UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

Possibilities for patchwork eportfolios? Critical dialogues and reflexivity as strategic acts of interruption

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No part of this project has been previously presented for examination to this or any other institution.

Signed:

Abstract

As a stratified social space Higher Education's linguistic 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1991) or 'everyday use' of literacy valorises and legitimates essayist literacy and its monologic addressivity, a discursive arena where, "it is the tutor's voice that predominates, determining what the task is and how it should be done" (Lillis 2001, p.75) with an emphasis upon evaluation of text as finished product.

Writing within dialogic practices of addressivity, where tutor and student writers, "engage in the construction of text as meaning making in progress" (Lillis 2001, p.44) illustrates the *fabric*ation of literacies and of reflective stories where teacher identity may be seen "as a gradual 'coming to know'" (Winter 2003, p.120) dependent in part upon social assembly and conversations.

Such infidelity to monologicism demands a dynamic dialogic forum such as that supported by an electronic portfolio as a strategic act of interruption of essayist norms. The eportfolio system, pebblePAD, was piloted with a group of 15 PGCE (PCE) students in 2004-5. The system was used for teaching, learning and assessment and as a data collection tool. The data was generated from individual and shared artefacts: audits, journals, critical incident sharing, online questionnaires and from summative reflective assignments. The reflective writing within the emergent community of practice provide evidence of Lave and Wenger's (1991, p.53) model which urges us to remember that, "learning involves the construction of identities" and that the conceptual bridge that peripheral participation in a community offers has the potential to allow us to take "a decentred view of master-apprenticeship relations."

The nurturing and enabling of such a community of practice within a professional course such as the PGCE has the potential to create politicised and engaged reflective writers and practitioners who view risk and uncertainty as positive factors who "take a decentred view of the master-apprentice…(leading) to an understanding that mastery resides not in the master but in the organization of the community of practice of which the master is part" (Lave & Wenger 1991, p.94).

Framing statement

Feminist methodologies are uneasy with the "dominant mode of representation within the social sciences in general" (MacLure 2003, p.99) and the boundaries between the researche/r/d. The feminist project of "freeing the 'voice' of the subject and the politics of emancipation which this carries" (ibid, p.100) has encouraged research which prioritises the vernacular, storytelling, narrative and journals and field methods such as "conversational interview styles, and forms of analysis and interpretation that intentionally curtail the authority of the academic researcher, such as self-reflexivity, collaborative interpretation or co-writing" (ibid, p.100).

The theoretical frameworks for this study draw upon the "hermeneutic backdrop" (Brown & Jones 2001, p.33) of post structuralism and feminism whereby, "absolute understandings of any individual piece of writing are not sought but rather each successive piece added modifies the flavour of the growing collection" (Brown & Jones 2001, p.36). In "perform(ing) what it announces" (Lather 1991, p.11) this dissertation will adopt a self-conscious use of quotations which requires the reader to "come back to the text again and again: (s)he must brood on it" (Bannett 1989, p.9) thereby demanding active participation of the reader in the construction of meaning (ibid p.8).

This dissertation recognises that "(e)ducational research is, unavoidably, a rhetorical affair. Like any other texts, research texts – reports, articles, instruments – are 'fabrications'" (MacLure 2003, p.80). The construction of this research text seeks to problematise the divisions and boundaries of paradigms which separate data and theory. Although adopting the convention of chapters the borderlines will be blurred and "a frame may be framed by what it appears to frame" (Derrida 1992, p.12).

Contents

Chapter 1 – Introduction

> "The opening of a space …a figure for deconstruction… a paradox that is also a denial of the spaces that insulate disciplines and fields from one another…We want to …practise this kind of infidelity to educational research in the hope of opening up connections and questions that are hard to see from within the space that marks its usual territories." Stronach and MacLure (1997, p.4)

> We must shift the role of critical intellectuals *from* being universalising spokespersons to acting as cultural workers whose task is to take away the barriers that prevent people from speaking for themselves.
>
> Apple (1991, p.ix)

Out came Wangero with two quilts. They had been pieced together by Grandma Dee and then Big Dee and me hung them on the quilt frames on the front porch and quilted them…In both of them were scraps of dresses Grandma Dee had worn fifty and more years ago. Bits and pieces of Grandpa Jarrell's Paisley shirts. And one tiny faded blue piece, about the size of a penny matchbox, that was from Great Grandpa Ezra's uniform that he wore in the Civil War.

"Maggie can't appreciate these quilts…she'd probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use."

"I reckon she would," I said. "God knows I been saving 'em for long enough with nobody using them. I hope she will."

"But they are priceless…Maggie would put them on the bed and in five years they'd be in rags."

"Well," I said stumped. "What would *you* do with them? "

"Hang them," she said. As if it was the only thing you could do with quilts.

Everyday Use , In Love and Trouble , Alice Walker 1984

All of our discourses are "politically uninnocent." Apple (1991, p.vii)

The aesthetic tensions within Alice Walker's characters' motivations in the short story, *Everyday Use*, beautifully illuminate the dangers of reifying and fetishising our research subjects within our own patchwork academic writing. In this short story first published in 1973 Maggie and Dee are sisters. Dee was the successful child who left her mother and sister for a new life and identity. She returned as Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo with her Polaroid camera to 'enslave' and capture her authentic heritage, including the quilts, whereas Maggie stayed at home with her mother. Wangero's cultural nationalism as characterised by Walker may be seen to represent the 'vulgarization of black culture' (Juncker & Juncker 1984, p.128).

However, as Christian (1994) identifies, Wangero was also the African name given to Walker on her visits to East Africa. Walker's 'serious playfulness' with the subject demonstrates her inside/outside relationship with the subject(s) of her writing as she states in an essay on writing, (Walker 1970, p.17) "what the black Southern writer inherits as a natural right is a sense of *community*". Walker's articulation of the problems of representation demand reflexive readings as she urges the writer/storyteller to, "fearlessly pull out of ourselves" (Walker 1974, p.237). This research narrative seeks to tell stories from the field whilst acknowledging that such attempts at self-reflexivity unmask "complex political/ideological agendas in our writing" (Richardson 1994, p.523).

 As a stratified social space Higher Education's linguistic 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1991) or 'everyday use' of literacy valorises and legitimates essayist literacy and its monologic addressivity, a discursive arena where, "it is the tutor's voice that predominates, determining what the task is and how it should be done" (Lillis 2001, p.75) with an emphasis upon evaluation of text as finished product.

How can patchwork writing support reflective development and academic writing?

Like Walker's quilts, framed and secured on the wall as object of the academic 'gaze', the essay, and dissertation, as a complete literacy artefact and decontextualised essay writing skills ideologically reinforce discursive practices which seek to maintain existing power relations. Writing within dialogic practices of addressivity, where tutor and student writers, "engage in the construction of text as meaning making in progress" (Lillis 2001, p.44) such as that offered by a patchwork framework, stretches and illustrates the *fabric*ation of literacies and of reflective stories. Borrowing from Winter's (1999, 2003) patchwork text writing format, learning and reflection, like teaching practice, are recognised "as a gradual 'coming to know'" (Winter 2003, p.120) dependent in part upon social assembly and conversations:

> Patchwork texts do have a linear development not unlike that of a narrative or an argument or a report, but they have to be read in a slightly different way, because they also have a 'radial' structure, not just moving forwards but working outwards from an initial point, assembling and editing together a variety of contrasting material, surveying a circular horizon of meaning in different directions. In other words, each piece makes its own point, as well as contributing to the whole, and the writers commentaries are just that – commentaries: even when they are placed at the end they don't (necessarily or fully) form a conclusion and sum up everything which has gone before. (Winter 1999, p.68)

Patchwork texts build over time with an emphasis upon the process of writing rather than the reification of the finished product. My self-conscious radial *text*ual writing and teaching practice(s) within a teaching and learning environment such as an eportfolio and within this dissertation seek to operate as an interrupter strategy suspicious of academic literacies and discourses.

As teaching mentor for new teachers on the PGCE in Post Compulsory Education I am privileged to share their developing teaching confidence, their challenges and successes, their weekly on-line journals and their evolving eportfolios. This role offers me the opportunity to describe myself as mentor as I have a meaningful one-to-one relationship with all members of the group. One of the greatest challenges for the teaching mentor is the facilitation of meaningful reflection – reflection that is critical and dialogic, reflection that questions the self and the construction of multiple selves, and reflection that engages within a context of wider social injustices – some of which are never solvable by a teacher.

Professional reflective practice, at the centre of teacher education programmes in the Post Compulsory Sector, is a fiercely contested and theorised activity that is incredibly hard to teach how to *do.* Students undertaking a PGCE are required to keep a journal but were not required previously to submit this writing ongoing to their tutor. As the journal is not summatively assessed its value to the student and for reflective purposes may be questioned. Formal assessment of reflection upon practice within the PGCE takes the form of essayist literacy. However, reflection as an academic discourse may be more usefully explored as a live, relevant and dynamic discursive activity (process) rather than as a static written given (product).

My approach has been to shift to a spiralling and ever expanding process model of reflection facilitated in dialogue, spoken and written, with peers and myself. As Brookfield and Preskill (1999) stress, the use of this conversational metaphor to encourage critical reflection is by its very nature at times unpredictable, messy and challenging. By straining the seams of traditional academic literacies, opportunities to challenge outcome-based paradigms emerge. The education of new teachers for the Post Compulsory Sector should encourage messy, divergent and challenging

reflection that is engaged with the social and political realities of teaching. It is vital that engaged and critical *voices* be nurtured and encouraged through dialogue and self-disclosures.

The pursuit of a critically engaged voice involves, as Rorty identifies, a 'facing up to' the "contingency of (our) most central beliefs and desires" (Rorty 1989, p.xv). Freire (1972) insisted that dialoguers immerse themselves in temporality, in risk taking as transformation for the establishment of trust. In working with those silenced and made invisible within hierarchical discourses, Freire's (1972, pp.76-7) concern was to develop consciousness and a voice:

> no one can say a true word alone – nor can he say it *for* another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words…dialogue is thus an existential necessity. And since dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of 'depositing' ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be 'consumed' by the discussants.

Such infidelity to monologicism demands a dynamic dialogic forum such as that supported by an electronic portfolio as a strategic act of interruption of essayist norms.

(e)portfolio as cultural space

Teacher Education for the Post Compulsory Sector driven by standards such as FENTO (Further Education National Training Organisation) and SVUK (Standards Verification UK), has long been committed to promoting and embedding reflective practice and action planning for professional development and is therefore positioned to engage reflexively with the PDP community and with traditional assessment mechanisms. The standard, summatively assessed, paper-based 'teaching-

practice portfolio' may be viewed as a static assessment product whose shelf life is limited and it may be argued of little relevance to the new or recently qualified teacher following its compilation. Adopting a learning platform, such as an eportfolio which encourages iterative 'patches' of writing building to a larger summative piece and reflection whose emphasis is upon dialogue (Winter, 2003) offers the opportunity to explore the use of the eportfolio as a social practice and situated literacy (Street, 1995). The use of a patchwork approach to writing development within the eportfolio space offers unlimited peer and tutor 'talkback' (Lillis, 2001) spaces as opposed to institutional summative feedback 'spaces for telling'. Eportfolio dialogue is not a one-off, its discursive features are forward looking and exploratory and analysis of its use may expose the hidden practices of the process-making nature of academic texts and literacies.

This dissertation is concerned to narrate the emergent communities' dialogic and multilogic practices as patchwork literacies in ways that illustrate their gaps and openings as exciting contestations to rigidly defined, isolated and anxious academic literacy practices and communities. Bayne's (2004) digital adaptation of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) descriptors of cultural spaces as striated (closed, sedentary, mapped, gridded and bordered) or smooth (open, nomadic and a space of becoming) offers a reading of eportfolio literacies as interactive border crossings, weavings and negotiations. As an academic writer the tensions within my own work are made evident in the shift from the digital to the page. In the pursuit of a representation and reading of smooth spaces I am confined to a striated, normalising and prescriptive literacy acknowledged and rewarded by my peers. As Bayne (2004) identifies, it is the interaction of the smooth and striated (writing) spaces, which work to defamiliarize the writer and reader. The non-essayist writer is free to wander informally within the eportfolio space, which is of course itself paradoxically a striated, rigid product of technology and an academic gated community.

Much of the current work around eportfolio has developed from the work of users of more traditional (and heavier) paper portfolios in professional vocational programmes such as teacher education and the health-related professions. However, many eportfolio systems place heavy emphasis on the product of eportfolio; that is a digital record of competencies and achievements, rather than supporting and developing the process of learning and reflection on that learning.

To summarise, this research explores the extent to which a PGCE PCE teaching community has developed an approach to the process and product of eportfolio which fulfils the outcomes required by external professional bodies such as FENTO, SVUK and OfSTED (Office for Standards in Education) whilst harnessing the technology's potential for promoting collaboration and discursive reflection within an electronic community. This research narrative will consider the use of an eportfolio learning landscape as a driver for critically reflective thinking and action planning narratives linked to the development of professional practice with a pilot group of 15 students in the School of Education at the University of Wolverhampton. It will go on to report on this teaching community's response to the dialogue opportunities of eportfolio and the extent to which the technology supports the creation of embodied critically reflective audiences. It is hoped that this research will contribute to developing a vocabulary; a philosophy; a theory, and a practice of eportfolio literacies.

Why elearning and why now?
Policy

The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education's (NCIHE) 1997 report, *Higher Education in the Learning Society*, more commonly referred to as the Dearing Report, recommended, over the medium term, the introduction of HE Progress Files (PF) to standardise the recording and transcription of student

achievement. The report also recommended that the file contain a means by which individual students could monitor, build and reflect upon their personal development (PDP). Within the electronic report's discussion of the wider context in section 20 it identified that, "(n)ew technology is changing the way information is stored and transmitted. This has implications both for the skills which higher education needs to develop students, and for the way in which it is delivered" (NCIHE, 1997). Within its appendix, *New Approaches to Teaching*, the report also identified that if Widening Participation agendas and targets were to be met HE must shift its teaching and learning focus. The dual drivers of providing a more personalised learning experience and engaging with new technologies as teaching and learning tools provided the arena for the development of eportfolios.

The responsibility for the implementation of the above recommendations was shared by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) now the Universities UK, the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP), the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) now part of the Higher Education Academy (Beetham 2005, p.25). In 2000 the QAA, in collaboration with CVCP, SCOP, and the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals (CoSHEP), following Dearing, (1997) issued a Policy Statement on PF and PDP (QAA, 2000) stating that by 2002/3 a student should receive as part of their Personal File, "(t)he programme transcript (which) should reflect the complete record of learning and achievement. It should include information on what was studied, what was successfully completed and what was not successfully completed (QAA, 2000).

PDP, "a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and / or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development" (QAA, 2000) was viewed as a more problematic and long-term challenge for HEIs who were initially given a five year

lead in period to implement and embed PDP. PDP was projected to help HE students become more confident and self-directed learners able to understand, articulate and evaluate their learning and skill development thereby encouraging a positive attitude toward learning throughout life (QAA, 2000).

The discourses underpinning these policy drivers ostensibly position and produce the HE student within a continuum of autonomous learning orientated to globalised competition and contribution. Lifelong learning as rhetorical driver constitutes the HE learner as purposeful human capital with increasing self responsibility for achievement with individual action decontextualised from structural and social inequalities (Clegg 2004, p.289). Simultaneously, there was also keen emphasis upon the role of the HE teacher in the creation of this autonomous learner. Jackson's (2001) working paper strongly linked the Progress File and PDP to the processes of learning and teaching and identified that, as an activity PDP would be most effective when it was a mainstream embedded activity linked to programme outcomes, valued by both tutors and students with tangible short and long-term benefits.

Between 2001 and 2002 LTSN produced a series of *Guides for Busy Academics* whose focus was the implementation and embedding of PDP. Clegg (2004, p.290) urged practitioners to engage critically with the shift within PDP discourses within these guides during this period as the focus shifted from the personal to "meta-discourses of learning to learn or employability" evoking Ecclestone's (1996) warning of the ubiquitous use of the mantras of reflection in HE.

The compulsory requirement for evidence of PDP from 2005 in combination with an intense period of emphasis upon elearning in educational strategy and policy drove forward the HEFCE Strategy for e-learning (2005) and the DfES's vision in *Harnessing Technology* (2005) of "a personal online learning space". HEFCE's at times cautious handling of the terms 'elearning' and 'embedding' betrays the heated

debates around the contested and contentious terms in the struggle to "normalise e-learning" (HEFCE 2005, p.4) within HE processes. HEFCE's strategy (2005, p.5) acknowledges that during the years 2000-5 elearning had suffered from an overt focus upon technology per se rather than upon the experience of learning and that future strategy and activity should support the diversity of "the use of technologies in <u>learning</u> opportunities". Online teaching and learning emerged as pivotal government objectives with a focus upon learning, research and innovation, which began with the student experience rather than the technology (2005, p.6). Richardson and Ward's review (2005, p.7) viewed this impetus as, "a more joined-up approach to learner support…particularly across transitions".

The following chapters will consider if the use of an eportfolio learning platform might simultaneously support reflective development in new teachers whilst satisfying government elearning initiatives and strategies.

Research Questions

How can the use of eportfolios foster reflective approaches to learning on a teacher education programme?

- ❖ What functions within the eportfolio could enhance and support this?
- ❖ What is the role of dialogue?

What are learner perceptions and attitudes towards eportfolio and patchworking?

- ❖ What are students' techno fears and beliefs?
- ❖ What evidence is there of a growing community of practice?

What can we learn from the use of eportfolio in teacher education?

- ❖ Is the eportfolio a developmental tool or fad?
- ❖ How can we embed lessons learned in our programmes?

Critical reflection stands against the capitalistic values that turn higher education into a competitive market place, where the speed at which students can be brought into and moved through the system is a measure of success. (Brookfield 1995, p.xvi)

Effective reflective practice can be like looking for Piglet: the more you look for it the more it seems not to be there; and afterwards it is hard to describe why it was so absorbing and life-changing – because the insights and inevitable changes they necessitate seem so obvious. (Bolton 2001, p.1)

Reflective practice is a research process in which the fruits of reflection are used to challenge and reconstruct individual and collective teacher action.
(Ghaye & Ghaye 2001, p.5)

Action
Reflection $\Big\}$ word = work = praxis
Sacrifice of action = verbalism
Sacrifice of reflection = activism
(Freire 1972, p.75)

Reflection is difficult
(Clegg 2004, p.292)

Leading on from the research questions and the tensions discussed in chapter 1, this chapter will focus upon current eportfolio agendas and how reflection may be supported through a growing community of practice. The burgeoning agendas for higher education are driven by the PF and PDP agenda, and, as Richardson and Ward (2005) identify the concept of reflective practice. PDP and eportfolio have become entangled, I would argue, quite unproblematically.

Why eportfolio?
What are portfolios and how are eportfolios similar/different?

Situating portfolios

> When teachers began developing portfolios over a decade ago, we knew what we were about – with process writing and collaborative pedagogies and, not least, portfolios – was pretty ambitious; it was, in fact, nothing short of changing the face of American education.
> (Yancey & Weiser 1997, p.1)

In Britain, vocational and professional programmes have utilised the portfolio structure as a learning, assessment and presentation mechanism for several decades. It is not incidental that the function of portfolios often begins from the assumption that it is an organisation rather than learning system. Baume (2001, p.6) answering, 'What are portfolios for?' listed: filing, learning, assessment and employment. Later Baume (2003, pp.3-6) identified the repository, development, assessment and presentation functions. Interestingly his developmental portfolio was conceptualised as, "a compost heap…something refined over time, enriched by addition, reduction and turning over " (1999, 2003 p.4). Baume's (2003, p.7) focus on the benefit of this paper format for the student is weighted in favour of the developmental portfolio as a valuable collation activity in which feedback from colleagues and tutors plays a major part. In 2003 Baume could only envisage an electronic portfolio as a digital repository allowing greater storage and access opportunities within virtual and managed learning environments.

However, a wider discussion of the possibilities of electronic portfolios was growing despite there being no clear or shared understanding or definition of what an electronic portfolio actually was. The 2003 White Paper, The Future of Higher Education, explicitly named the benefit of eportfolios to university admissions offices as they could offer a comprehensive picture of the abilities and experience of school leavers. The Burgess Report, Report of the Scoping Group on Measuring, and

Recording Student Achievement in HE (2004, p.22) for Universities UK envisaged that all HE students should have an electronic personal portfolio in the medium term, "perhaps by 2008, the UK HE sector should aim to work towards a more detailed, electronic portfolio model". The Tomlinson Group's DfES Final Report of the Working Group on 14-19 Reform (2004) identified the need for transferable transcripts and the 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper (2005) called for closer links between educational providers and the workplace utilising elearning. The emphasis within these documents was upon the repository and presentation roles of the electronic portfolio. Technology has simply replaced paper collation and the ring binder file.

It does not seem to be incidental that the 2005 deadline for PDP facilitated a collapse and I would argue misunderstanding of the terms and roles of PF, PDP and eportfolio.

> The term portfolio as used in the context of UK HE has a range of meanings. Here we are using it to describe a collection (or archive) of reflective writing and associated evidence, which documents learning and which a learner may draw upon to represent her/his
> learning and achievements, and on the basis of which may plan and set targets. A portfolio in this sense therefore encompasses the concept of records associated with personal development planning (PDP), including personal development records (PDRs) that may contribute to the HE Progress File…and extends beyond that, to incorporate artefacts which may evidence claims made in PDRs. Many institutions are choosing to implement PDP (and to encourage learners to manage their PDRs) through electronic means, often linking this to the term e-portfolio. (Ward and Richardson 2005, p.1)

In a recent review Richardson and Ward (2005, p.4) acknowledged that within their own review of eportfolio products "the terms eportfolio, PDP and Progress Files are

used interchangeably". It would seem that this collapsing of process and product is not uncommon, as will be expanded upon.

Yancey & Weiser's (1997) earlier quote offers a stark reminder of how far behind the English education system may be in its conceptualisation of the portfolio, whether paper or electronic. Barrett's work offers a reading of the conflicting developments within eportfolio development and use and suggests that unless the *users* of the technology recognise the conflicting and competing purposes of eportfolio its very value for learning may be subverted (Barrett & Carney 2005, p.1). Richardson and Ward's (2005, p.34) first comprehensive review of current software applications within the UK identified the "high level of representation of support for PDP" within eportfolio products as eportfolio has evolved from PDP practice. However the thrust of the recommendations still concerned technological issues such as interoperability, usability compliance and data protection rather than the learning and teaching experience despite the recognition that "eportfolio has become a buzz word associated with reflective practice" (Richardson and Ward's 2005, p.11). Hence much of the discussion at conference and peer review level has been upon the technical system and/or software used rather than the experience of the system as lived and experienced by teachers and students.

Reiterating Clegg's (2004, p.287) warnings of "untheorized accounts of PDP and the need for greater critical engagement with the conditions …and limitations of reflection", Barrett and Carney (2005, p.2) remind us of the philosophical accountability when balancing measurements of performance, for high stakes such as grades or employability, and portfolios to foster growth, "that is truly a story of learning, is owned by the learner, structured by the learner, and told in the learner's own voice (literally and rhetorically)" (Barrett and Carney 2005, p.2). Chapters two and four will return in detail to the inherent contradiction of reflective eportfolios.

The University of Wolverhampton's response

The University of Wolverhampton's response to the PF and PDP agenda and recommendation 20 of the Dearing Report was to adopt a holistic view and to undertake a project to design and develop a custom-built electronic file or eportfolio as there were "no suitable 'off the shelf' software packages available" (Lawton 2004, p.2) that met the needs of the University. Linked to the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy 2004, the electronic PACE (Personal, Academic, Careers, Employability) pilot followed a brief that it should provide a portal to aid student access to a variety of documents/texts/activities and that it should have a 'funky' interface encouraging interaction (Sutherland 2004). This notion of an engaging design led to the use of Macromedia Flash for the user interface. Sunderland's defence of this system above 'off the shelf' software packages was its potential for asset sharing and commentary, "for telling myriad stories to diverse audiences…where the audience is by invitation only".

The design and system logic for PACE was based around experiences or events. The original system had six generic input/asset types loosely grouped as: experience, action plan, thought, achievement, ability and meeting which are visually displayed as pebbles in the Flash screen. Upon 'entering' the pebble the student is guided through the recording of the event via writing frames. The design of the eportfolio system allows for future additions and revisions and for multiple share options. An asset may be shared with view only permissions, comment, copy or collaborate. These assets are private to the student within their own repository space until they choose to share with others. Richardson and Ward (2005, p.36) were clearly critical of other systems, which allowed learners little control over the information stored or the possibility for future access. It is interesting to note that the PACE system was

not included in Richardson and Ward's (2005) survey which explored twelve eportfolio products and offers the first definitive review of the software available.

In early evaluations Sunderland was problematising the notion inherent in the name of the product, PACE (Personal, Academic, Careers, Employability) in stating that, "the philosophy supports the recording of 'events' from all facets of an individual's life…the extent to which a user records inputs in one category is likely to be characterised by the support and encouragement of partisan 'influencers'" (O'Donoghue and Sutherland 2004, p.1). As the eportfolio entered its second year it did so with a new name, pebblePAD, and several new 'skins', or interfaces, an interesting shift from prescribed categories of the earlier model.

It could be argued that the earlier categorisation, PACE, could fall into the dangerous constructions of identities of students linked only to the traditional stakeholder interest. All pursuit within the earlier version can be seen to echo Clegg's warnings for PDP if the system was adopted prescriptively. The PACE pilot 2004 involved cohorts of students from the Schools of Computing, Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences, Applied Sciences and Education. Other stakeholders included the Careers Department, the Graduate School, the Student's Union, IT Services, Registry and the Centre for Learning and Teaching. (CeLT) The eportfolio was introduced to my tutor group as a concept at induction. As the narrative unfolds within this dissertation early frustrations will emerge. As the PGCE is a professional programme supported by a DfES bursary it is vital that the student's assessment schedule is adhered to with the 9 months of the programme. Herein lies the first tension when navigating process/product borders as both teacher and researcher, for the eportfolio as *process* to support the development of learning and reflective practice was constrained by the nature of involvement in a pilot. In reality the software *product* was still in development and my students and I were effectively guinea pigs.

However, this research narrative drawing upon the 2004-5 pilot year usefully situates itself within Baume's (2003) metaphorical compost heap, as the writing of the narrative of the eportfolio in use grows and is enriched by additions from its community of users. The community of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991, p.29) whose reflective 'situated learning activities' provided the rich and complex data for this study.

Reflection, PDP and eportfolio

It could be argued that portfolios of any media have 'encouraged' reflection as a competency as part of a vocational qualification. However, the danger is that the DfES 'personalisation of learning' agenda driven by the collection and presentation of hard evidence such as diagnostic testing and on-course tracking coupled with ongoing self-assessment/review/reflection reinforces this as competency. Reflection, as literacy act within these discourses, is recorded as one more stage in the systematic review that students are expected to 'evidence' as part of their PF and PDP. Reflection, or its interchangeable more value-neutral partner term, 'review', pose interesting questions for HE practitioners and students. Clegg (2004, p.293) responding to this shift to interchangeability suggests that the term 'review' may be a more palatable and transferable term and activity in some disciplines, what is unsaid here is *academic* disciplines, where, "reflection may suggest a discourse with which practitioners are not comfortable." This *taming* of reflection is suggestive of a "normalising practice …and mode of training of the self" (Clegg 1999, p.172).

Reflection, decontextualised and sanitised, it may be argued as performativity and surveillance, is applauded within the QAA's (2001) Guidelines for HE Progress Files. As Clegg (2004) identifies the aim then, of reflection, in this context is less about personal development and more about fulfilling institutional and government goals

(Ecclestone 1996) as reflection is "enshrined….and now expected to form part of every student's analytical learning-to-learn armoury" (Clegg 2004, p.292). Ecclestone (1996) has argued for a much clearer and more transparent discussion of the values and interpretations that underpin reflection and subsequently Clegg (1999, p.168) has suggested that much of the prevalent reflective practice literature has treated and rendered the individual as an isolated subject without acknowledging the diversity and impact of gender, class, racialized or disciplinary locations. She continues that reflective practice has developed as a 'pedagogic technology' that, within the condition of modernity, (Giddens 1991, Beck *et al.* 1994) may "produce a form of self-surveillance in which reflective practice becomes a managerialist orthodoxy" (Clegg 1999, p.168).

Within these contested debates the challenge for the feminist teacher educator is to navigate and articulate critically engaged reflective practice being mindful of the gap as Bolton warns (Bolton 2001, p.xvi). Similarly, Winter *et al.* (1999, p.193) maintain that reflective practice has a pivotal role to play in redressing the 'devaluation, deskilling and alienation' endured by the caring and teaching professions:

> Professional staff (began) to experience a sense of having their autonomy reduced, their decision-making mechanised, their expertise fragmented and their 'artistry' abolished… The reflective paradigm assembles its theoretical resources to defend professional values, creativity and autonomy in a context where they are generally felt to be under attack from political and economic forces which threatened to transform the professional from an artist into an operative.
> (1999, p.193)

Bolton (2001), Bleakley (1999) and Winter *et al.* (1999) reclaim reflection as an artistic process. Clegg (1999, p.167) argues for further discussion of the overlap between reflective practice and "reflexivity as articulated in the feminist

methodology literature". What Clegg usefully articulates is the concept of reflection as a characteristic of all human labour. Clegg continues that professional reflective practice is: pleasurable, even enthralling (Clegg 1997), however, echoing Ecclestone (1996), she warns of the danger of solitary apolitical introspection. For the feminist academic this warning is as applicable to the research and writing process as it is to reflection. Apple identifies that, "because feminism has had a long experience in self-reflexivity and in making the commonsense problematic, it can also provide the basis for the development of practices of self-interrogation and critique" (Apple 1991, p.x). As Ghaye and Ghaye's (2001) opening quotation to this chapter illustrates, reflection is, or should be, about a practice/research interface, which leads to challenge and collective action. Chapter four will consider how collective reflection may be harnessed as a "critical reflection of the illumination of power" (Brookfield 1995, p. 9).

What are reflective approaches to learning and teaching?

> Reflection is not, by definition, critical...reflection becomes critical when it has two distinctive purposes. The first is to understand how considerations of power undergrid, frame and distort educational processes and interactions. The second is to question assumptions and practices that make our teaching lives easier but actually work against our own best long-term interests.
> (Brookfield 1995, p.8)

As identified within this research narrative, reflection upon professional practice is a difficult and contested activity. Encouraging *critical* reflection within pre-service teachers is as Bolton identifies, "only effectively undertaken and understood by becoming immersed in doing it rather than reading about it or following instructions" (Bolton 2001, p.xiii). Herein lies the dilemma for the critical educator. For students new to reflection will often ask for guidance, advice and prompts. "Am I reflecting yet?" is a common question in both verbal and written interactions, yet as

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Bolton identifies, reflection is not a 'mastery' technique but is instead a messy and complex political and social responsibility. Freire (1972, p.55) called for a liberating political process where, "authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without men, but men in their relations with the world". Much of the criticism of theories of reflection can be aimed at their apolitical decontextualised view of reflection as Morrison argues "the notion of reflective practice has lost the sharpness of meaning since becoming popularised in the last ten years. It has become unclear what constitutes reflective practice" (Morrison 1995, p.82).

The "'backbone philosophies' of reflection – Dewey and Habermas" (Moon 2000, p.11), are most usually followed by Schön and Kolb in discussion on reflection. Rorty (1987, p.ix) claims Dewey's (1910, 1933), *How We Think,* as the 'bible' of progressive educators. Dewey's (1933, p.118) interest lay in the processes of reflective thinking, in the active, careful, persistent and often perplexing state of doubt that arose as a chain of linked ideas. Dewey's early focus was upon the consequences and responsibilities of reflection within a professional, vocational context wherein, "responsibility (was) a characteristic of reflective teaching….responsible action is more than just considering 'what works' for me right here, right now and involves a reflection of both the means and ends of education" (Ghaye & Ghaye 2001, p.57).

Dewey (1933, p.199-209) outlined five phases of reflective thinking: suggestions, the intellectualization of the felt or experienced difficulty into a problem to be solved, the use of linked or suggestive ideas or hypotheses to initiate and guide observation and action, the mental elaboration or supposition of the idea followed by the testing of the hypothesis by imaginative or overt action. This sequenced process may be criticised as overly mechanistic or staged in its linearity as in reality any of the five stages may overlap. Also Dewey's emphasis is upon reflection as an individual

activity without recognition of context or barriers as experienced or felt. The role of emotions in reflection is acknowledged but is limited somewhat in this account.

The goal-directedness of Dewey's philosophies is evident in the later experiential theorists such as Kolb (1984), Meizorow (1990), and Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985). Brookfield (1983) reminds us of the inherent contrast within writing on experiential learning, or learning from experience. Experiential learning is derived from contact with a relevant experience and setting where skills are acquired and applied with an acknowledgement of the role of feelings in the experience. It is a, "direct encounter with the phenomena being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter, or only considering the possibility of doing something about it" (Borzak 1981, p.9 quoted in Brookfield 1983). The intentionality of the learning is most usually sponsored within a workplace vocational setting. Other writing on experiential learning focuses upon its unintentionality and decoupling from any academic or vocational domain as "education that occurs as a direct participation in the events of life" (Houle 1980, p.221).

To draw the strands closer, Jarvis (1995, p.75) comments that the field of study focussed on experiential learning "is actually about learning from primary experience, that is learning through sense experiences." Eraut (1994) argues that the contradiction within experiential learning is the focus upon the experiential rather than the doing and that we should avoid the truism that all learning is experiential, as some theorists would claim.

Kolb (1984) created a model or cycle of experiential learning with four stages: concrete experience, observation and reflection, forming abstract concepts and testing in new situations. In earlier work, Kolb and Fry (1975, pp.35-6) claimed that for effective learning to take place an individual required specific abilities: concrete

experience abilities, reflective observation abilities, abstract conceptualization abilities and active experimentation abilities. A learning styles inventory was created (Kolb 1976) which positioned learners within four basic learning styles: the converger, a practical unemotional learner with narrow interests; the diverger, an imaginative people-focussed learner; the assimilator, a theoretical and abstract learner happier with concepts than human interactions and the accommodator; a risk taking, intuitive doer.

The categorisation and labelling of learning styles, and the concept of a learning cycle through which all learners must move for learning to take place has attracted criticism. Boud *et al.* (1983, p.13) acknowledge that the concept, "has been useful in assisting us in planning learning activities and in helping us to check simply that learners can be effectively engage….it does not help… to uncover the elements of reflection itself." Reflection as action is identified as an important and necessary component of learning but the process of encouraging and supporting reflection is not examined. The learning style inventory and the cycle do not acknowledge the impact of cultural, social and situated learning and as with Dewey, the sequential nature of the theory may be viewed as simplistic. Jarvis (1987, 1995) has argued that Kolb's focus upon the individual does not explore the nature of our production of knowledge. Jarvis went on to develop Kolb's model to accommodate the following experiences: non-learning, some non-reflective learning and some reflective learning. However, the same criticisms of sequencing may apply to this and other models of experiential learning.

Meizorow's experiential model (1990) focuses upon assumptions and presuppositions as the focus of reflection offers the possibility of 'transformative learning':

> Perspective transformation is the process of becoming
> critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have

> come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting on these new understandings. (Mezirow, 1990, p.14)

Boud *et al.* (1985, pp.26-31) further address the role of emotions in reflection by reworking Dewey's stages:

- returning to experience and recalling and/or detailing events;
- attending to (or connecting with) feelings, using helpful feelings and removing or containing obstructive feelings;
- evaluating the experience, re-examining and integration of new knowledge into conceptual framework.

Boud *et al.* have been criticised for their emphasis upon reflection-on-action which "constrain(s) reflection by turning it into a mental activity that excludes both the behavioural element and the dialogue with others involved in the situation" (Cinnamond and Zimper 1990, p.67).

The work of experiential theorists offers some useful insight in the guiding of reflection but does not explain its relationship to learning (Moon 2000). This in part is due to the multiple interpretations of the concept of experiential learning. However, as the work of Freire (1972, p.75) reminds us, the experiential project requires that the two dimensions of progressive education, reflection and action, are constitutive elements that cannot be sacrificed, even in part, or the other will suffer.

Schön's (1983, 1987) analysis of the role of reflection in a professional context has been hugely influential, even 'canonical', resulting in his ideas of 'the learning society', 'double-loop learning' and 'reflection-in-action' becoming part of the language of education. One of Schön's major concerns was the shift between reflection-on-action to reflection-in-action, or 'thinking on your feet' as a theory of

practice for professional activity whereby learning is made more effective through reflection in and upon experience.

For Schön, reflection is a conscious activity whereby professionals draw upon their experiences intuitively to inform their actions. Extending this, Schön claims that reflection can in fact support the making of intuition explicit. The value of his work and influence is however contestable. His epistemology of practice, which may be seen as arising from a perceived crisis of confidence amongst professionals, may be viewed as a critique of and challenge to technical rationality. However, this analysis appears oblivious to gender politics (Clegg 1999, p.168). Schön's location of the locus of dissatisfaction was the impact of the Vietnam War in the USA without reference to other social and cultural groups and their contribution such as the Civil Right's Movement and the Women's Movement. Clegg (1999, p.168) argues that the gender and racial blindness is a vital factor to consider when reflective practice as a professional activity is implemented in professions, such as Health and Teaching, that employ large numbers of women. So the adoption or reclamation of Schön's theories and critiques must also acknowledge the limitations of his work as "what we do not find in Schön is a reflection by him on his own textual practice in giving some kind of account of that he does of reflection-in-action and the reflective practicum… He does not interrogate his own method" (Usher *et.al*.1997, p.149).

However, Schön's critique of the teacher technician within a culture of technical rationality is a frightening reality for all providers of teacher education. The drive to *standardise* teaching and learning through government organisations such as FENTO and SVUK may be seen as an attempt to separate the theoretical world of the academy/university from the practical world of the workplace/college. Following the assumption that practical issues can be solved by a simplistic application of theory results in a binaristic paradigm with theory as the leading 'other.' Schön's emphasis

upon the role of reflection allows a 'reframing' but not an in-depth questioning of the values and knowledge(s) embedded in practice resulting in "a descriptive concept, quite empty of content" (Richardson 1990, p.14). In earlier work, Argyis and Schön (1974) identified the limits of 'single loop' reflection which fails to move from the justification of professional actions to a deeper reflection, or 'double loop' in which the professional questions their own goals and assumptions. To repeat, it has been argued that Schön's canonical work is less 'critical' than it appears to be and certainly not double looped in nature, "since it is not directed to its own situated practice of doing theory" (Usher *et al.* 1997, p.147).

Habermas's philosophical defence of the validity of reflection is that it is "a tool used in the development of particular forms of knowledge" (Moon 2000, p.13). Although not explicitly stated in reference to education, Habermas's stance is located in the notion of deliberate, systematic self-directed learning for the improvement of work practices. In common with Dewey, Habermas views the role of reflection as a generator of knowledge. Unlike Dewey, Habermas's focus and concern is upon the ideals of political emancipation and empowerment (Morrison, 1995). Carr and Kemis (1986) echo Habermas' view that "evaluative enquiry has an important role in the enquiry of social sciences" (Moon 2000, p.14) in their exposure of self-interest and ideological distortions within research practices.

Ecclestone (1996) drawing upon Carr (1985, 1995) argues that reflection *can* be critical, practical, emancipatory or technical, but that reflective discourses have tended to focus upon reflection as technical enquiry. Ecclestone also warns of the danger of viewing reflection as an end, rather than a means in itself and argues, "reflection can tacitly belie the different ideologies which underpin reflective practice" (Ecclestone 1996, p.150). Writing with Gupta and Greaves she (2001, p.137) identifies that 'the process of writing down reflections about experience and sharing

those written reflections with others, helps to improve the quality of reflection and avoids single loop reflection.' Gupta *et al.* (2001, p.141) conclude that "if individual portfolios are shared within a community of practice, and if a debate is generated about individual experiences, then this can lead to developing a body of practical knowledge."

Brookfield (1995, pp.2-3) pushes this further in his emphasis upon "reflection as hunting assumptions" which he categories as paradigmatic, prescriptive and casual. What emerges from these critical readings of reflection, as process, is the vital role of community. Eraut's (1994, p.56) discussion of the generation of professional knowledge stresses the under exploited nature of community as:

> There is no tradition of engaging in such behaviour in most professional work contexts; and the knowledge development receives little attention in an action-oriented environment. Moreover, communication between practitioners is such that only a small proportion of the newly created knowledge gets diffused or disseminated. Thus there is no cumulative development of knowledge over time: the wheel is reinvented many times over.

Reflection as 'professional knowledge' generated within a community can offer exciting contestations of accepted 'norms'. As multiple layers of dialogue challenge hierarchies the roles of mentor/tutor/peer and student are blurred. Professional knowledge may be seen as actively under construction and under reflexive review. Bolton's (2001, p.32) foundations for a 'through the looking glass model' of reflection are: "certain uncertainty, serious playfulness and unquestioning questioning." This model stresses the contingent and dynamic nature of professional reflection, which must be driven by process rather than mapped as product. Bolton (ibid p.33) carefully identifies that community members, "may need time and gentle encouragement towards gaining the confidence required to create their own

structure of appropriate and stretching enquiry…to people willing to 'not know' all the time, all sorts of things are possible."

Reflection and reflective writing on a professional programme such as the PGCE cannot always offer the space and time for such stretching enquiry particularly when reflective literacies are assessed within a modular system. However, the role of serious playfulness is a powerful tool in the teacher educator's toolkit to promote critically engaged reflection. Adopting and supporting a culture of serious playfulness allows for diversion and risk. However, new practitioners are often looking for a model or scaffold such as a single loop model of and for practice and risk taking is just too risky. A reflective horizontal community may allow for the playing out of stories of risk and experimentation in ways which allow vicarious reflection as chapter four will consider.

Bolton's third foundation or principle of reflective practice is an unquestioning acceptance that the process of reflection is itself one of questioning and a "willingness to risk abandoning previous "truths" and sit with not knowing" (Gerber 1994, p.290 in Bolton 2001, p.33). Bolton suggests that the creative letting go and questioning may lead to the "discovery of other possible selves – the myselves of whom I am not habitually aware, the myself I might be and the selves I am becoming" (Bolton 2001, p.33). This is also the stage at which an examination of the role of 'social coparticipation' (Hanks 1991, p.14) as a reflective action may offer suggestions for a model of engaged practice.

Community of practice?

Lave and Wenger's (1991) work has been hugely influential on theories in the field of learning at work or professional learning. Their focus upon learning (for this read reflection also) and legitimate peripheral participation as a social activity held

resonances of Freire's (1972) critique of the prevalent 'banking model' of education whose monologic addressivity, that is one-way communication without dialogue, and performance driven cultures created learners as 'useful human capital'. Although their language choices offer glimpses of what Clegg and Brookfield would argue were unexamined assumptions such as the concept of 'mastery' and 'life as apprenticeship' (Lave & Wenger 1991, p.29) their argument develops into a rich analysis of community participation as:

> situated learning… in which learning is not merely situated in practice – as if it were some independently reifiable process that just happened to be located somewhere; learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world…its constituents contribute inseparable aspects whose combinations create a landscape – shapes, degrees, textures – of community membership…the form that the legitimacy of participation takes is a defining characteristic of ways of belonging. (Lave & Wenger 1991, p.35)

Belonging and becoming are intrinsic to this approach for the development of reflective and reflexive practices amongst becoming teachers. Lave and Wenger (1991, p.36) view change and complexity as "part of actors learning trajectory, developing identities and forms of membership" which deny univocal centres:

> It seems important not to reduce the end point of centripedal participation in a community of practice to a uniform or univocal "centre" or to a linear notion of skill acquisition. There is no place in the community designated "the periphery," and, most emphatically, it has no single core or centre…full participation is intended to do justice to the diversity of relations involved…peripherality, when it is enabled, suggests an opening, a way of gaining access.
> (Lave & Wenger 1991, pp.36-7)

Again the emphasis here is upon the growing body of professional knowledge/reflection not a prescribed or directed route traditionally occupied or determined within and by the banking model of education. I would argue that the nurturing and enabling of such a community of practice within a professional course such as the PGCE has the potential to create politicised and engaged reflective practitioners who view risk and uncertainty as positive factors. Recent work on the formation of teacher identity within communities of practice (Bathmaker & Avis 2005) has been critical of the communities found within the Post Compulsory Sector and their responses to new community members. Bathmaker and Avis's research found that many new teachers felt marginalized rather than peripheral to the community. Although dialogue and exchange are identified as important functions within the research group's own community, the reflections and experiences shared are categorised as atrocity stories or moral tales which:

> may serve the function of distancing themselves from particular practices elsewhere…atrocity stories …allow the teller to express thoughts which are unvoiced in the situation described, in an attempt to redress real or perceived inequality in the situation. They encourage the listener to empathise with the teller.
> (Bathmaker & Avis 2005, p.53)

Bathmaker and Avis conclude that the lack of questioning of official discourses and practices on the part of the new teachers and the decontextualised removed nature of individual reflection made involvement in communities of practice difficult. They suggest that communities of practice have the potential to develop alternative interpretations:

> that would need to recognise the complexity, contradictions and messiness of educational practice. This would entail moving beyond the individual reflection on personal practice, designed to diagnose and cure faults. It

> would mean instead a broader, shared reflexivity about
> the work of learning that would allow for critical and
> uncertain accounts…it is here that we place cautious hope
> for the future.
> (Bathmaker & Avis 2005, p.61)

I would hope that my work with students would situate itself within this messy shared reflexivity. Chapter four will consider how an eportfolio might provide a learning landscape that offers an arena for exploration and risk and a forum that celebrates uncertainty and questioning.

Lave and Wenger's (1991, p.53) model urges us to remember that, "learning involves the construction of identities" and that the conceptual bridge that peripheral participation in a community offers has the potential to allow us to take "a decentred view of master-apprenticeship relations." Traditionally academic reflection is a monologic activity and literacy whereby individuals narrate their reflection for the tutor (master). Most usually received summatively, within an end of module portfolio, this reflection is not intended for dialogic exchange. A community of reflective practice has the potential to:

> Take a decentred view of the master-
> apprentice…(leading) to an understanding that mastery
> resides not in the master but in the organization of the
> community of practice of which the master is part: The
> master as the locus of authority…is, after all, as much a
> product of the conventional, centred theory of learning as
> is the individual learner.
> (Lave & Wenger 1991, p.94)

There are however problems with this model as Fuller *et al.* (2005) identify. Lave and Wenger claim that newcomers, as peripheral participants, move through a process of participation that constitutes their sense of belonging and supports their learning. Fuller *et al.* argue that this model of situated practice ignores 'old timers' who have

experienced higher levels of participation in previous communities. This is an interesting point to consider, as PGCE students do not all arrive at University without experience and may in fact be experienced teachers seeking accreditation. Any community created or organically evolving must consider the differentiated 'becomingness' and 'belongingness' of its members. Wenger's (1998, p.5) later work develops this social theory of learning and participation and identifies the interconnected components of meaning, practice, community and identity as crucial frameworks for discussing individual and collective experiences and perspectives.

As a researcher drawing upon feminist and poststructuralist theorists, Wenger's lived and integrated theorising speaks to me in a fundamental manner as I am reminded of Lather's (1991, p.27) framing that "feminism is the site where the theory/practice nexus is being most creatively interrogated." Feminist readings of professional reflective practices are sites of conflict. The function of the reflection within the eportfolio within the community of practice created, inhabits a simultaneous social space of empowerment *and* surveillance. The shared 'conflictual' and knowing enterprise offers an interesting illumination of border practices that refuse dichotomised domains.

This highly reflexive and complex creation of communities is dependent upon participation and practice. Participation in Wenger's terms (1998, p.56) is not simply collaboration, "it can involve all kinds of relations, conflictual and well as harmonious, intimate as well as political, competitive as well as cooperative." Wenger (1998, p.57) further claims that this participation then shapes its communities offering the potential for transformation which extends beyond a simplistic engagement in practice and becomes, 'a constituent of our identities.' The transformative potential of a community of practice will be considered further in chapter four. Wenger (1998, p.59) identifies the concept of 'reification', a useful

focus for reflective practices, as a way of 'evidencing', perhaps capturing, our practice and participation within a community, as "any community of practice produces abstractions, tools, symbols, stories, terms and concepts that reify something of that practice in a congealed form" (ibid p.59). The use of the concept of 'congealment' offers an interesting fluid, 'becoming' metaphor for the practices and artefacts of a community that are always in flux. The 'semi-solid' (OED) nature of reification suggests an ability to shift and metamorphose depending upon the 'temperature.' This in turn denies objectification as the "process and the product always imply each other" (Wenger 1998, p.60). This inherent fluidity also presents a double-edged danger. Wenger (ibid p.68) argues that the process of reification which is not "a mere articulation of something that already exists…but (is) in fact creating the conditions for new meanings" can amplify an activity, such as reflection, creating an appearance of effortlessness.

A good 'tool' such as an eportfolio may contribute to this reification however, Wenger (1998, pp.61-2) also warns that "the tool can ossify activity around its inertness." My readings of my PGCE community's reflections are always in danger of being frozen, even detached from practice and the *practice of reading* the reflections may itself be an inert activity. Barrett and Carney (2005, p.1) when discussing a reified practice and product such an eportfolio explicitly identify that, "unless the conflicting paradigms and competing purposes underlying portfolios are recognised, their value for learning may be subverted." The tension in the use and production of a community site such as an eportfolio must be made explicit because educational discourses position the artefact/product within positivist paradigms and banking models of performativity, aggregation and audit. The eportfolio educator negotiating the perilous HE landscape of PDP, PF and lifelong learning must acknowledge the role of stories and different starting points within the process and performance of the community of practice. As Barrett and Carney (2005, p2) identify, the portfolio as

product for assessment, or something 'done to' a student may not truly be an owned story of learning. Similarly, Wenger (1998, p.64) argues that the complementarily of participation and reification may offer a route to reflection as:

- Participation is essential to repairing the potential misalignments inherent in reification. When the stiffness of its form renders reification obsolete, when its mute ambiguity is misleading or when its purpose is lost in the distance, then it is participation that comes to the rescue.
- On the other hand, reification also makes up for the inherent limitations of participation….Mirroring the role of participation, reification is essential to repairing the potential misalignments inherent in participation: when the informality of participation is confusingly loose…when its locality is too confining or its partiality too narrow, then it is reification that comes to the rescue.

Barrett and Carney (2005, p.7) are also concerned that the potential to over-reify the eportfolio as learning and teaching assessment tool causes pedagogical concerns and difficulties as "portfolios should support an environment of reflection and collaboration" and, "it is a rare system that supports these multiple needs." Barrett (2005, p.19) suggests that reflection and "the metaphor of portfolio as story" offer "a powerful environment in which students can collect and organize the artifacts that result from engaging in these challenging, real-life tasks, and write reflections through which students draw meaning" (Barrett 2005, p.21). This storytelling metaphor is extended in McDrury and Alterio's (2002) work as they propose a storytelling pathway model based upon Moon's (2000) Map of Learning and Literary Studies.

Map of Learning (Moon, 2000)	Learning through Storytelling (McDrury and Alterio, 2002)
Noticing	Storyfinding
Making sense	Storytelling

Making meaning	Story expanding
Working with meaning	Story processing
Transformative Learning	Story reconstructing

Drawing upon Lodge's work in Literary Theory, (1990), McDrury and Alterio view the narrativising of learning in a higher education context as "a fundamental sense making operation of the mind, that would appear both peculiar to and universal among human beings" (Lodge 1990, p.4). Winter *et al.* (1999, p.21) view our lives as 'steeped in stories' and McDrury and Alterio (2002, p.33) point the reader to the community role and function of storytelling.

Winter *et al.* (1999) suggest that storytelling may be viewed as an exploratory discursive and interpretative practice. Freire (1972) challenged the educator to encourage their learners to tell their stories critically. Reason and Hawkins (1988) and Brookfield and Preskill (1999) push the metaphor further in their emphasis upon dialogue as the key to developing a questioning and exploratory reflexive capacity. Bernstein's warning that dialogue is also, "a powerful regulative ideal that can orient our practical and political lives" (Bernstein 1983, p.163) must be remembered by the critical educator as Brookfield (1995, p.143) challenges us to challenge the assumption "that adults – particularly teachers – know how to talk to each other in ways that are respectful, inclusive and democratic."

In creating the conditions for reflective storytelling and dialogue within a community, structural and institutional factors of imbalance, power and competition must always be considered and as teachers we must be sensitive to "diversity… in a communicative situation" (Burbules 1993, p.31). It is important to be persistent in this reflective dialogue, to be aware of the potential for dominance and the need to support turn-taking and to be guided by the procedural rules for dialogue (Burbules 1993) of voluntary participation, commitment to openness and reciprocity. Wenger

(1998, p.69) views the act of dialogue as a deliberate and conscious participation in a community, which demands the practice of mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire. Echoing Freire and Burbules, Wenger's community dimensions are driven by engagement. It is important to identify that the reciprocal and mutual nature of the engagement is the intrinsic work of 'community maintenance'. As stated earlier this is not to suggest that the community is homogeneous. Wenger (1998, p.77) is clear in his emphasis that community as concept is not an idealised or romanticised ideal and that relations of participation and engagement are:

> complex mixtures of power and dependence, pleasure and pain, expertise and helplessness, success and failure, amassment and deprivation, alliance and competition, ease and struggle, authority and collegiality, resistance and compliance, anger and tenderness, attraction and repugnance, fun and boredom, trust and superstition, friendship and hatred. Communities of practice have it all.

Coherence then stems from diversity, difference and discord as characteristic and enterprise. As a community of practice is not predicated upon sameness, joint enterprise as practice "is always mediated by the community's production of its practice….(and) conditions, resources and demands shape the practice" (Wenger 1998, p.80). The pursuit of this joint, discordant enterprise thus becomes a practice within the community where:

> the repertoire of a community of practice includes routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice. (Wenger 1998, p.83)

Bathmaker and Avis' (2005) research shows us that discord is a primary condition within a community such as teachers in Post Compulsory Education. Wenger's work

allows us to view the members of the community in a more complex manner as long as the urge to romanticize/fetishise the dis/harmony of the community and their practices is avoided. Wenger (1998, p.95) offers a reading of learning and reflection in practice as *engagement in practice*, as both the stage and the object where, "what they learn is not a static subject matter but the very process of being engaged in, and participating in developing, an ongoing practice." When applying this to a community landscape such as the eportfolio the emergence of negotiated practices is highly evident. As a situated reflective literacy (Street 1995) emergent practices demonstrate complex patterns of interaction. De Pourbaix's (2000, p.144) analysis of literacy in an electronic community discusses that:

> a view of literacy should be considered which moves beyond skills and considers the constantly evolving nature of communication needs, events and practices, the overlapping of communities and domains, and the inclusion in educational practice of a recognition of the multiplicity of communities, domains and literacies which constitute everyday life, both from internal (community member) and external viewpoints.

Wenger *et al.'s* (2005, p.1) most recent work focuses upon "communities of practice and the technologies they use to create a sense of togetherness over time and across distances." This work offers an interesting and important extension of the community model by exploring how communities and technologies may shape each other. This leads us to question explicitly the role of the technology, the eportfolio, as fostering and supporting the community and their reflective practices. Wenger *et al.* and De Pourbaix, contextualise and problematise online participation, as a practice, as acts of multiplicity or "technology-mediated togetherness" (Wenger 2005, p.2) and warn against reductionist accounts of online communities as:

> technology can heighten the **individual character** of the experience of the technology, because the experience of

community becomes something that participants **project** into their experience of the technology. A subtle entailment of this projection is the **danger of confusing the community with the technology: it is a community you belong to not an email list.** Furthermore, the mediation of a screen or a phone line increases the possibility of diverging interpretations and broadens the range of levels of participation and commitment. All this **calls for new breeds of interfaces and devices that bring the community to the individual.** Community technology is designed for communities, but it is **experienced** by individual members when they use the technology to **connect with the community**.

(Wenger *et al.* 2005, p.2) (my emphasis)

As a teacher who is actively seeking to exploit technology as a community-learning tool, Wenger *et al.'s* recent work offers exciting multiple readings of the 'everyday use' of technology in and for learning. With the individual as member of multiple communities at the centre of the radial activity, Wenger identifies the possibility for projections beyond the technology. The vital emphasis upon the community and technology as 'experienced' offers an opportunity to explore the relationship and mediations as participant as chapter four will consider.

> A key distinction can be made here between *method* and *methodology.* The term *method* can be understood to relate principally to the tools of data collection: techniques such as questionnaires and interviews. M*ethodology* has a more philosophical meaning and usually refers to the approach or paradigm that underpins the research.
> (Blaxter *et al.* 2002, p.59)

> Reflexivity demands a type of emotional literacy on the part of the researcher, who can sensitively engage with the research study while/because s/he is aware of her/his own responses, values, beliefs and prejudices.
> (Morley 1996, p.139)

> The paradigm wars, which Oakley (2000) vividly describes, have trapped their proponents into competing qualitative and quantitative camps, albeit while often at the same time recognising that practice always involves elements of both. The paradigm war remains stubbornly impervious to the messy realities of practice, however, because the key issues are socio-political, and concern resolution at the level of method.
> (Clegg 2005, p.416)

> Positivism has been displaced, or so we hope.
> (Apple, 1991 p.vii)

> I turn now to feminist efforts to empower through empirical research designs which maximise a dialogic, dialectically educative encounter between the researcher and the researched.
> (Lather 1991, p.70)

As outlined in the framing statement to this dissertation, methodologically and philosophically, as a 'paradigm' stance, a feminist poststructuralist research design may in itself be a likely problem for educational research as it adopts plural/multiple theoretical positions, which consider the relationship between language, subjectivity,

social organisation and power. These positions have been developed and often associated with, although often contested as being, "in and from the work of Derrida (1973, 1976), Lacan (1977), Kristeva (1981, 1984, 1986), Althusser (1971) and Foucault (1978, 1979a and b, 1981 and 1986)" (Weedon 1989, p.19) and Deleuze and Guttari (1987). The discursive nature of subjectivity evident in written, oral and social communities of practice allows for a feminist methodology whose readings examine contradiction, choice and sites of discursive struggle. Poststructuralism:

> demands radical reflections on our interpretative frames as we enter the *Foucauldian* shift from paradigm to discourse...poststructuralism holds that there is no final knowledge...whatever the object of our gaze it is contested...temporal.' (Lather 1991, p.111)

Poststructuralism allows "the reflexive practitioner to see experiences... as open to contradictory and conflicting interpretations...which can nevertheless disrupt habitual and mechanistic ways of being" (Brown and Jones 2001, p.6) as, "there is no such thing as "the" evidence: evidence is a contested domain and in a constant state of becoming" (Nutley *et al.* 2003, p.133). Morrison's (2002, p.3) sense of educational research as a "twin-focused" phenomena both attitudinal and action/activity-based supports a deconstructive project in its insistence upon examining the relationship between epistemology, ontology and methodology as "epistemological and methodological concerns are implicated at every stage of the research process" (*ibid* p.11). Recognition of these inter-relationships is discussed in terms of feminist research. However, the reading of a feminist ontology (singular) is somewhat restricted and would benefit from a reflection upon the work of Lather or MacLure. Supportive of this dissertation's stance however is the observation that:

> Feminists are especially critical of research that treats people studied as objects rather than subjects, and they challenge and reject claims to value-neutrality and objectivity in educational research. Instead, research is seen as an inter-subjective experience which should

> empower rather than exploit. Not surprisingly, the methodology that has underpinned feminist approaches has tended to be interpretive…and often micro in nature. (*ibid* p.13)

A critique of this research design and dissertation might focus upon its micro nature and its apparent low response rate in traditional terms. However, the eportfolio, as emergent learning and teaching space and as data collection tool offers a tangible example of what Clegg (2005, p.416) identifies as "the messy realities of practice" in a "dialectically educative encounter" (Lather 1991, p.70) and as such is worthy of examination.

Feminist poststructuralism seeks in its widest sense to interpret through 'opening up' (Derrida, 1987) whilst acknowledging that the interpretivist project is a problematic affair (Brown and Jones 2001). Similarly, a reflexive research enquiry that might be termed 'action research' (Carr & Kemmis 1986, p.162) whilst committed to "unmask(ing) the lies, myths and distortions that construct the basis for the dominant order " (Giroux 1983, p109) may be seen to be a product of the dominant order speaking of and for the 'subjects' of educational research. An acknowledgement of the flaws and limitations of educational research allows us to experiment with interpretivist paradigms as, "(s)ocialism, feminism, equity and improving teaching cannot just be thrown out as impossible dreams. We find ourselves still wanting to hold onto our emancipatory aspirations despite knowing about all of the flaws" (Brown and Jones 2001, p33). This research considers the development of new teachers and the use of an intervention – an eportfolio – within an evolutionary professional situation. In this way the research may be viewed as cyclical and disciplined and in dialogue with theory which "cannot simply be derived from data, but is always the outcome of a process in which researchers must

explore, organise and integrate their own and other's theoretical resources as an interpretative response to data" (Winter 1989, p.261).

By departing from an accepted notion of the interpretivist research paradigm's assumption that "the researcher sees language as a *more-or-less* agreed symbolic system" (Bassey 1990, p.18) an emphasis upon the textual construction of meanings and subject positions allows for the narration of 'stories' about self and practice to be considered as data. Accordingly, this methodology attempts to document and witness a 'shared meaning' (Allan, 1998) encompassing the mosaic of perceptions drawn from individuals in their social contexts. A flaw in the choice of data collection tool, perhaps evidenced by the low response rate to community activities, reminds us that power relations in all speech acts must be considered. Elliott's (1987, 1993b) adoption of the storying analogy also challenges the researcher to locate their own self within the rewriting narrative as evolutionary and organic rather than simply emancipatory in its scope and intention. So my reading and writing of my students' stories are in fact a further fabrication which may be perceived as fetishised. Similarly, the use of an inert technology as research design choice may further fetishise the practices and ossify and close down meanings rather than open up possibilities for an exploration of shared meanings.

My methodology quest is as much about the collection, collation and curation of data of discursive selves within a chain of stories 'patchworked' and 'framed' as it is about exposing and considering issues of power, identity and resistance. Methodological discourses do not exist separated from practice but are instead always subject to the 'field of force relations' (Foucault 1981, p.101). It is vital to acknowledge this research design offers the possibility of resistance whilst already inhabiting and being subject to discourses of power within a particular social institution for, "(d)iscourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (Foucault 1981,

p.101). This is because the discomforting 'situatedness' of the researcher must be foregrounded in terms of language and power and the singularity of the small scale case study emphasised. In this way the research design offers both strengths and weaknesses as it is built upon an intense professional relationship with a group of students whose writings and reflections were inexorably linked to their professional development and accreditation as teachers. The in-depth case study data explored in this dissertation must be considered with close reference to its contexts, as it is not as generalisable or as predictable as other paradigms claim for themselves, nor does it desire to be. Crucially, issues of validity are discounted within post structuralism as research is viewed as the, "enactment of power relations" (Lather 1991, p.112) and objectivity as a textual construction. Lather's claim for post-positivist enquiry below suggests that we should tell research stories that attempt to transgress and subvert and in doing so adopt methodologies and methods that are self-consciously enacting this. In this way validity, as a research enterprise, within "praxis-oriented research" (*ibid* p68) may be re-conceptualised in terms of what Lather examines as catalytic validity which:

> Represents the degree to which the research process re-orients, focuses and energises participants towards knowing reality in order to transform it, a process Freire (1973) terms conscientization….it flies in the face of positivist demands for researcher neutrality. The argument for catalytic validity lies not only within recognition of the reality-altering impact of the research process, but also in the desire to consciously channel this impact so that respondents gain self-understanding, and, ultimately, self-determination through research participation. (*ibid*)

In narrativising and "locating the story" (Hitchcock & Hughes 1989, p214) within a "particular location…over a defined period of time" (*ibid*) an emergent ethnographic approach to researching online learning activities, such as that described by Creanor *et al.* (2006) and Mayes (2006), has identified gaps in earlier research and suggests

that, "stories or narratives that capture the diversity of how students use learning technologies in their formal studies and attempts to elicit beliefs and intentions" (Mayes 2006, p.4) are key concerns for future research and a powerful defence of the research design deliberately adopted.

Their studies proposed that a methodology capable of filling these gaps should display at least some of the following characteristics:

- It should be 'naturalistic' (focusing on informal as well as formal learning)
- It should capture the complexity and authenticity of case studies
- It should sample purposefully (choosing learners who are characterised by behaviours or qualities of particular relevance)
- It should focus on typical e-learning contexts rather than on specific types of activity
- It should employ semi-structured interview schedules. *(ibid)*

Both studies drawn from the government-funded project LEX: learner experience of elearning, proposed a method termed *'interview plus'*, where the 'plus' represents some artefact or activity chosen to guide recall or aid thinking aloud (Mayes 2006, p.4). As the "main aim of the study was to elicit reflective individual narratives, the research team resolved to adopt this fundamentally phenomenological approach rather than engage in large-scale surveys" (Creanor *et al.* 2006, p.8).

The use of a dialogic approach or interview plus, as catalytic validity tool, within an eportfolio system is an appropriate method to online data gathering as it utilises online discussions, reflections and the artefacts created by students to stimulate further reflections/data including summative essays across a nine month period. This approach allowed issues and themes to be validated, explored and developed ongoing both with individuals and in groups using the eportfolio space like an online interview or focus group. Adopting a semi-structured approach (Hitchcock &

Hughes 1989, p.83) to online conversations allowed for exploration of both tutor and student identified issues. This data collection instrument (the eportfolio) was flexible and iterative however it was time consuming as the interactions created substantial data. The use of the eportfolio as focus group tool also had the potential to create issues as stated the talk space could be seen to replicate the power dynamics of a face-to-face exchange and care had to be taken to encourage all students to participate and engage. Early asset sharing within the eportfolio acted in a piloting capacity to test out both the technologies capabilities for data collection and the research questions. The use of both methods however allowed for a depth of response which allowed the qualitative range of the research to be extended.

However, as stated, both the relationship between the researcher and the students must be considered, and the context from which the data is drawn. As Lather, (1991, p57) quoting Oakley (1981) states there is "no intimacy without reciprocity" and this implies give and take at "the juncture between the researcher and the researched and the data and theory" (Lather 1991, p.57). Reciprocity seeks to democratize the research process through repetition and an ongoing relationship often resulting in co-authored and negotiated interviews and resulting statements. Researchers then, according to Lather, drawing on Tripp (1983, p.39) are "not so much owners of the data as they are ''majority shareholders". However, as Fay (1977) also quoted in Lather states our actions as researchers in the pursuit of emancipation often impose and close down meaning rather than construct meaning with research participants. Lather (1991, p.60) views interviews conducted in an interactive and dialogic manner "that requires self-disclosure on the part of the interviewer" as a movement towards reciprocity in research.

The use of a case-study of 15 students allows for an in-depth consideration of the affective domain as outlined by Creanor and Mayes. The size of the group was also

manageable within the constraints of the PGCE course. As stated earlier, a critique of small-scale case studies is their possible lack of applicability to other contexts. However the possibilities for such naturalistic data capture within an online environment have much to offer learning communities and researchers as Creanor *et al.* (2006, p.28) defend:

> However the location of the study in a period of rapid change in use of technology was not a problem for LEX. Perhaps learner experience focused studies of this kind may be in fact a highly suitable method for highlighting complex issues involved in technology and life. LEX shows that in spite of the complexities learners are articulate on these issues.

Data for this study was drawn from all 15 students in the group who were required to create online artefacts linked to their formal and informal learning. The immediacy of the availability of the research data, and the ability to act upon that data, is a key factor for research in online learning environments as Creanor *et al.* identify. The eportfolio was simultaneously a site for learning and identity construction negotiation and a dialogic data collection tool.

Practical methodological concerns are perhaps more mundane. There are equity issues to be addressed in terms of access to support for the development of technological eportfolio building skills and off-campus access to technology. Wenger *et al.* (2005, p.9) identify that the provision of technology to communities must focus upon "the community, its circumstances, its aspirations, its members and its activities". As the research 'data' was gathered within a professional qualification structure, any analysis of such data must embrace the contradictions of its construction and gathering. Eportfolio assets, as data, were collected and curated throughout the period of the PGCE. All students' voluntary informed consent was sought and they were invited to be involved in the research project with respect shown for their person, knowledge, values, the quality of educational research and academic freedom (BERA 2004, p.5). As participants, students were aware of their

right to withdraw from the research and care was taken to not overburden students when using this dialogic data gathering approach. Ethical approval was also granted internally from the School of Education.

All asset sharing within the eportfolio is confidential and asset owners control who views and shares their reflective patches. This 'safe' non-assessed dialogue does not have to be shared with a tutor/assessor. The eportfolio output is a public, assessable text and is selected dependent upon audience by the student. Sensitivity to discursive identities within the fenced asset sharing space must be demonstrated. Part of the research and data analysis must consider the role of the tutor in this dialogue/conversation and perceptions/responses to tutor comment. All student contributions used were voluntary and all students had the right to retain internal assets. The journals and 'etivities' (Salmon 2002, 2005) as 'textual products ' (Stronach & MacLure 1997, p.35) were produced in response to qualification and awarding body guidelines.

As would be expected from a poststructuralist framework the data analysis will be transitionary, leaky and interpretative following Winter's (1989, p.261) emphasis upon a reflective hermeneutic process and understanding that '"theory cannot simply be derived from data, but is always the outcome of a process in which researchers must explore, organise and integrate their own and other's theoretical resources as an interpretative response to data". So, stated simply, analysis strategies in line with the methodology and research design will be 'patched' and 'stitched' within a dialectic process of action and description. Research stories (data) are 'inextricably linked with the process of generating new pieces of writing' (Brown and Jones 2001, p.38). In framing the voices of others, the stitching and impurity of the narrative seams will mimic the patchwork creation of the product – the electronic portfolio.

Chapter 4 – Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of data

How can the use of eportfolios foster reflective approaches to learning on a teacher education programme?

I remember seeing an episode of the Simpsons where Lisa is making a patchwork quilt. It had been passed down by women in the family for years and each time a new piece was added by someone else it told a different story, but adding a new patch to the quilt just made it all the more richer in content.
Jane, PGCE student 2004

I've never heard of patchwork
writing before. I imagine it to
be less formal than some other
styles of writing, and more
concerned with small parts
of writing than a unified,
structured whole. I think of it
as small pockets of writing
coming together in a non-linear
way.
Claire, PGCE student 2004

As Bayne (2004) identifies, it is the interaction of the smooth and striated

(writing) spaces, or writing as entanglement, which work to defamiliarize the writer and it is hoped begin to 'deterritorialise' the technology and I would hope monologic essayist literacy by offering spaces for more creative writing and reflection. The patches of writing above gathered from students new to the ideas of patchworking and reflection demonstrate a sophistication and knowingness linked to wider cultural references and shared repertoires. Jane's use of the Simpson's narrative offers a powerful argument for supporting writing and reflective practices through telling stories in patches and Claire's 'radial' response is suggestive of an exciting departure from received academic writing 'norms'.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) deny binaristic readings of space/text as striated and smooth cultural/writing spaces can only exist in mixture, flux, translation and reversal – in messy entanglement. It is the passages between and within the writing forms conceived as fabric and patchwork metaphors that offer the possibility for multiple, non-linear forms of learning and teaching interactions. The eportfolio was a 'messy' and 'entangled' space, which offered the possibility for multiple story telling if a supportive community were prepared to grow. As teaching mentor and user of technology I was also in flux and translation during the period of 'narrative data gathering'. For many individuals within a reflective community this fluidity and lack of fixed points of reference could be interpreted as a threat. To further complicate the research the fluid nature of the eportfolio was operating within an, at times, rigid performance culture of tight deadlines.

It was important to establish baselines and to encourage the development of the community through activity and asset sharing. The PGCE group was introduced to eportfolio activities as a component of their personal and professional development unit. It was not possible to embed the eportfolio within standard classroom activities due to the nature of the pilot group status. However, the University's VLE was used to introduce asset sharing of metaphors tasks in preparation for larger community asset sharing. Five weeks into the PGCE a session was held to induct the group and to link the activities to the required outcomes for the module. A task sheet was prepared asking the students to create an *Open Thought* asset reflecting upon and narrating their feelings about technology and its use in teaching and learning. Students were then asked to share their thought pebble with colleagues within the peer group or individually with the tutor if they preferred (Appendix 1). As is highly evident from the 'data' there were mixed feelings about the use of technology and interesting patterns were emerging based upon the level of disclosure within the shared asset. Students 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7 demonstrate a confidence in their self-

assessment of current skills and future needs. Technical language such as networked computers, VLE, SPSS, photo-editing and digital appear within these initial audits. The performativity of these eliteracies finds an interesting counterpoint in those community members who foreground their fears and lack of skills. Student 3 uses the terms 'ambiguous' and 'slightly nervous ' in their reflection upon their feelings about technology. In a highly reflexive manner this student links those anxieties to a perceived future 'loss of control' within the classroom based upon their experience of seeing 'lots of teachers struggling with technology over the years…and the disruptive effect this can have in learning.' The community response to this shared asset was intriguing and quite literally produced a flood of talkback from their colleagues (all dialogue is at it appears within the asynchronous format – there is no spell/grammar check requirement within this notice board space). Nine colleagues responded to this initial asset from Student 3 with comments such as:

- o I don't want my students to think I'm incompetent either and disrupt my lesson;
- o the use of technology can be more disruptive than wanted, Keep it simple;
- o when things go wrong they go completely wrong;
- o new technology is always a struggle, I usually find that when I have managed to master one another comes along.

It is not unusual for a group of new teachers in their second week of teaching to fear how they may appear and how they might cope with the disruption if technology lets them down in their professional environment. What is interesting is the shared repertoire of experiences that the community draw upon evidencing that their experiences in education have been catalogued by technology struggles. However, other comments couple the use of technology to a more professional teacher identity:

- o it definitely makes oyu look and feel more professional;
- o technology can be good and has many advantages;
- o I like using technology in my teaching especially powerpoint. It makes teaching look so professional.

As Wenger (1998, p.72) identifies it is the level of discourse at the site of practice where negotiations of meaning are created. For reciprocal dialogue a community must be fostered if it does not contain the conditions to form naturally. The participants of this dialogue were mutually engaged, it may be argued because of the nature of their programme of study. However, what emerges from these patches of dialogue is evidence of the early stages of community maintenance through diversity *and* a shared repertoire. The shared practice of *becoming* teacher and *becoming* reflective writer connects this evolving community despite its complex diversity. The shared 'vulnerability' surrounding the practice of teaching within the group becomes a practice and pursuit in itself. The meaningful statements created by student 3 may be seen to be creating the conditions for dialogue, which may inform future modes of membership and dialogic styles. The danger of course is the pull of the confessional as Ecclestone identifies within earlier requirements for professional reflection. However, the community repertoire displayed or freed ironically within a technological tool such as the eportfolio emphasises its 'history of mutual engagement' (Wenger 1998, p.83) and its ambiguity as its members struggle with their professional, technological and other teaching identities.

A further irony within these narratives is the division of eliteracies into personal and professional domains. Technology as a personal communication tool such as MSN messenger and email are mentioned nine times within the reflective patches as positive and empowering modes of communication within communities but the use of Powerpoint as a professional presentation tool is feared by four of the participants who clearly feel their perceived marginalized rather than legitimate peripheral participation within the teaching community because they have not yet 'mastered' the software. This growing community offer insightful and sensitive readings of the identity constructions of beginning teachers and their, in their words, 'loathed or

liked' relationship with technology. The language of enslavement and colonialisation pepper the patches:

- o I usually find that when I have managed to master one another one comes along;
- o it does concern me how dependent myself and many organisations seem to be on it;
- o technology is empowering but it can also lead to enslavement
- o you have developed a love for the machines . it is good as you will need it to survive the 21st century.

The discourse of survival is not unusual in new teachers' reflections as their first year is often characterised by the language and experience of crisis and survival. What is interesting is the identified role of technology (the machine) to support the survival of 'becoming' teachers. Again the concept of professionalisation and image are coupled to the mastery metaphors as technology is almost an embodied beast to be overcome or tamed. What the patches also highlight is the transient and perceived unreliable nature of technology in the classroom and the need to have a backup plan. The complex 'knowingness' within this group of reflective writers suggests a reflexive awareness of border crossings within the emergent professional landscape(s) of this growing community of practice.

Adopting a blended approach, that is to say face to face coupled with online activities, to facilitating reflective dialogue an equestionnaire was designed and shared with the PGGE group (see Appendix 2 – part 1) later in the first semester alongside ongoing individualised and personalised dialogues with each student. The evolution of a mutually reinforcing and supportive community is dependent upon an awareness of the textures of the participation and the role of peripheries and boundaries. The equestionnaire was designed to be a growing narrative, a collective questionnaire not completed in isolation but one, which was a shared document within the community. Eight of the fifteen students engaged in this shared activity

with the remainder retaining the asset as an individual reflective activity shared with the tutor. It was already becoming evident who the more 'regular' technology users would be. The term 'the regulars' emerged from within the group. They were so labelled by one of the self-classified 'irregulars'. The danger of course is that the use of technology *per se* could become fetishised to such an extent that it could prove divisive, particularly in light of the earlier comments in regard to technology and professional identities. However, as stated the eportfolio was only one of the reflective tools and strategies used with this group and as such offers an interesting study of developing reflective writers.

What are learner perceptions and attitudes towards eportfolio and patchworking?

Elaine - a web we weave, spiralling outwards with attachments becoming part of the fabric.

Claire - like emptying a big jigsaw and building it slowly in pieces. Finding pieces of work that fit together and building from there and then maybe trying a different area afterwards. there's no logical, symmetrical or linear route but emphasis upon drawing out the best points and building upon them.

Access to the technology and the physical appearance of the cultural space was both seductive and off putting as the following dialogue from November 2004 illustrates This early dialogue is suggestive of how the eportfolio as a participatory practice might act to support becomingness and belongingness as Wenger (1998) identifies,

> **JH:** hello everyone still finding this technology bewildering but increasingly addictive - have responded to several of you but not sure if you are aware of it.
>
> **Jane:** I find it quite challenging and have found problems getting involved. Will persevere!
>
> **Alex:** Still getting used to the idea of logging on all the time, but I'm sure I'll figure it out soon.

> **JH:** On logging on all the time - what;s your regular pattern of on-line use then?
>
> **JH:** just popped in for another look eh? What is it about this format that entices us back in for another peep?
>
> **Elaine**: Yes i came back again after my last entry, addictive yes, curiosity yes came back to have a look.
>
> **Elaine:** I do enjoy the informality of being able to pop in and out as i want, i often find it is a break from the formality of working. Working on the computer is testing on my attention span at times and i usually have a break by having a look. The draw is the curiosity and the need for stimulus before going back to work.
>
> **Denis:** It is always bewildering when enter epace. The bubbles entice me and make me anxious to use the technology even more.

Elaine's comment that this dialoguing is a distraction from work is a fascinating comment upon the 'draw' of this shared experience within a specific social context or community of practice. Elaine is quite happy to foreground her nomadic use of the space and the fact that she may just 'look' for stimulation. This interesting adoption of a 'lurker' or 'browser' identity suggests that Elaine is remaking and remodelling her sense of self as user, listener and turn-taker. Harnessing student dialogue and experiences offers an opportunity for the foregrounding of generative themes and a base for investigation, a powerful role of the eportfolio returned to in end-of-year evaluations. As new teachers this community were 'coming to know' each other and themselves as teachers through multiple levels of disclosure.

The danger of course was that at this stage my role was balancing the modelling of 'problem posing' without orchestrating. This was facilitated through responding to and reflecting upon the emerging unresolved predominantly classroom 'problems' presented as critical incidents. As Ellsworth (1989) warns we must be aware of the rationalist assumptions that underpin many of our dialogues with our students and avoid simplistic claims of 'equality' in dialogue. The acceptance of the illusion of equality is both

dangerous and reinforcing of conventional power relations. Progressive educators "occupy an inescapable political role" (Giroux 1996a, p.43) and a focus upon dialogue insists upon a pedagogy of decentring which recognises the priviledging and silencing of discourses. The teaching of (reflective) literacy as a disembodied and decontextualised skill further reinforces the divide between the word and the world. Reflective literacies are often developed through solitary activity and submitted summatively for assessment at the end of a module. A dialogic approach to developing reflection and reflective writing in new teachers as a by-product is driven by a social and political responsibility to encourage all new teachers to enter their profession as reinscribers and deconstructors of text.

As an emerging literacy of computer-mediated talkback became evident within this community I was eager to establish its overlapping nature with other computer mediated literacy events and to encourage an examination of the differences and similarities.

> **JH:** How do you feel about me intruding in your digital learning space?Is my evoice the same or different to my gel pen voice?
>
> **Claire E:** I don't feel like you are intruding but providing another form of contact (or safety net). It is good to know there is someone else at the end of the virtual tunnel who knows which track I am heading along!!! As for your evoice, in this era of technology advancement, I still like to see the gel pen voice and keep a 'real' contact.
>
> **Jane:** I think it's pretty much like having a conversation over email or sms. I think that in general when something is written it can be understood differently than if someone had said something.
>
> **Claire W:** I have no problem with you intruding into my digital space, although I always feel like internet spies may be watching whenever I send anything via the internet. Paranoid I know. Similarly to Jane's comment, this reminds me a lot of msn messenger, where I usually end up rambling. Julie, your e-voice does seem different to me - your sentences are a lot longer and it makes the comments sound more like a train of thought.

> **Valentina:** Hi I don't mind you intruding my learning space, as Jane said it is like talking via e-mail or msn. I don't mind talking to people on pace, but I'm still not convinced about this eportfolio. I find it so much easier on paper!!!!

Valentina astutely was the first to separate out the process from the product and was very comfortable about the use of transferable known skills such as those used on MSN. The compilation of an electronic portfolio was perceived as a different event to 'talking' – so the dialogues of participation were more useful here than the final assessed product. The structure of the participation at this point was more linear as my comments led and determined the nature of the talkback. However, I had no mechanism for controlling the turn-taking or the content of the dialogue and as such it was beginning to offer multilinear and associative dialogue spaces.

Border crossings and negotiations within this narrative culture may provide escape routes from orchestrated roles and spaces for expression. A publicly shared dialogue with Elaine suggested a knowing and sophisticated use of border crossings within the space and a self awareness of the movement between this virtual dialogue space and others:

> **E:** If this message was from some body i did not know i wonder if i would quite so self expressional with my inner feelings and thoughts. It is almost like internet chat rooms where you do not see the person at the other end of your cyber chat.

> **JH:** so...is your digital space a play space rather than an educational space then?

> **E:** It`s a play space which becomes a form of education for me. My best educational and learnig ecpereinces have been achieved from self directed experimentation and doing things at my own pace. It gives me the opportunity to convey my thoughts and beliefs on issues through visual language. Reading the comments on internet spies and the reference to Foucault Discipline and Punish made me sit up and i reflected back to several projects i had created around these issues of surveillance and control.

JH: Post structurialism/post modernity allows us to use our play spaces for re/creation and re/invention. What do you think about these ideas?

E: Mondrians flat geometric structure deemed as true form of pure abstraction banish organic forms and curved lines, only to be thrown into turmoil by Eve Hesse`s `Hang Up` challenging male ideology her response to the critique of modernism (1966). The protruding loop defying all boundaries of sculputre and painting. It defied and crossed the boundaries of male dominated control in the art world and stood firmly against Greenberg`s article in the Partisan Review. Influensial yes it revolutionalised the art world and paved the way for others to express freely. The birth of a new concept and generation of art.

JH: did Hesse's work border cross in ways that resonate for us as reflective writers - if her work is a metaphor for challenge and boundary breaking what 3 key points can we adopt?

E: The challenge to move over the boundaries and challlenge the norms are the only means for progression and change to take place. If convention and the norm had not been challenged i would not be communicating through this format.

For Elaine this was a contradictory play space, a 'safe' enclosed space to express inner feelings, familiar like the 'chatroom'. The element of play and narrative pleasure maps to Murray's (1997) argument that hypertext, "non-sequential writing" (Nelson 1981; Landow 1992) that allows narrative to be organized in mult-linear strands, is an emergent form of pleasurable participatory narrative that supports the collaborative writing of stories (Murray 1997, p.44). The *pleasure* of the narrative event with Elaine and the play space offered however became a two-way conversation reinforcing more traditional tutor/student exchanges despite its community shared asset status. I was delighted with the depth of reflective dialogue but I also aware that the sustained two-way conversation might 'appear' as exclusive. I was asking my students to journey into unmapped literacy terrains where the distinction between the reader and writer were not fixed as in earlier academic writing experiences and in doing so I was aware that the tensions within my dialogue/assessor role

may be felt strongly as contradictory within the community as I inevitably occupied a position of power and authority.

In the attempt to problematise issues of power and community an equestionnaire, Appendix 2 part 1, launched in December 2004, returned to the self-audit issues of the earlier narrative data and pursued the group's perceptions of the benefits of an eportfolio for learning, teaching and assessment. Their responses offered a fascinating insight into their growing understanding of the role of technology and community to support their reflection and their professional development. As the equestionnaire was shared it quite literally grew in narrative depth allowing each community member the possibility to view the earlier narrative strands. Group asset sharing at this stage was still a recent activity, both for technological and group-building reasons. The eportfolio software used was still under development and so presented a 'risk' as learning and teaching tool. However, I was committed to embedding the technology as tool and methodology within my teaching and had to prepare the group for this.

At this point, a third of the way into their PGCE, the group were predominantly concerned with the professional benefits of an eportfolio system over its traditional paper-based partner. Students were concerned with its portability to new markets, particularly employment markets and already recognised that the concept and appearance would create an impact on employers:

> o   its ease of transportation…it will be easier to take out and show future employers.
> o   it can be accessed by anyone who is given permission…the same…as creating your own website
> o   I'm sure that anyone at the moment with an eportfolio who was applying for a job would stand out…It's just far more innovative than a CV and carrying around reams of paper.
> o   It is a format that could allow you to build up into an ongoing profile of yourself even after your course has finished.

The equestionnaire also asked how the use of virtual learning environments had changed the users' perceptions of technology. Students responded that they had found this form of communication to be enjoyable and useful, but sometimes hard 'to get my head around.' WOLF as a repository and early forum sharing space was identified as a positive early community building activity but that the shift to the new electronic literacy demanded by the eportfolio was more challenging. As stated the eportfolio was built in Macromedia Flash but in general students came to the electronic landscape with a shared repertoire and skills drawn from Microsoft products. The eportfolio literacy required in this domain was new, despite many references to its similarity to MSN, text and email, students struggled to acquire this new language within an academic landscape, 'PACE is taking some getting used to as it's dissimilar to word etc….I have faced problems accessing and navigating the site.' However, despite the developing eliteracies and fears of technology, the final reflections requested by the equestionnaire offered hope for future community building and reflective teaching practices. When asked to identify what they had learned from their reflection upon electronic communication and early asset sharing with colleagues the following statements were offered.

On learning and technology:

- o I have learned how much I have learned. I know how I feel about things now and have put into context what I am comfortable with and what I need to work on, rather than one big 'technology meltdown panic. '
- o This has made me think about the value of using pace and the place of IT based learning in the course we're doing and in the education sector.
- o It has made me think that I am actually quite comfortable…it's a bit weird though, I feel like I'm talking but nobody's really there!

On community learning and sharing assets with peers:

- o I enjoy sharing assets as a way of obtaining feedback, this helps me to ensure that I am on the right track and where I need to improve.
- o It is acceptable only if the people have a genuine interest in commenting.
- o It feels a bit strange sharing my writing with everyone.
- o It feel ok…I don't really have much to say about this yet but I'm sure there is potential for a wide feedback and support network.
- o I value the input from colleagues, so it feels OK.

Perceptions were still clearly mixed within the group but it is evident from the examples used that the role of the community and reciprocity was growing. Salmon (2005, p.vii) has identified a 'new generation of teachers and trainers' required for the messier world of online learning. Emoderators, in Salmon's terms, and their student groups must be prepared for time lags, journeying and assemblage – for discontinuity. Salmon (2005, p.81) identifies that the most successful online teachers are "those 'gypsy scholars' working in a portfolio way, and those who have experienced and seen the benefits of leading and constructing knowledge within virtual learning groups". This teacher positioning of 'being in the swim', of flux and fluidity is an important metaphor and methodology for online socialization as the group and I were 'becoming' a community through a mutuality of engagement (Wenger, 1998) where the 'netiquette' of engagement was organically forming. Through early asset sharing, models of interaction and expectation were emerging as a community practice that would grow in strength during the course. The offline community-building activites had clearly had an impact upon the expectations for online dialogue.

What can we learn from the use of eportfolio in teacher education?

At the start of this reflective review I considered my feelings last October when I was introduced to the process and considered it to be a sound tool for encouraging personal development. But only as time has

> gone on and I have shared my journals with others, has
> the true and lasting effect of the process become clear.
> (PGCE student)

The nature of the assemblage of assets within the eportfolio allows for unlimited comment and collaboration. The reader, whether the original author or collaborative partner, of the 'text' is able to *re*author by adding, deleting, editing and modifying dependent upon share permissions. In this 'reader-controlled environment' (Lankshear *et al.* 1996, p.161) trust and reciprocity were vital within the horizontal developing community of practice or 'practitioners'. The community were growing increasingly confident with the shifts. My role was more problematic. As mentor I was clear that the staging of layers of dialogue and intertexuality was linked towards closure and preparing student teachers to be border educators able to work within and across different communities. The continuing sharing of weekly journals grew as I adopted a more generic stance, rather than expert with suggestions and answers, in relation to the shared dialogues. The role of the tutor/mentor within these etivities (Salmon 2002, 2005) is one of flux and compromise as the dialogic power must shift to the community for it to be able to sustain itself. The inherent dilemma and contradiction, of course, is the nature of the gated community (by invitation and permission only) of the eportfolio. However, assets may be shared outside the community through selection and choice thereby creating further peripheral participation.

In the second semester of the PGCE the participatory narratives were determined by and within this group of reflective writers suggesting the building of a sustainable reflexive community independent of me/the university. This community offered the possibility of sustained critique, reflective practices, support and networking beyond the realms of the PGCE. In the decentring of monologic teacher addressivity for dialogic community reflective writing the patchwork process allowed reinscription and multiple narration as this anonymised critical conversation demonstrates:

Student 1: The group were all very distressed and in some cases quite angry about the treatment they had received from the teacher and from the college itself, and wanted to take legal action. They have all paid for the course and some are relying on passing for university entrance in september. I left at the end of the session feeling very presured - the group were relying on me to get them through a years worth of work in 8 weeks.

However, as I thought about the commitment I realised I didn't have the energy or time to go through with it - I am already terachig quite ahigh nuimber of hours in my attempts to combine 6th form with adult experience. I contacted the management to say that I was unable to take the extra classes, having received support fro x and x my mentor. The curriculum manager has now accepted that I am unable to take on extra work, but I was quite stunned and disappointed with her overal response (they are a whingey group, they need to learn to get on with it). It looks as though there will not be anyone else available to help them.

The main thing I have had to take out of this whole mess is the need to draw professional boundaries for myself. I want to help as much as I can with any class, particularly classes that have been badly treated, but there is only so much available tht I can give, and if I push myself too hard then there is a danger all of my classes will suffer because of it. I am a bit disappointed by some of the attitudes I have encountered and the treatment this class have and are receiving, but I cannot get too involved while I have so much else goping on, so I will just have to offer my best support in the time available

Student 2: It's not fair that the curriculum manager should expect so much from you and put this kind of pressure on you into saying yes you would take over the class for extra lessons... I think it must have taken you a lot to say no to your manager, but you should take pride in your ability to have dealt with the situation so successfully and professionally. You can't and shouldn't feel pressured into doing something that you can't phsyically do, as much as you may want to. I think sometimes you just have to detach yourself from such situations and realise that you have done your best and it is now up to the College to sort the problem out.

Student 1: Thanks for the support - I think you are right, if there is one thing that upsets students it is uncertainty and being messed about

Student 3: Firstly congratulations or not bowing to the pressure of taking yet another group, they can be quite sneaky at the college with getting you to teach other classes.

Student 4: x's journal this week really highlights the difficulty of deciding where you draw the line regarding your responsibilities to your students, and x's comments seem to reflect a similar thing. I've found a similar thing in my own placement: there's always more that you can do for your students, and you really need to keep everything in perspective and make sure you prioritise in a way that suits your students AND you. Well done on standing up for yourself - you can't take responsibility for fitting a whole years teaching into a few weeks!

Student 5: I think it was very brave of you to stand firm on this situation and you were right to do so. I think i would have backed down and took on the high work load and sunk in the prosess. Considering you were worried about your acertiveness i think this shows how you have developed.

These exchanges between a group of new teachers demonstrate a politicised knowingness of the 'games' of further education. They did not look to me, their tutor and mentor, as 'expert' to guide and inform but instead to each other for community support, reciprocity and challenge. Student 1 did not disclose with ease within the classroom situation – hence the references to growing assertiveness, yet the horizontal nomadic spaces and identities offered within the eportfolio allowed this student to narrate her reflective story in a highly self-aware manner. Student 4 speaks to and for the group with a sophisticated and knowing collective drawing together of the strands of the patchwork story within pressing professional discourses. This evidences the possibilities for a discursive space for resistance sustained by and through new technologies.

The eportfolio narratives of participation allow the non-essayist writer the freedom to wander informally in a rhizomatic, exploratory and playful manner that is of course itself paradoxically a striated, rigid product of technology. Politicised horizontal

reflective practice within a community of new teachers for demands the break from uniformity and an appreciation of the everyday uses of engaged critical dialogue. In telling the story and inviting a response, reinscription and multiple narration decentre the role of the teacher educator and instead offer a shift of addressivity. As Walker's short story beautifully illustrates it is the aesthetic pursuit of fixing and framing that denies rather than supports creativity. My use of this smooth, yet complicated and at times rigid writing space attempted to 'open up connections and questions' (Stronach and MacLure, 1997) to invite further dialogue. When considering the link between reflective patchwork dialogues and academic literacy in essayist form the PGCE group drew literally and confidently upon their journals and shared narratives and offered their development as reflective of the patches and interactions. The following pieces of student reflective writing draw attention to their constructed and patchwork nature. The students each chose a form of representation that foregrounded how strongly they felt their reflective and classroom development was linked to their community and to their own understanding of how patchwork reflection actually operated in practice. The first patch offers an exciting praxis-driven example of meaning making and specific identification of the role of the community in the (re)production of practice and theory:

> Looking back on my work and personal development over the last eight months, I feel it important to consider the first comments I made in my first reflective journal and my opening thoughts upon reflection.

Week 1 – semester 1

'As the lesson progressed and we were introduced to what the Reflective Practioner was about, I found myself increasingly interested in what I would be required to do. In both my undergraduate and postgraduate degrees I was never able to write in a personal and reflective manner and the thought of doing so was, although fairly daunting quite exciting at the same time…

I think that this module is going to be of great use and benefit to me, Already I feel that I am going to enjoy recording my feelings and progress on the course, as I know that I can express my feelings without being judged by others. I am also taken with the idea that I can use my notes to build upon and develop myself as a teacher over the coming year.'

Despite being excited about the new role I was undertaking as a reflective practitioner, I think that only through time has the worth of the process emerged (Mitchell, 1997; Kyriacou, 2001; Wallace, 2001).

Not only has the writing of the reflective journal been instrumental in the process of self-reflection, as too has the ability and confidence to share my journals with the rest of the group. In the 'Reflective Cycle' suggested by Gibbs (1998), the process of self-reflection is considered in a very neat and circular way, which I have come to find, is not how the process always evolves and fails to take into account the non-linear movement between stages. In the past, I tended to reflect upon incidents by jumping straight in and thinking what I could have and should have done when things have gone wrong, completely missing out the beginning three stages of the cycle: feelings, evaluation and analysis.

I feel that the process of sharing my journals has allowed me to learn from my peers and explore the three stages of the model that I have frequently missed out. Sharing my journals in an electronic format has also facilitated my ease at being able to share feelings with peers that I probably would not do face-to-face. The thoughts and comments from others also aid my evaluation and analysis of situations, importantly helping me to draw upon the incident and find the best way to move forward.

The understanding that online identities and interactions are easier to inhabit than face-to-face communication offers a powerful message to teacher education. This student explicitly identifies the asynchronous narrative format as supportive of a more theorised practice and of peer learning which may be harnessed in a professional network outside of the PGCE. The multilogic narrative practices, as exploratory and creative literacy practices have supported this student to look back and look through earlier reflective practices and lenses. The through-the-looking glass (Bolton, 2001) analogy allows us to draws attention to the constructed nature of text/reflection. The example of student writing above similarly foregrounds and

celebrates its constructed and knowing nature as a principal of reflective practice. This intertwining of narratives and of taking the reflections back into practice was common in the PGCE cohort. This student had become a willing and knowing deconstructor of academic texts such as theoretical models of reflection. This second student's narrative again literally draws attention on the page to the different narrative strands leading to the composition of the final piece of essayist writing:

> In taking on my access class I undertook my first ever team-teaching. This was again a symbolic release of classroom control for me and I struggled for a while with my role in this class: after the first session I commented in my journal
>
> *"team-teaching creates a very different role for me – I am getting used to letting go for some of the session and becoming a part of someone else's class"*
>
> Initially then I felt myself to be separate from the class, a bit of an add-on, uncertain about what my responsibilities were and what I was there for. Having read my journal, X commented that I should remember that I am a teacher and not an assistant, and this caused me to do a bit of searching.
> I think my uncertainty in the class reflected a shift from the concern with "my role – who do I see myself as?" that might normally inform my teaching to "my role –what do other people in this class see me as?": I was focussing on the perceptions of the other teacher and leading from these the perceptions of the students. However, as I spent more time developing my role in the class I became more confident and I think my role developed from that of assistant teacher to that of co-teacher, although I still felt a little bit of tension surrounding this. The lesson I would take from this would be the importance of assertiveness in beginning a relationship with any class, an assertiveness that I think I would now be more able to use (hopefully because I have matured as a teacher rather than just because I have more letters after my name, although this unfortunately does play a small part).
>
> Another comment I made with regards to my initial experiences with the access class was
>
> *"I miss the closer personal relationships I have with learners that I have in my smaller classes."*

> One of my challenges for the coming semester then was to develop strategies for forming personal relationships with larger groups of learners, and this is an area that I put a bit of work in to developing as I met with more big classes.

The inside/outside nature of this reflection expresses a crafting skill in which the student has returned to earlier narratives as' data banks' (Bolton 2001, p.13) to examine current and past-perceived strengths and areas for development. This storying and restorying of the teacher self projects an identity as emerging and becoming as, 'who I am' is not stable and fixed as 'self-definition (is) an ongoing narrative project' (Goodson 1998, p.11) which moves backwards and forwards. The use of the eportfolio as learning and teaching tool and landscape has clearly had an important effect upon this growing community of reflective writers. The 'data banks' offer powerful examples of how narrative is embedded is this community of practice and in their stories of becoming.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

> New digital technologies and multimedia are transforming how we teach and learn. They are transforming our classrooms from spaces of delivery to spaces of active inquiry and authorship. New digital media are empowering students to become researchers, oral historians, and cultural theorists in their own right. Whether constructing their own life stories or interpreting the life stories of others, the digital format transforms students' capacity to synthesize, interpret, theorize, and create new cultural and historical knowledge. In this way, digital formats potentially democratise learning and produce critical subjects and authors. (Weis *et al.* 2002, p.153)

The practice and research undertaken suggest that the new landscapes, such as an eportfolio, may offer exciting 'openings' (Stronach and MacLure 1997) for learning and teaching that support the shift from traditional anxious academic literacy practices of monologic addressivity to a more fluid and exciting literacy 'infidelity' allowing for increasing dialogue and exchange within student groups. The creation of reflective and reflexive communities of practice is a movement to 'situating' the eportfolio within a poststructuralist framework which supports the possibility of multiple readers and writers of 'taking control of the page.' (Blair & Takayoshi 1997, p.360) The research presented in this dissertation offer student narratives, which support the hypothesis that writing within an eportfolio can support the development of reflective practice within communities of practice. The use of a modelled dialogic approach supported by the feedback function within pebblePAD worked to create a predisposition to critical incident sharing through participation. It is not incidental that the intervention was adopted in a blended manner allowing for exploration of perceptions both face-to-face and online. In this context, the small sample size that contributed to the group online activities may be qualified by the

ongoing face-to-face dialogues occurring in the classroom: a blended approach to facilitating reflective dialogue.

The adoption of the blended approach and the reflexivity concerning the use of the technology allowed the students to 'voice' their fears and apprehensions about both the technology and the practice of teaching in what was in their words, "a safe space" supporting the reciprocity required for a community of practice to grow. New technologies such as eportfolios, if valued and embedded within a blended programme can function as powerful developmental tools allowing student teachers to look back upon their development and the representations of their development in a critical and theoretically-engaged manner. Eportfolio 'stories' built in a patchwork manner over time incorporating feedback from peers offer an insight into the shift from unqualified to qualified teacher and allow the playing out of stories of risk.

Stronach and MacLure (1997, p.4) urge us to practise infidelity in our writing and practices in order to challenge certainties of methodology. The strategic uncertainty inherent in this dissertation supports the resistance to closure and offers further narrative patches for consideration.

> I will wait for her in the yard that Maggie and I made so
> clean and wavy yesterday afternoon. A yard like this is
> more comfortable than most people know. It is not just a
> yard. It is like an extended living room. When the hard
> clay is swept clean as a floor and the fine sand around
> the edges lined with tiny, irregular grooves, anyone can
> come and sit and look up into the elm tree and wait for
> the breezes that never come inside the house.
> Everyday Use , In Love and Trouble , Alice Walker 1984

Walker's inside/outside landscape is suggestive of the smooth yet striated spaces offered within the eportfolio. The tensions of writing within the smooth spaces (the comfortable yard), domestic but not domesticated are prey to external forces such as

rain and wind. The clean and wavy comfort of the smooth space offers a beguiling landscape for community. However, as the story also shows power relations and fetishisation of community artefacts such as the quilts are inherent. The 'data banks' drawn upon in this dissertation are small fragments in the narratives of participation and becoming. The examples of early professional dialogue are suggestive of how the eportfolio as a participatory practice might act to support becomingness and belongingness as Wenger (1998) identifies and operate as a transition tool in the shift from student to new teacher. The nurturing and enabling of such communities of practice within a learning landscape such as an eportfolio within a professional course has the potential to create politicised and engaged reflective practitioners who view risk and uncertainty as positive factors – necessary survival strategies in the Post Compulsory Sector.

Blair and Takayoshi (1997, pp.364-5) astutely recognised that as eportfolio teachers/assessors we need to "change our ways of engaging with text. In a sense, we became more than mere graders of the work; we became actual users of the work, a real-life audience interacting with the document." This notion of exploring the active construction of eportfolio learning with the learner is a seductive one which it might be argued creates the conditions for storying and an exploration of the construction of eportfolio selves. The construction metaphor may also be extended to our methodologies as the researcher, engaged in the storying, theorizing and mapping of the eportfolio learning experience, (Kincheloe and Berry 2004, p.2) views "research methods actively rather than passively, meaning that we actively construct our research methods from the tools at hand rather than passively receiving the 'correct' universally applicable methodologies." This research narrative seeks to "wear its seams on the outside" (Stronach and MacLure 1997, p.15) recognising the contradictory nature of the storytelling in the pursuit of telling further stories that retrieve "inquiry as a 'way' that is always already beginning, always already on the

way…a different story…that makes a critical difference not only at the site of thought but also at the site of socio-political praxis " (Spanos 1987, pp.275-6).

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Appendix 1 – a selection of assets – Me and Technology
Student 1
Start Date
11 November 2004
Reflecting on Learning
I currently use technology predominantly for word-processing. I use my own computer at home a lot, and have spent the last 3 years writing my PhD on this and various networked computers. The majority of my work for my teacher training course is also word processed, and I prefer to write pieces in this way rather than handwriting.

I also use the internet a great deal, primarily for research, and have recently been visiting sites such as OFSTED, DfES and Q and A as background for my teaching course. I have recently been introduced to VLEs as well: I had to use a VLE called 'Blackboard' in some teaching I did last year, and this year am using Wolverhampton's VLE 'WOLF'. As part of this, I have been using online interactive documents, such as the interactive 'Lesson Planner', in order to help with my work.

I also use technology to keep in touch with people, through e-mail and msn messenger. I don't have a great deal of experience with spreadsheets and databases, and haven't yet used Powerpoint to create a presentation.

Student 2
Reflecting on Learning
I have mixed feelings about using technology. When it comes to things which I am familiar with, such as word-processing and e-mailing, I feel very positive about the use of technology. I find that word-processing packages mean that I can work far more quickly and time-efficiently than I otherwise could, and that they add a professional element to the work I can produce. In terms of OHTs

and handouts I can create for teaching, I think that word-processing makes material more accessible for students. The fact that you can save and re-use this work is also really helpful.

E-mail is also brilliant, although it does concern me how dependent myself and many organisations seem to be on it. I tend to feel anxious if I haven't checked my e-mail accounts (all 3 of them!) for a few days, just in case something really important has come up! E-mail is also great in terms of sharing documents - quite frequently I will need to e-mail work I've done to colleagues or vice-versa.

However, despite the obvious positive points about using technology and my increasing dependence on it (I find it takes me ages to handwrite documents now, as I do it so rarely!), there are some areas of technology which I find intimidating. The majority of jobs, including teaching, are becoming increasingly dependent on technology, and I worry that my skills won't be up-to-date enough.

I don't feel confident in the use of Powerpoint, and this is something I would really like to improve upon. It's expected now that teachers will be proficient in the use of Powerpoint, and, particularly when teaching large groups, it can be a really effective tool. I feel quite apprehensive about the idea of using technology in teaching situations, as I don't really trust it. I've watched many sessions where a teacher has prepared a great Powerpoint presentation, only to find out that a) the projector hasn't turned up, b) the screen is frozen, or c) there's some undefinable technical fault that means the presentation can't go ahead. As such, you always need a backup plan if you're intending to use technology to teach.

In addition, as a teacher you will need to encourage your students' use of technology. Whilst I feel that this is incredibly important, I don't know if my skills are sufficiently advanced in order to help to instruct other people.

Open Thought
I am currently able to use a wide range of basic IT skills, including use of internet, e-mail, word processing, use of spreadsheets including exel and SPSS, and powerpoint presentation skills.

Student 3
Reflecting on Learning
My feelings towards using technology in learning and teaching are ambiguous. Generally speaking I am fairly confident with regards to using technology I am already familiar with. However, I am slightly nervous with regards to using new technology (such as laptop projectors and computer programming), and I think that these feelings probably stem from the loss of control I will experience - I like knowing exactly what will happen and being able to get the outcomes I want. I have seen lots of teachers struggling with technology over the years (especially video recorders for some reason) and the disruptive effect this can have in learning.

Subject: *Me and Technology*
Posted by: *Sofiah* on 11 November 2004 14:38
This is exactly how i feel Rhi. I don't want my students to think I am incompetent either and disrupt my lesson.
Reply
Subject: *Re: Me and Technology*
Posted by: *Rhiannon* on 11 November 2004 14:40
I think it knocks your confidence if you look as though you are out of control
Reply
Subject: *Re: Me and Technology*
Posted by: *James* on 11 November 2004 14:57
These are very interesting thoughts
Reply
Subject: *Re: Me and Technology*
Posted by: *Seetal* on 11 November 2004 15:14
it definetly makes oyu feel and look more professional when you use technology in producing visual aids
Reply
Subject: *Technology taking over*
Posted by: *Alex* on 11 November 2004 15:16
I agree that sometimes the use of technology in a class can be more disruptive than wanted, keep it simple with good handouts if you ask me.
Reply
Subject: *technology*
Posted by: *Michael* on 11 November 2004 15:23

I completely agree with you. technology can can good and has many advantages. But when things go wrong they go compltetely wrong and can cause desruption and make the teacher look imcompetent. So what can we do about it? Little I think.

Reply

Subject: *Struggling with technology*
Posted by: *Elaine* **on 12 November 2004 19:00**
New technology is always a struggle, i usually find that when i have managed to master one another comes along.

Reply

Subject: *Technology and its advantages?*
Posted by: *Julie Hughes* **on 26 November 2004 19:43**
So, do you experiment or not? Handouts/printing can go wrong also? Are you excited about the possibilities of technology?
Julie

Reply | Edit | Remove

Subject: *Re: Me and Technology*
Posted by: *Imran* **on 11 November 2004 15:14**
identify yur self

Reply

Subject: *Re: Re: Me and Technology*
Posted by: *Julie Hughes* **on 26 November 2004 19:57**
Why identify? Do you like to who you are chatting to in cyberspace?

Reply | Edit | Remove

Subject: *Re: Me and Technology*
Posted by: *Denis* **on 03 December 2004 17:57**
I like using technology in my teaching especially powerpoint. It makes teaching look so professional but when it fails to work, for one reason or the other, I do agree that it could be disruptive. However, one could preempt this disruption by proper planning, eg having OHP as alternative.

Reply

Student 4
Me and technology
Open Thought
I use all forms of computer related technology - this includes the internet and web-sites. I own and maintain a web-site for a club that I am a member of. I use all forms of software packages from wordprocesssing, photo editing, and databases. I use software exclusively for creating lesson planners.

Start Date

11 November 2004

Reflecting on Learning

I consider using technology for learning and teaching in exactly the same way that I have always viewed technology - its a tool! Technology is an enabler, albeit a very powerful enabler. It cannot replace creative thought and never will. It exits to make our work easier in much the same way that a plough made the tilling of a fields a much easier task many hundreds of years ago. Perversly, it has resulted in our lifes becoming far more hectic, because we can do more and do it quicker, we do. Technology is enpowering but it can also lead to enslavemnet. While it has created many jobs it has also made many redundant. But the jobs that have gone were predominately tedious. Technology promotes inovation by making us think about it and how it can be changed, improved or utilised.

Subject: *Intersting*

Posted by: *David* **on 11 November 2004 15:05**

An intersting view. Hope you STE's going well.

Reply

Subject: *Re: Intersting*

Posted by: *Susan* **on 11 November 2004 15:14**

STE going well but am concerned re making up my 40 hrs teaching by Christmas

Reply

Post Comment

Student 5

Me and technology

Open Thought

I like using technology whereever I can in order to facilitate my work or activity. For example, I use the computer to word process my work assignments instead of typing on the normal type writer. Also, instead of writing letters and posting them, on most occassions, I use the internet to send e-mail as long as the receipient has an e-mail address. This is much faster and cheaper, and I can receive a reply much faster. Again, instead of using a normal camera, I use a digital camera that is much sharper and faster.

Student 6
Reflecting on Learning
Using technology in my learning makes learning exciting for me. For example, I learnt my ECDL course using the computer. I took all seven modules using the computer. This developed my knowledge and skills in the use of computers. Again, I learnt and took the driving theory test on the computer. This was also very exciting for me.

Using technology facilitates my teaching. For example, I can search the internet for information or resources that help my teaching. I can use PowerPoint presentation to deliver my lesson. This could make lesson delivery innovative, clear, and easy to produce as handouts.

Subject: *Digital*
Posted by: *Alex* on 11 November 2004 15:07
Who is the one using the digital camera, long live the 35mm!
Subject: *me and technology*
Posted by: *Michael* on 11 November 2004 15:17
From what I read I you like computers or have developed a love for the machines. It is good as you will need it to survive the 21st century. Now that I now you computer knowledge, and backgroud, I know where to turn to for help with a problem. God Bless. OJ
Subject: *Denis - you've been hiding all those skills!*
Posted by: *Julie Hughes* on 12 November 2004 19:21
Ah Ha Denis - you've let the cat out the bag now, already your colleagues are waiting for you to share your invaluable knowledge with them! OJ's already staked his claim! I agree that digital images are sharper - but also see Alex's point about the 35mm - what do you think?
Will you do something for me please? there's someone in our community who would like a chat about powerpoint - have you got any tips that you could pass on from your course?
Look in our community and find Susan Gregory - mention that I suggested that you might have some helpful hints re pp.
Thank you Denis - it's been very interesting to interact with your epersona. You obviously like communicating this way and your writing 'voice' is different. You mention already that you are aware of this and like the immediacy - I'd like you to think this through - what is it about computer mediated conversation that you really like? Do you feel more you here?
Mmm...I'm looking forward to your reply!
Julie

Student 7

I use word-processing on a regular basis, also internet searches and e-mails. I want to learn to use Powerpoint as soon as possible, and later to do the European Computer Driving Licence. At work as a Medical Receptionist I used to input Dr's notes onto a system. I use word-processing for assignments e.g. Unit 5 essay, and for work, e.g. songs and guitar chords for music students. Lesson plans will be done on the planner on WOLF for my placement.

Current problems are that, of this week, I am unable to access WOLF at home, so something has been altered. These problems are very frustrating. I will only be able to use WOLF at Uni or college.

Student 8
Reflecting on Learning

Use of technology for learning and teaching can be very useful as writing is quicker, mistakes can be rectified, work can be saved and printed off, acetates made etc. However, there are disadvantages e.g. access. There can be few colleges and universities where a computer can be guaranteed for all students at any time, certainly not here or at my placement college. Not everyone has a computer at home, or there may be competition for its use amongst members of a family. If it cannot be set up in a quiet room there can be problems with concentration. I also find I learn better from writing things down by hand on paper, so for me there are problems.

Subject: *my reply*
Posted by: *James* on 11 November 2004 15:26
Susan this is very interesting
Reply
Subject: *Re: my reply mark 2*
Posted by: *James* on 11 November 2004 15:27
this is another comment
Reply
Subject: *thought*
Posted by: *Julie Hughes* on 12 November 2004 19:12
You know what Susan - I think that it's really significant that you have been such a huge contributor to these technology dialogues. Have you thought about why this might be? Do you like this form of reflective chat? Had you thought about it as reflective chat? I'd like you to read over your metaphor comments and your technology

comments for clues to answer the questions above!

Re WOLF access - aaaghh - it's a pain isn't it? Have you worked out what it is? Is it a Uni problem? You can call IT services on any internal phone - 2000 to clarify. If there's anything you particularly need from WOLF let me or Moira know and we'll send to a personal email as an attachment.

Thank you for letting me share your thoughts about technology. I'll be interested to hear how you develop your powerpoint skills. Have you asked at your placement college- sometimes learndirect offer short courses.

keep in touch!

Julie

Student 9

Using technology can be challenging I have don`t profess to being a bofin with technology and learn as I use it, just as I am know.

Pace is another challenge and will be another explorative excercise. I had a dabble with this system some weeks ago and expereinced problems but did not have the time to experiment and explore. I feel that this is a good opportunity to have the PACE Electronic Portfolio which I feel will enhance not only my technical and IT skills but will give a professional edge to my personal portfolio profile of me.

Start Date

11 November 2004

Reflecting on Learning

I was never interested in computers and the latest gadgets, i must confess the latest technology was never a must. I have always been a paper file person but it is not until I have began to use technology on a regular basis computers, scanners, power point and internet that I have realsie how dependant I have become on it. I feel that technology loathed or liked for me is a necessity and the more i use it the more i want to explore and expereiment.

Appendix 2 – part 1

Copies of data collection tools:

Equestionnaire piloted 17/11/04

Description
Eportfolio project
Please could you take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire to support our research project
Remember that the boxes are expandable and you may write as little or as much as you like
Once complete return this asset to me

Thank you
Julie
Evidence
Name:

Age:

Technology and me - building on statements made for eportfolio on 11th November

On a scale of 1-5 with 5 as outstanding how would you rate your technology skills today?

Please provide a brief statement about why you have rated yourself with this score

Is this the same as or different to your self assessment (ICT audit)of your general ICT skills?

How has using WOLF and PACE changed your perceptions/use of technology? Please support with examples if applicable

What have you liked/disliked about the WOLF and PACE activities?

What is the difference between an eportfolio and a paper portfolio?

What might be the benefits of an eportfolio?

What are your understandings of patchwork writing? What associations/metaphors does this raise for you?

Reflecting on Learning
How does it feel to share your writing (metaphors and assets) with your colleagues? Why do you think it feels like this?

What have you learned from this reflection upon electronic communication?

Equestionnaire

Description
Eportfolio project
Please could you take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire to support our research project
Remember that the boxes are expandable and you may write as little or as much as you like
Once complete return this asset to me

Thank you
Julie
Evidence
Name:Jim daly

Age:46 & 1/2

Technology and me - building on statements made for eportfolio on 11th November

On a scale of 1-5 with 5 as outstanding how would you rate your technology skills today?
4

Please provide a brief statement about why you have rated yourself with this score
I have used technology throughout my working life and my academic background is in Technology. However, As technology is always changing there is always something new to learn. Therefore I don't think a score of 5 is ever possible.

Is this the same as or different to your self assessment (ICT audit)of your general ICT skills?
No, it's the same

How has using WOLF and PACE changed your perceptions/use of technology? Please support with examples if applicable
It hasn't really changed my perception.

What have you liked/disliked about the WOLF and PACE activities? Is communicating via PACE better than e-mail??
I feel PACE is not very intuitive. It could do with a HCI expert to look it over. As an example the font and the clickable icons are way too small.

I'm don't think PACE is a better communication medium than e-mail. It could be used to comment on submitted work but then again comments can be inserted directly into Word documents

What is the difference between an eportfolio and a paper portfolio?
Paper is a hard copy, en eportfolio is a virtual copy.

What might be the benefits of an eportfolio?
No need for paper, but could be vunerable to data losss.
What are your understandings of patchwork writing? What associations/metaphors does this raise for you?

A selection of indirectly related text.

Reflecting on Learning
How does it feel to share your writing (metaphors and assets) with your colleagues? Why do you think it feels like this?
I value the input from colleagues, so it feels OK.

What have you learned from this reflection upon electronic communication?

That input from colleagues is to be welcomed as long as it is constuctive

Subject: *testinng*
Posted by: *Elaine Riches* on 03 December 2004 07:47
testing
Reply | Remove
Subject: *equestionnaire*
Posted by: *Elaine Riches* on 03 December 2004 08:27

Age 37

Rate my tecnology skills as from 1-5 as 3-4.

I am self taught and never had any formal training or done a course and cannot measure or guage my ability accuratly.

Is it different to ICT audit and general ICT skills my response is Yes - i dont feel that ICT skills audit tests are a true judgement of a persons abilities with technology. I know from my own audit it was computer jargon which was my down fall, not my ability to be able to preform the task.

Like and dislike about Wolf and Pace. No dislikes, i enjoyed the metaphor task.

Eportfolio and paper - weight ratio, immediate contact and response to other peoples messages.

Benefits of eportfolio it is a format that could allow you to continue adding onto and build up into an ongoing profile of yourself even after the course has finished. It would still give you the opportunity for others to view your work and add comments and keep in contact with other people. With the option of making new contacts.

Patchwork writing - it is a web we weave spiraling outward with attachements becoming part of the fabric.

Splash pebble in the calm of the water creating ripples moving out and onward like those of trasnsmitter communication waves. Where do they go and when do they stop.

Reply | Remove
Subject: *E Questionnaire*
Posted by: *Jane Edwards* on 15 December 2004 23:28
Name:Jane Edwards

Age: 25

Technology and me - building on statements made for eportfolio on 11th November

On a scale of 1-5 with 5 as outstanding how would you rate your

technology skills today? 3

Please provide a brief statement about why you have rated yourself with this score

I use technology nearly everday. On the computer I can navigate the Internet and I can also manage and use quite a few different types of computer software.

Is this the same as or different to your self assessment (ICT audit)of your general ICT skills?

I think it's about the same, I haven't improved on my IT skills since completing my IT audit. I have however started using PACE - which has been a bit of trial and error!

How has using WOLF and PACE changed your perceptions/use of technology? Please support with examples if applicable

I enjoy using WOLF as I find it an easy and effective way of communicating with tutors and classmates. I have also found it useful to keep up-to-date with things that are going on in uni.

PACE on the other hand has been a bit more difficult to get my head around. Reassuringly I don't think I am the only one who feels this way. Most of the problems I have faced included accessing the program and also navigating the site. I think practice is the key.

What have you liked/disliked about the WOLF and PACE activities?

Similar to above really. WOLF is useful for contacting people and getting info on lectures / seminars. Whilst I like the idea of PACE and being able to have all of my personal info and thoughts on disc space, I am finding it a bit difficult to get my head around at the moment.

Is communicating via PACE better than e-mail??

I can't really see a difference to be honest! PACE just looks better than my email account.

What is the difference between an eportfolio and a paper portfolio?

For me, I think it's where the future lies. It would be really impressive to be able to store personal info, ideas and thoughts on a disc or web space and then allow potential employers to view it. It's also a lot lighter to carry around.

What might be the benefits of an eportfolio?

I'm sure anyone at the moment with an eportfolio who was applying for a job would stand out of the ground. It's just far more innovative than a CV and carrying around reams of paper. You can also access it any time anywhere.

What are your understandings of patchwork writing? What associations/metaphors does this raise for you?

For me patchwork writing means using work that you have written before and then adding it to another piece of work, then perhaps getting info / work from somewhere else and so on.

In terms of metaphors I immediately think of a patchwork quilt. For obvious reasons - link in the words. I remember seeing an episode of the Simpsons where Lisa is making a patchwork quilt. It had been passed down by women in the family for years and each time a new piece was added by someone else it told a different story, but adding a new patch to the quilt just made it all the more richer in content.

Reflecting on Learning
How does it feel to share your writing (metaphors and assets) with your colleagues? Why do you think it feels like this?

I'm not really bothered about sharing my feelings with people in my class. They all know me pretty well by now and I feel quite relaxed and un-threatened in terms of being judged by what I say.

What have you learned from this reflection upon electronic communication?

It has just made me think that I am actually quite comfortable in using electronic communication. I still have some concerns about

using PACE, but in time I think practice will help me get there. It's a bit weird though, I feel like I'm talking but nobody's really there!
Reply | Remove

Subject: *questionnaire (rhiannon)*
Posted by: *Rhiannon Beaumont* on 16 December 2004 14:35
Name: Rhiannon

Age: 24

How would you rate your technology skills today: 3 to 4

Why: I am fairly confident in technology I have already encounteredc a lot e.g. word, e-mail, internet, and I can learn how to do things quite quickly. But things I have not done so much make me wary and I know their are people on the course with a much higher knowledge and ability level

This is the same as the IT audit

Using WOLF has been quite helpful in terms of finding out about cancelled lectures etc, downloading materials and linking to audits. I have also shared some of my handouts here and would benefit if other people shared theirs in my subject area. PACE has so far been mixed - I have found that my pre-conceptions about technology layout etc e.g shortcuts, way of navigating the site are all slightly skewed and this throws me a bit - like having to learn over. It is not always clear to me where things have gone once I have saved them.

Using the PACE and WOLf has been sometimes helpful and sometimes not. I have generally enjoyed the experience (ish). For the moment I prefer e-mail.

An eportfolio is different from a paper portfolio in the sense that it can be shared more conveniently with a wider audience.

I don't really know what patchwork writing is. I sense that it means working on seperate pieces of work and then linking them together.

It feels ok to share metaphors assets etc. on line. I don't really have much to say about this yet as it is early stages but I am sure there is potential for a wide feedback net and support network
Reply | Remove

Subject: *equestionnaire*
Posted by: *David Cooke* on 16 December 2004 14:37
Aged 24, I rate my technology skills as 3 out of 5. I am confident
using new technolgy and learn through exploring and trial & error. I
think its inportant for us as teachers to be used to technology to try
and keep up with the students who in most cases are far more
experienced than us. My ICT audit shows that I'm comfortable with
ICT but there is always room for improvement. I'm experienced of
using WOLF from my previous studies here at Wolverhampton but
the use of PACE is taking some getting used to as it's a little
dissimilar to word etc. Haven't really used PACE much as yet due to
technical problems so I can't really say at this point but i'll get back
to you. I think a eportfolio will look alot more professional than
paper. I don't know what patchwork writing is but it brings up
pictures of patchwork quilts in my mind!!! Although i haven't shared
with colleagues as yet i think it will seem a little strange at first but
as the group is so well bonded i'm sure it will work out. I've learnt
that i need to resolve the tech problems with my computer and catch
up on the PACE system over January in preparation for semester
two.
Reply | Remove
Subject: *Eportfolio questionnaire*
Posted by: *Claire Watson* on 16 December 2004 14:39
Name: Claire Watson

Age: 25

Technology and me - building on statements made for eportfolio on
11th November

On a scale of 1-5 with 5 as outstanding how would you rate your
technology skills today?

I would rate my technology skills at a 3 today.

Please provide a brief statement about why you have rated yourself
with this score

I'm finding this whole eportfolio challenging for a start!! But I'm
slowly getting the hang of it, and think that my IT skills in general
are passable but could be improved.

Is this the same as or different to your self assessment (ICT audit)of your general ICT skills?

I gave myself marks varying from 1-3 in my IT audit. They were mostly 3s, but there are some specific areas (ie. publishing packages)that I feel less confident with.

How has using WOLF and PACE changed your perceptions/use of technology? Please support with examples if applicable

Using WOLF has been a positive experience, and has built upon my previous use of VLEs in Higher Education. I find it a very useful resource, and it helps when working from home. I really like the idea behind PACE, but am currently finding it a little frustrating as my home computer can't access it and keeps getting stuck on the 'Loading' page. I think I need to spend more time exploring it on my own in order to familiarise myself with it, but accessibility is making this difficult.

What have you liked/disliked about the WOLF and PACE activities?

The WOLF activities have encouraged me to use the VLE more and given me access to off-campus resources. The PACE activities have encouraged me to think about different ways of communicating, but it's a little unsettling at the moment as I don't really understand where my messages are going and who I'm sending things to!

Is communicating via PACE better than e-mail??

PACE enables a dialogue more than e-mail does, so in that sense it's helpful for a course like this. I've no idea if PACE makes things any quicker or simpler, though.

What is the difference between an eportfolio and a paper portfolio?

An eportfolio is far more interactive than a paper portfolio. If what I envisage as the end product of the eportfolio is right, then it will enable links between parts of the portfolio and make it easier to explore. It's also not as rigid as a paper portfolio.

What might be the benefits of an eportfolio?

Wider accessibility; not having to carry a huge bulky folder around; keeping an ongiong record of events.

What are your understandings of patchwork writing? What associations/metaphors does this raise for you?

I've never heard of patchwork writing before. I imagine it to be less formal than some other styles of writing, and more concerned with small parts of writing than a unified, structured whole. I think of it as small pockets of writing coming together in a non-linear way.

Reflecting on Learning
How does it feel to share your writing (metaphors and assets) with your colleagues? Why do you think it feels like this?

It feels a bit strange sharing my writing with everyone, as usually when you do written work it's only seen by a few people. Also, the things we are being asked about concern our own personal responses, so people get to know a lot of things about you quite quickly.

What have you learned from this reflection upon electronic communication?

That I can waffle alot on a keyboard!! Actually, I knew that already. This has made me think more about the value of using PACE and the place of IT based learning in the course that we're doing and teh education sector. Essentially, the technological focus of our society is broadening rapidly, and communication via e-mail, messenger and now programmes like PACE is changing the way that people interact. In that sense, it's interesting to think about this as a medium for communication, and how it differs from paper or oral communication.
Reply | Remove
Subject: *E Questionnaire*
Posted by: *Alex Everitt* on 16 December 2004 14:43
My age is 22 and at the present time I would rate my technology skills at about 3 as there are a number of things that I am capable of doing with certain programs but still find myself getting stuck with certain parts of technology. I've found that this is reflected in the ICT skills tests that I have recently completed on the website, yet I haven't yet done the ICT audit so will be interesting to see how they

compare.

I wouldn't say that the use of Pace and WOLF has changed my perceptions of technology by any drastic amount, it still seems on occasions a necessary evil that has to be completed. In regards to the use of email and using the facility to send reflective journals it does seem a little more useful as I have to word process the journal anyway, it's just an extra click on the mouse button to send it to someone. I don't mind the use of the email faclities, just seems like I'm stuck in front of a computer all the time. I feel that the only disadvantage to the pace system of email is that with my personal email account I'm able to check on my mobile if I have any emails and access them through the mobile for convenience, yet this isn't possible with the pace system.

I feel that there aren't that many differences between the eportfolio and a paper portfolio as I've already stated the work has to be wordprocessed and saved onto a disk anyway, the only difference is that it can be accessed by anyone who is given permission, surely the same as sending an email or creating your own website.

My understanding of the term Patchwork writing is that a person comments on a certain topic and then this is added to by another person and so on. In a way it could become lke a debate which may or may not be beneficial to the person who originally posted the comment. My own thoughts on this method of discussion is that it is acceptable only if the people have a genuine interest in commenting, rather that having to comment as part of an exercise as this may be detrimental for the whole of the class.

Reply | Remove

Subject: *Sharing Writing*

Posted by: *Elaine Riches* **on 16 December 2004 14:50**

Exposure, unveiling, revealing are the feelings of

Reply | Remove

Subject: *equestionnaire*

Posted by: *Claire Evans* **on 16 December 2004 14:59**

Name:Claire Evans

Age:28

Technology and me - building on statements made for eportfolio on 11th November

On a scale of 1-5 with 5 as outstanding how would you rate your technology skills today?

I would rate myself at 3/5

Please provide a brief statement about why you have rated yourself with this score

The reason for this is that I have quite a good command of technology for word processing, spreadsheets, databases and image work as i have used these a lot in the past at both university and in the work place. Over the last 12 months i have been getting to grips with internet use and email. This is mainly due to having my own computer and having the time to play with various components. I have also recently taught myself how to use power ponit for creating presentations as i had only used it on CD-ROM format in the past.

Is this the same as or different to your self assessment (ICT audit)of your general ICT skills?

it is very much the same as my It audit. I haven't really implemented a lot of technology into my teaching yet. I have mainly concentrated on using acetate for presentation work. I am using email a lot more now and internet research

How has using WOLF and PACE changed your perceptions/use of technology? Please support with examples if applicable

I have used wolf mainly for aquiring templates and collecting lesson power point presentations. I have found wolf makes things more accessible when I am not in the university. I have recently managed to access PACE from home which is creating a more positive outlook and turning some initial negative thoughts into postitive ones. I think it comes down to having time to play and take part in discovery learning.

What have you liked/disliked about the WOLF and PACE activities?
I like the idea of PACE being a separate entity with folders to keep the portfolio neat and tidy. I like Wolf as a kind of communications centre. the notice board and forum system allows for way of keeping up to date in the busy life outside of university

Is communicating via PACE better than e-mail??
I have found email easier so far for communication but that is because I understood it more. I have experimented a little with

PACE but never feally felt confident enough to engage and rely on it for communication - hopefully today's session and time to explore over Christmas will continue to change my mind and I will develop a confidence in using it.

What is the difference between an eportfolio and a paper portfolio?
The paper portfolio gives me a tangible, visible document that looks like a hefty piece of work. the eportfolio shows neatly filed document which can be accessed easily. The main difference is the intangibility of it. I also think the 'newness' of it will at first be met with some negativity but continued use and development may change that.

What might be the benefits of an eportfolio?
The benfits of the eportfolio will be its ease of transportation. If the eportfolio is loaded on to CD it will be easier to take out and show future employers.

What are your understandings of patchwork writing? What associations/metaphors does this raise for you?
Patchwork writing for me is like emptying a big jigsaw and building it slowly in pieces. Finding pieces of work that fit together and building from there and then maybe trying a different area afterwards. There is no logical, systematical or linear route but emphasis on drawing out the best points and building on them

Reflecting on Learning
How does it feel to share your writing (metaphors and assets) with your colleagues? Why do you think it feels like this?
I enjoy sharing assets as a way of obtaining feedback. this helps me ensure I am on the right track and where I need to improve. I found metaphors quite difficult at first but have found that the increased use has helped to make it easier.

What have you learned from this reflection upon electronic communication?
I have learned how much I have learned. i know how I feel about things now and have put into context what I am comfortable with and what I need to work on, rather than one big 'technology meltdown panic'