, lessons prepared by another teacher who is a subject specialist, it is clear how hard it is for her to bring much of herself to her practice.

Sophie talks about the use of questions at another point in our focused enquiry:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie*** – *I do think that it is really important to ask questions because then you can test what the children have learnt but I think that if you do too much of this partner share business then you are in danger of just letting them go off on a tangent and then you lose control again.*

As with other extracts, I found myself returning to these words many times over. Sophie suggests here that if students are asked to enquire with their peers "this partner share

business” that they will go off on a tangent. This illuminated for me her understanding of the students as naturally unruly, and her lack of epistemic trust in them as knowers (Murriss, 2013b). This further illustrates how she seems to hold deficit beliefs about them as naturally unruly. She does not seem to see that they have any innate desire to learn. Sophie’s seeming lack of trust in the students as knowers can also be seen in the way that she is condescending when the students do try to offer their ideas. She talks about a lesson that she has previously taught where she asked the students to consider what it might be like to live in a Norman Castle.

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – Oh yes one girl said that she would like to [live in a Norman Castle] and she said that she would like to because she likes the idea of being able to see for miles across the land ... yes that was it, I thought this was a nice answer.*

Haynes and Murriss (2012) suggest that teachers who do not recognise the validity of their students’ ideas may be condescending or patronising when their students try to offer their opinions, and I find this to be the case here. I wonder what is ‘nice’ about the student’s answer, and think about why Sophie did not dig deeper in order to find out more about what this student meant. It seems that she does not believe that the student may actually have had something of relevance to add to the discussion here, or maybe this is another example of how there is no time to explore student responses within the accountability gaze of the clock. Sophie does not seem to make time for the young people to question and enquire in her classroom because she works within the time constraints of the lesson plan, because she understands that the young people are naturally unruly and therefore equates enquiry with a potential lack of control over naturally unruly bodies, and because childist beliefs seem to impact on her ability to value the students’ attempts to bring their knowledge to the classroom. I wonder, in addition, whether Sophie’s lack of ability to bring her own ideas to knowledge production, means that she has internalised a view of learning in the classroom as the delivery of knowledge, rather than enquiry.

When I talk with the students in our first focused enquiry they seem to recognise that there are limited opportunities for them to bring their own ideas to the class. They believe this is because there is not time to do so within the constraints of the lesson:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Lion** – ... the teacher has to get a lot into the lesson and finish lots so you have to really think about what to say so that it doesn't waste the lesson. It's a bit annoying sometimes but its cause there is lots to do ...*

Lion seems to recognise that he is limited as an epistemic agent in the classroom in his comments here. He is evidently conscious of being selective about what he says in order that he does not waste the lesson. I wonder whether Lion is talking about things that do not directly link to the lesson objective or content, as Mohr Lone and Burroughs (2016) argue that teachers and students are made accountable to these. Just as Sophie seems to work within the gaze of the lesson plan, and to be accountable to it, Lion's comments here suggest that the students have taken on an understanding that learning in the classroom is about what the lesson plan tells them they must learn.

In thinking further about the lesson plan as a means of prohibiting students and teachers from bringing their knowledge to the classroom, I thought about the resources that Sophie is expected to use in order to deliver the Year 7 lessons, and whether these act as a material barrier to Sophie bringing her meaning making voice to her practice, or her ability to hear the students' voices. When I observed in Sophie's classroom, the main teaching resource, as determined by the lesson plan, was a PowerPoint. Sophie tells me that nearly all of the lessons in the Year 7 Curriculum are based around a PowerPoint:

***Diary 17.09.10** – talking after the first lesson, Sophie tells me that she finds the PowerPoint's useful for 3 main reasons: they contain the content you need to teach, they have the learning objectives on them so everyone knows what they need to learn, and they make the lesson more interesting because they have lots of pictures on and sometimes a video clip.*

In this extract Sophie seems to equate the Power Points as being for the purpose of sharing content with the students, and she suggests that she finds them interesting because they include pictures/video clips. However, thinking about this extract made me wonder how

engaging Power Points can be if nearly all lessons use them. In contrast, in my observation of Sophie using the PowerPoint, I did not find Sophie or the students to be engaged. I think more about this in the next section, alongside my use of a picturebook as the stimulus for the first PwC enquiry. I do this in order to consider how the PowerPoint and the picturebook intra-act differently with the students' and Sophie's identity as knowers.

### *The PwC Stimulus and the PowerPoint*

In this first PwC enquiry I use *Willy the Wimp* (Browne, 2008), a picture book written by Anthony Browne. I often use Browne's books as a stimulus for PwC seeing them as "exciting, evoke[ing] curiosity and awaken[ing] the imagination" (Calvert, 2007:320). Browne texts are widely recommended as stimuli for PwC (for example see, Haynes and Murriss, 2012). *Willy the Wimp* tells the story of a kind and gentle young gorilla. In the story Willy finds himself being bullied by a suburban gang of gorillas. In an attempt to stop them, Willy answers a bodybuilding advert, and he grows big and strong with the aim that no one will call him a wimp again. When working with this book in the past with students, they have come up with a range of questions linked to different themes and philosophical principles including fairness, identity and friendship.

I think about how the PowerPoint and the picturebook are used as teaching resources in the classroom. In particular, I consider how they intra-act differently with Sophie and the students, and how they either encourage or prohibit Sophie and the students from bringing their own knowledge to the classroom.

One of the first things I consider is how the PowerPoint was used in Sophie's classroom, and how the picturebook was used in the PwC enquiry. I find that there is a real difference with the way that the students and the teacher/facilitator can physically interact with the teaching resource. Thinking about the PowerPoint first, I argue that there is little

opportunity for the students to physically interact with it. They are not able to, for example touch the resource, to change the slide or to change its content. Rather it seems to be a resource that is a means for sharing content only. The slides contain written information, some pictures and some questions. The questions require little thinking from the students; rather they are more in the form of a comprehension, expecting the students to find the information they need to successfully answer the questions written on the PowerPoint slides. Similarly, Sophie has little ability to interact with the PowerPoint presentation. Although she is able to manipulate which slide is shown, by clicking on the mouse, she must follow them in order if she is to follow the order of the lesson plan, which she does. Sophie has not written the PowerPoint, and does not seem to be familiar with it, therefore she simply delivers it as content that she does not seem confident about.

Thinking about the picturebook, I argue that it provides the participants, and myself as facilitator, with very different opportunities to interact with it than the PowerPoint does. When I introduce the book *Willy the Wimp*, I hand it around so that everyone has an opportunity to physically engage with it, to touch it and to look closely at the words and illustrations. The book is passed around each member of the circle, some students chose to read a page and some just look at the picture and then hand it on. Sharing the book in this way reflects Lipman's (2003) philosophy that his philosophical novels should always be read around a circle, with everyone having a copy, which denotes respect for everyone as they all have equal access to the resource. Although I only had one copy of the book, because resourcing issues would not allow for more than one copy, handing the book around the circle seemed to be in keeping with the importance that Lipman placed on everyone having equal access to a resource. In contrast to PowerPoints that are used as a teaching tool in the Year 7 lesson plans, there are no pre-determined questions written in the picturebook. This means that no one has already decided what we will talk about. I argue that this means that the picturebook creates more equality over knowledge

production in the classroom than the PowerPoint allows for. The Power Point creates the idea that knowledge is something that is transmitted from the adult to the child, and as something that is already decided, in contrast to the picturebook that creates the idea that all ideas are welcome. The PowerPoint starts with a learning objective which tells the teacher what she must teach and the students what they are expected to learn, creating, I argue, a binary of teller and taught, adult and child. In contrast, the picturebook leaves learning wide open. Neither teacher nor student knows what should be learnt in the enquiry, it depends on what questions the stimulus inspires the students to generate. The teacher and the students may bring their different perspectives to their interpretation of and thinking with the pictures, and in this meeting together of ideas they may generate something new (Haynes and Murriss, 2011). The picturebook therefore creates the opportunity for child and adult to work together in a way that the PowerPoint actively discourages.

When I thought about the use of the PowerPoint as stimulus, and the way it seemed to encourage the young people to give factual and short answers, I found it interesting that when presented with a picturebook that the young people's answers were much more detailed, for example:

***PwC Enquiry 1 Giraffe*** – *Well I think that he's [Willy] got to stick up for himself because he wasn't small anymore so he could do what he wanted to do. If people are big, like tall and strong, then they have more chance to do what they want to others because they can intimidate them. If you are small then you can't really scare people.* [For full transcript of this enquiry see Appendix 3].

And later,

***Guinea Pig*** – *Yeah but the difference is that people choose to be bad or good like if even if something is bad in their life they don't have to be mean cause not everyone is mean that has something bad in their life so they are making a bad choice.*

The students provide explanations for their answers and demonstrate some of Kennedy's (2013) philosophical strategies from his toolbox of philosophical moves even in this, the first enquiry of the year; Giraffe uses an 'if then' argument and Guinea Pig uses a 'counter

example'. This really contrasts with the answers that students give in Sophie's lesson with the PowerPoint as stimulus. In Sophie's lesson most of the students provide short and factual answers to the questions that are asked. I wonder whether this is because, as suggested in Chapter 5, the IRF structure of talk, and her communication to them about what makes a good student, seems to encourage them to give short, factual answers, as these are the answers that receive Sophie's praise. I considered in Chapter 5 whether a self-fulfilling prophecy (Fricker, 2007) had been created whereby the students did not try to contribute more in their answers, because they had learnt that such answers were not valued in the class, or encouraged because of a lack of time. First, I thought about how an IRF structure of talk, teacher expectations of students, and the use of stimuli that does not engage thinking, can cause students to stop offering their ideas; and secondly I thought about how when students are provided with the opportunity to enquire about things they have decided they want to talk about they are able to enquire, even without being shown or 'trained' to do so. This seems to indicate very clearly Matthews' (1994) and others' arguments (see Chapter three, section on The New Sociology of Childhood and the Philosophy of Childhood) that young people are natural epistemic agents, and when given the opportunity to do so they are capable of engaging in sophisticated enquiry.

Following my thinking about how the participants interacted differently with the PowerPoint and the picturebook, and how the PowerPoint seemed to limit young people's ways of knowing, whilst the picturebook encouraged them, the teaching stimulus that is used seems important in intra-acting student and teacher as knowers.

When reading the transcript from the observation of Sophie teaching, and the transcript of the first PwC enquiry, I was prompted to think about control, as this seemed to be a strong discourse that ran throughout my diffractive analysis of my initial observation. One way that this control was articulated was through the way that Sophie acted on what the students could say and do. Although Sophie did not have a list of rules displayed on her



wall, other materialdiscursive things dictated what students were and were not allowed to do. This included the seating plan which told the students where Sophie expected them to sit, and her talk where she praised students who were quiet and who answered her questions with short and factual responses, and threatened those who deviated from the model of student that she expected. Within the IRF structure, Sophie controlled talk by nominating who could talk and when. Therefore, although not visibly present, the rules of the class were evidently Sophie's rules. I argue that this created an undemocratic classroom where adult could do to child what she deemed to be appropriate, and where child had little or no means of influence. In an undemocratic environment it is hard to see how young people's views can come to be regarded as different to but of equal value to adults' ways of knowing, a view that is held by advocates of the Philosophy of Childhood (for example see, Matthews, 1994). In order to be able to value the young people's ways of knowing in enquiry, it was therefore important that the community created a democratic space in the classroom. One of the ways this was done was by creating the rules for the community together. This put the students' ideas and thinking about what they considered important for our enquiries to be successful, to be fundamental to how the community operated. I go on to think about rules in Sophie's classroom, and rules in the PwC classroom in more detail below.

### *Rules*

The rules in the enquiry were not my rules. Rather they were our rules, created by the students and me together using democratic voting processes. Creating the rules together was a way of showing that I respected their ideas. I hoped, as Kennedy (2004) suggests, that the rules would create a sense of joint ownership and responsibility for what happened in the community. We had decided on the rules as a class community the week before the first full PwC enquiry. Although Sophie had been invited to input into the rules, she had chosen to use the time that we discussed and voted on the rules as a community to get

ready for her next lesson. She told me after the lesson that although she had not joined in with the discussion that she had been listening to what we were talking about. I made a note of what she said in my diary:

***Diary 1.10.10** – Sophie tells me that she did not join in with agreeing on the rules because she was interested in what the students might come up with on their own. She thought it might be “quite funny” to see what they thought was important.*

The words “quite funny” were a direct quotation of what Sophie said to me. Her response here made me think again about how adult teachers can be condescending about the ideas and opinions of young people. Sophie’s comment suggests she does not think that the young people will be capable of coming up with rules that are relevant to the needs of the classroom. This further suggests that childist assumptions about the abilities of young people to make meaningful contributions are embedded in her attitudes towards them. The rules that we agreed on as a class community were:

1. Only one person can talk at a time
2. The person that is talking picks the next person to talk
3. Put your hand into the circle if you want to share something
4. No one should be rude or laugh at other people’s ideas
5. Listen to other people when they are talking

Although Sophie had no input into the rules, and even though she did not sit within the community when we first enquired together, during this first full enquiry she reminds the students to follow the rules that they have created:

***PwC Enquiry 1 Sophie** – You didn’t have your hand in the circle so you shouldn’t have talked!*

I wonder whether she does this as a means of exerting her authority in the classroom or whether she does it in order to support the community to enquire together. I find it interesting that she obviously knows what the rules are, as she reminds the students to follow them, yet she fails to follow the community’s rules herself. This can be seen when Leopard puts her hand into the circle indicating she wants to add something to the

discussion, and I ask her if she would like to share her thoughts but Sophie interjects and gives her opinion instead:

***PwC Enquiry 1 Me** – Thank you for that. Does anyone else have anything else they would like to add to the point that was made that bullies are always mean? Leopard?*

***Sophie** – Well as a teacher you certainly see lots of mean behaviour from children to each other but I don't think that people are totally nasty it may be that they have negative things going on at home which take up all their focus, and then they react in negative ways towards others then as a coping strategy; I will be horrid to you so that I can cope when people are being horrible to me, I suppose.*

By speaking before the student, Sophie suggests that she views her ideas as more valuable than the students and therefore she feels justified in giving her opinion first. I wonder whether this is linked to what I discussed in Chapter 5, where I considered whether being the expert was important to her identity of teacher. As expert she may expect to be the arbiter of the 'right answer' in the eyes of the students. However, I also consider whether Sophie relishes the opportunity to bring her own ideas to the classroom. In a similar way to the students, Sophie may feel liberated in the PwC classroom as a space where her opinions are welcomed and encouraged.

Returning again to my thinking about how Sophie tells a student off for breaking one of the community rules, and then goes on to break a rule herself, it seems that Sophie does not think that the rules are applicable to her. In doing so she sets herself aside from the students, and she communicates to them that she does not respect their rules. This seems to be indicative of the fact that she does not seem to respect their ideas, and is an example of how the adult is seen as more important than the child in her eyes. My thinking about this is taken further in my focused enquiry with the six students, where one of the extracts that they select to talk about is around rules. They talk about how they think it is unfair when Sophie does not follow the rules that they have agreed as a class:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Panda** – Yeah that really annoys me when they [teachers] do that but like you can't say anything to them cause then you are just being rude but then I think they are not fair sometimes to us cause they make all the rules and we have to follow them but then they don't.*

**Giraffe** – *Yeah I think that they should follow the rules too.*

**Lion** – *Yeah and we might be like more nice to them if they didn't shout at us all the time and like ask us to do stuff in a nice way like that would be better, yeah it would cause then we would want to be nice to them because they would be nice to us and that would be fairer.*

I find it interesting that although the young people talk about this being unfair, in the following extract from the same focused enquiry, the students suggest that they have internalised an understanding that it is the norm for teachers to make up the rules, but to not have to follow rules themselves:

**Focused Enquiry 1 Lion** – *But that's like normal cause teachers always tell you what to do.*

**Butterfly** – *Cause they are the teachers.*

**Panda** – *Yeah they know what we are doing and ...*

**Butterfly** – *(interrupts) yeah they are in charge.*

The students here suggest that they are used to being treated by teachers in this way, but they also recognise that this is what teachers should do because they are the teacher. The students seem to accept Sophie's authority. I wonder, therefore, whether they follow Sophie's rules out of respect for her or because they know that this is what is required of them. Lion shows that he sees that I treat them differently when I enquire with them:

**Focused Enquiry 1 Lion** – *Cause I thought it was interesting that you were nicer to us than the teacher, cause like she got cross with us and you didn't.*

**Butterfly** – *Well like you were not bossing us around but Miss was.*

**Rabbit** – *Yeah but she is in charge of the class so it is her job and like, not saying nothing against you like, but you ain't in charge so like you can be nice to us and that's ok.*

**Butterfly** – *Yeah but he ... ur we shouldn't tell each other what to do only the teacher can do this.*

**Me** – *Why do you think the teacher can tell you what to do?*

**Lion** – *Cause they are in charge. Like that's their job.*

**Giraffe** – *Yeah, to be in charge so that we learn stuff like important stuff like maths. If we didn't listen and just talked all the time then we would miss how to do things and we couldn't do well in class then.*

In this extract, the students suggest that they recognise that I treat them with more respect than Sophie does. However, they also seem to understand that I can do this because I am not the teacher. They indicate in their response that they think that Sophie is legitimised in the way that she behaves with them, and in her use of behaviour management techniques because this is the role that she occupies in the classroom as teacher. The students'

understanding that it is the job of Sophie to control them, is mirrored in Sophie's

understanding of her role:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – ... when the students talk over each other this is just another example of the sorts of attitudes that we have to overcome before we can get the children to behave in class so that they can actually learn anything.*

Sophie's response here indicates that she understands the students as being naturally unruly, as she says that they must be taught how to behave before they can learn anything.

She repeats the idea that she sees that it is important that the young people need to be helped to behave:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – ... you have to sort out behavior because they just all mess around unless they know that you are in charge from the beginning. It's that whole thing of 'be mean to be kind' because once you have got them where you want and need them to be then you can start to do some really good stuff with them.*

And later:

***Sophie** – They need firm but fair rules so that they know how to behave.*

I am interested in how my role as facilitator may encourage different relationships between the students and myself, relationships that are not based on the authority of me as adult over them as young people, but rather based on democratic values where we demonstrate equal respect for the ideas of each other. I turn to my consideration of this now.

### *Classroom Relations*

In Chapter 5, I thought about how much of Sophie's talk seemed to be for the purpose of controlling both the young people's bodies and their minds. I examined how Sophie used IRF patterns of talk and behaviour management strategies, which made it clear to the students what type of student responses were expected and welcomed. I also thought about how classroom relationships between student and teacher developed within the gaze of panoptics, such as the classroom clock and the lesson plan, and I discussed how these created an overarching discourse of control.

In contrast, when I worked with the young people, I wanted to create a discourse of democracy. Following Articles 28 and 29 of the UNCRC, which talk about the need to treat young people with dignity and respect, I argue that it is essential if we are to recognise young people as having the right to a voice (Article 12), we create opportunities that empower them to contribute. I was therefore interested in how PwC may create opportunities for us to talk together as a democratic community, in ways that may empower the students to contribute their own ways of knowing to the learning that took place.

Sophie's apparent need to control the class can be seen in the way that she tried to resist my attempts to introduce democratic practices into the classroom. When considering how we could choose one of the questions that the students had come up with for our enquiry, I talked to the students about different options for how we could vote for a question democratically. I suggested that one way we could vote was that everyone could have two votes which they could either allocate to one question, or they could split over two questions. Sophie interjected at this point stating that she thought we should keep it simple so that everyone only has one vote:

***PwC Enquiry 1 Sophie*** – *I think that we should have one vote or it gets too complicated.*

Sophie does not seem to trust that the young people will be able to decide how it is best that they vote for themselves, rather she needs to tell them how they should do it. She also seems to assume that the students will not be capable of exercising two votes, and I wonder whether she again underestimates what they are capable of here.

At the end of the enquiry Sophie also seems to use the opportunity of 'last words' to assert her authority as 'in charge'. A stone is passed around the circle so that all members of the

class have the opportunity to share any final words.<sup>1</sup> Although Sophie does not sit with us in the circle, she stands up from her teacher chair at this point, walks over to the circle and takes the stone from one of the students as it is being passed around. Despite not joining us in the circle, she still feels that it is her place and right to give her opinions. Sophie also seems to exert her authority as expert in the room by providing a long answer in this last section of the enquiry, whilst all of the students provide short comments, which is more in keeping with the purpose of ‘last thoughts’:

***PwC Enquiry 1 Sophie** – I don’t think that just because you are small you will get bullied; I think that bullies pick on vulnerabilities and if someone is vulnerable about their size they could pick up on this but it is not size that matters but confidence. Also the idea about whether he is a bully or not because he is friends with the other children then I think this is really interesting, and I would have liked to look at this more because yes he might not have committed the actual act but he is guilty by association. You know when you do not intervene when you morally should have done, it would be interesting to talk about this again.*

By providing this extended response, Sophie seems to be asserting her epistemic superiority over the rest of the community, including me. By giving such an extended answer, there is no time for anyone else to say anything and so she has the ‘last word’ in the enquiry, in a very authoritative way. I feel that in doing this it is made very clear to the students who is ‘right’ in the class.

In Chapter 5, I argued that talk in Sophie’s lesson positioned her as in charge of what was learnt and this acted on the young people’s ability to share their own ideas. I have discussed in this chapter how Sophie seemed to continue to try to exert control in the enquiry through interjecting before students could talk, by failing to follow the rules that the students have created for the community, and by having the last words in the community. However, I noted earlier in this chapter, that the students’ talk was different in the COE to the talk that I encountered when Sophie was teaching. In the enquiry the young people offered more extensive answers and seemed to enjoy bringing their own voices to

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<sup>1</sup> Last words provide the community with an opportunity to make any final contributions that they may not have had the opportunity to make in the enquiry.

the classroom. In addition, when we talked together in the focused enquiry, the students' comments suggested they recognised they were able to bring their own ideas to the COE in ways that they cannot normally do in their classroom. When thinking about this Giraffe introduced an example of when they undertook a group task with Sophie. The students were given the learning objective to build a tower using a range of different given materials. Sophie then decided which tower was the best:

**Focused Enquiry 1 Guinea Pig** – *Sometimes we get to do a problem though like do you remember we made that tower last week.*

**Giraffe** – *Yeah that was good cause we had to work in teams to see who could make the highest tower with the newspaper and it couldn't fall over ...*

**Lion** – *[interrupts] when we put a kilogram on it ... in the middle that was the challenge. That was good cause we got to work together to do it.*

The students tell me that the teacher judged which was the best bridge but I find it interesting that they could not remember the reasons why she decided it was the best. It seems like Sophie may have missed opportunities for learning in this activity, an activity in which the students were clearly engaged. I therefore wonder what learning actually took place:

**Focused Enquiry 1 Guinea Pig** – *Miss said ours was the best cause it was like ... I can't remember but we won anyway cause ours was the best.*

Interestingly, the students indicate that they had their own opinions about which team should have won, and unlike Sophie who it seems may not have shared her reasons for her decision, the students are able to articulate their ideas to justify their decision:

**Focused Enquiry 1 Butterfly** – *Um ... I would like to choose who won sometimes though cause I think that you know the bridge that had the turrets should have won cause the group had thought about what the bridge looked like as well as making it tall and I think that was a really good idea.*

However, in the following extract the student seem to recognise that there is no space for their opinions in Sophie's class, and that they have a clear expectation that it is the teacher's job to choose:

**Focused Enquiry 1 Me** – *Did you have a chance to share your ideas?*

**Lion** – *No.*



***Panda** – Teachers always decide the winner ... well, no sometimes they might ask you to say things but not often and then the teacher always makes the final decision cause they are in charge really ... so I suppose that is what they should do like, its their job.*

***Giraffe** – Yeah but it would be good to say sometimes what we think.*

In Chapter 5, I considered how Sophie presents as a teacher that recognises her students as naturally unruly and as needing to be given learning opportunities and content that is suitable for their age. I argued that this influenced her understanding of them as epistemic agents. I found myself returning to this thinking when considering some of Sophie's comments in our focused enquiry.

### *Students as Epistemic Agents*

When we talk in the focused enquiry, Sophie makes a comment that seems to clarify my thinking that she largely understands her students through deficit and childist stereo-types.

She talks here about her belief that the young people in her class do not yet have the capacity to form their own ideas and opinions:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – ... they don't really have many opinions of their own yet; you know they just tend to say what they hear on TV or repeat what their parents say. As they get to know more about life as they grow up then they start to form their own opinions and then they decide what they really think about things for themselves.*

In her comments Sophie indicates that she believes that the young people she teaches are in a state of development. Her thinking seems to reflect Piaget's idea that young people learn in stages (Cregan and Cuthbert, 2014), stages that take them from ignorance to enlightenment (Matthews, 1992; Biesta, 2010). As a consequence, Sophie clearly indicates her belief that the students are not cognitively ready to engage in philosophical enquiry:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – I don't think they really get philosophy, like the way you want it done. I don't think they are really old enough for it yet. I know you said that you did it when you were in a primary school but maybe the children were talking about easier concepts, not really philosophical concepts.*

Sophie suggests that she does not think that students are ready to philosophise until they are doing their A-levels. This indicates that Sophie holds ageist assumptions that young people are not able to think in more complicated ways until they are older. She may also

not understand the difference between philosophy as an academic subject and

philosophising:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – I don't know really, maybe when they are in sixth form because that is when they have all the right skills like being able to think for themselves and think outside the box. I think until this time they just need to be taught things and then they will learn later about things like philosophy and psychology and the more 'thinky' subjects.*

She also seems to equate their identity with being naturally irresponsible and as having no innate desire to learn:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – Well if you asked a child what they wanted to be doing the majority of the time I don't think many of them would realistically say that they want to be in school learning, they would probably be much happier watching TV or out playing football or something else that isn't learning in school, so any opportunity that they have in school where they can get away with talking about things that they would rather be doing then they are naturally going to do this. Don't get me wrong, I don't blame them, school can be boring sometimes but we are not here to entertain them, we are here to make sure that they get the best education that they can in order to get the best out of life. I am sure that all teachers would agree with me there.*

However, things happen in the enquiry that seems to challenge her deficit views about the young people as both naturally unruly and as *tabula rasa*. For example, Sophie talks to me about the importance of not letting students choose who they sit by (which I did) because she tells me that they will just select their friends and will mess around with them. This is not what happens; in contrast the young people chose to sit with people they feel they will enquire well with:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Me** –... Did you notice this when you were looking through the transcript that the young people kept picking their friends?*

***Sophie** – Well, um ... actually I was quite surprised because they did pick people that I wouldn't normally expect them to go with, but then I think that is probably just novelty and in my opinion I think that you would be safer picking them yourself to ensure that there are no arguments and that the children do not leave anyone else out, you know the children with not many friends. What do you think?*

Sophie seems to recognise here that the young people behave differently than the way she expected them to, and states this surprised her. I wonder whether her belief that her students are naturally unruly is affected by seeing that the young people make good decisions about who to sit by when they are given the opportunity to do so. However, she

seems to modify this comment by also stating that she thinks that they only behave in this way as a consequence of the novelty of the PwC enquiries, and not because they are able to act as epistemic agents who are able to make choices that will support their own learning. I wonder whether she will be right, or whether her views about the students as naturally unruly will be challenged further if the students do continue to make similar choices about whom they sit by in future enquiries.

Similarly, Sophie's understanding of the ability of the students to bring their own ideas to their learning seems to be challenged when she seems surprised that the young people are able to share their ideas, and evaluate their thinking based on what their peers say. Sophie picks out the following part of the transcript as one of the areas that she finds interesting, and chooses to discuss in our focused enquiry:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – I thought this part was interesting [indicating an extract from the transcript of the enquiry] because it showed that they [the students] are able to listen to each other's ideas and maybe change their own ideas based on what they hear.*

I have already discussed how it seemed that being expert was important to Sophie's identity as teacher, and my thinking about this seems to be complemented by another comment that Sophie makes:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – We are the experts and so we are the ones that have a lot more information than the children.*

Sophie suggests that if the students ask her something that she does not know that she can 'blag' it and find out the answer for next time:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – if all the planning is done for you and the children ask you something that you don't know well then you can always blag it and find out the answer for the next lesson.*

In thinking about this extract, I consider how Sophie seems to fail to recognise here that she may have things to learn from her students, or that them asking a question to which she may not hold the answer may be an opportunity to engage in mutual enquiry. I wonder whether this is a consequence of hermeneutical injustice. Sophie's beliefs as adult teacher

that she needs to be seen as the expert in the eyes of her students, may be prompted by childist assumptions that adult is superior, but this view intra-acts with her ability to develop her own ideas by learning from the students. Rather than seeing such opportunities as a time to learn together, Sophie suggests that enquiry may be a threat to her identity as teacher, as expert and authoritarian:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – It's almost like the role of the teacher is becoming obsolete now and we could just be replaced with computers so that the children can sit on the internet all day just finding out things.*

And later:

***Sophie** – If you don't know it as a teacher then the children won't know anything that you won't know, at least most of them, it is just the few that try to catch you out.*

Sophie suggests that when students try to bring their own ideas to the classroom it is largely for the purpose of challenging her authority rather than an opportunity for them to learn. In the following comment, Sophie also indicates that if she gives up classroom to enquiry that this will have a detrimental impact on the students' ability to get the knowledge they need to be successful in their exams:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – ... we need to get these kids ready for their GCSEs earlier and earlier so if we don't get them with the knowledge that they need early on then we are really fighting a losing battle, you know what I mean!*

Sophie's comments in this focused enquiry suggest that she lacks confidence in her students as epistemic agents because she holds deficit and childist assumptions about them, and because she has accepted neo-liberal educational priorities which determine it is the role of schools to get students through tests.

In Chapter 5, I discussed how some of Sophie's talk appeared threatening. However, I do feel that she cares for her students. Although Sophie appears to equate her role with a need to control the students, this seems to be for the purpose of protecting them and helping them to become successful adults (Archard, 2004; Wynnes, 2006; Mohr Lone and Burroughs, 2016). She talks about the need to control in order that she can get them to do what she needs them to do. She does not see this as exercising power as teacher, power

over them, but rather because she wants them to do well in their tests. Ball (2013) argues that many teachers equate success in education with success in tests, and Sophie seems to hold this attitude. Therefore wanting them to do well in tests shows she cares for them in this regard:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – I worry a bit that I might let them down and I really don't want to do that.*

This made me think about how children's rights have traditionally been for the purpose of protecting and providing for young people, rather than about encouraging their participation. It seems that in order for the participation rights of the UNCRC to become a reality, the way that teachers understand their role needs to be critiqued. I wonder whether her experience of the students in this first PwC enquiry has created opportunities for Sophie to question how she understands the students in her class.

A further discourse that ran throughout my diffractive reading of the first observation was accountability. I argued that Sophie seemed to be a teacher who lacked confidence in her identity as teacher because she worked within classroom practices where she was accountable to the gaze of the SLT. I discussed how this created an idea that many material aspects of the classroom intra-acted with Sophie as panoptics, checking that Sophie behaved and taught in a way that helped the students to perform successfully in tests. Our focused enquiry provides me with an opportunity to think about this idea with Sophie.

### *The Gaze of Others*

In the focused enquiry, Sophie talks a lot about feeling that she works under the gaze of the SLT and that there is little opportunity for her to question what they ask her to do. This made me think about how she is intra-acted as a knower within the gaze of accountability (Ball, 2013):

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – I always seem to be criticised in training meetings if I say what I think, so I just tend to sit there and nod my head.*

Sophie also talks about feeling frustrated because she states that she feels that she works in a system where there are conflicting priorities:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – Every three years or so the government seems to introduce new things again but they just seem to be the same things dressed up with a new title, to be honest I think you just have to stick to your convictions and do what is best to ensure that the children can get through their exams to give them the best possible chance in life.*

Sophie also recognises that the SLT work within the gaze of others, namely The Welsh Government and ESTYN:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – There is also a massive contradiction in the school, lots of us feel, because they ask us to do this skills stuff and build up the children's skills but at the same time all they really care about is getting the right data because that's what ESTYN are really interested in.*

Sophie seems to understand here that her identity is intra-acted within a culture of blame (Ball, 2013), whereby if the students do not do well in tests it will be her fault. Ricci and Pritscher (2015) and Kizel (2016) argue this has made teachers unconfident in their own identity as knowers in the classroom, and this is the teacher that Sophie appears to be in the way she occupies her chair and in her delivery of lesson content that is alien to her usual practice:

***Focused Enquiry 1 Sophie** – It seems like we can't win whatever we do. If we just let them [the students] have free reign then they would never get to know everything that they need to know for the exams.*

Sophie seems to be a teacher who is frustrated and powerless. I wonder whether this has intra-acted with her in ways that make her feel inadequate in her practice in a way that Ball (2013) says happens when people recognise that they are constantly being checked up on.

### *Conclusion*

In this chapter I have thought further about how Sophie and the students are positioned as knowers in her classroom, and how the materialdiscursive practices of the PwC classroom helped to challenge these positions. I examined how in our focused enquiry Sophie identified as a teacher that understands that it is her role to teach the young people facts and to control them in order that they can achieve the most from their lessons. The students

that I talked with also see themselves as constructed within identities that position them as naturally unruly, as *tabula rasa*, and as developmentally unready. In the first PwC enquiry things happen that challenge both Sophie and the students to rethink these identities. The arrangement of the chairs in a circle allows for the students to enquire together, and they state that they enjoy this and recognise the value of learning in this way. Sophie also suggests she sees the value of the students enquiring together, and states she is surprised by how well they listen to each other and by the way are able to bring their ideas to the enquiry. However, Sophie equates this way of working with novelty and decides not to sit in the circle, leaving me to wonder whether this is because she does not equate what takes place in the COE with the real work of the classroom. I examined how I find it interesting that the students defer every contribution in the enquiry to me, and suggested this indicates they equate my role in the classroom with being the authoritarian and the keeper of knowledge.

In the next and final data chapter, I think about the classroom and its participants after we have enquired together over the course of an academic year. I think about how the classroom has changed from a materialdiscursive childist space to a democratic space, from a space where there is little room for anyone's knowledge aside from the knowledge of the Year 7 Curriculum, to a space where everyone's ideas are welcomed and respected. I think about my second observation of Sophie and how her narrative of young people has been re-authored so she now recognises them as epistemic agents. I also consider what materialdiscursive things continue to intra-act with the introduction of PwC into this and other classrooms.

## Chapter 7 – Seeking Authentic Relationships

### *Introduction*

In this chapter, my diffractive reading focuses on: the transcript of the last PwC enquiry, the second focused enquiry with Sophie, and with the participants, extracts from my research diary, the transcript of my second observation of Sophie teaching, and theories that supported my thinking about and with the data. As with the other data chapters, I did not read these things as separate entities, but alongside each other, in order to see what each could tell me about the other, to identify similarities and differences, and to see what, returning again to MacLure's (2013) idea of data that glows, stood out as important. In this reading together I built on my thinking in Chapters 5 and 6, about how Sophie and the students are enacted as knowers within the materialdiscursive intra-actions of the classroom.

In this chapter, I think about how PwC changed the identities of Sophie and the students as knowers. I return to my analysis of my initial observation, where I identified that the classroom was a space that enacted childist and neo-liberal discourses, which I argued acted against Sophie's and the students' ability to bring their own testimonies to their learning. In this space I suggested that both teacher and taught were victims of epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007): Sophie a victim of hermeneutical injustice, and the students victims of hermeneutical and testimonial injustice. I argued that particular materialdiscursive things intra-acted with the continuation of these injustices, including: the lesson plan, the layout of furniture, the window in the door, IRF talk, and behaviour management talk. Enquiring with Sophie in our first focused enquiry, she suggested that she understood her students through deficit discourses, as naturally unruly and as developmentally unready to engage in philosophical discussions. However, observing her students enquiring together in the first PwC enquiry provided Sophie with the opportunity to begin to question these deficit models. Although Sophie appeared to do this, as



discussed in Chapter 6, her critique seemed to be influenced by her belief that the students participated well in the enquiry because of the novelty of working in a COE.

In Chapter 6, I examined why Sophie chose to sit outside of the circle in our first PwC enquiry, holding herself apart from the students. I considered how this perpetuated traditional classroom binaries of student/teacher, child/adult, and passive/authoritarian. In talking with the students they seemed to have a clear understanding that it is the teacher's job to control them, and that teachers are holders of knowledge in the classroom. The students' comments also suggested they realised there was no time for their voices in the classroom. In contrast, given the freedom to enquire in the COE, many of the students demonstrated their ability to bring their own ideas and experiences to the classroom, and their ability to use philosophical moves (Kennedy, 2013). I thought about how materialdiscursive differences between Sophie's classroom, at the start of the year, and the PwC classroom, intra-acted with this seeming difference in the students' ability to act as epistemic agents, including: the teaching stimuli (PowerPoint to picturebook), the arrangement of chairs (rows to a circle), teacher talk (IRF to enquiry), and relationships (authority to shared ownership). In this chapter I think about whether these materialdiscursive changes have any lasting impact on the ability of the students to know in the classroom, and I consider whether the PwC enquiries supported Sophie to develop values of epistemic justice/trust (Fricker, 2007/Murris, 2013b) in her students as epistemic agents, and in doing so redress the consequences of hermeneutical and testimonial injustice on both her and the students.

I begin Chapter 7 by returning again to my thinking about how chairs are important material things in intra-acting who can know in the classroom.

### *Teacher and Student Chairs*

In thinking about chairs in the classroom, I think again about what MacNaughton, Hughes and Smith (2007) state that classrooms need to be set up in a way where young people's voices are welcomed. When I first observed in Sophie's classroom furniture was laid out in a traditional way, with rows of student desks facing the teacher, who positioned herself at the front of the class. Zophy (1982) states this set up makes it clear that the teacher is the one in charge. Sophie's seating plan also seemed to confirm her status as authoritarian. It enabled her to control who the students could sit next to and where, with the 'naughty' ones being positioned closer to Sophie in order to facilitate her authoritarian gaze. I thought about how Sophie's chair suggested that her classroom was a space that was underpinned by childist assumptions. Sophie's chair was large, leather and padded in comparison to the plastic, small and often broken student chairs. The teacher chair in its evident superiority made me think about how Sophie's needs as adult seemed to trump the needs of the students; she was comfortable whilst they were not. The positioning of Sophie's chair within the classroom also denoted that she was more deserving of space than the young people; Sophie had room to move, whilst the students had very little space around their chairs as they were situated tightly behind the student desks. The position of her chair at the front, and the position of the student tables in rows, encouraged transmission styles of teaching, rather than enquiry, suggesting that this was the style of teaching that was valued in this classroom.

When we enquired together in PwC, the chairs were rearranged in a circle. I thought about Fisher's (2013) assertion that this arrangement of chairs creates a sense that everyone's ideas are respected and valued. In Chapter 6, I discussed my surprise that Sophie chose to sit away from the enquiry, behind her desk, and thought about why this might be, and what message it may have conveyed to the students. I also thought about how moving the chairs into a circle, and my choosing to sit in the same style of chair as the young people, did not

change the way that the students engaged with me as the adult in the room. They continued to defer all of their answers and questions to me, as they were used to doing within an IRF structure of talk (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975).

Although Sophie's chair seemed to be a material representation of her authoritarian status in the classroom, I examined how she occupied the chair on its edge, and thought about how this suggested that she was someone who was unconfident in her identity in this classroom space. She seemed to present as one thing to the students, as in charge, and as another to me as observer and experienced educator, as unconfident. I came to recognise that her accountability to the Year 7 lesson plan, in a subject she had not taught before, caused her to be restricted in her ability to bring her own ideas to the classroom. She was delivering someone else's knowledge, using resources that encouraged the transmission of content rather than enquiry.

Over the course of the academic year, I noticed that the way chairs were occupied and positioned in the classroom began to change. After working with the class for just over three months, Sophie took down the seating plan from the classroom wall. I made a note about her reason for doing this in my diary:

***Diary 10.12.10** – Sophie tells me that she trusts the students to sit where they like now as she recognises that they are much better at making sensible choices. I ask her why she thinks this is and she says that she thinks they have got used to working with different people in the PwC enquiries and that this has helped them to recognise that it is important to sit by someone that they work well with, rather than just choosing their friends, as she expected them to do before.*

Sophie demonstrates respect for the students here by acknowledging they make good choices about whom they sit by, based on their knowledge of whom they learn well with. Sophie believes they have learnt to do this through making choices about whom they work well with in the PwC enquiries. It seems this has challenged Sophie's previous view that the students in her class were incapable of making such choices themselves.

Another change in the classroom that occurred over the course of the year was where Sophie chose to sit when I facilitated the weekly PwC enquiries. To start with, as discussed in Chapter 6, Sophie chose to sit apart from the circle, but after six enquiries Sophie sat within the circle, on a student chair in the same way that I and the other participants did. I reflected on how her positioning of herself outside of and then within the circle changed over the course of the year in my diary:

*Diary 26.11.10 – Today was the first time that Sophie sat with us in the circle. She sat in the same student chairs, just picking a chair seemingly like all of the other students. Her joining us in the circle has been a gradual journey. For the first two enquiries, she stayed behind her desk, and on both occasions wrote down the names of any students that she deemed as misbehaving, and as in need of punishment. However, in the third enquiry she pushed her teacher chair behind the circle. I asked her at the end of the enquiry why she had decided to sit there, and she told me that she was finding it hard to hear what the students were saying from where she was sitting. This indicated to me that she was interested in their ideas. However, I also thought about where she positioned her chair behind Lion, who she has warned me can be ‘very disruptive’ in class, although I have not encountered disruptive behaviour in the enquiry. Was her moving her chair a means of asserting authority over him? I wondered whether she was trying to assert her authority over him by sitting behind him, or trying to help me out by aiming to control him, to ‘keep an eye on him’ for me, or whether it was a coincidence she had sat behind him, and that her purpose for moving nearer to the circle was to better hear what the students were saying.*

*Today Sophie sits in the circle. She sits opposite me, a comrade being there to support me or to ‘keep an eye on me’ maybe. She has no pad, no means of physically writing down who has been ‘naughty’. I ask her about what it was like to sit in the circle at the end of the enquiry, and she tells me that it felt much better sitting in the circle today, she comments “I could really see everyone and concentrate on what they were saying. I think it will be much better if I sit in the circle from now on” [Sophie checked this diary extract the following week and confirmed that this was what she had said, or was in the spirit of what she had said].*

Thinking about this diary extract, Sophie moving from outside of the circle to inside of it seemed to represent a real change in her attitude to the ideas of the young people. When she was outside of the circle, it seemed she did not think that the students’ ideas were connected to the real work of the classroom, or that their ideas may impact on her own knowledge, whilst moving into the circle demonstrated a real interest in finding out what they had to say.

In considering the circle of chairs further, Sophie makes a comment in the focused enquiry that has a particularly profound impact on me:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – Once the children have learnt the skills of enquiry, I don't think you actually need the circle. I think the children just learn to question each other and listen to each other, and reason and treat each other with respect, and this becomes just a part of the way that everything is done, the way that the teacher treats the children and the way that they treat each other.*

I recognise that Sophie is demonstrating the value of epistemic justice/trust here. She talks about respecting the students and about listening to their ideas, and her talk seems to have moved away from a discourse of control to a discourse of democracy. It seems that experiencing them through enquiry has guided Sophie in challenging her deficit beliefs about the young people, in order to replace them with agentic views. In this extract Sophie seems to have developed a clear understanding that the students are capable of acting as epistemic agents when classroom practices provide them with the opportunity to do so. Rather than seeing the community as the only means in which they can do this, Sophie believes this is merely a material arrangement that can facilitate the students to enquire together. Sophie seems to agree with Woodhead (2008) that what is really important is the development of the values of openness to the ideas of others rather than the physical arrangement of chairs. Haynes (2009) suggests when she began to practice P4C/PwC she realised it was more than just a method of teaching that one can apply, and instead was a way of working that she internalised. Sophie's comments in this extract seem to resonate with Haynes' (2009) experience, as she also identifies that something has changed in her practice, and in her relationships with the students through working with them in the COE. Sophie implies she understands this is not down to the circle itself, but down to the way that student and teacher have encountered each other within the circle, and the skills that they have learnt in order to enquire successfully.

In the extract above Sophie also talks about respect. In her comments, Sophie demonstrates respect for the students' ideas. This can be seen in the way she listens to their ideas, and

also in the way she now follows the community rules. In Chapter 6, I discussed how Sophie reminded the students to follow the rules that they created but that she did not follow them herself, which indicated to me she did not see the community rules to be applicable to her as the adult in the room. In contrast, in the final PwC enquiry I find that Sophie now follows the rules that the students created, and I argue this indicates her respect for the students as fellow beings in the classroom:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – I feel that I just became like one of the members of the community with everyone else, because I was just desperate to give my opinions too.*

In this comment Sophie states that she feels empowered to contribute in the COE, and that she is excited to do so. It seems that developing a COE with the participants has changed epistemic relations in the classroom so that Sophie and the students now recognise the agency of the other.

Despite the removal of the seating plan, when I observe in Sophie's classroom a second time I find that the student tables are still arranged in rows, with the teacher desk at the front. This suggests that the classroom remains a space where teaching is for the purpose of transmission, teacher at the front giving knowledge facing students who are expected to absorb it. However, despite its traditional layout, I find that student and teacher occupy the classroom differently. I notice in my last observation of Sophie teaching that Sophie does not actually sit on her teacher chair until just before the end of the lesson. Instead she sits on the edge of a student table when she talks with the students. She encourages the students to talk with different people, at times with the person next to them or behind them, and at other times asking them to move their chairs so that they can work in groups. When I first observed Sophie, I found that when she asked the students to share their ideas that she remained behind her desk reading the lesson plan or looking at the PowerPoint, but in the last observation Sophie walks around the classroom, sitting with different groups, and engaging with them as they share their ideas by asking them questions. This seems to

demonstrate a genuine interest in their ideas, and Sophie's belief that she now learns *with* them.

The only time that Sophie occupies her teacher chair is towards the end of the lesson when she asks the students to complete a written task to comply with the lesson plan. I find it interesting that at this point she appears to become aware that there is little time left to complete the task, and I see more of Sophie as an authoritarian returning. It is the only point in the lesson that she raises her voice, and she starts to give commands. Although her talk is not threatening, as I found in the first observation, she does indicate from her words that she expects them to defer to her authority. I wonder whether this change in her talk demonstrates she struggles to marry enquiry in lessons that continue to be designed around neo-liberal priorities:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – Right we need to get going now, there is not enough time to share ideas with other groups I am afraid because we have spent too much time discussing our ideas so we need to get going. Ok if you can give the books out as quickly as possible and if everyone else can look at the whiteboard, come on hurry up everyone turn your seats around or you won't be able to see, come on.*

I wonder whether Sophie returning to sitting in her teacher chair indicates her recognition that despite her interest in enquiring with her students, that she continues to be tied to the content of the lesson plan. When she enquires with the young people, she seems relaxed, as suggested by her sitting informally on a student table, but when she sits in her teacher chair she returns again to her role of transmitter of knowledge and as 'in charge'. The panoptic gaze of the clock is what seems to cause her to change her position in the class. I think more about this in the following section.

### *The Clock*

In our second focused enquiry, Sophie returns many times to the idea that PwC has impacted positively on the students' ability to know in the classroom, on her teaching practice, and on her beliefs about the young people – moving from deficit to agentic views

of them. However, in her recognition of how PwC has supported these changes, Sophie states she has found it hard to change her classroom practice, because of the educational priorities that she is working within. In particular, Sophie discusses how she feels constrained by time and by the expectations of the SLT, and her concern that she may be judged negatively against other Year 7 teachers if her students do not perform as well in end of year tests as their students do. She seems caught between neo-liberal expectations, and her concern for student participation, intra-acted within dominant educational discourses, the school's expectations, and her own beliefs about the value of enquiry, for example:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – I just wish there was time in the curriculum to do more philosophy because I cannot believe how it helps these students to really think for themselves and to reason with themselves and with each other.*

Sophie seems to recognise here that although she has seen the benefits of engaging with PwC for the students, and for herself as a teacher, she is unable to change her own practice because she works in an education system that does not create, or maybe value, time being given to collaborative student enquiry. In my discussion with Sophie in our first focused enquiry, she seemed to equate her role as a teacher with a neo-liberal understanding that she should get her students to learn as much content as they can in order to perform well in tests. In our second focused enquiry, Sophie seems to have changed her opinion, and now sees the value of enquiring with her students:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – I always felt that there wasn't enough time to ask questions either and that although I would like to ask more that this was a luxury that the hectic school day did not warrant. However, I now recognise that there is real value in spending time discussing things together in order to take the children's learning forward because if they don't understand something then the quality of anything that they produce is much reduced.*

In this extract, Sophie states that she has moved from a teacher who thinks that it is her job to transmit knowledge to her students, to one who recognises the importance of students understanding something before they can come to know it. Despite this, Sophie suggests



that she continues to work within neo-liberal constraints that she believes will result in

PwC failing to have any real impact on her practice:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – I suppose it just comes down to time again, and I don't think I will have the time next year to do much with PwC to make it have a real impact, even though I will want to, because the SLT are bringing in more changes to the Year 7 curriculum and I will have to focus on implementing these.*

Sophie's identity as a teacher at the end of the research seems to have been re-narrated through her active involvement in the PwC enquiries. Sophie appears to have developed epistemic justice/trust in the young people's own ways of knowing, and to recognise herself as learning alongside her students. Accordingly, I wonder if Sophie is now a teacher who is expected to teach within neo-liberal educational discourses that do not fit with her understanding of how young people learn, and what they are epistemically capable of. In consideration of this, I turn to the idea of Bohman (2012) who argues that it is not enough for someone to develop epistemic virtues, in order to change their practice, if they continue to work within institutions that are places of embedded epistemic injustice. I argue that the education system in Wales, similar to the rest of the UK, is embedded with childist assumptions and neo-liberal priorities, which act on the ability of teacher and taught to bring their meaning making voices to the classroom. Consequently, Sophie seems to be a teacher who recognises the agency of her students, and who believes that PwC supports her and her students to learn alongside each other, but that the educational system that she works within acts as a real barrier to PwC being introduced into the school. She also talks about how she thinks that if the school takes on the practice of PwC that they will do it for instrumental reasons, rather than to support students and teachers to recognise the agency of the other. In addition, Sophie suggests that the other teachers will be unlikely to see how PwC can support them to question who their students are as knowers, because they will not be given the time to do so as she has done through enquiring with her students over the course of the year; rather she believes that the other teachers will regard PwC as another new initiative that has been introduced by the SLT:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie*** – *This shows that you need to give things a chance to work. I think that this is what will make it hard for the other staff to take on PwC because if they are like I was, and think it is just another initiative and they don't see an instant result or benefit, then they will not keep it up because I think that people expect instant results. This is the problem with most new things that the school introduces, by the time that you start to understand something and start to just see if it is worth doing or not then it gets thrown out and you have to try something new. I really um hope that we can take on PwC but I just don't see that it will really be given a chance like everything else, or that most teachers will give up before they have seen what a change it makes to the class.*

Thinking about this extract, Sophie seems frustrated with the climate of constant change that teachers have got used to working within, and she blames this for a negative view of change in schools. As Murriss (2013b) argues, Sophie recognises that initiatives are done *to* teachers, rather than teachers being given time to see how new initiatives are maybe relevant to their own practice. Sophie also seems to concur with Murriss (2016) that it is not enough for teachers to learn about transformational practices but rather they need to experience them for themselves.

Just as the classroom clock seemed to act on who Sophie was as a teacher at the start of the research, concerns about time also seem to influence her ability to change her practice. Throughout the academic year, the gaze of the clock acts as a constant reminder that all of us work within a system where neo-liberal priorities of learning take precedence over the students' and teachers' ability to enquire and learn together.

In Chapter 6, I thought about how the stimulus that Sophie used in the lesson I observed her teaching, the PowerPoint, and the picturebook that I used in the first enquiry with the students, intra-acted differently on the students' ability to bring their own meaning making voices to the classroom. I return to my thinking about the importance of stimuli here:

### *Teaching Stimuli*

When I first observe Sophie teaching, I note that she sticks rigidly to the Year 7 lesson plan. This includes using the PowerPoint teaching stimulus that is provided for her. It

seems she can not deviate away from using this teaching resource for two main reasons: first because she appears to rely on the PowerPoint to give her the subject knowledge that she feels is necessary to deliver a lesson that she is not a subject specialist in, and secondly because she knows that the senior leaders in the school expect all Year 7 teachers to teach the lesson plans exactly as they have been created. I therefore find it interesting that when I observe Sophie teaching a Year 7 curriculum lesson again, at the end of the academic year, I find she adapts the PowerPoint presentation that she is expected to use:

***Observation 2** – The PP displays pictures of a woman in a burka, a Sikh man and a Christian minister. There is a question underneath that says ‘What do these people believe? Discuss.*

***Sophie** – Let’s change the question slightly so that it reads why [added emphasis] do these people believe in a religion?’*

I wonder whether in deviating away from the question that she is expected to ask, Sophie shows that she is aware that the question in the PowerPoint is not likely to extend the students’ thinking. She therefore changes the question to one that is more enquiry-based, actively inviting their ideas by creating meaningful opportunities to hear them. In changing the question, Sophie suggests she has internalised a clearer understanding of how questions can support students to develop their own thinking.

In thinking about the observation, I consider how Sophie may have changed the question because she recognises, through seeing me modeling philosophical moves in the COE, that I value such questions, however in the focused enquiry this does not seem to be the case. Sophie talks about the reasons for why she now regularly changes the questions and resources that she is expected to teach from (as contained in the Year 7 lesson plans):

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – I have changed my question style and sometimes I will add something in or do something before the PowerPoint just to get the students interested, like I might use something like the voting Venn diagram that you use or the agree/disagree line, and I find that when I use things like this that makes them really have to think, that the lessons tend to go much better and that the children are more engaged. I have occasionally changed the materials that I use as well, like maybe some harder poems in English.*

Sophie's use of strategies that she has observed me using in the COE, and her deviating away from using the materials that she is expected to use, suggests that Sophie has seen how the PowerPoint resources may limit the students' ability to know in the classroom, whilst the pedagogic tools of PwC may support them. When I first observed Sophie teaching, and when we talked together in our first focused enquiry, Sophie suggested that she understood that she needed to use teaching resources that were based on developmentally appropriate content. This fit with Matthews' (1994) suggestion that when teachers understand students through developmental discourses they are unlikely to pick stimulus that is going to intrigue and challenge students, instead they are more likely to pick teaching materials they regard as age appropriate. In telling me in our second focused enquiry that she now picks poems that she regards as hard for Year 7 students, Sophie challenges developmental discourses. Rather than picking stimuli based on its suitability as developmentally appropriate, she now picks things that she believes are going to challenge the students. I consider how this indicates that she has changed her epistemological beliefs about what her students are capable of (Haynes and Murriss, 2012).

In our first focused enquiry, Sophie talked a lot about the need to appear to the students as having all the answers, in order to appear as the expert. However, in our second focused enquiry, Sophie suggests that the young people's own ideas often drive the direction of learning in the class, and I surmise this indicates that her being expert in her students' eyes is no longer as important to her:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – ... [Sophie is discussing one of the questions a student asked in one of her lessons] *I thought this was such an interesting question and we just sort of ended up having an impromptu and unplanned discussion about it.**

Sophie seems to have opened herself up to the ideas of her students and I think about how seeing me following the young people's own ideas in the PwC enquiries may have supported her, and encouraged her to do this. Just as the students told me that they thought that the lessons from the Year 7 curriculum were boring in our first focused enquiry

together, when I talk with Sophie in our second focused enquiry she suggests that she also finds delivering them boring:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – To start with when the new Year 7 curriculum came in, and I knew that I would have to be teaching other subjects, I was quite relieved that you had to just pick up a lesson and deliver it, and to be honest the children didn't ask many questions so I didn't feel intimidated if I was doing something like history. However, after a while I actually got really bored by the lessons.*

Sophie states here that she started the year liking the lesson plans because they enabled her to retain her epistemic superiority, to remain in charge of the content because it is given to her, and because there is no room in the lesson plan for the students to ask questions that might 'catch her out'. However, now Sophie positions herself as someone who does not want to be limited by the constraints of the prescriptive lesson plan. She is bored delivering it, and I wonder whether she sees that it limits her ability to bring any of her own knowledge to the lesson and to create opportunities to learn *with* the young people.

In thinking about how Sophie is intra-acted within the materialdiscursive lesson plan, and the stimulus of the PowerPoint, I return to thinking about the discourse of control. In my first encounters with the class, control was something that seemed to act on Sophie who must teach in a way that is expected of her, and on the students who must behave in a passive way that will enable them to learn as much content as they can. This control seemed to be exerted by Sophie through her behaviour management talk, her seating plan and the positioning of student chairs. The teacher that Sophie presents as in the last observation is very different, and I note that very little of her talk is now for the purpose of behaviour management or for enforcing her rules. I turn now to further consideration of rules.

### *Rules*

Within the discourse of control in the classroom that seems to be evident at the start of this research, I found that Sophie talked a lot about the need to control the behaviour of the

young people. As I noted earlier, Kohan (2006) argues that teachers who regard young people as unruly, blank slate or developmentally unready are more likely to adopt an authoritarian attitude, taking control of decision making regarding behaviour matters.

I find it interesting that in our second focused enquiry Sophie recognises a big change in the way the young people act in the classroom both when enquiring with me and with her when she is teaching:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – What has been particularly amazing is the way that they behave in the PwC enquiries has impacted on the way that they behave all of the time in lessons, or I know at least in my lessons.*

Sophie recognises that PwC has changed the way that the students act in the class because of the way that it has enabled them to work together:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – ... they seem to be able to regulate their own behavior and support each other. It's like they feel they have a common aim and they all are trying to achieve the best for all of them rather than competing against each other. Don't get me wrong I think that competition is important and it is good to want to achieve, but I don't know how to describe it really, it is like they are trying to ensure that they all support each other to get the best that they can out of each other. They don't all behave all the time, but none of them leave each other out now. Also if they do something wrong then you can reason with them so that they can tell me what they have done and why it hasn't helped them in their learning, and then they can talk about what they would do next time. We had some training recently on restorative justice and it made me think about your enquiries and how they have helped the class to develop some of the skills that you develop in restorative justice, things like being able to reflect on what they say and do; this seems to be something that they are particularly good at now.*

Sophie's understanding of the students as naturally unruly seems to have been replaced with an understanding of them as being able to regulate their own behaviour. Sophie no longer seems to believe that they will chose to be disruptive rather than chose to learn.

Rather she equates their behaviour with caring for each other, in the sense that Noddings' (2002) equates care with developing respect for each other's ideas. Similarly Sharp (1987) talks about how PwC supports students to develop caring thinking, and I wonder whether experiencing students enquiring together has supported Sophie to recognise the importance of care for collaborative thinking.

Just as Sophie picks up on how the students' talk demonstrates care, the students also recognise their care for each other. In PwC caring thinking refers to participants learning to step outside their own feelings and perspectives in order to experience the feelings and perspectives of others (Lipman, 2003). Sophie has come to recognise that the students do this when they enquire together. The young people select the following part of the PwC transcript to discuss in our second focused enquiry, and this indicates that they recognise how they care for each other differently in enquiry lessons (the bold part of the extract is the section from the PwC transcript that the students have selected to talk about):

**PwC Enquiry 2 Rabbit – So are you saying that sometimes it is ok to kill people if it is going to lead to a happier life for other people?**

**Squirrel – Well, I don't like the thought of um anyone being killed, but if you have to kill people, which you do in war, then it leads to the good side winning then I think that makes it um ...**

**Panda – justified?**

**Giraffe – Yeah like justified.**

*Focused Enquiry 2 Me – How do you think this is an example of someone helping someone else out?*

*Lion – Yeah like sometimes you know you are thinking of a word and like its right there in your mind but you just can't think of it and that's what happened here and then Panda helped by suggesting a word to help Squirrel. I think this was good 'cos it showed that Squirrel was listening to what Panda had to say which we know is an important thing to do in PwC and also the way that Squirrel didn't say like don't answer for me or whatever.*

*Butterfly – I think that we all help each other all the time as a group cause we know what it is like when you are trying to think and sometimes it is good to help each other think.*

Similarly to the students, I was also drawn to this section of the PwC transcript because of the way it demonstrates how a student, Rabbit, is able to lead the enquiry with her own question. This demonstrates a dramatic change in the classroom that I first observed, where the domination of IRF talk meant that Sophie appeared to control what questions were asked, although in reality she was actually rehearsing the questions given to her in the lesson plan. Opportunities for the students to ask their own questions were not sought, and when the students did try to ask questions, Sophie quickly shut down any potential for dialogue. Here, Rabbit shows that she is able to follow the enquiry and ask questions that will extend not only her own thinking, but also support the community to develop their

own thinking. In her search to get closer to the truth, by stimulating further thinking through her own questions, Rabbit demonstrates care for the enquiry.

Although I find that Sophie has made changes to the way that she works with her students, when I observe her a second time, she still seems to hold onto some deficit beliefs about the students. This can be seen when she tells me that the students in her class are different at the end of the research partly as a consequence of maturity, indicating developmental understandings of how they learn. I wonder if this is because, as Young-Bruehl (2012) suggests, that developmental models are so deeply engrained in adults' understanding of young people that their power to influence adult thinking remains:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie*** – *Well it is probably partly down to maturity because they [the students] are a year older and that makes a big difference.*

Thinking about developmental discourses further, I find it interesting that when we enquire together in our second focused enquiry, the young people now talk about feeling frustrated when they believe they are judged according to developmental discourses:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Lion*** – *Yeah like people shouldn't think that we can't talk about stuff just cause we are young.*

***Butterfly***– *Yeah, that annoys me when they do that.*

***Lion*** – *I think most teachers do that cause they think we can't cope with things so they stop things before they get interesting.*

***Me*** – *What do you mean that they stop things before they get interesting?*

***Lion*** – *You know, like you might like ask a question about something and you really do want to know the answer but then they either think that you are like trying to be naughty and they tell you off or they say that you wouldn't understand or something like that ...*

***Guinea pig*** – *[Interrupts] yeah and then you can't be bothered to ask again.*

Here the young people indicate a real awareness that they live in a society that denies them the ability to ask questions, and misjudges their capacity to enquire. The students articulate a clear understanding of their situation, which supports Pohlhaus' (2012) view that marginalised groups often have a better understanding of their position within society than the dominant group does, in this case adults. Lion recognises that attempts to ask questions in class are often interpreted as for the purpose of being deviant, rather than as an attempt to enquire into things that interest them, and he identifies that adults often underestimate



what they are capable of because they think that certain things are not appropriate for their age. The students articulate here some of the consequences of their hermeneutical marginalisation in schools. Although they do not have a name for it, such as childism or adultism (see Chapter 2), the students clearly recognise that adults discriminate against them on grounds of their age in this extract.

In Chapter 6, I considered how relationships between Sophie and the students were embedded within a discourse of control. I thought about how this contrasted with epistemic relations based on values of participation and democracy, relations I was aiming to establish through the practices of PwC. In Sophie's class she was in charge, whilst in the COE we created the rules together so control was distributed. Sophie's use of an IRF structure of talk demonstrated to the students that she could either validate or dismiss their contributions; whilst in the COE all contributions were welcome. Democratically engaging with students requires teachers to listen to their students in ways where they do not privilege their own epistemic authority as the adult. Although Sophie did not initially join in the community, after six enquiries she joined us in the circle and this enabled her to sit with her students in the same type of chair, as a material demonstration to them that she came to the enquiry as a fellow enquirer rather than as an authoritarian. As the year unfolded, I noticed that Sophie began to talk with her students in more respectful ways, and I consider how it was through spending extended time with them and experiencing them as knowers in the COE, that Sophie was able to build more respectful relationships with them:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – ... I suppose more this year because of the Year 7 Curriculum, where they [the students] have had lots of their lessons with me, then we have developed more of a relationship together and got to know each other better. This has been really good, I suppose a bit like being a primary school teacher where you have the same class all of the time, that means you really get to know what they like and don't like and what they are good at and not good at.*

In our second focused enquiry, the students also talk about how they recognise a change in the relationships between them and Sophie. They suggest that she is now more respectful to them, and to their ideas, and that this has resulted in them enjoying their learning more:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Butterfly*** – *It's like we don't have to just try to find answers we can actually think about what we want to say. It's better that way. I don't think Miss liked it to start with cause after you used to do a lesson with us she was well grumpy in the next lesson but then she started to change and then she was much better.*

***Me*** – *Why do you think she was this way?*

***Lion*** – *I don't know really cos it was like she didn't like to maybe see that we liked doing it better your way and then I suppose that sometimes we messed around for her more and she probably didn't like it cause we didn't mess around when you took us for PwC. Well we did a little bit some of us to start with but not for long.*

***Giraffe*** – *Yeah she didn't like that at all and she always said about why we were bad in her lessons and not when you did them, and that we were not fair to her like.*

***Lion*** – *I don't think any of us meant to be naughty in her lessons and not in PwC but we just seemed to be more interested in PwC, and her lessons were boring and it is hard to stay behaving well when you are bored the whole lesson but yeah her lessons are a lot better now cause she actually asks us what we think.*

When I observe in Sophie's classroom, I find reciprocal relationships based on trust of the expertise of the other (Lipman, 2003). Relationships have moved from ones of control/submission to ones based on democracy, and this seems to be a consequence of the participants' recognition of the other as a knower. I argue that Sophie has changed from a teacher who listens out for the answers she has already decided are relevant to the learning in the class, to a teacher who has learnt to hear her students' ways of knowing (Matthews, 1984), a move away from Davies' (2014) 'listening as usual', to actively listening out for what the students may bring to enquiry; a change from teacher authority/responsibility to distributed/shared responsibility is clearly articulated in the following comment made by Sophie:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie*** – *I notice that we hardly say anything at all, its like they almost don't need us to be there at all as if they can control their own learning and their own behavior.*

The young people also recognise there is a difference in who talks in the classroom:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Lion*** – [referring to the transcript they had been asked to look at] *We picked another bit next which was similar but it was more about how we could talk to each*

*other a lot in this one without you or Miss having to ask us questions to help our thinking. Its like we could think on our own really. It's this bit [reads the following extract out loud]:*

**PwC Enquiry 2 Panda – The one family would never be able to forgive the other family for what they did so ... no they can never be friends again.**

**Penguin – If that was my family then I would want the other family to suffer like I had suffered cause they er deserve to for what they did.**

**Lion – Yeah but if you think about it, it wasn't really their fault cause they were made to do it cause of the war.**

**Monkey – They could have said no they wouldn't do it.**

**Koala – Yeah but then they would have been killed for not doing what they were told and probably their family cause that's what bad people do in war, so really they had no choice.**

*Focused Enquiry 2 Panda – I don't think that we would have talked like this before because you just get used to the teacher like running the class and telling us what to think and then when we read this bit we were like quite pleased because we could see that we were discussing you know what we wanted to think about, and not being told what ideas we were allowed to talk about. I like it this way but not all the teachers let you do this.*

Panda believes that Sophie welcomes her voice, and consequently she chooses to share her ideas more. She no longer seems to be a victim of Fricker's (2007) epistemic injustice in this class, because her ability to share her testimony no longer appears to be limited by identity prejudices against her, as child. Sophie recognise that the students have much of importance to bring to their learning, and that they can support each other in the development of their ideas in this second observation. Sophie also talks in our focused enquiry about the students' ability to make philosophical moves, and she picks the following section from the classroom enquiry transcript to discuss in our focused enquiry:

**PwC Enquiry 2 Monkey – It's like those adverts on the telly when you see things like starving children, my mum always gets really upset but then when the advert stops she seems to forget about them then until she sees the advert again.**

*Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie – They are talking [here] about her mum's experiences and relating them back to what they are talking about. I think this is quite a mature skill.*

Sophie has noticed the importance of the students being able to connect the content in PwC to their own experience, a philosophical move. At the start of the research Sophie seemed to be a teacher who believed that her year 7 students were not capable of engaging in philosophical enquiry, whilst here she acknowledges they can make philosophical moves. In this change in her beliefs about what the young people are capable of, Sophie

demonstrates a genuine interest to learn with her students, and she creates opportunities for them to bring their own ways of knowing to the classroom, a clear articulation of how she has developed epistemic justice/trust in the validity of their voices.

In Chapter 6, I discussed how the students always directed their questions or responses to me or to Sophie, and never to each other. The more that we enquired together the more I found that the students developed the confidence to talk with each other, bypassing the need to seek validation from the adult in the room. This ability to enquire together, without the support of Sophie, is evident in the following extract. It is also evident that extended answers are now welcomed in the class, rather than the short and factual answers that Sophie praised when I first observed her teaching, and that the students are able to make a range of philosophical moves without support:

**Observation 2 Sophie** – *Ok what do you think Bear?*

**Bear** – *Well we must be thinking about what is important to people, maybe as it is an RE lesson we are thinking about what is important to people in their lives as part of their um religious beliefs. [making connections]*

**Gorilla** – *Yeah and I bet you probably wanted us to think of reasons for why we felt things were important to us [so] that we could empathise with people from religions that have things that are important to them but it might be different to what we think is important. [inferential thinking]*

**Wolf** – *Well it doesn't really matter what it is, it's just important that people have things that are important to them because that is what gives them a sort of motivation to get on with things. [makes a proposition] It's like when you believe in something like you're ... I don't know you believe that you can get a good job if you work hard at school then you are more likely to work hard because you believe that it is important and it will make your life better. [supports with an example] But if you don't think that it will get you a good job then um you might not see the point of school and just do what you have to and like mitch and that. [consequential thinking]*

**Gorilla** – *Yeah I agree, and in religion it is probably like your God that you believe in and that gives you what you need to do to keep doing things and keep working hard because you believe in the God and you know that's what the God wants you to do to live a sort of good religious life. [applies the example to consolidate understanding of the concept under discussion]*

**Sophie** – *So what do you think about the learning objective on the board, 'To learn about why people follow a religion?' do you think that fits with what you have been saying?*

Rather than closing the dialogue down at this point, as I found Sophie did when I first saw her teaching, Sophie seeks further clarification of the student's thinking and in doing so

demonstrates a real respect for the students' ideas. Following a comment made by Wolf,

Sophie says the following:

**Observation 2 Sophie** – *Maybe turn to the person next to you or behind you and have a chat to them about which comes first, following a religion or belief in a God, is that what you meant Wolf?*

What stands out for me in this extract is that Sophie checks that she has understood Wolf, which indicates her respect for Wolf's contribution. This shows that as a teacher Sophie now recognises the importance of clarifying her understanding when a member of the class speaks, a key PwC move that she seems to have internalised. Sophie also seems to recognise the students as epistemic agents in the way that she now follows their lines of enquiry:

**Observation 2 Sophie** – *Ok, does anyone think that there are other reasons why people might follow a religion or believe in a religion?* [She does not ask for hands up but selects a student] *Cat you have been quiet in today's lesson, what do you think?*

**Cat** – *Um ... I don't really know miss, I think you sort of just believe in something if you are told to, maybe cause you don't know how to say no, maybe like if you live in a country where you can't chose if you want a religion or not.* [she doesn't know but is prepared to speculate and provides an example to support her conjectures].

**Sophie** – *So you think that some people are forced to be a part of a religion?*

**Wolf** – *Yeah maybe some people are forced and some people maybe don't know that they have a choice or they worry that if they leave that their family won't bother with them no more like that programme about those Armish people that dis their kids if they chose to be not Armish anymore.* [he speculates and hypothesizes by offering a counter-example to support his argument].

**Sophie** – *This is all very interesting, I am really enjoying hearing your ideas. Let's take some more time to discuss this in more detail as I can see that many of you have lots to say. Ok if you get yourselves into small groups but try not to make too much mess with the chairs if you move around, there is another class in straight after us.*

For me these extracts illustrate that Sophie has become a teacher who recognises that she is, as James (2007) suggests, both being and becoming, as she now sees that she learns from the students as well as them learning from her. In this recognition, Sophie has created a classroom space where the young people's ideas are genuinely welcomed, and this seems to have empowered the students to more readily share their ideas, as demonstrated by the extended answers that they provide. Sophie's knowledge (or the knowledge of the Year 7 Curriculum) is no longer the only valid knowledge in the classroom.

In my thinking with these transcripts and the notes in my diary, I feel a real sense that this is a classroom of knowers, knowers whose ideas are both respected and welcomed. It seems that both students and teacher are epistemic agents who not only are able to bring their voices to the construction of knowledge, but also welcome the voices of each other and consequently all can participate in the direction of learning. In the next section I think about how this has repositioned Sophie and the students as epistemic agents in the class.

### *Epistemic Agents*

Sophie tells me that she recognises that there is a big difference between the young people enquiring in the first PwC enquiry and in this last enquiry:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie*** – *After I had read this transcript [indicating the final PwC transcript] I went back to the original one again to compare them, and when I read the first one again I was just astounded by the children's level of thinking and reasoning here in this um second transcript.*

Haynes (2009) suggests that when teachers have opportunities to hear young people's voices that they are often taken aback by the depth of thinking that they demonstrate.

Sophie seems surprised here by the student's ability to engage in sophisticated and philosophical enquiry, and in doing so seems to have suspended deficit beliefs that impacted on her views that young people were not developmentally ready to engage in philosophical dialogue. Sophie chooses to discuss the following extract in our focused enquiry:

**PwC Enquiry 2 Me – Do you mean that the reason that you kill someone doesn't matter?**

**Panda – Yes.**

**Giraffe – Yeah but don't you remember when we talked about that hot air balloon before, and we said that someone had to um jump off or they would all die. So we saved the man that had a cure for cancer because we said um that he would save millions of people so that justified saving him, and not the old man who we said had lived like most of his life anyway so it was fairer if he died. Then that is a bit like slaughter, although it is bad to kill loads of people, especially like women and children, but if it means that that will help you win a war and that will make life better for everyone like later on then that makes it OK to kill those people ... maybe?** [Rising intonation on the 'maybe' suggests he is asking a question rather than making a statement]

**Guinea Pig – So are you saying that sometimes it is ok to kill people if it is going to lead to a happier life for other people?**

*Focused Enquiry 2 Me – Ok, thank you. Why did you select this part?*

*Sophie – Well I picked this part first because I was so impressed by what the children were saying, or young people, as I know that that is what the class prefer to be called and what you call them. They were using such sophisticated arguments and touching on utilitarianism. To be honest I have only really understood this philosophical idea through joining in the enquiries with you.*

In her comments, Sophie seems to recognise the students as epistemic agents who can direct their learning and support each other in order to take the enquiry further:

*Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie – What I was particularly impressed by was the way that Guinea Pig was asking the rest of the class a question. It seemed to come completely naturally to him and it was like he could take on the role of the teacher without even thinking about it and you and I could just step back and listen. What really amazed me was the way that the rest of the class were quite happy for him to take on that role as well, like it was the natural order of things. Have you noticed now that the children don't direct questions to us at all, or answers even, they just direct them to each other ... it is amazing. Let me look at this bit again as I am sure there is something else that I wanted to say, I wrote some notes on the side here [points to some written notes on the margin of the transcript] oh yes, I also wanted to say that I was really impressed with the way that the class were able to refer back to a previous discussion, the one about the hot air balloon, and were able to create a connection between that and what they were discussing now about slaughter. Even though I suppose the concepts were the same in both, or at least similar, I was surprised that children in Year 7 were able to do this, sorry I mean young people. I really was surprised. I honestly feel that I have underestimated what they are capable of doing before.*

In her comments, Sophie demonstrates how she has shifted from a teacher who believes that young people should learn knowledge that is developmentally appropriate for them, to a teacher that is intrigued by the students' ideas and ways of knowing. She gives the example of a student applying her previous knowledge to a new example, recognising that this is a philosophical move. Through engaging in enquiry with her students, Sophie has learnt that what she expected them to be able to do previously, largely underestimated what they are actually capable of achieving. Sophie now presents as a teacher who has learnt to listen to the young people in her class with genuine curiosity.

In experiencing the COE, and thereby the pedagogic moves of PwC, Sophie suggests that she has been changed in the teaching practices that she now engages with.

**Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – *Before I don't think I really understood how to ask questions, if I am honest, and I have learnt a lot from you and the way that you ask the pupils questions to really tease out their own ideas and thinking. You are really good at getting them to justify their thinking, this is something that I really didn't think that they would be able to do at this age, well at least not to the level that they now can do.*

Sophie recognises the value of open questions here. This represents a real shift in her seeing this type of questioning as a tool for teachers to use to waste precious classroom time, to one where she values their worth in supporting and extending learning. In her own understanding of their worth, I see the classroom evolve from a place full of answers to questions which are already known, to a place of intrigue where everyone's wisdom is sought and celebrated. In this evolution of epistemic practices, epistemic relations have changed so that all members of the class can play an active role in knowledge production, and where both Sophie and the students can challenge, construct and deconstruct meanings with each other. The classroom has become what Kennedy describes (2004:214) as a joint space of meaning making, a space where knowledge construction is a “communal process”, where knowledge is no longer seen as set but rather as fallible and as open to revision (Lipman, 2003). It seems that in Sophie's and the students coming to respect the epistemic authority of the other, they have learnt how to be different together in the classroom and in doing so have “destabilize[d] and subvert[ed]” relations of authority between them (Kennedy, 2004:763). Sophie and the students are clearly intra-acted differently through their engagement with PwC, and Sophie recognises and acknowledges the role of PwC in this change in the following extract:

**Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – *What interests me the most is that they seem to want to delve into the unknown more and they seem to have a level of maturity to ask such interesting questions. This must be down to the PwC because my pupils were definitely not like this at the beginning of the year, in September, when they first came to my class.*

And later:

**Sophie** – *Also I think that the way that I see them and the way that they see me has changed. Before I would have said that I was teaching them and now I think, it probably sounds strange, that sometimes they are teaching me because they come out with some really interesting ideas that sometimes can, if I am honest, make me think about the ways that I see things.*



In Chapter 5, I suggested that childism was a type of lacuna, a lacuna that might intra-act with Sophie's ability to learn with her students, and thereby to miss out on knowledge they may provide her with. I suggested this could make her a victim of hermeneutical injustice. At the start of the research, Sophie demonstrated her view of the students was influenced by deficit stereotypes about young people, particularly deficit views of them based on developmental beliefs and views that positioned them as naturally unruly. I argued that these childist beliefs intra-acted with Sophie's understanding that she had anything to learn from and with her students, and it was in this way that she was hermeneutically harmed. In contrast, enquiring with her students intra-acts with Sophie's understanding of how learns with her students. Rather than closing down enquiry, as I saw her doing at the start of the academic year, she now seeks out opportunities to learn with them. In the COE, Sophie has critiqued the deficit and childist assumptions she held about her students, and her position as epistemic authority in the classroom, and new and different epistemic relations have developed as a consequence. These relations, I argue, have reduced any hermeneutical harm Sophie suffered when she was less aware of how she positioned her students based on prejudicial, deficit stereo-types. The change from teacher as authoritarian, to teacher sharing in learning experiences with her students is articulated in the following extract:

**Sophie** –... *when you have children saying things between them that make you as a teacher question your own ideas then that is quite exciting because then you don't feel like you have the monopoly anymore on what needs to be known.*

In her recognition that she now learns with her students, Sophie has had to problematise both her understanding of what her students are capable of, and to critique her previous beliefs that it is her role as teacher to transmit her own knowledge as a modern-foreign language teacher, or more recently the knowledge of the Year 7 Curriculum.

Sophie's classroom seems to have moved from one where the materialdiscursive intra-acts on the teacher's identity as authoritarian to one where the materialdiscursive intra-acts student and teacher into mutually respectful relations. The changes in furniture, teaching

stimuli, and teacher/student talk have created ethical relations between teacher and student that have moved from relations of authority based on domination to relations based on mutual regard. Guinea Pig seems to recognise the changes that have occurred in the classroom in the following extract:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Guinea Pig*** – *It's different with miss now cause she really listens to us and she doesn't make us just do all them boring lessons like the other classes have to.*

When Sophie appears to critique her deficit understandings of young people through experiencing them as knowers in the COE, she develops the confidence to deviate away from the lesson plans recognising that the students need more. Rather than adopting an IRF structure of talk with the students, Sophie seeks out opportunities to enquire *with* them. Not only does this enable the students to more easily share their ideas in the classroom, but also supports Sophie to make meaning with her students.

As Sophie talks about the changes she has seen in her beliefs about the students, and in the practices that she now employs, Sophie makes a comment that makes me think about how her ability to be an epistemic agent, and to employ classroom practices that welcome the voices of the students will be limited because she continues to work under a neo-liberal gaze. Sophie thinks that neo-liberal expectations will prevent the school from taking on PwC in any meaningful way:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie*** – *I keep talking about how brilliant PwC is and so do the other teachers that have had my class and have seen the impact on them but we don't get much of a chance to meet with the SLT.*

I wonder how her knowledge that she works within the constraints of the SLTs expectations, as demonstrated by the many panoptics in the classroom, may act on her ability to be an epistemic agent. I think about how both Sophie's and the students' identities continue to intra-act within neo-liberal discourses that create expectations of how they should *be* in the classroom. To me it seems Sophie, as the teacher, feels confined in her ability to be different with the students because she knows that she must follow the

lesson plans that the SLT expect her to, in order that she can give the young people the content they need to be successful in exams. How can the students and teacher be both beings and becomings (Davies, 2014) when neo-liberal priorities and practices continue to prevail? Sophie evidently continues to feel constrained in her practice by pressure to get through all of the lesson content:

**Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – *I mean, don't get me wrong, there are lots of times when they still irritate me and each other um when they don't focus but often it is because they start to talk about other things, not linked to the learning objective in a lesson and then you have to get them back on track because the SLT are really strict about the fact that we need to get through all of the Year 7 curriculum so that we can evaluate whether it is successful or not so that we know whether we are going to do it again next year.*

Kizel (2016) suggests that the prevalence of neo-liberal discourses in education largely prevents teachers from engaging with dialogic practices with their students, because such practices are not perceived as effective in getting students to acquire content knowledge. Sophie certainly seems to concur with this view. She talks about whether the school will continue with the Year 7 Curriculum or not, stating that it will depend on how well the students that have been subject to the programme perform in end of year tests:

**Focused Enquiry 2 Me** – *Do you know how the SLT intend to evaluate the programme's success?*

**Sophie** – *Yes each of the year 7 classes are going to undertake some tests, like mini exams, on each of the subjects that we have incorporated into the curriculum and then we are going to look at which ones they perform well in and which ones they do less well in and then look at whether this is down to teachers being less confident to deliver certain subject knowledge in certain um subjects and then decide, from here, which of them we are going to carry on with um sorry I mean which subjects we are going to keep in the Year 7 Curriculum, next year, that is if we carry on with it at all. I think that we will.*

**Me** – *Do you know what the tests will be measuring?*

**Sophie** – *What do you mean?*

**Me** – *Sorry, I mean actually not what but how will they measure how the young people have done?*

**Sophie** – *Oh ok, they will do some written pieces, some will be comprehension style and I think they are going to do an extended piece of writing in English to look at their style of writing.*

Whether students who have followed the Year 7 Curriculum do better in content-driven tests than previous cohorts, who have not followed the same curriculum, will be the driving force in the SLTs decision to continue with the new curriculum next year. Sophie

tells me there will be no opportunity for the teachers or students to share their experiences of the curriculum – what is important is quantifiable data. By not actively seeking their voices, neither teachers nor students seem to be valued as epistemic agents in the school. This is despite both Sophie and the students having clear views about the Year 7 curriculum, Lion, for example, comments:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Lion** – Then we don't get to learn about anything that we want to learn about and they are always the same way of doing things and that makes them boring. I would like to do more lessons like philosophy but then we wouldn't do much writing and you have to do lots of writing so that the teachers can mark it to see if you have learnt anything or not.*

Despite her experiences of PwC, Sophie continues to equate her identity as teacher as being one in which she must get her students to learn content, and she seems concerned that she will cause them to miss out if she does not share certain knowledge with them:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – I don't want them to miss out anything that the other classes are having because the stuff might come up in an exam and then if I have not taught them it then it would be my fault if um they didn't do well in the tests.*

Sophie feels intra-acted within the gaze of other teachers, concerned they may judge her negatively if her students do not do as well as the other Year 7 students:

***Focused Enquiry 2 Sophie** – It has made some of the teachers, especially those who have been teaching for a long time, a bit nervous as if they feel like they will be judged against each other and if one Year 7 class does well but another doesn't that it will be seen as if the teacher that um taught the class that did well did a better job of getting them to learn all the facts that they needed to pass the tests and then the other teacher didn't do as well um as teachers there are so many changes that sometimes you can feel a bit uneasy.*

In her comments, Sophie again demonstrates her awareness that she works within a neo-liberal discourse of performativity and accountability. As Davies (2014) suggests, she seems to have become a manager, delivering learning in a way that will enable the students to meet targets. I wonder, therefore, that even though Sophie seems committed to the changes that she herself has identified in her practice, moving from IRF talk to enquiry, and to using stimulus that she would have regarded as not developmentally appropriate before, that the structural systems of education may limit her ability to actually make any meaningful changes to her epistemic practice.

In summary, through enquiring with her students in the COE Sophie is now a teacher who understands that those that she teaches are epistemic agents. She no longer seems to view her students through developmental, *tabula rasa* or naturally unruly lenses, but in contrast to see them as people in the now who she learns with and from.

### *Conclusion*

My diffractive reading of the data with theory in this final data chapter suggests that Sophie has begun to re-author her identity as teacher. PwC seems to have enacted changes to the materialdiscursive world of the classroom, changes to furniture, to the use of stimuli, and changes to the dialogue the class members now use. I have argued that these changes intra-act with Sophie in ways that have empowered her to challenge the deficit beliefs she previously held about her students, and neo-liberal priorities, and in doing so supported her to recognise the meaning making voices of her students, to select or adapt teaching stimuli so that it is more engaging, and to develop different epistemic relations based on respect for the other, regardless of age. In the materialdiscursive PwC classroom, Sophie has become open-minded to what the students say and has become affected by their thinking. At the end of the research Sophie describes herself as an expert *with* her students, rather than as someone who wants to present herself as expert *to* her student. She also demonstrates virtues that I have recognised as epistemic justice/trust in the agency of the young people in her class.

Sharp (1994) argues that PwC creates a new consciousness with regard to young people's rights and I surmise that the classroom I observe at the end of the academic year is a materialdiscursive space where young people are recognised, welcomed and supported as rights holders. PwC has intra-acted with the class to develop authentic participation where everyone can express their views and opinions.

Despite the materialdiscursive changes in the classroom, and the impact that these had on all members of the class, Sophie doubted their longevity. She recognised that enquiry was unrealistic in a neo-liberal educational system that values quantifiable test data over the seeking of practices that engage students' voices. Despite her concerns, I find a difference in the relationships within the class, and an awareness that each has much to bring, even within the constraints of the clock, the PowerPoint and the gaze of others. I therefore wonder whether through these relational changes, and the mutual respect that Sophie and the students have gained for the experiences of the other, that there is hope that Sophie will now work with her current and future students in ways that respect their ability to know in the classroom, and therefore recognise their right to participate within the UNCRC.

In the final chapter of this thesis, I bring together my thinking about what happened to Sophie and the students when PwC was introduced into their classroom. I consider how thinking from an agential realist perspective, and employing the method of diffraction enabled me to think in ways that are new for educational research, and therefore that this work has implications for future research in this field. I examine what I identified as the limitations in this piece of work, and consider how this research has provoked questions that call for further research to be undertaken.

## Chapter 8 – Conclusion

*We shall not cease from exploration. And the end of all exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.*

*(T.S. Elliot (1942) Little Gidding)*

### *Introduction*

The foundations of this thesis originated from my commitment to democracy for all, and my inability to align the rhetoric of the UNCRC with my experiences of working as an educational practitioner in Wales. The UNCRC is an instrument of social change as it regards young people as full human beings, necessitating the disruption of deficit models of the child that have prevailed throughout much of history (John, 2003; Lundy, 2007). Article 12 of the convention requires that young people must be heard, and their ideas acted on, and this should impact on all aspects of their lives, including their formal education in schools (Graham and Fitzgerald, 2010). The UNCRC acts as a provocation for educationalists to critique how childism and neo-liberal educational discourses, policies and practices, intra-act with how students and teachers can bring their meaning making voices to learning in the classroom. In my search for participatory practices that empower the epistemic agency of both student and teacher, and the nurturing of democratic student/teacher relationships, I have brought together the theoretical ideas of childism (Young-Bruehl, 2012), epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007), and neo-liberalism (Ball, 2013), and agentic narratives of the child from the Philosophy of Childhood and the New Sociology of Childhood. I read these together with the data created in this research in order to better understand what material-discursive things intra-act (Barad, 2007) with student and teacher to either support or deny them the right to a voice in the classroom.

I introduced Philosophy with Children as a material-discursive practice into one Year 7 classroom. The aim was to examine whether it may challenge how childism and neo-

liberalism intra-act with epistemic relations and practices in the class. I was also interested in examining whether enquiring with her students may support the class teacher to develop values of epistemic justice/trust (Fricker, 2007/Murris, 2013b). In my consideration of who could know in this classroom, I have brought to light both ethical and political dimensions of the epistemic lives of teachers and students.

This final chapter of the thesis begins with a summary of the key findings of the research. I do not claim to exercise narrative authority as researcher in this section, but rather acknowledge that what I write is an agential cut (Barad, 2007); that is one possible way of seeing and knowing. This is partly because I could not write about everything that I wanted to within the context of one thesis, partly because there would have been many things that I failed to focus on which also intra-acted with what happened in the classroom, and partly because Barad (2007) argues the apparatus we use as researchers determines what is seen. I move on to consider how the findings, as I engaged with them, and with the participants, raise questions about the roles of teacher and student that are relevant to education in Wales. I consider how the findings are pertinent to the work of curriculum reform in Wales, following the publication of the Donaldson report, *Successful Futures* (Donaldson, 2015), and how they have implications for the Welsh Government's commitment to developing a thriving democracy, where all persons' voices play an active part in shaping the country. I think about how the theoretical framework of agential realism and a diffractive methodology (Barad, 2007), using focused enquiries in the spirit of PwC, and the Community of Enquiry (COE) as both classroom practice and research method, are largely unexplored ways of researching in education that have relevance for future research in this field. In addition, I discuss the implications of the findings for my own practice as a headteacher. The chapter concludes with a discussion of what I have identified as the limitations of this study, what I may have done differently if I was to undertake the research again, and my suggestions for further areas of study.



### *Summary of Key Findings*

I begin this section by revisiting the aims of this research:

1. To examine student and teacher epistemic relations
2. To examine epistemic relations and practices intra-acting with student and teacher
3. To examine PwC as a materialdiscursive practice that may create new and different epistemic relations and practices

From an agential realist perspective (Barad, 2007), and from a context of human rights for young people, particularly in consideration of the UNCRC, I sought data that would support me to address these aims in ways that provoked thinking about how teachers and students are intra-acted (Barad, 2007) as knowers, and thereby as rights-holders, within the materialdiscursive practices and discourses of a classroom. In thinking about the classroom as a space of Barad's (2007) intra-actions, I have challenged more usual ways of thinking of things as 'interacting' with each other. Barad (2007) states that interaction denotes the idea that things exist as pre-established bodies that participate in action with each other. In contrast, Barad's (2007) concept of intra-action recognises all things influence and work inseparably with all other things. Therefore, in considering how Sophie, the class teacher, and the students were able to know in the classroom, and how their ability to know changed over the course of the academic year, I did not think about how things in the classroom interacted on their ability to bring their knowledge, but rather understood that materialdiscursive things, in particular societal beliefs (childism), and political discourses (neo-liberalism) intra-acted. I argued that it is within these intra-actions that teacher and student identities as epistemic agents are created. All things matter, both material and discursive, in the creation of epistemic relations and practices; the gaze of others, the layout of furniture, the classroom clock, the lesson plan, childist stereotypes, neo-liberal priorities – all examples of things intra-acting with each other in the creation of who is and who is not allowed to know.

I introduced PwC as a means of creating new materialdiscursive intra-actions in the classroom: enquiry rather than transmission, thought provoking stimuli rather than PowerPoint, a circle of chairs rather than rows, and participation rather than submission. I sought to examine how these changes may create new and different epistemic relations and practices between Sophie and her students, in particular relationships which empowered all members of the class to bring their ways of knowing to learning, and thereby support recognition of young people as having valid things to say now, as young people, as the New Sociology of Childhood and the Philosophy of Childhood call for.

As I grappled with the literature in search of what may help me to address the aims of this research, I was drawn to the notions of childism (Young-Bruehl, 2012), epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007) and neo-liberalism (Ball, 2013). All three things seemed to be relevant for addressing the epistemic lives of teachers and students but in different ways, and I was initially unsure of how to bring these theories from different disciplines together. It was when I came to Barad's (2007) theory of agential realism, and more specifically her methodology of diffraction, that I came to a new way of thinking, a way that allowed me to read the theories of childism, epistemic injustice and neo-liberalism together. Barad (2014) states that diffraction is about 're-turning' rather than 'returning', as one may do when reflecting on something that has already taken place. Re-turning happens when one turns something over again and again, and in doing so creates "new temporalities (spacetime-matterings), new diffraction patterns" (Barad, 2014:168). From a diffractive stance, I read together childism, epistemic injustice and neo-liberalism, with the data that was created in this research, looking for what each could tell me about the other. In the process of doing this I came to think in new ways about the consequences of deeply embedded binaries within society, namely: child/adult, deficit/rational, becoming/being.

Thinking across different disciplines, helped me to better understand how epistemic injustice and childism may be relevant for the lives of students and teachers, within the political economy of neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism creates dominant groups, and a competitive ethos of winners and losers; within this political context childism can be understood as a prejudice that favours adult, they are the winners, whilst young people remain largely sub-servant to adult wants and desires. In doing this, young people are treated as unreliable knowers, just as other subordinate groups often are.

As I returned again and again to data and the literature, and as I worked with the participants, questions began to emerge. These questions evolved and took shape throughout the data creation period as I developed my understanding of the key concepts I engaged with, and as the data led me in new directions. Although many questions supported the direction of my thinking, the ones that I kept returning to in order to guide me were:

1. Do childism and neo-liberal educational priorities create materialdiscursive classroom spaces and practices that make it hard for teacher and student to know in the classroom?
2. Are teacher and student victims of epistemic injustice if they cannot bring their meaning making voices to the classroom?
3. If students and teachers are victims of epistemic injustice what types of epistemic injustice are they victims of?
4. Can the materialdiscursive apparatus of PwC support a teacher to develop epistemic justice/trust in the agency of her students?
5. Do epistemic relations and epistemic practices in the classroom intra-act in ways that create difficulties for teachers to engage with the practice of PwC?

These questions became the most significant in my thinking about what was important in determining the epistemic lives of the teacher and students that I worked with. As the research evolved, and as more data was created, these questions were used as a means of supporting me to plug the data into theory, and the theory into data. This helped me to think about the classroom at the start of the research, and to better understand how and why the classroom changed over the course of the academic year. Plugging these questions into the data also acted as a means of stimulating new ideas about how student and teacher may be intra-acted as knowers in a classroom space where childism and neo-liberalism were dominant discourses.

I turn now to a consideration of each of these questions, in pursuit of showing how each added to my thinking about the aims of this research.

*Do childism and neo-liberal educational priorities create materialdiscursive classroom spaces and practices that make it hard for teacher and student to know in the classroom?*

When I first began to work with the participants in this research, I found that childist beliefs and neo-liberal educational priorities caused Sophie to misjudge her students' capabilities. Rather than recognising her students as epistemic subjects, I found Fricker's (2007) concept of persons receiving credibility deficits because of prejudices against persons of that type useful; Sophie presented as a teacher that was influenced by developmental psychology and behaviourism, models of learning that are predicated upon adult superiority over child. In her underestimation of her students, Sophie demonstrated scepticism when they tried to offer their own ideas, and in this way she contributed to the students being denied opportunities to participate as meaning makers in the classroom (Kennedy, 2004). The students suggested that they did not equate their ideas with the real work of the class and, following the findings of Murriss (2013b), I argued this indicated that

they stopped sharing their ideas as a consequence. Consequently, Sophie's classroom revealed itself to me as a childist space where neo-liberal values of control and accountability could be clearly seen, whilst democratic values were absent.

Sophie exerted her adult authority over the young people in her class through her seating plan, which controlled where the students were allowed to sit, through the layout of the furniture, whereby she could cast her gaze over them at all times, and through her behaviour management talk, which created a clear binary of good/bad student.

Materialdiscursive classroom practices intra-acted relations of expert teacher and submissive student, relations that did not encourage teacher or student to search for meaning together. I surmised that discriminatory beliefs about the students intra-acted with neo-liberal educational priorities that expect teachers to value standardisation over the development of ideas, and measure success against the consumption of knowledge that has already been decided. This created an accountability culture, as demonstrated in the many panoptics of the class: teacher chair, window in door, Year 7 lesson plan, clock, all acting together as constant reminders of what is important in the political discourses that continue to dominate in schools. Under this neo-liberal gaze, Sophie's own identity as knower was constructed within the constraints of the knowledge that she was expected to deliver (the lesson plan), the materials she was expected to use (the PowerPoint), the constraints of the clock, and the gaze of those outside the classroom.

*Are teacher and student victims of epistemic injustice if they cannot bring their meaning making voices to the classroom?*

I have suggested childism and neo-liberalism intra-act in ways that create materialdiscursive epistemic relations and practices, which cause teachers and students to be wronged as epistemic subjects. When I first observed in Sophie's classroom, I found there were very few opportunities for either Sophie or the students to bring their own ways of knowing to the classroom. Sophie was constrained by the Year 7 lesson plan, which

largely dictated what knowledge she must share with the students and how, and the students were limited in their ability to share their ideas because they understood that what was valued in the classroom were the ‘right’ answers, answers that could be found in the PowerPoint slides. I considered how in their inability to bring their meaning making voices to the classroom both Sophie and the students might be victims of Fricker’s (2007) epistemic injustice.

*If students and teachers are victims of epistemic injustice what types of epistemic injustice are they victims of?*

#### Testimonial Injustice in the Classroom

I applied Fricker’s (2007) theory of testimonial injustice to the experiences of Sophie and the students in order to think about whether teacher and student may be victims. I found that materialdiscursive classroom practices intra-acted in ways that made it difficult for the students to bring their meaning making voices to the classroom. In particular, I surmised that materialdiscursive practices were embedded within childist assumptions based on deficit stereotypes about young people, and neo-liberal priorities that focused on the success of the individual over the class as a community. I argued that this enacted young people within discourses that underestimated what they were capable of, and discouraged materialdiscursive practices that welcomed the young people as epistemic agents.

I argued that Sophie failed to hear the students’ voices because of the deficit beliefs that she held about young people. When Rabbit tried to extend her answer about Muslim women, for example, Sophie shut her down, and I considered how this was a result of her inability to recognise that Rabbit could have had anything of any real value to add to learning. The sharing of content was what was valued in the lesson plans, and this encouraged an IRF style of talk because this style supported Sophie to assess whether the students were able to regurgitate the information she had shared with them. The Year 7 Curriculum was an example of the material working with the discursive, and the discursive

working with the material, both acting with the other in a way that intra-acted with the epistemic relations and practices that were created in this class. The Curriculum was based on developmental and tabula rasa assumptions about what the young people were capable of, which determined the content that was deemed appropriate to share with them; and neo-liberal priorities, which called for teachers to teach in ways that were for the purpose of sharing the content the students needed to be successful in tests and examinations. There was no time for either students or Sophie to deviate away from the lesson plan by following areas of enquiry that may have been of interest to them. I wondered, therefore, whether both Sophie and the students might be victims of testimonial injustice. However, Fricker (2007) argues that testimonial injustice only occurs when a hearer does not listen to someone who tries to offer their testimony because they hold a credibility deficit about that person. The young people in this class were understood through deficit stereotypes, a type of credibility deficit, and this was what created epistemic relations that made it hard for the students to bring their testimony to the classroom. Applying Fricker's condition for a harm to be epistemic, I argued the students were victims of testimonial injustice. In contrast, Sophie seemed to be limited in her ability to bring her knowledge to the classroom by the neo-liberal priorities she found herself working within, political conditions as opposed to a credibility deficit about teachers. Therefore, I concluded that Sophie was not a victim of testimonial injustice.

When thinking about the epistemic lives of Sophie and the students I also thought about whether they may be victims of hermeneutical injustice.

#### Hermeneutical Injustice in the Classroom

In order for there to be hermeneutical injustice, a lacuna must exist which prevents someone from understanding something that is significant to their social experience (Fricker, 2007). I thought about childism as a lacuna, and examined how it impacted on the

students' ability to challenge classroom practices that intra-acted with their ability to bring their meaning making voices to their learning. Most of the students seemed to accept that Sophie, as the adult teacher, could control talk in the classroom by deciding who could talk and when, and by validating certain answers and dismissing others, as demonstrated by her IRF pattern of talk. Most of the students also seemed to accept the way that Sophie spoke to them in the first lesson I observed her teaching, talk that I found to be rude and disrespectful at times. When one student, Lion, did challenge her, for unfairly singling him out when others were behaving in the same way as him, his challenge was short lived, and he seemed to accept that he *must* move to where she told him to, with little protest. Sophie not only controlled when the students could talk, she also controlled their bodies by determining where they could sit in the room. Sophie's seating plan told the students where they had to sit, and so this is where they did sit, no one resisted. I found it interesting that when we talked together in our first focused enquiry, the students told me that teachers were justified in controlling them, seeing that this was part of their role as teachers, and believing that control was an important mechanism for supporting them to learn what they needed to in order to be successful students. I argued that this acceptance of her authority over them was a consequence of how they were used to being treated in a society where adult is valued over child. Consequently, the lacuna of childism acted with the students' ability to question the educational regimes that they were expected to work in, including the way that teachers spoke to them disrespectfully and controlled where they sat. The students failure to challenge, or to sustain challenges, appeared to me to be a consequence of their inability to understand that anything in the way they were being treated was wrong. Sitting in the room, observing behaviours and talk between Sophie and the students, I really felt uncomfortable by the materialdiscursive practices that seemed to enact Sophie within a position of authority over the young people, she was the one with Fricker's (2007) identity power, whilst it was clear to me that the young people were the subordinates. I argued that the students were so used to being treated by teachers, and adults, as



subordinates that they did not question it, it was just the status quo. In their failure to challenge, they suffered as a consequence of the lacuna, because they had no real way to question how they were treated. The lesson that Sophie was expected to teach, the resources she was expected to use, her deficit beliefs about the capabilities of the young people and their desire to learn, the layout of the classroom that encouraged transmission and told them where to sit, and the panoptics that checked that the students were behaving as they should, were all practices the children accepted, all of them causing them to be hermeneutically harmed in their inability to recognise how childism caused them to accept that they must learn under educational practices that acted to silence their voices.

In thinking about whether Sophie may also be a victim of hermeneutical injustice in this classroom, I turned to Fricker's (2007) argument that only those that suffer as a consequence of a lacuna may be victims. I found Fricker's argument to be subjective, as it depends on what one means by harm. I argue that Sophie was epistemically harmed because childism caused her to fail to recognise that she was missing out on developing her own knowledge and teaching practice when she failed to hear her students' ways of knowing. It was only when Sophie started to recognise how her deficit beliefs about the students impacted on her ability to hear them, that she learnt to work with them in ways that enabled their ways of knowing to enhance her own ideas, and the teaching practices she used. Enquiring with her students, supported Sophie to address the impact that hermeneutical marginalisation of the students had on both the students and herself, as each came to recognise the agency of the other, and as the students themselves came to understand that their voices were relevant to the work of the class. Consequently, I argued that both students and Sophie were victims of hermeneutically injustice because of the lacuna childism.

*Can the materialdiscursive apparatus of PwC support a teacher to develop epistemic justice/trust in the agency of her students?*

In consideration of the students and Sophie as victims of epistemic injustice, I thought about what things needed to change in order for the classroom to become a materialdiscursive space that intra-acted Sophie and student as persons with epistemic agency. My own experience of PwC as a participatory practice, which had challenged my own values and beliefs about young people, and my role as a teacher, and the vast literature on the benefits of PwC (see Chapter 3), led me to want to examine whether introducing PwC could create new epistemic relations and practices in the classroom, ones based on recognition of the epistemic agency of the other. In introducing PwC, I introduced new materialdiscursive practices, replacing transmission with enquiry, PowerPoint with thought provoking stimuli, rows of chairs (stopping enquiry) to circle of chairs (welcoming enquiry), control to participation. The impact of these changes caused Sophie to critique how her beliefs about her students influenced how she was able to hear and learn with her students. I argued that as a result Sophie engaged with her students differently in the classroom, as seen in the way that she listened to them and built on their ideas in the final transcribed PwC enquiry, and the way she actively sought and followed their interests when I observed her teaching for a second time. Material changes to the classroom included the removal of her seating plan, with students now being able to choose where they sat, as is the practice of the COE. Although chairs and tables remained in rows, they no longer acted as a material barrier to enquiry in the classroom, as Sophie encouraged the students to move their chairs in her lesson so that they could enquire with different people. The most striking change between the classrooms I observed at the start of the academic year, and that which I observed at the end, was Sophie's use of the Year 7 Curriculum. At the start of the year, she stuck to it rigidly as she felt accountable to its gaze, as exemplified by the concerns she expressed in our first focused enquiry about SLT expectations, and her worry that she would be judged negatively against her peers at the

end of the academic year if other students performed better than hers. At the end of the year, Sophie changed the questions of the PowerPoint so that they became enquiry driven, and she employed PwC tools, including an agree/disagree line, suggesting she now recognised the importance of dialogue for learning, and that she valued the students' ideas. Sophie appeared to allow herself to become lost in dialogue with her students as for a time she became unaware of the clock, the constant reminder that she must complete the tasks of the lesson plan within a set time.

PwC supported Sophie to develop epistemic justice/trust in her students as givers of testimony, and developed her confidence to question and replace transmission forms of teaching that are encouraged by neo-liberal educational priorities. I found that as Sophie enquired with her students in the COE, she critiqued the deficit assumptions that had underpinned her own beliefs about her students at the start of the research, namely that they were naturally unruly, and developmentally not ready to engage in philosophical dialogue. I realised that these childist assumptions had prevented Sophie from learning with and from her students. In contrast, through listening to her students enquire together, and then later through enquiring with them, Sophie came to recognise that she had much to learn from her students. In our final enquiry, Sophie talked about how learning with her students had developed her practice as a teacher. She no longer saw that it was important for her to be the expert, but instead actively sought opportunities to follow her students' lines of enquiry. Therefore, although Sophie did not talk about childism, I argue that through her philosophical engagement with the students she had begun to develop an appreciation of how her deficit views of the child had previously impacted on her ability to develop her own knowledge.

*Do epistemic relations and epistemic practices in the classroom intra-act in ways that create difficulties for teachers to engage with the practice of PwC?*

In our second focused enquiry, Sophie shared her belief that opportunities for her to resist usual educational practices were limited. Despite Sophie becoming a teacher who recognised that she had much to learn with and from her students, and a teacher that had developed the confidence to question the resources that she was expected to use (as evidenced by her adapting the teaching materials from the Year 7 lesson plans at the end of the academic year), she did not think that she would be able to sustain practices that would allow for her students' voices. Sophie suggested this was because she continues to work under a neo-liberal gaze, and the expectations that this requires the SLT to place on her.

Sophie helped me to recognise that it would be hard for other teachers to take on PwC as a pedagogic practice, unless they also had the opportunity to have it modeled to them by an experienced facilitator, and were given time to reflect on their own practice, both on their own and with other teachers. Without this, Sophie argued that teachers would just see that it was another initiative that was being done *to* them, what Haynes and Murriss (2012:202) describe as just another thing to add to the “white noise in the world of education”. Sophie stated that it was the opportunity to slowly immerse herself in the COE that had impacted on her ability to see that PwC was not just another tool that could be added to her teaching repertoire, but rather that the participatory and democratic nature of PwC had enabled her to critique her own values, and critique the teaching practices that she had previously engaged with. Sophie suggested, and I concurred, that the opportunity for other teachers to do this would be unlikely, mainly because of the cost implications for schools.

After completing the research, I wrote a summary report of the findings for the SLT. Within this report I made it clear that Sophie, the students and myself were all able to see the benefits of developing a COE in the classroom, but despite this the school decided that they would not take PwC on in the school at this time. This was despite the fact that

quantitative data collected at the beginning and end of this research, but not reported on in this thesis, indicated improved standards for the participating Year 7 class in literacy and numeracy. The main reason that was given was that the school had invested a lot of time and money into the Year 7 Curriculum, and they did not want to introduce another new initiative that may distract teachers away from this. I felt disappointed that the participatory, democratic, and epistemic value of PwC could so easily be dismissed by the SLT, in favour of a curriculum based on the requirement to transmit pre-decided knowledge in ways, that I have argued, cause students to be victims of hermeneutical and testimonial injustice, and teachers hermeneutical injustice.

In order for teacher and student to be recognised as epistemic agents in schools, it is not enough to work with teachers at the classroom level. Instead I have argued that the powerlessness of young people, as exemplified by childism, needs to be addressed within society, and that the neo-liberal agenda in education needs to be replaced with democratic educational discourses. In the following section, I consider these two things in the context of Wales, as this was the setting for this research.

#### *Relevance of Research for Education in Wales and Democracy*

The Welsh government has made a political commitment to the UNCRC. This means that they have a responsibility to act on it because without actions, rights are mere words on paper. The findings in this research indicate that the government needs to put in place professional development opportunities for teachers that support them to critique how deficit models of the child, and childism, may impact on their ability to recognise the epistemic agency of young people. There also needs to be a commitment to educational reform that questions the neo-liberal discourses that currently underpin the curriculum, and thereby dominant educational policies and practices. I argue that the current curriculum works against young people's right to a voice, because it lays down what learners should

learn and teachers teach. We therefore need curriculum reform if the Welsh Government's commitment to democratic citizenship, and the human rights of the child, are to become a reality. Consequently, I argue that the Welsh government bears the ultimate responsibility for securing the UNCRC in schools.

This research comes at a time when a review of the curriculum in Wales is being undertaken. Professor Graham Donaldson was commissioned to undertake a large-scale review of the curriculum, and his findings were published in February 2015 (Donaldson, 2015). Donaldson recommended that the new curriculum should be based on 4 key purposes, which aim to develop young people as:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

(Donaldson, 2015:28)

These 4 key purposes form the fundamental drivers for the design of the new curriculum. Within them it is made clear that students should be able to connect and apply their own knowledge to the classroom. The report states that good teaching and learning will, amongst other things, challenge all learners, and promote creative and critical thinking, that builds on the students' previous knowledge and experience, encourages young people to take increasing responsibility for their own learning, encourages collaboration and supports social and emotional development and positive relationships. In the report Donaldson (2015) states that teaching and learning approaches should be less constrained by detailed prescription and narrow performance measures, and this has clear implications for the accountability culture that currently persists in schools. In addition, the review also recommends that a programme of professional learning is developed to ensure that the

implications of the review for the skills and knowledge of teachers is met. I understand that democratic principles, including young peoples' right to participate, are clearly embedded within the principles of Donaldson's suggestions for curriculum reform, and therefore that the findings of this research are of key significance to the work of curriculum reform in Wales.

This reform is contextualised within the Welsh Government's commitment to building a thriving democracy. Its commitment to including young people in this vision can be seen in its proposal to extend the vote to 16-17 year olds. Schools play a crucial role in giving young people opportunities to exercise their rights as citizens in the now, rather than just learning the skills to be citizens in the future (Lyle, 2017). I argue that this means that schools need to recognise and enable their right to participate, and therefore getting the new curriculum right is essential to the ambitions of the Welsh Government.

In November 2015, 68 pioneer schools were selected to lead the way in developing the new curriculum. In engaging teachers as active agents of change this seems to afford teachers greater autonomy in curriculum design. Creating a curriculum that is not done *to* them, an alternative to top-down implementation of change, values teachers' meaning making voices. However, thinking about proposed changes to the curriculum that appear to call for more democratic relations to develop between teacher and student, I am concerned that the findings in this research indicate that teachers may not be well positioned to develop a socially just new curriculum unless they first engage in dialogue which empowers them to critique deeply embedded beliefs about young people, and habitual and often deeply engrained traditional practices of schooling. I argue that without this requirement to critique their understanding about who the child is, to question the impact of childism on adult views about young people, and the purpose of schooling in a democratic society, the new curriculum may simply provide a mechanism for reinforcing

existing ways of thinking rather than actively seeking the voices of all its members, regardless of age.

The findings in this research suggest that PwC is a participatory practice that can support the Welsh Government's ambitions to increase the democratic engagement of young people. If schools engage with PwC, they provide opportunities for young people to develop the 4Cs of PwC, skills that will support them to develop the dispositions they need to be critical, caring and creative informed citizens. The COE provides a platform for teachers to hear young people enquire in ways that may challenge how childism and neo-liberal priorities have influenced their understanding of what young people are capable of. In this way PwC can also support educationalists to challenge the neo-liberal discourses we have become used to working within, and this means it has value for both students and teachers.

In the following section of this chapter, I consider how the ways in which I researched in this thesis supported me to address my research aims and research questions. I also consider how I used methods that were different to more conventional methodologies that are commonly used in educational research, and think about how this raises questions for future research in the field.

### *Researching Differently*

In this research I have aimed to undertake educational research in ways that have enriched and deepened my own thinking about the rights of young people and about democratic relations between adult and child. I have identified a clear link between research, theory and practice and, I argue, my findings have implications for research and policy that are particularly relevant in a time of curriculum reform in Wales.



My research aims and research questions showed that I had an equal interest in the material as well as the discursive, and this meant that I had to find research methods that would support me to think about both. This led me away from traditional qualitative approaches in favour of diffraction. A diffractive methodology allowed me to focus on the material and the discursive, as things that intra-act together in order to create what is found (Barad, 2007).

Diffraction also proved to be a useful method in helping me to read the key theories of childism, epistemic injustice and neo-liberalism together, in order to think creatively about what each might tell me about the other in my aim to better understand the epistemic lives of the different participants in this study. I employed the method of plugging different things into one another (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012) as a means of diffractively reading data and theory together. Through plugging in, I placed different ideas against different parts of the data, moving things around, cutting and pasting, returning to things that seemed interesting and important time and time again, looking for what different things they might tell me that I had failed to notice before. Plugging in also moved me away from a desire to remain *apart from* the research, so that my own epistemic beliefs and values are woven into the research aims, and my interpretations of what was created. Diffraction supported me to do this, as did agential realism, which became the theoretical framework for this research, as an ontoepistemological theoretical framework.

I also wanted to use methods that would support me to both enquire with the participants, and for the participants' own ideas and experiences to interpret what was found.

Qualitative research to investigate attitudes, most often comprises of focus groups and in-depth interviews in response to questions posed by the researcher. By adopting a focused enquiry approach the research participants were able to identify what aspects of classroom practice they found most interesting and puzzling. An enquiry approach to the research

enabled them to explore what it meant to them, not merely to respond to what I as researcher identified as important. Their selections from the transcripts of classroom discourse formed the content of what we enquired about, and this helped me to realise what was important in the enactment of their own identities as knowers. Therefore, the focused enquiries empowered the participants to actively interpret what was created through different data collection methods, so that we constructed what was found together. I maintain that this way of working with participants is in line with democratic practices because it allowed their voices to help construct the narrative that was reported in this thesis. I argue that this way of working with participants is particularly important if researchers want to use methods and think about what data is created in democratically engaging ways.

In this thesis I have moved from thinking about the COE as just the pedagogic tool of PwC, to also thinking about it as a method of examining classroom practice. I found that the COE supported my critical understanding of what took place in the classroom, and therefore recognise that the COE offers a very good opportunity for tracking changes in the epistemic lives of teachers and students. In addition, I suggest that other teachers might use the COE as an on-the-ground tool to critique their own beliefs and practice. Through participating in the COE Sophie was able to critique her practice and her beliefs about the child. Consequently, I argue that the COE provides a real opportunity for both professional development and emerges as a viable research approach in qualitative research, in particular when the researcher wishes to investigate the beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and values of respondents (Lyle and Andrews, 2017).

Researching with the same teacher over the course of a year, a relatively substantial period of time, allowed the PwC intervention to develop fully. By focusing on the professional development of a teacher this research offers an important contribution to understanding

how CPD can support teachers to understand participatory practices, essential if schools are to fully embrace the Donaldson recommendations, and take the UNCRC seriously. I argue that the use of focused enquiries and the COE over a period of one year in the same classroom has enabled me to research the complexity of social relations and the practice of teaching and learning more effectively than more conventional research methods. The focused enquiries had the power to engage participants in dialogue where they sought intersubjective meaning and recounted experiences. They helped me to access the knowledge and understanding of both the teacher and the students and gave me access to the stock of experiential knowledge held by teacher and students. Such data gave me an insight into everyday classroom practice and illuminated how identity power impacts on the epistemic lives and practices of both teacher and student. Consequently, I believe this research has relevance for the development of more democratic epistemic relations and practices in schools, and more democratic ways of working with research participants.

In my recognition of how I was necessarily entangled within this research, I understand that this research impacted on me as a practitioner.

#### *Impact of the Research on My Practice*

I have integrated what I have learnt from this research into my own thinking and practice. I have learnt much about my own identity as teacher, facilitator, as researcher, and as parent, and this has supported me to develop an enhanced self-awareness of my own practice and epistemic beliefs in order to limit the impact any previously unconscious childist views may have on my own credibility judgments of young people. In particular, working with Sophie really helped me to critique myself. When we first began to informally talk together about what was happening in the classroom, it felt that all of the focus was on Sophie's practice, beliefs and values. At times these conversations felt a little uncomfortable, both for myself and for Sophie. Once we had been talking for a while, Sophie told me that she

had felt on guard when we first spoke, concerned that I might be reporting on what she said to the SLT, even though I had told her that I would always show her anything I had written before I ever showed it to anyone else, including my supervisors. However, as our relationship developed I not only found that she learnt to trust me more, as demonstrated by her being more open when we talked, but I learnt to trust her more too. I found myself asking Sophie as many questions about my own practice as I asked questions of her. Our reflections on what was created within the COE's became about Sophie, the students, the classroom space, the materialdiscursive intra-actions, and also about me. I had not realised how much I would be changed in the process of this research. I became more aware of my own beliefs and values through conversations with Sophie, and in my desire to plug data and theory together, where I came to notice so many different things about us all, all of us participants together. I discovered, for example, there were many instances where childism continued to intra-act with my decisions. Reflecting on my choice of a YouTube clip, for example, I realised that part of the reason I had chosen it was because I thought that it would be a little controversial and maybe some of the students would not be quite ready for it. It was only when I thought about this decision again, some time later, I realised how influenced I had been by developmental assumptions. I had been just as caught up by the idea that some things were developmentally appropriate for the students, as Sophie was, even though it was such deficit assumptions about young people that I was seeking to disrupt. This was one example of many that helped me to really recognise how deeply engrained childist assumptions are, and how important it is that opportunities are provided for teachers to question how they may impact on their beliefs and values about their students.

What I have learnt about myself has had a profound impact on the practices that I encourage and promote in my school as a headteacher. I have had to think carefully about how the priorities that the Welsh government promote and expect under current

educational discourses, marry with my own beliefs about young people, and my heightened understanding of what takes place within a neo-liberal classroom. I have come to question everything that we do as a school in an attempt to safeguard against people being unfairly excluded from epistemic participation, and have tried to include the voices of participants from the whole school community in really developing the epistemic relations and materialdiscursive practices we engage with.

The impact of my commitment to democratic educational practices, and for young people to be understood as full human beings, has been recently recognised by Estyn who inspected in our school in October of this year. In the report both ‘care, support and guidance’ and ‘leadership’, two of Estyn’s key areas that are reported on, were judged as excellent, with pupil leadership and democratic principles both being identified as key strengths of the school.

As this research comes to an end, I find myself thinking a lot about the limitations of the study, and about what I may have done differently if I was to undertake the research again. I turn to my considerations about these things now.

#### *Limitations of the Study*

Although I do not perceive it to be a limitation of this study, I felt that it was important to remind the reader that it was not the purpose of this research to produce results that may be generalisable to other classrooms. I recognise that this was a small-scale study that was undertaken with one class, in the context of one classroom, and that what was created and how it was analysed was largely a consequence of mine and the participants’ subjective experiences and ontoepistemological beliefs. Rather than being concerned with generalisation, I aimed in this research to provoke thinking about what the theories of childism, neo-liberalism and epistemic injustice can tell us about the epistemic lives of

teachers and students, particularly in the context of Wales where the UNCRC underpins all work that is undertaken with young people (see Chapter 2 for further details).

Although it was important to me to facilitate the PwC enquiries myself, at times I came to recognise that this limited my ability to engage with the materialdiscursive practices of the classroom fully. Through becoming a member of the community, I necessarily focused on certain things, particularly the dialogue that was shared between different members (as more easily evidenced by the recorded and transcribed accounts). I was also conscious that my way of recording my thoughts about material things that seemed to matter in the classroom in my research diary, did not happen straight away but usually after each enquiry, and therefore that this may have caused me to miss things, or to forget things. If I had not facilitated the enquiries myself I may have been able to capture material things more easily, as they happened, probably with a photograph. These photographs may have supported me and the participants to better understand the part that material things played in the intra-actions in the classroom.

Something that has concerned me throughout this research is how limited I felt on being able to report on the data that was created. I recognise that I probably collected too much data for the purposes of one thesis, but I felt that in order for me to experience the students' and Sophie's classroom as a materialdiscursive space, in order for me to examine how the materialdiscursive practices of a COE acted on the students' and Sophie's capacity to know, and in order to adopt practices that would support the participants to analysis the data and to inform my thinking, that all of the methods that I employed were important. However, as I analysed the data, I found myself constrained in what I could focus on in the knowledge that I was restricted by word count. I was very conscious that all things mattered, all things intra-acting, both material and discursive, with the ability of Sophie and the students to be epistemic agents in the classroom, and therefore it was hard to know

what was most important to concentrate on. What I came to focus on was partly decided by what the participants identified as important, and as interesting in the focused enquiries, and partly on what I felt stood out as being particularly significant, what glowed (MacLure, 2013), to borrow the term from MacLure again. However, I feel that my inability to focus on all parts of the data in the constraints of a PhD word limit, was a real limitation of the study. This limitation calls me to work with this data further, to open myself up to what else it may tell me about the epistemic lives of teachers and students, and I therefore look forward to writing beyond this thesis.

### *What I May Have Done Differently*

Fricker (2017) has recently published work where she develops her theory of discriminatory epistemic injustice further. Due to the timing of this publication with the submission of this thesis, I do not feel that I have been able to properly engage with her latest writing. I would therefore like to continue to engage with Fricker's (2007) ideas in order to develop a fuller understanding of how her theories have progressed. Likewise Stephen Ball has just republished his book *The Education Debate* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed) (2017) and as the second edition was so key to my understanding of neo-liberalism, I would have liked to engage further with developments in his thinking.

The data that I engage with in this thesis is based on what was found over the period of my working with Sophie and the students over the course of the academic year. As Sophie expected, the school did not chose to take on PwC as a pedagogic practice, arguing that there was no room to include it in the Year 7 Curriculum. I wondered how else I could convince the SLT on the benefits for both teacher and student of engaging in a COE. I felt that I needed to provide them with a form of evidence that would fit with the accountability requirements of the neo-liberal agenda. Consequently, I returned to the school a year later and undertook a reasoning activity with the whole cohort of students

who were now at the end of Year 8. The activity enabled me to provide the school with quantifiable evidence of the long-term positive impact that PwC had on the students' ability to reason. Although there was no room to report on the findings of this further research in this study, I would like the opportunity to examine how this evidence impacted differently on the SLT's willingness to engage with the practice of PwC in a further piece of writing.

### *Future Research*

As I write this final section of my thesis I find myself experiencing a mixture of euphoria that I have managed to commit it all to paper, and devastation that what has occupied my thinking for so long is coming to an end. And yet I realise that this is of course not the end, as once embarked on, so many ideas for further studies are born.

Many questions have come to light as I have read for this thesis, and as I have engaged with the data. Some of the questions that I would like to examine further are:

- How can the lens through which society understands young people be critiqued on a large scale?
- Can PwC have a positive impact on disadvantaged students' inclusion and class engagement?
- Do teachers that develop the virtues of epistemic justice/trust have a duty of care to ensure that they act against the hermeneutical marginalisation of students?
- How can the conditions for democratic relations between teacher and SLT be encouraged?

In my thinking in this research I have come to recognise that there needs to be a "cultural climate" that wants "to listen to and involve children" (Moss, 2006:30). This research has provided an embryonic journey into the fields of childism, neo-liberalism and epistemic



injustice in the context of one school, and the wider political context of Wales, and in doing so has suggested that PwC has the potential to support democratic classroom practices, where teacher and student can bring their own voices to learning in the classroom. I ardently believe, that if rights are going to become a reality for young people, and in order for us to become a society that values the voices of all its members as a truly participatory, rather than a merely representative democracy, that we need further research into how childism impacts on the lives of young people, and how, as a lacuna, it causes adults to be hermeneutically oppressed in their inability to recognise that they have much to learn from young people. This requires, as Hendrick (2016:19) states, that childism needs be given “political resonance” so adults can become aware of the discrimination that young people experience on a daily basis when their voices are not heard. I conclude with my belief that researching the experiences of students in schools is not enough to understand the experience of young people, instead the epistemic experiences of young people in all aspects of their lives need to be laid bare. This requires a bringing together of multiple disciplines and theoretical frameworks with the aim of illuminating that which may not be understood if things are looked at in disciplinary isolation. I therefore conclude this thesis with the optimistic belief that we will see a sea-change in the way that young people are currently regarded as deficit in much of society, as research like this continues to provide evidence for the competency models of child that disciplines including the Philosophy of Childhood and the New Sociology of Childhood present us with.

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## **Appendixes**

Appendix 1 extract from research diary

Appendix 2 transcript of first observation of Sophie teaching

Appendix 3 transcript of first PwC enquiry

Appendix 4 transcript of first focused enquiry with Sophie

Appendix 5 transcript of first focused enquiry with the 6 students

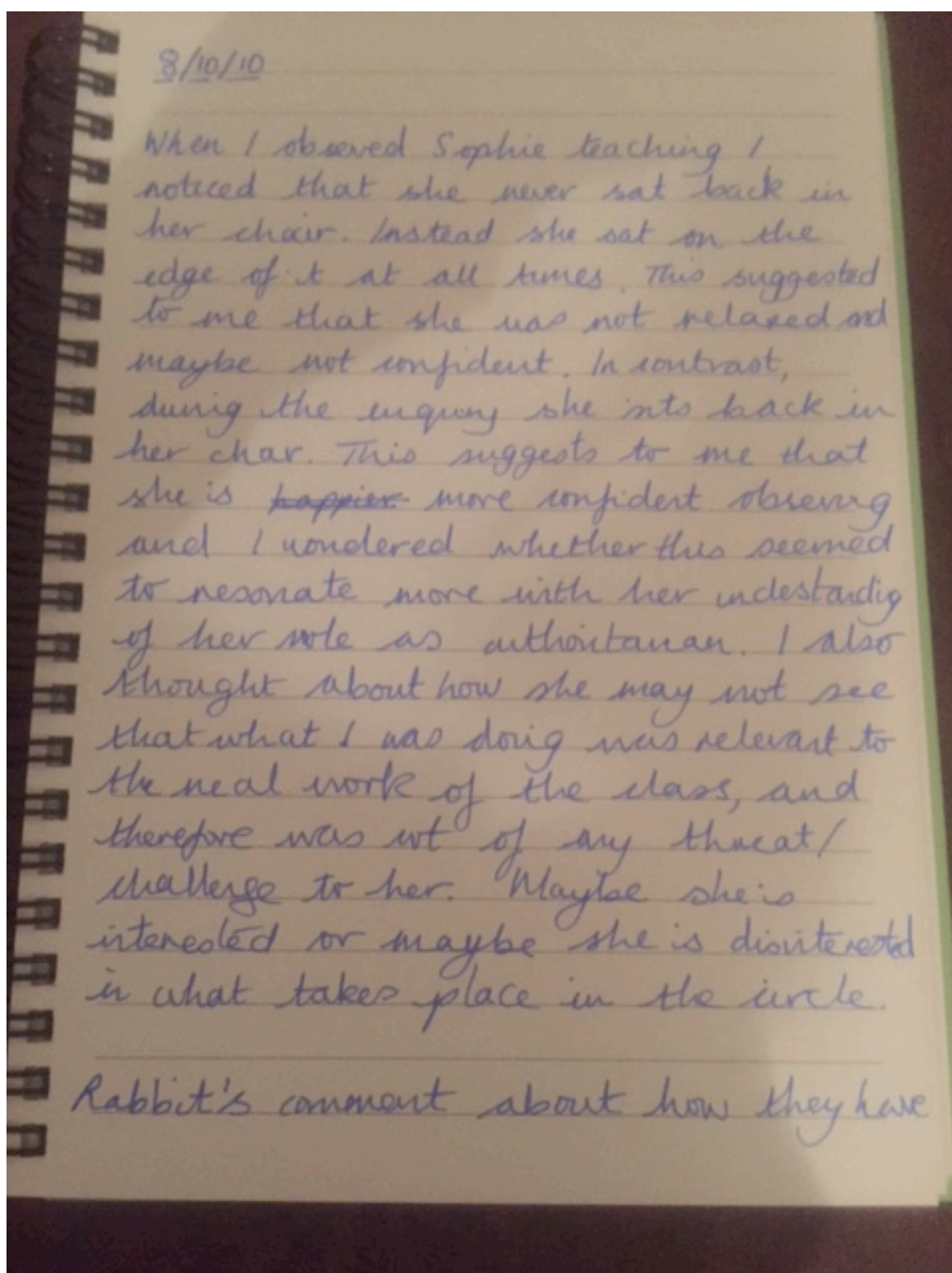
Appendix 6 transcript of final PwC enquiry

Appendix 7 transcript of second focused enquiry with Sophie

Appendix 8 transcript of second focused enquiry with the 6 students

Appendix 9 transcript of second observation of Sophie teaching

## Appendix 1



8/10/10

When I observed Sophie teaching I noticed that she never sat back in her chair. Instead she sat on the edge of it at all times. This suggested to me that she was not relaxed and maybe not confident. In contrast, during the inquiry she sits back in her chair. This suggests to me that she is ~~happier~~ more confident observing and I wondered whether this seemed to resonate more with her understanding of her role as an authority. I also thought about how she may not see that what I was doing was relevant to the real work of the class, and therefore was not of any threat/challenge to her. Maybe she is interested or maybe she is disinterested in what takes place in the circle.

Rabbit's comment about how they have

## Appendix 2 – Transcript of first observation of Sophie teaching

### *Context*

Observation of Sophie teaching a 45 min lesson from the Year 7 Curriculum

Subject focus of lesson RE

Learning objective: To learn about a Mosque

The students have just come in from break and they are all seated. There is a lot of talking between them. I overhear some of the conversations, which seem to be mainly about TV programmes or about other students. Sophie is sitting at the computer, which is on her desk, and she seems to be trying to find something on the computer. Sophie does not look up from her desk during this time but repeatedly makes a loud shushing sound, which seems to be directed at the students. Sophie stands up after approximately 5 minutes and starts talking to the class, this is the first time that she has talked to them since they entered the classroom.

**Sophie** – [she addresses the class from the front of the classroom, standing next to the whiteboard] Right, come on I'm waiting now. I said I am waiting. Come on we have loads to get through. I said I am ready now so come on. Lion I said I am ready, look this way. Right come on look at the white board, hurry up. Come on. [Most of the students are now looking at Sophie but about 6 of them continue to talk and do not seem to have realised that Sophie is even talking]. [Sophie raises her voice] I said I am waiting and I am not happy that you are wasting my time ... come on we have loads to do. [Raises voice further as some of the 6 students continue to talk] Come on everyone settle down, stop it Lion I can see what you are doing. Come on everyone, I have so much to get through in this lesson and you need to concentrate. OK, right you all need to look at the whiteboard. What is the learning objective? Husky read it please.

[Husky reads the learning objective for the lesson, which is on the whiteboard – it is written on a slide as part of a PowerPoint]

**Husky** – To learn about mosques.

**Sophie** – Right so that is what we are doing today. So you all need to listen carefully to the presentation about mosques because you have a task to do at the end. Right, Lion I won't tell you again be quiet now or be warned. Right lets look at the first page. Right, come on, ok I think Lion is finally ready to let us start. Thank you everyone.

[Sophie walks over to her computer and sits down on a chair behind the desk – her face is partly obscured by the computer screen. She clicks the mouse to move the PowerPoint onto slide 2. A slide full of text in very small type is displayed]

**Sophie** – Can you all see this? [Some students shout out that they cannot see it] Right, well I will read it then. [Sophie sits behind the computer at her desk. She reads the text on the script in a loud voice. She stops a number of times to talk to the students, many of whom start talking again whilst she is reading]

**Sophie** – So it says here, Lion I am watching you, it says that Muslims worship in a place called a Mosque. You can tell ... I have told you once Lion next time you will be standing at the back of the class.

**Lion** – That's not fair miss other people are talking. [A number of other students are talking]

**Sophie** – You are being very cheeky now, go and move next to Cat she can show you how to behave. Right, come on now where am I? [Seems to be speaking to herself] When you enter a Mosque you need to take your shoes off and then undertake a ritual washing routine called Wudu. Why are you laughing Owl, that's not respectful – do you want to tell everyone what's funny?

**Owl** – Um nothing miss, I just ... nothing. [A few other children laugh as well]

**Sophie** – Well I don't think it's respectful at all to laugh when we are learning about another religion.

**Owl** – Sorry miss.

**Sophie** – I am never going to get through this if everyone doesn't stop messing around. I am really getting cross now, come on. Right I, um, there are no images in a Mosque because Muslims regard it as blasphemous to have images of Allah. [Butterfly puts her hand up] What now?

**Butterfly** – What does that word mean?

**Sophie** – Which one?

**Butterfly** – The 'blas' whatever one.

**Sophie** – Well if you actually all bothered to listen then you might actually learn something – it is probably on the last slide with the definitions. Right if we don't have any more interruptions I might actually get through this slide. Right, there is a small hole in the wall called a mihrab, which shows the direction that the worshippers need to face in order to face Mecca. Many mosques have a minaret which is a tall thin tower. When it is time to pray, which must be done five times a day, a mueaain stands at the top of the tower, shhh, and calls Muslims to pray. Woman are allowed to attend the mosque but they have to sit separately from the men.

**Fox** – That's not fair miss.

**Sophie** – Put your hand up if you want to say something remember. Well its just what they do, I don't think we should make judgments on them that's just their religion and their beliefs and we should respect them.

**Fox** – Yeah but miss, why should woman be treated differently than men it just seems not right cause I thought we were all supposed to be equal now.

**Sophie** – I asked you to put your hand up. Does anyone else agree with Fox then that it's not fair, put your hand up if you agree with Fox [all the girls put up their hands and 6 of the boys]. Well there we are it seems mainly the girls agree, but we do need to be careful not to offend people from other religions. Right, you need to let me finish the last bit now. Fox I said we need to move on or we won't fit everything in, come on. Right the last bit, I was here. However, it is more usual that woman stay at home to pray. There are lots of famous mosques around the world for example the Blue Mosque in Istanbul. Right finally we can move on. So um, who can tell me, with their hands up, what the name of the washing ritual is, come on the answer is on the board.

[4 students put their hands up. A number of other students start to talk, it seems to all be off task talk]

**Sophie** – Shh. Right come on lets give someone a chance. So what is it Fox?

**Fox** – Wudu miss.

**Sophie** – Excellent, well done, thank you for that answer.

[Fox stands up and bows]

**Sophie** – Don't be silly and spoil it, sit down now! Shh everyone, come on lets get going.

**Sophie** – Shh, come on. [Most of the students stop talking and look at Sophie] Right you will all miss 10 minutes of your lunch if you don't all listen now ... come on shh. [Sophie sits down behind the computer and presses the mouse to proceed the PowerPoint presentation onto the next slide] See here there are some photos of a mosque, shh. Who can see the minaret? [6 students put their hand up, 4 are the same YP as before and two are new students] Good, well done, although I would like to see a few more having a go. Bear, would you like to go and point at the board and show us where the minaret is [said as a statement not as a request. Bear gets out of her seat and goes and walks to the front of the classroom. The other students are all sat in silence. Bear walks up to the board and points correctly to a minaret] Brilliant, I am very pleased with you. Thank you now take your seat again. [Bear walks back to her seat] Well who else can see something that is interesting on the picture of the mosque, remember what you were told on the last slide. Turn to the person next to you and see what they can see as well.

[Sophie leaves the students to talk for 4 minutes and 32 seconds. During this time she stays in her seat behind the computer, she looks like she is marking a paper register, and then to be checking or reading the PowerPoint and the lesson plan. I listen to some of the students talking, to start with they seem to all complete the task set for them and discuss what they can see on the picture. One boy says 'I can see a woman wearing one of those black things that covers them all, she's probably wearing it because she is ugly.' The boy he is talking to laughs. Another student says 'Those are nice the windows, a nice shape I mean. It's a really nice building.' However, after about 30 seconds most of the conversations that I can hear between the students focus on other things that are not about the picture from the PowerPoint]

**Sophie** – Right, come on now shh you have had loads of time to come up with some good ideas. Right lets get the whiteboards out and you can write down the thing that you liked best about the picture and why you liked it. Who is the whiteboard monitor? [Unicorn puts up her hand, she seems to reluctantly get out of her seat as she pushes her chair back and sighs and slams her hand on the table] Thank you Unicorn. [Sophie either does not acknowledge her actions or does not see them] Right everyone wait for their whiteboard. Stop fussing just wait. [It takes approximately 2 minutes for all of the whiteboards to be given out. During this time the students remain in their seats but there is a lot of noise. Sophie interjects at various points saying things including 'I warned you all' and 'Shh, they are trying to work next door.' 'You will all have to miss your lunchtime, be quiet and wait for your board.' Once all of the boards are given out a number of the students complain that their board pens do not work; the teacher responds to these complaints in various ways including: 'Sorry there aren't any more you will just have to borrow someone else's, 'Just borrow someone else's'; 'Well you shouldn't have used them all up'; 'The school can't keep affording to buy new ones because you lot can't look after them.' She

seems to become increasingly frustrated with the students and her voice becomes louder the more comments that she makes. Throughout this time, Sophie stays seated] Right, come on write down what you want to say and remember to ask the person next to you what they think too. That is the important bit it is important to share your ideas. Come on, you have 1 more minute. I have had enough Lion, just get on with what you are supposed to be doing now or you will be moved. Just get on with it Lion and Mouse you are just fussing and messing around. Well done Cat I am really pleased with the way you are working. Right, have you all shared your ideas? (a few students say yes or yeah.) Brilliant, well done everyone, you are working really well now. [Sophie clicks the mouse and another slide appears on the screen) Right, this is um ... [Sophie looks at the lesson plan] Yes, um, this is a picture of someone washing the special way that Muslims call Wudu. What can you see happening in the picture? [2 students put their hands up] Come on everyone, we are trying to help each other, remember team work lets have a few more hands up. [No one else puts their hand up] That is disappointing. Go on then what do you think Tiger?

**Tiger** –They are washing their feet.

**Sophie** – Well done that is a really good observation. What else can you see, come on everyone?

**Fox** – There are only men there as well miss where are the woman washing their feet?

**Sophie** – Don't forget it is really important that you put your hand up or not everyone will get a chance to share their ideas. We talked about men and woman in the mosque earlier, what did I say? Hands up. [no-one puts up their hand] Come on we discussed this earlier, a class merit for anyone who can remember the answer. [3 students put their hands up] What do you think Rabbit? Have a go.

**Rabbit** – Um, well I think you said something like women and men had to do things not together in the mosque and so maybe that is the same or everything because ...

**Sophie** – [interrupts] That is a really good answer, I think you can have 2 class points for that well done. Right now we have learnt a little bit about mosques you are going to write down three interesting things that you have learnt and then also write a question for something that you would like to learn. You can then write that question in your home journal for your homework and see if you can find the answer on the internet. Shh come on now, settle down. We need to get going as there are only 20 minutes left before the bell. Come on. If everyone had listened better you would have longer. Ok who is the book monitor? Hurry up come on. [No one indicates that they are the book monitor and no one starts to give out the books. Sophie does not seem to realise this. She sits down at her desk again and changes the PowerPoint back to the first slide] There you are, shh, there is too much noise again come on; there is the learning objective don't forget to write that at the start.

**Fox** – We don't have any books miss?

**Sophie** – What? Who is supposed to be giving them out. [Stands up and looks at a list on the wall by her desk] Hyena it is you come on you have wasted everyone's time now.

**Hyena** – Oh sorry, I forgot miss. [Stands up and starts to give out the books. A lot of the students are talking, what I can hear is off task talk]

**Sophie** – Get the learning objective written quickly. Remember to write something for your homework too. Well done.

### Appendix 3 - Transcript of first PwC enquiry

#### *Context*

This was first time that I had facilitated a full enquiry with the class. Before this enquiry I had:

- undertaken a number of activities to develop the young people's understanding of what a philosophical question is, a community of enquiry etc. – I had worked with them for a whole morning for this session
- recapped what a philosophical question is with a quad activity and I had introduced an agree/disagree line. We had then undertaken a mini-enquiry so that the young people were familiar with a PwC enquiry and sitting together as a community

**Present** – 29

**Stimuli** – Willy the Wimp, Anthony Browne

**Warm up** – ‘swap seats if ...’

**Question selection** – young people in groups of 4/5. Placed in groups by me – students given different fruit names and then asked to work with students of the same fruit name. Students asked to select one question per group and then write this on an individual white board and place it in the middle of the circle. The students wrote their names on the bottom of their white boards so that authorship of each question was clear.

**Voting** – Secret vote, thumbs up behind back. One vote each.

**Question chosen** – ‘Why do people pick on other people?’

**Me** – Ok so this question was from [I read out the names written on the bottom of the white board] Would one of you like to explain to the rest of the circle what you were thinking of when you thought of your question?

[The students who have written the question look at each other, two of them smile at each other and look embarrassed, another member of the group puts his hand up and looks at me. He directs his response to me]

**Duck** - We were thinking that the girl in the story got bullied by the other monkeys and we didn't really know why.

**Me** – Thank you Duck. We are going to discuss your question as a community now. Can anyone remember what strategy we used when we wanted to add something to the discussion last week?

[A number of the students put up their hands]

**Me** – Thank you Zebra, what do you think?

**Zebra** – We put our hand into the circle and then whoever has just spoken gets to choose someone who has their hand out to talk next so it is their choice not yours.



**Sophie** – Mrs Munro-Morris can choose who she wants to talk as well, you just get to select someone to talk sometimes, remember that.

**Me** – Thank you Zebra. Is everyone clear about what they do if they want to make a contribution to the discussion?

[No one indicates, by putting their hand up or otherwise, that they do not understand]

**Me** – Ok, would anyone like to start us off thinking about the question ‘Why do people pick on other people?’ and the group’s suggestion that they were thinking about the girl in the story and why she was being bullied and they didn’t really know why.

[Three hands go into the middle of the circle]

**Me** – Ok, Gorilla would you like to discuss your group’s question a little further?

**Gorilla** – Well, the thing is that the other monkeys were bigger than her and if you are bigger and **stronger** then you think that you can bully people that are smaller than you are.

[Gorilla stops talking but does not select someone to talk next. Pause of 2 seconds]

**Me** – Remember that it is your turn to select the next person to talk.

**Gorilla** – Oh yeah, sorry. Um ok Fox you can talk next.

**Fox** – Well actually in the story they were not monkeys they were gorillas!

[Fox does not select someone to talk next. Pause of 3 seconds]

**Me** – Do you want to pick someone else to talk? There are 3 other people waiting to talk that you can choose from.

**Fox** – Um ... Cat.

**Cat** – Well ... the thing is bullies are just cowards ... we talked about that in school before. Um ... Lion.

**Lion** – In the story I thought it was funny that the boy ... what was his name?

**Penguin** – Willy.

**Sophie** – You didn’t have your hand in the circle so you shouldn’t have talked!

**Penguin** – I was trying to help!

**Me** – If we try to talk when we have been chosen to share an idea in the circle that would be better as that is what we agreed as a community. However, we will forget sometimes to start with as we are only just starting to work as a community and we are new to PwC as a group. So if someone does forget that that is the way that we agreed to share our talk then can we think of a way to help them to remember in a helpful way? [Panda puts up her hand] Yes thanks Panda.

**Panda** – You could just tell them remember what we said before that we are going to use putting a hand in the circle to show its our time to talk and we decided not to shout out cause we said it would be too loud and ur not work too good.

**Me** – What do we feel about that as a community, would this be a good way to help people remember?

[Many of the students nod their heads]

**Sophie** - So remember everyone, you must wait for your turn or this won't work! Well done.

**Me** – Ok Lion you started to talk about the boy in the story.

**Lion** – Yeah, I was thinking that um ... I don't think I remember.

**Me** – Would you like sometime to think or would you like to choose someone else?

**Lion** – Um ... yeah I pick Pig.

**Pig** – I think the bullies are gorillas but I think Willy and that girl they are monkeys because they are smaller ... even when Willy gets big he is still just a monkey but he is just bigger cause he does all that stuff with like the exercise and eating loads of bananas and stuff and that makes him bigger but he is still a monkey. Do I ask someone else now?

**Me** – Yes that would be great, thank you.

**Pig** – Right Cat can say something next.

**Cat** – In the story I think that the gorillas were bullies because they looked mean and bullies are mean people. Um Lion.

**Lion** – Yeah I remembered what I was saying before was that I thought it was funny that the boy got bigger cause really he couldn't have got taller from exercise and the other stuff that he did ... but he could have got bigger muscles um so it wasn't very realistic.

**Me** – I am glad that you remembered what you were thinking and thank you for your contribution. I wonder if we can go back to what Cat was saying about the bullies looking mean and bullies being mean people. Let's take a bit of time to explore that together. Please could you turn to the person next to you and have a chat about whether you think bullies are always mean.

[The students talk to each other – some of them start talking straight away about what I had suggested they discuss, others seem to find it difficult to decide who their partner is or do not seem to want to talk to the person who is sat next to them. Sophie intervenes and tells students that they need to talk to each other because they are sat next to each other. I hear her say 'Don't be so silly' to a boy and a girl who make it clear from their facial expressions and body language that they really do not want to work with each other. I move around the groups listening to some of their ideas – only a few groups are able to talk about what I have suggested for more than a few seconds and they then start talking about something else related to the story or about something that is not related to the discussion]

**Me** – Ok would anyone like to share what they have been talking about?

[2 pairs of students put their hands up]

**Me** – Thank you Pug would you be happy to share what you and your partner were talking about?

**Pug** – Yeah we think bullies are always mean.

**Me** – Why do you think that is?

**Pug** – Because bullies hurt people and say horrid things and sometimes they hurt people and these are really mean things to do.

**Me** – Thank you for that. Does anyone else have anything else they would like to add to the point that was made that bullies are always mean? Leopard?

**Sophie** – Well as a teacher you certainly see lots of mean behaviour from children to each other but I don't think that people are totally nasty it may be that they have negative things going on at home which take up all their focus, and then they react in negative ways towards others then as a coping strategy; I will be horrid to you so that I can cope when people are being horrible to me, I suppose.

[There is a short pause of about 2 seconds]

**Me** – Would anyone else like to share what they think? Leopard?

**Leopard** – I don't know really because sometimes bullies are unhappy because they maybe have a bad life, like miss said, maybe they are being bullied by someone too like a big brother and then they take out the fact that they are unhappy on someone else who maybe is smaller or younger than them. Um I think I will have Lion.

**Lion** – Well I think that it was good that the little monkey changed. Um Mouse.

**Mouse** – I think there were only two bullies cause in the picture Miss do you remember that one of the gang looked really worried like he didn't want to be there.

**Me** – I think two very interesting points have been raised here that we should spend a little more time having a look at in more detail: the first is that bullies may behave in a mean way to other people because they are unhappy themselves. Can anyone think of an example of this? Fox?

**Fox** - I think if you are unhappy then you can be mean to other people, yeah because you feel unhappy. Um, go on Horse.

**Horse** – I think that bullies are always mean people that do bad things like bullying and hurting children and like pushing you against walls and things.

[Pause of about 1 second]

**Sophie** - You need to pick someone.

**Horse** - Oh yeah I got to choose someone ... ur I want to pick Giraffe.

**Giraffe** – Well I think that he’s got to stick up for himself because he wasn’t small anymore so he could do what he wanted to do. If people are big, like tall and strong, then they have more chance to do what they want to others because they can intimidate them. If you are small then you can’t really scare people.

**Me** – Did he then become a bully because he was big and strong?

**Sophie** - No he was big so he could defend other people and himself.

**Me** - I think that it would be really useful to unpick what we mean by a bully as some interesting ideas are being raised. On your whiteboards can you draw a circle and write the word bully in the middle and then mind map all the words that you can think of that describe a bully for you and your partner. If you can work with the person on your opposite side this time so that you have a chance to share your ideas with a new person.

[Young people are mainly engaged with this activity although there is some off task talk, especially towards the end – lasts for just over 4 minutes before I bring them back to the circle]

**Me** – Ok what I would like you to do now is join with another pair and circle any words using your red marker pen that are the same on both your mind maps and then circle any words that are different in another colour.

[Young people spend just over 2 minutes on this activity – it seems to generate interesting discussion and all YP appear to be on task throughout, I do not hear any off task talk or see any behaviour which suggests that they are off task. Sophie remains seated in her teacher chair behind her teacher desk and I move around different groups]

**Me** – Right, thank you for doing that. I wonder now whether you have some new ideas about what a bully is. Butterfly you seem keen to share your ideas.

**Butterfly** – Yeah it was really interesting because um, I thought we would have all the same words with the other group but we didn’t, like we thought bullies were all bad people but the other group felt quite sorry for bullies and said more about them being sad and angry and that this explained their behavior. We didn’t think that being sad should make it ok being mean, but their ideas did make us think that maybe we were not really thinking about the whole picture with a bully because they are maybe not all bad ... but all our words were about them being bad. Um ... Guinea Pig.

**Guinea Pig** – Yeah but the difference is that people choose to be bad or good like if even if something is bad in their life they don’t have to be mean cause not everyone is mean that has something bad in their life so they are making a bad choice. Cat.

**Cat** – What I don’t get is that at the end Willy was small again.

[Cat does not chose someone new to speak]

**Me** – Would you like to choose someone?

**Cat** – Yeah ... um .... *Lion*.

**Lion** – Why did he eat so many bananas? [Laughs, a number of the other students also laugh]

**Sophie** – [With a raised voice] If you don't take this seriously you can go and wait outside until the end of the lesson.

**Me** – Why did you want to know that Lion?

[Lion shrugs his shoulders and does not make eye contact with me]

**Me** – Would you like to pick someone else to talk or would you like me to pick someone?

**Lion** – I pick Zebra, yeah go brother.

**Zebra** - I think that, when I think about it, that like maybe he was small again at the end because he felt silly when he bumped into the lamp post because you feel small when you do things which make you feel stupid. Puma.

**Puma** – We thought that a bully was someone who has like a devil and an angel on his or her shoulders and they keep telling him to do things but the devil talks louder and they don't hear the good angel so they do stuff just cause they listen to the wrong voice not because they are bad.

**Me** – Do you think that is true for other people or just bullies?

**Puma** – I don't know really cause its hard to always listen to the good voice when there is lots of things to tempt you to do the wrong thing but then maybe the bad voice is always a bit louder.

**Me** – What do you mean? Butterfly you just put out your hand into the circle do you have something to add about that.

**Butterfly** – Bullies are mean. Owl.

**Owl** – I think the girl was really pleased that Willy was there.

**Me** – Why do you think that?

**Owl** – Cause then he got to stop the other gorillas from taking her handbag [**Sophie** – shh. This seems to be directed at two boys who have started to talk behind their hands] and like she would have been upset if they did this. Urr, I don't know who to choose next.

**Me** – Thank you Owl. I would really like to go back to another interesting point that was raised earlier if you are not sure who to pick next. Um let's have another look at the picture – I will put it up on the visualizer. [I move over to a visualizer to be able to show the relevant picture on the interactive whiteboard. Some of the students move their chairs so that they can see the board. A few students state things that indicate that they cannot see or that other people are in their way]

**Sophie** – Just move somewhere where you can see. Lion stop fussing and move your chair over there by Cat ... hurry up.

**Me** – That's great is everyone ok now?

**Sophie** – [Raised voice] Stop fussing just all look at the screen.

**Me** – Talk to the person next to you and have a think together about what you can see in the picture.

[The students spend just over 3 minutes discussing the picture – I move around the groups. Over half of the children spend the time trying to work out whom they are supposed to be working with. Sophie continues to sit in her teacher chair]

**Me** – Ok lets get back together to have a think about what the picture is telling us. Anyone like to start us off?

[No one puts their hand up]

**Sophie** – Come on someone have a go.

**Me** – Have a look at the different characters. [Giraffe puts her hand up]

**Sophie** – You are supposed to put your hand into the circle.

**Me** – That’s ok, thanks Giraffe do you want to share what you are thinking?

**Giraffe** – Well I was thinking that the two gorillas are bigger and they look meaner. Um ... no-one else has got their hand in the circle what do I do now?

**Me** – Would anyone else like to build on what Giraffe offered to the discussion that the two gorillas look bigger and they look meaner? What do we think about the third gorilla?

[Pause of 2 seconds then Elephant puts her hand into the circle]

**Me** – He is smaller than the other gorillas. Guinea Pig.

**Guinea Pig** – Yeah he is not as big ... he doesn’t look as bad as the other two gorillas maybe because he is not as big as the others. Um right Bear.

**Bear** – I think he is worried that someone else is coming because he is looking around. Husky.

**Husky** – Yeah right I think he is worried too because he looks like he is hiding behind the other one. Lion.

**Lion** – I think so too.

**Me** – Why do you agree Lion?

**Lion** – Cause yeah like you can see him and he is hiding. Bear.

**Bear** –He might get caught.

**Sophie** – That’s right.

**Me** – That’s an interesting idea Bear, does anyone else agree or disagree with Bear? Panda?

**Panda** – Yeah I do because you can see that he looks scared cause when you are scared you look like that.

**Me** – Why do you think he is looking scared Panda?

**Panda** – I think he looks scared because he is worried that he will get caught because he knows that what he is doing is wrong. *Pig*.

**Pig** – Yes I agree because he knows that his friends should not be taking the bag. Um ... I am not sure.

**Sophie** – You just need to pick someone who has their hand in the circle, come on pick Hedgehog.

**Pig** – Yeah ok.

**Hedgehog** – I was wondering if the one that looks scared is a bully or whether he is just one of their friends because ur he doesn't seem to actually be joining in. *Horse*.

**Horse** – I think that bullies are always unkind cause I got bullied in my old school. And oh yeah, he is a bully because he is with the others.

**Me** – Why do you think that he is a bully just because he is with the other two characters?

**Horse** – Because he ... um ... he is still there with them when they are grabbing her bag and he doesn't try to stop them from doing it, so it is like he doesn't really care about the girl and I was just thinking that maybe he is only worried that he might get caught for stealing rather than worrying about the girl.

**Me** – Does anyone else agree that the boy is more concerned about getting caught then he is about the girl? *Otter*?

**Otter** – I think that the boy is more concerned about being caught because he is looking around everywhere like he is looking to see if anyone is going to see them getting the girl's bag. *Lion*.

**Lion** – Yeah cause he is looking like this way and that way I think [*looks left and right in a exaggerated way – some other students laugh, Sophie makes a 'sshing sound'*]

**Me** – If he is looking around worrying about being caught and not actually taking the girl's bag then is he as big a bully as the other two?

**Sophie** – I think they are all as bad as each other. *Mouse* what do you think, you look like you have a good idea.

**Mouse** – I don't know um ... well um ... because if you don't actually do something then I don't think you are as bad as someone who does actually do something but then I don't know you might be.

**Me** – Do you want to share your ideas *Lion*?

**Lion** – Yeah, I think *Willy* was like supposed to be good. *Lizard*.

**Lizard** – *Willy* was cool. [*Lizard* does not pick someone else]

**Sophie** - Remember you are supposed to pick someone, come on you have been reminded already lots of times.

**Lizard** – Sorry, Um I don't know.

**Me** – It's ok, do you want me to pick someone?

**Lizard** – Yeah.

**Me** – Ok, Shark you have had your hand in the circle for a while would you like to add something to our discussion?

**Shark** – Yeah, well I think that they were all bullies cause you choose who you are friends with and if they didn't do anything to stop someone being mean then you are just as bad and she looks really frightened, the girl like, so they must have been really bad to her. I want to have next Cat.

**Cat** – Bullies are horrid. Pug.

**Pug** – Um ... I can't remember. Shark.

**Shark** – Well its like you shouldn't be unkind to someone just because they are smaller than you. Um ... I think Lion.

**Lion** – Well if I was Willy then I would have done what he did because he was well weedy before and then he was strong and then the bullies wouldn't like hurt him then.

**Me** – Do you think that only if you are big and strong that you can stick up for yourself? This has been suggested earlier as well. Lion do you want to build on what you have just said?

**Lion** – Well ... yeah cause weedy kids are always bullied cause they can't stick up for themselves if bigger ones come along. Do you want me to pick someone else?

**Me** – Yes please.

**Lion** – Leopard you can go next.

**Leopard** – Yeah well I think bullies are all mean cause they are.

**Me** – Ok, a number of things have been discussed in our circle today; I have been writing down some of the key ideas on post it notes. [I stick the post it notes on a piece of sugar paper on the floor] We need to bring the discussion to a close now, as it is almost time for break, but I would like us to pick one comment or question to end our last thoughts with. I will read them out to remind us: bullies are just cowards, bullies are really sad inside, if you are part of a group but don't actually do any of the bullying are you just as guilty of bullying as the other members of the group? and if you are small does that mean you will always be picked on? I am going to ask everyone to vote for which comment or question they would like to focus on for our 'last words' and then we will go around the circle and if people want to make a final comment then they can or um if you decide not to then the opportunity just passes onto the next person. We will pass around the philosophy stone and only the person holding the stone is able to talk. Do you think that we should have one or two votes each?

**Sophie** – I think that we should have one vote or it gets too complicated.

**Me** – Does anyone else have any ideas? [3 young people put their hands up] What do you think Koala?



**Koala** – I would like to have two votes because then you can choose more than one if you like more than one.

**Me** – Ok lets have a quick hands up to indicate if you would like one or two votes. Who would like one vote?

[6 students and Sophie put up their hands]

**Me** – who would like two votes?

[The remaining students put up their hands]

**Me** – Ok so we are going to have two votes. As we are running out of time I am going to suggest a quick strategy for voting, I hope that is ok. We are going to have an open vote, which means that people can see how other people decide to vote. This is because we started with a secret vote earlier and it is good to have a variety of different voting strategies and try um different things. If you all put your fists on your laps with your thumbs at the top but tucked in. When I read out the statement or question that you want to vote for just put either one or two thumbs up. If you use two thumbs then you cannot vote for another one, if you just use one thumb then you can use your other vote i.e. your other thumb to vote for a different statement or question as well. I hope that that makes sense – is anyone unclear?

**Sophie** – So you can use the two votes for one thing or split them so that you use one for one and one for another?

**Me** – Yes that’s right. Everyone ok with that?

[A number of students nod their heads]

**Me** – Great. So who would like the last words to be on: ‘Bullies are just cowards?’ [I look around the circle to count the votes, there are 18 votes for this statement] Ok I am going to write that number down on the post it note. Next ‘Bullies are really sad inside’. [12 students use their thumbs to indicate that they want to vote for this question] Great. [I write the number 12 on the relevant post it note]. Next ‘If you are part of a group but don’t actually do any of the bullying are you just as guilty of bullying as the other members of the group?’ [3 students vote]. Finally ‘If you are small does that mean you will always be picked on?’ [21 students votes] Ok the most votes were for the statement ‘If you are small does that mean that you will always be picked on?’ I am going to pass the philosophy stone to my left. Remember to pass it on when you have made your comment or to pass it straight on if you do not want to add anything this time.

[7 students pass the stone on before it gets to Lion]

**Lion** – If you are small then you will get picked on because you are not strong unless you have some big friends to stick up for you.

**Butterfly** – Same.

**Gorilla** – Same.

**Scorpion** – I think bullies pick on anyone that gets in their way.

[Next 2 students pass on the philosophy stone]

**Mouse** – Yeah.

**Frog** – The same.

**Guinea Pig** – I think if you show people you are scared of them, like Willy did, then they are more likely to pick on you.

**Rabbit** – Yeah like if you cry or something when they do something to you they will think its funny and then do it again but if you just ignore them then they won't bother.

**Tiger** – Same.

[The next 4 students pass the philosophy stone on without making a comment. The stone then passes to Sophie who has come and stood behind Lion in the circle and has put out her hand to indicate that she wants the stone]

**Sophie** – I don't think that just because you are small you will get bullied; I think that bullies pick on vulnerabilities and if someone is vulnerable about their size they could pick up on this but it is not size that matters but confidence. Also the idea about whether he is a bully or not because he is friends with the other children then I think this is really interesting, and I would have liked to look at this more because yes he might not have committed the actual act but he is guilty by association. You know when you do not intervene when you morally should have done, it would be interesting to talk about this again.

[The alarm rings to indicate that it is break time]

**Me** – Many thanks to everyone for taking part this morning and for offering so many interesting ideas. We will meet again the same time next week to have another enquiry. I am sorry that not everyone had an opportunity to share their last thoughts, but we just ran out of time. I hope that you have a good rest of the day.

#### **Appendix 4 - Transcript of first focused enquiry with Sophie**

**Me** - Thank you for taking the time to look at the transcript.

**Sophie** – That was fine, I enjoyed reading it, it was very interesting and I learnt a lot about the class.

**Me** - Did you have a chance to pick out five things that you felt were interesting within the transcript for us to discuss further?

**Sophie** – Yes, I highlighted them with stars, like this. [shows me a copy of the transcript] like this bit here [points to a highlighted section on the piece of paper]

**Me** – That’s great. Which part did you highlight first?

**Sophie** – I highlighted this bit [Points to a section on the transcript – I include the section below in italics]

##### Section 1

*Me – Thank you YP 4. We are going to discuss your question as a community now. Can anyone remember what strategy we used when we wanted to add something to the discussion last week?*

*A number of students put up their hands.*

*Me – Thank you Zebra, what do you think?*

*Zebra – We put our hand into the circle and then whoever has just spoken gets to chose someone who has their hand out to talk next so it is their choice not yours.*

**Me** – Why did you pick this section?

**Sophie** – Well I thought it was interesting because they were disrespectful to you here, and this show the sorts of attitudes we have to put up with as teachers.

**Me** – What do you think showed this?

**FT** – Well, you asked them a perfectly reasonable question about how you had told them to ask questions in the philosophy sessions and then Zebra answered disrespectfully by saying that it was not your decision who spoke next but theirs. I don’t think that anything you had said warranted such a response um ... I think the children were simply looking for an opportunity to be rude to you. This lot are like that, you give them an inch and um ... all that they do is run a mile because they think they can get away with anything then. I think you might be best the next time you meet with them setting down some clear guidelines.

**Me** – We have come up with some rules together for the enquiries, do you think that we need to do more?

**Sophie** – Yes I know you have done these with the children but I think that ... please don't take this the wrong way, but you are used to working with younger children and children in high school are much harder to control. They need firm but fair rules so that they know how to behave. Honestly, you will get much more out of them then because they will listen to everything that you say. Also it might work better if you pick the children to speak next, I think, because otherwise they are just going to pick their friends.

**Me** – That is an interesting suggestion, I appreciate the feedback. Did you notice this when you were looking through the transcript that the young people kept picking their friends?

**Sophie** – Well, um ... actually I was quite surprised because they did pick people that I wouldn't normally expect them to go with, but then I think that is probably just novelty and in my opinion I think that you would be safer picking them yourself to ensure that there are no arguments and that the children do not leave anyone else out, you know the children with not many friends. What do you think?

**Me** – I would like to keep going with things the way we did them today for a bit longer because this is what the young people wanted to do, but we could review it again in a few weeks and if it isn't working then I could go back to ask the young people for any different ideas for sharing then.

**Sophie** – Yes I suppose that could work. But ... I still think you are better giving them some concrete rules that they fully understand – I don't think they really get your rules.

**Me** – Would you like to go onto your second section?

**Sophie** – Ok. Um. Let me find the next bit I starred. [Looks through printed transcript] Yes this bit.

### Section 2

*Pig – I think the bullies are gorillas but I think Willy and that girl they are monkeys because they are smaller ... even when Willy gets big he is still just a monkey but he is just bigger cause he does all that stuff with like the exercise and eating loads of bananas and stuff and that makes him bigger but he is still a monkey.*

**Sophie** – I don't think they really get philosophy, like the way you want it done. I don't think they are really old enough for it yet. I know you said that you did it when you were in a primary school but maybe the children were talking about easier concepts, not really philosophical concepts. I don't think they are really old enough for it yet. I know you said that you did it when you were in a primary school but maybe the children were talking about easier concepts, not really philosophical concepts. I mean Pig obviously wasn't doing philosophy here talking about bananas. It will be interesting to see what they are able to talk about after a few weeks but I still don't think they will be ready.

**Me** – When do you think young people are old enough to partake in philosophical enquiry?

**Sophie** – I don't know really, maybe when they are in sixth form because that is when they have all the right skills like being able to think for themselves and think outside the box. I think until this time they just need to be taught things and then they will learn later about things like philosophy and psychology and the more 'thinky' subjects.

**Me** – Do you think young people in Year 7 cannot think for themselves?

**Sophie** – Um ... well, yes of course I think that they can think for themselves. Like they can come up with some fabulous ideas for stories and things like that, my class have been writing some lovely versions of fairy tales with a twist in lessons lately and these are really imaginative so they can think of things for themselves when they have got a structure to follow and can think of some really good things but when it comes to abstract thinking like philosophy then I think that we have to have realistic expectations for them. Therefore, we have to make sure that what we plan for them is fair to their talents. Otherwise it is too hard and then they start to misbehave and that is when the real problems start. One of the other form tutors in year 7 is having a terrible time because she didn't set the standard straight away in her class because she was off ill in the first week – so supply was in and that was it in then, now she can't control the class at all because she has had to come in and try to pick up the pieces. It happens all the time.

**Me** – What do you expect from a Year 7 class?

**YP** – Well they often come up from the junior school with inflated levels so you have to sort out all that to start with and then you have to sort out behavior because they just all mess around unless they know that you are in charge from the beginning. You have to sort out behavior because they just all mess around unless they know that you are in charge from the beginning. It's that whole thing of 'be mean to be kind' because once you have got them where you want and need them to be then you can start to do some really good stuff with them. Now we have this new curriculum where everything is taught cross curricular it will be a bit easier because you will just have to pick up a lesson, which is saved on the intranet, and deliver it. So I will be able to teach RE, history, geography and everything else even though I am really just a languages teacher and have only ever taught German and French.

**Me** – How do you feel about teaching other subjects?

**Sophie** – Well to start with I think me and some of my other colleagues were all a bit apprehensive about it but then we started to think well really if all the planning is done for you and the children ask you something that you don't know well then you can always blag it and find out the answer for the next lesson. They are all easy lessons to follow anyway you just start with a PowerPoint and then ask the children a set list of questions and then they have an activity to complete so really you can't go wrong. If you don't know it as a teacher then the children won't know anything that you won't know, at least most of them – it is just the few that try to catch you out.

**Me** – What sorts of activities are the young people asked to complete?

**Sophie** – Well there is a good range to keep all of them interested. They might do something like a fact finding in a book, or make a leaflet or a poster or something so yes all good stuff.

**Me** – Would you like to go onto the third section?

**Sophie** – Yes that would be fine. Let's see ... um ... yes this bit here. [Reads out the relevant extract]

### Section 3

**Butterfly** – *Yeah it was really interesting because um I thought we would have all the same words with the other group but we didn't; like we thought bullies were all bad people but the other group felt quite sorry for bullies and said more about them being sad and angry and that this explained their behavior. We didn't think that being sad should make it ok being mean but their ideas did make us think that maybe we were not really thinking about the whole picture with a bully because they are maybe not all bad ... but all our words were about them being bad.*

**Sophie** – I thought this part was interesting it showed that they are able to listen to each other's ideas and maybe change their own ideas based on what they hear. Like in this part here where you asked them to share their ideas with another group about what a bully is and the one group had said that they thought all bullies were bad whilst the other group thought that we should feel sorry for bullies. They didn't really explain their reasons for why either group thought this but they did say at the end that discussing their ideas had made them think about whether what they initially thought was the only way to think about something. Um I thought that this was quite good. I think that children are normally quite egocentric still at this age, my son certainly was, and that they find it quite hard to adjust their views to take on board what other people think so yes I was quite impressed that they were able to do this here. They didn't say why they thought what they thought though, initially that is.

**Me** – Why do you think this is?

**Sophie** – I would have thought that it is probably because they don't really have many opinions of their own yet; you know they just tend to say what they hear on TV or repeat what their parents say. As they get to know more about life as they grow up then they start to form their own opinions and then they decide what they really think about things for themselves. It can be quite hard to teach them at this age, I expect you find that teaching the little ones, because they are so keen in Year 7 and they just seem to want to try everything in school but they don't really know enough about anything to mean that they can really form any concrete opinions. This is my only real concern with the year 7 curriculum that has been introduced because although I think it will be good for me teaching it from my own interest perspective, I don't know if I will know enough about say History to be able to give them the knowledge that they need. I worry a bit that I might let them down and I really don't want to do that. I feel confident teaching languages because that is what I trained to do, it is what I have always done and therefore I have plenty of subject knowledge and I know how to teach kids to learn a language but I don't know much about poetry or things that I have to teach in the literacy sessions for example, so this is going to mean that I am going to have to learn a lot before I can teach it or, as I said earlier, I am going to have to blag my way through quite a lot of lessons and then go and do extra research afterwards. Its got to be better than teaching Year 8 though ... yeah Year 8s are a nightmare, its like they have lost all their enthusiasm that they come to school with in Year 7 and they are no longer the smallest children in the school so they think they can go around with permanent attitudes. They are definitely the hardest year group to control.

**Me** – Do you think the class will bring much to the lessons with them?

**Sophie** – It depends what they have learnt in junior school. We have such a range of schools that come to our school as we are such a big school. They come from all types of backgrounds too and some of the children are more susceptible to learning than others – you know what I mean! Some of them just want to mess around but most of them are good

kids, once they learn how we want them to behave in high school. It takes up until about October half term and then most of them are ok and they behave really well and usually produce some good work; although you lose them again in certain year groups especially in Year 8, you know, like I said before. Yeah, I am looking forward to seeing how they behave and concentrate in other lessons and in your sessions of course.

**Me** – You have talked quite a lot about the importance of them behaving.

**Sophie** – Yes, I think that it is a shame when some of the children in the class misbehave and spoil it for the others but they are for the most part a good lot but there are quite a few in the class, especially some of the boys, that will be hard for me to get them to do what I want them to do. I am enjoying teaching them at the moment but I might not say this by Christmas because I will be teaching them so often and I won't get much of a break from them, this might be quite hard. You will probably feel the same when you have done a few more of your philosophy sessions with them. Although they seem to respond well to you at the moment.

**Me** – Why do you think that?

**Sophie** – Well, cause you can't normally get Year 7s to sit still for that long and to talk about one thing so you must be gaining their interest, they must like what you are doing with them.

**Me** – What do you think they might like about what I am doing with them?

**Sophie** – I think they like having time to discuss things and to talk about things they are interested in, it a good opportunity for them to do this because with trying to fit everything into the school day there is not much time to do this really, which is a shame.

**Me** – Do you think they learn anything from discussing things as a group that they are particularly interested in?

**Sophie** – Well I think they develop confidence in their own ideas and they are able to think about whether their ideas are similar or different to their friends and this is important because if they think that their friends think the same as them then they are more likely to trust in their views. It is just um a shame, really, that there is not time to do this more. I do agree with them doing more discussing but we have to be realistic, you know.

**Me** – What do you mean when you say you have to be realistic?

**Sophie** – Well um you know you have to be realistic, you have a lot to fit in and nice lessons like philosophy are really in addition, they can't be the main way that the children learn because that isn't what happens in schools. There is certainly a lot that they need to learn and this requires them getting on with it to a certain extent and I don't think that philosophy is about getting them to know things although I do think that it is very interesting.

**Me** – Ok, thank you. Do you want to move onto the next section?

**Sophie** – Go on then. It wasn't much further into the transcript, it was this part here [points at the relevant text in the transcript] there were two reasons that I chose this part.

**Me** – Do you mind if I just read it first before we discuss it?

**Sophie** – Yes please go ahead.

Section 4

**Lion** – *Why did he eat so many bananas? [Laughs, a number of the other students also laugh]*

**Sophie** – *[With a raised voice] If you don't take this seriously you can go and wait outside until the end of the lesson.*

**Me** – *Why did you want to know that Lion?*

*[Lion shrugs his shoulders and does not make eye contact with me]*

**Sophie** – The first reason that I chose this part was because Lion asks something that is not relevant about bananas and he does this to get a reaction, I tell him off but you go back to ask him why he wants to know this. I was interested whether this was a behavior tactic linked to the philosophy sessions like are you deliberately trying to get him to say something so that he looks silly in front of the other children when he is obviously only looking for a reaction? I thought this was quite clever of you.

**Me** – I suppose I was trying to give him the opportunity to justify his question to see if there was a genuine reason for why he asked it. If there was I wanted the group to understand that it was a genuine enquiry and then hoped that they might be able to help him answer it.

**Sophie** – Well it obviously wasn't.

**Me** – I think that on this occasion you were probably right. However, if this was the case then by coming back to Lion and asking him to think about his reasons for his question rather than simply dismissing him then if he didn't intend it as a genuine question then he might think more about any additional questions or ideas that he offers into the circle. I hope that the young people will start to develop as a community of learners together who want to support and help each other to come to conclusions about things that they decide to talk about and if they do develop in this way then I think that they will not want to waste time on asking questions or making statements that do not get them closer to finding answers.

**Sophie** – I think that there will always be some children like Lion that will always ask stupid questions whatever you do or however the group develops because that is what he likes to do in the class in order to get a reaction. I think that he will honestly do that whatever but what you are saying sounds good and I would be really pleased if the philosophy sessions help him to behave well and to concentrate in his lessons, he might find that he really starts to get something out of them himself. Um the other reason that I picked this part of the transcript was because of what I said. I seemed to react in a very different way to Lion's question from you and I found this really interesting, I suppose it is always strange seeing your own behavior or reactions written down and reflecting on them. You were very calm, whilst I raised my voice. I think that Lion will respond better to the way I deal with things simply because he will then learn how to behave and then he will be able to learn properly but I will be interested to see the way that he reacts to your approach. I think you will just have to be careful that he does not get out of hand if you are not firm enough with him from the beginning. I don't think that I could change the way I am anyway though because I know that the way I do things works because I have been



teaching for over 14 years and although other ways might work as well, in other ways, I know that I get results quickly and we need to get these kids ready for their GCSEs earlier and earlier so if we don't get them with the knowledge that they need early on then we are really fighting a losing battle, you know what I mean!

**Me** – Do you think that there is a difference between teaching skills and teaching knowledge?

**Sophie** – We have talked a lot about skills in our training sessions and our staff meetings as 'skills' seems to be the latest buzz word, but really I don't see how they can focus on skills when the children don't really know anything. I aim to get the children to know as much as possible first and then I think that the skills come later. I don't know though as I always seem to be criticised in training meetings if I say what I think so I just tend to sit there and nod my head when really I think that I am just going to carry on doing what I have already done because my GCSE results are always high in the two languages that I take so I know that I am doing a good job ... well it seems like I am anyway.

**Me** – Why do you think that there has been a focus in your school training on skills at the moment?

**Sophie** – I think that the government is always changing its mind about what is the most important thing. The school just has to react to this and give us the training that they think is responding to what the government is asking them to do, I think that we all fully understand this but it is still quite frustrating anyway. To be honest most of us listen to what the senior leadership team have to say and then we go ahead and do what we have always done because as I said before we know that it works. I don't think that you should change things if you know that they work because this means that you are not doing the best for the children. Every three years or so the government seems to introduce new things again but they just seem to be the same things dressed up with a new title, to be honest I think you just have to stick to your convictions and do what is best to ensure that the children can get through their exams to give them the best possible chance in life. Lots of our children go onto university and that's good then because I feel like I have played a part in getting them there. I suppose skills is just another way of focusing on getting them to have the information and attributes that they need to focus when they are doing their exams, that is how I have interpreted the training anyway.

**Me** – What sorts of skills do you think the school is focusing on?

**Sophie** – Well there seems to be a big push to get them to find things out for themselves at the moment and we have had lots of training on asking the 'right types of questions'. I find this a bit patronising really because it sorts of suggests that the way that you are imparting knowledge to them is not good enough and that they would be better finding things out for themselves. To be honest as well, we are the ones that have studied our subjects and have gone to university etc. as well so we are the experts and so we are the ones that have a lot more information than the children so it seems silly if we are not then allowed to share that with them. Its almost like the role of teacher is becoming obsolete now and we could just be replaced with computers so that the children can sit on the internet all day just finding out things. There is also a massive contradiction in the school, lots of us feel, because they ask us to do this skills stuff and build up the children's skills but at the same time all they really care about is getting the right data because that's what Estyn are interested in. Like, we have just had a poor Estyn report and one of the reasons was because the number of children getting the 5 or more GCSEs at a C or above is down in lots of areas so then the SLT, or our heads of department, just talk to us about how important it is that we get the

right results and that we need to ensure that we have taught them all the right information so that they can pass the tests. It seems like we can't win whatever we do. If we just let them have free reign then they would never get to know everything that they need to know for the exams. Anyway that is what I think, and I know that I am not the only one who feels like this.

**Me** – You mentioned training you have had on using questions as well.

**Sophie** – We had some training on that recently. We all had to have a meeting with our heads of department after school and they told us that SLT had told them that there are certain questions that we should encourage and other ones that we should avoid. They said you shouldn't ask questions when the answer is only yes or no or another one word answer, a closed question, that type. But we did try to explain that there isn't really time to ask lots of different questions which have got long answers because you have got an awful lot to get through in every lesson and if you wasted too much time asking questions then you would never get past the first part of the lesson. I think that the teachers who are not that competent are the ones that focus on these longer answer type questions because then they can waste time while the children just talk and then they don't get onto doing anything in their books so there is less to mark. I don't think that SLT fully understand what goes on in the classroom sometimes, it is like they have forgotten because they haven't actually taught for a while.

**Me** – What do you think is a good form of questioning?

**Sophie** – I do think that it is really important to ask questions because then you can test what the children have learnt but I think that if you do too much of this partner share business then you are in danger of just letting them go off on a tangent and then you lose control again. I think that it is much better to say maybe ask one long question that they can respond to with their own ideas and then ask questions that check their understand of what you have taught them. Then you have got a good balance.

**Me** – Can you think of an example?

**Sophie** – A recent one? [Does not wait for a reply] Well ... um we are supposed to plan for open questions in our planning now so I always try to think of one, or quite often there is an open question, or more than one, in the list of questions that are given to you as part of the lesson plan for the Year 7 Curriculum. . Gosh ... it is hard to think of one off hand, can I look at my planning file a minute?

**Me** – Of course.

[Gets a file out of her bag and starts to flick through it]

**Sophie** – Ok so this is a lesson that we were doing yesterday on castles. Um ... the learning objective was to look at parts of a Norman castle, they had to draw and label a diagram. So the open question I asked was 'Would you like to live in a Norman Castle?'

**Me** – What do you think makes this an open question?

**Sophie** – Well they can say whether they would like to live in a castle or not and then you would probably ask them for their reasons, reasons for their answer.

**Me** - Can you remember how some of the young people responded?

**Sophie** – Most of them said no they wouldn't but they didn't really give any reasons for their answers. Oh yes one girl said that she would like to and she said that she would like to because she likes the idea of being able to see for miles across the land ... yes that was it, I thought this was a nice answer

**Me** – Do you think that there is any particular reason why the young people did not give a reason when they answered that they did not think that they would like to live in a Norman Castle?

**Sophie** – I expect that they didn't really know why they thought this or maybe they didn't actually think about their answers in much depth like if you have more knowledge about something you might be able to give reasons more.

**Me** – Ok, so do you think that it is knowledge that gives us the ability to justify our answers?

**Sophie** – Yes because without knowing something about something then you would not be able to think about something in any real detail.

**Me** – Ok, shall we move onto your final section now?

**Sophie** – Yes. My last section was um ... this bit here [reads it out]

#### Section 5

***Sophie** – Just move somewhere where you can see, Lion stop fussing and move your chair over there by Cat ... hurry up.*

**Sophie** – Yes, I highlighted this part because I wanted to warn you not to get them to move around too much for your own sanity because this is when you really lose control in the class. My experience of working with children is that you are best to keep them in one place for as long as possible because as soon as they move around then you lose them and they start to talk about other things like what they watched on TV and by the time you get them all focused again then you have wasted so much time. Honestly until you get the rules well and truly established if you want to get the most out of them, I would keep them as still as possible. I don't want to seem mean to them, that's just from my experience and its of course for their benefit as much as for our benefit as teachers.

**Me** – Why do you think that the young people lose focus and start to talk about other things?

**Sophie** – Well if you asked a child what they wanted to be doing the majority of the time I don't think many of them would realistically say that they want to be in school learning, they would probably be much happier watching TV or out playing football or something else that isn't learning in school, so any opportunity that they have in school where they can get away with talking about things that they would rather be doing then they are naturally going to do this. Don't get me wrong, I don't blame them, school can be boring sometimes but we are not here to entertain them, we are here to make sure that they get the best education that they can in order to get the best out of life. I am sure that all teachers would agree with me there.

**Me** – Ok. Many thanks for the advice and for your feedback on the transcript. Do you mind if I just ask you about the session overall?

**Sophie** – No problem.

**Me** – How do you think the philosophy for children enquiry went and how do you think the young people responded to it?

**Sophie** – Well I was pleased that they, in the main, behaved and that they normally took their turn and didn't try to talk over each other; I felt that it went well from this point of view. I also think that with lots of practise that they will probably get better at asking more interesting questions and giving better answers because at the moment I think they don't really know what to say or think but once they are taught to by you then I am sure that they will be better. I think that they definitely enjoyed it and they concentrated well, again most of the time and most people, but that could be the novelty of it because I haven't done anything like this with them before and I don't know if it will work as well once they have done it a few times. I am a bit concerned that you are not being hard enough on them in terms of behavior and I don't want them messing around for you but hopefully they won't and I can always send them to the assistant head or head of year if any of them become disruptive.

**Me** – Do you not think that we would be able to resolve any issues within the class?

**Sophie** – Probably, oh yes I am sure that we can always resolve things, like I nearly always do in class, but it is good to have the backup of the SLT because they have more clout I suppose than maybe I do by this I mean that the children are more likely to listen to them because they know that they will be in big trouble if they are sent to them.

**Me** – Many thanks.

## **Appendix 5 - Transcript of first focused enquiry with the 6 students**

### Focus Group

Panda

Giraffe

Lion

Butterfly

Rabbit

Guinea Pig

**Me** – Thank you very much for looking at the transcript, at the copy of what we were talking about in class in our first full PwC enquiry, I really appreciate you spending the time. Were you able to pick out five sections that you would be happy to discuss with me further?

**Lion** – Yeah, I will read out the first one. We highlighted it with the highlighter pen like this [Shows me the part on the paper that they have highlighted] I'll read it out now [reads it out loud]

### Section 1

**Sophie** – Mrs Munro-Morris can choose who she wants to talk as well you just get to select someone to talk sometimes, remember that.

**Lion** – I thought it was interesting that you said we could choose but then Miss said that actually it was up to you to and not up to us.

**Me** – Why did you think that was interesting?

**Lion** – Cause that happens a lot.

**Me** – What do you mean?

**Lion** – Well like she will say to work in a group or in a pair but then she tells you what to think about and who to work with so really you don't have any decisions to make.

**Me** – Can anyone think of an example? What sorts of things does your teacher ask you to work on with someone else?

**Lion** – Well she might like say if you get stuck on a Math's question then ask the person next to you to tell you what to do. She doesn't like it when we all come and ask her cause she says she is only one person and can't do everything.

**Panda** – Yeah and sometimes if we are doing something like Art then she will get us to work with someone else then too, like to make something.

**Lion** – But that's like normal cause teachers always tell you what to do.

**Butterfly** – Cause they are the teachers.

**Panda** – Yeah they know what we are doing and ...

**Butterfly** – [interrupts] yeah they are in charge.

**Giraffe** – But sometimes they get you to learn stuff that is really well boring and it would be better if we learnt other things.

**Lion** – Like most stuff is boring especially Maths.

**Me** - Why do you think it is boring?

**Lion** – Cause like you just have to do sheets and sheets of questions and then you go to the teacher and she checks them and then you go and do the ones you got wrong again and you can't talk to your friends unless you are stuck.

**Guinea Pig** – Sometimes we get to do a problem though like do you remember we made that tower last week.

**Giraffe** – Yeah that was good cause we had to work in teams to see who could make the highest tower with the newspaper and it couldn't fall over ...

**Lion** – (interrupts) when we put a kilogram on it ... in the middle that was the challenge. That was good cause we got to work together to do it.

**Me** – Who decided which team had the best bridge?

**Panda** – Well to start we had to test them with the weight and any bridges that didn't get fallen down when we put the thing on then they got to go to the front. Then the teacher looked at them all and said which was the best one.

**Butterfly** – Yeah that was good cause my team won.

**Lion** – Yeah but my team should have won cause ours was taller.

**Guinea Pig** – Miss said ours was the best cause it was like ... I can't remember but we won anyway cause ours was the best.

**Me** – Did any of you get to help decide which was the best?

**Rabbit** – No because it was the teacher that got to like decide.

**Lion** – Yeah she looked at them all and then she decided and she picked that one cause ... she did.

[Panda puts his hand up]

**Lion** – You don't need to put your hand up you just say it ... we ain't in class.

**Butterfly** – Um ... I would like to choose who won sometimes though cause I think that you know the bridge that had the turrets should have won cause the group had thought about what the bridge looked like as well as making it tall and I think that was a really good idea.

**Me** – Did you have a chance to share your ideas?

**Lion** – No.

**Panda** – Teachers always decide the winner ... well, no sometimes they might ask you to say things but not often and then the teacher always makes the final decision cause they are in charge really ... so I suppose that is what they should do like, its their job.

**Giraffe** – Yeah but it would be good to say sometimes what we think.

**Me** – Would you like to carry on talking about this section or would you like to go on to talk about the next section that you picked?

**Lion** – Next bit.

**Butterfly** – Yeah.

**Me** – Ok, which bit did you highlight next?

**Lion** – This bit about when YP23 said about bullies [YP28 reads out the following section]

### Section 2

**Cat** – *Well ... the thing is bullies are just cowards ... we talked about that in school before.*

**Lion** – Yeah that bit.

**Me** – Why did you decide on that bit?

**Lion** – Um ... cause we thought it was good when Cat said that bullies were cowards. We agreed with this.

**Giraffe** – Yeah, I think that too.

**Panda** – We talked about this in school before.

**Lion** – Yeah the teacher said that if you are a bully then you are a coward cause you are ... what did she say?

**Butterfly** – Yeah you are like not happy so you are unkind to other people.

**Lion** – I didn't really get it.

**Me** – What didn't you get?

**Lion** - Well like, the teacher said that if someone is unhappy that sometimes they are unkind to others but I didn't get how that made you a coward cause cowards are scared not unhappy.

**Butterfly** – Yeah I didn't understand either.

**Guinea Pig** - Yeah but miss said that so she must be right cause I remember my old teacher saying something like that as well when the police came in to talk to us about bullies on Facebook.

**Me** – You said that you discussed bullies in circle time, what happens in circle time?

**Lion** – Well, like the teacher just says pass the stone around the circle ... but um first she says we are going to discuss something like being happy or something like that and then we have to pass the stone around and say something.

**Panda**– Yeah or you can just hand it on to the next person cause you might not want to say something.

**Giraffe** – But miss always says we should say something otherwise the circle is a bit boring cause no one shares anything.

**Rabbit** – I don't like that when she says that cause then you feel like you have to think of something to say and I keep thinking if I think of something that maybe someone else will have said it first before its my turn for the stone and then you have to think of something really quickly.

**Lion** – And if you don't and you just pass the stone on then the teacher looks at you like she is really cross. I sometimes don't say something though even if I have an idea cause I can see it annoys her and sometimes I think that is funny.

**Panda** – That's not very nice.

**Lion** – So, sometimes the lesson is boring so I do that so it is less boring. But if we are talking about something that I am interested in then I want to say something but most times I don't. In my old school like if you wanted to say something, then the teacher like listened to you more but now the teacher has to get a lot into the lesson and finish lots so you have to really think about what to say so that it doesn't waste the lesson ... It's a bit annoying sometimes but its cause there is lots to do and like you don't want to make the lesson longer cause then you miss your break or sometimes and you don't get long breaks now like in my old school, yeah they were much longer.

**Me** – Does anyone else have anything they want to share about this part of the transcript?

**Panda** – Yeah. Um it was interesting that we talked about bullies being cowards cause this is what miss had said before but then if you are a coward then people should be helping you, the teachers and that, not getting you into trouble cause you must need help but then actually what happens is they just get into trouble and no one like talks to them about why they do it like you just get a mark on your record.

**Lion** – Yeah, I got loads of marks, I am always in trouble for talking most of the time when miss is.

**Butterfly** – Yeah, she hates that and the other teachers like they want you to be quiet when they are telling you something all the time and you have to wait to ask a question until they say you can and so normally you don't bother cause by the time you are allowed to ask a question it probably sounds silly or something.

**Giraffe** - Yeah or like you know that she doesn't really want you to ask that question cause you know that then she really needs us to get onto doing the writing cause we always have to rush the writing bit.

**Me** – Do you have to write in every lesson?



**Rabbit** – Yeah cause otherwise miss don't know what you have learnt.

**Guinea Pig** –Um, I just wanted to say that sometimes you think something but there is no time to write it down and so the teacher doesn't really know what you think and that is a bit annoying but you just write down whatever in the end cause you just need to get it done.

**Me** – What do you mean?

**Panda** – Well sort of, you know, like you just do what you have to do and there is normally a list on the board and you just follow that really. It like helps you to know what to write.

**Lion** – Yeah, I always uses the list. Can we go onto the next bit now?

**Me** – Is that ok with everyone?

**Lion** – Yeah, I want to.

**Giraffe** – Yeah. I'll read it.

### Section 3

*Me – Have a look at the different characters. (Giraffe puts her hand up.)*

*Sophie – You are supposed to put your hand into the circle.*

*Me – That's ok, thanks Giraffe do you want to share what you are thinking?*

**Lion** – Yeah this bit.

**Me** - Why did you pick this part?

**Lion** – I picked it.

**Butterfly** – And me.

**Me** – Why did you both want to pick this part?

**Lion** – Cause I thought it was interesting that you were nicer to us than the teacher, cause like she got cross with us and you didn't.

**Butterfly** – Well like you were not bossing us around but Miss was.

**Rabbit** – Yeah but she is in charge of the class so it is her job and like, not saying nothing against you like, but you ain't in charge so like you can be nice to us and that's ok.

**Butterfly** – Yeah but he ... ur we shouldn't tell each other what to do only the teacher can do this.

**Me** – Why do you think the teacher can tell you what to do?

**Lion** – Cause they are in charge. Like that's their job.

**Giraffe** – Yeah, to be in charge so that we learn stuff like important stuff like maths. If we didn't listen and just talked all the time then we would miss how to do things and we couldn't do well in class then.

**Butterfly** – Yeah like you have to do what miss says cause that's like what is supposed to happen but like if someone else comes into the class, like a visitor, then miss has to like stay in charge cause otherwise we might be rude to them and then miss would be cross.

**Lion** – Yeah but Miss was right to get cross because we kept forgetting to put our hands in.

**Butterfly** – Yeah but we only kept forgetting, it was hard to remember all the time cause you always have to put your hand up otherwise miss don't know who to pick next to answer the questions.

**Me** – Who decided on the rule to put hands into the circle?

**Lion** – You did cause you're like the teacher so you make the rules and stuff.

**Panda** – No, we actually um we all said we were going to do that cause we didn't want to put our hands up like in class, like normal class, cause that is what we normally do and that would be a bit sort of boring if we just did what we always do like ...

**Lion** – [interrupts] yeah but its still up to the teacher cause they like say vote for this one and all that ... blah, yeah so we don't really get to pick the rules.

**Panda** – Yeah but we did vote and we said we wanted to do it.

**Giraffe** – It depends if the teacher says like you can do this, this and this and then you chose which one cause then you haven't really had a decision because well you had to chose from what the teacher told you to chose from but if you can just do whatever you want to do then you get to chose what you really feel or want and that is like real choice.

**Lion** – Yeah, like that.

**Panda** – Yeah but ... ur we shouldn't tell each other what to do only the teacher can do this.

**Me** – Why do you think the teacher can tell you what to do?

**Lion** – Cause they are in charge. Like that's their job.

**Panda** – Yeah, to be in charge so that we learn stuff like important stuff like maths. If we didn't listen and just talked all the time then we would miss how to do things and we couldn't do well in class then.

**Me** – Do you think that there needs to be someone in charge in the classroom?

**Butterfly** – Yeah um because ...

**Lion** – [interrupts] yeah cause otherwise we would just all mess about and be naughty.

**Giraffe** – Yeah cause we need rules like.

**Me** – Why do you think that you need rules?

**Giraffe** – Cause you do. All classes have rules.

**Me** – Do you think some rules are more important than other rules?

**Panda** – Maybe, but no, we just have to um like do what we are told to do otherwise you could get a detention. If you do good and behave you might get a merit mark and then you get rewards but mostly the naughty kids just get merit marks when they are good.

**Lion** – Yeah like me, I got loads.

**Panda** - It ain't fair sometimes like if you are normally always mostly good and that.

**Lion** – Can we do the next bit and can I read it? [addresses question to me]

**Me** - Is everyone happy with this? [Other students nod their heads]

[Lion reads the following section]

#### Section 4

**Butterfly** – *Yeah it was really interesting because um I thought we would have all the same words with the other group but we didn't; like we thought bullies were all bad people but the other group felt quite sorry for bullies and said more about them being sad and angry and that this explained their behavior. We didn't think that being sad should make it ok being mean but their ideas did make us think that maybe we were not really thinking about the whole picture with a bully because they are maybe not all bad ... but all our words were about them being bad.*

**Lion** – Yeah we picked that bit.

**Rabbit** – We thought it was good cause they said loads and explained things well.

**Butterfly** – Yeah like in detail.

**Lion** – We said like you could understand what they meant cause they explained what they meant in detail so that made it easier to um ... get it.

**Rabbit** – Yeah get it.

**Lion** – Yeah like it was good cause like it was good to get time to say what we think and we could say what we really thought. Yeah with our friends.

**Panda** – Yeah it was good to do that with our friends and some people that you um don't normally work with cause they might not be your friends.

**Butterfly** – Yeah it's good to try new people to find out their ideas.

**Lion** – It was good cause you could hear what other people thought about bullies and not everyone had the same ideas, which was interesting cause it was good to see that not everyone thought the same as you. It made me think about my own thinking.

**Butterfly** – Yeah and me.

**Giraffe** – Yeah I think so too.

**Lion** – But not everyone had the right idea cause they said bullies were sad but they ain't really they are just not nice.

**Me** – Do you think that your ideas are always right and if someone has a different idea that they are wrong?

**Lion** – I know what I think and they might not be wrong but they might not be right like if they don't think the same as me cause I know what I think is right is right ... it must be.

**Butterfly** – I think it is good to hear what other people think cause sometimes you don't really know and then you can hear what other people think and that can help you sometimes.

**Me** – I think that we better go onto the last section now, if that is ok because I don't want to take up your break time and it is almost break time now. Is that ok?

**Lion** – Yeah.

**Giraffe** – Do you want me to read it? Can I?

**Me** – That would be great, thanks.

[Giraffe reads the following section]

### Section 5

**Sophie** – *If you don't take this seriously you can go and wait outside until the end of the lesson.*

**Me** – Why did you pick this section as a group?

**Lion** – We didn't think that the teacher spoke to us very nicely.

**Butterfly** – Yeah like when you remind us about a rule then you say it nicely, like kindly, but when the teacher says it she always says it in a cross voice and then you just feel like you don't want to listen to her cause then she is just a bit like rude.

**Lion** – Yeah like if we shouted at each other then we would be in trouble so its like she can do what she wants but we have to do what she says even though she is rude to us.

**Giraffe** – Most teachers are rude to kids but then we don't always be nice to teachers like listen to them so then we deserve to be told off I suppose.

**Lion** – Yeah but like adults are always rude like sorry to say but they are cause they just expect you to be like perfect but then they don't follow the same rules like um ... I don't know like um ... I know in assembly like they are really boring but you have to just sit there in silence and if you don't you get into trouble but then the teachers sit on the side and they all talk to each other.

**Panda** – Yeah that really annoys me when they [teachers] do that but like you can't say anything to them cause then you are just being rude but then I think they are not fair sometimes to us cause they make all the rules and we have to follow them but then they don't.

**Giraffe** – Yeah I think that they should follow the rules too.

**Lion** – Yeah and we might be like more nice to them if they didn't shout at us all the time and like ask us to do stuff in a nice way like that would be better, yeah it would cause then we would want to be nice to them because they would be nice to us and that would be fairer.

**Panda** – Um ... when they say stuff in a nasty way then you just don't want to listen to them cause then you just think whatever.

**Me** – Why do you think the teacher raised her voice?

**Lion** – Cause we weren't doing what we were supposed to do but then we just forgot cause it was new.

**Butterfly** – Yeah but teachers always like to shout cause then we know they are like in charge of the class.

**Lion** – Yeah.

**Panda** – Yeah but not every teacher shouts just most teachers. I like the teachers that don't shout cause then you want to work more cause you feel like they are not rude to you and they are interested in what you have got to say. When teachers shout you just feel like I can't be bothered and I just want to not bother speaking to them.

**Lion** – Yeah cause they are just not interested in what you have to say they just want to do what they want to do and make sure that you behave but ... yeah.

**Rabbit** – Um, what matters most is that we all do what we are told and then the teacher won't shout really.

**Lion** – Yeah but mostly lessons are boring and then you just mess around cause then it makes the lesson go quicker. That's why really.

**Butterfly** – Yeah, um but ... sometimes teachers just shout, like quite a few, because you know they just want to show you that they don't want you to mess around ... they don't even give you a chance and they don't want to hear what you might have to say.

**Lion** – Yeah you soon learn which teachers you can tell your ideas and answers to and which ones you just stay quiet.

**Panda** – That was the bell.

**Me** – Thank you. Ok we better finish there because I don't want you to miss your break. Thank you very much for talking to me, I really appreciate it.

## Appendix 6 - Transcript of final PwC enquiry

**Context** – This was the final PwC enquiry I facilitated with the class.

**Present** – 28 students

*By this enquiry we no longer had hands into the circle, people just waited for an opportunity to talk and then shared what they had to say with the community.*

**Warm up** – Young people worked in small groups of their choosing (no more than 5) to place pictures of art from best to worst. Pictures included Banksy graffiti and Mona Lisa. Students then had to justify their ideas to another group and could choose to change their mind based on their peer's opinions.

**Stimuli** – YouTube clip 'S-laughter'

*After watching the clip we created a community mind map of the word 'slaughter' to check everyone's understanding of the word.*

**Question selection** – Students selected groups they wanted to work in, 3, 4 or 5 students in each group.

**Voting** – Vote using feet

**Question chosen** – Is it ok to kill people if you have a good reason?

**Me** – Ok would you like to share your thoughts behind your question? [question directed to the students whose question has been selected]

**Penguin** – Can I share what we were talking about? [addresses other members of the group; they all nod their heads] We found the clip really powerful because you think to start with that it is about something happy and I don't think that you really think that much of it at first and then um the flashy 's' starts and you realise what the word really says and it is a shock because you thought it was something happy but actually it wasn't.

**Owl** – Yeah so we started to think about what the word slaughter actually means cause like we know it is a shocking word because we all felt like that but we wanted to think about why it was shocking. So we talked about the word and what urr you know it meant and we knew it meant killing so then we thought about whether if you kill people in a war, but you are the good side, is that slaughter, or is it only slaughter when you kill people when you are on the bad side?

**Leopard** – I know what you mean like in WW2 when the Nazis gassed all those people like them Jews. The Nazis they were the bad side and so they slaughtered all of them but then we learnt in History, in my old school, that we killed all the people in Berlin by dropping bombs so was this slaughter or was that just part of war?

**Owl** – I don't think it matters if you are the right side or the wrong side actually because if you kill people, like lots and lots of them, then that is slaughter whether it is for a right or a good reason or not ... I don't think that actually matters.

**Me** – Do you mean that the reason that you kill someone doesn't matter?

**Panda** – Yes.

**Giraffe** – Yeah but don't you remember when we talked about that hot air balloon before, and we said that someone had to um jump off or they would all die. So we saved the man that had a cure for cancer because we said um that he would save millions of people so that justified saving him, and not the old man who we said had lived like most of his life anyway so it was fairer if he died. Then that is a bit like slaughter, although it is bad to kill loads of people, especially like women and children, but if it means that that will help you win a war and that will make life better for everyone like later on then that makes it OK to kill those people ... maybe? [Rising intonation on the 'maybe' suggests he is asking a question rather than making a statement]

**Guinea Pig** – So are you saying that sometimes it is ok to kill people if it is going to lead to a happier life for other people?

**Squirrel** – Well, I don't like the thought of um anyone being killed, but if you have to kill people, which you do in war, then it leads to the good side winning then I think that makes it um ...

**Panda** – justified?

**Giraffe** – Yeah like justified.

**Leopard** – Yeah but you talked about a good side and a bad side in war but both sides think that they are doing the right thing cause that is why they are fighting like they might think that the other side's religion is not good or that they should have some land or something so um ... yeah.

**Lion** – So are you saying that if there is no such thing as a good or a bad side then slaughter is always ok or never ok?

**Wolf** – I am saying that that it is never ok cause yeah there is no right or wrong side so the killing of innocent people who have done like nothing wrong can never be justified.

**Sophie** – I thought it was interesting that someone said earlier that it was worse to kill woman and children, I just wondered what the thinking was behind this idea and if anyone agrees or disagrees with it.

**Lion** – I agree that it is worse to kill woman and children because they are like not as strong as men so they can't stick up for themselves as much.

**Squirrel** - Yeah, but you can't treat men and woman different because woman can fight in the army and stuff so they can be as strong yeah ... like my cousin she is in the army and she is dead strong and she wouldn't be very happy if you told her not to fight cause she gets really angry if anyone says she shouldn't fight in a war just cause she is a girl, she shouts at my uncle all the time cause he always takes the mick out of her.

**Hedgehog** – No but like your cousin might be like that but most girls don't go to war it is mostly men.



**Giraffe** – I know but that's because it's not like pushed on girls to go to war like it is for men. Its like when you go to the cinema and there is that advert for joining the army and if you look its like nearly all men and only a few um girls in the advert so if you were a girl at school and the teacher was saying like what job do you want I don't think a girl would like think about the army or anything like that cause they haven't been encouraged.

**Lion** – But if there's like a war like in Afghanistan and the bad side want to kill a load of woman in a village cause they think that will get them noticed then um ... those woman they are not soldiers so they are just normal and they shouldn't be picked on cause they didn't ask to be in a war.

**Me** – So do you think there's a difference between slaughtering soldiers in a war and slaughtering the general population in a country that happens to be at war?

**Sophie** – That's a really hard question because from an ethical perspective I think that killing is wrong full stop but if you know that there is a threat that you could be killed and that is part of your job which you have accepted, then actually this would make me think that it is worst to slaughter innocent people, you know people who are not soldiers.

**Lion** – Yeah but if we go back to what we was talking about before about that killing some for the better good of others then I think it doesn't matter if they are soldiers or just ordinary people. So lets say that there is a war between two groups in a country and they both get to a town and whoever kills the most people then the other side win like um they win the war yeah then because they just um do ... well, what I meant was that if they win the war whatever side and then there is no more killing from anyone then if some people get killed to achieve this if they are soldiers or just normal people then well that's just the way it has to be to be fair to the other people.

**Shark** – But that's not fair to those people because they didn't even want to be in the war if they just lived like as a normal um farmer or something and then even if you are a soldier you might be like a child soldier and then you have been kidnapped so you don't have any choice, so they haven't agreed to the chance that they might die.

**Me** – Do you think that anyone actually agrees to die?

**Panda** – They do like suicide bombers they want to die cause they blow themselves up.

**Me** – But do they actually want to die?

**Sophie** - I think they are just brainwashed into thinking that they want to die when actually they do not really understand what they are setting themselves up to do.

**Pug** – I don't think it is important if someone choses to die or to kill someone else or not, if they do it then they are guilty cause other people have died, this is what is important.

**Panda** – Yeah but if someone has been forced to kill someone else then they are not as much to blame as someone who killed deliberately cause they didn't mean to do it.

**Husky** – I think what I meant earlier was if you just kill one person to save millions but you can't kill say a 100 people to save maybe 1000 people because that would not be fair.

**Me** – But why not? What's the difference between killing 1 person or 100 people to save a million or a 1000 people, can you say that individual people are worth a certain amount and use this to calculate how much for example 1 person or 10 people are worth?

**Butterfly** – I don't think you can.

**Lion** – Um ... no I agree.

**Squirrel** – Can we do an agree/disagree line cause I want to see what other people think cause I don't know what I think?

**Me** – Good idea. OK let's see um, lets go with 'It is ok to kill one person to save a 100 people' Agree/disagree. I'll put the cards down over here and yeah if you just stand by one card.

[The students stand by the agree or disagree card to indicate whether they agree/disagree with the statement. 18 students stand on the agree side, 7 on the disagree, and 3 stand in the middle suggesting that they are not sure either way. Sophie stands in the disagree side]

**Me** – Snail why do you agree with the statement?

**Snail** – I agree with the statement because one person is not going to have as much happiness as all the 100 people so killing them is a small thing compared to saving all those other people.

**Me** – Anyone else got any thoughts they want to share?

**Leopard** – You can't just decide for someone else that they should die.

**Bear** – I agree.

**Me** – What do you mean?

**Bear** – Well, if say the priminister knew that he could pick some people to die to save the rest of the country how could he chose?

**Sophie** - Maybe people would volunteer?

**Bear** – Yeah but they should not be asked to volunteer really its like that question you know do you want to die should not really be asked ... um you know like that choice shouldn't really ever be given to people because no one should want to die.

**Panda** – Well I don't think it is right to kill at all so that's it really.

**Lion** – But what if your mum and dad were part of the people that could be saved yeah and the person that was dying was someone that you didn't even know and you would never get to meet, I would definitely want that person to be killed to save my parents ... that's more important to save people you love than people you don't even know.

**Koala** – Um ... yeah I can see what you mean. I think um ... I think I would still say killing was wrong but like then I would have an emotional reason to want that one person to be killed, cause if I didn't know them at all then I wouldn't care about them like my mum and dad ... its really hard.

**Sophie** – I think Lion has made a really good point because in those circumstances I don't think I would care about the one person, especially if I never had to meet with them so I never had an emotional connection with them, I would just be concerned about my actual

mum and dad. So although I started by saying killing is wrong, full stop – I don't think that you can actually make that decision until you are in those circumstances.

**Giraffe** – I agree because you can have beliefs but when they are tested, when they are about your family, then those beliefs might not be the same.

**Me** - Does anyone want to swap sides?

[2 students move from disagree to agree and 1 person from the middle moves to agree]

**Me** – Why did you move Lizard?

**Lizard** – I just think the same now.

**Me** – What about you Horse?

**Horse** – Yeah the same cause I don't think if it was your family that you would honestly not want one person to be killed.

**Tiger** – Like your family comes first.

**Flamingo** – Yeah.

**Me** – Ok lets change the statement to, it is ok to kill one hundred people to save one thousand people. Agree or disagree?

**Sophie**– That's a difficult one.

**Lion** – That's different then!

**Sophie** – Why?

**Lion** – Cause its more people so that can't be right.

**Squirrel** –That's a lot harder to decide cause when its lots of people all of them have family so just one person dying is different than a hundred people dying because those people all have a family!

**Lion** –I don't think you can kill that many people for any reason. It goes back to the point that we were making before that slaughter is wrong because you can't kill loads of people for any reason.

**Panda** –Yeah but then what if your mum and dad was in the side that was going to be saved then you wouldn't mind if the other ones was killed then.

**Giraffe** –Yeah I suppose but I think I agree because even though 100 people are killed then still that means that 1000 people are ok ... um so that is because I don't want to be mean to the other people but I think that all those other people being ok means that it is ok for them to um ... have to die.

**Me** – Ok, so lets go back to sitting in the circle. [We all move back to sit in the circle]

**Me** – Ok, so can we remind ourselves about what the question was ‘Is it right to kill people if you have a good reason?’ After what we have been discussing would anyone like to add anything to our discussion?

**Sophie** – Can I say something? It is interesting because we have talked about slaughter assuming that it was in a war situation but what if the slaughter was maybe to do something like kill 100 people who were infected with a disease to stop the disease from spreading to the rest of the world because then no-one else in the world would get it. Would this be different? Would it make slaughter ok now?

**Panda** – I don’t think slaughter is ever ok because it is killing people when they have done nothing wrong!

**Me** – Does that mean it would be ok to kill someone if they had done something wrong then?

**Panda** – Yeah maybe it would be ok ... then, but ... I don’t really know then.

**Pug** – That is the same as killing one person to save 100, its one way or the other ... um, you can’t agree with both ... either ok to kill or not ok to kill. I think you should never kill someone what ever you think.

**Chicken** – Yeah and who decides if someone has done something wrong like if you um bomb a city cause you are at war with them then your side will think you are doing the right thing but the other side will think you have done something terrible but have still done the same thing so like is it wrong or not?

**Rabbit** – I agree because you shouldn’t think about who the people are it is either ok to say it is ur ok to kill or it isn’t. Even if it is your family. Like I know it would be really hard if it was like your brother or something but you can’t have a rule and then break it.

**Dragon** – I have been thinking ... um ... that there is a difference between someone being killed that you know and someone being killed on the other side of the world. I think that when something is like in the news in maybe another country like France maybe, that you worry about it more because you think it might happen to you too but if it is in a country that is far away that you think about it for a bit and get sad and then you think of something else.

**Monkey** – It’s like those adverts on the telly when you see things like starving children, my mum always gets really upset but then when the advert stops she seems to forget about them then until she sees the advert again.

**Sophie** – Yeah, I am a bit like that.

**Me** – Why do you think she does that? Sorry I mean your mum.

**Monkey** – I don’t really know.

**Bumble Bee** – Do you think its like when you see someone that’s homeless in town you um feel a bit guilty when you see them especially when its raining but you soon forget about them – maybe it’s a way of stopping you being sad all the time, cause if you thought about things too much then you would be worrying and sad loads.

**Snail** – Do you think that our brains are made like that so we just forget things or do you think we have learnt to be like that?

**Lion** – Yeah like when you are living in a war and you see people with their legs blown off and all splattered everywhere, you would think that people would just go mad but they don't.

**Husky** – Sometimes they do.

**Cat** – Yeah but mostly they just don't and they get on with their lives when the war is over.

**Me** – Ok, so imagine this situation. One family lives in a town who follow one political party, lets call them Party A, and another family also live in the town and they support a different party, lets call them Party B. Um in the country where they live there is a civil war – can anyone explain what a civil war is? Yes, Shark?

**Shark** – Its um when different people in the same country fight.

**Me** – Yes that's a really helpful description, thank you. So Party A and Party B are now at war with each other. The one family who supports Party A is told by his party that he has to fight the family that supports family B. They used to be friends but suddenly the war has made them enemies. So the one family slaughters a number of the members of the other family. In the end let's say Party A wins the war and the town goes back to being at peace. The two families go back to their normal jobs. Can they still be friends after what has happened?

**Panda** – The one family would never be able to forgive the other family for what they did so ... no they can never be friends again.

**Penguin** – If that was my family then I would want the other family to suffer like I had suffered cause they ur deserve to for what they did.

**Lion** – Yeah but if you think about it, it wasn't really their fault cause they were made to do it cause of the war.

**Monkey** – They could have said no they wouldn't do it.

**Koala** – Yeah but then they would have been killed for not doing what they were told and probably their family cause that's what bad people do in war, so really they had no choice.

**Sophie** – I think that is a really interesting point. Do you think that if it was not their fault, if they had no real choice, then they are to blame for hurting the other family?

**Giraffe** – Yeah I think they are.

**Me** – Why do you think that?

**Frog** – Cause they should have said no.

**Me** – Can we take a moment to turn to the person next to you to discuss if the reason why someone does something makes a difference to whether they are to blame for their actions or not. Does anyone have any thoughts?

**Lion** – Me and miss were saying that if you intend to do something then that makes the outcome worse than if you didn't intend to do something. So like if I hit my brother and he cut his head – if I hit him deliberately then that would be worse than if I had hit him by an accident.

**Sophie** – I thought as well of the example of manslaughter and murder, if you didn't mean to kill someone then it is manslaughter whilst if you had the intention to kill then it is murder and you get a much longer prison sentence for murder than you do for manslaughter. So this suggests that intention to do something wrong does make an act worse.

**Lion** – Also if you didn't mean to do it then you didn't want to do something bad and if you don't want to do something then you are not as bad.

**Panda** – Yeah but then the person you have hurt is still hurt and it doesn't matter to them if you meant to do it or not cause they still have like the bad head or the broken leg or whatever so it is just as bad for them um if you meant to do it or not!

**Giraffe** – If it was an accident like if a little old lady had a heart attack when she was driving or something like that and then she ran someone over like you couldn't hate the old lady cause it wont her fault.

**Lion** – Yeah but not always do we do what is right as well.

**Me:** What do you mean?

**Lion** – Well ... um, I mean like isn't it just as bad to know that you should do something cause something good will come of it but you don't do it then aren't you just as guilty as someone who is guilty if they didn't mean to do it. I know what I mean but I just can't say it!

**Giraffe** – Yeah like I know what you is thinking like when ... I don't know I can't explain it but I knows what you mean.

**Me** – Can anyone think of an example to try to explain what Lion has suggested?

**Snail** – Do you mean um well, do you mean that lets say for example there was someone who had nothing to eat and you didn't give them anything but you could have done, no that's not a good example. Alright then what about when what you were saying with the adverts before, you don't give any money then a child dies.

**Husky** – Yeah but you wouldn't know they were dead.

**Lion** – That don't matter they are still dead.

**Seal** – It does matter cause if you don't know you can't feel guilty!

**Husky** – Yeah but you shouldn't feel guilty just cause you don't know something you should feel guilty cause its wrong to ignore someone when you could have done something.

**Sophie** – But if you don't know then how can you feel guilty or should you feel guilty because there is a possibility that there is a negative outcome?

**Rabbit** – Yeah but remember when we talked about what we do and that it always does something to something else so everything we do like just walking down the street could end up hurting someone else so there is nothing you can do really or um you would just feel guilty like all the time.

**Bear** – I think that's just hard cause you shouldn't try to hurt anyone.

**Me** – It is a real shame but we are going to have to bring the enquiry to an end now as the bell has already gone for break and I want you to be able to have sometime before your next lesson. I wonder if you could just write down on your little white boards one word to describe how you feel about the clip that we watched earlier now that we have discussed it. It is only really short, less than a minute, so I will put it on in the background again. When you have written it if you just stand behind your chair with the white board on your chair with the word turned facing out, like this [I write the word 'hello' on my white board and then stand up and put the whiteboard on the chair so that I can read it the correct way up if I was standing on the outside of the circle] If you just write your word in your own time and then put it on the chair and then if you want to you can stay and look at others words or you can go straight to break, honestly up to you what you want to do.

[All the students write a word on their board, none of them go to break until everyone has written and displayed their word, they then start to move around the outside of the circle, without being asked, and reading each others words. All of the students continue to talk about what we have been discussing as a community]

## Appendix 7 - Transcript of second focused enquiry with Sophie

**Me** – Thank you for agreeing to meet with me again to go over this second transcript. Thank you also for spending time again to go over this transcript to again pick out five parts that you felt were interesting that we could discuss together. Were you able to pick out five areas?

**Sophie** – Well, I have but I found this much harder to do than before in the first transcript, because there were so many more things in this second document ... sorry, I mean transcript, that I really would have been happy and interested on focusing on because it just shows how much the children have come on. After I had read this transcript [indicating the final PwC transcript] I went back to the original one again to compare them, and when I read the first one again I was just astounded by the children's level of thinking and reasoning here in this um second transcript. [Points to the second transcript] I was quite emotional after reading it simply because I could just not quite believe how much they had really come on. Well, anyway do you want to know the first part that I picked out?

**Me** – Yes please.

**Sophie** – Um, it was this bit ... um I will read it out now. [Reads the follow extract out loud]

### Section 1

**Me** – *Do you mean that doesn't matter?*

**Panda** – *Yes.*

**Giraffe** – *Yeah but um don't you remember when we talked about that hot air balloon before and we said that someone had to um jump off or they would all die; so we saved the man that had a cure for cancer because we said um that he would save millions of people so that justified saving him and not the old man who we said had lived like most of his life anyway so it was fairer if he died. Then that is a bit like slaughter, although it is bad to kill loads of people, especially like woman and children, but if it means that that will help you win a war and that will make life better for everyone like later on then that makes it ok to kill those people ... maybe?*

**Guinea Pig** – *So are you saying that sometimes it is ok to kill people if it is going to lead to a happier life for other people?*

**Me** – Ok, thank you. Why did you select this part?

**Sophie** – Well I picked this part first because I was so impressed by what the children were saying, or young people, as I know that that is what the class prefer to be called and what you call them. They were using such sophisticated arguments and touching on utilitarianism. To be honest I have only really understood this philosophical idea through joining in the enquiries with you. What I was particularly impressed by was the way that Guinea Pig was asking the rest of the class a question. It seemed to come completely naturally to him and it was like he could take on the role of the teacher without even thinking about it and you and I could just step back and listen. What really amazed me was the way that the rest of the class were quite happy for him to take on that role as well, like it was the natural order of things. Have you noticed now that the children don't direct questions to us at all, or answers even, they just direct them to each other, it is amazing.



Let me look at this bit again as I am sure there is something else that I wanted to say, I wrote some notes on the side here [points to some written notes on the margin of the transcript] oh yes, I also wanted to say that I was really impressed with the way that the class were able to refer back to a previous discussion, the one about the hot air balloon, and were able to create a connection between that and what they were discussing now about slaughter. Even though I suppose the concepts were the same in both, or at least similar, I was surprised that children in Year 7 were able to do this. I really was surprised. I honestly feel that I have underestimated what they are capable of doing before, I just wish there was time in the curriculum to do more philosophy because I can not believe how it helps these young people to really think for themselves and to reason with themselves and with each other.

**Me** – That is interesting.

**Sophie** – I also noticed throughout the transcript that you and I say hardly anything. Obviously I know that you are leading the enquiries, or facilitating them – that is the word you use isn't it?

**Me** – Yes.

**Sophie** – I notice that we hardly say anything at all, its like they almost don't need us to be there at all as if they can control their own learning and their own behavior. What has been particularly amazing is the way that they behave in the PwC enquiries has impacted on the way that they behave all of the time in lessons, or I know at least in my lessons. This has meant that I can do so much more with them and that they really respond to things that I would have never have expected them to have the capacity to do.

**Me** – Can you think of an example?

**Sophie** – Well to be honest it is all the time with them, there is not really a specific example. I just find that this class more, than any other class that I take, whatever the age, or have taken in the past, they seem to be able to regulate their own behavior and support each other. It's like they feel they have a common aim and they all are trying to achieve the best for all of them rather than competing against each other. Don't get me wrong I think that competition is important and it is good to want to achieve, but I don't know how to describe it really, it is like they are trying to ensure that they all support each other to get the best that they can out of each other. They don't all behave all the time, but none of them leave each other out now. Also if they do something wrong then you can reason with them so that they can tell me what they have done and why it hasn't helped them in their learning, and then they can talk about what they would do next time. We had some training recently on restorative justice and it made me think about your enquiries and how they have helped the class to develop some of the skills that you develop in restorative justice, things like being able to reflect on what they say and do; this seems to be something that they are particularly good at now.

**Me** – Why do you think that they have developed these skills?

**Sophie** – Well it is probably partly down to maturity because they are a year older and that makes a big difference and of course they have spent lots of time together so they have got used to each other and I suppose more this year because of the Year 7 Curriculum, where they have had lots of their lessons with me, then we have developed more of a relationship together and got to know each other better. This has been really good, I suppose a bit like being a primary school teacher where you have the same class all of the time, that means

you really get to know what they like and don't like and what they are good at and not good at. But also, definitely the philosophy lessons have had a big impact because I compare them to other Year 7 classes that I have had in the past and they are far more articulate and also I suppose caring towards each other, it is almost like they really want to do well as well in a way that I think is really mature for children of this age. I mean, don't get me wrong, there are lots of times when they still irritate me and each other um when they don't focus but often it is because they start to talk about other things, not linked to the learning objective in a lesson and then you have to get them back on track because the SLT are really strict about the fact that we need to get through all of the Year 7 curriculum so that we can evaluate whether it is successful or not so that we know whether we are going to do it again next year.

**Me** – Do you know how the SLT intend to evaluate the programme's success?

**Sophie** – Yes each of the year 7 classes are going to undertake some tests, like mini exams, on each of the subjects that we have incorporated into the curriculum and then we are going to look at which ones they perform well in and which ones they do less well in and then look at whether this is down to teachers being less confident to deliver certain subject knowledge in certain um subjects and then decide, from here, which of them we are going to carry on with um sorry I mean which subjects we are going to keep in the Year 7 Curriculum, next year, that is if we carry on with it at all. I think that we will.

**Me** – Do you know what the tests will be measuring?

**Sophie** – What do you mean?

**Me** – Sorry, I mean actually not what but how will they measure how the young people have done?

**Sophie** – Oh ok, they will do some written pieces, some will be comprehension style and I think they are going to do an extended piece of writing in English to look at their style of writing.

**Me** – Do you know if there is going to be any focus on oracy skills?

**Sophie** – We did talk about that um I was part of the working party looking at how we were going to evaluate the impact of the new curriculum, we all had to evaluate different bits or be involved in setting it up and writing it, but we decided that it would be very hard to evaluate their oracy skills and that it would take a long time because you would have to hear them all speaking individually and that would take too long.

**Me** - Have you noticed any other changes?

**Sophie** – They definitely seem more focused and they ask really interesting questions. Before I don't think I really understood how to ask questions, if I am honest, and I have learnt a lot from you and the way that you ask the pupils questions to really tease out their own ideas and thinking. You are really good at getting them to justify their thinking, this is something that I really didn't think that they would be able to do at this age, well at least not to the level that they now can do. However, I now recognise that there is real value in spending time discussing things together in order to take the children's learning forward because if they don't understand something then the quality of anything that they produce is much reduced. It is interesting because I don't take them for maths, as you know, they go to a different teacher and she has said that they are her best class as well in terms of

both behavior and the way that they focus in class and apply themselves. She has said that this is particularly evident when they are doing problem-solving tasks. I am sure that this is linked to the work that you have done with them and the way that they have come on with their ability to reason and question.

**Me** – Why do you think that the maths' teacher thinks these things about the class?

**Sophie** – I think that she is right, the class are different from other classes. I think that they have learnt to love learning and to want to achieve because they have learnt to think their way through a problem. I think all of them have improved, some of them can still be silly especially when something is not particularly interesting, you see that in class then, but that's not my fault I have to deliver the lessons that we have been given, although I do try to change some of the questions now to ask them more like you do as they seem to give much better answers then. Sometimes I wish I could teach them in a different way because every lesson starts with a PowerPoint as an introduction and I would be bored if I had to start every lesson like that, in fact I get a bit bored teaching in this way sometimes, but it is a really useful way to start the lesson because they can see what they are learning about, visually, because you write up the learning objective well actually it is already there in the PowerPoint and then you can go back to this at the end of the lesson so that they can test themselves to see if they have learnt it or not, so I can see why the SLT decided to go with this format. But sometimes, I suppose, it is very repetitive and that's when some of the class can lose interest and start to mess around but in all honesty most of the time the class don't waste time, normally, with messing around, only occasionally, and therefore they stay much more focused in the class.

**Me** – You suggested that you have to stick to the lesson format that you have been given but that you have changed your style of questioning, why do you think you have done this?

**Sophie** – If I am honest, um ... I have had to move away from teaching the way that the lessons are set up for us a little bit, I have had permission from the assistant headteacher, because they were finding the lessons too boring and I was finding that they were too prescriptive for them and that they needed more. But I still start them in the same way and get them to do the same tasks because I don't want them to lose out by missing some knowledge that the other classes are getting because then I would be jeopardising their chances in the end of year tests, I have changed my question style and sometimes I will add something in or do something before the PowerPoint just to get the students interested, like I might use something like the voting Venn diagram that you use or the agree/disagree line, and I find that when I use things like this that makes them really have to think, that the lessons tend to go much better and that the children are more engaged. I have occasionally changed the materials that I use as well, like maybe some harder poems in English, but mainly only in English because as I say I don't want them to miss out anything that the other classes are having because the stuff might come up in an exam and then if I have not taught them it then it would be my fault if um they didn't do well in the tests. Also there does seem to be a certain amount of, not really competition, but um, well I suppose, it feels like the SLT are sort of judging us with this curriculum I suppose.

**Me** – How do you mean that they are judging you?

**Sophie** – Well we have talked in the staff room a bit, as teachers, or those that teach the year 7 curriculum, that we feel like the SLT want the curriculum to be a success because they have invested a lot of time into it and that if it isn't then we will be judged as failing to deliver it properly rather than it being about the curriculum needing to change ... um, does that make sense?

**Me** – Yes, I understand what you mean?

**Sophie** – It has made some of the teachers, especially those who have been teaching for a long time, a bit nervous as if they feel like they will be judged against each other and if one Year 7 class does well but another doesn't that it will be seen as if the teacher that um taught the class that did well did a better job of getting them to learn all the facts that they needed to pass the tests and then the other teacher didn't do as well um as teachers there are so many changes that sometimes you can feel a bit uneasy.

**Me** – Ok, you said, before, that um you said that you felt that the class needs more sometimes, what did you mean?

**Sophie** – Well um like if I take an example of an RE lesson where we were supposed to look at a PowerPoint with pictures of a church, I think it was a cathedral, on so that they could identify different parts of it. So we started off looking at this but then someone in the class asked, I can't remember who, sorry, something like whether having a religious building like a church or a mosque in a community helps bring the whole community together or whether it divides it. I thought this was such an interesting question and we just sort of ended up having an impromptu and unplanned discussion about it. The class were amazing, they had such interesting ideas and they just listened to each other really well. This was about a month ago or so. What interests me the most is that they seem to want to delve into the unknown more and they seem to have a level of maturity to ask such interesting questions. This must be down to the PwC because my pupils were definitely not like this at the beginning of the year, in September, when they first came to my class.

**Me** – Do you think that the class has changed in any other way?

**Sophie** – I think they have changed in lots of ways. Mainly in their behavior, as I said before, they were quite a naughty and disruptive class to start with, particularly some of the boys, and there are really no concerns any more and other teachers say the same. Also I think that the way that I see them and the way that they see me has changed. Before I would have said that I was teaching them and now I think, it probably sounds strange, that sometimes they are teaching me because they come out with some really interesting ideas that sometimes can, if I am honest, make me think about the ways that I see things. Like that example I was just telling you in the discussion some of the children said some things about how a mosque can bring together a community, one of the children said that it develops a level of mystique so local people want to find out about Muslims because they want to find answers and that they are more likely to do this if they are already a captive audience. I haven't explained that very well, sorry, but what I mean is that I hadn't thought in that way that people might want to investigate something that is on their doorstep simply because it seems a mystery to them and that in itself can promote tolerance as people start to find out more. I thought that this was a fascinating and different way of looking at something.

**Me** – It sounds like you have had some really interesting discussions with the class.

**Sophie** – Yes it has been a very interesting year. I suppose the problem is that I won't have a class like this again and that will be really disappointing because I will have to lower my expectations again and go back to teaching things at a lower level again. The idea is that if your project is proved to be successful that they are going to train all the heads of department on how to use philosophy but I can't see the school really doing that because it will be expensive and then you need everyone to well I suppose get it and I don't think

they will. I honestly, and I don't mean to be rude, but I thought that it was another one of those faddy ideas when you first came to do it with my class and although I have been blown away I don't think that it will be easy to replicate that with everyone if they haven't seen it being done and the impact that it has had.

**Sophie** – I suppose it just comes down to time again, and I don't think I will have the time next year to do much with PwC to make it have a real impact, even though I will want to, because the SLT are bringing in more changes to the Year 7 Curriculum and I will have to focus on implementing these.

**Me** – Do you think that the changes will mean that you will have more to cover in your lessons?

**Sophie** – Yes, there will be more to cover I think, although I am not sure because we haven't been exactly told yet, but I have heard lots of rumors. I know that you are presenting what you have found out as well in the autumn term, but that won't have an impact for a while but maybe they will in the long term. I keep talking about how brilliant PwC is and so do the other teachers that have had my class and have seen the impact on them but we don't get much of a chance to meet with the SLT.

**Me** – Shall we look at the second section that you selected?

**Sophie** – Um yes of course. It was the bit where you asked what I thought was quite a difficult question, or concept and the children were able to engage with it straight away. I also thought that it was interesting, from my perspective, how I feel that I just became like one of the members of the community with everyone else because I was just desperate to give my opinion to. It was this bit. [Points to the relevant part on my copy of the transcript]

### Section 2

**Me** – *So do you think there's a difference between slaughtering soldiers in a war and slaughtering the general population in a country that happens to be at war?*

**Sophie** – *That's a really hard question because from an ethical perspective I think that killing is wrong full stop but if you know that there is a threat that you could be killed and that is part of your job which you have accepted, then actually this would make me think that it is worst to slaughter innocent people, you know people who are not soldiers.*

**Sophie** – I thought this was interesting because firstly talking about killing people, especially slaughtering, is something that I would not have imagined discussing with Year 7 children in the past because I would have thought it would have been too upsetting for them. I would have been worried about parents complaining as well, cause our parents often do complain about things, you know how it is? However, the class didn't seem to find it intimidating or upsetting at all talking about slaughter. Their responses were very mature in fact. I was also interested in the fact that they were able to think about quite an abstract way of thinking about killing, you weren't asking them to just think about whether killing was right or wrong which I would have thought that they could have coped with quite well but you were asking them to think about this on another level, that is there a difference between killing soldiers and killing citizens. This isn't something that I think some adults would think about or discuss let alone year 7s and so this was quite a shock to me, really, when actually they coped really well with this concept and didn't even seem phased – do you think that this is amazing?

**Me** – I think that the children coped very well with discussing a difficult concept.

**Sophie** – I agree. I was also interested that I wanted to join in and that I felt that I was just another participant, as I said, in the conversation, I think in the last few times that you have done P4C that I haven't felt like the teacher anymore just a part of the group I suppose. I don't know if this sounds silly because obviously I am an adult and they are children but I feel that we have got to a stage now where I feel like they have as much to bring to the classroom in terms of taking their learning forward as I can bring um ... you know in terms of ideas and things and developing what they think. I hope that I did not say too much in the discussion because I was really interested but I hope that I did not dominate the discussion because the rest of the class obviously had some really good ideas to share. I always feel that it is a shame that we have to stop when it gets to break time but it has been interesting to hear the class talk in the next lesson they are often still talking about what we have discussed in the next lesson and sometimes we have not done what we are supposed to be doing but instead have carried on the discussion for a bit. The problem is that I have to get through so much and although I have had permission to adapt some of the lessons, sometimes retrospectively, when things have gone off in a particularly interesting direction, I still have to make sure that I get through the content or I would be in trouble ... I imagine.

**Me** – How do you find the fact that you have a set amount of content that all teachers in year 7 are expected to get through?

**Sophie** – I have to be honest that I find it a bit frustrating. To start with when the new Year 7 Curriculum came in, and I knew that I would have to be teaching other subjects, I was quite relieved that you had to just pick up a lesson and deliver it, and to be honest the children didn't ask many questions so I didn't feel intimidated if I was doing something like history. However, after a while I actually got really bored by the lessons because they all started with a PowerPoint and when I could see what they started to do with you as they got more used to P4C um then I started to see the importance of questioning and although we were being told that we had to use open questions the actual set up of the Year 7 Curriculum did not actively encourage you to be able to use many open questions they were far more closed knowledge based questions. I suppose that I will just have to develop the confidence to do things in a way that I can see have such a positive impact, its hard when you are not used to questioning things though and just tend to do what you have been asked to do.

**Me** – Why do you think that you feel that you just tend to do what you are asked to do?

**Sophie** – Well I think that when you first train to be a teacher that you come full of enthusiasm and then you soon realise that every school has a different way of doing things and that you have to sort of fit in with this. I have only worked in this school and so I suppose I have just got used to being asked to do things the way that the SLT want them done here and they always change things and I have just got used to not asking why and just getting on with what I am asked to do.

**Me** – Ok. Do you mind if we look at the next section now?

**Sophie** – Yes of course. Um ... yes next I marked this part. [Points to the transcript, and reads the section out loud]

### Section 3

**Squirrel** – Can we do an agree/disagree line cause I want to see what other people think cause I don't know what I think?

**Sophie** – I picked this part not because of what was said but because it made me think about the agree/disagree line. This is something that I have had a go at using when you are not there anymore and I really like it.

**Me** – What do you like about it?

**Sophie** – Well I think that it works really well as a way of children sharing their ideas and then deciding whether they want to change their ideas or not based on what they hear other people saying. I think that it is good because none of them say anything about each other if they do change their mind, they are always quite respectful of each other's ideas and don't see it as a bad thing if the children change their minds, probably more the opposite.

**Me** – I agree that they do not feel concerned about saying that they have changed their mind based on listening to their peers.

**Sophie** – I like the way that they start the sentences as well with I agree or disagree, it suggests that they really understand how to structure an argument. I think that they have learnt how to do this from the way that you have modeled how to construct an argument with them. The other thing that I thought was really interesting was the way that the children could refer to examples that are sort of outside of their experience. Well like in this part. [Sophie reads the following extract]

### Section 4

**Monkey** – *It's like those adverts on the telly when you see things like starving children, my mum always gets really upset but then when the advert stops she seems to forget about them then until she sees the advert again.*

**Sophie** – Monkey is talking about her mum's experiences and relating them back to what is being talked about in the circle. I think this is quite a mature skill.

**Me** – Do you think that the young people were able to do this quickly?

**Sophie** – No, I think it took them a while to be able to do this because it is quite a skill. I don't think that these things happen quickly, I think that the class needed a long time to do things that it took a while for them to learn the skills and that they needed to have them modeled to them lots of times before they started to use them independently. This shows that you need to give things a chance to work. I think that this is what will make it hard for the other staff to take on PwC because if they are like I was, and think it is just another initiative and they don't see an instant result or benefit, then they will not keep it up because I think that people expect instant results. This is the problem with most new things that the school introduces, by the time that you start to understand something and start to just see if it is worth doing or not then it gets thrown out and you have to try something new. I really um hope that we can take on PwC but I just don't see that it will really be given a chance like everything else, or that most teachers will give up before they have seen what a change it makes to the class.

**Me** – You seem to have found that being a part of this research has been of benefit to the class and to your own practice, am I right in thinking this?

**Sophie** – Yes definitely. I think it has benefited the class as I said before in making them be better thinkers and learners and developing the way that they treat each other and react to each other. In terms of me, yes I think that seeing the way that you are with the children and seeing the way that they have developed has changed the way that I view children and my expectations of what they can achieve is defiantly much higher. I really think that I misunderstood how much Year 7 children can do, how much they are capable of if they are given the right opportunities. But if you can not see what they are capable of, if you don't realise then you can't be blamed for this its like the system is set up so that you can't see what these children are really capable of ... it's a shame really.

**Me** – You have talked a lot about differences that you have seen, do you think that there have been any particular differences in individuals that stand out for you at all?

**Sophie** – Yes, this is linked to the last section that I highlighted. I think that the biggest difference I think that I would say is in Lion. At the start of the year he was really difficult to control because his behavior was really difficult and he was always defiant. You must have noticed this. But philosophy lessons seem to bring out the best in him and to really re focus his energy from one where he wanted to be the class clown and impress his friends, to being one where he wanted to impress people by demonstrating his ability to say interesting things. It's like his peers and their attitudes in the philosophy sessions really helped to develop his maturity. I think this is what I mean. I highlighted this example of how he responded to a question now:

#### Section 5

**Lion** – *Well ... um, I mean like isn't it just as bad to know that you should do something cause something good will come of it but you don't do it then aren't you just as guilty as someone who is guilty if they didn't mean to do it. Ah I know what I mean but I just can't say it!*

**Giraffe** – *Yeah like I know what you is thinking like when ... I don't know I can't explain it but I knows what you mean.*

**Me** – *Can anyone think of an example to try to explain what Y28 has suggested?*

**Snail** – *Do you mean um well, do you mean that lets say for example there was someone who had nothing to eat and you didn't give them anything but you could have done, no that's not a good example. Alright then what about when what you were saying with the adverts before, you don't give any money then a child dies.*

**Sophie** – I really thought it was good then the way that the other children in the group supported him to come up with an answer. I don't think that would have happened when I first had the class because I think they would have just assumed that he was messing around because that is what they were used to, what they expected from him.

**Me** – Why do you think that Lion has changed?



**Sophie** – I think that he has realised that he doesn't need to be silly in class in order to get recognised by his peers. In fact I think that the others now like him more because he joins in and doesn't always want the lime light, it is as if he has learnt to get accolade in other ways, by being a part of trying to get answers through discussing things with others. I think that this has made a huge impact on him and his ability to succeed in school and to make friends. I really hope that he does not change when he goes into Year 8.

**Me** – Do you think that he will?

**Sophie** – I don't know really I hope not because I think that as a class the children have developed so much and have become a real community of learners but if they then have to go back to learning without being given the opportunities to question and to share their ideas in the same sort of way then they might become really frustrated and that might then make them start to act up and behave badly because they don't have any other outlet for their frustration. Or they might have learnt good skills now that they will carry forward. I think a lot depends on the teachers that teach them because they might not like it if the children give their opinions without them being necessarily asked for, this could then be a problem because it might be interpreted as rudeness. I hope not but I can see the potential for it happening.

**Me** – Where do you think that PwC could fit into a school curriculum most effectively?

**Sophie** – Well I think that actually my opinion on this has changed a lot. To start with when you first started talking about it with me I could see it fitting into PSE and maybe into literacy especially for oracy but now having seen it being done I think it is more about it just becoming part of the ethos of the class, if that makes sense. Once the children have learnt the skills, I don't think you actually need the circle, I think the children just learn to question each other and listen to each other and reason and treat each other with respect and this becomes just a part of way that everything is done, the way that the teacher treats the children and the way that they treat each other.

**Me** – You mention here about the way that young people might treat each other, and the way that the teacher might treat the young people I wonder if you think that there might be a difference in the way that the young people treat the teacher as well?

**Sophie** – Um, yes I think that there is a difference actually quite a big difference because as teachers I think that we think that we know most things, well I don't mean we know everything, but we know everything that we need to know about our own subjects to help the children to get their exams but actually when you have children saying things between them that make you as a teacher question your own ideas then that is quite exciting because then you don't feel like you have the monopoly anymore on what needs to be known. The problem is that although this is really exciting the children still need to know certain things for the exams and that there isn't really much time to go over or explore anything else so the sad thing is that although I think that there is so much potential in P4C I suppose like I was saying before, that there is not really time for it in school, if you want to do it properly and to see the real benefits. The curriculum is just too tight.

**Me** – Is there anything else that you wanted to discuss about the transcript or your experience of PwC?

**FT** – No I think that we have gone over everything that I wanted to discuss, thank you again for the opportunity to be a part of the project I have found it very interesting.

## Appendix 8 – Transcript of second focused enquiry with the 6 students

### Focus Group

Panda

Giraffe

Lion

Butterfly

Rabbit

Guinea Pig

**Me** – Thank you for agreeing to have a chat to me again and for spending some time looking at the transcript of our PwC enquiry. Were you able to find five sections of the dialogue that you wanted to talk about?

**Lion** – We chose the following bit first because we thought that it was really good the way we were helping each other out. [Reads the following section out loud]

### Section 1

**Guinea Pig** – *So are you saying that sometimes it is ok to kill people if it is going to lead to a happier life for other people?*

**Panda** – *Well, I don't like the thought of um anyone being killed but if you have to kill people, which you do in war, then it leads to the good side winning then I think that makes it um ...*

**Squirrel** – *justified?*

**Giraffe** – *Yeah like justified.*

**Me** – How do you think this is an example of someone helping someone else out?

**Lion** – Yeah like sometimes you know you are thinking of a word and like its right there in your mind but you just can't think of it and that's what happened here and then Panda helped by suggesting a word to help Squirrel. I think this was good 'cos it showed that Squirrel was listening to what Panda had to say which we know is an important thing to do in PwC and also the way that Squirrel didn't say like don't answer for me or whatever.

**Butterfly** – I think that we all help each other all the time as a group cause we know what it is like when you are trying to think and sometimes it is good to help each other think.

**Panda** – Definitely not because like some people in the class used to like be a bit mean and you might not want to say something because you knew that they would laugh at you or laugh at what you were saying so you probably wouldn't want to say something in case they did.

**Lion** – Um ... that's a bit true and I used to do that sometimes if I can tell you, but then you kind of get to realise that that's not very fair and also that you can learn stuff from other people when you listen to them and then it is worthwhile listening. I used to find lessons really boring and then I found that when you were talking about something that mattered like in P4C that you wanted to listen more and not mess around because then you could make yourself think bigger and better.

**Me** – You said here that you think that you listen better in your lessons now, is this in all lessons?

**Lion** – Ur yeah I think so, well mostly but when a lesson is really boring like when it is just a normal lesson then I try to listen but sometimes if there is not anything worth listening to, like you know you are not going to learn anything, then I can start to be a bit silly but only because I start to like get fed up.

**Panda** – Yeah some teachers are really boring and they don't let you get involved in the lesson.

**Giraffe** – Its like they can't trust you to say something useful like they think you are just going to mess around anyway so then you don't actually bother.

**Rabbit** – What gets me upset is when they shout at you when you don't get something and if you try to ask for help then they just say that you are being like naughty or something and then cause you don't want to get a detention then you don't say anything cause its just easier not to.

**Panda** – Not all teachers are like that though and I think that some of our teachers think that we are better as a class now and that they listen to us more.

**Me** – In what way do you think that some teachers listen to you more now?

**Butterfly** – Well like they sort of ...

**Lion** – [interrupts] they get us more and get that we have something useful to say.

**Panda** – Like they want us to say things now and they give us a chance, but only in some lessons I would say.

**Lion** – Yeah and only some teachers, some of them treat us the same and I don't think they will ever change cause they just like to do things their way and they like everyone to be quiet.

**Guinea Pig** – It's different with miss now cause she really listens to us and she doesn't make us just do all them boring lessons like the other classes have to but she sometimes says that we better not say that we haven't done them cause she says she is supposed to teach them. It is good now though cause she thinks they are boring too but like at the beginning of the year I think she thought they were quite good and that we would like them but they were always the same.

**Giraffe** – They always started with um a PowerPoint like and then you had to go and write about what you had learnt but you don't really learn much cause you just copy down what is on the board really, you just had to fit it in. So although we still always have to do what is on the board, sometimes the teacher like she, miss, does something slightly different to start the lesson first and then we look at the PowerPoint but it is important that we do the PowerPoint cause this is where we get the information from that we need to like pass or do stuff in the lesson. I don't know if I actually learn much from copying though, I just seem to forget it like really quickly.

**Panda** – It's much better now actually cause we discuss things all the time and when you talk about things I find that I really get them more and they make more sense and sort of stick in my mind. I think about things more for a longer time now and sometimes I talk about things with people at like break time and stuff and sometimes at home. When I told my mum I was doing philosophy though she thought I was getting like confused first cause she said I couldn't be doing it at school cause I was too young.

**Lion** – Yeah I agree, it is much better.

**Me** – Do you want to look at the next section that you chose?

**Panda** – Yeah cool. I'll read it. Um it was this bit. [reads it out loud]

### Section 2

***Sophie** – That's a really hard question because from an ethical perspective I think that killing is wrong full stop but if you know that there is a threat that you could be killed and that is part of your job which you have accepted, then actually this would make me think that it is worst to slaughter innocent people, you know people who are not soldiers.*

**Rabbit** – We wanted to talk about this bit because we thought it was interesting the way that Miss was very different the first time that you wrote down what we were all saying and this time. When we looked at the first one then all she did was tell us off but on this one she more joined in like shared her own thinking.

**Lion** – It's like she could see now that we don't need her to tell us off when we don't need her to cause um we can control our own behavior now we don't need her too. Its quite good to hear what she has to say too it is quite interesting but sometimes she can try to say too much and it means that we don't get much of a chance to say what we think sometimes too and that's a bit annoying then.

**Guinea Pig** - Yeah.

**Rabbit** – Yeah she is much nicer now and much fairer, like she seems to be interested in what we have to say.

**Lion** – Her lessons are more interesting cause she tries to teach us like you do now by giving us a chance to talk about everything rather than her just telling us what to do and how to do it. Sometimes she still does this though, but she is much better.

**Me** – Why do you think Sophie has changed?

**Lion** – Cause she can see that the way that you do stuff with us is much better because we are interested in it and we can think the way that we want to not just the way Miss wants us to think.

**Butterfly** – Its like we don't have to just try to find answers we can actually think about what we want to say. Its better that way. It's like we don't have to just try to find answers we can actually think about what we want to say. It's better that way. I don't think Miss liked it to start with cause after you used to do a lesson with us she was well grumpy in the next lesson but then she started to change and then she was much better.

**Me** – Why do you think she was this way?

**Lion** – I don't know really cos it was like she didn't like to maybe see that we liked doing it better your way and then I suppose that sometimes we messed around for her more and she probably didn't like it cause we didn't mess around when you took us for PwC. Well we did a little bit some of us to start with but not for long.

**Giraffe** – Yeah she didn't like that at all and she always said about why we were bad in her lessons and not when you did them, and that we were not fair to her like.

**Lion** – I don't think any of us meant to be naughty in her lessons and not in PwC but we just seemed to be more interested in PwC, and her lessons were boring and it is hard to stay behaving well when you are bored the whole lesson but yeah her lessons are a lot better now cause she actually asks us what we think.

**Giraffe** – Yeah but she does still shout sometimes and then I just can't be bothered to listen really cause its like she only shouts when she doesn't seem to know what she wants us to be doing.

**Lion** – Yeah its like she hasn't really thought about it and then she blames it on us and says it is our fault cause we are messing around. When she shouts at us though I just think whatever and then I think I am probably more cheeky to her but then I don't want to do that when you are taking us cause I actually want to listen to what everyone has to say cause we are all talking about things that we are actually interested in.

**Butterfly** – And even if you are not that interested in what we are talking about cause you can't always be interested in everything cause everyone is different, then it is still like good to listen to how the arguments start and how they go like you might get someone who thinks one thing to start with and then when they listen to other ideas from other people then they might change what they first thought. I really like this when this happens.

**Me** – Have you ever changed your mind about something?

**Lion** – Yeah I have sometimes because you can't always give reasons for what you first think and if you can't it means that you don't really know why you think that so you don't have a good reason to think that but if you hear other people that have got good reasons for what they think then this really helps you to think about your own ideas.

**Panda** – Yeah like when you think something but you don't really know why you think it, talking about it either makes you understand why you think something or hearing what other people think helps you to think something new instead.

**Lion** – Like when you do an agree/disagree line, we like doing them cause then you can actually show with your body when you change your mind and it is interesting to see who changes their mind.

**Butterfly** – Some people change their mind all the time.

**Lion** – But then you think that they are probably only doing it to be show offs like to just move around cause they can but that's not the idea really.

**Panda** – Yeah.

**Me** – It looks like you have highlighted a part of the agree/disagree line for your third section. Is that why you highlighted that part because you like the agree/disagree line?

**Panda** – Yeah we do like it but that's not really why we wanted that part, we picked it cause we thought it was interesting that you can think something but then when you get another example it makes you think again.

**Lion** – The bit we picked was this bit here. Do you want me to read it?

**Me** – That would be great, thank you.

[Lion reads the following extract out loud]

### Section 3

**Lion** – *But what if your mum and dad were part of the people that could be saved yeah and the person that was dying was someone that you didn't even know and you would never get to meet, I would definitely want that person to be killed to save my parents ... that's more important to save people you love than people you don't even know.*

**Koala** – *Um ... yeah I can see what you mean. I think um ... I think I would still say killing was wrong but like then I would have an emotional reason to want that one person to be killed, cause if I didn't know them at all then I wouldn't care about them like my mum and dad ... its really hard.*

**Butterfly** – Yeah like its really interesting this bit.

**Lion** – Like she thinks something and then she still thinks it but she can see that it would be hard, if it was your family. I think we all thought it was much harder to talk about when you were thinking that it is someone that you love, especially your family.

**Guinea Pig** – Yeah when it's your family it's hard.

**Lion** – Cause you don't want things to happen to your family but like she was saying that killing is wrong but then when we started talking on the agree/disagree line about if it was your family then she couldn't think the same way as strongly. We picked another bit next which was similar but it was more about how we could talk to each other a lot in this one without you or Miss having to ask us questions to help our thinking. Its like we could think on our own really. It's this bit. [Reads the following extract out loud]

### Section 4

**Panda** – *The one family would never be able to forgive the other family for what they did so ... no they can never be friends again.*

**Penguin** – *If that was my family then I would want the other family to suffer like I had suffered cause they ur deserve to for what they did.*

**Lion** – *Yeah but if you think about it wasn't really their fault cause they were made to do it cause of the war.*

**Monkey** – *They could have said no they wouldn't do it.*

***Koala** – Yeah but then they would have been killed for not doing what they were told and probably their family cause that's what bad people do in war so really they had no choice.*

**Panda** – I don't think that we would have talked like this with each other before because you just get used to the teacher like running the class and telling us what to think and then when we read this bit we were like quite pleased because we could see that we were discussing you know what we wanted to think about and not being told what ideas we were allowed to talk about. I like it this way but not all the teachers let you do this.

**Butterfly** – It was quite hard to talk about war cause some people got a bit upset, but well not upset cause it was really interesting but you could have got upset cause when you think about it at the same time that you think about your family then you are likely to get a bit sad ...

**Lion** – [interrupts] actually I think you might get mad too cause you don't want anyone to harm your family.

**Me** – Do you think that there are things that we should not discuss in P4C?

**Lion** – No, um I think it is good cause you don't treat us like babies and think that we couldn't talk about things. Yeah, even if some people might get upset by some things that doesn't mean that we shouldn't still talk about it cause if you understand something better then you might not get upset about it next time or at least you might understand it a bit better. Yeah like people shouldn't think that we can't talk about stuff just cause we are young.

**Butterfly**– Yeah, that annoys me when they do that.

**Lion** – I think most teachers do that cause they think we can't cope with things so they stop things before they get interesting.

**Me** – What do you mean that they stop things before they get interesting?

**Lion** – You know, like you might like ask a question about something and you really do want to know the answer but then they either think that you are like trying to be naughty and they tell you off or they say that you wouldn't understand or something like that ...

**Guinea pig** – [Interrupts] yeah and then you can't be bothered to ask again.

**Butterfly** – Yeah you soon know which teachers like questions and which don't and then you are different when you are with different teachers.

**Lion** – Yeah you learn how to wind the teachers up as well, some of them are really easy to wind up. I probably shouldn't say that you um cause you are a teacher.

**Me** – That's ok. Did you manage to pick another section?

**Guinea Pig** – We did, but we found it a bit hard to find 5 cause we thought we were just talking about the same things again. We did pick a bit though and we talked about that bit for a while didn't we?

**Panda** – Can I read it this time?

**Lion** – Yeah, go on.

[Panda reads the following extract out loud]

Section 5

**Seal** – *It does matter cause if you don't know you can't feel guilty!*

**Husky** – *Yeah but you shouldn't feel guilty just cause you don't know something you should feel guilty cause its wrong to ignore someone when you could have done something.*

**Sophie** – *But if you don't know then how can you feel guilty or should you feel guilty because there is a possibility that there is a negative outcome?*

**Rabbit** – *Yeah but remember when we talked about what we do and that it always does something to something else so everything we do like just walking down the street could end up hurting someone else so there is nothing you can do really or um you would just feel guilty like all the time.*

**Lion** – We liked this bit because we were talking about that cool philosophy stuff that we talked about ages ago about everything doing something to everything else. I really liked that idea.

**Butterfly** – Yeah we talked about it with like when you are walking down a path and then you come to a bit and you have to chose whether to go left or right and then you go one way but you will never know what would have happened if you went the other way.

**Lion** – Yeah then we started to talk about parallel universes, and that was well good cause I like all that stuff.

**Panda** – Yeah me too.

**Giraffe** – Yeah me too.

**Panda** – I like watching all the programs on space and that on the telly.

**Me** – Is there anything else that you wanted to discuss?

**YP28** – Yeah, I just wanted to say that I really don't like the Year 7 Curriculum but all the teachers say that it is great and they had a meeting with our parents and they told our parents how great it is and my mum came home and told me this and I said that I didn't like it.

**Me** – What don't you like about it?

**Lion** – Well mainly I don't like the lessons cause they are boring ...

**Panda** – Yeah!

**Lion** – Then we don't get to learn about anything that we want to learn about and they are always the same way of doing things and that makes them boring.



I would like to do more lessons like philosophy but then we wouldn't do much writing and you have to do lots of writing so that the teachers can mark it to see if you have learnt anything or not.

**Me** – Why do you think that you have to write something down to show what you can do?

**Lion** – Well.

**Panda** – Cause you just do I suppose cause um ... teachers can't mark what you say cause there is nowhere to mark it.

**Lion** – But I think teachers would like P4C cause they don't mark our books anyway or not for ages and then you don't care what they write cause they only put something like good anyway so you can't tell if you are really good or not.

**Giraffe** – Some teachers mark your books and give you targets and stuff.

**Butterfly** – Yeah but most don't.

**Me** – What do you think about PwC?

**Lion** – Yeah its well good, I really like it.

**Butterfly** - Yeah it makes you feel more grown up cause you get to discuss things that you are really interested in and aren't just decided by the teacher.

**Lion** – I um think that it is really good cause of the way that you get to hear what other people want to say and what Miss wants to say and then you can think about your own ideas again. I think I am a much better listener now that I have been doing P4C.

**Panda** – Me too.

**Butterfly** – It's like a whole new way of thinking that we haven't done before like a new way of working that makes your brain think in a different way. You want to do it then go and talk about it at home, like what you have been thinking about in class cause you want to see if like your mum thinks the same way as you or if they um think in a right different way to you.

**Me** – Does anyone else want to share anything else?

**Lion** – No.

[The other students also state that they have nothing further that they want to share or discuss]

## Appendix 9 transcript of second observation of Sophie teaching

### *Context*

Observation of Sophie teaching a 45 min lesson from the Year 7 Curriculum

Subject focus of lesson RE

Learning objective: To learn about why people follow a religion

The lesson plan states that the lesson should begin with the students reading the lessons learning objective from a PowerPoint slide. Sophie starts the lesson by asking the students to stand up in a circle in the corridor outside the classroom. Sophie asks them to share one thing that is important to them and why. She then asks all of the class to come back into the class and to sit down. The class is set out in rows facing the interactive whiteboard. The teacher's desk is in the same place with the computer on. The walls continue to be covered in a number of posters, the same as before. However, there is also a board with post it notes on with a title that says 'What do I want to know more about?' The post it notes contain questions related to the topics that they have been covering in class. There is also a large display in the classroom with students' work displayed on it – there is a title that says 'Work we are Proud of'.

**Sophie** – [Sophie is sitting on the side of one of the student tables] Ok, shh is everyone ready? [She pauses for approximately 2 seconds, everyone has stopped talking by this point and is facing forward] Right let's get going. Can anyone suggest why they think I asked us to start our lesson by sharing what we thought was important to us and explaining our reasons? [16 students put their hands up]

**Sophie** – Ok what do you think Bear?

**Bear** – Well we must be thinking about what is important to people, maybe as it is an RE lesson we are thinking about what is important to people in their lives as part of their um religious beliefs.

**Gorilla** – Yeah and I bet you probably wanted us to think of reasons for why we felt things were important to us that we could empathise with people from religions that have things that are important to them but it might be different to what we think is important.

**Wolf** – Well it doesn't really matter what it is, it's just important that people have things that are important to them because that is what gives them a sort of motivation to get on with things. It's like when you believe in something like you're ... I don't know you believe that you can get a good job if you work hard at school then you are more likely to work hard because you believe that it is important and it will make your life better. But if you don't think that it will get you a good job then um you might not see the point of school and just do what you have to and like mitch and that.

**Gorilla** – Yeah I agree, and in religion it is probably like your God that you believe in and that gives you what you need to do to keep doing things and keep working hard because you believe in the God and you know that's what the God wants you to do to live a sort of good religious life.

**Sophie** – So what do you think about the learning objective on the board, 'To learn about why people follow a religion' do you think that fits with what you have been saying?

Don't forget to put your hand up so that everyone gets a chance. Um ... Wolf, what do you think?

**Wolf** – Yeah cause you might believe in a god because it is important to you or maybe you start believing in a god because you don't have much else in your life and then it becomes important to you because it gives you a purpose and then like you might see it as more important, I don't really know which comes first or if it matters.

**Sophie** – what do people think, does it matter? That is an interesting point I think. Maybe turn to the person next to you or behind you and have a chat to them about which comes first following a religion or belief in a god, is that what you meant Wolf?

**Wolf** – Yes.

**Sophie** – I really think that you have made a really interesting point there. Ok everyone, what do you think? Have a chat between you.

[The students seem to all be on task, discussing the question that has been asked. I can hear a few comments from where I am sitting including: 'Yeah but I think some people are made to be a part of a religion because their parents make them so they probably just say that they are part of the religion and that they want to pray to the god that they are supposed to but they don't really want to', 'I don't think anyone really believes in a god, they might think they do but its cause they don't have enough belief in themselves and then they need someone to look after them a bit like a parent but when you are an adult', 'I think having a god must be comforting like someone to back you up when you don't know what to do or to give you the answers.' The students are left to discuss the questions for just under 3 minutes, during this time Sophie sits with 2 different pairs and listens to what they have to say. She does not ask either pair any questions or make any comments. Just before she tries to get the students' attention she walks back to the student table she had sat on before and sits on it again]

**Sophie** – What do you think? Shhh. Ready? Anyone want to share their ideas? Hands up. [All of the students apart from 3 put up their hands] I don't know who to chose there are so many of you that look really keen to share your ideas. Um, lets have Shark – what do you think?

**Shark** – Well miss we were saying that like when you believe in something that if it works out to be good then you probably believe in it more so that when you start to follow a religion that you maybe don't know how much you will end up believing in it.

**Giraffe** – [Shark's partner] Yeah like we said that sometimes you just have a religion because you just have it cause like maybe your parents have it too and you just don't have any choice but there is a difference between having a religion and actually believing in a god.

**Sophie** – Very interesting, I think I agree with you that there is a difference between belonging to a religion and really believing in it – very interesting, well done. Anyone else want to share what they thought or shall we move onto the second slide? Any one want to put their hand up?

[12 students put up their hand]

**Sophie** – Ok, what did you want to share Tiger?

**Tiger** - Well we were saying that we think that you get belief in a god first because why would you go to like church and that and change everything you eat like the Muslims do and the Jews if you didn't really believe in something worth giving up the things you like first.

**Snail** – Yeah, I think I agree because its like if you don't think you are going to get something out of it like going to heaven then why would you bother?

**Sophie** – So has there always got to be something in it for people to want to do something?

**Snail** – Yeah ... suppose because why would you do it otherwise? You know what I mean ... its not like you would train for a race, like a running race, and then not actually run it would you? That would be pointless, all that effort and like eating good food and then nothing at the end um, I just don't think that anyone would do that.

**Lion** – Yeah but it depends what you mean when you say that you have to get something out of it ur I mean well you don't have to have a prize for something to make you feel happy; you could maybe, I don't know, paint a picture and then be happy because you like the picture and maybe that's like believing in a god ... you know you might not get something from it but actually it just makes you feel calm when you pray and that.

**Sophie** – This is a very interesting discussion, well done everyone but we better get on or we won't get through the lesson. So lets look at slide 2. [Sophie stands up and walks behind her desk and clicks the mouse, the whiteboard now shows the second slide. Sophie walks back to the student table and sits down again. The PP now displays pictures of a woman in a burka, a Sikh man and a Christian minister. There is a question underneath that says 'What do these people believe? Discuss]

**Sophie** – Let's change the question slightly so that it reads 'why' do these people believe in a religion? What do you think? Maybe these people all believe for different reasons. Any thoughts? Shh! [Some students have started to talk, I cannot hear if they are talking about the picture or about something else] Come on let's focus, any ideas or thoughts? [Sophie stands up and walks over to a flipchart board. She turns over three pages on a flipchart pad that have been written on before she comes to a blank page and then she write 'Why?' at the top of the page] So any ideas? Hands up, shh there is a lot of talking lets try to focus. [Everyone stops talking and looks at Sophie. Ok, well any thoughts? Hands up, well done. [9 students put their hands up] Um, ok Bear what do you think?

**Bear** – Well its like we said before miss that its like people believe in things cause it gives them something to sort of follow I suppose like a purpose or having a way of life a way to be. [A few other students nod. Sophie writes on the flipchart paper 2 bullet points: something to follow, and something to believe in]

**Sophie** – Ok, does anyone think that there are other reasons why people might follow a religion or believe in a religion? [She does not ask for hands up but selects a student] Cat you have been quiet in today's lesson, what do you think?

**Cat** – Um ... I don't really know miss, I think you sort of just believe in something if you are told to, maybe cause you don't know how to say no, maybe like if you live in a country where you can't chose if you want a religion or not.

**Sophie** – So you think that some people are forced to be a part of a religion?

**Wolf** – Yeah maybe some people are forced and some people maybe don't know that they have a choice or they worry that if they leave that their family won't bother with them no more like that programme about those Armish people that dis their kids if they chose to be not Armish anymore.

**Sophie** – This is all very interesting, I am really enjoying hearing your ideas. Let's take some more time to discuss this in more detail as I can see that many of you have lots to say. Ok if you get yourselves into small groups but try not to make too much mess with the chairs if you move around, there is another class in straight after us.

[The students discuss in small groups of their choosing from between 2 and 5. They discuss their ideas for just under 8 minutes; during this time Sophie moves around the groups listening and asking the students questions. In the discussions that I can hear the students remain on task throughout. I can hear comments being made that include 'I think the Muslim woman is probably forced to be a Muslim because that's what happens in those types of countries' with reply from another student, 'Yeah but there are loads of Muslims in rich countries too like America, I watched a documentary on it so they are not forced into it']

**Sophie** – Right we need to get going now, there is not enough time to share ideas with other groups I am afraid because we have spent too much time discussing our ideas so we need to get going. Ok if you can give the books out as quickly as possible and if everyone else can look at the whiteboard, come on hurry up everyone turn your seats around or you won't be able to see, come on. [All of the students turn their chairs around, some of them have moved them to face the other way in order to talk to people that were sat behind them. Sophie moves to the computer and sits down, and she clicks the mouse so that the PP moves onto the next slide. She reads a list of instructions that are displayed on the next slide of the PP out loud So we need to work in pairs to create a checklist of 10 reasons why we think people believe. If you write them in a list in your books under the learning objective, you can either use numbers or bullet points but make sure that these go into the margin. You have about 25 minutes to do this task and then if we have time some of you can come out to the front and share your lists. Ok if you need any help I will be moving around each group and talking to you. You both need to write the list and they need to be the same really, although, I suppose, if you have slightly different ideas then they might be slightly different but they should really be the same. Ok has everyone got their books? [A few students shout out that they have not got their books]. Ok come on Squirrel a bit quicker, everyone else should be starting that already has their books, no excuses; I am really looking forward to seeing all of your lists.