THE ART OF BECOMING: THE SPIRIT AND WHOLE-PERSON LEARNING IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

by

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ABSTRACT

This professional doctoral thesis emerges from my professional practice as a theological educator and is a practical theological inquiry into the question of how tutors might support personal and spiritual formation in theological education for youth ministry.

The empirical research process used qualitative methods, with Appreciative Inquiry forming the overarching approach. Data collection was undertaken using semi-structured one-to-one interviews and focus groups to elicit graduate and tutor experience. Crystallization was used to frame analysis of the data, drawing on thematic analysis and creative approaches, such as I poems and visual representations. Reflexivity was prioritized throughout and undertaken in various creative ways.

Three dimensions of tutor practice are identified as supporting personal and spiritual formation in this context: good practice and flexibility in learning approaches, quality relationships and facilitating growth-promoting space. These are brought into critical conversation with pneumatology, to consider how understandings of the Spirit might inform, challenge and give provocative insight into tutors' practice.

The study contributes to academic conversations about theological education for youth ministry and pneumatology. The integration of sustained reflexivity, reflection on practice, theological reflection and critical engagement with theory have led to fresh understanding and an evolution of my professional practice, thus contributing to the field of practical theology.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BIAPT	British and Irish Association for Practical Theology
CTFG	Core Tutor Focus Group
CYM	Institute for Children, Youth and Mission
DPT	Doctorate of Practical Theology
GP	Graduate Participant
IASYM	International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry
JNC	Joint Negotiating Committee
MA	Master of Arts
MCYM	Midlands Institute for Children, Youth and Mission
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
ODE	Oxford Dictionary of English
PDP	Personal Development Plan
PTFG	Practice Tutor Focus Group
TP	Tutor Participant

Note: Unless otherwise stated, all Bible quotations and references are taken from the NRSV.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a practical theological inquiry, investigating how tutors might support whole-person learning in theological education for youth ministry. It constitutes part of a professional doctorate and thus seeks to generate knowledge from the practice context to develop understanding, expertise and 'professional wisdom' (Lee 2009:10; Bondi et al 2011). Professional doctorates should be relevant to both researchers themselves and the communities of practice they represent (Fulton et al 2013:13). This small-scale, heuristic research project, located in my practice as a theological educator, explores ways in which tutors might support whole-person learning in youth ministry training. Focusing on personal and spiritual formation, which are more challenging to assess than professional and academic development, the practical theological investigation brings data emerging from empirical research into critical conversation with relevant literature, reflection on practice, creative reflexivity and pneumatology.

The study here represents four years' part-time work and builds on writing undertaken earlier in the programme, namely a literature review (Whitehead 2012), academic article (Whitehead 2013c, 2014d) and reflective practice assignment (2014a). These pieces of work contribute to and inform the thesis.[1]

The inquiry focuses on my role as a tutor with Midlands Institute for Children, Youth and Mission (MCYM) and more specifically on areas of personal and spiritual formation experienced by MCYM students studying for BA degrees. The purpose of the research is

[1] The purpose, aims and methodology of the inquiry were also outlined in the initial research proposal (Whitehead 2014b).

to ascertain how tutors' practices contribute to changes in these areas and how this might, in turn, inform practice. My aim is to develop my own practice and contribute to ongoing conversations around the nature, purpose and effectiveness of youth ministry training specifically and theological education more broadly, as well as making a theological and methodological contribution to practical theology.

In Part One I provide an overview of the various contexts which are foundational to the research, situating it within practical theology and my personal and professional context, outlining its relatedness to the professional disciplines of youth ministry and theological education and delineating my use of pneumatology in the practical theological conversation.

Part Two introduces the methodology for the empirical research, with Part Three providing a critical reflection on the research process.

Part Four comprises analysis of the empirical data and its various implications are drawn together in Part Five.

PART ONE: SITUATING THE RESEARCH

Introduction

This part of the thesis provides a detailed outline and exploration of the research focus, aims and background, through the different contexts in which it is situated, seeking to highlight potential contributions to knowledge and practice in the different fields. These different contexts are complex and many elements within them overlap, intersect and coalesce. However, for simplicity's sake they are explored as discrete entities.

The Practical Theology Context

The discipline of practical theology shapes this inquiry contextually and methodologically. Here, whilst acknowledging the breadth and complexity of the field with its diverse approaches and methods (Swinton & Mowat 2006:3), I situate the thesis within the particular practical theological traditions and frameworks that have informed it.

Practical Theology, Critical Conversation and Theological Reflection

An understanding of modern practical theology which fundamentally shapes the approaches within this thesis is that of a critical conversation between lived experience, theological tradition and other disciplines (Pattison 2000b:139-140; Whitehead & Whitehead 1995:43-63).[2] This process-oriented conversation is essentially theological

[2] The critical correlation approach has been traced historically through Church history to the present day (Graham et al 2005:140-166), developed more recently by Tillich (1953) and subsequently revised by others, including Tracy (1981) and Browning (1991).

reflection, which enables critical, reflexive exploration of, and engagement with, human experience, faith and insights from a wide range of disciplines (Graham et al 2005:6).

Within the practical theology conversation, the respective weight given to each of the participating voices has been highly contested. Early proponents of correlation (for example, Tillich 1953 and Hiltner 1958) prioritise Christian tradition but revised correlational approaches allow human experience to inform, influence and shape theological understanding (Lynch 2005:105), resulting in practical theology traditionally being regarded as oriented towards liberal or radical theological perspectives (Pattison & Lynch 2005:410). My evangelical-charismatic background gives predominance to theological tradition, seeing Scripture as the 'normative and infallible truth' (Anderson 2001:55). However, my doctoral journey has necessitated a wrestling with questions around what is 'normative.' Theological traditions are not static but dynamic and mediated by culture and experience (Green 1990:91-92). Similarly, the implicit tenets and values of other disciplines inevitably influence the character and the outcomes of reflection (Ballard and Pritchard 2006:36; Pattison 2000b:246). 'Critical perspectivalism' helpfully allows mutual, correlative conversation and questioning, recognising the distinctiveness and even the potential irreconcilability between the different voices (Bridges & Atkinson 1994:50-51).

Some key dynamics[3] of this theologically reflective conversation process are as follows.

[3] I use this term advisably to underline the way in which these aspects of practical theology are not static or inert but evolving, changing and developing.

A Focus on Practice

Practical theology is 'concerned with actions, issues, and events that are of human significance in the contemporary world' (Pattison & Woodward 2000:7). This provides a direct parallel to the Professional Doctorate, taking lived experience as its starting point and drawing 'us into our ordinary lives, with all their uniqueness, all their limits, all their richness' (Killen & de Beer 1994:78-9). The interaction between theory and practice can be complex, with practical theologians critically exploring experiences, actions, motivations and the implications of these for faith, theory and future practice (Pattison 2013:4). There is 'no straight line from theory to practice' (Cahalan & Miksoski 2014:2), but rather a multi-layered and multi-faceted investigation, encompassing detailed, complex 'experience-near' interpretations of the 'living human web' (Miller-McLemore 2012a:45, 26). Thus, practical theology concerns itself with particular rather than general practice experience – it works with specific contexts rather than generic truths (Kinast 2000:1).

Practical Theology and Reflective Practice

Practical theologians draw on the methodologies of professional reflective practice, a development process which is dynamic, meticulous and methodical and reaches beyond description to critically engage with practice experience (Bolton 2010:1; Rolfe et al 2011:5). As an academic discipline, practical theology combines this systematic rigour and critical analysis with thoughtful, scholarly engagement (Farley 2000:125, Pattison 2000b:247), drawing on the insights and resources of faith – biblical, sacramental, creedal, historical – to underpin and furnish thinking (Green 1990 12-13; Pattison 2000b:139, 141).

Praxis

Theological reflection also emphasises the 'so what?', or implications of the process, identifying action and change arising from the reflection. Here, right acting (*orthopraxis*) as well as right thinking (*orthodoxy*) is characteristic of a *praxis*[4] focus (Bevans 2009:72). It is grounded in action but led by values, seeking to embody belief in transformative and liberative ways, thus potentially becoming a place where faith is interpreted, incarnated and expressed (Graham 2002:7; Swinton & Mowat 2006:5). *Praxis* has tended to use the pastoral cycle as its key framework (Graham et al 2005:188), a model which has informed my training and practice as a youth and community worker, minister and educator.[5]

Praxis usually includes struggle against oppression (Osmer 2008:77), and this fits with the research context, where students learn professional values of anti-oppressive practice, equality of opportunity and empowerment (Young 1999:9). Professional socialisation is at work here,[6] but the desired outcomes are deeper than surface changes in practice. Rigorous reflective engagement with practice, theological tradition and other relevant sources can lead to the development of *phronēsis* – practical, embodied wisdom, which integrates values, attitudes, belief and action (Graham 1996:152-153). This is a 'movement towards insight', an exploratory, integrative process, essential for Christian growth (Killen & de Beer 1994:15; Whitehead 2014a:3).

[4] Praxis finds it roots in Marxist philosophy and Freiran pedagogy (Freire 1996:164; Graham 1996:131-32).
[5] Both disciplines utilise the experiential learning cycle (Kolb 1994), which also is foundational to Osmer's approach to practical theology (2008:11) and the theological action research model offered by Cameron et al (2010: 50).
[6] Professional socialization in this context would be defined as a complex set of processes through which individuals tacitly or intentionally acquire knowledge, understanding and skills, along with a sense of professional identity (Miller 2013:369-370). In the MCYM context this would be understood to involve students internalizing the values, attitudes and practice of a professional youth and community worker into their behaviour and self-concept.

An Exploratory and Creative Discipline

If *phronēsis* encapsulates the 'so what?' of practical theology, *poesis* can be seen as the 'what if?' (Bennett et al 2018:2), a quality which emphasises the creative, exploratory nature of the discipline. Young (2013:413), whilst acknowledging that theology (and particularly systematic theology) may need to be explanatory in the sense of coherently articulating doctrine, emphasises these more experimental, investigative qualities:

> …theology is not a kind of scientific hypothesis to explain the world or anything in it – it is not explanatory as such. Rather, theology is in principle exploratory since its subject-matter is essentially a mystery… where one is concerned with a subject in principle beyond the capacity of human thought then the metaphor of exploring the unknown characterizes something essential about this endeavour.

Theological reflection is thus most effectively undertaken from a 'standpoint of exploration' (Killen and de Beer 1994:16), open to feelings, questions, insights and images that may arise, as experience is brought into conversation with Christian tradition. This openness to imagination, creativity and possibility is a hallmark of *poesis*, which, as a concept, unites art, poetry and 'making' and is focused on attending to the beauty within ordinary things and everyday life (Walton 2014a:13-15).[7] The deeply metaphorical nature of theology (Walton 2014b:xxvi) and the potential for theological writing to be something 'that dances, puzzles, stimulates, delights' (Pattison 2000a219) is characteristic of my own preferred approach, and will be explored more throughout this thesis.

[7] Walton draws on Lefebvre and de Certeau here in her exploration of *poesis*, as well as anchoring the concept within Aristotelian thought.

Practical theology as a discipline is thus creative, imaginative and full of possibilities. It is flexible, open-ended and provisional (Cahalan & Miksoski 2014:4; Pattison 2000b:137).

A Confessional and Reflexive Discipline

Practical theologians are generally 'committed inhabitants of a particular worldview' (Pattison 2013:4) and I understand practical theology to be a confessional discipline in which my Christian faith plays an important part. My theological reflection is grounded in spiritual disciplines of prayer, worship, reflection on and study of Scripture and my own faith journey. I also regard it as a place of potential encounter with the divine and a locus for personal and spiritual change (Ballard & Pritchard 2006:74; Green 1990:129).

This quality of self-implication, characteristic of both spirituality and practical theology (Sheldrake 2006:25), highlights that theological reflection involves taking 'a closer look at the experience *and* at our frameworks for interpretation' (Killen and de Beer 1994:x-xi, emphasis mine). The process necessitates reflexive self-awareness in terms of the lenses or 'frames of reference', through which practical theologians view the world and interpret experiences, reading, theology and research and which are inevitably shaped by background, beliefs, values, upbringing, culture, context and previous experience (Moon 2006:23). This necessitates identifying my own preconceptions and biases, exploring how these impact and influence the whole research process and seeking to develop a more nuanced understanding of myself as an individual and a researching professional (Bennett et al 2018:35). My own positioning within the current thesis will be explored later in Part One.

It is important to highlight that these self-implicative and reflexive qualities not only serve to increase practical theologians' awareness of their own subjectivity and

locatedness, but are also important ways of generating insight and constructing knowledge within practical theological inquiry (Bennett et al 2018:34).

Practical Theology and Whole-Person Learning

I understand practical theology to be both an integrative and integrating discipline (Whitehead 2003:13), and this has been my experience throughout the Doctorate in Practical Theology (DPT) programme and research process. As a 'bridge discipline' (Schlauch 2000:209), practical theology fits with my desire to integrate areas of interest, understanding, theoretical frameworks, practice, experience and research, with my own personal, spiritual, professional and academic development.

The discipline of practical theology thus appears to be congruent with holistic and integrative approaches to learning, encompassing 'whole person knowledge' (Anderson 2001:23). It embraces the affective as well as the cognitive domain, not eschewing analysis and critique, but giving space and opportunity for engagement with feelings, images and emotions (Killen & de Beer 1994:21), creative and reflective writing (Walton 2014b:xxiv-xxx), the visual arts (Ballard and Pritchard 2006:141-2; Nash & Nash 2009:117-131) and the practitioner's own faith journey. Practical theology has helped nurture my relationship with God, creating space to integrate my professional and academic life with my personal spirituality and allowing myself to be challenged in who I am becoming. Practical theology is also a whole-person discipline in the way practitioners bring the whole of themselves to the process, including their vulnerabilities, emotions and problems (Bolton 2010:60). It therefore has significant congruence with the themes of this thesis.

Problems with Practical Theology – Personal Reflections

Although I have found practical theology to be a 'spacious place' (Whitehead 2012:8), during the DPT I have found it difficult to engage in the processes outlined above. Approaches encompassing critical conversation, academic rigour, creativity and personal faith may appear straightforward in theory, but I have found integrating these different aspects problematic. I have become increasingly conscious of my own entrenched positions, the power of internalised cultural and theological 'norms' and ways in which my personality, vulnerabilities and preconceptions constrain my reflection. I long for creative and exploratory processes, but have often found myself playing safe, fearful of stepping outside accepted conventions, causing offense and/or being seen as 'unorthodox.' This is encapsulated in the following autoethnographic poem.

> ***Papier-Mâché***
> *I am a papier-mâché person,*
> *formed of so many layers –*
> *childhood constructs, influences, information,*
> *things spoken and written, heard and read*
> *across the years.*
> *These entities have moulded me and shaped me.*
> *Powerful and passing things,*
> *remnants of my past;*
> *layer on layer, influence on influence,*
> *pasted in place, held fast.*
>
> *I am covered in these words, these snippets,*
> *opinions, judgments, overlapped and overlaid,*
> *things which have nurtured and nourished,*
> *succoured and sustained me.*
> *Comforted me when I was afraid.*
> *When did they cease to serve me well?*
> *How did they come to form*
> *this coating, this veneer,*
> *this hard protective shell?*
>
> *For now I want to bend and stretch*
> *and flex and flow,*

I find myself constrained.
Respect-full.
Care-full.
Fear-full.
Held in place by all the many things
that should have brought me freedom.
And this too-solid shell becomes a place to hide
That traps so much of all I am inside (Research Journal, August 2017).

My theological thinking and writing have been inhibited by wanting to 'get things right' and concerns about others' opinions, resulting in a gulf between the approaches to practical theology that I aspire to and my actual theological reflection. The later part of the doctoral process brought into focus the importance of wresting and wrestling, grappling and struggle in the process of 'doing theology.' This has been challenging, confronting me with painful aspects of my personal history. The layers of my own upbringing, Christian and church experience, constructs of God, professional training and academic theological education inevitably inform and give grist to the mill of my reflection. In seeking to free myself, I have encountered God in challenging ways and sought to 'unlearn' (Alves 1990:14), as well as to learn.

Practical theology, while providing frameworks for rigorous and critical exploration, welcomes processes of unlearning, acknowledges fragmentation, embraces questioning and mystery and is comfortable with messiness. Although this 'fragmentary, partial and unsystematic,' quality (Pattison, 2000b:236) may appear to counter integration, it rather demonstrates that disorientation can be embraced as a significant part of a wider process.[8] Within practical theology's 'creative and constructive disintegration' (Pattison

[8] I acknowledge connections here with Brueggemann's reflections on the Psalms (1991, 2002).

2007b:129) there is room for the tensions and paradoxes which have emerged and which will be explored throughout this study.

Reflection on the Slant

My response to holding together the disparate elements of this complex process during the DPT has been to undertake reflection 'on the slant' (Whitehead 2014a). This draws from the poet Emily Dickinson's counsel to 'tell all the truth but tell it slant' (Dickinson 2016:563), recognising that it can sometimes be overwhelming to encounter things head-on. Reflecting on experience or practice through the mediation of a 'third thing' (Palmer 1998:117, 2004:93) – a story, poem, piece of art, creative endeavour – allows

> …truth [to] emerge from, and return to, our awareness at whatever pace and depth we are able to handle – sometimes inwardly in silence, sometimes aloud in community – giving the shy soul the protective cover it needs (2004:93).

So-called 'oblique' approaches acknowledge the imprecise definition, multiplicity and potential incompatibility of complex objectives and propose processes of experimentation and discovery to engage with them (Kay 2011:3-4). Obliquity acknowledges the iterative and adaptive nature of choices in diverse contexts and the range of perspectives and potential judgements in any situation (2011:172). It recognises that understanding is 'necessarily piecemeal and imperfect' (2011:8). This willingness to embrace complexity, uncertainty, experimentation and multi-stranded and multi-layered processes and objectives has been foundational to my using on the slant approaches in theological reflection, drawing together theological fragments (Forrester 2005) and engaging them in purposeful, playful conversation.

These fragments are drawn from a range of theological sources and seek to provoke, illustrate, question and illuminate. Being an 'artful discipline' (Killen & de Beer 1994:2), practical theology also offers opportunity to integrate creative approaches to reflection and I have developed the reflexive approaches outlined in my reflective practice assignment to enhance my learning (Whitehead 2014a). These include visual arts, crafts, poetry and metaphors – which, when engaged with, can facilitate an appreciation of different perspectives and the emergence of deeper insight and learning. These approaches also potentially enable access to the kind of tacit 'knowing' which is embedded in our ways of being and in our 'feel for the stuff with which we are dealing' (Schön 1983:49).

These fragments are not randomly selected. Instead, the approach resembles the medium of montage[9] in films which involves 'the joining together of different elements in a variety of combinations, repetitions and overlaps' (Willerslev & Suhr 2013:1). Montage creates a rich and multi-layered effect, often utilising multiple allusions, cultural references and explicit or tacit resonances. Montage is also evident in the work of writers such as the poet TS Eliot, whose juxtaposition of images drawn from a range of sources are woven together to form a striking whole. His writing typifies symbolist approaches, being 'indirect, allusive, often obscure and [tending] to concentrate on evoking individual moods and elusive states of mind' (Macrae 1980:10). Metaphor and symbol from diverse literary, mythological and historical sources are arranged to form a 'complex criss-crossing of associations' (1980:10), then combined with almost brutal

[9] Interestingly, montage has been relatively recently acknowledged as a helpful approach to qualitative research (see for example Denzin & Lincoln 2003:4) as an 'interpretive practice,' which allows an 'aesthetics of representation.'

realism. Thus, the use of multiple voices, perspectives, images or allusions does not have to be lacking in structure or discipline:

> Through assembling (choice) bits
> and (otherwise neglected or discarded) scraps,
> through the cut-and-paste reconstructions of montage,
> one may bring alive,
> open the text to multiple ways of knowing
> and multiple sets of meaning,
> allow multiple voices to be heard,
> to speak to (or past) each other
> as well as the contexts from which they emerge
> and to which they contribute. (Pred 1997:135)

In embracing these approaches, I resist a 'tyranny of balance' (Whitehead 2012:13), which my natural caution might engender. In my initial literature review I anticipated that practical theological conversations might 'at times be contentious, uncomfortable, creative, imaginative, confrontational, angry, humorous, confused and bewildering' (2012:15). I would now add to this provocative, unsettling, disturbing, joyful, life-giving and exhilarating. I continue to believe that adopting paradoxical underpinnings for reflection – 'certain uncertainty, serious playfulness and unquestioning questioning' (Bolton 2010:70) – can enable practical theology to 'be filled with a sense of power, promise, expectation, discovery, longing, desire, homecoming, dreaming of dreams, attraction' (Pattison 2000a:219).

Conversation Partners

Having outlined the disciplinary background and my hopes and intentions regarding the practical theological approaches within the thesis, I move on to outline the constituent conversation partners within this particular theologically reflective conversation. I begin

by delineating my personal context, which encompasses the background to my research interest and the reflexive lenses through which I engage with the process.

Personal Context

The personal locus of this research is my experience of undertaking MA studies in my thirties and engaging with academic theology for the first time. Having spent my Christian life in evangelical-charismatic churches, I found myself wrestling with deeply held theological beliefs and questioning previously unchallenged church practices. Concurrent difficulties in my personal life and subsequent therapeutic support contributed to significant personal and spiritual change. My MA research into creative training approaches and deep learning (Whitehead 2003) provided opportunity to engage critically and reflectively with my ministry practice and is foundational to the current research.

This MA course was not explicitly formational but I was nevertheless shaped and changed by the processes of theological and practice-focused reflection, academic learning and engagement with the diverse thoughts, perspectives and opinions within my cohort and the tutor team. This experience was pivotal in my personal and professional life and engendered a committed to supporting the holistic learning and development of others – in youth ministry, broader ministry in churches and communities, theological education (which is the context for this study) and, more recently, school chaplaincy.

Reflexivity

To a certain extent 'all research is researching yourself' (Walford 2001:98) and the impossibility of separating self from research activities is broadly acknowledged (Ngungjiri et al 2010:2). This is even more important in a professional doctorate where researching one's own practice can run the risk of a lack of impartiality, vested interests in the results and over-familiarity with the context, participants and emerging data (Costley et al 2010:6). I have already briefly considered reflexivity in relation to practical theology, but it is helpful to unpack it more fully at this point.

Reflexivity as a concept has been described as 'complex, ambivalent and challenging', carrying varying (though related) meanings in different situations (Bennett et al 2018:41). Within social research it is understood to encompass those attitudes and processes which enable researchers to 'acknowledge how their own experiences and contexts (which may be fluid and changing) inform the process and outcomes of inquiry' (Etherington 2004:31-32). Reflexivity recognises and acknowledges the multifaceted, complex and fluctuating nature of human identity (Bennett et al 2018:42; Etherington 2004:31) but nevertheless helps engage with several key considerations. These include:

- the impact of the researcher's sense of identity and personal history;
- personal motivation, investment and purpose;
- researcher values, beliefs, biases, preconceptions and assumptions;
- physical, emotional and relational aspects of the research;
- issues around social location, personal and institutional power and responsibility;
- external and internal influences on research decisions;
- issues around honesty and transparency.

Reflexivity is supported by the structure and values of professional doctorates, which encourage critical and reflective engagement with the researcher's professional context to enhance practice (Lee 2009:6). Throughout the research I have sought to be aware of my own preconceived ideas, expectations and potential blind spots, using my reflective journal, research supervision and conversations with others[10] to regularly connect with reflexive questions. As a white, educated, professional, middle class woman currently in a charismatic Anglican context but with an evangelical- charismatic background and a long-term vested interest in the personal and professional outcomes of the project, 'robust self-awareness' (Ringer 2002:263) and 'critical subjectivity' (Reason & Bradbury 2001:184) have been crucial.

Within the thesis I seek to prioritise these reflexive aspects, demonstrate openness about my perspectives and 'multilayered [sic] relationship' to what is being explored (Lane 2006:57) and scrutinise my intentions and motivations as well as my theories and methods (Dauphinee 2010:806, 813). I do this through my use of the 'I' voice and through reflective and autoethnographic writing.

Professional Context

My role as Assistant Centre Director of MCYM, between 2004 and 2016, provides the professional context for this study. MCYM is part of the Institute for Children Youth and Mission (CYM), a national training organisation which provides professionally and academically accredited courses for those training in ministry with children and families, young people, schools and communities. MCYM is situated in (and in partnership with)

[10] The Birmingham DPT cohort, my spiritual director and 'critical' friends have all been helpful in this regard.

an Anglican Theological College and takes students from various theological and denominational traditions who undertake placements in diverse churches and Christian agencies.

Pedagogically, from its beginnings in the 1990s,[11] CYM sought to discover a 'third way,' integrating academic theological study with professional youth work training, reflection on practice and practical theology (Mayo 2002:109). This *praxis*-based approach was developed by Bob Mayo and Pete Ward in Oxford Youth Works and provided youth ministry training that was, for the first time, intentionally formational.[12] The tensions of this multi-disciplinary approach and the need for integration are still crucial issues in youth ministry training, as courses negotiate diverse educational and developmental objectives and agendas. Restrictions on time and the constraints of professional and academic validation requirements can lead to training providers adopting either an over-cerebral approach, focused predominantly on academic achievement or a reductionist approach, which downgrades professional aspects to 'hints and tips' skills-development. Both of these are arguably inadequate in equipping youth ministers with the qualities needed for sustainable and fruitful ministry.

Seeking to foster a more integrated approach, the MCYM staff team spent significant time developing a more nuanced articulation of our pedagogical philosophy. This commitment to holistic formation is expressed through a seven-stranded model (Nash et al 2009:4), which encourages personal, spiritual, ministerial, theological, professional, academic and community development. These strands interrelate, overlap and

[11] CYM started admitting students in 1998, although the partnership that began CYM was formed and was operational a number of years before this.
[12] The approach is situated within the overlapping fields of ministerial formation and theological education and somewhere between residential training and distance learning (Mayo 2002:109).

interweave to create learning experiences which engage with the whole person. This approach to formational learning seeks to equip those training for ministry to be professionally competent and theologically informed practitioners *and* people with the necessary personal qualities, character and spiritual maturity to sustain ministry long-term.

Some tensions between these strands highlight those faced by MCYM students,[13] whose experience forms the focus of this inquiry. They are undertaking an academic degree and a professional qualification, while being placement-based and engaging in Christian ministerial formation. Most have a strong sense of vocation and are attracted to MCYM because they want to combine their training with opportunities to grow personally and spiritually within a Christian learning community. MCYM tutors hold a different set of tensions – the diverse expectations of various stakeholders including students, academic and professional validating bodies, placement churches and organisations, the wider youth and community and higher education sectors, the theological college in which MCYM is based and CYM nationally. This complex relational web results in varying sometimes contradictory demands and requirements. I hope the outcomes of this research will inform MCYM tutor practice in cultivating a learning culture and experiences which weave together to support a whole-person approach, within the challenges of these differing 'pulls.'

Whilst academic and professional validation requirements measure the professional, theological and academic strands, evaluating formational aspects of the course – particularly personal and spiritual development – has proved problematic. Anecdotal

[13] I have also observed these tensions in my own development.

feedback and student exit interviews suggest that many students find the course 'transformative' and 'life-changing,' but no research has been undertaken to ascertain what this means or to explore the factors underpinning this. This thesis seeks to provide some qualitative data and analysis to support this conversation.

Disciplinary Context

Youth work in the UK currently faces various challenges, both in the faith-based and broader secular sectors. When I started the research, professionalisation had resulted in the nationally-recognized Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) qualification increasingly being expected by many Christian employers and the move of the JNC from diploma to degree-level[14] had further emphasised academic learning within youth work training. There was concurrent uncertainty about the future currency of the JNC within the field and concerns within the Christian sector about levels of politicization within youth work training requirements. Locally and nationally, drastic cuts to statutory youth services have dramatically changed the professional landscape with many county and city councils having no remaining statutory youth work provision. The Christian youth work sector also faces financial challenges, with many organisations making job cuts and churches increasingly either depending on volunteers for their youth work or combining the roles of children, family and youth worker into one. Changes to Higher Education funding have impacted student recruitment, resulting in much higher fees and students no longer receiving funding for a second degree.

[14] From September 2010 the minimum entry requirement for the 'Professional Youth Worker range' became a BA Honours degree from a university or college of higher education validated by the National Youth Agency.

During the undertaking of this research, CYM was affected by the development of Common Awards for ministerial training within the Church of England,[15] the decline and closure of some Colleges and an increasingly competitive market for continuing providers. This constantly-changing and challenging background means the future of theological training feels uncertain. Further challenges emerge through personal, ministerial and denominational agendas, deep-seated preconceptions around lay and ordained ministry and assumptions and agendas around the standing, priorities and purposes of ministry training. Set in the background of a declining traditional church and the resulting missional and financial pressures, the issues and debates are complex and multi-faceted. This 'shifting sand' of cultural and disciplinary change (Shepherd and Nash 2014:8) make it a crucial time to re-examine pedagogical values and practice within the sector.

The Cultural Context of Youth Ministry

Significant cultural shifts have necessitated appropriate responses from those in ministry generally and youth ministry in particular. The decline in church-attendance and an increasingly post-Christendom and post-Christian culture means those involved in ministry and mission can no longer assume broad knowledge and acceptance of Christian values and norms (Frost 2006:7; Murray 2004:6). Youth ministers in diverse settings increasingly work with young people who are unfamiliar with Christian language and narrative (Collins-Mayo et al 2010:52; Pimlott & Pimlott 2008:80;[16] Savage et al 2006:21). Many Christian young people find the gulf between church culture and

[15] Common Awards in Theology Ministry and Mission are a suite of higher-education awards that are now used for ministry training within the Church of England and other partner churches, validated by the University of Durham.

[16] I am one of the authors of this text, which was published under my former name.

everyday life almost impossible to bridge and end up living 'double lives' (Pimlott and Pimlott 2008:139), espousing 'Christian' values and behaviour in church and secular values and behaviour elsewhere. Anecdotally, this is particularly the case with issues around sexuality and gender identity, where the ethical position of many Christian young people is much more in line with societal norms than with traditional evangelical perspectives. These issues are further exacerbated by young people being at a developmental stage in which they seek their peers' approval and acceptance (Kroger 1996:74).

Youth ministers, though not immune to these pressures themselves, face the challenge of encouraging young people to embrace a 'lived' faith which inspires and informs the whole of life (Cotterell & Hudson 2012). This involves articulating and promoting this kind of discipleship *and* personally modelling a whole-life faith. Relevant knowledge, understanding and skills are insufficient for this; youth ministers also need self-awareness, emotional literacy, personal maturity and integrity to enable them to embody the life of God (Bass and Dykstra 2008:1). Again, this has significant implications for training institutions, raising issues concerning pedagogical approaches, the values underpinning these and the skills, knowledge and attributes of theological educators in youth ministry training contexts.

Theoretical and Conceptual Context of the Research

The research is situated within a web of interconnecting and overlapping theoretical fields, any number of which could have provided the conceptual framework for the research. Theories around development, learning and education, spirituality, youth work and ministry, psychology, formation and culture were all considered to be relevant and

are drawn on as needed. However, the thesis primarily builds on and contributes to a body of existing thinking and discussion around adult education, theological education and formation for ministry[17] and I now move on to explore these more explicitly.

Whole-Person Learning and Adult Education

From an adult education perspective, the underpinning theoretical framework used here is that of 'whole-person' or holistic learning (Heron 1999:23; Whitehead 2013a, 2014a; Yorks & Kasl 2002).[18] This has been delineated as learning which involves 'the whole person, a being that is physical, perceptual, affective, cognitive (intellectual, imaginative, intuitive), conative (exercising the will), social and political, psychic and spiritual' (Heron 1999:23). My understanding of the term draws on concepts of deep learning (Marton & Säljö 1976a:4, 1976b:117) holistic (Schreiner 2009:754) and integrative education (Palmer & Zajone 2010:6) and transformative learning (Mezierow 1991). In summary, I understand whole-person learning to be learning which:

- does not concentrate exclusively on the academic and cognitive but also engages with social and emotional aspects of learning, encouraging consideration of and engagement with the affective as well as the cognitive domain;
- works towards nurturing spiritual development and, in a confessional context, relationship with God;

[17] The semantics around Christian education, ministry training, formation and theological education have been much-debated, but the term theological education is generally used within MCYM so for simplicity's sake I adopt it here.

[18] I have chosen to use the term 'whole-person' rather than 'holistic' learning within the thesis as the word 'holistic' can carry with it potentially unhelpful images of perfectionism and promote binary thinking regarding wholeness and brokenness. I have been influenced in my thinking here by Baker (2009), Betcher (2007) and Pattison (2007b). I explore this issue in more depth in my literature review (Whitehead 2012 37-42).

- engenders deep learning, seeking to go beyond surface memorising of information and facts and promoting the development of attitudes, values and dispositions as well as knowledge, understanding and skills;
- embraces emotional connectedness and multi-sensory experiences within learning processes;
- acknowledges and celebrates difference within individual learning preferences and personality types;
- promotes integration and the development of wisdom (Whitehead 2014d:64-65).

Theories of socially constructed aspects of learning and becoming – specifically the significance of socialisation and internalisation (Berger 1972:140; Berger & Luckmann 1966:149-82) – form a foundation to this project, alongside more phenomenological conceptions of learning, such as the work of Rogers (1983). My professional background has inevitably shaped my values, meaning my approaches are informed by youth and community work values – empowerment, equality of opportunity, informal education and participation (Young 1999:15-16) and adult learning principles – voluntary participation, autonomy, valuing experience, collaboration, reflection and empowerment (Brookfield 1986:9-11; Rogers 2002:14, 42).

Theological Education

Little has been written specifically on theological education for youth ministry, with notable exceptions being Dean and Hearlson (2016) and Linhart (2016), both situated in a North American context. This research contributes to well-documented broader discussions around formation for ministry and draws on the 'critical self-consciousness'

(Kelsey 1993:1) identified within theological education since the 1980s and 1990s, predominantly but not exclusively in North America. Particularly influential is Farley's foundational critique of the fragmentation of theological education (1983), which censures rationalist perceptions of theology as a solely scholarly discipline (1983:10) and the functionalist, clerical, skills-based approach (1983:127). He suggests that integration occasionally occurs within theological institutions 'in spite of and not because of the pedagogy and curriculum' (1983:5). This 'fragmentation' can also be seen in the separating out of spirituality within many theological education institutions, where it has often become a 'poor relation.' Farley's call for a more integrative 'habitus' (1983:31, 181) has provided a foundation for those who propose 'profound, life-orienting, identity-shaping participation in the constitutive practices of Christian life' (Dykstra 1991:50).

Challenges in Theological Education

Theological education, which is normally undertaken within a higher-education framework, still foregrounds academic scholarship and tends to be dominated by 'intellectual, rational logocentrism' (Pattison 2007a:90). This can encourage a 'schooling-instructional paradigm' (Westerhoff 2000:16), which emphasises cognition and thinking (2000:69) and directs institutional energy towards academic learning rather than holistic development and maturity. It also encourages educational methods which favour impartation, meaning that lectures or 'banking' (Freire 1996:53) approaches predominate. This culture is perpetuated by some key maintaining factors: a protestant tradition that values intellectual elucidation and sees 'word' as God's primary way of engaging with humanity (Pattison 2007a:93), a focus on Jesus as 'the Word' (John 1:1) and the prominence of Scripture and preaching in church ministry all contribute towards

this (Whitehead 2014d:64). Arguably, Christian education has prioritised scholarship over developing distinctively Christian approaches to pedagogy (Smith & Smith 2011:3), something this study addresses explicitly.

The practical demands of academic accreditation within Theological Education Institutions necessitate a cognitive focus and this emphasis can engender a culture in which academic ability is valued above skills, character and maturity. Although some courses are adopting newer types of assessment, including visual and digital methods, written assignments still predominate. Assignments and cognitive learning are clearly more easily measured than so-called 'softer' skills. Crowded module descriptors and timetables are also challenging and in youth ministry training this is exacerbated by meeting professional as well as academic requirements. The time pressure of academic and skills-based learning can feel challenging enough, without integrating personal and spiritual aspects as well (Whitehead 2014d:64).

Theological Education – A Brief Overview of the Literature

The strands of various debates are evident within the literature, for example, critiquing existing models in equipping people effectively for ministry (Harkness 2001; Wheeler & Farley 1991:9), re-envisioning theological education missionally (Banks 1999; Cronshaw 2011), exploring the nature of formation generally (Nelson 1988) and spiritual formation in particular (Lindbeck 1996; Wood 1991), issues of virtue (Tracy 1996) and transformation (Loder 1996).

Interest in spirituality in Christian Higher Education in North America is also relevant and is rooted in concerns around a perceived neglect of research into the 'inner life' and spiritual development in this context (Chickering et al 2006; Astin et al 2011). Issues of

faith and learning have also been explored more broadly by a range of authors (for example, Hegeman et al 2011; Wolterstorff 2004; Yust & Anderson 2006), although not explicitly in a theological education context.

Also in a North American context, Warford (2004) and Foster et al (2006) explore teaching and learning in theological education and Bass and Dykstra's edited work (2008) emphasizes the inter-relatedness of discipleship, ministry, education and ministry formation. These texts raise issues and questions that the current research builds upon. Smith's proposal to shape education more holistically through the development of educational cultural liturgies (2009, 2013), also contributes to this conversation. Shaw (2014), writing in a Lebanese context, touches on some practical implications of educating more holistically, although his proposals are not fully developed.

In the UK, Nichols and Dewerse (2011) use quantitative and qualitative approaches to research transformative learning and Mayes (2009) draws from empirical research to explore prayer in formation and learning. Griffiths (2013), notably also researching within CYM, explores graduates' experiences of professional identity. Although these studies have relevance, none bring together the ingredients of theological education, youth ministry and whole-person learning engaged with here.

Theological Educators

The literature above tends to focus on theology and practice, and little has been written specifically about the character and attributes of theological educators. Palmer's work (1983, 1998) is perhaps best known and most widely used in exploring these issues. Working within higher education in the USA, he endorses the significance of the presence, personality and attitudes of educators in a range of settings (1998:1-3). In the

context of medical training, more explicit research has been undertaken into educators' skills and qualities (Fromme et al 2010; Hatem et al 2011; McLean 2001). These obviously do not consider the spiritual dynamics found within ministerial formation but recognise the value of a holistic breadth of skills and attributes.

The lack of any clear theoretical or research-based work exploring the skills, personal attributes and character of theological educators was a significant factor in my motivation for undertaking the research, which I hoped would be able to contribute to this gap in the field.

The Spirit as a Conversation Partner

The theological dimension of this thesis is an exploration of the Spirit as a model for whole-person learning. Throughout the doctoral journey I have used aspects of pneumatology as a critical lens through which to consider and generate insight into education and formation processes. In this section, I outline my rationale for choosing pneumatology as a conversation partner and provide an introduction to key areas of thought that will be developed and engaged with later in the thesis. Before this, however, it is important to articulate my own 'starting points' in negotiating the 'rich and jagged spiritual terrain' of pneumatology (Sakenfeld et al 2007:859).

How to Speak of the Spirit?

Within the Christian tradition the Spirit is understood to be the third person of the Trinity and a trinitarian theology forms a foundation for my own understanding. My practice has been influenced by an understanding of Trinity as 'a model of mutual, self-

giving community' (Fiddes 2000, Whitehead 2014d:65),[19] in which the person of the Spirit is co-equal in nature with and clearly 'distinct' from the Father and the Son (Johnson 2007:50; Turner 1996:175). To reflect this standpoint, I speak of 'the' Spirit (capitalised), to differentiate from the many other diverse and diffuse understandings of 'spirit.'[20] I have chosen not to use the preface 'holy' as this is not consistently used in biblical references to the Spirit.

The language used in pneumatology carries with it implicit theological assumptions and even knowing how to speak of the Spirit can be problematic. Authors use different pronouns - 'it' (for example, McFague 1987; Coakley 2013), 'he' (Smail 2002; Taylor 1972) and 'she' (Johnson 2007; Moltmann 2011). I use personal language to emphasise my understanding of the Spirit's personhood but avoid the use of personal pronouns as I understand the Spirit to encompass both male and female attributes. In terms of biblical engagement, I focus on New Testament perspectives, as the activity of the Spirit in the New Testament correlates more immediately with the issues I am exploring.

Spirit Traditions – Personal Reflections

> Our journeys involve a tension between finding or recognising, being claimed by 'home', and searching for a critical space by seeking to conceptualise and reflect on places in which we have found ourselves. (Bennett et al 2018:105)

My interest in pneumatology was sparked long before I began the doctorate, with strands of influence coming from many years spent in evangelical-charismatic churches, where people expected to see the Spirit moving, but where pneumatology was implicit

[19] The nature of relationships within the trinity are highly contested theologically and my understanding here and at other points is reflective of one particular perspective. Moltmann gives a helpful overview of the broader spectrum of thinking in this area (1992:289-309).
[20] Space restrictions necessitate a curtailment of the potential argument here, which is interesting but not core to the focus of my research.

and tacit, rather than explicit and clearly articulated. This charismatic tradition is, in a sense my spiritual 'home,'[21] with which I maintain an ongoing but often uncomfortable connection, as I experience the 'uneasy balance between commitment and challenge' (Bennett et al 2018:105-06).

Although I believe in the Spirit's active and transformative work in the world and the Church and my own devotional life reflects a charismatic spirituality, I have been deeply troubled (and personally hurt) by unhealthy ways in which I have sometimes witnessed charismatic language and practice used in ministry contexts. Part of locating myself in relation to my 'home' tradition has involved engaging reflectively and reflexively with some of these experiences, one of which is reflected in the following autoethnographic poem.

Casting out Demons

I am surprised
on entering the room to find three here
instead of one. Three ministers
for a meeting, obviously begun
before I got here.
Friends too, I thought,
but not so friendly here:
serious faces, solemn but sincere,
sincerely helping – showing me the way
you say, to freedom.
I am not okay – you start to list the issues,
obviously 'seen', discussed and saved for such a meeting,
revealed by Holy Spirit for my good,
so I can live my life the way I should.

I act immodestly, you declare,
the clothes I wear unbecoming, not fitting the bill
of someone working for a church, and still

[21] 'Charismatic spirituality' has been defined as the tradition in which 'the "encounter with the Spirit" both corporately within the worshipping life of the Church and individually through personal devotion and ongoing work and witness in the world' is the core motif (Cartledge 2006:16). Within this tradition, I have been involved in Pentecostal churches, 'New Churches' (growing from charismatic church movements emerging in the UK from the 60s onwards) and charismatic Anglican churches.

you list further offenses – looking others in the eye, face-to-face
when speaking. This shows a lack of modesty and grace,
- evidence of vanity of the vilest kind.
The way I walk, bringing to mind
a prostitute, you feel,
quoting Scripture to reveal
the truth of the allegation:
Isaiah, Chapter three,
'The women flounce and strut,
haughty and flirting with their eyes,'
It's clear that you despise
what you have seen in me.

And as I sit before
your trinity of might,
you cite the Holy Spirit to endorse
your wisdom and the rightness of your cause.
I believe it all,
I feel a deep embarrassment and shame,
that gives still further credence to your claim.
At twenty two, fresh faced and full of trust,
I take as true
Everything you say.

At twenty-two
I think you know
So much more that I do -
led so clearly by the Holy Spirit.
How could I know the 'Spirit' language
kind of multiplies
the power of the positions that you hold?
I am not bold,
but anxious, keen and desperate to please.
I feel dis-ease, but banish every doubt
and wait for you to cast the demons out. (Research Journal, November 2017)

Why the Spirit?

Personal History and Context

The research process has thus provided opportunity for me to reflect on some negative experiences of charismatic practice: situations in which the Spirit was used to justify or legitimise patriarchal practice, where the Spirit was linked to personal fulfilment and

satisfaction or where supernatural experiences and spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7-10) were perceived as Christian 'badges of honour'. These more negative aspects of the tradition – 'sentimentality, fanaticism, the lust for power' are seen as particularly liable to emerge when the experiential becomes the driving force in these contexts (Walker 1993:44). Facing my own disillusionment and prejudice has been an important aspect of the research process and has led to a rigorous interplay – or wrestling – between my 'hermeneutics of suspicion' in this area (McCarthy 2000:203) and my charismatic theology and practice.

I am particularly interested in the power-dynamics inherent in the kinds of situations highlighted above and these are pertinent to the research context as the course draws many students from evangelical-charismatic backgrounds, with the college in which MCYM is situated being 'gently charismatic' in its practice. I also continue to worship in a church that would identify itself as evangelical-charismatic in theology and practice.

Previous Writing and Study

I engaged in theological reflection around the Spirit and adult learning during my MA and I have previously used pneumatology to explore facilitation in adult learning, recognising ways in which the Spirit could be seen as a model facilitator (Nash et al 2008:44;[22] Whitehead et al 2013:10). Developing further reflection on this during the DPT gave opportunity to further and deepen my thinking and to explore previously unchartered territory. In developing the research proposal, I was aware that I had 'played safe' in my previous explorations and wanted to stretch my thinking and understanding by engaging with different theological traditions of the Spirit to my own.

[22] I am one of the authors of this book, which was written under a previous name.

Space in the Field

Some would argue that the Spirit has been neglected in Western theology (Moltmann 1992:1; Slee 2002:171), although with the spread of Pentecostalism and the emergence of the charismatic movement, pneumatology has more recently experienced a 'renaissance' (Kärkkäinen 2002:11).[23] It continues however, to be relatively under-researched in practical theology (Cartledge 2015xiii). Although much has been written about the formational work of the Spirit in a broad sense (for example, Oden 1992; Shults & Hollingsworth 2008), comparatively few writers have engaged with issues around the presence and locus of the Spirit within education.[24] Even Johns, a key figure in Pentecostal understandings of education and formation, focuses more broadly on spirituality rather than on developing a pneumatology for formation – the Spirit being seen primarily as the grounding for conscientization and incorporation of God's word (Johns 1998:85, 93). One notable study is that undertaken by Lawson (2005), whose doctoral research seeks to bring pneumatology, theological anthropology and adult education theory into critical conversation in a Christian context.[25] From a pneumatological perspective he focuses mainly on Spirit as Paraclete and Creator (Lawson 2005:56-70).

The Spirit and Whole-Person Learning

The Spirit appears to have much to offer an exploration of whole-person learning. New Testament portrayals of the Spirit's work mirror theological educators' practice in

[23] See, for example, relatively recent publications by Cooke (2014), Kärkkäinen (2002), Thistleton (2013), Welker (2006) and Williams (2011).
[24] Writers who have contributed to this conversation include Guare (2001), Hess (1991) and Mayes (2009).
[25] His work draws primarily on theories of transformative learning (Mezirow 1991) and Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development' (1978).

several ways, providing some correlative, practical examples to consider. The Spirit is seen to undertake educative activities such as speaking (1 Timothy 4:1), teaching (John 16:13), opening up understanding (1 Corinthians 2:12), leading into truth (1 John 2:27), enabling (John 4:23-24; Romans. 8:26-28), empowering (Acts 1:8) and sending out (Acts 13:4).

As the person of the Trinity who is most immanent in creation, human experience and personal transformation (Johnson 1950:236-237), the Spirit is also apposite in exploring personal growth and change processes. The Spirit mediates knowledge and experience of God (Romans 8:16, 1 Corinthians 2:11-12) as educators mediate between learners and the material to be learned. The Spirit enables dimensions of God to be experienced affectively, for example, in Acts 2, where the intensity of the Spirit's presence makes the 'encounter' extraordinary (Cartledge 2015:93). The mysterious qualities of such experiences defy simplistic interpretation. These areas of affective engagement and mystery are facets of education which have consistently fascinated me and which emerged in the research process.

Challenges Posed by Pneumatology

Reflecting on the Spirit can be problematic, however. Even the word 'spirit' carries many meanings, from signifying the non-physical part of a person – the seat of the emotions and character, the soul or true self – through to ghosts, prevailing attitudes, distilled liquids, energy, courage or vivacity (ODE 1706). The word is employed in everyday and trivial ways, its usage often loose, careless and even contradictory. Biblically, the etymology is no more straightforward, with the Hebrew (*ruach*) and Greek (*pneuma*) terms encompassing a range of potential meanings, including breath (Genesis 2:7; Psalm

33:6), wind (Numbers 11:17, 31), divine energy or presence (Psalm 139:7), human dispositions or characteristics (Hosea 4:12), angelic or demonic beings (Psalm 104:4; 1 Samuel 16:16) and the essence of the human core (Psalm 77:6) (Sakenfeld et al 2007; Turner 1996:2).

In Christian theology the Spirit is multi-faceted and subject to contested understandings. The Spirit tradition is not a single entity but rather has a multi-variant quality that mirrors the nature of both education and practical theology. Ideas of where the Spirit is at work can be tenuous and subjective. Some see the Spirit as an impersonal force-field. For others the Spirit appears to have become a handy depository for Christian experiences or occurrences that are beyond straightforward understanding. Perceptions of the Spirit within different Christian traditions do not sit easily together but provide sharp theological fragments, which can helpfully provoke, disturb, challenge understanding, shed light and open possibilities for fruitful reflection and practice.

In a sense the Spirit has become 'all things to all people,' (1 Corinthians 9:22) reflecting a 'pneumatological Smorgasbord', or 'necessary pluralism of pneumatologies' (Kärkkäinen 2002:105, 9). The depth and complexities of this field notwithstanding, it is the Spirit's fragmentary and multi-dimensional nature makes pneumatology particularly pertinent to this study.

I have previously explored some relatively straightforward aspects of the Spirit in relation to whole-person learning (Whitehead 2013b, 2013c, 2014d), but am increasingly aware of the temptation to tame and sanitise the Spirit theologically. The Spirit portrayed in the New Testament appears to resist such domestication. Here, the Spirit is

'the free, personal, divine Giver who... cannot be controlled or limited by any ecclesiastical system, by priestly power or by charismatic techniques' (Smail 2002:166).

Spirit on the Slant

The multi-valent nature of the Spirit tradition makes reflecting obliquely or on the slant particularly apt as it offers the opportunity to engage with and embrace rather than overcome the inherent contradictions and complexities. In Scripture, aspects of the Spirit are understood predominantly through metaphor, poetic language, stories and descriptions of the Spirit's activity. Many of the Spirit metaphors[26] highlight things best understood through experience (Ryken et al 1998:390). It is through these glimpses, allusions and fragments that the Spirit's work, character and disposition is perceived, and through these that I explore how the Spirit might shed some light on an understanding of whole-person learning. Using the term 'theological fragments,' I draw on Forrester's appeal for a 'modest, unsystematic theology' which, rather than seeing the theological quest as problem-solving akin to completing a jigsaw, values the fragments themselves as having 'their own integrity and mystery' and the potential to provide 'illumination, encouragement, challenge or warning' with a view to influencing and informing practice (2005:ix).

To summarise, this study takes elements of the pluriform Spirit tradition as a provocative conversation partner to consider how tutors might support whole-person learning in theological education for youth ministry. The purpose is not to present a

[26] In valuing metaphors, I am aware that although many are helpful in creatively opening fresh horizons for understanding, some metaphors can be mundane, hackneyed or clumsy (Avis 2004:101). I therefore seek to be judicious in my choice of metaphors to engage with.

systematic, propositional treatise on the Spirit or an authoritative exploration of the Spirit's role in education, but rather to allow sharp fragments of pneumatology to provoke creative, interrogative and illuminative reflection, which will fund the imagination and generate insight.

At this point, by way of introduction, I outline two aspects which are foundational to my exploration of the Spirit's multiple dimensions – Spirit as breath of life and the Spirit's elemental nature.

Spirit as Breath of Life

> Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit...' (John 20:21-22)

As noted above, the New Testament *pneuma* is understood to correspond to its Old Testament counterpart *ruach* (Kärkkäinen 2002:28). Both can be translated breath or spirit. Here the Spirit is the breath of life, without which the whole of creation would perish. A spirit theology 'takes seriously the fecundity, diversity, range and complexity of life and of life-supporting systems' (McFague 1993:145) and underlines Gods' relational connectedness with creation. The breath metaphor emphasises the utter dependence on God of everything that lives, including humankind (McFague 1993:148). The natural, taken-for-grantedness of breathing is striking here: breathing is fundamental to very existence. It is not usually done consciously or deliberately but reflexively and instinctively. It is invisible, primal, automatic and involuntary.

Through this lens, the Spirit is understood to be a natural, taken-for-granted and fundamental aspect of Christian life, not an optional extra or added bonus. Relationship with the Spirit is instinctual and essential to life in God; it is the source and sustenance of this life and mostly by-passes the mind.

This etymology of spirit is that of breath – deriving from the Latin *spiritus* meaning breath, *spirare* to breathe (ODE 1706). This God-language is also the language of education. It is 'inspiration' (from the Latin – breathing in), which speaks of being stimulated to do or create, of imaginative ideas, of enthusiasm and energy (ODE 896). It is 'aspiration' (from the Latin breathing upon): longing, yearning or seeking something – aiming towards it (ODE 93). It is 'to transpire' (from the Latin to breathe through), to come to be known, to emerge or be revealed – the unveiling of that which is hidden (ODE 1875). It is 'to perspire' (from the Latin to breathe through), conjuring up images of hard work, physical exertion, stress or striving (ODE 1315). It is 'conspiring' (from the Latin breathing together), which not only suggests plotting in secret but collaborative effort or work towards a specific end (ODE 370). Finally, it is 'expiration' (breathing out), the releasing of air from the lungs or the last and final breath – the last gasp (ODE 610). When breathing is a struggle it is brought forcibly into our awareness. Shortness of breath, breathlessness or more serious conditions such as asthma or lung disease make us aware how crucial it is to breathe effectively. When breathing is threatened, life itself is at risk.

The Spirit encapsulates these qualities and attributes, holding the paradoxical potential for life in all its fullness and for a kind of dying within the process. Here, 'deep calls to deep' (Psalm 42:7); response to God is intuitive and instinctual and may by-pass the

mind. These aspects of Spirit challenge much contemporary educational practice, in which the cognitive, thinking and rational aspects of human-being are often prized. As conversation partner the Spirit helpfully emphasises instinctive and invisible aspects of learning and becoming, which are natural and fundamental to living and being.

Due to its connectedness with both the Spirit and education, some of the 'breath'-language identified here will be used specifically to frame reflection later in the thesis.

The Elemental Spirit

The four elements, earth, water, air and fire, were regarded as the basic constituents of the world in ancient and medieval philosophy (ODE 562), and were thought to explain the complexity of every known substance. Three of the Spirit-related metaphors – water, fire and air – highlight the Spirit's elemental nature. 'Elemental' also carries wider meanings - being of the powers of nature, being comparable to a force of nature, a supernatural entity or force, being powerful and primitive and being fundamental or essential to life (ODE 562-3).

Thus, elemental language speaks of natural and supernatural power, potentially both generative and destructive. Like breath, air, water and fire are essential to life, to individual and community existence. They are fundamentals, non-negotiables. They are life-giving and life-enhancing. They are also potentially mutually incompatible, not easily manageable, and if out of control they can be devastating. Air gives life and breath but can blow fiercely in storms, gales, tempests and tornados, leaving destruction and desolation behind. Water refreshes, quenches thirst, revives and cleanses, but can also surge, swell, flood, drown and overwhelm. Fire can glow and purify, give heat, light and protection, but can also combust, blaze, engulf, obliterate and devastate.

We cannot hope to control the force and energy of the Spirit, who, like the wind, will 'blow where [the Spirit] chooses' (John 3:8). The elemental Spirit is disrupter and disturber *as well as* life-giver and sometimes, paradoxically, both at the same time. The vestiges of cliff top bracken, set alight and burned away, leaving only charred stumps and sticks, seem devoid of the possibility of life, yet somehow the very burning is generative and regenerative, breeding new life out of the desolation. Similarly, in the midst of the Spirit's elemental devastation, there is always potential for new life and growth. It is the Spirit to whom the resurrection of Jesus is attributed (Romans 8:11).

Wind and fire are common features of theophanies in the Bible (Ryken et al 1998:393) and these God-encounters are often disruptive, disturbing and life-changing (for example Moses encountering the burning bush in Exodus 3:2-6 or God's presence in cloud and fire leading the Israelites through the wilderness in Exodus 13:21-22). Like these encounters and the elemental metaphors which capture their essence, learning processes are not always easily controlled. Learning brings a complex mixture of experiences – factors which feel life-enhancing and strong emotions such as frustration and anger. Learners may experience loss and grieving as part of the process. To draw on another metaphor, painful struggle and travail can often be part of educational 'birthing' experiences, and individuals can be taken beyond what they feel their limits might be. Nevertheless, the hope that the struggle will be ultimately productive and fruitful can engender a determination to embrace it.

Conclusion

In Part One I have outlined the various contextual strands that form a background to this research: the practical theological background and approaches, my own prior commitments, the practice and disciplinary settings from which it emerges and its theoretical and theological underpinnings. Part Two delineates the design of the empirical research and provides a rationale for the methods used.

PART TWO: RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

Modern practical theology now distances itself from more applied models, as it understands theology to not only end in practice, but to start there too (Bennett et al 2018:64). As an interdisciplinary activity practical theology uses a wide variety of methods to understand context and experience (Pattison & Woodward 2000:15), and this study seeks to understand the particular context and experience through several empirical research methods. This part of the thesis outlines the methodology used within this process.

The research question was developed in consultation with colleagues and the wider field. A paper presented at the International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry Conference in January 2013 drew together some of my initial thoughts (Whitehead 2013:a). Questions and discussion within that session, along with a research seminar at St John's College in Nottingham (June 2013) and a workshop undertaken with the CYM national team in the same year helped me move from the overview of the literature towards focusing the research more specifically and honing the question.

I began to frame the fieldwork with the following question in mind: 'How might the practices and attributes of tutors support personal and spiritual formation in theological education for youth ministry?' The personal and spiritual aspects were the areas of whole-person learning I was particularly interested in exploring, as other strands of students' development could be more easily gauged through existing professional and academic assessment frameworks. The focus on tutor practice corresponded well with

the nature of the professional doctorate. The question was broken down into several other questions as follows:

- To what extent do students experience personal and spiritual change?
- To what do they attribute changes they experienced?
- What factors do they see as having supported these changes?
- How specifically do they do they believe tutors have supported these changes?

I chose to use the language of 'change' rather than 'development' or 'formation' as I felt the latter two words were more value-laden and open to a range of different interpretations. I did not want to assume that changes experienced had been positive or that students had necessarily understood themselves to be in an explicitly formational process.

Working within the MCYM Structures

It is helpful at this point to outline the contextual structure in which the research was carried out. During their three-year course, MCYM students study within a specific cohort – their year group. Each year group has a year tutor who is the first point of contact for any concerns, issues, problems or disciplinary action and who seeks to support students pastorally and academically and engender a sense of community within the cohort. Year tutors meet with students individually at the beginning and end of each academic year but are available to students when needed.

In addition to the year tutor, students are taught by all core tutors[27] and other visiting tutors for their different modules. As the course is placement-based, they spend much

[27] I am using this term to describe college-based tutors who work full- or part-time within MCYM to differentiate between this role and that of the practice tutor.

of their time working in a church or Christian agency, where they are supervised by a Line Manager and also have a spiritual mentor who provides personal and spiritual support. To support their professional learning and development each student also has a practice tutor, who they meet with one-to-one. Some practice tutors are part of the core tutor team, others are experienced professionals who live near the student. Students are also part of a peer formation group which is also facilitated by a tutor.[28]

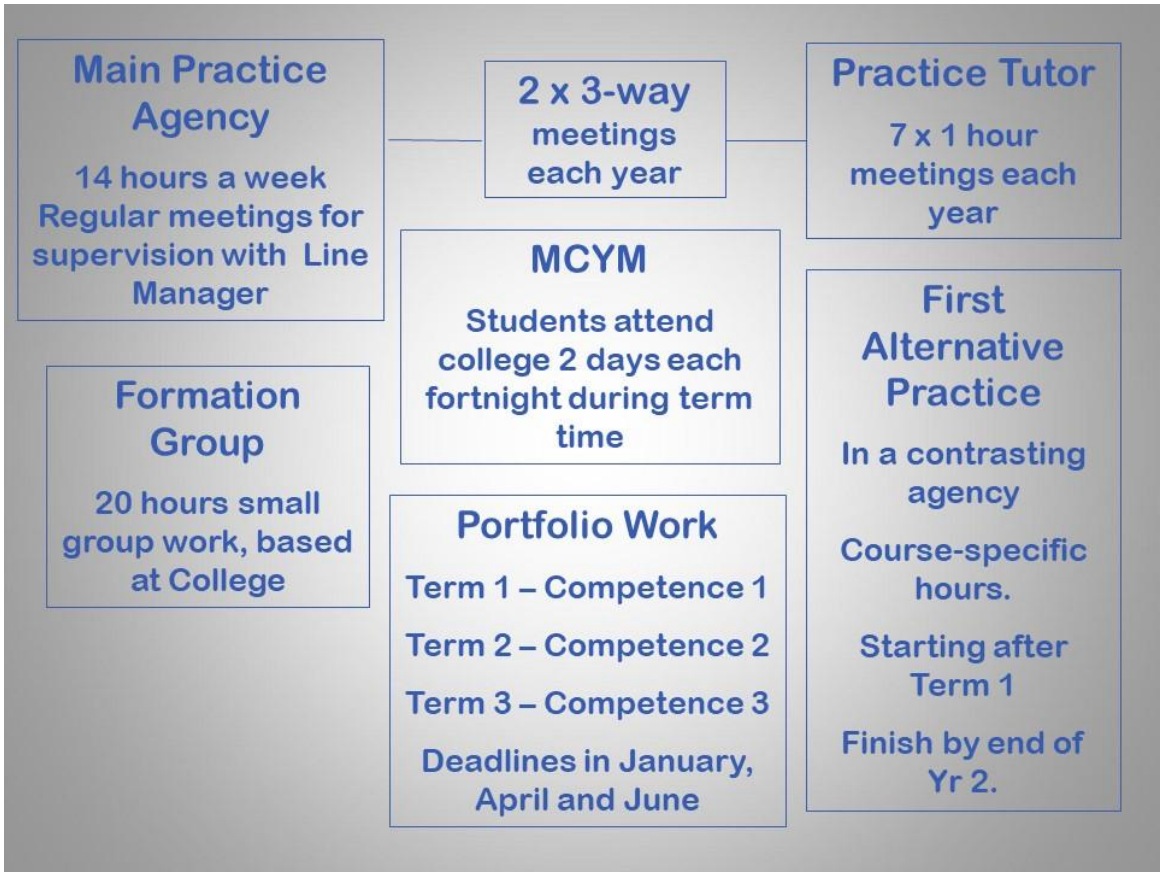


Figure 1: MCYM Professional Practice Structure (MCYM 2016)

[28] The names of different roles and groups have changed over the years and this is reflected in the words of the graduate interviewees, whose time on the course ranges over the preceding 10 years. To avoid confusion, the terms used in the text of this thesis and in all data references has been adapted to reflect the terminology used within MCYM at the time of writing. The exception to this is 'placement' which is more easily understood in broader contexts than the more recent 'Practice Agency.'

As can be seen in Figure 1, in addition to the work undertaken in the main Practice Agency (placement), students also undertake practice in two Alternative Agencies to gain contrasting and complementary professional experience. They are supported in each of these by a Line Manager, who holds a position of responsibility within the organisation.

Research Design

To discover how tutors might effectively support students' personal and spiritual formation, I elected to speak to MCYM graduates to elicit their stories and experiences. I decided against conducting the research with current students due to the potentially problematic power issues engendered by my role in their academic and professional assessment and the difficulty students might feel in choosing not to participate or withdrawing from the research at a later date. Although inevitably still involving power dynamics, relationships with graduates were not impacted by this particular aspect. Furthermore, their reflections would be retrospective, allowing them to gauge the extent to which the course had prepared them for their current ministry roles.

In addition to this I decided to speak to a number of tutors – initially the core tutor team, but then also several practice tutors. Tutors would, I hoped, provide a different, complementary perspective on whole-person learning, with their stories and reflections providing helpful information regarding their professional teaching practice, their understanding of their role in relation to formation, examples of personal change they had seen in students and the extent to which the implementation of a whole-person approach was intentional on their part.

A Qualitative Approach

Focused on human experiences and stories, the research would inevitably have an interpretive quality and draw primarily from participants' perceptions, interpretations and understanding (Silverman 2010:6). It was thus best suited to a qualitative approach, my previous writing having highlighted the complexities involved in exploring a subject of this nature (Whitehead 2012:22). Qualitative research methods, while seeking patterns within the data they generate, acknowledge and value complexity, depth, nuance and multi-dimensionality, rather than viewing them as inconvenient or problematic (Braun & Clarke 2013:4;). Qualitative methods also take context, personal involvement and reflexivity seriously (Braun & Clarke 2013:4). I was aware that qualitative research rarely proceeds in a linear, orderly fashion and was likely to be an iterative, heuristic process (Lee 2009:30), in which the proposed framework would need to change and adapt as the project progressed (Braun & Clarke 2013:4). I sought to be realistic about what could be achieved, acknowledging this to be a small-scale project, undertaken by a part-time researcher and with limited word-count.

I anticipated some quantitative data might also be generated, resulting in 'mixed methods' (Plowright 2011), which necessitate bringing together and shaping the different research into 'a unified, coherent whole' (2011:3-4). I was also influenced by the concept of 'bricolage, with various elements combining and interacting to generate fresh understanding (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:4). This approach was particularly attractive due to the embracing of a 'combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study' which could facilitate 'rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth' (2003:8). This fitted with the complexity, multi-

layered and interweaving nature of the research themes and practical theology as a discipline.

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was chosen as the overarching methodological strategy. AI (Cooperrider et al 2001, 2008), widely used in organizational development, seeks to identify generative narratives and practices within organizations, nurturing and developing organisational strengths, rather than adopting a deficit, problematizing approach (Branson 2004:19). Although evidence-based practice, generally with a problematizing or diagnostic emphasis, would be most commonly used for research in my field (Lee 2009:58-59), AI was chosen for several reasons.

1. In my educational practice I seek to embody aspects of the learning within the process and I wished to use research methods which exemplified this. The values of AI – incorporating collaborative working, participation and the valuing of participants' experiences – are congruent with my personal and professional values and those of MCYM, which as an organisation counts relationship, equality of opportunity, choice, respect, freedom, responsibility, wholeness and justice among its values (CYM 2015:5).
2. The overarching principle of wholeness within AI (Watkins et al 2011:14, 75) recognizes and appreciates the complexity and interconnectedness between different, apparently discrete parts of a system, acknowledging the unpredictability and non-linear nature of organizational change. This embracing of both complexity and wholeness reflects themes explored within and emerging

from the literature review (Whitehead 2012:22, 48) and provides a potentially unifying dynamic, bearing in mind the mix of methods proposed.

3. AI values using images and metaphors, particularly organic and holistic metaphors for change (Watkins et al 2011:18). This reflects the approaches to theological reflection (Killen & de Beer 1994:21) explored in Part One and fitted well with how I intended to engage reflectively and theologically with and through the research process.
4. AI is fundamentally concerned with engendering change, looking to future practice and implementing research outcomes in innovative and imaginative ways. This corresponds well with the purpose and focus of the professional doctorate, which applies learning to professional contexts and enhances professional practice (Lee 2009:6). AI researchers play an active role in interviewing and implementation (Cooperrider et al 2008:104), an advantage in terms of the 'insider' nature of DPT research.
5. The cyclical AI process is congruent with the pastoral cycle (Green 1990:28), the experiential learning cycle (Kolb 1984:42) and the reflective cycle (Moon 2000:73), which, as I have noted, are fundamental to my approaches to learning, reflection, teaching and praxis.
6. As a 'dynamic and iterative process' (Cooperrider et al 2008:101) AI fitted well with qualitative research methods and was an approach I was keen to explore using in my ongoing professional practice.

AI and the Research Process

The AI 4-D cycle forms a five stage strategy:[29]

1. **Definition** - inquiry goals are established, questions framed and the projects specific strategies and structures are developed.
2. **Discovery** – findings and possibilities are shared through conversation and dialogue, primarily through the appreciative interview, in which discoveries, opportunities and organisational qualities are highlighted.
3. **Dream** – when the 'best of what is' has been identified, there is an envisioning of what 'might be', using interview stories to elicit key themes underlying times when the organization has been at its best.
4. **Design** – participants co-construct the future, designing the 'organizational architecture' to create strategic statements of intention, strategically using past successes as a springboard to the future.
5. **Destiny** – innovation and action are harnessed to implement what has been discovered (Cooperrider et al 2008:6-7).

I envisaged that the five stages of the AI process would integrate well with the proposed research strategy (Figure 2):

[29] The definition stage was added to the other four original stages by practitioners at a later date (Watkins et al 2011:36).

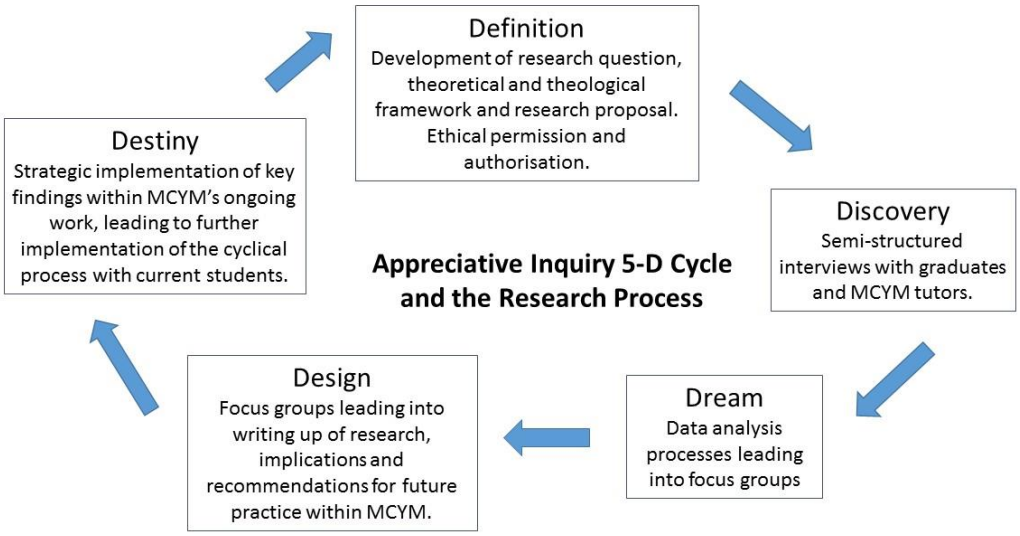


Figure 2: Appreciative Inquiry 5-D Cycle and the Research Process

Challenges Posed by the Use of AI

AI makes no claim to collect data as 'objective reality' seeing the collection and exploration of data rather as a 'jumping off point' to enable dialogue, application and theorizing, which in turn will engender organisational change (Cooperrider et al 2008:104). I recognized that a robust approach would be needed to ensure the kind of methodological and academic rigour required to demonstrate 'doctorateness' (Trafford & Leshem 2008:33).

AI is committed to the widest possible representation from stakeholders, including all who will be impacted by the discoveries made (Cooperrider et al 2008:106). My decision not to involve current students in the research inevitably undermined this principle. However, I hoped this initial small-scale project would inform ways of subsequently involving current students in further AI research.

AI's positive focus raised questions around how 'negative data' might be elicited and processed. I was already concerned that interviewees might find it difficult to speak negatively about their MCYM experience, due to my existing relationship with them. To some extent, using AI side-stepped this issue quite helpfully. Nevertheless, it was important to bear this area in mind as the research progressed.

Data Collection Methods

Semi-structured One-to-one Interviews

Having considered a range of potential approaches, I decided to use in-depth, semi-structured interviews with graduates and tutors as the key research method. Interviews are a key tool in AI and the participants' experiences, stories, interpretations, opinions and knowledge were central to the issues raised by my research question (Mason 2018:111). Widely used in qualitative research, interviews can provide fruitful and informative data (Braun & Clarke 2013:73). The flexibility and adaptability of semi-structured interviews provided a clear structure with space for interviewees to tell their stories, develop their ideas and elaborate (Robson 2011:281). I judged interviews would engender conversation and dialogue, enabling an informal approach with a flexible and fluid structure (Braun & Clarke 2013: 79).

Concerns that not all interviewees are equally articulate and perceptive (Creswell 2009:179) were not judged to be significant here, as the interviewees were all trained in reflective practice and accustomed to presenting reflection on their experiences both in written and verbal form. There was a risk of participants saying little or responding

emotionally to certain questions (Creswell 2007:140) but I was confident that my experience of group facilitation and one-to-one working gave me the skills to meet these challenges should they arise. The significant time commitment involved and a possible lack of breadth (Braun & Clarke 2013:80) were deemed a worthwhile price to pay for the potential depth and richness of the data.

The AI appreciative interview is structured in three stages with opening questions, questions focused on the key topic being investigated and then concluding questions (Cooperrider et al 2008:51-52; Watkins et al 2011:161). I used this framework to develop the interview schedule, a version of which I proposed to send out in advance to interviewees (Appendix 1).

Content Analysis from Data

The analysis of documentary sources is widely acknowledged and valued within social research (Robson 2011:348), and three potential sources of data were identified as being relevant.

- Permission was sought to use exit interview material for the six cohorts of students. Originally generated for course evaluation, review and promotional purposes, I judged this data might generate some helpful themes for analysis and provide helpful material for triangulation.
- My own research journal, comprising reflections on the research, a record of the research process, and ongoing reflection and evaluation of my professional practice and role would be important in keeping an accurate record of the process and for reflexivity purposes. I planned to draw on my experience of

learning journals (Moon 2006) to ensure that this was reflexive, robust and detailed.

- Within the information sent out prior to interviews, participants were invited to use visual or creative means to reflect on their experience if they wished to. I considered this alternative to word-based approaches might be helpful for those with visual and kinaesthetic learning preferences.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were chosen as a means of enabling participants to engage with the emerging themes of the research and to assist in triangulation. This method reflects the participative and collaborative nature of AI, enables the researcher to gather data from multiple participants at the same time (Braun & Clarke 2013:108) and provides opportunity for research participants to engage with each other as well as with the researcher (Costley et al 2010:96). I hoped this would generate rich data as participants would be able to agree, question and challenge each other's responses (Braun & Clarke 2013:108; Bryman 2016:502). The focus groups were designed to be semi-structured and focused around consideration of the initial research findings (see Appendix 2 for the schedule for the first Focus Group). I hoped they would also provide opportunity to observe how the participants made sense of the research data and constructed meanings around it. This kind of 'meaning making' is thought to occur more naturally within a group context than one-to-one (Bryman 2016:502).

Recruitment of Participants

Decisions around the number of participants were made while attempting to balance practical and time constraints with the need for sufficient quality data. Numbers of

participants tend to be much lower in qualitative than in quantitative research (Davies 2010:128) as qualitative research generally provides more detailed data, necessitating a relatively small sample for analysis (2010:128). This was particularly anticipated here, due to the participants' reflective skills.

Graduate Participants

Graduate participants were selected from the six cohorts of MCYM youth ministry students graduating between 2008 and 2013, potentially 108 individuals. Purposeful sampling was undertaken among graduates working in 'Christian ministry,' defined here as working for a church or organisation with an explicitly Christian focus and value base. A fully representative sample was unrealistic, but I analysed statistical data relating to gender, race, class of degree and age to seek broad representation across the six cohorts. Participants were selected from a range of backgrounds and denominations, located within two hours of the College.

Tutor Participants

The four core members of the teaching staff were interviewed, along with three other tutors from the broader teaching and tutor team, two of whose names had emerged through graduate interviews and one who happened to be present at another interview.

All the interviews were conducted face-to-face, digitally recorded and then transcribed.

Ethical Issues around Data Collection

The Ethical Review Form was approved by Birmingham University Ethics Committee (see Appendix 3) and written authorisation obtained from MCYM, CYM nationally and the college I was employed by.

Consent, Withdrawal, Confidentiality and Data Storage

I emailed potential graduate participants inviting them to participate in the research (Appendix 4). Informed consent was sought from those who showed interest and the research was explained in the initial email, an information sheet and verbally before all interviews and focus groups (See Appendix 5 for the Information Sheet and Consent Form). Informed consent was also sought from colleagues within the core MCYM staff team and the wider tutorial network.[30] All participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time.

Interviews and focus group discussions were digitally recorded and data files stored on a password-protected computer. My own written and printed notes were kept securely at home.

Participants were all known to me but their identity was protected through the use of pseudonyms in the transcripts, my notes and all writing up of the research. In the final writing up of the thesis I decided not to use pseudonyms but rather to abstract out the data to further ensure anonymity.[31]

Roles within the Data Collection Process

The roles I adopted during data collection were inevitably fluctuating rather than fixed (Walford 2001:62) and needed careful consideration. They included being researcher, facilitator, observer, participant, learner, former tutor, interviewer and colleague. They were predictably influenced and restricted by the participants' expectations and the

[30] Some minor changes were made to the information sheet and consent form to make them applicable to tutors.

[31] For example, this means that at times in the text of the thesis I have intentionally not specified whether the participant is male or female.

range of differing relationships I had with individuals concerned. The power dynamics inherent within the interactions similarly differed, depending on the history, nature and depth of the relationships concerned.[32]

Power Dynamics

Awareness and understanding of when, where and in what ways power was being exercised (Fox et al 2007:94) was crucial in several ways during the research.

The hierarchical nature of research interviews has been well-documented (Braun & Clarke 2013:88; Cassell 2009:508) and in addition to the fact that I had taught and assessed all the graduate interviewees, I also carried organizational, expert, positional and resource power (Fox et al 2007:88-90), the extent and impact of which varied between individuals. I only interviewed graduates with whom I had no ongoing managerial or academic relationship or close friendship, although some worked as MCYM Practice Tutors, which added unforeseen complexity. The interview would require participants to give an account of themselves and thus there would inevitably be some degree of 'impression management' (Goffman 1971:203). In this regard I considered the impact of the historical student-tutor relationship, which might result in participants saying what they thought I wanted to hear. The AI framework helped here by inviting graduates to share positive stories and experiences, rather than explicitly critiquing my practice or MCYM, which they might have found problematic. To further redress the power imbalance, the participants chose the interview venue[33] and the

[32] For example, I had been year tutor for some students, which has inevitably led to my having more contact with them pastorally. Some had done pieces of work for me or had been to CYM events or our annual retreat.

[33] The exception to this was where the interview was relatively spontaneous because the individual concerned happened to be in College. This happened with two graduate interviews.

project and process were fully explained in the initial email and then verbally prior to the interview. During the interviews I consciously adopted relaxed body language, maintained interest throughout and sought to be accepting and non-judgmental of all that was said (Sarantakos 2013:288).

In the tutor interviews I held positional and organizational power but I did not have direct line management responsibility for any of the participants. Again, I clearly explained the research and sought to put participants at ease in the interview context.

Within the focus groups, I knew that in addition to the issues already highlighted in relation to interviews, the dynamics within the group – including power struggles, different professional roles, historical group dynamics and dominant personalities – were likely to be factors (Robson 2011:295). Within the core tutor focus group (CTFG), the presence of the Centre Director, who manages the whole tutor team (including myself) created an additional power dimension.

The research, with its focus on the positive, was deemed unlikely to cause distress to participants but a named person was available to support anyone for whom the process raised any difficult issues.

Data Analysis Process

Chosen Methods and Rationale

I originally planned to use the appreciative questions suggested in the AI framework to reflect on each individual interview (Watkins et al 2011:168-9), before moving on to the next stage of the AI process – identifying the themes arising. However, for reasons that will be explored in Part Three, I found AI's approaches to data analysis simplistic and

potentially exploitative. I was also keen to use creative approaches, such as art and poetry, which I had found of significant benefit in my own reflection, and which had formed the focus of my reflective work in the third year of the DPT.

The idea of *crystallization*, originally conceptualized by Richardson (1994, 2000) and significantly developed by Ellingson (2009), emerged as a way of engaging with the analysis and representation of complex data. Richardson proposes a turning away from the traditional simple metaphor of the triangle in the research process (triangulation), to the more complex crystal, 'which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, mulitdimensionalities, and angles of approach' (Richardson & St Pierre 2005:963).

Crystallization offered significant flexibility in choices of genre for data analysis and representation, whilst providing a (relatively) coherent and increasingly recognised framework. It embraces the richness and partial nature of accounts, gives space for the complexity of the researcher's position and vulnerability and is cautious about knowledge claims and generalizability (Ellingson 2009:4).

I judged that crystallization would allow me to engage both creatively and reflexively, drawing in learning around reflection and practice, whilst still honouring and valuing the research itself. It was particularly helpful that significant thought is given to ethical issues around data representation, given the multifaceted nature of my own roles within the research process and the nuances of power inherent in these. Crystallisation fits well with autoethographic approaches (Ellingson 2009:23, 62) and I was becoming increasingly aware of the reflexive and potentially autoethnographic nature of my work. Valuing questions, complexity and partial-knowing, it would help me not to over-state

the findings of the research but rather embrace the complexity of the issues raised, whilst valuing and affirming the emerging themes, patterns and perspectives.

My intended use of crystallization as a framework for data analysis is summarized in Figure 3.[34]

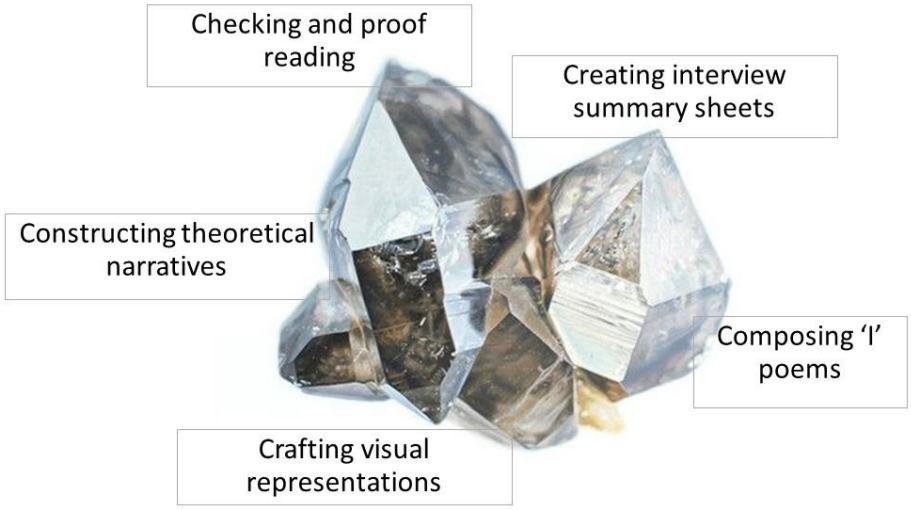


Figure 3: Proposed Use of Crystallisation in Data Analysis

Checking and Proof-Reading

Transcribing the interviews myself enabled me to 'inhabit' and become increasingly familiar with the data (Bryman 2016:483; Rubin & Rubin 2005:204). Similarly, re-listening to check and proof-read, helped me continue to identify emerging themes and patterns.

[34] I created this diagram for a supervision session as a way of exploring the potential efficacy of the approach in my context.

Interview Summary Sheets

Following the AI process, interview summary sheets helped identify immediate impressions of each interview (Cooperrider et al 2008:118). The questions used were:

1. Most appreciative quotable quote?
2. Most compelling story about how participant experienced change?
3. Most life giving moment for me as a listener?
4. Most intriguing 'golden innovation'?
5. Three key themes?
6. Small steps towards possible positive change?
7. Broader steps of positive change?

I used the questions after checking and proof reading each interview, then collated these into a summary table (Appendix 6). This was highly subjective, primarily measuring my personal response to the data, but it cultivated my awareness of the emerging themes, providing starting points for coding as well as supporting my reflexivity.

Thematic Analysis – Towards Theoretical Narratives

To code the data, I adapted an approach from Auerbach and Silverstein (2003:43), which involved making the text manageable by printing the transcripts, selecting (underlining) relevant text for further analysis, coding repeating ideas and then collating these in Word documents under specific themes. This systematic process was effective in immersing me in the data and simultaneously gaining a certain degree of analytical distance from it (Saldaña 2016: 41). At any rate, it revealed the extent to which my initial impressions of the data did not correlate with what was actually said. For example, participants commented significantly on reflection on practice and learning from their

peer group, themes which I had not noticed during the interviews, perhaps because of their taken-for-grantedness in my own practice. These kinds of discoveries demonstrated that the coding and grouping process, though laborious and time-consuming, was productive.

Creating I Poems

I poems were originally conceived[35] as a way of identifying how participants represent themselves in interviews, through paying particular attention to any statements using the personal pronoun 'I'. These statements, along with the relevant accompanying text are highlighted in the transcript, copied and placed in a new document (Kara 2015:117-18). I considered this approach would be particularly useful for foregrounding participants' voices but adapted it by including relevant thematic text, rather than solely the 'I' comments and deleting any detracting 'padding.' I maintained the integrity of the participants' words by not changing their order (from the interview) or adjusting them to make sense or flow more coherently.

Crafting Visual Representations

Having found arts-based methods helpful in my own reflective practice I wanted to integrate these into the data analysis. Although initially unsure of how this might work, I explored a number of approaches including visual mapping (Margulies 2002; Sibbet 2010, 2013), collage (Sokol 2015), drawing (Johnson 2011) and mixed-media (Mawn 2011) to work with and reflect on the data. These were also used in my own reflections and journaling which fed into this stage of the writing.

[35] Credit is given to Carol Gilligan and her colleagues for the development of this approach in the 1990s (Kara 2015:117).

Pulling the Strands Together

During the initial data analysis process around 24 different repeating ideas emerged, and I created Word Documents for each one, gathering together the relevant data (see Table 1 for the list of repeating ideas). As the sifting process progressed, the repeating ideas were collated into broader strands of thought, and aware that I couldn't consider everything in depth, I focused mainly on those which were most relevant to the research question, emerged most regularly or resonated with particular areas of interest – 'sparking' my curiosity and imagination. I sought to mitigate against my own desire to 'tidy up' the data and make it all fit together into a coherent whole, by ensuring I gave space for areas of dissonance and contra-voices.

Table 1: List of Repeating Ideas

Academic	Different views and beliefs	My practice	Space
Achievement	Freedom	Practice tutor	Struggle
Affirmation and encouragement	Impact on practice	Prayer/worship	Support
Bespoke versus box ticking	Investment	Reflection	Teaching and learning
Change	Journals	Relationship with God	Theology
Comparison (with other contexts)	Lifestyle choices	Responsibility	Year group/peers
Confidence	Line manager	Self-awareness	
Core tutors	Modules and sessions (specific)	Small groups	

Conclusion: Challenges and Changes

The basic structure of the research process ran as expected, although inevitably some adjustments and alterations were made as the project progressed. The ethical review process was helpful in identifying some key areas that I needed to attend to, for example, in regard to storage of materials, the length of time the data could be kept for and obtaining authorisation for the research.

PART THREE: REFLECTING ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Introduction

Here I reflect on and analyse some key aspects of the research process, beginning with critical reflection on the effectiveness of the research strategies and methods used. I then move on to explore in detail some issues that emerged in relation to reflexivity and the use of creative processes.

The timeline for the research is shown below, with the majority of the fieldwork undertaken between November 2014 and June 2016.

Table 2: Timescale of the Research

Timescale	Research Activity	
July 2014	Submission of Research Proposal.	
June 2014	Submission of Ethical Review Form.	
August 2014	University ethical permission received.	
September 2014	Organisational authorisation received.	
November 2014 – May 2016	Interviews with graduates undertaken.	Some informal implementation of findings occurred throughout the fieldwork as my awareness of practice issues was heightened.
November 2014 – June 2016	Interviews with tutors undertaken.	
March 2015	Start of data analysis (concurrent with fieldwork).	
December 2015	Practice Tutor Focus Group (PTFG).	

July 2016	Core Tutor Focus Group (PTFG).	
March 2016 – September 2017	Data Analysis.	I left MCYM in July 2016.

The heuristic nature of this type of qualitative research meant that I had expected there to be changes in the planned process as the project progressed (Mason 2018:51), and as a reflective practitioner I expected to be in a process of learning myself and to adapt and change things as I learned and my skills and understanding developed. The research was undertaken in accordance with the University's ethical approval and any changes made were minor ones which were covered under the existing ethical and organisational permissions. The processes of journaling, supervision and reflection with the DPT community and others were essential in supporting my decision-making and in exploring my own responses to the research process and the emerging data.

One key development during the process was the change in my work situation, which meant that I moved from being an 'insider' to an 'outsider' in the research context. Each of these standpoints has advantages and disadvantages. As an insider, my access to information, individuals and, in my context, resources to support the research was invaluable in the early stages of the process. However, the 'blurred relationships' between myself as researcher and the people and context I was researching were challenging at times (Muncey 2010:33). The move to being an 'outsider' was inconvenient in practical ways but helpful in gaining some distance from the context and holding less of a personal investment in the outcomes.

The reflections that follow incorporate material drawn from my research journal, field notes, supervision updates and reports given within the Birmingham DPT group.

Reflecting on the Research Strategy and Methods

AI and the Research Process

The use of AI as an overarching research strategy proved effective in data collection, providing a helpful framework and setting a positive tone to the interviews. I had hoped that using AI would still enable participants to express negative or critical views, but was still surprised by the extent to which this proved to be the case. The future-orientated questions in particular provided opportunity for individuals to imagine improvements within the course and therefore to highlight existing weaknesses and disadvantages. The invitation to conceptualise what 'might be' gave space for participants to recognise the absence of something they hold in their minds as an 'ideal image' (Cooperrider et al 2008:114). Many of the suggestions made will be outlined within the data analysis, but others included: a greater focus on pastoral care within college (GP2 240),[36] a chaplain (GP7 295-305), an annual retreat (GP5 385-89; GP9 269, 394), greater integration with college ordinands (GP7 312-18) and a designated member of staff to work more closely with placements (GP8 511-18). One participant was rather apologetic about their criticisms (GP6 463). Others were diffident about them, seeking to make it clear that they understood why things were as they were (GP2 238-39; GP7 309-10; GP8 514-15; GP9 275-79). Some cited other peoples' opinions about more negative aspects of course experience (for example, GP11 368). These examples of the ways graduates handled

[36] The reference here refers to the specific graduate participant and relevant line number within the transcript.

more negative data suggest that although they did not find it easy to criticise, the AI structure gave helpfully positive ways of doing this.

As mentioned in Part Two, I chose not to follow the 'pure' AI approach once I reached the data analysis stage. I had envisaged this would work well, but once I had the data and revisited the approach, it appeared very simplistic and did not provide the nuanced engagement needed. The interview and focus group transcripts represented real people with backgrounds and situations familiar to me and I was conscious of their time, input and, in some cases, very personal stories. AI's description of 'mining the data' (Watkins et al 2011: 91) at this stage of the process felt potentially exploitative and did not encompass the holistic principles underpinning both the research question and my personal and professional values.

When choosing AI I had also assumed that the research would progress quickly enough for me to implement change within the organisation and although this happened to some extent, the changes were effected less formally. These changes mainly involved the development of my own practice and those aspects of the course that were clearly within my areas of responsibility. My change of job during the data analysis phase meant I was unable to implement the findings myself with current students as I had originally hoped to do. This was an unavoidable weakness of the research.

To summarise, although aspects of the AI process served me well, in retrospect, the latter stages of the model were less suitable for this purpose than the earlier ones. Active participation of current students in the research would have more fully reflected the aims and ethos of AI, but I still maintain that my choice not to do this was right. If I

were to use AI as an overarching strategy in future, I would do this in situations where *all* stakeholders could be fully represented and involved.

Interviews

The recruitment of participants was more problematic than I had envisaged. Few graduates responded to my initial email and I eventually sent out a broader invitation, which generated some responses. I actually ended up using 'convenience sampling' (Bryman 2016:187), working through existing links, relationships and extending invitations to potential participants who happened to be coming into College for other reasons. Although this process was frustrating and time-consuming, it meant I interviewed people I initially would not have considered for the project and ultimately ended up with a broader representation of backgrounds and course experiences. A fear of exploiting my position as a former tutor meant that I was rather tentative and reluctant to 'push' people by sending more than one invitation. Looking back, I could have been more assertive in my approach without misusing power and this is something I would consider in any future project. A total of eleven graduate and seven tutor interviews were undertaken. An overview of the graduate participants can be seen in Table 3. The information has been simplified and limited to that which will not enable participants to be easily recognised.[37] There were seven female and four male participants.

[37] For example, the year of graduation has been removed as has any information pertaining to disability or race.

Table 3: Overview of the Graduate Research Participants				
Interviewee	**Gender**	**Age at start of course**	**Degree Class**	**Current role or context**
GP1	F	19	2:1	Volunteering in a Christian project
GP2	F	19/20	1st	Further study and Christian youth worker
GP3	F	19	2:1	Church youth minister
GP4	F	19	2:1	Christian youth work project leader
GP5	M	20s	2:2	Church youth worker
GP6	M	23	3	Part-time work and voluntary ministry involvement
GP7	F	19	2:1	Theological education
GP8	F	30s	1st	Christian school's work project leader
GP9	F	19	2:2	Project leader – Christian community organisation
GP10	M	20s	2:2	Church youth worker
GP11	M	20s	JNC	Christian youth work project leader

The interviews proved to be an invaluable source of data, but varied significantly, lasting between twenty and ninety minutes. Most, but not all, generated the kind of reflective engagement I had anticipated. I emailed a full interview schedule to the first two interviewees, who came to the interview with extensive notes and seemed quite disconcerted when asked a follow-up question. I felt they were seeking to give the 'right' answers and decided not to send out the questions beforehand for subsequent

interviews but rather to give a summary overview of the interview themes. This less detailed information appeared to support the semi-structured nature of the process more helpfully and the later interviewees appeared more relaxed and spontaneous when responding.

Although the interview guide was prepared in advance, the flexibility and responsiveness allowed by the semi-structured approach (Braun & Clarke 2013:79) was helpful. The schedule was later adapted to reflect pertinent issues that emerged in early interviews, for example, asking about ways the participants' course experience of formation impacted their current ministry practice.

The tutor interviews were undertaken concurrently with graduate interviews. As I later decided to prioritise the graduates' voices, it would have been more helpful to have completed the graduate interviews first, using the tutor interviews afterwards for triangulation. This would have also enabled the emerging data from graduate interviews to frame the tutor interview questions. The questions could then have been more effectively focused to broaden and deepen the level of critical analysis within the process.

Focus Groups

As with the interviews, recruitment for the first focus group proved challenging and I ultimately adopted a convenience approach by holding an optional gathering following an existing practice tutor meeting (PTFG). This meant that the focus group occurred relatively early in the data analysis process. The second focus group, with core tutors (CTFG) was useful and provided some helpful affirmation regarding the emerging themes.

Ultimately, I used comparatively little data from the focus groups, which served more as a sounding board for the ongoing research, rather than providing much additional material. I later wondered about the value of these. In retrospect it would have been more beneficial to have held focus groups when the data analysis had been completed, as a way of critiquing the outcomes of the process. The timing here was influenced by my leaving the organisation and by a number of personal factors which impacted the time I had available at key stages. It is important to acknowledge that 'life' inevitably impacts and influences the research process and that research is carried out in the real, not an ideal world.

Use of Materials

I had envisaged using additional materials far more than ultimately proved to be the case. Exit questionnaires from several student cohorts usefully helped to frame the interview schedule but none of the interviewees chose to take a creative approach to reflecting on their course experience.

My research journal was invaluable throughout, although it was much more ad hoc than I had anticipated and in several different places and forms. Digital notes on my laptop, updates for supervision, written pieces on A4 paper and pieces of artwork all became rich sources of reflective material. My personal art journal became an additional source of insight into my personal and spiritual development through the process (Hieb 2005), something I often only noticed on rereading it much later.

Ethical Considerations

Considering ethical issues was crucial, not only in ensuring that my research practice was safe, responsible and appropriate, but also in fostering reflective and reflexive

deliberation about my decision-making throughout the process. Two areas of particular interest which emerged were as follows.

1. Issues Around Anonymity

Working with participants that I knew and who knew each other was a challenge. As the research progressed I found I was hearing the 'same story' from different perspectives. This was particularly interesting when interviewing practice tutors who had been mentioned specifically by students. Tutor descriptions of the students' development through the course provided fascinating comparisons to the graduates' own perspectives. It was essential but not always easy to ensure that I did not disclose participants' identities to others (Bryman 2016:145), even though at times it would have been interesting to have asked more probing questions about individuals.

It was particularly challenging to link the participants' voices and stories with their historic, structural and socio-economic contexts (Ellingson 2009:40). Although I wanted to maintain this kind of connected integrity with the data, doing so would have made some participants' identities recognisable, due to small size of the organisation and the nature of the student body. This meant that some interesting implications regarding student experience were not as fore-fronted as they might otherwise have been, but I regarded this as the lesser of two evils.

2. Fluid and Overlapping Roles: A Critical Incident

My own role within the process was a factor throughout the research and I used a form of critical incident analysis (Scaife 2010:41-42) to reflect on a specific situation in the PTFG, which highlights the fluidity of practitioner-researcher roles and demonstrates how these can be challenging to negotiate. A graduate participant, now also a tutor, was

due to participate in the focus group later in the day of the practice tutor meeting. A problem had arisen relating to the tutor's practice with the student which I needed to discuss with them and this raised a number of issues for me. As the individual's former tutor and being currently responsible for overseeing practice tutors I held relational, professional and role power in relation to the individual concerned. The fact that the tutor was a research participant added an additional 'layer' into these power dynamics which further complicated the situation.

I feared that a difficult conversation in the morning might detrimentally affect the focus group in the afternoon, concerned that there might be emotional 'leakage' into the session which might impact the tutor's participation and potentially influence the dynamics of the group as a whole. Being averse to conflict myself I was reluctant to have this difficult conversation at all, and especially on this particular day. However, knowing it was important, I went ahead with the conversation, which was, in the end, prompted by a question from the tutor.

Although it felt awkward, the conversation was more straightforward than I had feared. The tutor was defensive, but I judged I had achieved an appropriate balance between challenge and encouragement. Interestingly, the tutor's conduct in the focus group was noticeably different to how they would normally behave. They were so quiet and withdrawn that a colleague, who was also in the session, asked me directly if something was wrong, noting a lack of eye-contact and defensive body language.

The situation highlights the complex textures of relationships and power within research, particularly when researching one's own practice. Inevitably, personal and professional factors influence the process, some of which are completely outside and

beyond the scope of the research. Research practice and reflections do not take place in a vacuum. They are influenced by a wide range of factors relating to me as a person and practitioner, the institution I work for, the processes and procedures we use, the cultures and contexts and the network of relationships involved, the participants' relationships with me and the organisation, their professional identity and practice and their wider world and experience. These factors are dynamic and change, sometimes even from moment to moment.

This complexity is fascinating but difficult to pin down in any simple, coherent way. It is a fluid web rather than a static framework: a web which overlaps and intersects. This necessitates 'reflection in action' (Schön 1983:49) or 'in the moment' – methods for attending, not only to what is happening around me, but also to my own responses and reactions, which in turn influence and impact everything else. Cultivating such awareness is key, not only in the research context, but in my ongoing professional practice.

Data Analysis Process

Some of the literature appears to suggest a clear progression and structure to data analysis. I found the process much more like a see-saw moving in multiple directions – an iterative movement between different aspects - the data sheets, creating I poems, returning to the original interviews (on paper and recordings), creating artwork – seeking to grasp the context, content and intention of what was being said and then back around again. This was much more time-consuming and confusing than I had envisaged and I often tied myself in knots. Data generation and analysis, I found, were not separate tasks but interwoven (Colley 2010:186), as at times, I was doing both

concurrently. I reflected in my research journal about the temptation to try and make everything fit nicely and tidily and recorded my attempts not to do that, as it felt as though 'over-taming' the data could suck the life out of it. These reflections on the convoluted nature of the process brought to light ways in which 'not knowing' is an unavoidable aspect of research. Crystallization, which acknowledges and embraces potential messiness and complexity and which 'involves bringing together multiple contrasting, even conflicting ways of knowing' (Ellingson 2009:30), was invaluable in this regard. This also connects back with some of my reflections on the nature of practical theology in Part One.

A Question of Priorities

I began the data analysis by focusing on the graduate interviews because:

- the sheer volume of data generated meant it was important to start somewhere;
- I wished to ensure that the graduates' voices and experiences were prioritized as those who had experienced first-hand the changes that were being explored;
- undertaking the tutor interviews had, in many ways, felt like the continuation of previous conversations. I was conscious of the significance of shared experience and values within the tutor team and ways in which our collaborative development of MCYM's educational ethos and values (for example, the strands model) would inevitably have influenced and informed the responses.

Process

Checking and correcting the transcripts, including anonymising locations and organisations took much longer than anticipated. The Appreciative Questions framework was a useful 'first stage' of getting into the data. Once I had coded the first

two transcripts, a 'critical friend' analysed and commented on these, making suggestions to inform my practice. Following coding, I put the quotations reflecting the repeating ideas into table form in their separate documents, which enabled me to easily add reflective notes on each quotation (Appendix 7 gives an example of this). I then collated the documents to analyse and construct theoretical narratives.

In working with the transcripts there was a danger of prioritizing data from more articulate and reflective graduates (Colley 2010:188). Some spoke at length without interruption, whereas others appeared to struggle or were more confused in their expression. The levels of theoretical references made by participants also varied significantly, with some tutors and graduates having much more 'theoretically constructed accounts' (Colley 2010:189), which generated easily quotable, lucid and even eloquent text. I will outline later how I responded to this challenge.

Presenting aspects of the emerging data in conferences and seminars[38] was a valuable way of getting feedback from others in the field and shaping my approach to the data. At times this was challenging, particularly on occasions when the data appeared to challenge my own or widely-accepted, existing understandings of effective educational practice. For example, one seminar participant challenged the emerging data quite vociferously in terms of its implications around how learning should be facilitated and I found myself responding quite defensively. In my learning journal following the seminar I reflect how difficult it is to be attentive to data which appears to go against the flow of existing or popular opinion.

[38] These included presentations at a National CYM staff conference, a research seminar in my workplace and a paper presented at BIAPT in 2016.

The Use of Crystallization

As I have already intimated, crystallization provided a rich and fertile framework for the data analysis. The different facets of crystallized engagement effectively supported the complexity of the process and enabled me to bring different aspects into conversation with each other, without feeling overwhelmed by the amount of data and information and reflection from other sources.

As the project progressed I found myself adding to my original diagram areas that were proving influential and significant in their own right. For example, my research journal and personal writing became much richer data sources than I had anticipated. Crystallization also offered a way of giving a clear voice to pneumatology without the theological perspectives having to be shoe-horned into the writing (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Revised Crystallization Process

A major strength of using crystallized approaches at this stage was the potential for play and playfulness in engaging the data. The word 'analysis' potentially creates the impression of a scientific, rigorous and streamlined process and does not capture the sense of exploration, serendipitous occurrences, random thoughts, ideas and perusals that were part of my experience.

Reflexivity and Autoethnography

As I outlined in Part One, reflexivity was envisaged from the outset as being key to the research, due to the situated nature of researching my own practice. 'Disciplined noticing' (Mason 2002:61), not as a mechanistic tool, but rather a 'collection of practices' to engender a systematic and methodical approach (2002:59), was a helpful way of understanding this. Although I did not set out explicitly to use autoethnography as a research method, I increasingly drew on the literature around this more intentionally and explicitly as the research progressed and I became aware of the convergence between some of the data and writing I had done earlier in the programme.

Autoethnography has been described as 'systematic, self-focused and context conscious' (Ngungjiri et al 2010:2-3) and was helpful in bringing additional rigour and order into the process. My journals, personal and research-based, written and visual, became key components of this. My poems and reflections, some of which were retrospective, had a strongly autoethnographic quality to them. Paying attention to my own inner responses in the form of 'systematic, sociological introspection' (Ellis 1999:671), was particularly valuable during data analysis and writing, but at times I found the process emotionally

challenging as I confronted things about myself that were difficult – notably in relation to fears, emotional pain and insecurities (Ellis 1999:672).

I was also conscious of the need for clear boundaries. In reflecting on and writing about my own practice context I became aware that much of my day-to-day work was relevant to the themes I was exploring. Comments made by individual students, pastoral conversations and incidents in teaching sessions could have provided rich data, but to use these as material for the research would have necessitated obtaining 'retrospective informed consent' (Tolich 2010:1600-01). This would have been possible, but ethically questionable due to the same power issues that had discouraged me from interviewing current students in the first place. This area appears to be under-explored in the literature relating to professional doctorates. It presents some interesting ethical challenges, particularly regarding the extent to which reflecting on ongoing practice is part of the research process and the subsequent questions around informed consent from colleagues, peers and others with whom researching professionals work, but who are not directly involved in the research process per se.

Autoethnography also supported reflection on other ethical dimensions, namely how I conducted the interviews, highlighted relevant data, situated myself within the project and considered ways in which my practice as a practitioner-researcher might potentially be injurious to others (Dauphinee 2010:808). It also allowed me to consider how my own experience, including the emotional dimensions of this, might contribute towards my own learning (Ngungjiri et al 2010:9). Here, important factors of 'interrogating [my] own experience' included suspending my existing understandings, investigating my

assertions and considering my experiences as conjectures which needed to be tested out (Mason 2002:206-209).

The Use of Creative Approaches in Data Analysis

These issues relating to reflexivity and autoethnography lead aptly into a consideration of ways in which creative approaches contributed to the data analysis process.

In the first three years of the DPT I had found writing poetry, creating artwork and visual mapping invaluable in a number of ways.

- Visual mapping and free writing were helpful at times when I became 'stuck' or blocked in my thinking or writing. These helped me overcome a tendency towards perfectionism and provided ways of organising and clarifying my thinking. The sense of play engendered by creative approaches often helped 'pull me out of a tense, over-thinking, stalled place' (Whitehead 2014a:8).
- At various points in the research I became overwhelmed by the options available, by my tendency to over-expansiveness and diffuse thinking and by the breadth of my interests and the 'tyranny of choice' offered by the interdisciplinary nature of practical theology. Using poetry, visual images and metaphors helped me distil, sift and structure my thinking (2014a:11).
- Creative approaches have also supported me in developing self-awareness and becoming more reflexive in my approach. This has been the case particularly at times when I have found myself responding emotionally in situations, whether in supervision, the DPT cohort, during fieldwork or in writing (2014a:15-20).

To demonstrate how these approaches informed and contributed to this inquiry, I present three specific illustrative examples.

1. The Ethics of Representation: A Body of Data

One challenging question that arose during the data analysis process was how to work with the large quantity of data available to me – the transcribed interviews and focus groups, my research journal and other available documents appeared almost overwhelming. As I began coding I was encouraged to see differences between my initial impressions of what the themes might be and what was actually emerging, but I was conscious of researcher power in highlighting and selecting text from the transcripts and concerned that despite seeking to cultivate critical subjectivity in my approach, my choices would inevitably be influenced by my priorities, interests, prejudices and interpretations.

In considering how to select phrases and passages for coding, many examples given in the literature appeared to pick out very short phrases or sentences (for example, Auerbach & Silverstein 2003:57). I judged this kind of fragmentation could lead to comments being taken out of context and detached from the participants' wider stories (Bryman 2016:583) and was conscious of the temptation to manipulate the data by selecting 'chunks' that fitted my existing viewpoints.

I found myself highlighting relatively large sections of text and wrestling with some difficult issues. How could I represent with integrity, the complexity of what I was reading in the transcripts? Was it possible to set participants' comments in context and maintain the integrity of their voice rather than plundering the transcripts for relevant 'nuggets' to use? I was equally concerned to avoid including lengthy direct quotations in

the final thesis. Using the phrase 'body of data' in my research journal was the catalyst for a visual reflection on 'embodiment' – a line-drawing of a female figure surrounded by reflective questions to challenge my own handling of the data (Figure 5).

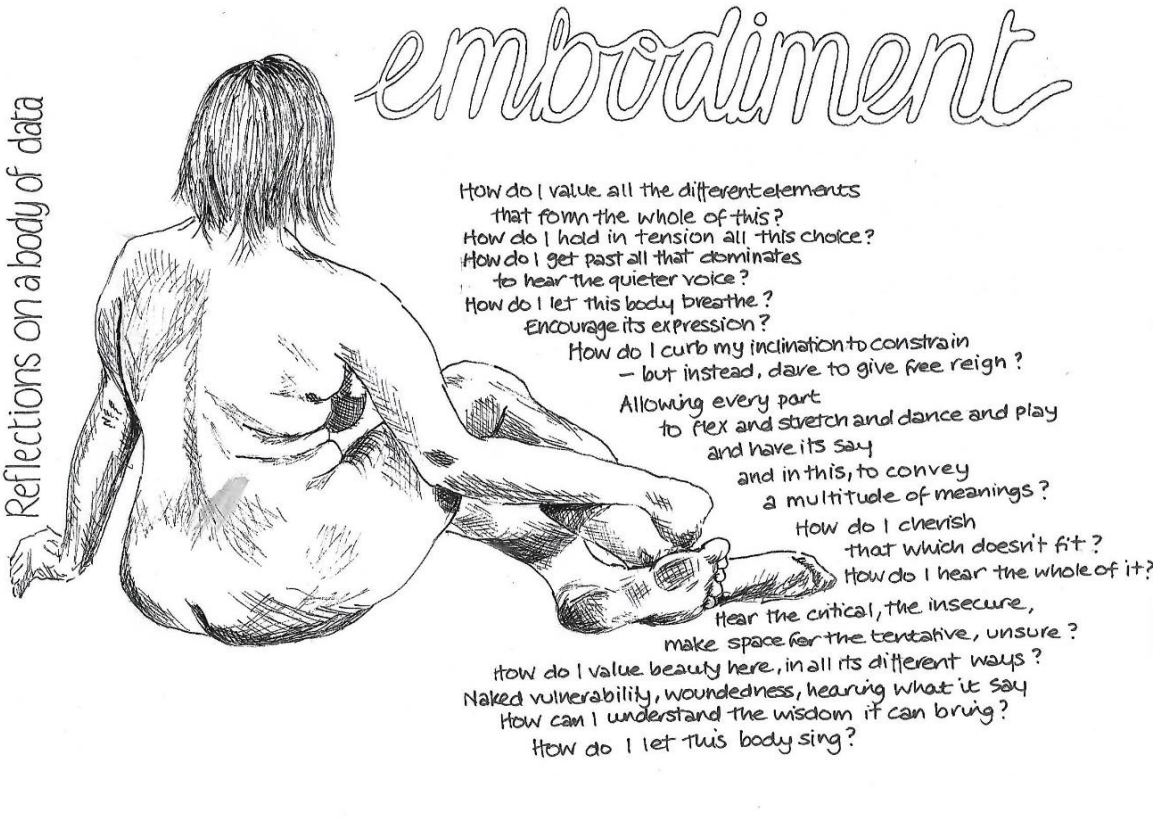


Figure 5: Embodiment: Reflections on a Body of Data[39]

I wondered how I could allow the 'body of data' to express itself. how I could allow each part to speak in its own way, 'to flex and stretch and dance and play.' I was drawn to 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 as I drew and wrote, which describe the significant parts of the body of Christ and the integrity of the whole. The principles here seemed apt in considering how I could value and honour those parts that seemed critical, awkward, insecure, inappropriate or particularly vulnerable. The outcomes of this reflection included my embracing of the concept of crystallization and the decision to use I poems

[39] The text in this image can be found in Appendix 8.

as a way of retaining the integrity of the participants' voices, whilst framing the material more accessibly for the reader.

This concept of a body of data was also helpful in responding to one graduate interview, which felt contradictory, highly personal and rather chaotic. I felt the individual had self-disclosed in ways that left them potentially vulnerable (Liamputtong 2007:6) and which they had not been aware of at the time. Interviews capture the perspectives of individuals in a moment of time and their priorities, professional roles, circumstances and feelings are fluid rather than static. It appeared in this case that the participant had used the interview as a pseudo-therapeutic or cathartic experience, something which was underlined by comments made towards the end of the transcript.[40] The interviewee appeared confused, contradictory, conflictual and lacking in self-awareness.

The participant had not asked for a copy of the transcript at the time and demurred when offered this later. Due to my sense that they were vulnerable, I felt uncomfortable about using some of the data, even though it would have brought in some interesting and varying perspectives. However, I also did not want to shy away from the material because it felt more difficult. I was aware too of ambiguities in my own responses to the individual concerned which emerged even during the interview itself and are reflected in my research journal.

The issue of researcher-power was foregrounded here. Looking at my visual reflection, I was reminded particularly of 1 Corinthians 12:21-25.

> The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that

[40] I have intentionally chosen not to reference the transcript at this point to further protect the anonymity of the individual concerned.

> seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect, whereas our normal respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissention within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.

This transcript gives very different perspectives on student experience because many of the comments are dissonant with those of other participants. It helpfully foregrounds and values the complexity and ambiguity of student experience, so it was important to include some of these reflections, whilst recognizing their sometimes contradictory and conflictual nature. In the spirit of the passage cited above, I have sought to honour and value the data, recognizing it as 'indispensable' but treating it with respect – protecting without being patronizing or paternalistic. This has necessitated particular attentiveness to anonymising the material and eschewing the use of any quotations or references that would have hinted at the identity of the participant, however interesting and relevant some of this was.

2. Using I Poems

I made the decision to use I poems early in the data analysis process and they proved to be helpful in a number of ways. They were a useful entry point to the creative aspects of analysis and valuable in engaging with the participants' actual words and foregrounding their voices; also in responding to some of the aforementioned issues relating to participants' articulacy.

Two examples illustrate the value of this approach.

Using an I poem changed my perspective on one early interview, the shortest I undertook. I initially perceived little relevant data in the transcript and struggled to get

past the graduate's style of expression, which appeared hesitant and inarticulate, particularly in comparison with other more eloquent participants. Creating an I poem – including cutting out the questions, padding and hesitations (see Appendix 9) – altered my perception of the transcript completely. I was struck by aspects of the participant's experience which had been 'hidden' by the hesitancy and lack of confidence. The I poem indicated significantly more clarity regarding experiences of personal change and the factors contributing to this than I had recognised when undertaking the interview, transcribing or reading the transcript.

I poems also proved valuable in highlighting participants' 'moments of insight' – significant times when they learned something about themselves or were aware of particular change or growth (see Appendix 10). Creating I poems from these transcript sections was helpful in analysing the commonalities and differences between the experiences.

The use of I poems facilitated closer engagement with the participants' voices and their actual words but also paradoxically enabled an almost stylised reading, which helped me to gain some distance from the data.

3. Using Visual Representations with 'Orphan Text'

The term 'orphan text' has been used to describe data which appears significant but does not fit any of the emerging themes (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003:57). One participant describes being from a different cultural background to other students and most people in the placement. As this was the only black graduate I interviewed, I was aware of the uniqueness of this experience amongst the interviewees and wanted to take seriously this description of struggling within a predominantly white culture. When

reflecting on the interview a visual image came my mind, which I sought to recreate, to further reflection on my responses to the text and give 'voice' to some of the interview content (Figure 6).

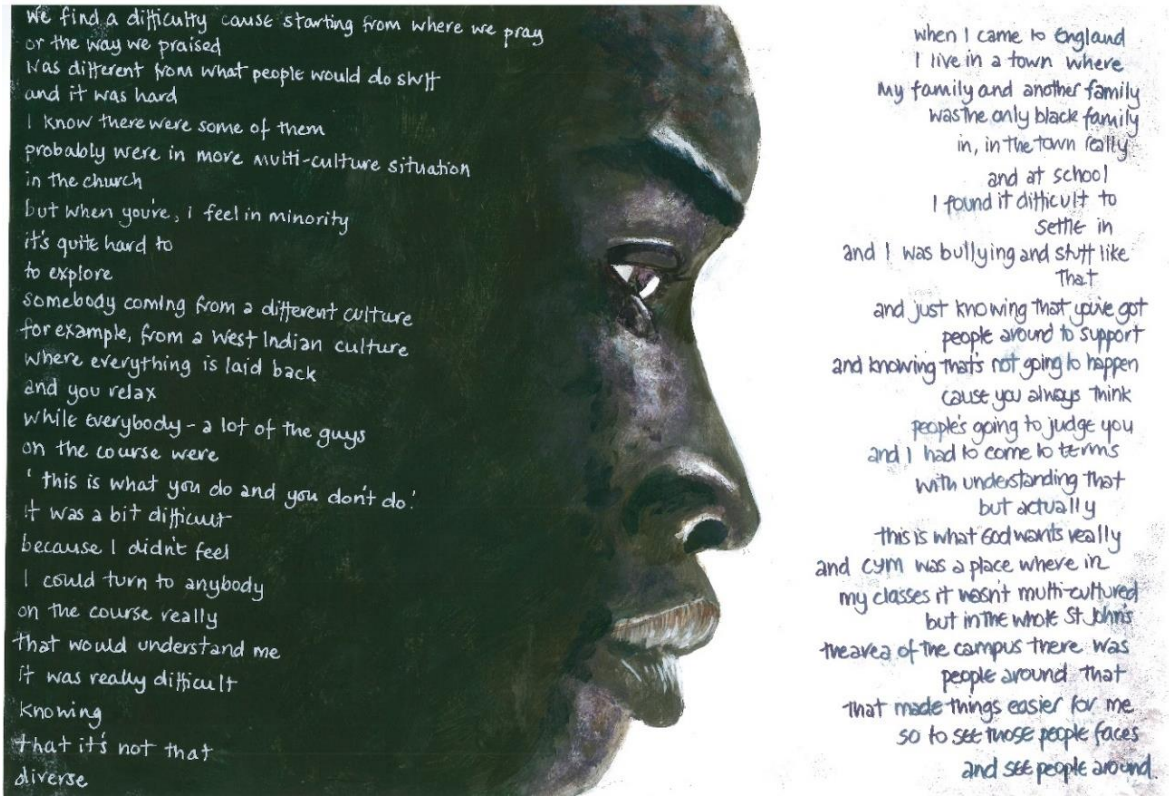


Figure 6: Cultural Challenges

I spent time drawing and then painting a 'black' face in acrylics – not seeking to portray the individual concerned but rather choosing an ambiguous image, which could have been male or female. I was aware of much soul-searching here. The interviewee describes feeling isolated and I did not want to portray a 'victim,' but rather someone with strength and dignity. I kept the tones of the image muted but avoided being over-simplistic with colour, deliberately not using brown or black paint but mixing colours from scratch, using different shades of red, blue, yellow and white. The process challenged my own tendencies to oversimplify issues of colour and race; the 'mixing'

process highlighting the complexity of colour and the nuances and hues and shades that make up individuals' personalities and experiences as well as their skin tones.

I found myself paying significant attention – looking in great detail at the textures and tones of the skin and wondering to what extent I am attentive as a tutor to students' nuances and distinctiveness, regardless of colour or race. I used an I poem from the participant around the image (see Appendix 11 for the text of this). The process and resulting image challenged my own perceptions and practice, enabling me to take seriously an issue I could easily have glossed over. It also meant that I later recognised the connectedness of this apparently orphan text to other data which described the importance of students having role models they could relate to, something I explore further in Part Four.

Moving Towards Emerging Themes - Practices and Attributes

Sitting on My Hands

Here we go again.
This feels like more of the same,
speaking, rehearsing, repeating.
I suspect you know already
what you think,
But you need to hear yourself say it.
I have so much to do.
I have no time for this.
I feel tension in my jaw,
my hands,
my body:
longing to move on to the next thing,
itching to close down the conversation.
But however banal this seems
I sense it is important to you.
So
I sit on my hands.
I wait.
I nod.
I give you time

to speak, rehearse, repeat.
Allowing the words and the space and the time
to swell
and grow
peace
within you. (Reflective Journal, November 2016)

The autoethnographic poem above proved a key turning point in deliberations on the data. I initially sought to distinguish between tutors' practices and their personal attributes, but as the research progressed I found this increasingly problematic. At first, I ascribed certain data to tutor attributes, as the comments made appeared to describe tutors' personal qualities and character. For example, tutors were seen as generous (GP2 168), interested, authentic, and impartial (GP6 351, 352, 362). As I considered the data more closely, however, it became clear that these perceptions – these 'attitudinal or experiential elements' (Rogers 1993b:177) – were impressions and interpretations rather than evidence of actual characteristics or virtues. The qualities highlighted were understood through tutors' words and actions.

This realisation was sparked by working and reflecting on the poem above, a retrospective, reflective piece, which illustrates a gap between my own feelings and my practice in engaging with one individual. The graduate, a research participant, spoke in the interview about always feeling valued, affirmed and listened to. This contrasted with my own recollections of conversations in which my internal responses had not always been as positive as they were interpreted as being.

I realised that my values and attitudes towards students are aspirational rather than a constant reality and that the use of certain approaches in my work enable me to 'seem' positive, accepting, encouraging and non-judgmental even when this is not actually the

case. Adopting certain practices enables me to be consistent, regardless of my personal circumstances, mood or opinions.

Practice and Practices

The language of 'practices' is pertinent here as it emphasises the importance of intentionality, responsiveness and concrete action. Although the term practice has been used in a Christian context to describe specific activities relating to worship and prayer, I use it here in a wider sense, recognising the 'ubiquitous, essential and extraordinarily various and diverse' nature of the concept (Bennett et al 2018:60). Professionally, a practice has been described as 'a more or less coherent and complex set of activities that has evolved co-operatively over time, and that exists most significantly in the community of those who are its practitioners' (Dunne 2011:14). This understanding carries with it an understanding of 'internal goods' (MacIntyre 1985:187) which can be understood to include both the desired outcomes or telos of the practice and the capabilities or qualities of the practitioner (Dunne 2011:14). The sense of encompassing both competences and virtues of character is apt here.

In a broader sense practices have been understood to incorporate 'those shared activities that address fundamental human needs and that, woven together, form a way of life' (Bass 2010:xxv), or I would propose, a 'way of living' or 'way of being.' An understanding of practices promotes a sense of interrelatedness and integration. Practices are not random or patched haphazardly together. 'They flow into one another, each one making a space for God's active presence that then ripples out into other parts of life' (Dykstra & Bass 2010:10).

This integrated and integrative characteristic is particularly relevant here. On my personal and professional journey towards integration, my hope is that these positive qualities are not simply external performances, but reflect who I am and who I am becoming as a person. I do not want to simply use strategies and techniques to support students, but rather with integrity, seek to develop the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) in my life. Adopting certain practices, however, means that if, for example, I am having a bad day or going through a tough time, I can relate, respond and work in a professional and consistent way, even if I don't 'feel like it.' This ensures a consistency of professionalism as well as security and predictability for students in what they can expect from me.

Conclusion

The first three parts of the thesis have provided a reflexive account of the context, methodology and process of my research into how tutors might support whole-person learning. I now move on to outline, explore and interpret the research data, using the concept of 'practices' as a way of framing my thinking.

PART FOUR: EXPLORATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

As I have already highlighted, the data analysis structure prioritised the graduate participants' views and the integrity of their voices. Here, I explore the findings that emerged, in conversation with data from the tutor interviews and focus groups, relevant reading, my own reflections and pneumatology.

This data is discussed in three key areas of practice: learning dimensions, relational dimensions and space-making dimensions. These themes were chosen because they encapsulate most of the data relating explicitly to the research question.[41] Although explored as discrete areas, ways they overlap and intersect became apparent during data analysis and writing. Indeed, several sub-themes could have fitted within any of the three sections.

Personal Change

It is beyond the remit of this thesis to explore in depth the *nature* and *extent* of changes that graduates experience during the course, but it is important to note that they do describe significant personal and spiritual change during their course. Tutor interviewees support this with numerous examples, citing specific students and recounting evidence of personal and spiritual change. I summarise some salient aspects of this briefly.

> If I look at the people in my group we *all* came out different as people, which kind of happens anyway at university or college courses, but not, I don't think in

[41] Other themes that could have been chosen were focused around structural aspects of the course and the nature of the changes experienced by students. I chose to focus on the key areas that enabled me to most fully engage with the research question but have sought to acknowledge and incorporate these other two areas more briefly elsewhere in the thesis.

> any way as drastically as much as what happens with CYM. I think we *all* moved in our values and thinking and stuff, *drastically*, in that period of time. You know, like I said personally I would say, *absolutely*, it's, it kind of helped to form me as a person, definitely. (GP11 331-35)[42]

The word 'drastic' is illustrative of terms employed to describe the nature of changes experienced during graduates' time with MCYM. The words 'transformative' and 'transformational' are also commonly used. Some interviewees refer to every part of life as having being changed (GP6 58-60), noting a 'kind of continual transformation and reformation of thoughts and ideas' (GP2 102) and seeming to struggle to express the enormity of the change.

> It was massive. Completely changed the way that I did my job. Completely changed the way that I lived my life and completely changed the way that I viewed myself. (GP8 94-95)

The overlapping of personal and spiritual change is reflected in accounts of course experiences and lifestyle changes, for example in how they relate to peers and make personal choices. Several individuals mention development in creativity, self-management and awareness of professional identity as well as growth in personal qualities such as confidence, self-awareness, acceptance of others, autonomy and taking responsibility. Not all the changes identified are straightforward. One participant describes being 'very sceptical' about experiences of change towards the end of the course, feeling that he left on a sour note. Looking back, however, he clearly sees areas of significant personal change, even though, at the time this was a 'battle' (GP6 93, 97).

[42] Unless otherwise stated, any emphasis in quotations from the transcripts reflects words emphasised verbally by participants.

In terms of spiritual formation, graduates reflect on being influenced by Jesus' model of serving (GP4 54-56), being more focused on God in everyday life (GP1 58-59) and for one individual, significant changes in his understanding of God (GP5 32-42) whom he previously had 'in a box.' For two participants the course stimulated a process of personal and spiritual change that continued into subsequent years (GP2 62-66; GP7 57-60). They acknowledge this may have been due to their age when beginning their studies. Another younger graduate sees herself in an ongoing process of transformation and feels the course gave her '*great* foundations' (GP9 55-56).

A number of rich metaphors are used to articulate graduates' experiences of change. The familiar image of a cocoon and butterfly (GP4 142-43) describes a cyclical process of personal change that occurs several times during the course. Two participants use a Russian doll metaphor: one describes layers that 'just keep coming off and coming off (GP7 264-5), the other reflects on different aspects of her 'self.'

> It's about the 'me that…'
> the me that I know,
> the me that God knows,
> the me that my friends know,
> the me that my family knows,
> the me that my best friend knows
> and I think for me
> that was what the course *did*.
> It gave me chance
> to have a look
> at all the different mes
> and so
> there were mes in there
> I didn't know existed
> which was really interesting
> because it was *clearly* a transitional time for *me*
> So that Russian doll metaphor is like,
> this is everything that I am
> and then you can take out all the different bits.
> And they all fit *in.* (I Poem, GP8 350-59)

A jigsaw image echoes this idea of a transition time during which numerous things come together (GP8 361-66). The metaphor of a nuclear warhead is less positive, but vividly illustrates the dramatic nature of the changes experienced by another interviewee (GP10 20).

There is evidently much that could be developed here and this overview points to a rich seam of potential thinking and development. I use it here to provide a foundation to those aspects of data which more explicitly relate to the research question and now move on to consider the three dimensions of this.

1. Learning Dimensions

Graduate interviewees speak at length about aspects of teaching and learning that support their personal and spiritual formation. Some contributions relate to course structures and frameworks and although I do not focus on these within the thesis, they provide important background to tutors' face-to-face practices and the learning culture and context. I therefore summarise them briefly.

- The placement-based nature of the course enables students to directly apply and implement learning, providing a practical learning context in which to grow and develop.
- Specific modules provide particular opportunities for growth and development. These include those relating to Biblical studies, management, learning, working with individuals and groups and specific sessions on Myers Briggs and bereavement.

- The centrality of reflective practice within course structures is a key factor in personal change.
- The use of journaling as a learning tool within professional practice modules contributes towards personal and spiritual formation. Participants mention opportunities to choose what to reflect on; the need to go over material (particularly biblical material) several times; the disciplines of writing things down and of looking at things from different perspectives.
- Academic achievement is a significant locus of change for some graduates, who describe the transformative nature of their academic experience, including the affirmation and subsequent confidence gained from receiving good marks.
- An increased sense of responsibility is engendered by the course's practical demands – holding down a placement as well as studying; taking leadership roles in practice; making travel arrangements; moving away from home and becoming independent.

I now move on to consider key teaching and learning practices identified by graduates as contributing significantly to their personal and spiritual formation. These are explored in two sections: first, those that would be broadly accepted as important within adult learning theory and then issues raised which are not as commonly discussed within the literature.

Recognised Facets of Adult Learning Practice

Employing a Range of Active Learning Approaches

> … it was just *interactive* … there was always a *game*, there was always a way of thinking about it … and then *input* and then convers*ations* and it was just a way, a real way of just allowing you to process it all. (GP11 167-169)

Graduates believe the diverse range of experiential approaches to teaching and learning supports their development, citing teaching methods such as workshops, discussions, work in pairs, games, input, conversations, moving around and small-group Bible study. Examples are given of tutors using interactive and creative methods to encourage reflective practice and theological reflection, including picking up acorns in the College grounds (GP9 172) and using objects, postcards and music to reflect (GP5 84-87). For some, such approaches are new and eye-opening.

> … it was just really good … I never thought reflection could go that way. I thought you reflect as you pray, and you wait to hear from God and that's it, you don't use other materials other than the Bible. (GP5 87-90)

A recurrent response is that graduates find these active and creative approaches engaging, provoking and helpful in processing learning. Several affirm the importance of learning encompassing 'not just being talked at' (GP3 219), recognising that this suits their personal preferences for an active approach. One finds this helpful as she '[doesn't] like sitting' (GP4 129); another wants to *apply* learning and describes a growing understanding of his own tendency to fidget in learning situations (GP5 93-97). He has since applied observations of his MCYM cohort's different learning styles to his own youth work context. Several participants have incorporated creative approaches used within MCYM into their own practice (for example, GP4 153-55; GP5 86-87).

Learning modules are core to the course curriculum and graduate interviewees adopt the language of learning styles and approaches here, some alluding directly to module teaching when describing their own preferences. Some contrast MCYM learning experiences with other learning contexts: for example, one individual compares MCYM's

'holistic' approach with the more didactic, lecture-based style of a previous degree course, with which he engaged relatively superficially (GP11 304-319).

Endorsing Interaction

As well as encouraging engagement, action and interaction enable students to engage with their peers' perspectives: 'that kind of talking and listening and, you know, the hearing of people's perspectives and making sense of it' (GP11 168-69). Sharing experience is widely recognised as significant in adult learning (Jarvis 2004:126) and several graduates allude to debates, conversations and opportunities to listen to other people's stories and experiences (GP7 62; GP11 139; GP2 191-92). Diversity of background – personal, theological and denominational – is particularly important here, as it exposes them to differing perspectives and views.

The personal faith and commitment of their peers encourages and inspires the participants. Graduates reflect on being challenged and challenging others within teaching sessions and in the social spaces around teaching days (GP1 34-37; GP2 182-85; GP11 136-142). When asked what she would wish for MCYM, one individual responds:

> …student cohorts that were really invested … groups of people that that really brought that very dynamic quality to learning. So people from broad … areas of spiritual or theological preferences or people with very different life-experience or different ages. Yeah, a diverse and willing and enthusiastic student cohort in each year I think is what I'd wish. (GP2 265-70)

This desire reflects the interviewee's earlier descriptions of being personally stretched through encountering different views and opinions within her year group (187-200).

This kind of diversity creates a richness, with an 'eye-opening' 'spectrum of thoughts' (GP5 38-39, 53; GP11 137), which for one graduate leads to a first ever examining of her

'fairly set ideas about different theological values and ideas' (GP7 59-60). Her diverse year group creates a culture of debate and questioning, which for her results in significant personal change.

The peer group experience is not always positive, however. One participant is broadly positive about observing other students, 'how they act and how they *do* things … and how they *see* things and how they speak and how their culture is informing them and I think that's helped me a *lot*' (GP6 245-47), but also reflects on struggling: not knowing how to handle others' comments and finding it hard to participate and be real (GP6 138-152).

Enabling Robust Questioning

Aspects of the exploratory, interrogative group dynamic identified above are reflected in the value placed on questions and questioning in teaching days, practice tutorials and pastoral and spiritual support. The following is illustrative of a number of comments:

> I was expecting *answers* but I actually … came out with more questions, but I'm so glad that it did because actually if we understand life as a learning journey then actually that's always going to be the case, isn't it? … understanding that, that was really significant, I think, in terms of my *spiritual* formation. I guess, and that relates very much to the personal as well. (GP7 74-80)

One graduate links the 'transformational' nature of his course experience with the 'questioning aspect of the course' (GP6 97-100), which is seen as a continual process. He has reservations about the intensity of this, however, wondering if there was too much questioning (GP6 116). This ambivalence, though important to note, is not shared by other interviewees. 'It's not like you come out thinking, "Oh my God, I don't believe in God anymore" … I actually came out having more *questions* but more *faith*' (GP11 78-

79). This graduate found asking tough questions so helpful that he has recreated this as a community practice in his church context (GP11 73-74).

Christian leaders can often feel pressured to preserve denominational biblical or theological traditions, meaning that questioning in Christian contexts can sometimes be perceived as heretical, thus limiting honest dialogue and growth (Melander 2006:23). Graduates are grateful that tutors are not afraid or taken aback by questioning and even encourage it by asking provocative questions themselves. One tutor regards this as fundamental to his practice, seeing questions as a helpful way of giving responsibility to students. He sometimes observes patterns of response and behaviour and gives feedback on these, but normally facilitates rather than instructs (TP7 25-28, 133-34). Another tutor endorses this approach (TP2 18-19), connecting it with good educational practice and with empowering and facilitating rather than spoon-feeding.

Earthing Learning in Practice

Applying learning to practice is embedded in the course structure, but is mentioned as something that tutors do explicitly and helpfully. Ensuring that learning is practical and applied is significant in several graduates' personal and spiritual formation and the following statement exemplifies some of the reflections on this:

> …keeping it practical, so rooted in reality and rooted in outworking, what does that look like? Here's the theory, here's the time to think, but actually, how does that *work*? And like what do you have to do in order to make things work? (GP8 464-66)

This connectedness between learning and practice relates to the whole course experience. Examples include a Line Manager using supervision sessions to support a student in applying learning to his different practice contexts (GP11 213-19) and one

individual's experience of practice tutorials being transformed when she changes to a tutor who uses practice-focused approaches to reflection (GP1 89-94). One interviewee reflects on other MCYM graduates who struggled when teaching was not sufficiently linked to practice (GP11 434-445).

Explaining - Making the Tacit Explicit

> …learning kind of came to life really.
> I think *that* had a *really* significant impact
> on the way that I understood *myself*.
> It just, it put
> clarity on what I knew
> but wouldn't be able to *express,*
> because I didn't have any frameworks
> to kind of map it all in.
> So *now* it feels really obvious
> and quite probably basic,
> but again if I hadn't done a course
> that looked at those kind of things,
> I probably wouldn't be able to understand myself
> In the way that I do now. (I Poem, GP7 199-204)

This graduate's moment of insight describes how taught theory provides a framework for her experience and tacit knowledge, which is 'transformational' personally and professionally. Theories, models and frameworks are used by tutors in both college sessions and practice tutorials as 'hooks' so that learning is not 'just stuff that's just rolling around' but rather interconnected and brought together (GP11 370-72). The jigsaw metaphor mentioned earlier describes frameworks that one graduate becomes aware of, enabling her to identify missing pieces and the value of her existing understanding. Learning involves gaps diminishing and things falling into place (GP8 361-66).

These approaches do not reflect the 'impartation' or 'banking' models critiqued by Freire and others (Deer Richardson & Wolfe 2001:8-9; Freire 1996:53), but rather involve connections being made between existing understanding, knowledge and experiences. Tutors provide structural input – hooks or jigsaw pieces – but the learners themselves make the connections and own the process of putting things in place or connecting the material that is being learnt, in a dynamic, collaborative process.

Empowering Students to Take Responsibility

This kind of ownership is reflected in the way graduates value taking responsibility in their learning. One individual, who is asked to prepare and deliver a presentation remembers

> …feeling really pleased to have this moment where I could see myself doing something well and in front of my peers and, and to be kind of taken seriously, it wasn't tokenistic… it felt like preparing something well and… in a thought-through way. (GP2 79-82)

Additionally, being student representative for the year group helped develop leadership skills, particularly significant because of the lack of leadership opportunities within the student's placement. These opportunities are significant in terms of 'holistic formation… In some ways I'd call it professional formation, but … it felt much more like confidence-building as well' (GP2 155-57). Another graduate also reflects on the benefit of being a student representative and the opportunities for learning this provided (GP5 455-58).

For some interviewees, personal responsibility is connected with an awareness that others are investing in their learning. The following epitomises some of the comments made about this.

> You've got three years
> where this is what you've bought into
> everybody's *expecting* you to do it
> it's a *safe* place to do it.
> As *I* bought into it,
> those people around me
> seemed to enjoy the fact
> that I was buying into it
> and *they* really bought into it.
> It was like a self-perpetuating thing,
> the more I put in,
> the more they put in,
> the more I got out,
> the more I wanted to put in.
> I thought, this is my golden opportunity,
> they're doing this for me,
> I need to get as much of it out as I can,
> so I'm a *much* better worker at the end of it
> otherwise I'm doing *them* a disservice
> and I'm ultimately doing God a disservice.
> All these people are helping me,
> I need to do the best I can.
> That meant I was able to
> in a sense,
> chuck myself of the cliff,
> where I perhaps
> wouldn't have been able to do it before. (I Poem, GP8 213-223)

For some individuals, therefore, the expectations and investment of those around them generates a sense of personal responsibility and growth. Although unsure whether tutors do this intentionally, the same graduate reflects on God's presence in the process:

> …that's the whole packet in terms of just God getting you in the right place at the right time and everything just, it *multiplies* doesn't it? You add, you know, God's, … Kingdom is multiplication not addition, so you put two things together at the same time and you get four rather than just the two of you sitting somewhere. (GP8 256-60)

Linked to this theme of investment, another graduate speaks of 'vested interest,' reflecting on investing herself in response to the affirmation and encouragement she

receives from tutors and in response to a growing awareness of her own abilities and achievements (GP2 176). Others talk about the importance of people investing in prayer (GP5 155-59), time, experience and knowledge (GP5 236-39) and support provided within placements (GP7 241-43; GP11 255-56).

For tutors these aspects of students' personal responsibility and investment are also significant.

> It's resourcing them with the tools to practice now
> how to more eloquently use them,
> that they can then take responsibility,
> they don't go around dumping on other people
> or blaming other people.
> This is *your* learning.
> I can't write the journals for you.
> I can only give you feedback on what you give me.
> I'm not going to chase you.
> You contract as you go along –
> what kind of support do they want?
> And I just say to them,
> what do you want to talk about?
> You've done your journals
> and you want to talk about something else,
> that's fine.
> I'm kind of open-ended with the tutorial.
> Cause it's their tutorial.
> It's not my tutorial. (I Poem, TP2 238-247)[43]

This aspect of students taking responsibility – self-directedness or autonomy – is a key distinctive of adult education (Brookfield 1986:18) but needs to be set in the context of critical reflection. It is insufficient for students to have functional autonomy in the sense of choosing certain actions within a narrow, constricting framework. True self-directedness involves 'the exploration of alternative perspectives and meaning systems'

[43] The reference format here refers to the tutor participant and the line number in the transcript.

and the possibilities to 'reinterpret and recreate of their personal and social worlds' (Brookfield 1986:58-59), a form of conscientization (Freire 1996:90).

Facilitating Learning – Drawing Some Thoughts Together

Much of what has emerged here is clearly evident in adult learning literature – using a variety of teaching methods, interaction and sharing experience, encouraging questions, connecting learning to experience and encouraging learners to be self-directed are factors that would be seen as self-evident within the field. It may appear to be stating the obvious to say that effective formational teaching will implement adult education practice, but anecdotally this is often not the case in theological education.

Within the field, there are currently moves towards insisting that tutors have a Higher Education Teaching Qualification, but in many colleges, theological expertise is still prized far more than proficiency in facilitating learning. MCYM is relatively unusual as all the core tutors have professional backgrounds in teaching, training and/or learning. One tutor reflects at some length on his professional formation as an adult educator (TP2 247-266), perspectives which resonate with my own experience. In addition to the practices identified above, key values underpin practice and will benefit theological education (TP2 251-55). These include working in an empowering and non-oppressive way, recognising, valuing and respecting the uniqueness and personhood of each individual learner and ensuring that tutors operate with self-awareness and are secure in their own identity and self-worth. These qualities are essential if tutors are not to misuse power, create dependency or draw their sense of self-worth from their work with students (TP2 280-89).

The Spirit and Good Practice in Adult Learning

There are some clear parallels between effective adult learning and aspects of the Spirit's workings. The Spirit operates in ways which are experiential and interactive, engaging individuals and groups and impacting the whole of life (Acts 2:3-12, 4:31-37, 8:29-35).

When it comes to areas of empowerment and responsibility, New Testament portrayals of the Spirit suggests that individuals choose whether to engage with the Spirit or not. They can opt to speak or remain silent when the Spirit is at work (1 Corinthians 14:32); they can resist (Acts 7:51), quench (1 Thessalonians 5:19), insult (Hebrews 10:29) or grieve (Ephesians 4:30) the Spirit. Processes of 'becoming' generated by the Spirit are co-operative ones, in which the Spirit is at work but choice and responsibility lie with the individual concerned.

Similarly, in good adult learning practice, a facilitative approach sees tutors serve as process designers, boundary markers and maintainers, encouragers, supporters and imparters of information (Knowles et al 1973:201; Whitehead et al 2013:8), but learners choose the extent to which they engage, think, reflect, study, question or respond. The Spirit's work is empowering and liberative (Acts 1:8, 2 Corinthians 3:17), as is effective adult education. The Spirit empowers individual change, but does not coerce or force it. The locus of choice and responsibility rests with the individual. These pneumatological perspectives speak compellingly into discourses of power within theological institutions, where roles, titles, the power to grant (or withhold) qualifications and approval for ministry, can all be used and/or misused.

The interviewees were struck by the concept of 'investment' and the Spirit models ways of working which demonstrate investment but eschew 'over-investment'. The Spirit does not gain identity, self-worth or glory through what happens to individuals, rather the Spirit glorifies Christ (John 16:14), pointing towards him and communicating what the Spirit has received. The need for tutors to avoid over-investment points to the importance of personal security, self-awareness and critical honesty about their practice, values encouraged in adult education training and recognises that tutors' work is about something much greater than themselves.

Further Facets of Adult Learning Practice

Transpiring, Spirit and Mystery

> Transpire: (from the Latin *transpirare* to breathe through) to come to be known; be revealed; to prove to be the case; to occur, to happen. (ODE 1875)

Having considered the relevance of pneumatology in relation to adult learning practice generally, I move on to explore two further aspects from the data, namely, when and whether to 'go with the flow' and engaging with emotions in learning. Both these aspects are broadly absent from adult education or formational literature and both relate to the idea of 'transpiring,' emerging, or things becoming apparent within sessions. The Spirit's wildness and unpredictability provides a lens through which we can explore these other, less foreseeable aspects of teaching and learning, which both involve the unknown, the unpredictable and the relinquishing of a certain degree of control by the facilitator.

The Unpredictable Spirit – Going with the Flow

The contested nature of pneumatology reflects ways in which the Spirit's life and activity remain, to a great extent, mysterious. The Father and the Son are relatively easy to identify with, having human nature and attributes, but in contrast the Spirit appears to be rather tenuous, understood more through the language of metaphor and through actions and workings. Johannine references to the Spirit highlight this mysterious aspect, for example, in Jesus' encounters with Nicodemus. Jesus first describes a mysterious rebirth by and through the Spirit (John 3:5) and then compares the Spirit to the wind, which 'blows wherever it pleases' (John 3:8). These images, familiar and potentially appealing to the Greek readers of the time (Thistleton 2013:135), emphasise the inexplicable, transcendent nature of the Spirit, connecting back to the elemental aspects that were explored in Part One.

The Spirit's mysterious nature reminds us of the importance of that which cannot be named, controlled or fully understood. The Spirit sends (NIV) or drives (NRSV) Jesus into the wilderness (Mark 1:12) and 'compels' the apostle Paul to go to Jerusalem, (Acts 20:22) where he faces persecution, arrest, trials and goes on to be shipwrecked. This may seem to contradict my earlier reflections on autonomy. It certainly overturns some popular understandings of what it means to be 'led by the Spirit' (Romans 8:14). The Spirit is not some tame force at the command or whim of Christians, but rather is powerful and unpredictable. Being led by the Spirit in the examples considered above involves immediate changes of plans, inconvenience, struggle and suffering.

The implications of this for tutors are challenging, particularly within a results-orientated, highly organised and systematic educational culture. Within MCYM, as in all

Higher Education and Theological Education contexts, curriculum, module content, learning outcomes, practice competences and assessment criteria are all predetermined and prescribed. However, the data suggests that for several participants some key learning emerges, not within these pre-planned structures, but in the unplanned and the unforeseen.

For example, some graduates notice and appreciate tutors' willingness to 'go with the flow' when issues come up of particular interest. One example, part of a moment of insight, describes a visiting tutor talking about the concept of *Shalom*.

> It wasn't part of her core,
> it wasn't part of her *session*,
> she was talking about stuff
> and then I think a few of us,
> we were like,
> 'What, what?
> Stop, stop, stop.
> What are you talking about?'
> And then she was like,
> 'I'm talking about this king of peace,
> *Shalom*, you know, d'you understand?'
> And, 'No, no, no
> we don't understand that.'
> And then you're kind of like,
> 'Tell us more.'
> And I think she kind of *parked* stuff
> for about half an hour
> and just kind of talked about it. (I Poem, GP11 145-50)

The willingness to respond to the needs of the moment, rather than always sticking to predetermined plans, leads to several graduates describing an individualized experience rather than one where 'one-size fits all.' Preferences for this may reflect consumerist approaches to learning, but graduates felt tutors engaged with their interests and questions specifically and personally, which left a lasting impression. Moving to a

different practice tutor, one graduate found the new tutor's approach 'a lot more … how I needed it to be, the structure was more focused on how I want, how I needed to, how I lived' (GP1 90-91). This is echoed in the interviewee's hopes for the course.

> …for everyone that comes through, that it's what they need, that it's specific to them, like a lot of courses can be set, so this is the way it runs, but that actually you continue to get into the how it's going to look for each individual person. (GP1 136-37)

Others, commenting on practice tutorials, made similar comments about tutors working to their preferences, agendas and strengths rather than simply seeking to fit a prescribed framework (for example, GP2 165-67). This sense of being able to play to one's strengths is encapsulated in the following reflection on the perception of space for individualised learning within MCYM.

> I think I felt that the course gave me room
> to respond to it,
> to respond to it as myself,
> to kind of draw in things
> that I was interested in
> or really work on things
> that I was good at.
> So rather than
> some courses feel a bit like
> working against yourself
> and you just have to be good
> in terms of how the marking system works,
> whereas I think there was a real sense
> of responding with my whole self,
> and probably with my best self –
> that I could have quite a
> tailor-made experience of CYM. (I Poem, GP2 117-23)

Another graduate contrasts her MCYM learning experience with her son's experience of education, hoping that in the future MCYM would continue to not feel target-driven but maintain its flexibility,

> …not being lured into churning out finished projects, sort of tick-boxes, that just pushes people through, but keep something, that allows, that keeps an individual route within a, within a course so that people can … have a bit of space, can bespoke it to themselves. (GP8 467-73)

Stepping out from the safety of pre-set agendas and programmes means embracing flexibility and even potential messiness, something this participant goes on to address.

> [So they] *have* got time to, to be a bit messy and wrestle with stuff rather than, you know getting, getting sort of almost cloned youth workers coming through … because to allow people to think and reflect and challenge lots of stuff is much messier than saying, 'here's your information, write your essay, right we'll move on.' (GP8 473-77)

Three graduates mention one tutor's practice in this regard, describing the use of student-led 'scatter diagrams' on the board. One cites this approach as significant in challenging and changing her theological understanding and personal engagement with God, even though she sometimes didn't understand what was happening (GP8 242-46). Another believes this 'messy' approach enabled connections to be made and ideas to be brought together, while also acknowledging that although he found the 'messiness' helpful, others did not necessarily feel the same (GP11 368-69).

Another graduate describes the approach as:

> …second to none, wasn't it in terms of where [the tutor] stretched you and the more you went with it. You could have gone, 'Oh it's just too all over the place, I'll just…' But the more you got into it and the more you were prepared for it to be messy and stuff, the more you got out of it, and the more … it felt like he would … come with you. (GP8 242-46)

Her reflections highlights that this approach requires more responsibility, rigorous engagement and investment from students.

'Bespoke' and Messy Learning – Some Challenges

This idea of bespoke learning is one that I have been committed to for some time and I recognise this willingness to 'go with the flow' as an aspect of my own practice. It does bring the challenge of fulfilling curriculum demands and supporting students to fulfil course requirements, whilst maintaining sufficient flexibility to explore, encourage curiosity and pursue issues and questions that arise. Time constraints are often cited as reasons for eschewing this kind of flexibility. Anecdotally, many tutors find the volume of module content can mitigate against more creative, spontaneous and interactive approaches, which are often time-consuming. Role perception is crucial here – whether tutors see themselves as imparters of information or facilitators of exploration and questioning. The answer should be 'both – and,' rather than one or the other.

Flexible approaches challenge tutors to leave the safe, predictable shores of prepared lecture plans and notes to explore areas, which they may not feel adequately prepared for or knowledgeable about. Here, the sense of being a fellow-learner, rather than 'the expert' is invaluable:

> …the imagery I come back to
> is the community of co-learners.
> So I expect to go in to facilitate
> and support learning,
> but I am expecting to learn as well.
> And that doesn't mean –
> I'm not going for my own benefit
> so I can learn –
> but I hope it helps me to go in and go,
> 'the image of God
> is in these people already.'
> And this image –
> 'I'm the expert, they're the empty vessel' –
> that kind of mentality of formation,
> to me is an anathema. (I Poem, TP2 295-300)

This requires personal security, facilitative skills and the kind of creative improvisation that is engendered through experience rather than in any formal teacher or tutor training programme. I have learnt most about these aspects of facilitation through observing more experienced practitioners and listening to them reflect on their ways of working. These individuals have been aware and intentional about their facilitative approach to practice and explicit about process aspects of teaching and learning. This highlights the potential value of mentoring in theological education and the need for ongoing skills development.

'Going with the flow' also create a potential tension between the needs of the group as a whole and those of the individuals within it. This can stretch tutor practice to such an extent that learning becomes fragmented and is dissipated. Holding both the needs of group *and* individuals in tension is key here and this is also an area where the Spirit can inform our practice, working both within groups and in the lives of individuals.[44] The analogy obviously cannot be taken too far, but the 'both-and' aspect is helpful and informative.

The Experiential, Affective Spirit: Emotions in Learning

> …a truly holistic Christian education will be a formation of both heart and mind, both intellect and affect. (Smith 2013:190)

Engagement with the Spirit highlights the importance of the affective in learning. It is often within the affective domain that people are most aware of the work of the Spirit, who can circumvent the cognitive to enable deeper experience of God.

[44] An example of this is Acts 2:1-21, where the Spirit falls on the disciples as a group but simultaneously impacts individually, for example, empowering Peter to preach.

Coakley uses the lens of prayer to consider the Spirit 'as initiator … and guide to the "inaccessible" divine realms' (2013:130). It is through the Spirit that Christians experience and know God and 'through prayer, and being "*mingled* with the Spirit" that we become partakers of the Word of God (2013:127). The generativity of prayer in this regard is compared to the procreative potential of sexual intercourse (2013:128) and she understands 'the sense of prayer "in the Spirit" becoming a uniting thread in life, "an all-encompassing relationship", so that prayer [becomes] no longer one activity (or duty) amongst others, but the wellspring of all activities' (2013:169-170).

The sense of mystery here and the ways in which prayer takes Christians 'to a realm beyond the normal constraints of human rationality' (2013:127), proposes a completely different way of 'knowing,' that is experiential, relational and transformational. In this kind of relationship with the trinitarian God, people change, not through imitation but through 'being radically transformed by ecstatic partnership in the Spirit' (2013:322).

This kind of transformational 'knowing' is firmly in the world of the affective domain – the world of image, metaphor, experience, emotion, desire and relationship.

Another way of considering this is through the lens of left brain/right brain – or left hemisphere/right hemisphere thinking. The left hemisphere is seen as the locus for logical cognitive, literal and propositional thinking, whereas qualities such as self-awareness, empathy, identification and emotional intelligence are located in the right hemisphere (McGilchrist 2012:57-61). Thus the Spirit could be understood, from Coakley's perspective, as being at work primarily in the right hemisphere. Thinking of this in terms of polarisation is unhelpful, both are important. Nevertheless, it is clear

that left hemisphere processing has tended to be more prized in academic institutions, including theological colleges.

Logic, thinking and reasoning may be valuable, but the Spirit is clearly at work in other areas of the human psyche – 'I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also; I will sing praise with the spirit, but I will sing praise with the mind also' (1 Corinthians 14:15). Here again valuing the affective clearly does not mean adopting an unthinking, unreflective approach (Whitehead 2014d:70). On the contrary, affective engagement can bring deeper insight to thinking and reflection, which can support integration.

Several areas of the affective domain could be explored with relation to learning,[45] but one key theme that emerges from the data is that of emotion, which is particularly evident in participants' descriptions of their moments of insight.

Recounting a session in which learning fell into place for her, one graduate recognises a sense of frustration in prior experiences of education and recalls being in tears at the end of the session, 'in a good way,' overwhelmed with relief as realisations about herself clicked into place (GP7 206-06). Another talks about a sense of 'fit' between the course and her passions and interests, as she was,

> … studying something I *loved* doing,
> talking about things that I *loved* thinking about,
> engaging with thoughts and ideas that I *loved*,
> that I *loved* putting myself into
> and thinking critically about. (I Poem, GP2 40-42, emphasis mine)

A contrasting experience reflects feelings of intensity, pressure and the student feeling out of his depth, referring to experiences of anxiety and struggle during his time with

[45] I have developed some of these ideas further elsewhere (Whitehead 2014d).

MCYM (GP6 91-92). Others describe feeling emotionally overwhelmed by grief or stress: one participant crying regularly in meetings with her Line Manager (GP3 100), another in teaching sessions (GP9 213, 249). One interviewee uses the word 'vulnerability' several times, along with the powerful metaphor of having his 'not very deep roots… ripped out.' This vulnerability, captured in a relatively violent image leads him to wrestle with theological questions for himself (GP11 63-65). The description reflects ways in which emotional concepts are often 'metaphorized', with simpler linguistic terms often proving insufficient to express complex emotional feeling (Kövecses 2003:27). Several participants use metaphors to describe emotions relating to their experiences of personal change. These include a nuclear warhead (GP10 20), a phoenix rising from the ashes (GP10 82-84) and a rainbow, symbolizing hope (GP6 381-86).

Emotions in Learning

It is beyond the remit of this thesis to explore in depth the many different theories around emotion and the multiple ways of studying and engaging with it.[46] However, several aspects contribute helpfully to the current discussion.

Emotions, like feelings, are part of an internally-experienced, bodily response to the world (McLeod 2007:173). However, whereas feelings can be regarded as a multi-faceted, ever-present inner sensing, emotion is usually more specific, identifiable (as anger, grief, fear) and more immediately overwhelming for the individual experiencing it (2007:173).

[46] It is however helpful to recognise the contested nature of this subject. Strongman identifies over 150 different theories of emotion (2003:5).

Emotion has often been looked down on and guarded against within Western Culture, where socialisation has encouraged the repression of public displays of emotion (McLeod 2007:171), an attitude attributed to the influence of Plato and Descartes (Strongman 2003:11). Emotion can therefore become problematic for individuals who have been socialised to believe that expressing particular emotions (for example, anger) is wrong or unacceptable (McLeod 2007:172). This is reflected in attitudes towards emotions in learning, where so-called 'scientific ways of knowing' (Dirkx 2008:11), or the valuing and emphasizing of rationality have often prevailed. Within education, expressions of emotion can often be met with disapproval or censure, being regarded as inappropriate or disruptive (Clarke & Dirkx 2008:91; hooks 1994:155).

Dirkx suggests that the expression of strong emotions in learning situations is most commonly connected with conflict, citing differences in personalities, values, interests and opinions (2008:9). From the data, I would add inner conflict to this – the disequilibrium caused by new ideas and concepts conflicting with previously held views and values. Learning tasks, evaluation pressures and tutors' behaviour and attitude evoking memories of significant people in the learner's past can also be key factors (Dirkx 2008:9-10). Emotions are important because they provide information to individuals, highlighting a very fundamental attitude or tendency towards a person, situation or event and, when expressed, often bringing a sense of relief, release or resolution in respect of the issue (McLeod 2007:171-173).

Interestingly, little appears to have been written about emotions and learning in the context of theological education. Assisting students to grow in emotional literacy and intelligence is crucial however (Dirkx 2008:9), as it gives opportunity for them to

recognise and process issues in their own lives which, if not addressed at this point, may emerge later and potentially unhelpfully in their future youth ministry contexts.

Adult learning situations, and particularly those which emphasise relationships and self-development, can often bring quite strong emotions to the surface. It is easy to underestimate the levels of emotion which may be present within a learning context (Dirkx 2008:10). I was unaware of some of the strong emotional responses described by the graduates, even though I had facilitated some of the sessions described. Much of the emotional texture within a session will be unseen and for tutors this is an additional challenge. In the experiences highlighted by participants their emotions highlight important truths about how they are changing and who they are becoming. Each individual describes, ultimately, if not immediately, a sense of having settled something for themselves. Notably, in each of the moments of insight described, the interviewees go through a process of reflecting on and working with the emotions, rather than simply expressing them, although this is done mainly outside the classroom rather than within it.

My own experience during the DPT underlines the value of reflection on emotional responses to learning and I have written about using creative approaches to process my own experiences of feeling emotionally overwhelmed at certain points during the programme (Whitehead 2014a:15-20). Working with my emotions has been pivotal in supporting my own 'sense-making' and developing self-awareness. It has been important for me to recognise that emotions that dominate with no understanding can impede rather than enhance my practice and that it is therefore crucial to engage with but not be subsumed by these emotions (2014a:19). I have found the support of my

supervisor and my spiritual director invaluable in this area. At key times they have both provided opportunities to reflect and explore the issues raised and this points to ways in which tutors can helpfully support students' emotional processing where appropriate.

The graduates' examples mentioned above were all sparked within group contexts and three 'emotional tasks' identified as crucial in counselling are helpful for educators in this regard. These involve supporting students to explore concealed or unidentified feelings, to express supressed emotions and to regulate or restrain emotions which feel out of control (McLeod 2007:173-175). These ways of working are not necessarily taught or even acknowledged within many educational frameworks. However, it is important for tutors to be able to adequately, if not skilfully, support students in expressing and where appropriate interpreting their emotions. Holding the emotional space, validating the expression of emotion and creating a context where it is acceptable to express even very strong emotions are all part of this process. This kind of permission-giving, whether tacit or explicit, will only be possible if tutors see emotional expression as normal, understand it to be a potential source of learning and can manage their own anxiety in the situation. This may be challenging, particularly if it is unclear what has provoked a particular emotional response. Encouraging the student to stay with the emotion and not be afraid of it is part of this process, as is 'holding' the anxiety of the group and, if necessary, validating the emotional response to the group.

The educator's role in this area is potentially problematic (Dirkx 2008:9). Facilitating this kind of emotional engagement puts them in a similar position to a counsellor or therapist and some tutors may experience a role conflict here. In MCYM this arises when tutors are supporting students pastorally while also having to make decisions around

professional competence or fitness to practice. This can create an ethical dilemma as boundaries of confidentiality that would be taken for granted in a therapeutic context are not as explicit here.

Working with what Transpires

A pneumatology which embraces mystery, the uncontrollable and unpredictable, provides a helpful framework for working with all that 'transpires' in learning contexts. The image of the Spirit 'breathing through' teaching situations is not particularly comfortable or safe. There are limitations and dangers as well as advantages in taking the Spirit as a model for practice. As I have noted, the Spirit can be destructive as well as generative and facilitators need to be aware of the risks to individuals, groups and their own well-being of going with the flow and working with strong emotions. The Spirit may know the very thoughts of God (2 Corinthians 2:10-11) and may have all wisdom and knowledge, but human beings 'know only in part' (1 Corinthians 13:9) and are imperfect and fallible. Certain key principles will be important to bear in mind.

- The learning group is not a therapy group and tutors are (normally) not therapists. Awareness is needed as to the boundaries of what is appropriate to explore in learning contexts. This will vary in different situations, but some individuals may need to be encouraged to seek specialized therapeutic or pastoral support.
- Robust self-awareness is vital when working with emergent things in learning, particularly when strong emotions are being expressed (McLeod 2007:177). Tutors must practice 'dual attention' – listening to themselves as well as the individuals involved (2007:178).

- An awareness of tutor power and the impact of this on individuals and the group is crucial. There is a sensitive balance in being willing to relinquish aspects of control whilst maintaining a healthy oversight of group boundaries.
- Key skills can be developed which support tutors in this area – emotional intelligence (Goleman 1996); emotional literacy and sensitivity to 'feeling language' (McLeod 2007:178).
- A toolkit of approaches can help creative and responsive improvisation, for example, developing skills in the use of rituals and expressive arts (McLeod 2007:181-82).

Facilitating Learning as Art

During the research I came to consider the task of facilitating learning as a form of professional artistry (Schön 1991:18-19), in which practitioners draw on skills, understanding, experience and wisdom to fashion learning experiences, through careful planning and through responding 'in the moment.' This does not involve the formulaic application of set approaches but rather engaging with groups and individuals and meeting them where they are. Rather like ministry itself, it involves the integration of skills (*techne*) and practical wisdom (*phronesis*) (Foster et al 2006:319-320). I would also suggest that it requires the integration of *poesis*, a sense of making or 'craft' (Palmer 1998:14-16). In this kind of 'knowing in action' (Schön 1991:25), the knowledge concerned is 'ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing' (Schön 1991:49).

In relation to this, Schön gives the example of jazz musicians improvising together, who have a schema to work with and a repertoire which they can draw on and deliver at appropriate times (1991:55). There is an evolving and progressive quality to this:

> Improvisation consists in varying, combining, and recombining a set of figures within the schema which bounds and gives coherence to the performance. As the musicians feel the direction of the music that is developing out of their interwoven contributions, they make new sense of it and adjust their performance to the new sense they have made. (Schön 1991:55)

To be effective facilitators, who are able to respond 'in the moment' to what transpires, the data suggests that tutors need an adaptable, multipurpose toolkit – or a diverse 'repertoire' (Schön 1991:138) – of professional skills, akin to that of the craftsperson, which is implemented and modified depending on situational requirements. This necessitates an ability to think in the moment and requires high degrees of self-awareness, strong reflective skills and confidence.

These approaches also require tutors to appropriately manage their own emotional responses and work flexibly with the constellation of different factors that make up the learning context – the session plan, intended outcomes, content, teaching methods, timings, context, environment, group culture, norms and conflicts, students' individual backgrounds, perceptions, expectations and histories. They may also find it helpful to be aware of more sophisticated aspects of facilitation, such as the psychodynamics of groups and unconscious processes such as identification, projection, transference and so on (Ringer 2002:133-43). As it has been suggested that interpretations of group behaviour are probably only 25 per cent right 25 per cent of the time (Jaques 1999:4), this is an unenviable task.

2. Relational Dimensions – Ways of 'Being With' Students

Being Relational

Relationships are a core value within MCYM so it is unsurprising that positive relationships with tutors are highlighted as a key factor in personal change. These relationships are described as 'personable' (GP9 143) and 'relaxing' (GP6 322), qualities the graduates link with accessibility, approachability and being able to relate personally to tutors.

One graduate, who started the course at nineteen, highlights these relationships as significant in her transition into adulthood and transformative in her personal and spiritual formation (GP2 60-65). Another compares his relationships with core tutors to more negative experiences with teachers at school (GP5 314-17) and describes how he now seeks to replicate the relational qualities experienced on the course within his own Line Management practice (GP5 317-39), particularly valuing qualities of honesty, openness, genuineness and respect that he experienced. This description is emblematic of other comments within the interviews, as is his belief that relationships should not be 'half-hearted' (GP5 319-21). Relational *skills* are noted, for example, listening skills, emphasis on process and use of questions as key in developing and supporting relationships (for example, GP6 357-60).

The focus on relationships is mirrored in responses from practice tutors who, when asked to prioritize the importance of different aspects of their role, all place relational aspects above academic ones (PTFG, Appendix 12). In the example shown in Figure 7, for example, tasks relating specifically to submitted academic work appear as relatively low

priority, with broader relational and learning aspects seen as significantly more important.

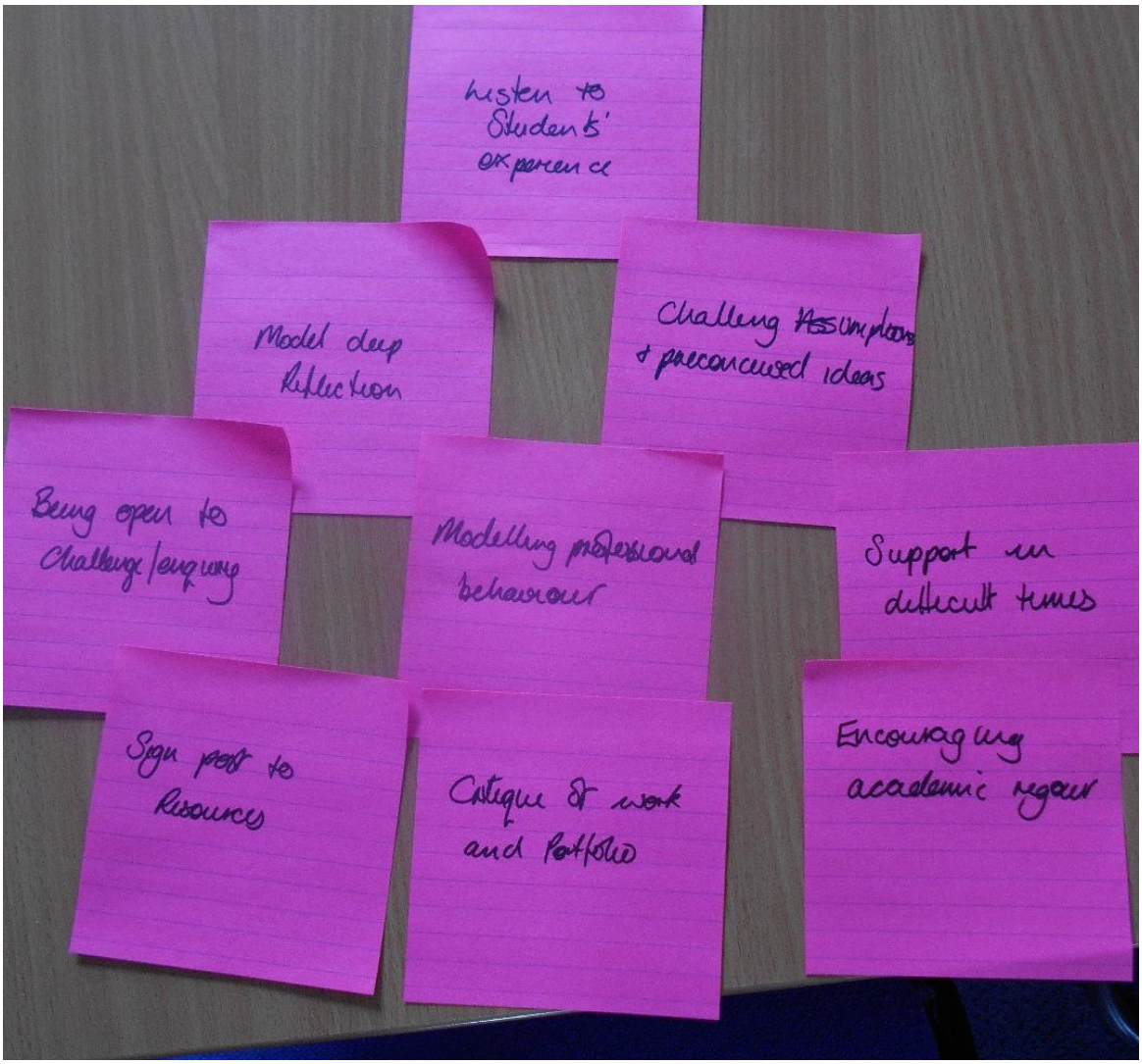


Figure 7: Sample Feedback on Role Priorities for Practice Tutors

For some graduates the development of student-tutor relationships takes time. One interviewee, highlighting his practice tutor's contribution to the formation process, acknowledges initial struggles with the relationship:

> [My tutor] was really key. At first I thought he was really cold. He'd sit there with his arms folded and he was really logical and straight down the line. But then I got to know him … and I suppose he didn't change … he was like it all the way through but I got used to it and he asked really good questions. (GP10 32-35)

It is important to acknowledge that for some graduates, the relationships do not 'click' at all and relationship difficulties with their practice tutor inhibit learning for at least two individuals. Both ascribe this to the tutor's approaches to the academic aspects of the course.

> He always laughed at my work ... found it funny. I think he was very academic and I'm not, like, I can write essays, but it's not where my heart is. I'm not academic, I don't really want to be, so I think my style of writing maybe didn't fit with his cleverness. So I feel like we, we didn't *clash*, but I never felt particularly comfortable with him or that he was particularly helpful. (GP3 111-15)

Although the interviewee laughs here, I was taken aback by her comments. In my research journal I note surprise and shock, knowing the tutor in question and the graduate's academic ability.[47] Another graduate's similar experience is contrasted with the change she notices when a new practice tutor works in ways more suited to her preferred learning style (GP1 75-76). The importance of meeting students where they are, rather than where tutors would like them to be, is crucial to note here.

Being Available and Approachable

Several graduates mention qualities of availability and approachability in student-tutor relationships, describing practice tutors as 'generous' (GP2 168), 'available when I needed him' (GP4 95), 'there for you' (GP5 228) and 'interested in me' (GP6 351). Core staff are seen as accessible and for some individuals these relationships extend beyond

[47] The student gained a 2:1 degree and worked consistently at this level throughout the course.

classroom and college. For example, staying with a member of staff during teaching blocks made other staff appear more approachable for one participant (GP4 109-11). Some practice tutors see availability as an important part of their role (PTFG) with two participants citing it explicitly as a priority in their practice.

One graduate talks about initially finding it difficult to approach members of staff, particularly going to a tutor's office and being fearful of saying the wrong thing, but then discovering that the reality is very different (GP10 54-56). There is a parallel here with this individual's response to the practice tutor, cited earlier. My research journal draws on wider knowledge of his prior educational experience, which may well have led to an expectation of negative relationships with authority figures. Positive or negative constructs of education, conceived in childhood shape the way adults approach learning (Rogers 2002:79) and there is much potential for projection and self-fulfilling prophecy in these kinds of situations. This makes tutor practice even more significant when it comes to what is communicated tacitly as well as what is articulated – the 'caught' aspects as well as the 'taught' (Whitehead 2013c:29). Tutors suggest finding ways to '[break down] expectations/opinions students initially have about us' (PTFG), and propose a number of ways of doing this, including: clear definition of the practice tutor role, a 3-way meeting with the spiritual mentor, prayer and affirmation in meetings, informal times with the student and a focus on getting to know each other in the initial session (PTFG).

Being Supportive

Issues of availability and approachability are linked strongly with the idea of support for the graduate interviewees. One cites the support I gave, as year tutor, to a group of friends.

> I think the *availability* to be able to talk if there was, like with pastoral issues. So, when we had that incident, at the end of, I think it was Year One, like to have that support, which I don't think you'd get in a normal Uni course, and we were like, 'What the heck's going on?' and 'How do we process this?' That was really, really helpful. (GP3 119-24)

This graduate goes on to reflect on the importance of receiving support beyond the academic, 'having that awareness that life isn't, it's not all about your course … we're people and, life's messy' (GP3 124-25). This connects with the need for tutors to work with individuals as 'whole people' rather than adopting a purely academic framework and focus.

Other references to being supported include graduates noting how tutors actively seek to meet students where they are in their learning rather than delivering material by rote (GP1 90-91), provide resources such as books or websites (GP4 97-98) and are willing to take 'risks' rather than simply playing it safe in tutorials (GP2 171-72).

Several graduates perceive tutors as going beyond what might be perceived as 'normal' and certainly beyond the scope of their job description or employed hours. This is true for many practice tutors, who give far beyond what is required, and also for core tutors in terms of personal support and availability. It is challenging to consider how a culture of 'going beyond what is expected' might work in practice in terms of potential pressure on staff. If one tutor spends much more time with individuals, might this put additional

expectations on others? Should tutors be expected to work extra hours for no pay and how might this impact those with other jobs, family or other commitments? This draws attention to diverse understandings and models of ministry, which engender very different expectations within denominations and individual churches. The data from tutors reflects very different approaches to this, with some being much more boundaried around availability. Lack of consistency in practice here could lead to some students feeling short-changed if they feel they receive less support than others – something that would benefit from further exploration within the tutor team.

Being Affirming and Encouraging

Affirmation and encouragement are seen as significant, with one graduate feeling genuine interest from his practice tutor, 'that he had my, you know, best interests at heart' (GP6 354). This is directly linked with experience of positive personal changes during the course. Another talks about encouragement from core staff '[opening] a door for some people, to feel comfortable,' reflecting on openness between staff and students (GP4 108).

The following I poem illustrates other graduates' reflections on this.

> Being given opportunities to contribute.
> Kind of starting small
> and that growing.
> For me it was a confidence thing,
> so I was very tentative at first.
> I remember writing some answers down,
> but I didn't want to contribute them to the class
> and you saw them and read them and said,
> 'These are really good,
> these are interesting ideas.'
> So being affirmed for being a positive contribution
> being really helpful,
> helping me find a voice

in class dialogue or discussion.
And then those opportunities growing.
Talking at the front
or taking leadership roles in class learning –
because it was so experiential
there were lots of opportunities
to step in and take responsibility.
I found those really helpful
in terms of holistic formation.
I'd call it professional formation,
but for me it felt much more like confidence-building as well,
just finding myself
and being comfortable in that arena.
And that kind of positive feedback thing that happens where,
if you're affirmed and encouraged to do something
and then it goes well,
it makes you want to do it again
and try a little bit more.
It felt like I was in a good cycle the whole way through.
I was encouraged to try more and more,
to be more innovative
put more of myself into studying,
and that was always
welcomed, encouraged and supported. (I Poem, GP2 145-63)

The kind of development of confidence described here is mentioned in six of the graduate interviews – though not attributed solely to tutor encouragement but to a range of influences, opportunities and experiences. Some key tutor practices are identifiable in the above I poem:

- valuing and affirming student contributions – not just those spoken aloud in group discussions, but noticing and, where appropriate, acknowledging comments jotted down by individuals in their own note-taking or during table discussions;
- giving students responsible and meaningful roles within the learning process – presentations, group leadership, facilitating aspects of the learning – through adopting collaborative, experiential approaches to learning;

- giving positive and constructive feedback, which is targeted and meaningful.

The graduate above describes a cycle of trying things, receiving positive feedback, being encouraged, trying new things and investing more in response to the encouragement given. This sequence, akin to the experiential learning cycle, appears to create its own energy and dynamic. The graduate speaks earlier about underachieving and struggling with attentiveness in school (GP2 43-46), suggesting that affirmation and encouragement are perhaps particularly valuable to those who lack confidence educationally.

The data from tutors also foregrounds this area. One participant, speaking about valuing, esteeming and treating students with respect, understands the power of their words and actions in this context.

> To affirm them,
> that's profound;
> to tell them,
> 'That's a wow,
> you realise how much you've got that!'
> Just helping them join dots
> and see the significance of what they've got,
> when they've got it,
> even if they haven't realised it.
>
> That for me is the challenge of my whole life,
> including my formation education –
> that it's not about me helping students see
> how wonderful I am.
> It's a matter of helping them see
> how fantastic they are,
> how fantastic they can be
> and all that they can be in God,
> and all that they can be in their lives.
> And that for me sits in my values
> as I go and facilitate formation. (I Poem, TP2 313-316, 362-366)

Another tutor describes using an 'asset-based' approach, 'encouraging them in who they are and what they've got and building on that and trying to help them see… the goodness in themselves' (TP5 122-24). Melander (2006:87) describes the power of asset-based thinking, highlighting the value of positive reinforcement in a childcare context and grounding this approach theologically in an understanding of the *Imago Dei*.

> In an authentic relationship, we see God's image in the other person. Accepting the truth of another person – and seeing him or her as a reflection of God's goodness – is foundational to authentic, respectful relationships… When we accept other people, we try to accept who they are (instead of who we desire them to be). We do not label or judge one another. We do not squeeze each other into categories or roles. We do not look to the other to be a mirror of ourselves. Instead we look for the beauty that blooms inside of each person we encounter. (2006:29)

Being Open and Vulnerable

Graduates value a sense of reciprocity within student-tutor relationships and this is exemplified in tutors' willingness to share their own experience of professional practice, ministry and life. Tutors talk about their own lives and practice (GP6 335-37) and are honest about their own questioning (GP6 329) and things that have not gone well for them (GP5 246-47). Graduates citing these examples are helped by seeing that tutors don't have all the answers and are still on a journey themselves. They find it encouraging to hear tutors speak about God's work in their lives, describing how the integration of these stories make lectures engaging and inspire their own understanding of and relationship with God (GP6 336-40).

The level of giving and sharing demonstrated by tutors is again perceived as going beyond what would normally be expected. Graduates are significantly impacted by the honesty and openness modelled, and one individual describes how he now consciously

integrates these qualities into his own practice (GP5 217-20). This openness is sometimes related to specific struggles and life events – notably my marriage breaking down and another tutor's experience of serious family illness (GP10 62-66). Awareness of these struggles enables students to relate to tutors, 'you knew that [they] were real people' (GP10 65) and identify with them more.

The level of openness shown is sometimes perceived as rather shocking.

> I think when [the tutor] told us some of the stuff that was going on in [their] life it was, it was a bit of a shock to us, 'cause we was like, you know, '[Are they] meant to be sharing this?' But again [they] felt safe enough in our company to share that, which then encouraged us to be able to do that as well, which was really helpful. (GP4 117-20)

This interviewee this refers twice to the tutor's honesty catalysing greater openness within the student group (GP4 68-70, 119-20). Another graduate becomes quite emotional when talking about this issue.

> I think just *having* tutors that were open to,
> to being challenged,
> to being loved,
> to having their *hearts* broken by students
> (I hope I didn't do that).
> I think for me what really stood out
> (I'll get emotional now)
> is the *vulnerability* that the tutors had.
> Whether it was like a bereavement session
> and it's *hard*,
> to working through a PPE or a dissertation
> and being really challenged in your thoughts,
> and being able to say back to your tutor,
> 'Well what about you?
> I want to know from you as well.'
> The vulnerability that came with that.
> Then when *life* is pants,
> just sharing that,
> and in a way that is not making excuses either
> but just being open. (I Poem, GP9 145-52)

This theme of vulnerability, though evidently significant for some individuals, is not widely explored in adult learning literature. Indeed, it appears to contradict much educational practice. Models in which educators are 'set apart' and 'expert' are widespread and the data challenges the extent to which tutors' lives and experiences might contribute to whole-person learning. This necessitates questions around the appropriateness of tutors sharing personal information within learning and what 'appropriate self-disclosure' might mean here. Important conversations are needed within specific contexts to establish appropriate boundaries, bearing in mind that while some tutors are comfortable being very open about aspects of their personal life, others may prefer not to share personal information and experiences. Over-sharing could result in others (a tutor's family, for example) being made vulnerable or in tutors seeking to meet their emotional needs through their engagement with students. Sensitivity, self-awareness and thought is needed here.

Being a Role Model

Graduates often connect issues around vulnerability with comments about looking up to tutors and seeing them as role models. Tutors are 'authority figures or experts' (GP2 61) but their openness about their own journeys means they model the importance of life-long learning. Tutors' accessibility and vulnerability does not appear to undermine the respect in which they are held by those interviewed, but rather, to enhance it. It also appears to be seemingly small things that tutors are modelling. For example, one graduate, describing tutors explicitly as good role models, notes their presence in worship sessions, even when they have no direct responsibility for the session (GP10 60-61).

One I poem encapsulates the data most fully on this issue.

> Just being there in the lectures,
> watching the lecturers
> and their approach to things in the sessions,
> was really good.
> Just listening to them.
> You have your [practice tutor]
> and the [formation] group
> and stuff like that,
> but for me it was
> watching all the lecturers,
> listen to them
> and see how they do things,
> helped my spiritual growth more.
> Because those lecturers for me,
> I looked up to them.
> They're giving their knowledge
> and their experience,
> sometimes further than it should have been given,
> which was really key,
> to watch them share,
> and for me
> that helped me grow spiritually a lot more. (I Poem, GP5 231-39)

The Impact of Role-Modelling

The impact of tutor practice here is evidenced by graduates applying things they see modelled. Some individuals describe how their personal approaches to reflection have been influenced and informed by course patterns and structures (GP5 415-26; GP8 138-141). Other examples relate to approaches modelled by particular tutors, which graduates now integrate specifically and intentionally into their own practice. As well as openness and vulnerability, these include creative approaches to facilitating work with young people (GP4 153-55; GP8 243-56), using different models of reflection and worship (GP5 86-92, 275-95) and actively and intentionally investing in young peoples' lives (GP8 270-75).

Tutors themselves recognise the importance of this. Responses in the PTFG mention modelling as a specific facet of the role, citing modelling 'deep reflection,' professional behaviour generally, personal spiritual formation and professional boundaries as crucial (Appendix 12). Two tutor participants place this aspect particularly highly in their practice priorities.

Identification

Some graduates acknowledge a particular connection with an individual tutor, 'everyone has … certain persons that click with you' (GP6 365). For one individual, this sense of 'clicking' emerges from noticing similarities to himself which enable a sense of connection or identification – coming from the same geographical area of the country or sharing similar background or experience (GP6 356, 369-71). Common experience is perceived as helpful by one individual, whose practice tutor can support her in addressing specific placement issues because he shares the same denomination (GP4 100-01). Another identifies with those he sees around college who come from the same racial background (GP5 179-90).

This suggests that identification is valuable in promoting feelings of connection and relationship between tutors and students. If certain students find it easier to relate to those with whom they identify and relationship is a key factor in personal change, then a tutor team which is diverse in terms of race, age, gender and background will more effectively support the formation process, providing more diverse role models. This is potentially challenging in a profession which remains predominantly male, white, middle class and middle-aged. In MCYM we have been particularly aware of the lack of racial diversity, with a predominantly white core tutor team, though the team is more diverse

in gender, life experience and background. We have sought to engage skilled individuals from other ethnic groups as practice tutors, dissertation tutors and visiting lecturers, although this has not always been easy.

This sense of being influenced by role models resonates with Smith's envisioning of education as

> …a constellation of practices, rituals, and routines that inculcates a particular vision of the good life by inscribing or infusing that vision into the heart (the gut) by means of material, embodied practices. (2009:26)

This applies not only to students who are seeking to emulate and learn from tutors, but also to tutors themselves, who, through literally 'practicing' are adopting ways of being, which can become inculcated and integrated, not only into their practice, but into their lives.

Inspiration: Spirit as Mediator of Relational Experience

> Inspire: (from the Latin, *inspirare*, to breathe or blow into) to inhale, to fill someone with the urge or ability to do or feel something; create a positive feeling in someone, to animate someone with a feeling. (ODE 896-97)

In considering the relational aspects of tutor practice, I turn to a key strand of pneumatological thinking – ways in which the Spirit is understood to mediate experience to and between people. Graduate interviewees understand their relationships with tutors to be 'inspirational' in a range of ways and reflections on Spirit as mediator of relational experience gives further depth to this exploration.

Cartledge defines mediation as 'the action whereby two distinct elements are brought together by an intermediary or third party… often used when two estranged parties are

brought back into a reconciled relationship' (2015:64). He proposes an understanding of the Spirit's 'intermediary' nature, 'in terms of mediating the presence of the triune God such that God is recognized to be present' (2015:65), suggesting that within the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition this mediation has both internal and external aspects to it.

> This means there is an emotional or affective pole, such that people 'feel' certain kinds of things… There is also a ritual pole – a set of practices that are ritualized and into which people are socialized and participate as part of a social group. (2015:68)

The 'Go-Between God'

If learning is to impact and influence the whole person it needs to engage deeply. Taylor, describing the Spirit as the 'go-between God' (1972), highlights the difference between knowledge of and encounter with. Here, the Spirit is 'the invisible third party who stands between me and the other, making us mutually aware' (1972:19). The notion of encounter is fundamental to education as students are 'encountering' all the time – both internally and externally – through engagement with tutors, peers, managers, learning materials, the practice context, literature, different views and perspectives and their own thoughts, responses, questions and emotions. In a confessional, formational context like MCYM, students also expect to encounter the divine (Whitehead 2014d:69).

McFague (1993:148-49) conceives Spirit as the main way that we perceive God's presence and agency in the world, speaking about the sense of 'direction' in God's purposes and in the life of God's people:

> The guide for interpreting that direction is called the Holy Spirit, and it works through human beings: we become the mind and heart as well as the hands and feet of the body of God on our planet… a particular direction (a 'new creation')

> characterized by inclusive love, especially for the vulnerable and oppressed. For Christians, the Spirit has been qualified or given shape and scope by the Holy Spirit and is a direction or purpose for life that depends on our cooperation as God's partners.

Though emerging from very different theological traditions, these strands of thinking emphasise the Spirit's role in generating a sense of connectedness between God and creation in ways that are participatory and emancipatory. It is the Spirit who empowers for service, directs, expresses and includes.

This connectedness is seen in New Testament descriptions of the Spirit mediating encounters with God. In Luke and Acts, for example, workings of the Spirit are understood to be 'the self-manifesting presence of God' (Turner 1996:160). The Apostle Paul uses evocative language to describe how the Spirit communicates the love of God to individual believers:

> For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God. (Romans 8:14-16)

This passage is fundamental to Coakley's understanding of the Spirit as the 'primary means of incorporation into the trinitarian life of God… actually catching up the created realm into the life of God' (2013:11). Here, the experience described is seen as 'a movement of divine reflexivity' (2013:113), both an 'outpouring and incorporative flow of the Spirit' (2013:294) which is life-giving and transformative.

A Mediating Mirror

The reflexive way in which the Spirit mediates the experience of being accepted and adopted by God here resonates with participants' descriptions of the transformative

acceptance, encouragement and validation they received from tutors. Education can be redemptive (TP2 129-37). One tutor speaks explicitly about seeking to 'mediate a loving and where appropriate… forgiving God' (TP5 125), highlighting that many students carry around unhelpful images of God. The tutor uses the metaphor of a mediating mirror, to explore the way tutors reflect back positively to students to support the development of self-esteem (Richards 2011:78).[48] This idea of 'the looking glass self' carries with it three key elements of a self-concept: how we believe we come across to others, our anticipation of how they judge us and some kind of feeling about this, such as pride or shame (Cooley 2011:126-8).

Here, the nature and influence of the person involved is vitally important. Tutors carry authority and power by nature of their role, qualifications and status within the institution. Student perception of them as role models adds to their weight of influence. Having an awareness of oneself as a 'mediating mirror' can inform tutor practice as they seek to encourage, affirm and inspire those they are working with, potentially also reinforcing a sense of God's love and acceptance. This happens, not in the apparently significant events but in the day-to-day ordinariness of course life. One tutor uses an understanding of *Missio Dei* (TP5 106) to consider the idea of noticing what God is doing in a person's life in a pastoral context and affirming or developing that. This recognition that God is already at work by the Spirit, in the lives of individuals and learning communities encourages me to see myself as co-operating and collaborating with the Spirit and challenges me to trust all that the Spirit is doing in the lives of those I work

[48] Richards' work refers to youth work practice with young people, so is particularly relevant here, in terms of youth ministers experiencing positive affirmation that they can then model in their own practice with young people.

with, much of which will be unseen. This sense of trust also helps mitigate against unhealthy uses of power in tutor-student relationships.

Embrace, Inspiration and Affirmation

Another helpful metaphor to explore the Spirit's work in this regard is that of embrace – in the context of expressing friendship rather than sexual intimacy (Cooke 2014). Key aspects of this are a knowing of self and other, an invitation to friendship, mutuality and reciprocity, a sense of hope for the future, comfort, peace, appreciation and unconditional acceptance (2014:183). These qualities appear to reflect some of those highlighted in the data. Cooke sees an external embrace as insufficient to communicate the essence of these qualities and he describes times when, even without a physical gesture, an 'inner embrace' is experienced, through words, body language or a simple look (2014:183-184). It is this kind of embrace that encapsulates the work of the Spirit and is deeply challenging when it comes to facilitators' practice and attitudes.

Embrace conjures a sense of focus and attentiveness – being fully present, in the moment. This has resonances with the Spirit as paraclete (*parakletōs*) (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7), the one who is called alongside (Unger & White 1985:111), the intercessor, mediator, helper, comforter, consoler, encourager, teacher and advocate (Sakenfeld 2007:877; Turner 1996:77). This quality of presence – of attentive, disciplined 'withness' (Krallmann 2002:13-14) has significant implications for educators. Evidently, tutors are not 'with' students all the time, but the quality of their presence when they are can have significant impact.

Much of what is being proposed here relates to the power of the Spirit to inspire and affirm and it is tempting to idealise this. As we have already noted, however,

pneumatology is a field fraught with complexities and the textures of power within it are by no means straightforward and may be highly problematic. For example, the random, arbitrary and uneven way in which the Spirit appears to choose those to whom gifts are to be given (1 Corinthians 12:11) can almost appear to suggest either favouritism or disinterest rather than a clear plan that reflects a God who is just and fair. In an educational context these kinds of practices would be regarded as unprofessional, incongruous and inappropriate.

Inspiration, Power and Mediation

Similarly, understanding tutors as mediating God's presence, even in a metaphorical way, could create unhelpful and unhealthy power dynamics. If tutors are somehow understood to 'represent' God there is a risk of the abuse of power. Tutors are human and subject to error, misinterpretation and wrong judgements. The importance of discernment within the Christian tradition and of 'testing the spirits' is vital here (Fleming 1978:202; Wink 1992:103-104).

These textures of power work on a corporate as well as an individual level. Organisations, whether explicitly religious or not develop a 'spirit,' or an inner, tangible essence of power through their myths, rituals and foundational narratives (Pattison, 2007b:111-116). The nature of this 'spirit' will vary significantly and is established over time, often tacitly. Prayerful consideration and attentiveness to the prevailing culture or spirit within a context can be extremely helpful in discerning the extent to which the 'powers' at work within the organisation are healthy or not.

This kind of reflection has been a focus of much conversation within the MCYM core tutor team, particularly in connection with students' personal and spiritual formation.

This is reflected in the data. Tutors recognise the importance of mediating God's love and acceptance, but wrestle with the extent to which their role involves challenging students. One graduate would like to see tutors challenging student behaviour and lifestyle more rigorously.

> I think sometimes being challenged by your peers is really helpful and it also helps *you* when you learn how to challenge people. But also from, sometimes you need that slightly higher person saying, 'Is this decision that you've made, the best one, and does it honour Jesus right now?' (GP3 192-95)

The description of tutors as 'higher' people is significant here. This approach and expectation reflects the graduate's church culture and would be emblematic of numerous MCYM students. In my own practice I have often reflected on the appropriate use of tutor power and this theme emerges in several tutor interviews, reflecting differing understandings of role, power and formation. One clearly believes students should take responsibility for their own formation, seeing the tutor's role as challenging professional issues lovingly without collusion (TP1 60). For others the issue is more complex. One sees formation as God's responsibility but believes God uses tutors and the student community within the process, with the tutor 'facilitating that, in God's hands' (TP6 95). This tutor intentionally seeks to engender change, for example, creating situations which will force students to confront issues they struggle with; combining groups to stimulate conflictual exchanges of views; creating learning experiences that will stretch and challenge individuals in areas where they need to grow (TP6 96-106). While articulating this, however, the tutor admits more recently backing off this approach (TP6 107), and acknowledges some discomfort around the issue.

Another tutor expresses frustration about not being able to 'offer discipleship to the student' (TP2 160, 436), which they would like to do as a core, rather than as a 'side issue to their academic journey' (TP2 197-98). This tutor wishes to find ways of fulfilling academic and professional university requirements, whilst facilitating intentional and overt discipleship.

> That without the fear of manipulation, students could come and say to us, 'I give you permission to speak into my life, I expect you to pray for me and with me and be honest in what you sense from God for me.' (TP2 385-87)

Another ongoing conversation is that around the potential for abuse of power when it comes to prayer and charismatic spiritual gifts.

> There's this ongoing debate about
> what does power mean in our context
> and the potential abuse of power?
> I probably err on the side of,
> 'I don't want to come anywhere close
> to abusing power,'
> which probably sometimes means
> there may have been occasions
> where I may have been better off saying something,
> but I'm very conscious of that.
> That for me is one of the dilemmas of our set-up,
> we both want to do the formation
> but we also have to sign off on people.
> I don't know that there is any way round that.
>
> Several of us in church contexts
> would have no problem doing, praying prophetically,
> for want of a better phrase,
> it's still something I struggle with a little bit here.
> [As] a year tutor I would pray
> I would sort of ask God for something
> but it was always difficult to know to what extent,
> how boldly to pray something you felt
> because there was that,
> that dual role. (I Poem, TP5 195-207)

This participant's reflections effectively echo my own ambiguous feelings around this area. It is clearly falls within tutors' remit to challenge unprofessional behaviour or attitudes, and this should be undertaken as 'elegantly' as possible (Thompson 1998:217), tactfully, constructively, not attacking, aggressive or punitive but compassionately and appropriately-timed. Personal and spiritual issues which do not directly impact on the professional or ministerial context,[49] are less straightforward. Differing expectations in students' various relationships and contexts (home, family, friendships, church, placement, college) brings an added complexity. Interactions and particularly interventions involve the exercise of power (Gibson & Clarke 1995:43) and the church has been criticised for its well-intentioned, latent oppressions (Berger 1972:131-32). 'Benevolent oppression' (Parker & Randall 1997:26), however well-intentioned is nevertheless still oppression.

Within theological education there is an added spiritual dimension which can create an additional weight behind any messages that are communicated, whether spoken or not. Interventions can become spiritually abusive, if tutors use students to meet their own needs for control or self-esteem (Linn et al 1994:13) or if they deny students their spiritual freedom, for example, by telling them that 'their way' is the only way to follow God (1994:12). Some of the personal experiences I mentioned in Part One mean that I am particularly cautious about these issues.

Tutors have opportunities to model good practice here. Learning to negotiate power issues is important in students' personal and ministerial formation. They already

[49] It is important to note that many student placements would expect students to adhere to a specific code of conduct if they were in a ministry or leadership role and this would be understood to be a professional issue within MCYM.

exercise power in their relationships with young people and will do so increasingly as their ministries develop. Helping them understand the dangers of unwitting oppression (Dalrymple & Burke, 1995:52) and unpacking the problematic nature of power dynamics in ministry contexts, is vital in supporting them to avoid practices which impose values, manipulate or indoctrinate those they work with.

3. Space-Making Dimensions

Introduction

The third broad dimension which emerges through the data analysis is that of 'space.' Several graduates refer specifically to aspects of 'space' on the course as important within the learning process and significant in their personal and spiritual development. This is relevant here, because the creating of 'space' is very much in the hands of facilitators in learning contexts. The crafting, development and sustaining of a 'growth promoting climate' (Rogers 1993b:177)[50] is an important dimension of educational practice and has formed part of my own writing and reflection (Nash et al 2008; Whitehead et al 2013).

Terminology around space is complex and potentially problematic (Lefebvre 1991:16) and notions of space are widely contested in different fields, with the term being used in various, often contradictory and potentially confusing ways. Space and spaces 'are seen through metaphors and socially constructed meanings, but they are also themselves the source of many signs, metaphors and metonyms' (Pattison 2013:3).[51]

[50] Although I use this term here, it is important to note that the qualities identified as key to this – genuineness, acceptance, empathy (Rogers 1993a:230-233) – fall very clearly into the previous area explored – that of relationships. This highlights the overlapping nature of the themes.
[51] Pattison is writing about 'face' and 'faces' here but the description seems particularly apt.

The participants accordingly use the term in a range of different ways, which I seek to explore and unpack here. These are largely unconnected with the relationship between people and the physical settings in which they live and work and the effects of this (Gallagher 1994:17). Neither do they speak primarily about spaces or places as material entities – the quality of the environment – so called 'ecological' understandings of place (DeMiglio & Williams 2008:21). Although this is alluded to briefly by one or two participants, it is not the main focus of their reflections. The references to space rather address issues around the quality of relational and educational experience: opportunities to have time (space) away from their normal routines to learn, reflect, think and question and a learning environment (space) which paradoxically incorporate both a sense of 'safety' and significant challenge and struggle.

Here, I explore some of the ways the term 'space' is used by the graduates and its implications for theological educators. I first give a brief overview of some of the key aspects emerging, before moving on to explore these two key areas of apparent contradiction – safe space and challenging space.

Different Kinds of Space

One graduate describes the range of different learning contexts available within the CYM experience, all of which contribute to formation and which, he believes, should be part of normal church life.

> Why isn't it something
> that's part of church,
> that pushes the boundaries
> pushes you to places
> that are quite vulnerable and
> kind of uneasy
> and makes you think and challenge?

> I think the environment at CYM -
> the spaces:
> the lessons or the college days,
> your [practice] tutor,
> you should have good line management
> and a good placement
> then your formation group.
> There's lots of spaces to kind of
> think stuff through.
> So the intensity of that is,
> is hard to replicate. (I poem, GP11 90-98)

The spaces described here are practical, structural spaces within the course, which provide opportunities for input, challenge, reflection and thinking. The description is not only of the structural dimension of these spaces but their intensity and quality, which push learners beyond their current, comfortable thinking into discomposure and questioning.

'Time Away' Space

> It was the *physical* space gave you *spiritual* space … if you give people physical space it allows them to in a sense transcend up into that spiritual space, 'cause they've got to have that physical space, for some people they've got to have that physical space first. (GP8 131-35)

This interviewee, who has demanding family responsibilities, reflects at some length on the importance of having space apart from everyday life; the way in which 'actually going *away*' (GP8 77) is significant in formation. Being apart from the responsibilities of home creates a special, personally-owned space and she directly connects the physical college environment and journeys there and back with personal and spiritual formation. The graduate now seeks to recreate this sense of 'space apart' with young people, through fashioning 'sacred spaces,' in which they can reflect and think about their lives.

She acknowledges that this aspect may be particularly significant for her as a mature student, with limited time for herself in everyday life, 'so every space I had was really valuable. Space to think was *very* valuable' (GP8 126-27). After graduating she misses the thinking time provided by car journeys to and from college and now intentionally travels by train to recreate this experience (GP8 145-150). This desire to replicate reflective space experienced within MCYM is echoed by another participant who provides away-days for his staff, to encourage conversation, thinking, the development of understanding and reflection on practice, vision and values (GP11 101-9).

Reflective Space

Space to think and reflect is not only 'taken' by students but is created by tutors and Line Managers. For example, one Line Manager actively encourages a participant to make sense of his learning through and within his practice. This goes beyond reflecting and applying learning in context, but is a more integrated sense-making *in* practice. The Line Manager also gives a weekly opportunity to share his learning and reflection in youth team training, which further embeds the learning (GP11 210-24).

My own teaching practice includes creating space for individual and corporate reflection within training days and one graduate mentions this explicitly as significant in his personal and spiritual formation. Creating time for students to reflect alone, in pairs or groups is something he finds particularly helpful and would like to see more of. He acknowledges this practice particularly suits him as an introvert and believes that further time and space to reflect would significantly help his personal and spiritual development. Again, he now builds this practice into his ongoing youth work practice (GP5 409-29). Another graduate would like to see more space created on teaching days

for ‘reflective conversations … where things could be learnt without having to achieve anything’ (GP2 260-66).

Within the pressure of curriculum demands it is often difficult to carve out this time-space and tutors often experience a tension between content transmission and process issues. Opportunities for reflection, however, can be invaluable in supporting students to integrate learning and to engage with their own personal and spiritual formation.

Space as Group Culture and Context

When graduates speak of space they are often not describing physical or even time spaces but rather the group culture and context. As I have noted, these descriptions broadly fall into two categories – ways in which the space feels ‘safe’ and the apparently contradictory notion of ‘challenging’ space. I explore these here, as dynamics which lie at least partly in the control of tutors, and then seek to explore how these two very different aspects might be held in creative tension through professional, facilitated boundaries.

Safe Space

Earlier, I explored how relationships with tutors supported positive growth and there is an overlap here as these relationships are described as a ‘positive environment’ in which students have ‘space to grow’ (GP2 70). Thinking about these relationships in spatial terms encourages engagement with the multifaceted and multi-dimensional nature of relationships in learning situations. Several participants mention ‘safe’ space in relation to their personal and spiritual formation and describe key qualities of this space. One notes a sense of equality with the Line Manager, as they work things out and learning together (GP10 46-48). Another describes ‘listening space,’ in which it feels safe to

express and explore opinions. She recounts a placement experience in which she is judged and 'pushed down' because of her inclusive attitudes towards same sex relationships. Shortly afterwards, discussing the same theme in an MCYM session, she feels listened to and affirmed. She sees this as crucial in her theological and spiritual growth (GP2 89-95). One graduate reflects on returning to college for a training day two years after graduating and confiding with me about personal struggles. For her the safety of the space leads to a positive,

> … probably a healing experience, in terms of knowing that you wouldn't be judgmental on my situation, and that, that kind of gave me permission to speak to other Christians about it in a way that I probably wouldn't have had the confidence to do before. (GP7 214-16)

For another graduate, the qualities of safe space include the freedom to express emotion (particularly tears), to be vulnerable, observe the vulnerability of others and disagree without damage to relationships (GP9 249-250). When asked about a metaphor that encapsulates her experience of personal and spiritual formation, 'safe environment' is the one this participant chooses (GP9 226). This is particularly significant for her because she joined the course later, when relationships had already been established within the cohort. Interestingly, it is not the relationships with peers that she perceives as safe, but the facilitated space of the course itself.

This same participant makes connections between the physical and emotional space, reflecting on creating a 'safe space' in her current office:

> … the moment I'm at my desk I'm working, but the moment I'm sitting in the, we call it the comfy area, it's a completely different atmosphere, I'm like, I'm more personable than work-orientated. 'Cause … it's very much like a peaceful sensory area. So having that space for my team and for me to just go 'phew.' (GP9 214-9)

Her description of this space is resonant of my MCYM office space. The physical layout of the room was important to me and two spatial images strike me in the interviews as particularly emblematic of the space I sought to create. The first is the description of my open door policy (GP9 145) and the second is one participant's response to being asked what was helpful in supporting their formation: 'Your sofa.' They go on to elaborate further:

> At first tutors seemed really distant... but the reality was really different. And I can remember sitting on your sofa a lot and it felt okay to just come and talk things through for a bit and try and work it out. (GP10 53-7)

I am struck by the way the door and the sofa become symbols for these individuals of my approachability. Although I do not intend to explore social-geographical aspects of space within this thesis, the sense of the office layout, or furniture within it being emblematic of a quality of space is quite striking and highlights ways in which objects and settings can become meaning-laden for those who engage with them: 'a set of context-dependent, taken-for-granted signs necessary to action, to practical and relational engagement in some part of the everyday world' (Pred 1997:127).

In a one-to-one context, notions of safe-space from therapeutic contexts highlight the importance of physical space as well as aspects of purpose, relationships, and values being important in creating and managing spaces (McLeod 2007:92). One practice tutor explicitly highlights similarities between therapeutic contexts and the tutorial environment.

> It was a kind of one-to-one
> concentrated time,
> so they were there alone
> without other influences.

> We were creating a space
> that was kind of outside their placement and
> their friendship groups.
> It was just focused
> upon them
> and that was just really important.
> It's so key to be able to stand
> outside your situation
> and I think that's where
> the counselling thing comes in.
> It's not counselling,
> but the only other place
> you ever do that
> is in counselling:
> to stand outside your situation
> and talk through with somebody
> who actually is positive about you
> and it's focused on you.
> So I think it gave them
> not only the space to do that
> but it gave them the need
> and the skills
> to create those spaces in the future.
> And for most of them
> I think they've continued to do that. (I Poem, TP3 261-74)

This echoes the sense of 'space away' which was mentioned earlier and the importance of having opportunities to be 'separated off from the routines, rules and expectations of everyday life' (McLeod 2007:92). For other tutors too, creating or facilitating a safe environment is seen as important. This encompasses notions of not constraining or restricting students:

> I see my role as whatever it is that makes sure there's space around so that they can emerge into a space where they can just be, where they're not trapped or struggling to find a role. (TP1 138-390)

Issues around being real, honest and open are also seen as important:

> …facilitating a safe learning environment where people can be honest and frank about their own questions and doubts and not feel they're going to be put down

> or threatened by other people in the group, allowing for different personalities to put things out there whether they think it or not, but that's how they figure it out. (TP2 219-22)

Significant characteristics of this safe environment include valuing people, getting alongside them, treating them as Jesus would, being respectful, developing relationships of trust, co-creating the space, expecting to find God and giving students the benefit of the doubt (TP1 66-69; TP2 295-96, 309-11).

Challenging and Diverse Space

Issues around questioning and welcoming diversity have already been noted and graduates highlight issues of challenge – particularly being stretching in their thinking and understanding – several times in relation to encountering teaching that contested areas of their existing beliefs or previously-held understanding.

The area of challenge is particularly apparent in the moments of insight I poems (Appendix 10). For some, the poems highlight a shift in their understanding of themselves – their previously held views of their identities and the experiences that had shaped these. For others, the moments of insight relate to prior, negative experiences of education, describing a significant shift in their self-concept to being people who could engage in and succeed at academic learning.

Some individuals see the space as challenging because they are faced with different approaches to faith, church and spirituality, realising for example, that other Christians have very different views to theirs (GP7 61). One graduate believes this experience of dialogue and questions has generated robustness in her faith and practice. Another is grateful for the rigour of the discussions:

> I know there was tension at times, but nobody was, there wasn't conversations that you couldn't have. We grabbed hold of stuff and made, we really challenged things, as a group … there weren't people in the group going, 'No, no, no, that's too far, that's too far.' (GP11 139)

Graduates also reflect on personal challenges with aspects of the course: formation group dynamics (GP2 244); being an introvert in a group of extroverts, struggling to connect with students of the opposite sex and relationship tensions with another student (GP5 198, 200, 207); feeling depressed and struggling to handle people's comments (GP6 69-70); feeling out of their depth, childhood feelings being exacerbated by fears of others' opinions and low self-esteem (GP6 91-92).

Some of the metaphors participants use to describe their formation reflect this sense of struggle – roots being ripped out (GP11 63), battling (GP6 97; GP9 53) and going through fire:

> The image that's really strong for me is a phoenix from the fire – because it could have been crunch time for me. That could have been it, I could have easily slipped away, but it felt like a phoenix coming out of the flames. (GP10 82-84)

In most of these comments the struggles are seen as formative – roots being regrown, emerging from the flames – but the level of struggle is sometimes extreme:

> I describe it like CYM blasted a nuclear warhead through my life. I remember talking to people about it when I had my kind of breakdown and how it felt as if everything had been kind of smashed apart, as if the course was designed to break everything apart. And [one tutor] said it should be a positive building experience. And [my practice tutor] said the same – that it was about building, not breaking down. (GP10 20-24)

Tutors also reflect on the significance of struggle and challenge:

> All of them,
> through the time of the course,

have encountered,
challenges within themselves.
There's been a bereavement,
the confrontation of historical abuse,
the kind of confrontation of inner-self.
So, personal, inner-personal challenge.
They've encountered something
which has confronted them
and broken through
in some kind of way.

So one student had it all worked out.
But through his encounter with poverty,
with people living in poverty,
that broke him open.
That then had a major impact
on his understanding of God.

The student I had on placement,
he had encountered very major bereavement.
I don't know what got him through that.
I know it was a real challenge and a real struggle,
he was probably in terrible despair,
but he came to our organisation,
he connected with people brilliantly.
These are people who are poor,
people who spot a fraud at a thousand paces.
He was just himself
and even in just a few weeks,
he was open and receptive.
He took away a great richness really,
and learnt something about himself. (I Poem, TP7 78-124)

This highlights that some struggles experienced are simply those of life itself, which intersects with the experience of studying and engaging in formational experiences. Challenges, both within and beyond the course experience are seen as developmental, emphasising that educational experiences do not always have to be enjoyable to be formative. There is a tension here though. Some educational approaches can be deliberately 'deconstructive,' intentionally plunging students into doubt and questioning or very combative in approach and style, encouraging a harshness in debate which can

leave some individuals floundering. Such approaches were not validated by the data and I would have concerns about them from my own experience and ethical standpoint.[52]

Although the two aspects of 'safe' and 'challenging' space may appear to be contradictory, a further quality of the space, described by several participants, provides a helpful way of holding these in creative tension.

Boundaried Space

> We laugh now
> about how we were
> as a group.
> We were so worthy
> and self-reflective
> and challenging
> to each other.
> We really took on that role
> with a great sense of importance.
> We'd challenge each other
> and ask each other
> the difficult questions.
> There was the safety within
> within the group to do that,
> because you'd facilitated
> some really important
> kind of constructive discussions
> around who we were going to be
> as a year group,
> and set a precedent
> that we could be that.
> There was safety to dialogue
> and have different opinions
> and disagree with one another,

[52] Some of my reflection here was triggered from the BIAPT seminar I facilitated, considering issues of 'safe space' in my initial findings. One individual questioned whether education always had to be enjoyable to be formative. In responding to the question I was aware of my own experiences of learning through struggle, but had not yet come across this significantly within the data. The comments made appeared to come from a 'deconstructive' approach to theological education and a preference for a combative style in discussion and debate and this was reflected in the tone of the question itself.

and enough gentleness
that we took care of each another
and enjoyed each other's company
and that was really formative and important. (I poem, GP2 181-90)

Here, tough conversations are both empowering and formative. The challenging nature of the space engenders a broadening of the student's world, which she connects to developing increased grace, empathy and appreciation for others' experience, spiritual practices and theological perspectives (GP2 192-194). The hearing of different views and perspectives provokes a re-evaluation in terms of where she is 'theologically, personally, professionally because you notice the things you …react against or the things that you really value in other people' (GP2 195-97). These difficult conversations take place within space that has been negotiated and intentionally boundaried, a quality echoed elsewhere in the data.

It really *has* influenced me.
I think because it was spelled out from day one.
There *are* going to be some tricky topics.
There *are* going to be some disagreements
I can burst into tears,
I can just say,
'Actually, I really disagree with your theology,'
Whether or not that was in the setting of the classroom
or outside or years later.
And that was a boundary that was put in,
that it is a safe place
and what is said is kept in the room,
is kept within our relationships,
and if you've got an issue with that it'll escalate.
So it was made very, very clear from day one. (I Poem, GP9 244-55)

Here, 'safe' does not mean comfortable, but the way in which the space is boundaried and negotiated creates a sense of safety. A third individual describes how discomfort and challenge are 'held' in the way the group is facilitated.

I think what was really helpful and healthy
was the way in which those conversations
were *managed*,
because actually it really resulted in some,
there were some very uncomfortable conversations
and people got upset,
some people got very defensive.
But I think that the way
that those conversations were managed
meant that it was okay
to be uncomfortable
and actually there was something about
being okay within that tension.
It made it okay to have questions
and I think that's really helpful. (I Poem, GP7 68-74)

Thus, when the participants speak of 'safe' space, they are often referring to the negotiated, intentional creation of a group context with a healthy culture and boundaries, which is supportive, accepting, affirming of difference, promotes trust, questioning and the taking of personal responsibility and creates opportunity for reflective time-space and questioning. In tutor practice, this cultivation of safe space for difficult conversations and challenging experiences, is crucial. Vulnerability is healthy here because it is securely contained, 'actually it was *contained* in a way that would be okay. Sometimes it did feel like the safety net would kind of rip apart but it never did' (GP7 270-71).

The concept of hospitality can be helpful in considering aspects of space in learning contexts (Palmer 1983:71),[53] not only in terms of students feeling valued and accepted, but in welcoming 'strange' ideas, concepts and contributions (1983:74).

> A learning space needs to be hospitable not to make learning painless but to make the painful things possible, things without which no learning can occur –

[53] Palmer suggests that this is one of the key characteristics of an effective learning space, along with openness and boundaries.

> things like exposing ignorance, testing tentative hypotheses, challenging false or partial information and mutual criticism of thought. (1983:74)

The worlds of therapy, coaching, mentoring, spiritual direction and facilitation all help inform practice here. The material being engaged with in these contexts is potentially challenging and stretching, but safety in the relational environment is prioritised. In coaching relationships, values such as acceptance, respect, confidentiality, clear boundaries, healthy conflict, openness, integrity and contextual practice are fundamental (Melander 2006:19-20). If groups are understood to be social, contextualised units with unique ways of communicating, meaning-making and action-taking (Ringer 2002:17-18), then an integral aspect of tutor practice must be to facilitate and work with these groups in healthy, growth-promoting ways. The development of an explicit culture allows for the group to become conscious about different beliefs and perceptions and to actively choose the qualities which are important to them. These can then be encouraged and 'lived into' by group members. This kind of culture is empowering rather than prescriptive. Specific rules about behaviour can also be made. A culture is a dynamic work in progress and needs to be added to or subtracted from as needed (Hunter et al 1999:8).

Negative and potentially damaging group dynamics such as splitting, scapegoating, subgrouping and so on, can inhibit participation and lead to exclusivity, exclusion or unhealthy compliance (Ringer 2002:133-143). This potentially encourages a surface conformity which would almost certainly inhibit genuine processes of positive personal and spiritual change.

In this regard, it is important to note that not all the participants experienced the group as a 'safe' place. One individual in particular feels that he could not be authentic and speaks with sadness about putting on 'false personalities' and feeling 'lost as a person' (GP6 293, 300). This is challenging to hear as a tutor and brings into question how many others may have felt like this if they felt they didn't 'fit' (GP6 276) because of their background, culture or prior educational experience.

> I just felt sometimes I didn't want to speak up because it was like, in this group and especially in the teaching group sessions because … it's a bit of a front really, you're putting on something. (GP6 151-2)

Amidst generally positive feedback from the participants, this contra-voice is vital to listen to. A strong group dynamic can engender positive change but can also lead to unhealthy cultures, patterns and dynamics emerging. This is something tutors need to be aware of, keep themselves apart from and be willing to address and challenge where appropriate. As I have already noted, the complex and multi-faceted nature of group processes makes this particularly challenging and theological education adds additional complexities such as the significance of individual religious identity and the need to understand students' diverse attitudes and 'pieties' (Klimoski et al 2005:27-33).

Again, strong facilitative skills that include the ability to improvise creatively are perhaps particularly valuable here in creating and maintaining an atmosphere of safety, trust and mutual respect, making diversity acceptable and valuable.

Conspiring: Spirit as Space-Maker

> Conspire: (from the Latin *conspirare*, breathe together) to make secret plans jointly, seem to be working together. (ODE 370)
>
> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and *the communion of the Holy Spirit* be with all of you. (2 Corinthians 13:14, my emphasis)

Within a culture that is rife with 'excessive individualism' (Moltmann 1997:92), Christian faith can all too easily adopt an individualised focus and this trend is equally true in formational contexts. Personal and spiritual formation can become an individual enterprise of 'self-creation.' Most of the spaces described by the participants are spaces with others – spaces between and among; relational and connected. Individuals may have personal experiences within these spaces but the experiences are triggered, catalysed, supported and encouraged by those around them – tutors, peers, line managers and others in their agency. The 'communion' (NRSV), 'fellowship' (NIV) and unity of the Spirit emphasises the importance of communities in personal growth, which in turn links strongly to understandings of unity within diversity. People's experiences, backgrounds, perspectives and opinions may vary widely but this diversity has the potential (when held within a facilitated space) to create a rich place of growth where understanding, generosity and acceptance of difference can flourish. This corporate aspect of learning is emphasised in one's tutor's reflection.

> I think my approach,
> is the actor's approach
> of ensemble mattering more.
> So if you go to Stratford, for example,
> when they take the bows at the end of the play
> they all bow together
> and nobody stands and comes forward.
> That sense of ensemble is that without you
> and you and you,
> no matter what your role,
> this play wouldn't be what it is.
> That sense of ownership,
> of something we're doing together.
> You graduate together
> you do things together.
> And that is my philosophy really,
> that the ensemble,

at its heart
is just a secular version
of what church should be:
creating something that is only possible
when everybody works together. (I Poem, TP6 56-65)

This tutor observes that the students who changed most are those who 'bought into' this idea of community and fellowship, highlighting that in recent exit interviews, nearly all the student leavers said that the sense of community within MCYM was the thing that they had learned most from and which would stay with them (TP6 77-79).

The unity engendered by the Spirit may be emphasised within the Epistles (for example, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 2:1-3) but this unity is not about conformity or hegemony. It seems rather that the Spirit loves diversity – witness, for example, the chaos early in the book of Acts, when the disciples spill out into the streets, speaking in a range of different languages and finding themselves accused of drunkenness (Acts 2:5-13). When the early disciples seek to contain the church within the Jewish population it is the arrival of the Spirit, falling inconveniently on the Gentiles which is the sign of God's desire to reach out, anoint and work within diverse communities (Acts 10:44-46). Here, the Spirit is not so much the comforter as the disturber of the peace. Whenever the Spirit's presence is felt in Scripture there appears to be chaos and turmoil which is integral to creativity – it is by no means a comfortable place.

Within the young churches, the apostle Paul emphasises the need for order, to bring some security and respectability within public worship (1 Corinthians 14:9-33). The Spirit is the bringer of life, but should not be an excuse for exhibitionism or excess. There is a creative tension here: we should welcome, not quench or seek to control the Spirit,

whose life spills out all over the place. At the same time, there is a need for things to be done appropriately and in order.

The Spirit's affirmation of difference in the face of a desire for conformity, is resonant of ways in which the participants come face to face with 'otherness' in the form of very different values, theological and perspectives. Most find themselves in a safe enough environment to articulate their own positions and perspectives, knowing that these will be listened to and respected, even if others do not agree. This unity within diversity is demonstrated in and through the work of the Spirit as the means by which the Gentiles are accepted by the early Jewish church (Acts 10).

The early church, though often idealised, was not without its problems and issues – witness, for example, the debates around circumcision (Acts 15:1-2) and the 'sharp disagreement' between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15: 36-41). These imperfections point to the kind of 'transformative' space which eschews 'the delusion of normative idealism' (Betcher 2007:158) and perfectionism but rather embraces vulnerability and brokenness within processes of becoming. Growth-promoting space is one which does not foster conformity but rather encourages openness, honesty and authenticity through the strength of relationships which are affirming, accepting and encouraging. Here, there is potential for positive personal and spiritual change, but the Spirit's work can be understood, 'not as the power to rescue and repair *according to some presupposed original state or ideal form*, but as the energy for unleashing multiple forms of corporeal flourishing' (Betcher 2007:50 italics mine).

The way in which the Spirit is understood to relate to other members of the Trinity within aspects of the Christian tradition adds a helpful dimension to considerations of

unity and diversity. Moltmann describes the Spirit as God in person, essentially relational, entering into fellowship with believers and in turn, drawing them into relationships of 'reciprocal participation and mutual acceptance' (1997:89). Here, what is important is what those who are different have in common. The image here is that of a divine dance, or *perichorēsis*, a sense of mutuality, connectedness, distinctiveness with common understanding (Moltmann 1992:304). The Spirit exists in fellowship with the Father and the Son and draws humanity, in turn, into relationship with the Trinity, so that 'our limited human lives participate in the eternal circular movement of the divine life' (Moltmann 1997:91). *Perichorēsis* is sometimes unhelpfully idealised (Coakley 2013:267),[54] but is useful as a way of understanding that community is not about surrendering individuality in favour of a homogenised whole, but rather about mutual support, energising and encouraging:

> The more the organization of information and the exchange of energy becomes possible, the richer life will become in the diversity of living beings and their relationships. (Moltmann 1992:227)

Thus, the Spirit can be seen to hold in creative tension that which is safe and that which is dangerous and contested. The Spirit confirms and guarantees our identity as God's children (2 Corinthians 1:22) and affirms our acceptance within this relationship (Romans 8:15-16). However, as I have noted, the Spirit is also the one who leads into the wilderness, disturbs, upsets, overturns and interrupts; whose work is untamed and wild, provocative and disturbing.

[54] Coakley is critical of the ways in which this has become an 'imitable prototype' for church and community relationships – 'social trinitarianism' – as she believes this has resulted in the projection of some anti-Enlightenment agendas on the life of God (2013:270).

This whole dynamic fundamentally challenges understandings of the purpose of formation. The Spirit may form believers into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18) but the question still remains, which 'Christ' are they being formed into? The multiplicity of images of Christ and perspectives on his life and ministry defy easy answers. The meek, mild and loving Jesus, who is a benign, bland presence in some Sunday schools and churches stands in stark contrast to the table-turning, institution-upsetting, religion-critiquing, cross-embracing radical that we read about in parts of the gospels. Perhaps to be formed by the Spirit into Christ's image involves embracing this multi-dimensionality with all its potential discomfort and inconvenience.

Conspiring to Create Breathing Space

The multidimensionality of the Spirit's work is analogous with processes of education and formation, where multiple things often happen simultaneously. Some of these are highly visible, others are unseen but no less powerful. Experience here is multi-stranded and multi-layered and the space inhabited, nuanced, facilitated and textured. It is not an vacuum, but rather something that is pregnant with possibility – resonant of the Spirit hovering or brooding over the void in the opening verses of Genesis, or overshadowing Mary in the annunciation (Luke 1:35). This 'noncluttered space for the Spirit' is, Coakley argues, 'the absolute precondition for the unimpeded flowing of this divine exchange in us, the "breathing of the divine breath"' (1998:226-227).

This creative potentiality speaks of the kind of 'space-making' that allows education to breathe. It challenges tutors to create life-generating spaces in which the curriculum, approaches, sessions and students have enough 'breathing space' to explore, wonder, question, discover and create. This stands in stark contrast to narrow, conforming,

controlling models of education. It will necessitate some relinquishing of control by facilitators and a willingness to continue to develop and grow. As tutors model what it means to continually be open to new experiences of learning, contexts can be created which embrace the kind of education which provokes, disturbs, disquiets and holds people in the midst of struggle. Arguably, this is likely to more effectively prepare students for ministry in a post-Christendom world, particularly if it provides a context where students can develop qualities of self-awareness, respect and compassion for self and others, confidence, humility, curiosity and resilience.

What was Noticeably Absent from the Data?

Before I draw these thoughts together it is important to acknowledge themes which I had anticipated seeing, but which did not emerge significantly in the data.

Prayer and Worship

The graduate interviews made little reference to prayer or to worship, either individual or corporate. These are areas which would have been expected in regard to personal and spiritual formation (CTFG), particularly in a theological college context. A few mentions are important to note:

- One participant comments that 'eating together and worshipping together' helps provide a context in which formation can take place (GP7 147).
- Two participants remember peer-led lunchtime worship times, although these are described as 'reflections' rather than worship (GP9 159; GP10 59-60). These are noted as having been helpful. A core tutor (also an MCYM graduate)

comments that she would have used the term 'reflection' to describe these sessions and remembers finding them valuable (CTFG).

- One participant mentions my practice of starting teaching days with reflection, which 'would help us remember that everything was together, that it wasn't all separate but joined up' (GP10 97-99). As I always also began the day with prayer, it is interesting that reflection is mentioned but not prayer.
- Some participants would like to see broader worship styles used, to help students realise that worship 'is something more than just singing songs' and reflect the diversity in students' backgrounds (GP6 444; GP7 307-312).

This area was discussed at some length during the CTFG, and participants noted that MCYM practice has changed considerably since the research participants graduated. We had recognised that worship times – held on the first day of teaching – had drifted into being more generic reflections rather than worship and prayer. Additionally, preparation for student-led worship was often minimal as students only realised on the day that they were due to lead. More recently we have changed the timing of worship, drawn year groups together where possible and created a more structured annual programme to reflect different Christian traditions and incorporate the seven strands framework. Some of these changes were influenced by the data that was emerging early in the interview process. It would be interesting to seek to gauge whether current students feel that this is now a more significant aspect of their personal and spiritual formation.

Community Week

Another area I had expected graduates to mention more was the annual community week – a three-day residential at the start of each academic year, which is designed to

be formational for students and engender a sense of community across the three year groups. One graduate did see this as 'a significant time,' with the residential in Year Two highlighted as a point when the cohesiveness and openness in the group increased (GP4 119-20).

Two other graduates mention community weeks, but both more negatively; one suggests that it did not fit with her personality (GP7 346-49) and the other describes it as 'the least enjoyable part of the course' (GP8 99-104), though both acknowledge its potential value to others. One tutor, a former student, 'hated' community week as a student (CTFG), as family circumstances made travelling to Oxford and three days away from home very difficult. Her experience, like the other two negative comments, referred to a time when MCYM joined with the other CYM Regional Centres for this residential. I wonder whether the more recent practice of running community weeks locally would have received more positive feedback.

Conclusion

This part of the thesis has demonstrated that tutors' practices play a significant role in the personal and spiritual formation of MCYM students in a range of different, complementary ways. Expertise in facilitating learning, outworked within professional frameworks form a foundation for this, when they are employed with the kind of professional artistry that can flex and adapt to students' needs and emotional responses, the demands of the learning context and questions that arise 'in the moment.' Affirming, mutual, encouraging relationships are also fundamental to creating learning spaces in which students can identify with tutors, who they respect as role models, while understanding that they have weaknesses and are on a learning journey

themselves. These boundaried, relational, hospitable spaces engender a sense of safety while allowing students to be stretched and challenged in their thinking, their faith, their attitudes and through the 'stuff' of life.

In employing practices which reflect these qualities, tutors will find themselves holding a number of tensions or paradoxes which support processes of integration and some of these will be highlighted in the next part of the thesis as I seek to draw out the implications of the inquiry and its potential applications.

PART FIVE: REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH JOURNEY – IMPLICATIONS, APPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

> …to make an end is to make a beginning.
> The end is where we start from. (Eliot, 1963:221)

This part of the thesis maps where I find myself at this stage of the research journey – drawing threads of the inquiry together, whilst recognising the ongoing nature of learning, reflection and personal and professional development. Thus it is both an ending and a beginning and as such is emblematic of several paradoxes that have emerged during this process and which continue to shape my thinking as I draw together implications, applications and conclusions, some of which involve the juxtaposition of seemingly incompatible characteristics.

Doctoral research is concerned with making a contribution to knowledge, and, in the case of professional doctorates, contributing to practice (Fulton et al 2013:12). Here, I first highlight key findings, acknowledging their limitations in terms of generalizability and suggesting how they contribute to knowledge and practice in the field of adult education generally and theological education specifically. Within this, I provide illustrative examples of how participation in the research has impacted and informed my own practice as a theological educator and suggest implications for practice within MCYM and the broader field.

I then suggest potential secondary application for the research within the fields of practical theology and reflective practice before moving on to provide a critique of the thesis, outline potential dissemination of the findings and identify areas for possible future research. Finally, I reflect on the research journey's personal implications.

Adult Education and Theological Education

The findings within the research make a contribution to knowledge within adult education in regard to whole-person learning. As identified in Part One, although the term has been used within the literature (Heron 1999:23; Yorks & Kasl 2002) and various theorists have sought to identify holistic approaches to adult education (for example, Schreiner 2009 and Palmer & Zajone 2010), the current research brings together, connects and integrates elements of whole-person learning which are disparate in the literature. Within this, the issue which emerges from the research around knowing and not knowing adds a specific dimension to theory within the field.

Within theological education, the thesis offers an original and explicitly theological underpinning for discussions around practice. The role of the Spirit as a heuristic tool within the research provides an alternative theological epistemology, contrasting with ways in which education has previously been theologised through the Father or the Son.

Theological Education for Youth Ministry

The primary findings within the research concern implications for theological educators in a youth ministry context. The data supports the suggestion that MCYM graduates experience significant personal and spiritual change during their time on the course and

that tutors' practices play a significant role in this change. Three key dimensions of practice emerge as significant: learning, relationships and facilitating space.

1. Tutors as Facilitators of Learning – Knowing and Not-Knowing

The data reveals that tutors need to be skilled facilitators of adult learning, adopting a range of adult education skills. This has training and professional development implications for theological educators, particularly in institutions where theological scholarship is prized above educational expertise. It is clear that appropriate training in adult education methodology and practice supports tutors in working professionally and effectively. Moreover, to successfully support personal and spiritual formation, tutors also need to cultivate professional artistry to enable them to employ these skills sensitively and flexibly, improvising in content and approach in response to students' individual and group needs.

Recognising and engaging with emotions is also crucial in supporting whole-person learning in theological education and this demands high levels of self-awareness and sensitivity as well as emotional literacy and intelligence. These skills are often developed in pastoral care settings, which many theological educators may have experience of. However, they need to be integrated in ways which enable practitioners to draw on them appropriately and sensitively in learning contexts. This requires personal and practical wisdom, which necessitates ongoing personal and spiritual development for tutors, through supervision (managerial or non-managerial) and/or spiritual direction.

This focus on professional artistry and development is held in tension by reflections on the Spirit, which suggest the value of embracing 'not-knowing' in educational practice. This is not about cognitive subject knowledge but rather an acknowledgement of

mystery and the impossibility of being fully aware of and understanding everything. Not-knowing can lead to the renewal of a fascination with the unknown in practice contexts. Towards the end of the research I came to think of this as a remystifying of my professional practice, which has served to spark curiosity and renew a sense of wonder, 'making strange' some of the things that I take for granted in my work.

Paradoxically then, not-knowing can lead to the development of active experimentation and the development of both *phronesis* and *poesis,* as tutors see themselves as co-learners with students, aware there is more to learn and discover and embracing experimentation and improvisation. The vulnerability and interest engendered by this can spark reflection and increased openness to learn, which may help prevent boredom and burnout for theological educators. Again, this will necessitate appropriate personal and professional support and supervision if the cutting edges of professional curiosity are to be kept sharp.

Confidence and Curiosity

These dual elements of knowing and not knowing became more evident in my practice during the research and my confidence increased significantly. This was evident in my induction of Line Managers and tutors, my assertiveness within tutor teams and in the improved quality of resources I created. The research increased my consciousness of student experience, particularly how teaching days, placement responsibilities and community week 'feel' to them. I found myself increasingly valuing all that students bring to learning, encouraging them to use and apply their prior experience. In this way, paradoxically, the not-knowing increased my clarity and intentionality.

In terms of not-knowing, the research findings also helped re-ignite my professional curiosity. I became much more comfortable asking questions and seeking to discover what students were experiencing, rather than making assumptions or guessing. In my teaching I more regularly 'checked in' with individuals and groups, particularly if I felt I was sensing a negative response or atmosphere. Seeking to hold the balance between content and process has been a continual aspiration in my teaching, but the research helped underpin my practice in this area with an evidence-base that engendered increased confidence when it came to going with the flow, experimenting with fresh approaches to learning and discerning when to stay with a subject and when to signpost to further information or content.

Implications for Practice

I identify three categories of implications for practice within MCYM: those which have emerged explicitly from the current research, aspects which are practised inconsistently (for example, by Core Tutors but not by Practice Tutors) and those which are recorded as examples of best practice, which should be maintained within the organisation. In relation to facilitating learning, specific implications for tutors' practice would be as follows.

Emerging from the Research:

- Articulate expectations around 'investment' from all involved in the formation process.
- Consider specific training for tutors in relation to emotional literacy and working with emotions in a learning context.

Inconsistent:

- Ensure a diversity of background within groups to bring in different denominational and theological perspectives. With less diverse groups, use examples of differing perspectives.
- Encourage tutors and students to share personal 'faith stories' within teaching sessions.
- Facilitate an exploratory culture in which debate and questioning are welcomed and valued.
- Find concrete ways of encouraging autonomy and self-directedness.
- Nurture flexibility and a willingness to 'go with the flow' when appropriate within sessions, including some creative exploration of tangents and the pursuit of issues and questions that arise.
- Start where students are, rather than where tutors think they 'should' be.
- Avoid making assumptions about students' engagement, but regularly 'check in,' particularly if the energy in the room appears to dissipate.
- Cultivate a culture of ongoing personal, spiritual and professional development for tutors, including effective supervision, spiritual direction and strategic peer observation and/or mentoring.

To Be Maintained:

- Ensure that tutors are trained in adult education.
- Utilise a range of active and interactive learning approaches, including creative approaches and directly apply learning into practice contexts.

- Value students' prior learning and experience and make explicit connections between past, present and future learning, experience and practice.

2. Tutors as Models and Mediators of Relationship – the Now and the Not-Yet

The data emphasises the importance of relationships with tutors in relation to students' personal and spiritual formation. Tutors' ways of being with students – their availability, approachability, supportiveness, affirmation, encouragement, openness and vulnerability – encompass relational qualities which help students engage with the challenges and changes they experience. Reflecting back to students their uniqueness, skills, abilities and qualities also contributes to a growth in confidence and self-acceptance. This brings into focus ways in which learning encompasses both 'taught' and 'caught' elements. Formationally, students learn as much from who tutors are and from what they do as from what they say and teach, highlighting the importance of congruence between these aspects in tutors' practice. Tutors' habitual ways of being with students can inculcate attitudes and values which students can then emulate and develop in their own practice with young people.

The importance of diversity within tutor teams is underlined by ways in which students value being able to identify with particular tutors. Tutors serve as role models for students, who are not seeking exemplars of perfection but value authenticity and vulnerability from those who teach them. Articulation of weaknesses, descriptions of struggle and how mistakes have been overcome, apologising when errors are made and appropriate self-disclosure all support this process. This demands a degree of personal security, and again self-awareness on the part of tutors, but can help facilitate the

eschewing of perfectionist models of formation and encourage the development of reflective, robust and resilient practitioners.

The data and research process made me increasingly conscious of the ways in which power is used and the different facets of power within tutors' relationships with students. This is evidenced in very visible aspects such as assessment processes, the ability to award or withhold qualifications and status power in the classroom and also in less obvious ways such as the regard tutors are held in, the perception of them as experts and role models and the weight of their words and approval. These power issues are further amplified whenever spiritual dynamics come into play. Awareness of these textures of power within tutor-student relationships is crucial if tutors are to work professionally and anti-oppressively and if they are to be liberative in their approach. Again, modelling good practice and being explicit about values and process here can support students in understanding and applying ethical approaches in their own youth ministry contexts.

These qualities demand a high level of maturity and tutors, like students, are in a process of learning and becoming. There is a 'now' and 'not-yet' aspect to this process – a helpful reminder of the ongoing, life-long transformative work of the Spirit. The breath-of-life Spirit is continually at work in all the stuff of life, not standing still or getting there, but rather brooding creatively and valuing the fullness of the present moment as well as drawing towards the future.

Changing the Focus of One-to-One Meetings with Students

My growing awareness of the importance of tutor-student relationships highlighted both the visible and embedded aspects of formation. This became particularly apparent

when, as Year Tutor, I managed the induction processes for a new Year One cohort. The three-year interval since I had last done this drew attention to significant changes in my approach.

For example, course requirements involve one-to-one meetings with students at the beginning and end of each academic year to establish and then review Personal Development Plans (PDPs). Students' goals provide a framework and focus for discussion and prayer. Aware of the importance of the developing relationship here, I used the initial one-to-ones to focus on establishing relationships with the students, giving time for them to talk about themselves and leaving the 'business' of PDPs until later in the term. Whole-life learning is not merely about domains of learning (cognitive, affective, psychomotor) but also about the different worlds that students inhabit, which are often diverse and sometimes at odds with each other. I hoped that getting to know them better initially would help me support them in building bridges between these different worlds. I was conscious of needing to do this without encouraging dependency. Students responded positively to this and reflected on areas that might influence and impact their studies. PDPs were done a fortnight later when students had a better grasp of course requirements and processes, and these were completed more thoughtfully and fully than usual. This process was more time-consuming, but contributed to creating positive and affirming relationships from the outset.

Implications for Practice

Specific suggestions for the development of MCYM tutors' relational practice are as follows.

Emerging from the Research:

- Explore issues around tutor boundaries and expectations within the tutor team to ensure that there is either consistency of practice or agreements about difference concerning availability, time given and openness about personal issues.
- Explore how tutors appropriately 'challenge' in learning contexts and review how power is exercised in relation to all areas of practice, including prayer and spiritual gifts.

Inconsistent:

- Be perceived as available and approachable, rather than over-busy and over-stretched.
- Create opportunity for students to take increasing responsibility within learning contexts and student life, creating a culture of positive and constructively critical feedback, to support confidence-development.
- Take opportunities to affirm and encourage students where possible – even when contributions are not within the group as a whole, for example, notes taken in sessions or comments overheard in small group discussions.
- Use 'caught' elements within teaching, including personal qualities (for example, positivity, enthusiasm, inclusiveness, calmness) and approaches and strategies that students could use in their youth work practice.
- Seek to maintain diversity within the tutor team, if necessary enhanced by visiting tutors.

- Explore what it means to be 'fully present' with students, avoiding multi-tasking and being attentive within different aspects of the tutor role.

To Be Maintained:

- Make relationships with students a priority, getting to know their contexts and situations as early as possible in the course.
- Adopt an asset-based approach, seeing students as made in God's image and seeing to mediate and mirror God's love and acceptance to them.
- Model humility, being open about weaknesses (where appropriate) and apologising when mistakes are made.
- Model ongoing personal and spiritual formation, practicing appropriate self-disclosure regarding the challenges, opportunities and reality of this.

3. Tutors as Facilitators of Growth-Promoting Space – Safety and Challenge

The data indicates that aspects of space in course life contribute to students' personal and spiritual formation. Spaces away from the normal patterns of everyday life are helpful, as are various kinds of reflective opportunities, conceptualised by graduates in spatial terms. The dichotomy of space being both safe and challenging provides a paradoxical framework in which students grow and learn. Tutors can facilitate safe space by ensuring that the learning context is clearly boundaried. Establishing and maintaining group contracts helps establish a healthy emotional climate within learning groups. Acknowledging, valuing and actively affirming diverse backgrounds and views gives permission for different perspectives to be expressed and helps ensure that these are respected.

This sense of safety provides an environment in which students can be 'held' even while experiencing challenge and struggle, factors which are also seen as formative. The data indicates that this challenging space is not actively created by tutors, but rather emerges as part of the experience of being in a group with others from different backgrounds or perspectives; is generated through students' engagement with different ideas within teaching or their reading; surfaces as they face personal or issues arising from their history or circumstances or else crops up through life issues which occur during their course.

Deconstruction is not intentional in terms of the curriculum and underlying ethos. Nevertheless, some students experience this before rebuilding and integrating their learning and experience. It is important to note that this is not the experience of all students and some individuals leave the course with unresolved struggles, questions and issues. In the different aspects of course life – teaching days, tutorials, pastoral meetings – tutors can nurture and utilise the opportunities presented by this 'challenging space' by normalising struggle, affirming processes of change and offering support, encouragement and where appropriate, signposting to more specialised sources of help.

Group Contracting

Another area of practice directly changed as a result of the research was my approach to group contracting with the new students mentioned earlier. With previous cohorts, I had briefly discussed group boundaries and expectations within a teaching session, but instead I incorporated the process into student worship to emphasise its theological and spiritual significance. I also hoped to model an approach that students could replicate in their youth ministry practice.

Using a circle of chairs around an 'installation' of stones and pebbles, and with music playing as students entered, I opened with verses from 1 Peter 2:4-5, to frame a reflection about living stones and Jesus as the cornerstone. I explained group contracting and asked the students to share what values they wanted to embody as a group, write these on cards and place them around the installation (see Figure 8). They then explored in pairs what practices would support the values they had identified and how they wanted to 'be' as a group.

Figure 8: Group Contracting

This was my fifth cohort as year tutor and the responses were noticeably more considered and thoughtful. There was a sense of deep listening to one another as I facilitated the feedback of what people had written and discussed. Different views were acknowledged and respected. The session was closed with active prayer – students took a stone, listened to the Bible passage again and were asked to consider what they as individual 'living stones' brought to the group. I collected the values and wrote these up with the ground rules before emailing them to the group. We revisited, discussed and agreed them during their next teaching day.

This approach was emblematic of ways in which I have continued to develop my practice in terms of crafting meaningful, reflective spaces. I became more intentional about including relevant and appropriate reflection and prayer at the beginning and ends of teaching days, ensuring that this connected with and underpinned the content of the day's teaching. I also more deliberately integrated theological reflection throughout teaching days, giving students opportunities to reflect alone, in pairs or in small groups and providing specific opportunities for prayer, personal reflection and engagement with God within sessions. I see these practices as ways of 'layering' the learning that is taking place and integrating personal and spiritual aspects with the professional and academic course content.

Therapeutic Practice and Role Boundaries

A recurring theme throughout the data analysis was the ways tutor practice overlapped and intersected with therapeutic ways of working. Both in group and in one-to-one contexts, graduates valued the kind of attentiveness, care, affirmation, reflection and creation of boundaried space that might be qualities more commonly found in counselling or therapy. Many experiences reflected changes that might be expected in those kinds of environments. I wonder if any kind of formational learning, engaging as it does with personal and spiritual change, inevitably has a therapeutic quality to it? There are implications around this for tutor practice, in terms of awareness, training and professional boundaries. For example, issues around confidentiality come to the fore when people are talking about very personal issues to a tutor or within a group. Supporting students who might feel emotionally distressed, and meeting the needs of individuals within the group context are also potentially challenging.

This area is particularly pertinent in current UK culture which has seen a dramatic rise in issues around mental health for young people (Khan 2016). Rising numbers of students present with depression and anxiety and even those who receive specialist support (which is often difficult to obtain) need further support in the college and placement environment. Increasingly, students are also graduating into roles where they will be supporting young people with mental health problems – many are already doing so in placement – and providing appropriate, non-clinical support within the college context can model good practice that they can take into their ministry situations.

Implications for Practice

In relation to the space-making dimensions of the research, specific suggestions for tutors' practice within MCYM would be as follows.

Emerging from the Research:

- Support the development of tutors' skills in 'holding' emotional space, managing their own anxiety and responding to emotional issues that emerge.

Inconsistent:

- Encourage students to see teaching days as 'time away' for learning and reflection and to value them as opportunities to step out of work and everyday life. Support them in negotiating with placements that they will not be contactable by phone or email on these days.
- Incorporate prayer and reflection as a normal part of teaching and learning processes, creating a culture in which students expect to encounter God during

teaching days as well as continuing to develop opportunity for corporate worship and prayer.

- Establish, maintain and revisit group contracts and boundaries, negotiating these with students and ensuring that groups understand the purpose as well as the content of these. Consider incorporating worship and/or prayer into this process. Elegantly challenge where necessary.
- Clearly articulate expectations arising from these contracts and other professional expectations such as mutual respect. Model respectful listening, acceptance of different views, co-learning, non-judgmental responses and empathy.
- Create spaces which are hospitable, both to students and to new ideas. Acknowledge and normalise diversity, different views and perspectives and the place of struggle within course life and individual formation processes.

To Be Maintained:

- Incorporate specific opportunities for personal and small group reflection during teaching days to allow students to process what is being learnt.
- Create a supportive culture but ensure that personal issues are not allowed to dominate class time. Review pastoral care and referral practices regularly.

Implications for Youth Ministry

The outcomes of the research hold secondary implications for the field of youth ministry. The data indicates that many graduates consciously implement learning relating to personal and spiritual formation into their ministry practice with young people. In a challenging and changing cultural context, with diverse demands and

pressures, supporting youth ministers to become more 'whole' will enhance and enrich practice on the ground. At the time of writing there is significant decline in the numbers of students undertaking training at this level – in youth work generally as well as youth ministry in particular. I hope that some of the data generated here might serve to advocate for the efficacy of courses like MCYM in equipping individuals for youth ministry.

Implications for Practical Theology

Holding Paradox

Throughout the research 'paradox' has been a recurring theme. I have sought to hold together aspects of the visible and the invisible, knowing and not knowing, the safe and the challenging, affective and cognitive domains, individuals and groups, freedom and control, the now and the not-yet. In seeking to eschew the 'either-ors,' which could so easily lead to fragmentation and binary opposites (Palmer 1998:62), I have endeavoured to embrace more complex 'both-and' approaches. As I have indicated, the Spirit provides a nexus for this, holding apparently contradictory facets in creative tension. The Spirit has also provided a locus for more personal reflection and a way to hold the 'space between' and make peace with my charismatic background and practice and my theological questioning and wrestling. In and through this process I have discovered a richness in these paradoxical tensions (Kandiah 2014:307), which have deepened my understanding of and relationship with God, increased the reality and honesty in my faith and theology and engendered personal integration.

The Spirit and Charismatic Theology

The reflections on the Spirit contribute to a broader conversation concerning the place of the Spirit in theology generally and practical theology in particular. Pneumatological engagement within practical theology's critical conversation has been a rich, complex and sometimes problematic experience. Although increasingly robust and sophisticated theology is now emerging from the Pentecostal and Charismatic tradition (Cartledge 2006:134), much of it continues to focus on 'encounters' with the Spirit (2006:134) and tends to adopt either an experiential or more systematic perspective, exploring and explaining how the Spirit operates. This can result in a rather instrumentalised pneumatology. Bringing theologians from very different theological traditions into the conversation results in a problematising and remystifying of the role and activity of the Spirit. The research therefore contributes to what might be described as an 'emerging' charismatic practical theology, which encourages thoughtful, rigorous, 'insider' engagement with charismatic experience and practice.

The Spirit and Education

The indeterminacy and ambivalence of notions of the Spirit within theology provides a helpful horizon for not knowing too much in too definite a way, eschewing absolutes and easy solutions, pat answers and rigid programmes but encouraging educators to embrace a living, creative and generative process that is unfolding and unpredictable. This is particularly useful at a time in education when much emphasis is put on outcomes, programmes, organisation and planning. Engagement with the Spirit as a conversation partner helpfully highlights ways in which incompleteness, uncertainty and mystery play a crucial part in educational processes. If learning is to impact the whole person, then these qualities must be embraced. This process can be understood to be

apophatic (Mudge 2009:623) a *via negativa* of not knowing, not being in control, embracing the hidden and encountering the wildness of God (Lane 1998:62). It offers the possibility for a remystifying of formation, theological education and other disciplines (like practical theology) which can easily be reduced to hints, tips and techniques.

Limitations of Pneumatology

Spirit theologies also highlight that education will not always be comfortable but may also unfold in painful, challenging and potentially disastrous ways. Taken at its extreme, an over-embracing of the Spirit as a model for practice could result in an ad-hoc, contentious, unprofessional, fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants approach. The limits of pneumatology are clear here - chaos is not appropriate in an educational setting. The potentially destructive Spirit metaphors raise some of the difficulties in this regard, as do other references to the 'dangers' of the Spirit. The untimely deaths of Ananias and Sapphira for lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-10) fly in the face of our understanding of love and forgiveness. Mary has often been held up as the model charismatic because of her 'willing receptivity' to the Spirit (Smail 2002:23), but the conception of Jesus is risky, inconvenient, culturally inappropriate (due to her marital status) and completely life-disrupting. The elements of risk within the workings of the Spirit give a sense of processes which are haphazard, indiscriminate and unsystematic, qualities which fly in the face of the modern education system.

Perhaps professional education practice can speak to pneumatology here, critiquing the potentially haphazard dynamics of power and arguing for impartiality, even-handedness and order in charismatic practice? Some of the more 'wacky' aspects of the tradition

(Cartledge 2006:136) might benefit from aspects of good educational practice, such as enabling robust questioning, earthing theology in practice, making the tacit explicit and ensuring that power is used in appropriate and non-oppressive ways.

A Practical Theology that 'Breathes'

There are significant parallels between my reflections on education and my learning about practical theology. The importance of having sufficient skills, tools and resources; the value of embracing questions and uncertainty; the tensions between knowing and not knowing; the potential for formation, shaping and inspiring; the place for struggle, wrestling, uncertainty and doubt. The multi-variant traditions of the Spirit provide helpful insight into letting practical theology 'breathe' rather than tying it up in propositions and convictions. This contributes to the argument against the reductionism that can ensue when practical theology is engulfed by empirical scientism and hard-to-measure things such as 'subjectivity, meanings, intuitions, insights and experiences' may be marginalised (Pattison 2007b:276).

Two further particular areas of learning emerged from the process, which I believe make a contribution to the field.

The 'Art' of Practical Theology

The research highlights how arts-based approaches to reflection can inform and enhance practical theological endeavour. This contributes to an emerging conversation around issues of aesthetics within practical theological exploration. Some theological reflection literature includes practical suggestions of artistic and creative approaches (including Ballard & Pritchard, 2006:140-142; Nash & Nash 2009:117-131), although this is relatively sparse. Elsewhere, there is a growing call for 'poetic' approaches to practical

theology (Pryce 2014:160; Walton 2014a, 2014b). This tends to focus primarily on the written word but it does reflect a growing recognition of the value of creative methods in practical theological research (Bennett et al 2018:149).

There is thus great potential for developing 'serious art and thus also simple play' (Walton 2014a:13) in practical theology and the potential reflexivity engendered by making art of various kinds (valuing the process as much as the outcome) is something that would benefit from further exploration. The focus on creative and reflexive methods in this study therefore seems to make a timely contribution, as it corresponds to increased interest within the field.

Montage and Crystallization as Approaches to Practical Theology

Methdologically, both montage and crystallization are recognised within qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:4-5), and seem ideally suited to serve as approaches for 'doing' practical theology generally and practical theological research more specifically. Both approaches encourage multi-vocality within the process, giving potential for multiple perspectives to emerge. Both embrace different ways of knowing and are able to express complex and multi-faceted perceptions. They allow the juxtaposition of different standpoints and effectively hold paradoxical thinking, giving helpful shape to conversations which feel inherently convoluted and even contradictory. At the risk of bringing in a further metaphor, in this quilt of fragments I have constructed, these approaches have helped me resist the temptation to cover the back of the piece, to hide the workings, the knots, the cobbling together, the sloppy stitches, the loose ends and the uneven edges.

Creativity and Reflective Practice

As I have outlined, I had found artistic creativity helpful earlier in the DPT in overcoming stuckness, curbing over-expansiveness and working through the emotional implications of my experiences. However, an unforeseen outcome of the research was the extent to which the creative approaches used took on a life of their own and sparked the interest of others.

Creative approaches to reflection are under-represented within reflective practice literature,[55] although Moon explores using story as a way of broadening and enhancing learning journals (2006:122-31) and suggests creative activities to 'boost' journal writing (2006:142-57). The body of literature around creative or visual journaling (including Johnson 2011) tends to focus more on 'making art' than on reflection. Across reflective disciplines, reference to using creative arts can be found in relation to supervision (Lahad 2000; Schuck & Wood 2011), counselling and therapy (Farelly-Hanson 2001; Malchiodi 1988; Sunderland & Engleheart 1993) and spiritual direction in a ministry context (Paintner & Becknam 2010). The hybrid approach used here, which integrates creative writing, poetry, engagement with metaphors and objects, drawing, painting, craft and collage appears to have something distinctive to contribute to the field of reflective practice.

Supporting Reflexivity in Research

Developing this 'artful discipline' (Whitehead 2014a:20) in my research practice has been crucial to my reflexivity and engendered deep engagement with the data and my responses to it. Art has been recognised to connect with personal, subjective feelings

[55] I have already cited some exceptions to this within theological reflection literature.

and emotions, with artistic processes supporting the discovery of our own 'interior landscape' (Eisner 2008:11). As stated earlier, this not only supports researchers in locating themselves reflexively, but also contributes to the generation of knowledge. These more 'artful ways of knowing' challenge the epistemological status quo within the academic research community (Finley 2008:72), which has perhaps led to their underrepresentation in research literature. It is encouraging to see changes in this, partly due to the growing appreciation of reflexive approaches such as ethnography and autoethnography.[56] Mixed methods accounts have received some recognition (Kara 2015:133; Ellingson 2009:97), but again the artistic hybridity used in this study may have a contribution to make to the field.

An Unforeseen Outcome

A connected, but unforeseen outcome of the research has been developing the use of visual methodologies in my teaching practice. Figure 9[57] illustrates one way I visually record sessions to support

Figure 9: Sample of Visual Facilitation Recording in a Learning Session

[56] Space does not permit a full exploration of this growing field, but examples are Knowles & Cole (2008), Macintosh (2008), Mason (2018:163-183), Prosser (2011) and Rose (2012).
[57] This photograph was posted on Facebook by a student following the session in which it was created. The visual measures approx. 2 metres by 1.5 metres.

participation, engagement and remembering. This has been very well-received by students and has caught the attention and imagination of colleagues. I delivered training within the MCYM staff team on this and facilitated training at another CYM centre.

Although I began the DPT with a commitment to using creativity in my practice and believed it to be as valuable as more cerebral approaches, the research has provided more robust foundations for this and consequently increased confidence in engaging more imaginatively in all aspects of my professional life.

Whole-Person Learning and the Researching Professional

The concept of 'transdisciplinarity' (Lee 2009:136) supports consideration of how my learning has been outworked in my broader life and ministry. Within my voluntary ministry practice in my local church, for example, I have increasingly used participative processes, focused more carefully on culture setting in services and smaller gatherings, utilised visual methodologies, particularly in preaching and leading services, and sought to create 'safe space' in large and small groups for exploration and sharing. I attribute much of this to my participation in the DPT and have noted that these practices are influencing and informing other peoples' practice in that setting.

During data analysis, at the end of Year Five of the DPT, I changed jobs and the research findings have significantly influenced and informed my current role as a school chaplain. Although in a completely different environment to the research, I have both consciously and tacitly implemented the learning into my current context. Some examples of this are as follows.

- I have sought to cultivate awareness of staff and students' wider worlds and their impact on well-being and learning.

- A whole-person focus has characterised my practice. In the academic context of an independent school I am aware of being an advocate for this within the school culture and leadership team.
- I prioritise relationships, recognising that these take time and aware of the positive power of availability, approachability, affirmation, encouragement, empowerment and openness in building trust and engendering confidence in others.
- I seek to embody the Christian ethos of the school through my practices – both visible and unseen – and am conscious of the importance of role modelling. I intentionally hold the tension between professional role boundaries and qualities of openness and vulnerability.
- I have cultivated 'safe spaces' within school, both physically through the remodelling of the school quiet room and a welcoming, comfortable atmosphere in my office, and relationally. As part of this I have challenged school practice regarding confidentiality and am involved in reshaping policy in this area.
- Awareness of the Spirit has been significant in working from a place of peace and seeking to discern where the Spirit is at work in the school and in the lives of staff and students. I seek to embrace mystery and the unknown in my practice and am becoming more comfortable with 'not knowing.'

The way these issues have fore-fronted my thinking as I began a new role suggests that although the research was contextual, small-scale, inductive and not intended to provide generalizable outcomes, some of the findings may have limited generalizability in other settings.

Critical Review of the Research

The research methods worked well in eliciting relevant and useful data for the inquiry. As I have already noted, with the benefit of hindsight it would have been more effective to have interviewed all the graduates first and then undertaken the tutor interviews once the graduate data had been analysed. This would have enabled the tutor interviews to test the validity of the data. Similarly, it would have also have been helpful to have undertaken the focus groups with tutors much later in the data analysis process.

I am aware that the power dynamics inherent in my relationships with participants inevitably influenced the responses given. It would have been interesting to see whether different perspectives had emerged if an external facilitator had been used for all or some of the process.

I would have liked to have involved the research participants in respondent validation (Bryman 2016:385), but due to personal circumstances and my change of role I was unable to draw the participants together in the MCYM context to discuss the findings. To seek a similar outcome I elicited feedback on the first draft of the thesis from individuals who had prior or current connection with CYM.[58] My change of role also meant that I was not able to personally implement aspects of the research within MCYM.

In retrospect, I feel I was right to not include current students as participants. However, having moved out of MCYM I could have done this later as an outsider.

[58] This group included one of the tutors who had been interviewed as part of the research, two MCYM graduates and one graduate from another CYM centre who has also worked as a CYM tutor. I also gave the research to a further individual who had no prior knowledge of CYM.

I would have liked to have implemented more creative approaches throughout the research process. My reluctance to engage with these earlier was due to playing safe, as it took time for my confidence to grow in this area. In further projects I would seek to expand this area in both the research practice and the writing up.

Dissemination of the Research

Ongoing academic presentations within the DPT cohort and at the annual summer schools enabled me to share the research as it progressed and to receive invaluable feedback, questions and suggestions. Aspects of my ongoing learning also inevitably influenced and shaped my teaching and training during the doctoral process. Some published work during the research drew specifically on aspects of the inquiry (Whitehead 2013b, 2014c, 2014d, Whitehead et al 2013).

I have agreed to share the research outcomes with the MCYM tutor team as part of their ongoing professional development and to help develop supporting materials for practice tutors and line managers if appropriate (CTFG). I would seek opportunities to present aspects of the research findings at BIAPT or an IASYM conference. I envisage publication possibilities relating to teaching and learning practice and/or pneumatology and will seek to publish something around creative reflection or creative research methods using my reflective approaches through the whole DPT.[59]

Areas for future research or exploration?

Several areas of potential future research emerge from the thesis.

[59] My hope would be to integrate aspects of the thesis with material from the Reflective Piece from Year Three of the Programme.

Possibilities Using the Existing Data

- Further investigation into the *nature* of personal and spiritual change experienced by students.
- Exploration of metaphors used to describe personal change and transformation.
- Direct comparisons between tutor and graduate perspectives (suggested in the CTFG) and comparative analysis of the data with reference to gender, age, prior experience, church background and socio-economic background.
- Exploration of the structural dimensions of teaching and learning - course development, modules structure and outcomes, the role of placements, reflective practice and journaling.

Developing the Themes

- Extending the research to consider those training for ordained or lay ministry.
- Exploring the connections which emerged between formational learning and therapeutic processes and considering the extent to which education can be understood to be therapeutic and the implications of this.[60]
- Development and application of research themes to my current role as a school chaplain.
- Aspects of 'body' and embodiment in learning, which are also implicated in a whole-person approach.
- Exploration of the Spirit as 'agent within' formational process, particularly within a charismatic context.

[60] The benefit of using therapeutic skills and approaches within professional education is already being explored to some extent within nursing training (Bowcott & Peters 2015).

Developing the Methods and Approaches

- Usage of montage and crystallization as methods within practical theological reflection and research, using and progressing some of the approaches taken in relation to the Spirit here with other themes, contexts and experiences.
- Furthering understanding and practice of play and playfulness in relation to theological reflection and considering how this might inform methods and approaches.

Practices and Attributes

Having engaged with the data through the lens of tutor attributes I am still left wondering about issues of character in relation to the research. My conviction that effective learning practices should emerge from facilitators' virtues and personal attributes, rather than part of a professional persona has not diminished through the process. If tutors are to cultivate whole-person 'becoming' for students it would seem self-evident that they should be on a journey towards becoming more whole themselves. I would be interested to explore this further, both through further engagement with the tutor data and fresh research in different ministry contexts

Personal Implications of the Research

> Until our lives change as a result of what we have learned, insight remains incomplete. (Killen & de Beer 1994:43).

A professional doctorate is by implication a learning experience for the researcher. Outlining my development through the process involves untangling and unravelling different layers of learning and becoming. The parallel process (Hawkins & Shohet 2006:224) of researching whole-person learning and formation, while learning and being

formed myself has involved encountering (sometimes uncomfortable) similarities, echoes and resonances. Developing reflexivity through autoethnographic engagement with this has been crucial and one of the richest and most formative aspects of the process for me personally.

I have found the pluralist nature of the research process challenging and have sometimes striven to make everything fit in unrealistic and potentially unhelpful ways. In recognising my tendency to 'flatten out' my writing, rather than value its uneven texture, findings, wrinkles, problems and unanswered questions, I have been confronted with my perfectionism and desire to please and impress others.

Theological engagement with pneumatology has furthered my understanding and practice of practical theology and has been spiritually formative. Holding the complexity within this process was sometimes problematic and necessitated struggle and wrestling in my understanding and my relationship with God. My willingness to embrace uncertainty, questions and a sense of mystery in my work (and my life) has grown, as has my recognition of the importance of 'being fully present' with and to those I work with. I am more willing to trust the Spirit's work in the lives of others rather than seeking to provoke change.

I have seen significant growth in my personal and professional confidence and am more secure in my identity as a researcher, professional and academic. The changes I have undergone during the DPT have helped me embrace my current role, where much of what is significant is hidden. This reflects a level of personal security in my own practice. My current practice still encompasses aspects of my work with MCYM which were life-

giving and enables me to focus on key practices which support and facilitate students' personal change and wellbeing.

I offer a prayer – a litany[61] – to draw my reflections to a close.

Conclusion: A Litany of Spirit-Shaped Becoming

Spirit of God,
Enliven us –
Our moments, our days, our years.

Consuming fire,
Cleanse and purify us,
Kindle obedience, ignite passion.

Breath of life,
Revive and renew us,
Inspire our being and becoming.

Holy mystery,
Hold us in our not-knowing,
Re-mystify all we take for granted.

Inspiring initiator,
Nurture in us holy imagination,
Provoke our wonderings and wanderings.

Ever-present counsellor,
Cultivate awareness within us,
Inhabit our encounters and our interactions.

Transforming creator,
Change us,
Form in us the image of the unknowable Christ.

Dynamic, uncontainable force,
Unsettle and discomfit us,
Take us beyond ourselves and our limitations.

Righteous advocate
Rage your justice within us,
To stand with the oppressed..

[61] Although this is a personal prayer, I have chosen the format of a litany to reflect ways in which the research is rooted in communities of practice and worship, using 'us' and 'we' rather than 'I.'

Spirit of the past and the future,
Possess us fully in the present,
Beckon us towards the fulfilment of all things.

Amen

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this process. There is no pressure or requirement to answer any questions you don't wish to respond to.

- The information will be confidential and anonymised and that their identity will be protected in the write-up and subsequent publications.
- They can withdraw from the research at any time, up to nine months after the interview.
- They do not have to answer any questions they do not wish to.
- Check they are still happy for the interview to be audio-recorded and notes to be taken.
- Remind them that they can see a copy of the transcript if they wish.
- Explain about storage and disposal of data.
- Explain AI as an approach – focuses on life-giving aspects of organisations and that this means the focus of the questions will be positive – answer however you like.
- Give opportunity for the participant to ask any questions they may have.

Part 1: Opening Questions:

- What were you doing prior to joining MCYM?
- What attracted you to MCYM
- What is your current role and what do you find most meaningful, valuable, challenging or exciting?

Part 2: Topic-Related Questions:

A lot of people have spoken to us about the ways in which they change personally or spiritually during their time with MCYM. As you think about your time with us you will probably be able to think of ups and downs, high points and low points. Please reflect on ways in which you feel you changed personally or spiritually during your time on your course.

- If you can, please think of one or two stories or examples which illustrate this experience of change. What happened? What were your feelings and insights about change?

If you had to describe the ways in which you changed personally and/or spiritually during your time with MCYM…

- What were the most positive aspects of this?
- How, if at all, does this link with the idea of formation for you?
- In what ways did MCYM positively contribute to these changes?
- Are there any ways in which MCYM centre staff positively supported these changes?
- Are there any ways in which your Fieldwork or Professional Practice Tutor, your Line Manager or your peers positively supported these changes?

- Can you think of any metaphors which describe your experience of positive change during your time with MCYM?
- As you seek to continue to learn and develop personally, spiritually and professionally, what habits or practices have you found most useful?

Part 3: Concluding Questions

- Imagine it is five years from now, MCYM is able to preserve its core strengths and we have transformed our approach to formation to best serve God, our students and the field. What are we doing that would make this effective? What was the key to our success? How did we get there?
- What three wishes would you have for changing MCYM in terms of the way it seeks to support the personal and spiritual formation of students?

Appendix 2: Schedule for Focus Group 1 (PTFG)

Introduction

- Brief introduction outlining ethical issues around consent, participation, withdrawal, anonymity etc.
- Introduce the purpose and outline of session
- Introductions – each member of the group to introduce themselves briefly.

Summary of Research Process So Far

- Overview of research question, methods and emerging themes.
- Use large visual to summarise this.

Engagement with Emerging Issues

- Participants will be asked to explore the themes arising in terms of their understanding and the outworking of their tutor role.
- Use post-it notes to describe the areas they see as important in in terms of supporting students' personal and spiritual formation during the course. Write one area on each post it note. Emphasise participants can include themes emerging from the research or other areas they see as important.
- Ask participants to rank these in a pyramid style (one at the top, then two, then three etc) to highlight their perception of the importance of the themes.
- Facilitate conversation around the themes and ranking, drawing on participants' experiences

Wishes and Dreams

- Ask participants what dreams they would have for MCYM in terms of students personal and spiritual formation.
- Use long sheet of paper on long table and black pens to write these down (standing around table).
- Then in a silent process, give time for participants to add to the wishes and dreams of others by writing comments and questions around the wishes and dreams that have been written.
- Give opportunity for conversation and reflection.

Thanks and Close

Appendix 4: Initial Email to Potential Research Participants

Research into Personal and Spiritual Formation at Midlands CYM

I am currently looking for a number of graduates to participate in a research project I am undertaking exploring students' experiences of personal and spiritual formation during their time with Midlands CYM. The research will serve to support and develop our practice within MCYM and is part of my studies with the University of Birmingham towards the Doctorate in Practical Theology.

What will it involve?

Participation would involve me interviewing you about your experience of MCYM. The interview would take place at a venue convenient to you and would last for around an hour. You will also be invited to attend a focus group later in the research process to consider the initial findings of the research with other participants. Anything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence and your anonymity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms.

What if I change my mind?

If you show an interest, you are completely free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time up to nine months after the interview, without affecting your relationship with myself or anyone within MCYM. There are very low risks, if any, associated with the project, which has been approved by Birmingham University Ethics Committee.

What do I now?

If you would be willing to take part, please would you get back to me and I will send you some more information. If you would like to talk further about any aspects of the research, please feel free to contact me on [phone number].

Many thanks,

Blessings,

Jo

Appendix 5: Information Sheet and Consent Form for Interviewees

Research into personal and spiritual formation in MCYM

Thank you for your willingness to take part in the research project I am undertaking into students' experience of personal and spiritual formation during their time with MCYM. The research will serve to support and develop our practice and is part of my studies with the University of Birmingham towards the Doctorate in Practical Theology.

I will be using a strategy called Appreciative Inquiry, a participative, collaborative approach, which seeks to listen to people's stories and experiences in order to identify what is life-giving within organisations and to creatively build on these strengths. As part of this I am seeking to do a number of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with MCYM graduates and tutors. The interview would take place at a venue convenient to you and would last for around an hour. I would send you some questions to think about beforehand. Our conversation would be recorded digitally and I may also take some notes. If you find it helpful to reflect in other ways (for example, using art, poetry, visuals, journaling etc.), you would be very welcome to do this and bring with you anything you would like to feed into the research process.

If you wish to, you will be able to see copies of the interview transcript up to the point where the first draft of the dissertation is submitted. You will be invited to attend a focus group later in the research process to consider the initial findings of the research with other tutors.

You should be aware that you are completely free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time up to nine months after the interview, without affecting your relationship with myself or anyone within MCYM. There are very low risks, if any, associated with the project, which has been approved by Birmingham University Ethics Committee. Your name will not be associated with any part of the research so you will remain anonymous. If any issues emerge during the interview which you feel you want to explore further pastorally, someone will be available to you to provide this kind of support. If you have any concerns about the project at any time, you may contact my research supervisor, Professor Stephen Pattison (s.pattison.1@bham.ac.uk).

The expected benefits of participation are that you will have opportunity to reflect on your own personal and spiritual development and hear the initial findings and share experiences with other graduates. I hope the experience will be encouraging for you and will also support you in your work with others.

Your participation in this project requires formal consent so if you are willing to take part please complete the enclosed form and return it to me.

Yours sincerely,

Jo Whitehead

Assistant Director

MCYM

Participant Consent Form
Research into Personal and Spiritual Formation within MCYM

Researcher: Jo Whitehead

Name of Organisation: Midlands CYM

Please read the enclosed information sheet carefully then tick as appropriate:

	Yes	No
I have read and understand the information provided about the research.	☐	☐
I agree to the interview being audio-recorded.	☐	☐
I would like to receive a copy of the interview when it has been transcribed.	☐	☐
I am interested in being part of a focus group to look at the initial findings.	☐	☐
I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time without explanation, up to nine months after the interview.	☐	☐
I understand that my identity will be protected and a pseudonym used in the writing up of the research and any subsequent publications.	☐	☐
I agree to take part in the research outlined in the information sheet.	☐	☐
I understand that the data will be kept securely for ten years, in accordance with University of Birmingham requirements.	☐	☐

Name of Participant: **Signed:** **Date:**

Name of Researcher: **Signed:** **Date:**

Jo Whitehead

If you would like any further information about any aspects of this project, please do not hesitate to contact me on [redacted] or [redacted].

One copy for participant and one for the research file.

Appendix 6: Summary of Appreciative Questions

	Quotable Quotes	Key Experiences of Change	Key Themes	Steps Towards Change
GP1	'I do think quite a lot about the Lord is my Shepherd psalm and how, when it says leading through dark places and beside still waters, and actually there were times when I really struggled and felt like I was in that place but actually I got led through that and I was brought to the, the still waters.'	'I think I was challenged a lot in my faith about the people that I met while I was on the course. So even students who had obviously the same beliefs, but different, and challenging to know why they, what I believed in and what I didn't, and whether I agreed with things or how they did things or not… I think a lot was about people's personal relationships, so when there were people who were like living with partners before marriage and sex before marriage, those kind of situations when they come up. I was like, Oh, I don't know how I feel about that so it did challenge me like that.'	A bespoke approach to training. Getting on track with God. The importance of structure.	Importance of a bespoke approach rather than a 'one-size-fits-all'. Practical approaches to reflection rather than simply 'academic' approaches.
GP2	'I think … parts of the teaching and some of the assignments encouraged us to engage with our whole selves. And to reflect holistically and to kind of respond with our whole selves about things that were challenging or stimulating or. I think I felt that the course gave me room to respond it, … as myself and so to kind of draw	She noticed the role that I had taken in facilitating the group forming effectively: 'I think we were so worthy and self-reflective and challenging to each other and, and we really took on that role with a great sense of importance that we'd challenge each other and ask each other the difficult questions and so I think probably that there was the safety within, within the group to do that. I think that was partly because you'd	Reflection. Even negative experiences contribute positively. Holistic nature of the learning process.	Importance of giving people responsibility and tasks to do which enable them to participate meaningfully. Include more on pastoral care and self-care – or support students to access this effectively. Create more 'time space' for fun learning and reflective conversations

	in things that I was interested in or really work on things that I was good at, so rather than kind of, some courses feel a bit like working against yourself …I think there was a real sense of responding with my whole self and probably with my best self – that I could, I could have quite a tailor-made experience of CYM.	facilitated some really important kind of constructive discussions around who we were going to be as a year group and set a precedent that we could be that and, but, but I felt there was safety to dialogue and have different opinions and disagree with one another and, and also that there was enough gentleness that we took care of each another and enjoyed each other's company.'		outside the classroom.
GP3	I kind of learnt how to be the leader that, not just the leader that I thought I should be, but the leader that God had called me to be. That, leadership module we did where, it just, it releases you to understand that not everyone's the same and not to compare yourself to other people, which has always been something that has been hard for me, to learn that actually my leadership style is, is good and it's alright and that was really helpful.'	I think, the one of the things, I never thought I'd say this, cause I don't think I'm particularly creative in that crafty sense, but doing that scrapbook at the end of Year 3, as our final professional practice folder, I think was one of the *best* pieces of work that I'd ever done that actually helped *me* as a *person* as well as gave me marks for my essay, cause it made me, it took forever, but it made me think about the three years that I'd *had* and it, it helped me to reflect, and I think *that* in particular was one of the key moments in working out, actually who am I and 'how am I as a youth worker' and then I used that for my interviews which was really helpful, cause I could say, *this* is what I can bring, *this* is who I am, this is what it means to do youth work.	Leadership. How course wasn't too academic but felt real and practical. Importance of teachers being passionate.	Create peer-accountability partners within the course. Develop approaches to discipleship which recognize that ministry is a high calling. Look at how people are mentored and supported by line managers and PPTs.

		So I think *that* in particular, that one piece of work was really, really helpful in my formation.'		
GP4	'… the caterpillar and the cocoon and the butterfly, um, yeah. I think that, yeah, that would be the significant one and not to say that the butterfly is the end product, although in that case it, it generally is but that process is something that happens all the time and I think in the first year I went through that process and then in the second year I went through that process again, and in the third year I did in a different way. Because each year, I think things probably changed and there were things that I probably recognised and things that I didn't.'	Hearing about how experience on the course now impacts and influences current practice – particularly as it links with creative approaches to teaching: 'Yeah so if, if I'm sat teaching young people, so this was more evident in [my placement] really, towards the end of the degree, having taken time out and just started again. It's trying to be creative in how young people connect with God and I think it's, when, when you're sat in church and you're just reading your Bible it's really hard to be creative and try and *think* creatively but I think I try to take a bit of a leaf out of your book really and give the young people journals – as part of the course that I was doing with them and said, you know, do what you want in that, I'm not going to look at it. But allowed them to be free in a book alongside of my teaching.'	Growing in confidence. Openness of tutors. Sense of a journey with God.	Resting before doing, rather than as a response to burnout. Continuing to be open with people and allowing them to be free. Continuing to enable people on their journey with God and professional journey.
GP5	'…for me it was more watching all the lecturers and the up-front there develop, watch them and listen to them and see how they do things was, helped my spiritual growth	Talking about openness of lecturers and their willingness to be vulnerable and continue to learn themselves. Noted the learning about approaches to reflection that he still uses in his practice – particularly	Investment into students. Reflection as an ongoing practice. The importance of one-to-one time.	People to visit placements and give one-to-one input. Reflection space at the end of days to enable processing of learning.

	more than, kind of one-to-one PPT or PFG group because those lecturers for me, I looked up to them … they are investing in me as a, as a youth worker, I'm not just paying to be there but they're investing. They're giving their knowledge and their experience sometimes further than it should have been giving, which was really key to watch them share, and for me that helped me grow spiritually a lot more.'	the use of postcards which is something that he picked up on CYM.		One-to-one time with lecturers. Benefits of being a student rep. Consider the impact of white culture on students from different cultural backgrounds – experience of cultural expectations and 'norms'?
GP6	Huge amount early in the interview about growing through significant struggle. 'However, I feel that like from a personal perspective, which is only down to me, is that you're putting yourself up to be vulnerably changed. I think that every part of your life will be changed on the course.'	'And so for me, it, it just flung up, threw up lots of different things I never really realised I was like in my life, like things I'd, I'd say or things I'd do or the type of personality I was. I never really saw that before, like in that sort of exposure, you know what I mean, like, I didn't. So it enabled me to kind of grow beyond what I, or go into avenues of life, because I trusted God in the calling to go there – areas I'd never, like, now as a person looking back, I think 'Wow, like, I'm actually grateful for that experience, because a lot of it was quite lows, quite like difficult, kind of verging sometimes	Growing through struggle. Identity - being real/confidence. Questioning.	The need to engage in a variety of different worship styles Seek to engage with the Spirit more explicitly through lectures. Apply learning to life as well as practice. Be aware of how tough it can be for people who don't naturally 'fit' in the group. Be aware of how 'middle class' the course can feel.

		depression because it was kind of like I didn't know how to deal with it, I didn't know how to handle certain people's comments or certain issues or. But then, from that, I've become like more of a, a balanced person, I feel like I've kind of come to sort of a, an agreement with myself more. I understand this is who I am and this is what I'm meant to be and, and that nothing can change that.'		
GP7	'… there's something about kind of stamina and resilience that um, that was really developed during that time, which I think if I'd done kind of a different course that didn't challenge some of those ideas of what it means to work with people and understand people, I don't think I'd have had those, the, my foundations would have been developed in a different way. Yeah, so maybe found resilience and stamina are two really key words. Particularly when you're working in churches where it's complex and	'I will *never* forget learning about learning styles with you … School was fine for me but, but not amazing and I, I remember feeling really frustrated cause I thought the stuff that I was learning about was just irrelevant and I, understood that I could have deeper thoughts about things that were never really looked at at school or whatever, and when it came to understanding learning styles and learning preferences and experiential learning and all that kind of thing and doing Myers Briggs and all the kind of personality stuff like learning kind of came to life really. And I think *that* had a *really* significant impact on the way that I understood *myself*. Because it just, it put, put clarity on what I knew but wouldn't be	Safe places. The significance of peers. The importance of being exposed to different views and questions.	Having a chaplain for students and staff. Look at the relationships between ordinands and CYM students and explore ways of learning from each other.

	people are, interesting.'	able to *express* because I didn't have any frameworks to kind of map it all in. So *now* it feels really obvious and quite probably basic, but again if I hadn't done a course that looked at those kind of things I probably wouldn't be able to understand myself in the way that I do now. Um, so that was a real, yeah, real eye-opener. I remember crying afterwards. In a good way.		
GP8	'It was the *physical* space gave you *spiritual* space' 'I always found your stuff really interesting in terms of like, of how you, *how* you taught. Everything, everything we did, you just got, you just got more like, how, sort of like *you* would walk in and we'd go, oh we've got Jo today, so how's she teaching, how's she got it set up? How's she-. You know, what, how's, how does stuff, because all that was stuff that I could learn for lessons, in terms of what, what, what did I, if this is Jo, who we all think's really *good,* then what do *I* look like to young people when *I'm*	'And so, the um, the academic stuff because I was doing well in it was hugely helpful because it, it gave me a huge affirmation that actually I *could* do something, and gave me confidence to look at the other areas that I thought I need to be more aware of. I need to be *more* aware of how I am in groups, I need to be *more* aware of how I am with people, I need to be more aware of what I'm trying to do in terms of my theology. What am I trying to *do* for these youth workers and where does that come from? So to be, self-aware as to what I was contributing or *stopping* happening is quite challenging but through the c… but, but if I was going to do it properly that's what I needed to do and I, I, in my head I was going, you've got three years where this is what you've bought into	Confidence. Investment. God at work in the process.	Someone dedicated to linking with placements and mentoring placement supervisors. Personal vocational support for those who, part way through the course, realise they're not called to youth work.

	doing stuff? Where is *this* in *mine*? And how does, and how do I get there? And how does it become *me*, not me copying somebody?'	and so everybody's *expecting* you to do it so it's a *safe* place to do it whereas if you do it now, like um, like you have a huge level of investment in me don't you for those three years or *I* did because as *I* bought into it, those people around me seemed to enjoy the fact that I was buying into it and *they* really bought into it and it was like a self-perpetuating thing, the more I put in, the more they put in, the more I got out, the more I wanted to put in.'		
GP9	I think because the tutors demonstrate, at least demonstrated a complete all-roundedness and openness and vulnerability and had an open door policy so when life was hard, because it is hard doing a full-time degree and being between part-time and full-time on placement. It is really tough, ... Wow. It was really difficult and, and I, and I actually get saddened that I didn't appreciate that to the fullest while I was here and it is only in the last couple of years that I'm like, yeah, this is when my journey into	'I really loved the personable relationships side that the tutors had, so both year tutors – I know this is speaking about you now Jo – but I think the way that that was done was great. I think it was rare that you had a closed door policy and I think just having tutors that were open to being challenged, to being loved, to having their hearts broken by students. I hope I didn't do that but I think just seeing that and I think for me what really stood out. I'll get emotional now. Is the vulnerability that the tutors had, um all through so whether or not it was like a bereavement session and it's hard, to working through a PPE or a dissertation and being really challenged in your thoughts and being able to then say back to your	Reflection. Safe space. Tutors' vulnerability.	Dedicated time given in placement to personal growth/investment. Retreat opportunities for students. More regular review times during the course.

	this, this is where I am now.'	tutor, 'Well what about you' like you know, I want to know from you as well' and the vulnerability that came with that and then when life is pants, just sharing that and, and in a way that is not making excuses either but just being open.'		
GP10	'You would create the space for reflections at the beginning of the day and that would help us remember that everything was together, that it wasn't all separate but joined up.' 'And I can remember sitting on your sofa a lot and it felt okay to just come and talk things through for a bit and try and work it out.'	In lectures the reflections helped show that your Christian life was everywhere and that was one of the main things. And the reflection times after lunch… even when students were leading it was good tutors being in there. Sometimes you didn't even know that people were in until then but then they just came and were part of the group, and it was good role models. And I think the fact that you were real people. So with you and [X]. [X] was chair of [my placement organisation] and you were our tutor. And [X] and her mum and her dad and the struggles they had. And it was important because you knew that tutors were real people and had families and knowing about what you were going through and when you went through stuff like we did.	Being listened to (safe spaces). Being asked hard questions. Struggle as part of the process.	CYM having a post-degree CPD process to support students' transition into work. Underlining the importance of biblical truths in challenging times. Continuing to create space for reflection at the beginning of the day.
GP11	I think the way that you know, [X] teached, the way that you taught. It was always, there was always a	I think because there's that Christian theology side to it, it means that you, you very clearly have an understanding that there's a holistic	Reflection. Personal investment. Transformation.	More theological engagement with current policy issues.

	game, there was always a way of thinking about it, there was always a, input and then conversations and it was just a way, a real way of, just allowing you to process it all, … so you, you know, you kind of really got chance to grab hold of things.'	way of understanding spirituality, it's, it's, it's there, it's embraced, and actually not just a little bit on the side, it's actually like, it's an equal, like the way I understood it was, or thought about it, kind of theory and theology were kind of an equal footing. It was like a equal weighting, it wasn't like a bit that you add on the end or you put theory in a little bit, a kind of equal footing. So it's kind of like that whole holistic spiritual, … by the Spirit type way of understanding people and then youth work, and then was, was always there.'		

Appendix 7: Sample of Repeating Ideas Sheet

Impact on Practice

I think, mainly through the course through time management was really important and I did really struggle with that. I do, but I have to physically plan things in my diary, every single thing I have to do in my day, phone calls, whatever, otherwise I just don't do it. But actually then having the structure and things to be able to run things like the crèche I do on a Wednesday morning, If I hadn't had that structure shown to me and I hadn't worked through it I wouldn't be able to do it, and run that. (GP1 p3)	Links between struggles on the course and current time-management strategies.
It's trying to be creative in how young people connect with God and I think it's, when, when you're sat in church and you're just reading your Bible it's really hard to be creative and try and *think* creatively but I think I try to take a bit of a leaf out of your book really and give the young people, journals – as part of the course that I was doing with them and said, you know, do what you want in that, I'm not going to look at it. But allowed them to be free in a book um, alongside of my teaching. So I think I try and do that. And, and that's mainly because I don't like sitting down and doing stuff like that so my personality comes out in the creative side. I think if ever I'm doing some kind of teach or preach at, at the front of church I think, so we did some presentation stuff, I always, so in a sermon, I was looking through my sermons the other day – I've got them in a file – and every single one of them have um, three points and they're all clear points and they all link to each other and they all link to the final kind of 'this is this' or 'this is what you should be doing' or 'this is what the Bible teaches us. I don't think I would have done that before. It would have just been here, there and everywhere really. Maybe a scatter diagram – a bit like [X's] board. I'll never forget that. Yeah, so I think some, some of my stuff has become more // focused and channelled and some of the stuff that I do and other stuff has been a bit more free. (GP4 p4-5)	Influenced by my practice. Using things that worked for her learning style. Impact of course learning. Course experience both focusing and freeing.
I think some modules we had, the reflection module but for all your different lecture would say go outside and find an object or bring something back to the room that makes you think of a certain situation or reflecting and that's really impacted me // because most of my work *now* I use, I do, I use a lot of reflection in it. I pick a piece of music or I've got lots of postcards or stuff like that so I use now as a reflection for the kids and just for me it was just really good because that's most of my, I never thought reflection could go that way. I thought you reflect as you pray, and you wait to hear from God and that's it, you don't use other materials other than the Bible,	Influenced by creative approaches to reflection. Implementing things experienced in college in current practice with young people.

but using other resources, using just walking in the park and picking up a leaf and reflecting on that leaf and how it's growing and how God can use that is really for me, is really key. Never thought reflection could be done in those ways. For me the learning and learning modules were challenging in a good way. Cause understanding for myself that the way I learn, because a lot of time I just think I'm not taking anything in because I'm quite fidgety, or I want to be maybe applying something or doing something differently, and then watching round the class and thinking why is everybody […] while I just kind of dozing off or in my own little world but then realising actually that's just a different style of people learning. It's, I don't like to, being active, um, which was really key to understand that, understand that the young people I work will, with, will learn differently because sometimes it challenged me when I'm talking and kids are just fidgeting around and on the phone and I'm thinking, 'goodness, put the phone down.' It recalls me back to my time when actually I learn the same way but it's just sitting there and fidgeting and doing other things doesn't mean they're not listening, it actually can mean they're listening even more than the other ones who are just sitting there and so that's really helped me learn and develop my growth in the work. (GP5 p2-3)	Fresh understanding. Applying learning styles to practice with young people.
One of the things we use a lot, I use the postcards, got quite a lot at the church, probably hundreds in the youth room and every time we use it I always, I always pick up the same image, because it always sticks out to me and I always reflect on it differently every time. (GP5 p7)	One of my activities now used in current practice.
Even now, cause of working with S, the youth work, the student here, then she will come to me with a problem, I look back through my years of my work and I'll go to that competence and read and think, and I can still reflect again on a different, how I could have done it differently again, and it's just sometimes you have to leave it there then but sometimes it's great to go back and just reflect and I think reflection is one of the biggest thing I've, one of the biggest things I've taken away out of CYM, always finding time to reflect on anything and everything. (GP5 p7)	Using written work to refer back to. Reflective skills implemented now.
I know we *have* done that in my year sometimes um, during the day and we've had that time to go away in our pairs to process and chat things through, but for me I don't think it happened enough, um, as an introvert, cause I want, I like to process and to think and I think that would be, that would have helped me develop a lot more and I would love to see that. I want to wish to, to see that happen more in practice, because, in practice I feel as a youth worker, when out there you spend more time reflecting on your work you've done at	Patterns of reflection now applied to youth ministry practice in terms of

the end of the day, you know, I can finish half an hour to reflect on what happen on the day or on the session we just did or in schools, because often everything's in a rush we don't leave that space and, and sometimes I still don't do it. … I'm not sure it will work with everybody but it might do for some and it would make a massive difference um, cause, cause by the time I get home, I'm tired and I don't want, last thing I want to do is talk about work. (GP5 p10)	reflecting on a session or the day.
I think I learned a little bit how to manage and administrate, just through the modules and through, through um, the journaling, learned that, how to do that sort of stuff, not saying that I'm perfect at it but I'm saying it's been really good to learn that administration skill because if I didn't come on CYM I'd have gone straight into youth work with a job, would have stayed with [the youth work organisation I was with], I would never learn or develop that administrating skills, or even the reflective side of things. Um, cause the team I was on before was all hands-on travel and working a lot. (GP5 p10)	Learning management and administration skills which are now implemented into youth ministry practice.
Because the theology was great. I learnt a lot about Jesus and different things and like, obviously talks with [X] about liberation theology and things like that. And I learnt a lot from that but it was more like text rather than application, you know, actually it was more, I felt sometimes I wasn't able to kind of *apply* that in, in any sense. It wasn't, there wasn't that *movement*, you know what I mean, it was more like and I think that's where people, if I'm being critically honest, I think that's where people, not being horrible, but people struggled the *most* on the course. (GP6 p10)	Importance of being able to apply learning to practice.
Everything, everything we did, you just got, you just got more like, how, sort of like *you* would walk in and we'd go, oh we've got Jo today, so how's she teaching, how's she got it set up? How's she-. You know, what, how's, how does stuff, because all that was stuff that I could learn for lessons, in terms of what, what, what did I, if this is Jo, who we all think's really *good,* then what do *I* look like to young people when *I'm* doing stuff? Where is *this* in *mine*? And how does, and how do I get there? And how does it become *me*, not me copying somebody? How do *I* learn *my* style in terms of young people and that and how I do that. And it's the same with all, all the tutors would have, would, would *bring* something *different* in the way that they did their lectures (GP8 p6)	Implementing learning straight away into the practice context. Using learning but developing own style rather than mimicking. Tutors' different approaches.
So something, something about that, you know, God calling, something about relationship and investment and, not only in, if that works so well for me and I benefitted so, so much from that in *so* many different ways, then how do I do that for my gap year students in terms of relationship, so in terms of them	Experiencing being invested in and then wanting to

feeling invested in but also what about, you know, the, what about those young people that *I* go in and do school's lessons for. Do they feel that I've invested in them, cause if that's a *key*, that they're valued and that what I'm doing is valued, I feel that what I'm doing is valuable, then is, what, what does that communicate? (GP8 p6)	replicate that for young people.
I love the management side. That was part of the course that I just was so passionate about, and still really am, and about doing it properly and managing well, by encouraging people, which is really what I'm about and just. (GP9 p1)	Implementing favourite aspects of the course into current practice.
I still kind of look at my notes about this and, and actually one of the models I've just used was the urgent, not urgent, not important, important. That's really helped a colleague who was really struggling with getting their to-do list done but actually just a grid - amazing. So having practical things just stored away that we can bring out. Amazing. (GP9 p2)	Using specific models learnt within professional practice.
But I guess that's also the *beauty* of this course because so much of it is reflective and putting in models of how we theologically reflect. Whether or not it's picking up an acorn in the grounds, or, or a very *big* theological reflection on the Bible I think the reflective practice was *huge* and I don't, having worked in kind of private, public and voluntary sectors since graduating, I still don't even think in the Christian areas of voluntary sectors, reflection's done enough, and it's something I really *push* for with my committee and my trustees, but it's something that they find difficult (GP9 p5)	Importance of and approaches to reflection now applied to the practice context.
So I, having started in [my organisation], I just really thought how I wanted best practice to be. But again, I think, being, being a manager and starting that set-up I was able to implement that from day one, rather than come in and make changes. So I have half an hour every day that I'm paid for, to have time out either reading the Bible, doing some devotion, whatever that might be, um, every quarter, I think it's every quarter, I get two days retreat days, so I have eight retreat days a year. And again, they were just going to give me *one* a quarter, but I said, I know from my personal experience that by the time I've settled down it'll be three o'clock in the afternoon and I need two days to retreat and I can do that, so *two* of those four sessions I can retreat *personally* and then the other two have to be around work, which is great. (GP9 p5)	Implementing devotional and reflective aspects into practice – making space.
Again, that, I've harped on about it lots, but just safe environment and creating that safe space. // I do that a *lot*, so in my office is a huge area of personal space um, one for me, cause at the moment I'm at my desk I'm working, but the moment I'm sitting in the, we call it the comfy area, it's	Implementing safe and hospitable space that was modelled on the course.

completely different atmosphere, I'm like, I'm more personable than work-orientated. Cause it's kind, it's very much like a peaceful sensory area. So having that space for my team and for me to just go 'phwww'. (GP9 p5-6)	
Um, and I think *now*, we, so for instance having those away-days, um, for people who haven't been to CYM so X and X, because you want, you, are important because you want, as much as you can, replicate that kind of environment where you can talk and understand and grab hold of things and think around, think about practice but also think about vision and values, what underpins what we do? Why do we do what we do? What, what would make us not do some stuff because of our vision and values? And I think, if you talk to someone like X, I think she, she understands youth work, but she's, she's *grown* in her understanding of her own values and I think that's, that's what's so important about, and it actually been really, really good about, kind of what CYM does, is it, it gives you that opportunity. (GP11 p3)	Replicating the CYM environment.

Appendix 8: Embodiment: Reflections on a Body of Data Text

How do I value all the different elements
that form the whole of this?
How do I hold in tension all this choice?
How do I get past all that dominates
to hear the quieter voice?
How do I let this body breathe?
Encourage its expression?
How do I curb my inclination to constrain
– but instead, dare to give free reign?
Allowing every part
to flex and stretch and dance and play
and have its say
and in this, to convey
a multitude of meanings?
How do I cherish
that which doesn't fit?
How do I hear the whole of it?
Hear the critical, the insecure,
make space for the tentative, unsure?
How do I value beauty here, in all its different ways?
Naked vulnerability, woundedness, hearing what it says.
How can I understand the wisdom it can bring?
How do I let this body sing?

Appendix 9: First I Poem

I'd heard a lot about it and it just felt it was the right thing for me.
I was challenged a lot in my faith about the people that I met
Students who had the same beliefs, but different,
Challenging to know why they, what I believed in and what I didn't,
Whether I agreed with things or how they did things, or not.
A lot was about people's personal relationships
People who were living with partners before marriage and sex before marriage,
Those kind of situations when they come up.
I was like, 'Oh, I don't know how I feel about that!'
So it did challenge me like that.

I think I learnt a lot about myself.
I did change what I was focused on and what I,
What I felt was the right way to go.
I did have to step back out of some groups I was involved in.
To limit the amount of time I spent with certain people
Because it was drawing me down.
But also trying to be that positive influence
in those groups at the same time.
I think it just helped me remain more focused on God
And where he was calling me
Rather than thinking,
'I've got to be all things to all people.'
Actually, I've got to be fixed on God.

I started with a bit of a struggle,
My tutor, we were thinking on different lines,
Cause she was really academic
She was telling me, 'You need to do it this way,
this way this way'.
And I really struggled with that way.
I really sort of went in myself within the course
but I changed who I had.
I developed better from that point.
When I moved to my new tutor
She was very supportive
It was a lot more
Like how I needed it to be,
The structure was more focused on how I want,
How I needed to, how I lived.
A lot more practical things,
Rather than just sitting and writing.
It was a lot more practical way to reflect.

Because I knew my Line Manager quite well,
She knew when there was something that wasn't right.
It was easier to work around
To make the meetings what I needed them to be

rather than just ticking boxes.

I do think quite a lot about the Lord is my Shepherd psalm,
When it says leading through dark places and beside still waters,
And actually there were times when I really struggled
and felt like I was in that place,
But actually I got led through that
And I was brought to the still waters.

When students meet like outside of the time
And do their reflections together
I think that's quite important -
Having the personal space for students to reflect,
Cause obviously everyone reflects differently, don't they?
Sometimes it's easier than doing it all in a big group,
Cause you've got more chance of being able to hear
What everybody's got to say,
Rather than just the ones that can get it across.
Yeah, the powerful ones.

I just think like for everyone that comes through
That it's what they need, that it's specific to them,
Continue to get into the how it's going to look
For each individual person
How it all fits together.

Appendix 10: 'Moments of Insight' I Poems

GP2

I had this kind of penny-drop moment
with the two modules that we did –
Learners and Learning
in groups and individually.
Something clicked.
I realized we were
studying something I loved doing;
talking about things that I loved thinking about;
engaging with thoughts and ideas that I loved,
that I loved putting myself into and thinking critically about.
There was this real awakening
of an academic within me
that I didn't,
I didn't know was there.

GP3

I never thought I'd say this,
'cause I don't think I'm particularly creative
(In that crafty sense),
but doing that scrapbook at the end of Year 3 -
as our final professional practice folder -
was one of the *best* pieces of work that I'd ever done.
That actually helped *me* as a *person*
as well as gave me marks for my essay.
It took forever,
but it made me think about
the three years that I'd *had,*
and it helped me to reflect -
and I think *that* in particular
was one of the key moments in working out,
actually who am I?
And how am I as a youth worker?
And then I used that for my interviews,
which was really helpful,
'cause I could say,
this is what I can bring,
this is who I am,
this is what it means to do youth work.
So I think *that* in particular,
that one piece of work
was really, really helpful in my formation.

GP5 1st Moment

I always had God in a box
only turned to God when I really needed him;
never turned to him in good times
or when things are just floating along;

always think God is only there for when you need him.
But during all the modules,
the biblical studies ones really challenge what you believe,
and your concept of God.
and your peers in your group,
and your formation group.
You chat about stuff.
Just opened my eyes to see
how God really move in this situation.
and not putting God in a box,
just leaving him to just work,
without restraining him.
That's really big growth to me and a change.

GP5 2nd Moment

On my second year
I was really challenged,
because I was interviewing this guy from a different culture.
He was a Muslim.
And for me to stand firm in my faith
and actually talk to him about what I believe,
is a massive step,
because I've grown up in a culture where
you keep everything to yourself and that's you.
And for me it was stepping out of that boat,
and talking to him about my faith,
and telling him why I'm doing this research and stuff -
that's really opened my eyes,
and make me confident in my faith.
And since then I've been able to speak to *older* people
about my faith,
'cause I'm quite happy talking to kids about it
but not to people older than me,
'cause I felt they're more experience,
and know more,
or will have a different opinion,
or they hit a loophole in what I believe
and might target me.
But since then I've been really been able to push forward in it,
because that's given me the confidence
to be able to integrate with people of different faith as well.

GP5 3rd Moment

When we go through the Old Testament,
and I'm not a big fan,
especially the older one that's really hard to read.
The tutor was talking about the idea,
the idea they are there for a reason,

God didn't just put it in just for, for the sake of stats.
God likes things, the way he did it.
he had to be precise,
and he had a precise reason,
a precise time for things.
For me,
that teaching was really, like, wow,
those little things means a lot to God -
those little details.
Because sometimes we look at life,
for me I think,
'That doesn't make much difference to God.
God doesn't care about that.'
But every inch of the life
God really care.
and that really hit out to me,
because those things I'd never really bothered about.
What is important? What?
And the tutor has really taught me that of God really -
that God cares about little details,
not just the big things,
the little ones that no-body seems to see.
God still cares about it.
So that's really, what I took out,
from especially that module.

GP 7

I will *never* forget learning
about learning styles with you.
I kind of rewind a little bit.
School was fine for me
but not amazing,
And I remember feeling really frustrated,
'cause I thought the stuff that I was learning about
was just irrelevant;
and I understood that I could have deeper thoughts
about things that were never really looked at at school.
And when it came to understanding learning styles
and learning preferences
and experiential learning
and all that kind of thing,
and doing Myers Briggs
and all the kind of personality stuff,
learning kind of came to life really.
I think *that* had a *really* significant impact
on the way that I understood *myself*.
It just, it put
clarity on what I knew
but wouldn't be able to *express,*
because I didn't have any frameworks

to kind of map it all in.
So *now* it feels really obvious
and quite probably basic,
but again if I hadn't done a course
that looked at those kind of things,
I probably wouldn't be able to understand myself
In the way that I do now.
So that was a real, yeah, real eye-opener.
I remember crying afterwards.
In a good way.

GP11

I think the one that was personally for *me*,
the one that sticks in my mind is,
very early on we basically went through the Bible.
So Old Testament and then New Testament.
I just remember going into that,
having very, very little understanding of,
you know, you knew bits and bobs and stories
but you didn't know how it all fitted together.
And I very specifically remember a day,
we'd had the lesson in the morning,
and I remember going off on my own
actually, into the garden area,
and just going,
This is actually quite challenging stuff,
but *good.*
I've wrestled with the creation story.
The person that came and taught us that day
gave a lot of different interpretations.
And it wasn't like they were *telling* you
creation's wrong but, this is the right way.
It was like
actually this is the *breadth*
and the understanding of what that is,
and the tools to be able to kind of make sense of it for yourself.
It was just like,
that was that moment where,
I first thought my not-very-deep roots
had kind of been ripped out.
So I'd gone out into the garden
feeling quite vulnerable.
It wasn't like I was brought up in a fundamental,
you believe in creationism or you don't believe in God.
My church actually *would* have given options
and thought in different ways of looking at stuff.
But I think it was just that kind of,
it was that moment in my life
when I really wanted to grab hold of this stuff
and make sense of it.

And I think you just gave me that opportunity.
And I think that was a very clear moment
when I thought,
again, like I said,
I felt quite vulnerable,
quite kind of, quite worried,
but I was just kind of,
you know,
hang on a minute,
this is really challenging what I've thought.

Appendix 11: Cultural Challenges I Poem

We find a difficulty,
cause starting from where we pray
or the way we praised
was different from what people would do stuff.
And it was hard.

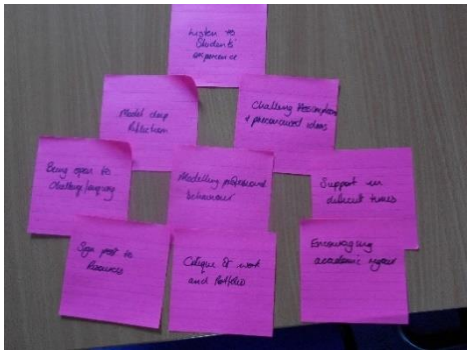
I know there were some of them
probably were in more multi-culture situation
in the church,
but when you're, I feel in minority,
it's quite hard to explore
somebody coming from a different culture
for example, from a West Indian culture
where everything is laid back
and you relax,
while everybody – a lot of the guys
on the course were,
This is what you do and you don't do.'
It was a bit difficult
because I didn't feel
I could turn to anybody
on the course really
that would understand me.
It was really difficult
knowing that it's not that diverse.

When I came to England,
I live in a town where
my family and another family
was the only black family
in, in the town really.
And at school I found it difficult
to settle in
and I was bullying
and stuff like that.

And just knowing that you've got people
around to support,
and knowing that's not going to happen,
cause you always think
people's going to judge you.
And I had to come to terms
with understanding that.
But actually,
this is what God wants really,
and CYM was a place where
in my classes

it wasn’t multi-cultured,
but in the whole of St John’s,
the area of the campus,
there was people around that,
that made things easier for me,
so to see those people faces
and see people around.

Appendix 12: Tutor Priorities from the Practice Tutor Focus Group



Listen to students' Experience

Model deep reflection

Challenge assumptions + preconceived Ideas

Being open to challenging/ enquiry

Modelling professional behaviour

Support in difficult times

Sign post to resources

Critique of work and portfolio

Encouraging academic rigour

Modelling how my spiritual formation happens

Building relationship through shared activities

Resourcing – where she can find stimulus

Bringing reality into everything

Encourage her to embrace challenge

Empowering

Being on her side

Allowing her to question

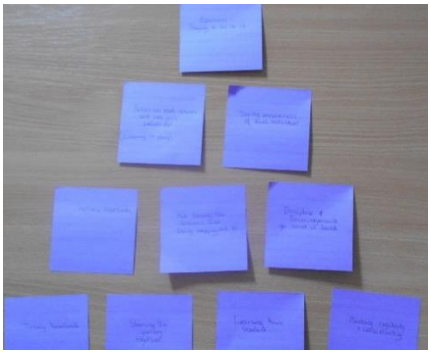
Praying for her

Pray

Be present **Challenge**

Listening **Encourage** **Vulnerable in answering their questions**

Share ideas **Model professionalism + spirituality** **Be available** **Play 'piggy in the middle (centre + placement)**

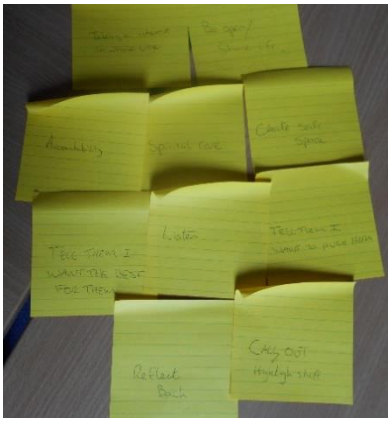


Openness – saying it as it is

Focus on root causes and not just behaviour (listening to story) **Seeing uniqueness of each individual**

Holistic approach **Not having the answers but being happy not to** **Discipline + encouragement go hand in hand**

Timely feedback **Sharing the journey together** **Learning from student** **Meeting regularly + consistently**

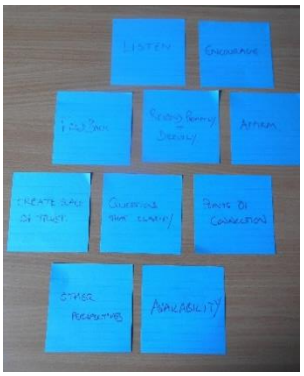


Taking an interest in whole life **Be open / share life**

Accountability **Spiritual care** **Create safe space**

Tell them I want the best for them **Listen** **Tell them I want to push them**

Reflect back **Call out highlight stuff**

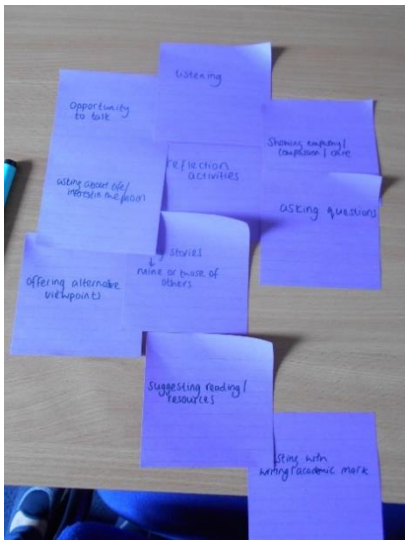


Listen **Encourage**

Feed back **Respond promptly + directly** **Affirm**

Create place of trust **Questions that clarify** **Points of connection**

Other perspectives **Availability**



Listening

Opportunity to talk **Showing empathy / compassion / care**

Asking about life / interest in the person **Reflection activities** **Asking questions**

Offering alternative viewpoints **Telling stories – mine or those of others** **Availability**

Suggesting reading / resources

Assisting with writing / academic

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