

**STUDENTS' 'VOICE' WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM:
COMPLEXITIES, CHALLENGES, AND POSSIBILITIES**

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**Presented to the Doctorate Board, Faculty of Education in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the Doctorate in Philosophy at the University of Malta.**

June, 2022



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COMPLEXITIES, CHALLENGES, AND POSSIBILITIES
FOR EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to those in my life who have remained patient while I persevered in this endeavour. First, to my husband, thank you! You graciously picked up the slack around the house while I hunched over my laptop for the past seven years. You have tolerated me bringing articles to read wherever I go. You have allowed me to work many weekends instead of spending time having fun with you. This journey has been challenging for us, but I know you have also gained from it. I hope you will pursue your dreams with diligence and perseverance knowing that you will also find success. Thanks for reminding me of what is most important.

Second, to my supportive parents, thank you! You have quietly acknowledged and supported my dreams throughout my life, never questioning how I will achieve them. Throughout this process, you have urged me forward and celebrated each step of the way.

Finally, I devote this dissertation, and my future research, to students who struggle in schools because of the ideology of ‘average’ and to dedicated educators who can envision a future of education that is more encompassing of the diverse ways all students engage in learning. Together, let us continue to make visible the hegemonic, unexamined beliefs and practices that negatively label, marginalize, and separate differences and work to share our vision of an educational system that defines normal as the ordinary human variance.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The ‘I’ who writes this thesis is “several”, formed with, through and using The ‘I’ who writes this thesis is “several”, formed with, through and using “everything that came within range, what was closest as well as farthest away” (Deleuze & Guattari as cited in Stivale, 1998, p. 73) (Deleuze & Guattari as cited in Stivale, 1998, p. 73). In short, the authorial I is thoroughly threaded through with the voice of others. It is because of the generosity and patience of the people who I thank below that I have been able to configure this version of years of pedagogical research encounters that were so formative and generative (for me, at least).

To my supervisors, Prof. Daniela Mercieca and Prof. Erica Burman: it has been an honour to learn from your humour, intellect, and relentless pedagogical experimentation. Thank you for giving me permission to join you in wondering aloud. Thank you for your hard questions and thank you for reminding me of the central importance of social justice in research. Thank you for modelling pedagogically what it might look like to listen more. I hope to grow in the direction of the calm strength, principled discipline, and ethical integrity that you embody.

To my advisor Prof. Kenneth Wain: thank you for working alongside me in this PhD work. Your deep conviction about the affirmative potential of dialogical engagement, your ethics of care, your wisdom, and your orientation to hope have been grounding. Thanks for pushing me to be (perhaps) a little bit more coherent.

To my mentors and friends, Prof. Daniela Mercieca and Prof. Duncan Mercieca: thank you for your patience in this lengthy process, for continuously pointing me to wonderful resources which have shaped my thinking about the ideology of voice, and for your support in all of my academic pursuits. I knew you were going to be two amazing forces in my life. You have supported my development as an academic, researcher, psychologist, and a person. Yet you have also helped me cope with the immense changes that have happened in my life during my PhD journey. You are incredible role models, mentors, advisors, friends, confidants, and brilliant, beautiful, compassionate, and caring people. I love you dearly!

To the principals and educators who supported this research about student participation in school: thank you for your openness to the students' work and this doctoral project. Thank you for the passion with which you lead and care for others. I deeply admire your strength and perseverance amidst adversity and am thankful for your guidance and support to me from the beginning.

To all the staff who participated in this research: It has been a joy and privilege to work alongside you. I hope that this thesis evokes a sense of your desire for teaching and learning connections that compound the capacities of students, teachers, and support staff to speak and listen, teach and learn, affect and be affected.

To the students who were part of this study (and those who were not): it is difficult to articulate in words how your experiences affected me and changed the way that I think and feel about teaching, learning, and living. Your knowledge, capacities, and what was formed between us in our collaborative work far exceeded what I anticipated. Thank you for everything that you shared with me and what you did not share because it was too important.

The institution where this study was situated is a community that I love. The felt force of affection and yearning to connect and to make a difference in the lives of others is palpable when you walk through the front foyer of the building. It would be difficult to find a leadership team, teachers, and staff who work harder or with more care, energy, and sincerity. Educators and caregivers of students at the school are deeply supportive of the desire that circulates in the school to value students' and the community's knowledge. Children at this institution seek out connections with each other and with others, and at school, they desire to participate in pedagogical encounters. This institution is, as those within it frequently say, a "family."

ABSTRACT

This dissertation research takes a re-conceptualist approach to the study of voice in education to examine children's daily encounters at school and in residential care that dissociate from socially constructed accounts of children's lives, especially those which seek to compartmentalize the child, children, and children's decision making. As an Educational Psychologist (EP), my interest in this research was to understand the ways in which children make themselves visible and legible as social actors—even in ways which disagree with adults' expectations. I wanted to see how they negotiate the circumstances that surround their life, and, perhaps most importantly, I was interested in the role (if any) their voice has in the political process.

The theoretical orientation of this study is grounded in the work of French philosopher Jacques Rancière namely, the distribution of the sensible, ignorance, political, and aesthetics: among others, to explore what kinds of knowledge and values related to children's voice get to be visible or invisible, sayable, or unsayable, audible, or inaudible, legible, or illegible, to the extent that such existing frameworks police children's everyday practices. These partitions are, in fact, perceivable through children's demonstration of what they assume adults expect of their works and behaviour.

In this regard, two of the main questions my dissertation raises are: What is children's voice, and how is it accessed? What is the impact of children's voice on EP practice? Based on the mosaic approach case study, with children aged between 8 and 15 who attend nurture centres, I bring in my observations of how children display their capability to voice out their views and disagree with and overturn the existing rules and roles imposed on them by constituting political scenes, despite the struggle/s that might follow. The methodological approach, too, draws from a Rancièrian concept of aesthetics that demands the researcher to disrupt her preconceived notions about the subject and thus constitute effects of equality with the informants by the presumption and practice of equality. This method required the adult researcher to consider her positionality and membership at the site, as well as to take seriously relational ethics toward researching with children.

However, rather than having answers set forth, my dissertation aims to invoke (re)considerations toward new and different approaches to the works and theories of education: to reconceptualize habitual theories and practices, hierarchical adult-child relationships, and assumptions of rules and roles in education; to think and do activities with children through different perspectives and pedagogical practices, seeing children as political and social agents, embrace relational ethics in research with children, and review implications about EP practices in relation to children's voice.

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CHAPTER 1 - HOW POSSIBLE ARE IMPOSSIBLE STUDENTS?

1.1 Introduction

We might just be coming upon one of those times in a field of study when the question of knowing if we, as educators, can think differently from how we've been thinking and perceive differently from how we've been seeing is necessary if we are to go on looking and thinking at all. (Ellsworth, 1997, p. 195)

Between one lesson and another, there is always a bustle of activity in the corridors, even on the most typical of school days. As I get closer to the computer lab, I realise that the Form 3 students (13- and 14-year-olds) are arguing over something. Apparently, during their optional lab time, this small group of students had started to bicker over the final touches of the final presentation of *Odysseus* (reading book) for Book Week. I get closer to understanding what is happening. It seems to me that one of the students, Tom, has run into a glitch with some of his video files. The IT teacher quickly assists him in fixing the problem but soon becomes aware that it is only the tip of the iceberg. Despite several weeks of lab time, Tom still struggles with completing the basic first step of importing files into his project. This means that he is still at the beginning of the significantly long process of finalising his project. Later, I get to know that, while the rest of his classmates lined up beside him to download their completed projects, he flatly admitted to his Learning Support Educator, "I don't care about the work, I don't care if I don't get a good mark, I don't care about whatever has to do with school."

My surprise at what he said later turned into a feeling of exasperation when during the final presentation of the student's projects, I saw that the short piece he managed to put together failed to mention what he had decided over the course of the class periods with his class teacher and Learning Support Educator. The meaningful story he had promised to talk about is not there in the least. What is projected on the screen instead is, on the main part, incomprehensible to his peers. They asked him to explain what the interview segments and photos meant. Having known Tom for some time, I feel the urge to explain that he is still in the process of completing his story, but I stop myself, realising that I should not. Despite being conceded an extension and offered help from a classmate, he never managed to tell his story, and never even got to write a script. A few days after the screening, Tom resubmits his work. His class teacher, Learning Support Educator, and I can only let out a sigh in unison.

We watch as the presentation again stammers to an abrupt end. It is obvious that he had not done any revisions to it. The IT teacher posts his final grade, together with instructions on how to improve it, and when the assistant head of school sees this, he firmly suggests that we should stop spoon-feeding the student and let him make the necessary changes on his own.

I shift uneasily in my seat, watching my mental draft of an email offering help to this student disappear into thin air. I keep it to myself, but there is an uneasy thought that I cannot seem to shake, one that has haunted my work with so many other failing students throughout the years: if Tom is not the student I thought he was, a student who tries hard when someone believes in him, then does that make me, the Educational Psychologist (EP), a failure for not having managed to reach Tom?

1.2 A Lost Story

Tom's story, unfortunately, is not isolated. One can see similar situations in tens of classrooms every day. A struggling student threatens to interrupt what otherwise might have been the achievement of a scene of good teaching (Davies, 2014). Being so unremarkably commonplace, one might think that this issue does not merit such a prominent spot at the very beginning of this dissertation, where I should have started with something more, say, 'significant'. Instead, I do this as a gesture toward the "significant insignificant" (Highmore, 2010, p.10). Looking at the significant insignificant (Highmore, 2010) means concentrating on these elements that could be described not as already-marked-as-significant (like scenes of obedient students), but instead to describe the rest: that which is generally not taken note of, that which is not noticed, that which has no importance; what happens when nothing happens other than the students achieving or behaving well. This shows my intent in this study: to subvert the established way of looking at the world (Houston, 1991) and to look where I ought not.

The core of this, to me, means paying attention to what St Pierre calls "lost stories" (St. Pierre, 1997, p.180). These are stories that crop up where they should not. Lost stories like Tom's, together with others of "failing" or "incompetent students" (as termed by the system), have had the tendency over the years to put me at risk, which I think I am as a professional. These stories drive educators away from their jobs, but this dissertation, as I try to explain, is

a pursuit of such stories. As I proceeded, it became ever so clear to me that most lost stories have the potential, in the words of Foucault, “to ‘tear’ me from myself, to prevent me from always being the same” (Foucault, 1991, p. 32). Taking this perspective is not a lack, but rather it is a political stance in which I choose to rub up against that which puzzles me, not just for the purpose of understanding it, but more to take up a position in which I am not so sure of myself and where I see this “not knowing” as the best chance for a different sort of doing (Lather, 2006, p. 43).

My interest is in how “lost stories” (St. Pierre, 1997, p. 180) can continually disrupt our field of vision by inserting discontinuity into what would otherwise be coherent scenes of schooling (Ellsworth, 1997) and can highlight our best chance to reflect on our ways of knowing and doing with students who we have found to be increasingly and problematically pigeon-holed into various categories of “failure” or “deficit”. In my years as an EP (another pigeon-holed category), I have been well-trained in the coherent scenes of good teaching, which I must be vigilant about documenting and helping to produce. My eyes know how to spot engaged children, constructivist activities, and open-ended questions. I know how to spot ongoing assessment, critical thinking, and the teacher voice that denote a certain sense of authority over the classroom. Due to my familiarity with detecting these coherent scenes of schooling (scenes that assure me that teachers have taught “it” and students have learned “it”), I know how to spot and work on the moments of discontinuity when control over the classroom has been lost, when students do not seem to be understanding and when the resources children bring to each lesson have been marked down.

This does not mean that being a psychologist has ever come easily to me. I still remember every vivid detail of my first observation in a kindergarten classroom. I walked in, pulled out my official observation form, looked around the classroom, and wondered how and what I would begin to write about. What I have noticed as the years have progressed is that even though I have learned to read the classroom differently, the job has, ironically, become more difficult. It appears to me that I am always looking in the “wrong” places, away from activities, where I am likely to find good teaching and more towards the edges and corners of classrooms, where scenes of discontinuity are sure to be found. It seems to me that I must pick amongst an infinite number of scenes between those that bring continuity and those that threaten to cause discontinuity. Which scenes do I make visible in my official observation forms? Do I focus on how excellent Anne is at the use of prompting during her guided

reading group? Or do I focus on the reader who struggles and has had the bathroom pass for over 10 minutes now? How about Martin, who has just finished his daily visit to the headmaster's office and has just stormed back into the classroom? I do feel the need to put down a note about the flying books in the back corner where independent reading should be happening.

Amidst my struggle over how to 'read the classroom' and what to make 'visible' in words in my role as an external observer of these situations, it has become routine for teachers to ask me as a psychologist to turn a blind eye to certain things. Before even having had the time to introduce myself or look for a spot where to put down my belongings, I am usually warned about the most problematic children who might soon show up on the pages of my official observation forms. I am there to observe one specific child as part of an assessment, but instead, it seems as though the teacher also feels the need to justify herself for her students' difficulties. I am immediately assured that *what's-his-name-who-sits-in-the-corner* will soon be serving his punishment, that *so-and-so* is about to be assessed for a diagnosis, and that the *one-who-never-gets-it* happens to be in the multi-sensory room. Such pre-emptive moves, most of the time, are accompanied by the actual rejection of the problematic students from the classroom, clearly giving out a not-so-subtle suggestion of what to "not see" and "not listen" and that such students are not to be "counted" in my evaluation of whether the teacher has been able to produce an environment of good teaching. These physical voice spoke words that carry meaning. With a word, the teacher interpellated (called forth a subject into being) to say, "They are... students/ good/bad/intelligent/ignorant". Similarly, when the student, through his actions or by using physical words, calls out to a teacher saying, "I am bored", the teacher who turns to respond can, at that moment, become a teacher who struggles to engage the student (Althusser L., 1971). These lines of connection between a student and a teacher are rhetorically drawn and interwoven between "good teaching" and "engaged students".

The feedback given by the educators about these students is bound up by a power discourse that controls and limits these voice through meanings, constructs and assigns roles and positions that are established and reinforced by practice, authority, and imposed policy in schools and classrooms. I am very interested in the way in which the forces at work within the educational space continually striate the complex relationship between the process of words and actions that liberate and emancipate and the process of words and actions that

subjectify and enslave and how, in the course of their striation, they develop other forces and emit new spaces (Deleuze & Guattari as cited in Stivale, 1998). In this research, the word ‘emancipation’ will not signify a move from a minority position (that most often these students in my research are assigned to) to a majority position or as the process of a political subject (a child who is heard and seen) becoming aware of itself by finding its voice. That is not the intention here. Emancipation will instead signify a rupture in the order of how things are usually seen through the process of equality—the very act of equality as an assumption between every speaking being (Biesta & Bingham, 2010). Emancipation will be something the children will do for themselves—they do not have to wait until someone explains and interprets their needs, but they come up with their own interpretations, expressions and actions. According to Bingham and Biesta (2010), this assumption of equality is a process of “subjectification” (p.33). It is a process about appearance (‘the coming into presence’), and it represents a supplement to the existing order because it adds something to this order (Biesta & Bingham, 2010). This will question what can be seen, heard, and said and what and who must become invisible, inaudible, and uncounted in the classroom. This is the question I explore in this dissertation with the aim of revamping the thinking and practising of equality in education.

The two research questions guiding my study are:

What is children’s voice, and how is it accessed?

What is the impact of children’s voice on EP practice?

1.3 Impossible Students and the Question of Equality

The discussion over what it is that can be seen, heard, and counted in classrooms tends to be continually lost by students whose behaviour, acting, and speaking are usually counted as “failures” (Youdell, 2006). The presence of students in these counts of failure embodies a pressing issue that equality faces in education nowadays. As Varenne and McDermott (1998) argue, schooling has provided us with all the tools, possibly the most apparent of which is the proliferating categories of deficit that are waiting to be assigned to children (Varenne &

McDermott, 1998) and the enduring school storylines (Holland, Lachicotte Jr., & Skinner, 1998) surrounding ability and conduct. These categories are used to look at children narrowly in terms of whether they can live up to the standards of what is considered “good/average students” (Campano, 2007). For effect, Youdell (2006) compiled a list to date of these ever-expanding classifications: “high ability, average ability, low ability, gifted, talented, special needs, learning difficulty (mild, moderate, severe), emotional and behavioural difficulties, emotional difficulties/behavioural disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autistic spectrum, disabled, impaired (sensory, physical, intellectual). Special. And so on” (p. 8).

My main job as an EP is varied, and yet, in Malta, it has been mainly constructed as that of assessing students according to a set group of criteria to see if they are eligible to have the support of a learning support educator in class. Thus, because of the gatekeeping environment in which I work, my job is reduced to translating children’s unique set of abilities into a group of criteria that fit into a category/label so that they can access services. The translation is the process of making the psychological discourse (like ‘standard scores’, ‘centiles’, and age equivalence’) accessible to everyone, especially to the people who decide the future of the child based on sameness and difference from the average child (Mercieca, Mercieca, & Bugeja, 2018). The act of translation subsumes the child (and often the family) into a major language everyone seems to understand, capture, and fix. After all, to be entitled to receive such support, a child must meet certain criteria under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Trohanis, 2008). Failing to meet these criteria means that they cannot be found eligible for specialised support at school (Trohanis, 2008).

This is indeed unfortunate as one fraction of the dilemma lies in the fact that a single label or word may not begin to describe a complex child completely, and not all children fall under one category/label or meet all the criteria in a category/label. Nevertheless, if I, as a psychologist, cannot fit them into one such category because they do not satisfy the criteria or because I refuse to give a label, then they would not qualify to receive support. This dilemma weighs on my personal and professional values because I always believed that children are in process, and they are taking in information about themselves each day. Labels are words that can leave “a mark”, “penetrate and leave scars”, and stick to children affecting transformations to their body and sense of self (incorporeal transformations) (Deleuze & Guattari as cited in Stivale, 1998, p. 198). I always fear that people around the child begin to

see them exclusively according to the label because labels live on and are difficult to remove. I constantly ask myself: Why is there a need to label a child's set of differences? Why can't a child receive supportive services based on their needs without having to give one all-inclusive name to their behaviours, symptoms, or differences?

In our day-to-day life, when we get things wrong, when we are not the finest cook, when we make a mistake in calculations, when we mix up words while singing a song, there is hardly a price to pay for our shortcomings. We might be laughed at, perhaps, and embarrassed for a moment, but we simply move on with life. At school, however, unlike everyday life, tasks are extremely organised and often have special constraints linked to them for the (sole) purpose of documenting who is doing better than whom (Varenne & McDermott, 1998). In other words, there is apparent institutional visibility in schools, which means that slip-ups, mistakes, and shortcomings will most often not only get noticed but also be named. Unfortunately, this comes with potentially significant consequences. These categories/labels have created a norm based on the 'typical' student (Jones, 2013) and schooling has become an extremely well-equipped site of classification that has made it its aim to check how far off children are from that "typical" student benchmark. The French philosopher Jacques Rancière (1991) has called this ordering and classificatory system in schooling a hierarchy of intelligence, or otherwise, a hierarchy of capacities (Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, 1991). This hierarchy divides the world into the knowing and the ignorant, the ripe and the immature, and the capable and the incapable (Biesta & Bingham, 2010). In practice, it sets up a regime of how to find out who understands academia and who fails at it.

The compelling story of 'Adam, Adam, Adam, and Adam' in the book *Successful Failure: The School America Builds*, written by Varenne and McDermott (1998), becomes significantly relevant for the purpose of this argument. The Adam, the family knows, is a 9-year-old boy who enjoys singing, playing basketball, and taking part in a successful partnership in his after-school cooking club. Adam also happens to struggle mightily in decoding text. In general, despite his struggles, Adam can use the resources surrounding him to get things done and be part of activities in ways that are recognised as competent across a variety of contexts. However, when it comes to school, and only when it comes to school, Varenne and McDermott (1998) stress Adam is seen as having a problem. At school, the four

Adams who sing, play basketball, cook, and find ways to accomplish difficult tasks are rendered invisible; it is almost exclusively *Adam-the-struggling-student* who is visible at school. The crucial point, then, is that the schooling system is not a neutral site that simply highlights what Adam cannot do; rather, it is precisely organised to make his disability apparent (McDermott, 1998). Thus, Adam's problem is not always visible, but the social order of a hierarchy of intelligence and capabilities is well organised to find out what he does not know (Varenne & McDermott, 1998). Tom Billington (2006) similarly displays a dichotomy between the professional voice, which describe the struggles of Donna, who lives with autism and is restricted by a primary consideration of impairments and deficits. The same Donna is also described through ideas about "assets" as a means of developing professional practice (Billington, 2006). Billington (2006) questions which narrative schools would choose to go by, arguing that the dominant story is usually the one in which professionals describe the person's characteristics and struggles.

The two characters above, Donna and Adam, are closely related to the *social model of disability*, coined by Mike Oliver in 1983 (Best, 2005). This model does not deny the reality of impairment nor its impact on the individual; however, it acknowledges the impact of an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication, and social barriers, which often exacerbates the difficulty. The hierarchy of intelligence and capabilities does not stop at giving us categories which turn students into "bad students" or "undesirable learners"; more significantly, it presents some students, like Donna and even potentially Adam, as "unintelligible" (Youdell, 2006). It is this social organisation's system that ensures that students' achievements outside of academia are rendered invisible and that their voice become inaudible (Dejours & Deranty, 2010, p. 6). In certain scenes of schooling, there are students that go over and above the category of bad learner/bad student (Youdell, 2006). They are so far outside the bounds of what is considered acceptable that they cannot even be accounted for on the good/bad student binary. Instead of being learners or students, they simply become *impossible* (Davies, 2014, p. 34). The rendering of students as "unintelligible" is not a particularly exceptional occurrence anymore; in fact, it is increasingly becoming routine.

The following situations are three encounters that happened with students deemed to be *impossible* (Davies, 2009, p.34) before the data collection began and that were pivotal

inspirations for the research process. These three encounters were observed in my role as an EP during school visits.

Impossible Student 1

I am about to talk to a boy in a primary school who I assume has broken the rules because he is sitting out in the corridor. “Do not talk to him,” a teacher tells me as I get closer. Later, when I pass by after a meeting with the school management, the boy is still sitting in the same corner, this time sobbing. Even though I feel uncomfortable, I follow the other teachers who have become accustomed to seeing him out in the corridor and walk right by him, his crying becoming inaudible.

Impossible Student 2

I walk towards the lockers at the far back of a primary school classroom. Matt’s desk is right there in the corner, too, away from all the other children’s seats. I have been told that he is always in trouble, but when I ask him if there is a good place where I might leave my coat and bag for the next hour, he seems polite enough to me. At break time, he asks if he is allowed to go out and play with the other children, as the teacher requires him to ask every day. I am surprised to realise that his tone is not resentful or shy, but rather, it is curious. He truly wonders if he has been good enough to deserve it. Later, Matt’s teacher eagerly proclaims to the students that they will be doing their first creative writing assignment of the year. The nature of the assignment intrigues me. The students are to write letters to a character of their choice from a story in their reader. “Dear Thor,” Tom writes, “will you come to school instead of me?” Taken by surprise at his humour, I giggle when I read it. Tom is well known to avoid his schoolwork; one day, it is because he lost his pencils, and another time, it is because he cannot find his papers. Often, however, he accompanies these words with “I know I am stupid.”

His eyes shine for a short moment at my reaction to what he wrote. I quickly tell him that I think that what he wrote is funny. “Do you think a teacher would rather read funny writing or boring writing?” I ask him with a smile. His smile of a few moments before turns into a thoughtful glare. When I get back to his desk a few minutes later, I am taken aback when I

notice he has started a new letter after erasing all the old ones. When I ask him why he tells me matter-of-factly that his teacher would be angry at him because she would think that he is trying to be funny on purpose, I think this is sad and wonder what else Tom has erased and will still erase this year.

Impossible Student 3

Everyone knew Owen. And everyone had something negative to say about him, and this shaped his life. To me, Owen was an impossible student. He was continuously escaping from school, and in most cases, he was involved in bad behaviours. Whenever a case would rise, you could usually expect to hear Owen's name.

As I arrived in class, the teacher instructed her class to take out their reading books and begin writing definitions of keywords for the story on pages 25-33. The class begins organizing the classwork except for Owen, who sits sulking at his desk. The teacher approaches Owen, and the following exchange occurs:

Teacher: "Owen, I told the class to get ready for the classwork, but you aren't. Is there something wrong?" (Owen ignores the teacher's question and avoids eye contact with her.)

Teacher: "Owen, I asked you a question. Now, what's your problem?"

Owen: "There is no problem, except you! I don't want to do this dumb work. Leave me alone."

Teacher (now angry): "If you are going to be in my class, you will have to do your work like everyone else. Also, when I speak to you, I expect an answer. I don't like your attitude, and I will not tolerate it in my classroom. You better watch yourself, or you'll be sent to the Headmaster's office." (This is not the first exchange of this type between the teacher and Owen. Both seem to carry residual anger from these prior episodes.)

Owen (laughs sarcastically): "Leave me alone! I don't care about you or this stupid class. Go ahead and write my name or send me wherever...as if I care!"

The teacher tells Owen to leave the room and report to the headmaster. Owen becomes angrier, calls the teacher an obscene name, and pounds the wall as he strides out of the room. He continues to curse loudly as he walks in the corridor. The teacher writes up the incident as

insubordination and submits her report. That same week, Owen is referred to me for an assessment of ADHD.

1.4 A Framework of ‘Voice’

These students introduce the threats of discontinuity and loss of coherence and control (Ellsworth, 1997) into scenes of schooling and shift the question of how to achieve good teaching to a very different question. It becomes a question of what can be seen, heard, and said and what and who must become invisible, inaudible, and uncounted in the classroom. This in itself becomes a question of power over who can speak and who cannot speak.

Michel Foucault’s (1984) work focused on the way that power operates in modern societies to control people’s bodies (Cousins & Hussain, 1984). According to Foucault (1984), control starts to be internalised and exercised through surveillance rather than force (Gergen & McName, 2000). Institutions such as schools produce obedient students who comply with social norms, not under threat of punishment, but as a result of their behaviour being constantly sculpted to ensure they fully internalise the dominant beliefs and values. In Foucault’s (1984) view, new “disciplinary” sciences (for instance, criminology, psychiatry, and education) aim to make all “deviance” visible and thus correctable in a way that was impossible in the previous social order. Every exercise of power depends on a scaffold of knowledge that supports it and claims it to be evidence-based. This often legitimises the mistreatment of some groups in the name of ‘helping’ them (Strawson, 2008).

Although these mechanisms seem to be liberating (emancipatory) at first glance, in practice, this often translates to a means of keeping control. This is because the rights and duties of citizens at any moment are based upon the majoritarian “fact” of the society concerned (in this case of the student deemed “average”). Democracy has always relied upon the principle of majority rule, but the prior question “majority of whom?” is usually settled in advance—and not by democratic means. “Majority” here does not refer to the quantitative majority of those counted but to the qualitative majority of those among the population at large who are considered fit to be counted. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) point out that, despite its effectivity, the majoritarian “fact” is a kind of fiction that represents no one. It is the public figure of the majority in a qualitative sense that must be contrasted with the “becoming-

minoritarian of everybody” (Deleuze & Guattari as cited in Stivale, 1998, p. 106) understood as the creative potential of individuals or groups to deviate from the standard. Power, for instance, can produce disciplines, such as Educational Psychology which, in turn, can create a specific type of knowledge, such as establishing the expected intellectual levels of children’s IQ, thus defining who is “ignorant” and who is “average” and justifying certain forms of control (assessments, diagnosis, recommendations, monitoring), through the stimulation of an ideal (Foucault, as cited in Ball, 2013, p. 65).

In recent years, there has been a “shift in ideology and practice of the helping professions towards a partnership model which values the perspective of those deemed to be silenced throughout history—children (e.g., *Every Child Matters*, DfES, 2003)” (Avdi, Griffin, & Brough, 2000, p. 244). The energy for such change was generated initially, perhaps by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC1989), where there was a historic commitment towards listening to the world’s children. Yet the way in which this voice was to be translated was always under the close surveillance of the technicians of each discipline, such as teachers, social workers, psychologists, etc. (Clifford, 2018). The relationship between the United Nations and its members can also be seen as one of power where member states (on a surface level) always seem to have a choice between accepting or rejecting the United Nations resolution. However, acceptance does not necessarily mean agreement. So, despite the UNCRC’s almost universal endorsement, it can be argued that it is “the result of a prior or permanent consent, but it is not by nature the manifestation of a consensus” (Foucault, 1980, p. 220). Consequently, the UNCRC does not contest but reinforces power relations (i.e. of adults over children as a means of surveillance).

However, where there is power, there are also always sites of resistance or spaces that hold out the promise for a reconfiguring of power relations in a way that might redress oppressive institutions and practices and try to make visible forms of existence that are otherwise rendered insensitive (Rancière, 1995)—just like the three impossible students mentioned earlier who are so far outside the bounds of what is considered acceptable and who introduced the threats of discontinuity and loss of coherence and control (Ellsworth, 1997).

1.5 Introducing Equality

What remains is the extraordinary exception, the power of the people, which is not the power of the population or of the majority, but the power of anyone at all, the equality of capabilities to occupy the positions of government and of the governed (Rancière, 2006).

How can we disrupt the hierarchy of intelligence and capabilities that has made it the norm to deem so many of our students as incompetent and even impossible? I borrow from Rancière (1995) the term “equality” to question the concept of the hierarchy of intelligence in schooling (Rancière, as cited in May 2008). Equality, like social justice and democracy, is a term that many educators find easy to like, especially because its meaning seems positive and acceptable, but it also is a pure event of which there are many historical expressions, none of which exhaust the concept and thus remains a concept largely unexamined in practice (Johnson & Edelsky, 2004). The equality that Rancière proposes might be a little harder to embrace because it does not refer to sameness, equal opportunity, or racial equality (Crockett, 2011). Its aim is not inclusion, fairness, or just distribution of resources. It is not a question of how those who are “already included might reach out to those who are not and bring them into the existing order” (Pelletier & Sharp, 2009, p. 267). Instead, what Rancière offers us is a much more antagonistic account of democracy, where those who seek to interrupt any given social order by making a claim of equality do not want to be included in the existing order. Instead, they want to redefine the order with new identities so that new ways of doing become possible and countable.

To wed “impossible students” with “equality”, as understood by Rancière, then, is not a question of how they might be included or how they might come to count within the current order as “good students” who follow the rules set by the majority. Instead, the question becomes one of focus where our vision shifts to those moments where equality enters and intrudes the scene of schooling through these students (Ruitenberg, 2008) not only from an outside that is known but from anywhere (Rancière, 2009). This interruption that these students cause is therefore considering visibility in its transformative sense by interpellating educators to listen and see, which allows us then to (re)consider, above all else, who can think and speak from their own intelligence, who is really a speaking being, and who is indeed unspeakable.

1.6 Conclusion

The task of modern schooling may take many forms, such as that of transmitting academic knowledge, social skills and moral values to children and youth. In other instances, education might be seen as a mechanism for economic growth and reducing social inequality. Many countries have made it their top priority to create educational policies to facilitate an environment for learning in which social inequalities are reduced and where principles of social inclusion become important elements of the model of a unified school. Ordinary pedagogy starts—as we could see in the previous sentences—always starts with the axiom that inequality exists (teaching those who do not know or including those who are not included), and thus purports to create knowledge and pedagogical surroundings in order to reduce the gap of that inequality (Rancière, 2015). The point of departure here promises children equality that is yet to come sometime in the future (Rancière, as cited in Deranty, 2010). However, the term ‘equality’ that Rancière (1995) focuses on is the kind of equality that cannot be postponed until an ideal future time (Rancière, 1995). Instead, it is a disruptive force that needs to intervene by repeatedly interrupting our field of vision. And even if this dissertation is not about Rancière’s philosophy per se, his work greatly influences this dissertation and its theoretical framework.

1.7 Locating Dissertation within the Tradition of Critical Psychology

Given the growing uneasiness about the quality of the “evidence-based” practice upon which (politicized) judgments are being justified, the field of critical psychology might help me (as an EP embarking on this research journey) to explore new ways in which education and other authorities not only control (stating for e.g.: which students are *possible* or *impossible*) but also effectively exclude some groups from full participation (which students need to be placed in other places).

The field of psychology has traditionally been founded on a concept of human beings who are intrinsically flawed, inadequate, or deficient and focused on a child who will require help at some point. This topic has swiftly become well-known in the context of the various

psychological discourses of the child being evaluated and investigated in accordance with practices that, eventually, require the improvement of the child in response to a restricted perception of their deficiency. The potentially crippling nature of many contemporary theoretical choices and practices in childcare and educational settings is reaffirmed by Burman's (2008) use of deconstruction as a tool for analyzing development narratives.

Gergen (1992) states that we, as EPs, need to look for opportunities to construct practices that may empower children and young people, not as isolated individuals disconnected from the social world, but as social living beings, and that we look for times when we can work as allies with them, their families, and the educational professionals that seek to support them. In stark contrast to the intellectually narrow agenda of educational psychology, which held that the main outlines of our human nature are now approximately known, this renaissance of enthusiasm for the potential in our discipline as EPs is a welcomed change (Burt, in Hearnshaw 1979, p. 49).

I hope that with this research, I will be able to join forces with other EPs around the world, including Newman and Holzman (1993), Bird (1999), Neilsen and Kvale (1999), Billington and Sloan (2000), Gallagher (2003), Kincheloe (2006), Corcoran (2007), Goodman (2010), Goodley (2011), Mercieca (2011), Martin and McLellan (2013), Vassallo (2013), and Williams (2014), who are developing a more critical approach to psychological research and practice (2014).

It is my hope to re-engage with the promising possibilities for educational to build a platform for imagining and enacting novel forms of social activity, re-imagining the discipline's scientific legitimacy, and articulating an ethical response to the increasingly international nature of the psychologization process. This dissertation hopes to serve as a timely reminder to the field of educational psychology to reflect critically on the ways in which it labels, valorizes, pathologizes, or otherwise shapes human beings and to offer a criticality that includes naming the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions that permeate the field. I also hope to shed light on the human subjects that are constituted and limited by these discursive knowledges and to support mechanisms that help children and young people successfully resist and move beyond any such oppressions so as to challenge the pathologizing culture of human difference.

1.8 Organization of Dissertation

This chapter narrated the stories of impossible students whose academic level or behaviour did not make sense in the view of their educators (including me). I offered these stories not as a launching point into a problem I am poised to solve, not as potential data, and not to introduce a research framework which sees the other “as the problem for which I am the solution” (Lather, 2010, p.73). Instead, I wrote of these students because I began this study in confusion. I began...lost. In choosing to pursue lost stories (those stories that bring discontinuity into our work as educators), I am proposing a conceptual study that is very different from the knowledge project I initially sought, one which I lusted after (Pitt & Britzman, 2003, p. 766) to allow me to secure claims through data and bring me some semblance of closure about how to be a good educator and EP. Instead, in this research, I intend to focus on what interrupts the normative, in particular those categories such as good teaching, good students, and teaching for social justice, in order to find out what becomes visible, sayable, and audible when educators and students are positioned and perceived as political subjects. The term “political subjects” means that they will be exercising the very capacities they supposedly lack by enacting the rights they are not entitled to claim (Rancière, 1995). This interrupting force is brought about by equality, as I suggest in the chapters that follow.

In Chapter 2, I want to begin an intellectual adventure centering on the search for equality in schools with several theorists, especially focusing on the French philosopher Jacques Rancière whose ideas on politics are becoming more widely known, although they have yet to be taken up by many in education.

Chapter 3 examines the literature about engaging with children’s voice.

Chapter 4 explores the methodology adopted in the study. It considers the philosophical nature of its qualitative approach and how this impacted the study’s overall design. It outlines the method of selection of the schools, children, and educators. The research methods of observations, semi-structured individual and group interviews, and the use of participatory tools are also explored. Consideration of any ethical issues that arose within the research is also provided. Finally, an account of the process by which the data was analysed is presented, leading to an explanation of how the overarching themes of children’s moments of equality (political moments) were generated.

In Chapter 5, I look at various pedagogical events which might be sites for the practice of equality. This work of reconceptualizing equality and democracy in education then sets up Chapter 6, in which I present encounters with adults whereby a discussion around equality happens. These two chapters necessarily create a sense of order in the multiplicities of my engagements with students, teachers, other staff members and various theorists by laying down the dimensions that clarify my analysis of what voice can do and bring these dimensions into relation.

Chapter 7 then tries to wed these two scenarios premised on a logic of equality as I seek to expand, argue with, and rewrite what it means to practice equality in schools from the lens of an EP.

Chapter 8 presents the contribution and originality of the research study to the Educational psychology field and discusses reflections on the research process and implications for education and practice. This part of the research also provides opportunities for practitioners to reflect on alternative ways of listening and responding to children's voice.

1.9 How the Chapters tie Together

The first part of the dissertation provides an overview of the theoretical tools being proposed as the grounding principles to a critical psychological practice. Apart from the work of Jacques Rancière, that will be sewn throughout the dissertation, there are other mentioned theoretical presentations that vary widely but share the same quality of being reflexive cornerstones around which to construct a body of work in the field of voice in psychology. These theories imagine the people with whom EPs work as thinking and speaking subjects with agency, and so offer the possibility of appreciating a complex subjectivity, providing a foundation for a potentially liberatory practice. The theories mentioned in this dissertation are not exhaustive (there are other theories and the ones mentioned, do not automatically offer emancipatory possibilities to those they seek to help) of the field of voice. While I acknowledge the limitations of the theories presented, I will argue that they can be used to provide a more nuanced subjectivity than is typically

presented. I will also write about the way in which educational institutions and discourse shapes the environments in which we as EPs find ourselves. I will question how education, psychology and schooling define and, in turn, limit (possibly) human freedom.

The second part of the dissertation will provide real-world applications of voice with the presentation of five different stories by exploring a different angle on the ways in which listening informs EPs professional work. The concept of expertise in practice is then examined in later chapters with a demand for a recognition of the various and different forms of skills, values or competencies that are required for psychologists and educators to build empowering working alliances whilst willing and able to critique the ideological function of psychological knowledge in any given situation.

CHAPTER 2 - A NEW INSIGHT INTO EQUALITY AND DEMOCRACY THROUGH JACQUES RANCIÈRE

2.0 Chapter Overview

This research focuses on how educators might work under the presupposition of equality by interrupting existing orders of schooling that have made it increasingly and problematically normative to see so many of our students as incompetent (Youdell, 2006) and perhaps even “impossible” (Davies, 2014). In this chapter, I draw on the work of French philosopher Jacques Rancière to set myself up in the educational field to explore issues of equality and democracy in classrooms with the goal of declassification, that is, to trouble our definitions of teaching-as-usual (Davies, 2014) and open questions of what it might look like for educators to practise equality and democracy in our classrooms. I want to find out what becomes visible, sayable, and audible when we position educators and students as political subjects who exercise the very capacities they supposedly lack and by enacting the rights they are not entitled to claim (as termed by the system).

The two research questions guiding this study are: (i) What is children’s voice, and how is it accessed? and (ii) What is the impact of children’s voice on EP practice?

2.1 Introduction: A Confession

I begin the challenging work of contending with Rancière’s rather difficult theories of equality, democracy, and politics to attempt to disrupt teaching-as-usual and the hierarchy of intelligence. In doing so, I will be demonstrating how useful this new understanding of the practice of equality could be in muddling the education’s fields of vision and expanding our interpretive strategies around “incompetent” and “impossible” students. This practice might disrupt how we (usually) perceive, talk about and engage with such students. Throughout this chapter, I also track my own journey through Rancière’s studies to carry out the important work of figuring out in a complete way what democracy and equality in schools might look, sound and feel like (Johnson & Edelsky, 2004; Greene, 1995). I find myself needing to demystify any sort of expertise that I might seem to claim throughout this dissertation by briefly sharing my story of getting to know Rancière. The journey I speak of in this chapter (that of imagining more fully the practice of equality) all started around the year 2014 when I was introduced to Rancière’s writings by one of my supervisors.

At the time, I was sure that my dissertation would focus on those students who seemed to be rendered invisible in scenes of schooling due to their “incompetence”, but I thought that this work would be political. At the time, politics for me meant promoting new possibilities and innovative pedagogical approaches that could potentially somewhat relieve schools from the oppressive spaces they had become for students at risk of being labelled into one category or another, leading them to be seen as failures. I had no idea then that my thinking of what constitutes the political world itself also became a source of inquiry. Rancière’s cautious approach to claims of equality offers tools for nuanced analyses of student voice work. I am an EP reading Rancière with limited training in philosophy, and at times connections were often difficult to make. However, my intent is that, through his readings, I experiment with the utility of his concepts for “local situations” (Lawlor & Wiame, 2016, p. 2). I appropriate his concepts in working with present educational perturbations. I argue that Rancière’s concepts, in combination with concepts created alongside students and educators, are potentially new ways of thinking and working with the voice in schools and research.

At first, I read accessible introductions to Rancière’s thinking. This intrigued me to get my hands on more of his writings so that I could learn more about his notion of equality. As St. Pierre (2011) suggests, how we read, where we read and in what order we read considerably influence our theoretical journeys (St. Pierre, 2011). Undoubtedly, it mattered to me that the very first text I read of Rancière was one that focused on equality. It mattered that I read this book while I was neck-deep in the all-consuming work of research, mirroring my experiences as an EP and, at the same time, that of a research apprentice, continually raising questions about the students’ and my own competency, visibility, categorisation, and equality. It mattered that the following book I read was *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1987), as this book perhaps showcases Rancière’s theories on equality better than any other. It mattered that in the following years, even more work continued to surface on Rancière’s ideas, including those connected to the field of education.

In the following sections, I seek to provide an introduction to Rancière’s thoughts on equality and explain why these thoughts could possibly be important for education, especially in disrupting hierarchies of intelligence and capabilities that have made so many students seem “incompetent”. It is important to note that I write not to achieve the satisfaction of the one who knows but to set in motion and clarify my intellectual adventure and, together with you

(the reader), looks into the possible meanings of equality, targeting a tentative redefinition of politics as we get to the final pages.

2.2 Democracy as the Practice of Equality

Rancière reserves the term “le politique” for those disruptive practices when an individual demonstrates one’s equality against all odds (Rancière, 1999, p. 29). Within his framework, politics becomes interchangeable with democracy, which is not to be understood as an electoral regime, constitutional framework, or ethos. Instead, from Rancière’s perspective, democracy revolves around the practices of interrupting and challenging the hierarchically organized social orders (which Rancière, 1999, p. 29 calls “la politique) by acting upon “the presupposition of the equality of anyone and everyone” (May, 2009). What results from this framework is a distinctive understanding of the subjects who wage political struggles for equality. In contrast to conventional approaches that focus on mobilization around a collective identity, common interest, or shared consciousness, Rancière does not take “students” or “children” as terms referring to already existing collectivities. Instead, he proposes to rethink and about them as contentious names taken up by “fluctuating” and “always provisional” (Rancière, Panagia, & Bowlby, 2001) subjects which emerge out of the political practices that question the existing distribution of roles and places in a political community. Accordingly, Rancière uses the term “political subjectivation” to emphasize that subjects do not exist prior to such practices but instead result from them (Rancière, Panagia, & Bowlby, 2001).

To do this, I intend to explore some of Rancière’s key ideas regarding equality, which I outline as follows:

- Equality is an opinion whose verification we pursue (Rancière, as cited in Biesta, 2010)
- Equality is a presupposition, where it comes at the start of the pedagogical and political process rather than at its end (Rancière, as cited in Biesta, 2010)
- Equality is an action that disrupts the social order (Rancière, as cited in Biesta, 2010)

- Equality is a logic that creates a scene of dissensus, where it must intervene at the level of the regime of the visible, and raises new questions about what can be seen, heard, and said in each social order (Rancière, as cited in Biesta, 2010)

Following a reflection on these ideas, I aim to use these ideas to begin the formulation of questions for myself and others about what engaging with students as premised on relations of equality might signify. My goal is to frame this discussion about democracy and equality in education as an effort to speak with Rancière under the sign of equality. This process, in Rancière's sense, is a matter of translating and counter-translating, writing and re-writing, the process of turning someone else's intellectual adventures into your own. In this chapter, I pursue a translation of Rancière's notion of equality to make his words my own words and to begin to imagine a fuller picture of what it might be like to practise equality in schools and turn his story of equality into my own story (Rancière, 2009). Only then can I begin to (possibly) understand.

2.3 Equality or Inequality?

Society, at times, frames human predicaments in a political, intrapsychic, and deficit-oriented way (Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009). Predictably, this results in solutions that are remedial in nature and individually focused-rather than system-focused. Forced by the pressure of certain bodies that profess guidelines that need to be met for children to receive help, EPs, as we have seen in Chapter 1, readily conceptualise problems as related to the individual (or the family) and then propose individualised (or systemic/family) solutions. As EPs, we persist in defining problems intrapsychically and individually; thus, social injustice is perpetuated due to efforts to change individuals and not the social context (Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009)

Rancière (1991) states that even schools who think that they are practising equality by reducing the gap between the "average student" and the "impossible student" (Davies, 2014), very often, the act of teaching takes inequality as its starting point (Rancière, 1991). This is especially seen via a banking model of education in which teachers deposit knowledge onto students, who in turn are reduced to mere recipients of teachers' knowledge (Freire, 1970; Holt, 1982). Working under this assumption means that students always need adults'

explications in order to learn. Thus schools perpetuate a system that continually reinforces domination (teacher over student) (Ballenger, 2009).

2.4 Lessons in Inequality

Writing in the 1980s in France, at a time when Pierre Bourdieu's work was having an increasing influence over educational policy, Rancière calls into question a progressive approach to education that is premised on what he characterises scornfully as an "equality-to-come" (Bingham & Biesta, 2010, p. 10) because, according to him, Bourdieu was supplying the means to "distribute the sensible" (a system where forms of participation are established by modes of perception over what is visible or invisible) are established in a hierarchical manner by accepting the immutability of hierarchical class divisions in society. Equality, in this sense, then becomes the result at the end of the pedagogical and political process, achieved by gradually reducing inequality between those who can and cannot participate in the polis (city) (Rancière, 2006). This pedagogical logic is supported by two fundamental axioms:

- One must begin with inequality so as to reduce it; and
- Inequality must be reduced by conforming to it by making it an object of knowledge (Rancière, 2006, p. 4).

Thus, to reduce inequality, we must first understand how inequality works. From this perspective, emancipation becomes (at least in part) a matter of gaining liberatory knowledge (Hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom.*, 1994) or knowledge about inequality. Rancière suggests however that in the instance that we take inequality as the point of departure and work under its presupposition, we are doomed to endlessly verify inequality (Rancière, 2015, p. 11). The word "doomed" here signifies a sense of a predestined argument, implying that those who begin from inequality always teach a lesson in inequality as they continuously prove inequality, and by proving it, they constantly rediscover it (Masschelein & Simons, 2013). The fact that schools seek to equalise and reduce the gap between students who can and cannot achieve validates the inequality that Rancière tries to steer away from, by using agents like EPs to work on this issue.

As EPs, we are expected to help (to fix) children with behavioural, emotional, and/or academic problems; determine the source of their problem; and develop a plan of action to address the problem (of how close or far off they are from the “average” student). This rather reactive and traditional approach to the practice of educational psychology has been criticised multiple times, but much to its credit, the field responded to criticism with a turn to preventative models of practice. The practice of educational psychology has contributed both historically and currently to the educational inequities experienced by many students and communities. Rather than identifying the systems, policies, and practices that are sources of inequities within educational systems, school psychology may have supported even more the status quo and colluded with oppression. The result of this, Rancière writes scathingly, is that progressive scholars have offered us a never-ending explanation of the reasons why inequality must lead to equality and yet never leads there (Rancière, 2010, p. 12).

Thus, when Rancière takes issue with Bourdieu’s sociological analysis of education, it is not because it is descriptively incorrect (Rancière readily concedes that inequality exists) but because it is a kind of theory which depresses rather than inspires change for the better (Davies, 2014). Moreover, it is also a type of theory, Rancière argues, that, like traditional educational thought, bases itself on intellectual hierarchies by setting up intellectuals who have knowledge of inequality to claim to know the ‘ignorance’ of others or know the real reasons why people are oppressed but of which they themselves are usually ignorant (Davies, 2014; Masschelein & Simons, 2013). When the aim of education is conceived as that of emancipating students from oppressive practices and structures in the name of social justice, the task of the educator often becomes that of explaining the workings of power or of setting up some pedagogical situation in which students would be able to see and understand how power operates so that they can begin to address it and perhaps even, at least on some level, work to make it recirculate (Biesta & Bingham, 2010). Whichever the case, the emancipated becomes dependent on the intervention of the emancipator (Biesta, 2010). This approach to progress is based on what Rancière (2006) describes as a “pedagogical fiction”, which suggests that the educator is always ahead of those who need the education to be liberated (Rancière, 2006, p. 44).

However, when emancipation and equality are related to the knowledge of inequality, a fundamental dependency is introduced into the logic of emancipation, where the teacher

typically knows while the students do not yet know (Biesta & Bingham, 2010). This, Rancière concludes, is, therefore, no other than another lesson in inequality itself (Rancière, 2006). Similarly, the educational psychology field replicates this subordination. In trying to be sensitive to injustices and human suffering, professionals tend to work within the system by translating students' needs into quantitative data gathered from IQ tests, literacy assessments, etc. (Zeichner, 2009). The child and the family always need the professional to describe the child's needs, and the professional needs to abide by certain standards to grant their client those needs (Pitt & Britzman, 2003).

Professionals rarely challenge those systems that maintain inequalities. Thus, Rancière's major disagreement with progressive education is not with its methods or its findings but with its presuppositions. The ingenuity of Rancière's work is that he is able to show that what is done under and in the name of equality, democracy, and emancipation often results in the opposite; it REproduces inequality and keeps people in the same exact place(s) (p. 45) (Biesta, 2010). It shows exactly how close or far off from the "average" student the child is and produces a set of guidelines to be followed so that the child can catch up with the rest of the group. More often than not, that gap is reduced with the allocation of a Learning Support Educator who helps the child keep up to par with the rest of the group who is "average". Although it is important to somewhat contextualise Rancière's work by placing it against those approaches that choose inequality as their starting point, I must point out that Rancière believes that significant, important work happens in the name of reducing inequality (Biesta, 2010). His underlying aim is not to dismiss this work but to simply not call it "politics", as he does not believe it has anything to do with equality.

For Rancière, politics is not parliament coming together to pass a law, an election where we choose new leaders or a judgment of a court. Politics for Rancière becomes this very distinct and uncommon activity through the revelations of a miscount or a category of people that was not to be seen or counted, and there emerges a full subject: as an equal political being. Throughout this dissertation, the discount will be for all those children deemed to be "impossible students".

2.5 Making Equality the “Opinion Whose Verification We Pursue.”

As a response to Bourdieu’s work (mentioned earlier on), Rancière wrote *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1987) to offer an alternative vision of education in which equality becomes the opinion whose verification we pursue. The main character of this book, the French revolutionary Joseph Jacotot (1770–1840), accompanies Rancière throughout most of his subsequent scholarship and perhaps represents Rancière’s key encounter in terms of formulating his notion of egalitarianism. Jacotot’s central insight is quite radical: instead of hoping for equality as the result of the pedagogical and political process, he makes intellectual equality a given and uses it as his starting point. The “madness” (or genius?) of his pedagogy relies on this provocative thesis: all intelligence is equal. Rancière does not mean that we will achieve the same marks on a test or we have the same IQ scores (if IQ can ever be a marker of intelligence), but that we share a basic ability to learn.

Rancière writes about Josef Jacotot, who, in the early 19th century, was an exiled French professor invited to teach French at the University of Louvain in the Netherlands to a group of Flemish students. Being that Jacotot did not speak his students’ language, he encountered a somewhat precarious teaching situation (Rancière, 1991). There was no language that would allow Jacotot to explain anything to his students (Biesta, 2010). Sharing only a dual-language copy of a single text with his students, through the aid of an interpreter, he asked them to:

- Read the bilingual book edition of Fénelon’s novel *Télémaque* by using the translation (from French to Flemish)
- Repeat what they had learned several times
- Quickly read the other half
- Write their opinions about the book in French.

By holding the authoritative role as a commander demanding that they reread and repeat over and over again what they had learned, Jacotot realised later that they were able to complete the task at a very high level (Citton, 2010). Jacotot understood that it was possible to teach without explanation, and, based on this, he developed an approach called “universal teaching” (Rancière, 1989) that proclaims that “an individual can do anything he wants”

(Rancière 1989, p. 65), since man is a well served by an intelligence. Rancière's exploration of the case of Jacotot is interesting for two reasons, which are both connected to the discussion of Paulo Freire (1968) that was mentioned earlier on in this chapter (the 'banking' concept of education). One has to do with the fact that Jacotot and his students did not share a language, so there was no possibility for Jacotot to deposit any content in the minds of the students. There was, in other words, no possibility for 'banking education' (Freire, 1968). Yet, while in this regard, that is, in terms of the transmission of knowledge, Jacotot could not teach his students anything, Rancière insists that this does not mean that Jacotot's students learned without a schoolmaster. This means that Jacotot did teach and act as a schoolmaster.

Rancière contends that in educational settings, explanation offers itself "as a means to reduce the situation of inequality where those who know nothing are in relation with those who know" (Rancière, 2010, p. 3). When teachers explain something to their students, they do so with the intention of giving their students the knowledge and understanding they do not yet have. In this sense, it seems reasonable to think of an explanation as the way to overcome the inequality between the teacher who knows and the student who does not yet know. Rancière argues, however, that whereas this may be true when we look at the content being transmitted from the teacher to the student, the way in which the "act" of explanation is itself performed communicates something different, namely that explanation is indispensable for learning and understanding; that students are thought of as being unable to understand without explanation. This is the point Rancière makes when he suggests that "to explain something to someone is, first of all, to show him that he cannot understand it by himself" (Rancière, 1991, p. 6). The explanation then turns education into what Rancière refers to as a process of stultification: a process that keeps students "in their place", that literally keeps them voiceless, rather than serving as a process of emancipation.

The act of explanation constitutes the student as the one who is unable to learn without explanation, without the intervention of a "master-explicator" (Rancière, 1991, p. 12). This leads Rancière to the conclusion that the student is actually the product of the "explicative order" (Rancière, 1991, p. 4), not its condition. The explicative order is founded upon what Rancière calls the "myth of pedagogy", which is "the parable of a world divided into knowing minds and ignorant ones, the capable and the incapable, the intelligent and the stupid" (Rancière, 1991, p. 6). The explicator's "special trick" here consists of a "double

inaugural gesture” (Rancière, 1991, p. 6). On the one hand, he decrees the absolute beginning: it is only now that the act of learning will begin. On the other, “having thrown a veil of ignorance over everything that is to be learned, he appoints himself to the task of lifting it” (Rancière, 1991, as cited in Peters & Tesar, 2015, p. 149). The intention behind this approach to teaching is generally a laudable one, as the teacher aims “to transmit his knowledge to the students so as to bring them, by degrees, to their own level of expertise” (Rancière, 1991, p. 3).

The “art” of the schoolmaster, “who methodically lifts the veil from that which the student could not understand alone, is the art that promises the student will one day be the equal of the schoolmaster” ((Rancière, 1991, as cited in Biesta & Bingham, 2010, p. 5). But will this promise ever be delivered? Is it ever possible to escape from the circle of explanation? Or is it the case that as soon as one starts out on a trajectory of explanation, one will be there forever, always trying to catch up, always trying to understand what the explicator already understands, but always in need of the explicator’s explanation to understand? Viewed in this way, the explanation is actually “something completely different from a practical means of reaching some end” and rather appears to be an end in itself. The explanation is “the infinite verification of a fundamental axiom: the axiom of inequality” (Biesta & Bingham, 2010, p. 3). Contrary to the pedagogical order, emancipation, according to Rancière, means: “the consciousness of what an intelligence can do when it considers itself equal to any other and considers any other equal to itself” (Biesta & Bingham, 2010, p. 39)

Fundamentally, Jacotot’s insight resulted in a radical reformation of pedagogical methods that had the following basic premise: is it possible to teach what you do not know yourself? (Citton, 2010). The role of Jacotot was definitely very important; however, rather than transmitting the content or giving his knowledge to the ignorant, his role evolved into that of challenging students’ wills through relentless questioning: what do you see? What do you think about it? What do you make of it? And so on, to infinity (Rancière, 1991, p. 23). Finally, based on his experimentation, Jacotot concluded that the act of the teacher who obliges another intelligence to exercise itself is independent of the possession of knowledge. According to Jacotot, it is indeed possible that one who is “ignorant” might permit another who is “ignorant” to know something unknown to both (Biesta & Bingham, 2010, p. 10). Forced to take his own knowledge out of the picture, Jacotot is merely “a will that sets the ignorant person down a path” (Rancière, 1991, p. 2-3), instigating a capacity already held by

the individual in question. Ultimately, Rancière (2009) summarises the pedagogical encounter as follows: “The student learns something as an effect of their master’s mastery, but they do not learn the master’s knowledge” (Rancière, 1991, p. 2-3).

2.6 An Optimistic Account of Politics

The notion that someone can learn what they do not know without a master explicator (Rancière, 1991, p.12) does not mean that learning is easy. The teachers can create an environment for this to occur, but students must still do the work. The teacher needs to realise that many students might not make it because learning is hard. If learning was just a cluster of knowledge, then there would not be the need for any teachers because knowledge is readily accessible on Google searches anyway. The actual moment of transformative learning, however, does not happen all the time. It requires a good teacher, a good structure, and a student who has the interest, the will and the time.

The story of Jacotot reminds me very much of my own story. I was complaining one time to my coach, saying that after running 5km, I just can never push myself to run some more as I always get too exhausted. My coach said that it could be because I was thinking about my pain and my breathing, but my concentration needed to be on the pit of my belly. I did what she told me, and I just thought about the pit of my belly. I ran for 7km, thinking that I had made it. So I went back and told her what I did, and her reaction was: “Well done! How did you do that?” This was, for me, the perfect example of this relation of will; I was still the student, and my trainer was still the teacher, but she gave me something to think about, and that focus is what led me to do the work.

So my story and Jacotot’s story lend themselves to an optimistic perspective about politics, which focuses not on social equality or large-scale agendas in which equality must continually be deferred, but instead on intellectual equality. The focus shifts onto those moments when the equal capacity of anybody emerges to disrupt a set hierarchical order that has made sensible those who are qualified for thinking and speaking (Rancière, 2009).

Through Jacotot, we see that, in part, pedagogical encounters can always be a site for interrupting the social order and therefore disturb intellectual hierarchies. This is a hopeful lesson in terms of our capacity to cultivate possibilities in the present (Ryther, 2009). Thus, instead of orienting ourselves within a larger political project, we could shift our focus to the

here-and-now of pedagogical relations and create new inscriptions of equality in an unequal society or an unequal institution like a school (Rancière, 2009). With Jacotot's axiomatic equality serving as a theoretical starting point, I am beginning the work of imagining what making equality the opinion whose verification we pursue might look, sound, and feel like (Rancière, 1991, p. 36). I, therefore, focus on three key acts highly involved in creating a political sequence that could possibly disrupt the intellectual hierarchies at work in education:

- (1) presupposing one's own equality;
- (2) staging one's own equality; and
- (3) using the logic of equality to construct a scene of dissensus.

By studying each section, I then briefly look into some of the ways in which these conceptualisations of equality might matter in the field of education, specifically for me as an EP. I will be looking at how these three acts can help educators and their students to steer away from the roles and places they are usually assigned to, both by traditional and progressive accounts of schooling. I indulge in an extended discussion of these three ideas and set them as possible educational entry points inspired by the opinion of equality (Rancière, 1991, p. 36).

2.7 Equality as a Presupposition

Todd May (2008) notes a more active notion of equality that, according to the distributive theories of justice, tends to be outlined in more passive terms. Equality is "given" by those in power, and this enforces a hierarchical order, which presupposes an inequality between those who distribute or assign power and those who receive the distribution and are positioned as recipients rather than actors (May 2008, p. 10). Children are "given" this voice by their educators within the setup of the classroom whenever they ask for their viewpoint on certain topics. As an EP, I also give voice to the student whenever I translate their strengths and needs into the writing of a report together with recommendations for support and then present it to governmental bodies in order to get the necessary help. In this case, equality is posited as something to be received; it perpetually implies unequal relations because to receive equality is already to be less than equal to the one who bestows it (May 2008, p. 71). Rancière refers to the people who bestow voice to others as the "police order" (Bingham & Biesta, 2010, p.

84). The police order decides the practical sensibilities of being and interacting and where everyone is shaped, defined, and disciplined through dominant values of citizenship and state.

Active politics (what can be seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time (Rancière, as cited in Dikeç, 2013) essentially involves opposition or resistance to this “police order”, embodying a challenge to established order by the excluded, “the part which has no part” (Rancière, 1995, p.31) in the name of equality and the attempt to bring about a reconfiguration of the distribution of the sensible. This demonstration of dispense is the moment of politics. The social order which is orchestrated as democratic is squeezed of political dissent and is thus defined as anti-political. The spaces defined through “police order” and the act of “politics” are conceived as essentially oppositional (causing dissensus). The height of political change is at the sites of the redistribution of the sensible, where the palette of sanctioned sensibilities shifts ground to be refigured to incorporate “other” sensibilities and affective expressive politics.

2.7.1 Equality of Intelligence

Rancière, is not trying to prove “that all intelligence is equal but seeing what can be done under that presupposition” (Rancière, 1999, p. 46). Using this perspective to analyse the reading of the classroom setting in a different way, the question that comes up is: “What if ... equality?” (p. 1), a question formulated by Ruitenberg (2008) that beautifully summarises this notion of the presupposition of equality in this way:

- “What if we begin from the assumption that everyone is capable?”
- “What if we assume that all intelligence is equal in the sense that everyone is able to rise to the tasks that life puts before them, and we work under this assumption?”
- “What if equality becomes our hypothesis, and we set out to verify it? “

This new way of reading the classroom under the presupposition of equality would allow us to interrupt the usual order of doing things. When walking into a classroom, the students know where to sit. They sit in the student chairs, and the teacher stands at the front – at the teacher’s desk. And simply because of that relation or hierarchy that is implied in the architecture, anyone can understand their roles as “teachers” and as “students”. This relationship is built into the environment, and it is also ingrained in our way of understanding the world around us. However, the relationship between the subjects interpolated as students and the subject interpolated as a teacher could be different. (Are they in those fixed seats where they cannot move, or is it possible to rearrange the furniture and have them located differently? Is the student chair placed in a way that they can only raise a hand and ask a question to the person in authority, or is it possible they can turn around and ask someone else? – maybe a peer).

Being an EP and making constant use of intelligence tests automatically makes me reflect on questions such as: what about those who do not have equal intelligence because of being mentally disabled? Or have very low IQs? May (2008) convincingly argues that when Rancière invokes the equal intelligence of all human beings, he has a “minimalist” (p. 43) conception in mind, which is less about intellect per se and more about the ability to “engage in the project of reflective construction of lives” (p. 60). Nonetheless, the emphasis on intelligence, even of this sort, as the property or capacity that renders humans equal, still seems problematic. This is because it tacitly excludes those who cannot reflectively construct their own lives or participate in speech. In this respect, Rancière’s account is somewhat continuous with a liberal tradition that posits human equality based on reason and thereby (implicitly or explicitly) denies full personhood and community membership to those with cognitive disabilities or mental illnesses.

Rancière adds that “each one of us describes our parabola around the truth. No two orbits are alike. And this is why the explicators endanger our revolution. No one has a relation to the truth if he is not on his own orbit” (Rancière, 2006, p. 59). I delight in seeing my cousin, who has autism, caressing his mother’s face when she is sitting on the sofa next to him. There is no “I love you” uttered, but the mere act of the caress is enough to embrace the love he feels. I also admire a student’s passion for and knowledge of horses and horse races. He can name all the horses that race during the week at the horse race course. He can recognise a

good horse by the posture of its legs, and he admits that he has a special way of establishing a connection with them to let wild horses be ridden without any accident. His IQ score is 52, and he cannot function well in a pre-set school setting based on market benchmarks. Each mind differs, and the complexity of the processes involved in communicating with other individuals differs. Our intelligence must work hard to figure out what others mean as “thoughts fly from one mind to another on the wings of words ... will figures will” (Rancière, 1983, p. 62). Thus, for this to happen, we need “our intelligence’s leading virtue: the poetic virtue” (Rancière, 1983, p. 64).

2.8 The Figure of the Child: Why “Equality as a Presupposition” Might Matter in Education

Rancière’s conceptualisation of equality as a presupposition might matter to educators when making assumptions regarding the children for which pedagogies intend to emancipate (Bingham & Biesta, 2010). When it comes to the figure of the child, Bingham and Biesta (2010) note that it has become relatively easy for progressive educators to become so fixated on the injustice of society and the injustices of schooling that they forget the very assumptions that are being made about those who are said to be emancipated through education (Biesta & Bingham, 2010, p. 63). They provide a figure of the child who already speaks and who is already assumed to be an equal being. Based on Rancière’s figure of the child, they talk about the story of 17-month-old Barbara (Bingham and Biesta, 2010).

Barbara knows seven words, including the word “nana” and grunt. It is apparent that Barbara uses the word “nana” to signal for her bottle in a rather arbitrary way. One day, she was upset, and she happened to randomly say “nana”. Her father, confused, had tried a few things to soothe her, but no attempt seemed to improve the situation until he gave her the bottle. She smiled, took the bottle, and said, “nana”,. As time went by, all of those around her came to recognise that for Barbara, the word “nana” meant that she wanted to be fed. Like most children learning their mother tongue, Barbara was able to make herself understood. She invented and used a new word, “nana”, and, in so doing, earned herself the status of the speaker from the perspective of the adult world.

What progressive educators tend to forget is that children like Barbara have already spoken (Bingham & Biesta, 2010). The core of their argument is that Rancière's child proceeds in an arbitrary manner towards that which cannot be anticipated beforehand (in large part because he sees language as arbitrary and utterances always contestable). Rancière's figure of the child sees the child inserting themselves into language and refusing to be a concept for streamlining and improving education; this child does not need a method to speak. Barbara, for instance, has already undergone the most difficult of apprenticeships in learning her mother tongue. This child already speaks. That is the child's method (Biesta & Bingham, 2010, pp. 71-72).

Rancière's notion of equality as a presupposition and, specifically, the figure of the child, asks us to confront a number of questions: "Do we remember that children have already spoken and are already capable and competent? Do we see children who must be moved from oppressive conditions to emancipatory ones so they can then be equal? Or do we see children whose acts proclaim, 'We have always been equal'?" (May 2008, p. 72). Do we see children who say, "One day we will be able to", or do we see children who proclaim, "Yes, we already can"? (Citton, 2010, p. 32). I keep coming back to Rancière's figure of the child who already speaks throughout the dissertation in my understanding of education by gesturing at some of the questions that Rancière's conceptualisation of equality as a presupposition might raise for education.

2.9 Equality as Staged

The essence of equality is not so much to unify as to declassify, to undo the supposed naturalness of orders and replace it with controversial figures of division. (Rancière, 1995, pp. 32–33)

Rancière's notion of equality as a presupposition and the question it inspires of *what if* equality is addressed primarily to those whose lives take place at the various ends of social hierarchies (May, 2009, p. 14). Rancière (2001) calls them the miscount or the category of people who have not been taken into account. In an already formulated and accepted classification, they are unequal to others. From the perspective of the dominant social order,

these are the people who are not really speaking beings (Rancière, 2004a, p. 5) because they lack the authority to speak and whose voice are heard merely as noise. From the perspective of the dominant social order, they are rendered invisible and inaudible. According to Rancière, disrupting this social order means that politics must therefore rise from below (May, 2009, p. 4) when those regarded as “impossible” demonstrate their equality (Simons & Masschelein, 2010, p. 513).

2.9.1 Disorderly Equality

Bayly and Hallward suggest that this demonstration shapes itself into a theatrical form when people act outside of their social locations, or rather, stray away from their natural “allotment” of capacities in order to inhabit new bodies in different times and spaces (Bayly, 2010; Hallward, 2006). This off-base demonstration is best explained as an intervention on the orderly distribution of functions and roles described by Plato, who, along with Bourdieu, is one of the theorists whom Rancière very frequently takes his pen against. Plato argues that just as the soul is composed of three hierarchical parts (i.e. appetitive, rational, and spiritual), a just society should be composed of three corresponding classes, namely the guardians (philosophers charged with governing the republic), the auxiliaries (soldiers who defend the republic), and the producers (includes all professions other than warriors and rulers). The producers have no share in the ruling but merely obey what the rulers' decree (Hallward, 2006; Bayly, 2010).

Within schools, for example, dissensus created by “impossible students” (Davies, 2014) could destabilize and de-territorialize the underpinnings of the imperial logic of display, and the site of the school itself will serve as a tool of governance of students (George & Bennett, 2005). The school space is positioned as a space where the dominant ordering is seemingly universal in its sensibilities but policed along syllabi, curricula, and “average” or mainstream abilities. These sensibilities are naturalized as an agreed articulation of a consensual narrative of student hierarchies of achievement. The school space is where epistemologies and taxonomy of logic are seemingly dynamic but are at once fixed and in synthesis with hierarchies of standardised scores based on the “average student” (Lovejoy, 2017). In alignment with Rancière, the field of perceptions within the school space is figured

through sensibilities that form “regimes of truth” that shape the encounter, recognition, and pedagogy (Tolia-Kelly, 2017). A shift in perceptions, a challenge to accepted orders, epistemologies or indeed “ways of seeing” could, in fact, become the site of the political that enables a new redistribution of the sensible, one that includes those not already included. Rancière’s political subjects do not simply take their rightful place in a particular scene, but rather they also create a stage and establish a theatre where none was supposed to exist according to the logic of the established order (Bayly, 2010).

This disorderly (through acts of dissensus) equality has been widely written about in Rancière’s aptly titled book, *The Nights of Labor* (1989), in which those at the “wrong” end of the political hierarchy seek to disrupt the natural divisions of time and space that try to keep them in their place. In the book *The Nights of Labor*, which is about 19th-century workers in France in the midst of the socialist movement, Rancière highlights the stories of proletarian workers who, without having been taught to write, spend their days as manual labourers while composing poetry, newspapers, and a handful of associations during their nights, resulting in a rich intellectual life. These writer-intellectuals were not writing to unify around their working-class identity or to consolidate popular culture and become more aware of their condition as workers. They were trying to be other (than the role assigned to them) people by claiming their legitimate right to participate in activities that, for them, were deemed illegitimate as they were presumed to be too tired or ill-equipped to think during their nights.

For Rancière, the key point about these workers is, therefore, that they are doing something more than claiming their social identity (Pelletier & Sharp, 2009, p. 275), or what Ross (1991, as cited in Ruitenberg, 2008) calls engaging in a “profound gesture of non-identification with one’s supposed being or condition” (p. 1). The manual labourers were supposed to work by day, sleep by night, and have no time for thinking. However, rather than sleep, they devoted their nights to other activities to give themselves this time that did not belong to them and to enter into a world of writing and thinking that was not theirs (because of the distribution of roles) (Panagia & Rancière, 2000, p. 5). Instead of becoming more aware of their conditions as workers, the worker-poets demonstrated their equality by becoming less aware (Rancière, 2009). The ignorance of inequality is demonstrated by being ignorant of the implicit norms about the spaces in which they could appear, as well as ideas

about how they should use their time (Varenne & McDermott, 1998) and acting *as if* they were members of the elite class. By ignoring inequality, they forced their entry into the common world of thinking beings. This is unpacked in the following section.

2.10 Struggling with *As If*

The labourers' demonstration of equality represents a struggle over the *as if* when the worker-poet implemented a different *if* that overturned the whole logic which allotted them their place (Rancière, 2009, p. 276). By acting *as if* intellectual equality were indeed real and effectual (Rancière, 2009, as cited in Biesta, 2010, p. 52), the worker-poets proved that it is possible to disentangle in every case the *as if* involved in the *that's the way it is* (Rancière, 2009, p. 280). By claiming and practising a way of thinking, speaking, and living that was not or is not theirs, these workers "exposed the sheer contingency of the social order" (Simons & Masschelein, 2010, p. 53), making these labourers write poems significantly dangerous to the prevailing social order (Hewlett, 2007). Through the act of reusing the nights that were meant for proletarian sleep by making themselves at home in a medium that did not belong to them (poetry, philosophy) and by dreaming of a life they were not born into, they showed that things can always be "otherwise" (Highmore, 2011, p. 98). By refusing to accept their places in society as workers and the partitions of time that come with it (a time for work and a time for rest), they exposed "politics as the enactment of a disruption in the parcelling out of allocated space, time, and sense" (Highmore, 2011, p. 98).

As anticipated by Rancière (2010), some lodged the accusation that this enactment of the *as if* is nothing but a delusion, which, in reality, does not lead to true equality; the worker who writes poems at night still continues to be exploited by day. Nevertheless, Rancière emphasises that the worker does not need some sort of reality for the political subject (Rancière, 2009, as cited in Citton, 2009, p. 130) but wants the political actor to actually splinter reality (Rancière, 1999). By refusing to adhere to the discourse that the existing world is the only one possible (Varenne & McDermott, 1998), the political actor proposes a reordering of the real, a reordering of social roles, places, and scripts (O'Shaughnessy, 2011, p. 4). In the end, this political actor builds a scene and constructs a stage on which something new can be seen; a subject that had never been visible or audible within the given field of

experience before and whose appearance threatens to reconfigure the field of experience (Rancière, 1999).

What we see, therefore, is that in scenes of politics, the players are theatrical beings who stage ways of speaking that allow them to reject the identities that had been stamped on their bodies, the assumptions made by others about their capacities, and the Spatio-temporal locales to which they had been relegated (Tanke, 2011, p. 67). The players are those who, by disrupting the configuration in which one has a certain position to see, speak, and act, are able to distance one from themselves (Simons & Masschelein, 2010, p. 513). The stage of politics that they set up is a contentious one that refuses to be limited to the ‘real’ and one on which political actors can demonstrate that, even if egalitarian assumptions are alien to social logic and aggregation, they can be affirmed in a transgressive manner, and that politics consists of this very confrontation (Panagia & Rancière, 2000, pp. 2-3). Having concluded this section on equality as staged, I now start looking more at this contentious stage on which politics is played out, a conversation that prepares the foundation for the final part of this chapter: Rancière’s conceptualisation of equality as creating dissensus.

2.11 Staging a Wrong

Ultimately, Rancière is very clear on the fact that what is most important and most true about staging one’s equality is the verification to oneself of one’s own equality. He argues that the “staging of equality can never be merely a demand or pressure put on the other, but it is always simultaneously given as proof to oneself. This is what emancipation looks like” (Rancière, 1995, p. 48). Nevertheless, Rancière (2010) acknowledges that taking the risk to “verify one’s own equality has no effect on the social order” (p. 15), proving that one has never compelled others to recognise that they are wrong (Rancière, 1995 p. 99). This is, therefore, a shift that Rancière makes to reconceptualise the political demonstration not as a demand but rather as a staging of a wrong, a setting up of a disagreement over which bodies can have what kinds of capacities (Rancière, 1999), or a conflict between those acting in the name of their equality (and those who agree with them) and “the social order that presupposes their inequality” (May, 2010, p. 73). Citton (2009) refers to this shift from politics as one from politics-as-a-battlefield to politics as a stage (p. 134).

More importantly, it is at this stage that political actors can display for all to see what the social order has all along denied them (May, 2008). During the 1960s civil rights movement, young African-American students staged a sit-in at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina and refused to leave after being denied service—and they are an example of equality as staged (May 2008). The people attending these sit-ins acted from the transgressive assumption that they could do what white people took for granted; they sat down at lunch counters in the South where African Americans were denied service, they asked for menus, and they tried to order a meal. Rather than saying, “You have wronged us, and you need to do something about it”, their message was, “We are equal to you, and now we’re going to see whether or not you recognize that” (May, 2008, pp. 75-76). Ultimately, their transgressive staging of equality was made so that they could put on display the social order that had failed to recognise their equality. By staging a wrong, as Rancière puts it, the political process had begun (Tanke, 2011). Those who had no business speaking spoke, and those who had no business in taking part took part (Rancière 2004, as cited in Hewlett, 2007, p. 111). The stage was all set so that the enactment of politics could be performed. By the end of this chapter, I will argue further on this theatrical notion of equality as dissensus, shifting the focus from the political actors to the stage itself and also to the audience and their way of seeing.

2.12 Teacher, Student, and the Distance in Between: Why “Equality as Staged” Matters in Education

The first way in which Rancière's conceptualisation of equality as staged could matter to educators is in our reframing and reclaiming the gaps or distances that have become the norm in our pedagogical life with students, as I suggested in Chapter 1. If, as Rancière portrays, equality exists only in its demonstration, where those at the “wrong” ends of hierarchies refuse the identities, spaces, and times that had been assigned to them by a given social order, the question educators should pose is how these distances or gaps could possibly open up spaces from where children can stage their equality. When we relate with students through pedagogy, Rancière (2007) argues, the distance that is most often evoked is between the educator's knowledge and the student's ignorance. There, the educator has the task of becoming an expert on this distance to know the exact space between ignorance and

knowledge, which involves, in practical terms, the possession of the knowledge of ignorance (Rancière, 2007, p. 275). Using this knowledge of ignorance, the master (Rancière refers here to both traditional and progressive teachers) can go about suppressing this distance by knowing specifically what remains unknown to the ignorant, how it can be made knowable, when, and where, and according to what protocol (Rancière, 2007, p. 275). The distance students are covering is, each time, the distance between their own ignorance and the educator's knowledge; they are kept in their rightful place as students who must understand according to the timeframes, places (e.g. a Year 4 classroom), and capacities (e.g., you are capable of learning this concept a little at a time, but not that part just yet) that had been allotted to them.

However, Rancière (2007) suggests a very different sort of distance, a distance that intends to shift bodies away from the places, times, and capacities that had been allotted to them. When covering the said distance, exactly as they did when first learning their mother tongue, the “ignorant” are encouraged to move through the “forest of things and signs” (Rancière, 2011, p. 10) “to tell what they saw and what they think, to verify and be verified... [the educator] listens to his class; he selectively intervenes or stands down when needed. His role is to mobilize students’ will and desire for learning” (Nastic, 2016). It is tempting to discount this theory because the metaphor of “things and signs” is inadequate when considering interpersonal and intersubjective. However, it is possible, instead, to read this as a theory of negative intersubjectivity, where the influence of the *other* as encountered by the subject is oppressive and stultifying. Seen in this way, the metaphor of the stultifying pedagogue does not have to be opposed to the idea of a body-based intersubjectivity. Understanding arises from things, signs and people, but there is a potential for a subject’s understanding of itself to be negatively impacted by certain kinds of encounters with other subjects: for the encounter to serve only as a reminder of the subject’s own apparent ignorance (Rancière, 2011).

Every person, from the musician to the scientist, enters the distance illustrated by the “forest of signs” (Rancière, 2011) when embarking on an intellectual adventure. Ultimately, in terms of declassifying someone’s supposed place, to move into this distance is to show one’s capacity by acting as a member of the common world of thinking and speaking beings. It is to act as a person who wishes simply to communicate through the “forest of signs” or become adventurous by initiating a process of translation and counter-translation in which one’s

intellectual adventure might make a difference in another's intellectual adventure (Rancière, 1991). This distance is infinite because it cannot be suppressed. It is, therefore, no longer the educator's secret; it is the student's journey (Rancière, 1991, p. 23).

In this forest, the child can skim stones to shape surfaces into manifestations of his or her will and the ability to do this is, nevertheless, undeniably derived from the surface of the forest itself: he or she is in any part of the world that he or she shapes (White, 2016). The child is simultaneously in work, creating it, separating from it and responding to it. The will is a thing of autonomy, but as it engages and shapes its world, it is also of that world and shaped by it too. Throwing stones in the forest shape those things and signs and lets the child learn how they change what they are (White, 2016). The student who argues and rebels against a pre-set system of rules shapes the classroom dynamic as he reveals himself and exercises his or her will by doing so. In the classroom and within the school, there is also the 'feedback loop' (the judgment of the teacher or the school) that exists, which is particularly magnified because of the structures of spatiality, temporality, and interaction in work and the student's navigation of it.

These structures, or structured procedures that lead to specific processes in each iteration of a student's achievement or behaviour, are shaped by the teacher and by the school and can be seen as stultifying interventions between the child and the actions he or she does and the achievements or failures that he or she acquires. But if we think of the encounter of the school system with the child as the action of the will on an object, which is to say, a phenomenon in the "forest of things and signs", then we can see its emancipatory aspect in the attention it brings to the subject as possessing an active will. Thus, to reclaim and reframe the distances which define our pedagogical encounters, to wrest them away from the master and return them to the adventurers, is to set the stage for new ways of speaking in the classroom. This stage is aimed for educators and students to speak under the sign of equality as those whose efforts and explorations are always strained towards someone who has addressed words to them that they want to recognise and respond to, not as students but as people, just as how one responds to someone speaking to them and not to someone examining/assessing them (Rancière, 1991, p. 11). Therefore, Rancière's conceptualisation of equality as staged raises these questions:

- How does our notion of the distance and gaps that are inherent in our pedagogical encounters create intellectual hierarchies?
- Do these gaps tend to become our secret or the student's journey?
- Could new interpretations of the gap build the conditions where students could stage new ways of speaking and stage a declassification from speech that keeps them in their place as the ones to be evaluated?
- How could staging such speaking allow students to push their entry into the common world of thinking and speaking beings while journeying through distances that cannot be suppressed but have to continually expand in this "forest of signs" (Rancière, 2008)?
- Who will the teacher be at this distance? What can it mean to be a translator and a counter-translator?

Even though my target in this chapter is to gesture at a few questions that Rancière's conceptualisation of equality as staged could possibly raise for education, it will not be the last time that I refer to Rancière's notion of distance as a space for declassification throughout the dissertation, particularly in Chapter 3, where I try to bring Rancière to school. As for now, I move on to the final way in which Rancière conceived equality (as far as this chapter is concerned), to wit equality as a logic that could create dissensus.

2.13 Equality: A Logic Which Creates Dissensus

Equality is enacted within the social machine. And dissensus is not primarily a quarrel, but it is a gap in the very configuration of sensible concepts, a dissociation introduced into the correspondence between ways of being and ways of doing, seeing and speaking.

(Rancière, as cited in Biesta & Bingham, 2010, p. 15)

A major accusation of Rancière's notion of equality is that politics, as a result, becomes merely a state of mind with no material consequences (Jodi, 2011; Hallward, 2006). If this is true, therefore, it can be cast aside as an inconsequential account of democracy, which does not encourage us to do much more than play at politics or equality (Hallward, 2006). By

becoming political, the staging of equality also has a real social effect as it intervenes in the space of what Rancière calls “the police” (Rancière, as cited in von Eggers, 2013) in order to create dissensus.

2.13.1 The Police: The Enforcer of a Particular Distribution of the Sensible

Tanke (2011) argues that when Rancière writes about the police, he does not intend the truncheon-wielding cops who hit or arrest the striking workers or unruly students (p. 45). Instead, Rancière’s definition (1999) of the police is that of an order of bodies that assigns ways of doing, being, and saying while ensuring that those bodies are all allocated a specific place and task; “it is an order of what is visible and sayable that sees that a particular action is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse while the other is deemed to be noise” (p. 29). When put under pressure on the question of whether there ever is a concrete actor that acts as the police, Rancière’s (2006) answer is that it is too easy an answer. He clarifies that the distribution of places and roles that define a police order does not simply refer to some institution, big machine, or the media. This distribution of what is given to our experience or of what we are and are not able to do can emerge just as much from the assumed spontaneity of social relations (Rancière, 1999, p. 29). Therefore, the police refer to any hierarchical order (Chambers, 2010, p. 61) or any order that structures what can become visible and sayable. Basically, there is no place outside of the police or a police order (some police order is inevitable, but not all police orders are the same). There is a worse police and a better police, Rancière argues, although he does not clarify what he means by this (Chambers, 2011). The key point is that, according to Rancière, politics must always take place from within the conditions of the police (May 2008, p. 11). In other words, politics consists of confronting hierarchies where they exist and are, therefore, always local and occasional (Rancière, 1999, p. 139).

The police order is not enforced solely by the police, however. It is also a matter of how the sensible (perception and the senses) get distributed, partitioned, and shared (May 2009, p. 18). Otherwise explained, hierarchies are imposed by people coming to see and experience their world in certain ways that sustain and nourish those hierarchies (May, 2009). Significantly, this distribution of the sensible is shared as it represents a sharing of the sensible that creates a common world (Tanke, 2011, pp. 2-3). Thus, as it structures our

thinking in terms of what is a possibility for future thought and action, it defines the field of “possibility” and “impossibility” (Tanke, 2011). Most importantly, each order of the police (as the means by which society enforces its distribution of the sensible (Tanke, 2011, p. 45)) wants to shrink the stage in terms of what can be seen and heard or what can be rendered sensible (Rancière, as cited in, Duranty, 2010). According to Tanke (2011), the police monopolise the interpretations of sense in order “to strip the sensible of its litigious character” (p. 46). Thus, the police tell us that salary disputes are private matters between workers and employers, that education happens in schools, and that we are citizens when we are in voting booths. Instead of wielding a baton, the police mentioned here is the one who constantly tells us, “Move along! There is nothing to see here!” (Rancière, Panagia, & Bowlby, 2001).

2.13.2 Dissensus: The Confrontation of the Logic of the Police with the Logic of Equality

From police at the school gates to the everyday policing of children’s bodies, schools are both allies of the police and agents of policing themselves. There are various ways teachers are forced to act as police themselves. The most widely known example of this kind of policing-by-proxy is broken supervision, which compels teachers to monitor students for signs of bullying, aggression, or violence and to report them accordingly. When teachers fill in the attendance sheet in the morning, they are writing a legal document with legally enforceable consequences. All their relations in the classroom, then, are underpinned by this power imbalance: they can go to the bathroom whenever they want, but students need permission, and they can leave, and students cannot, under threat of their families being fined or prosecuted for truancy. While it is a parent’s legal duty to arrange “suitable” education for their children, it is not a school’s duty to continue educating a student; schools can and do make use of permanent exclusion, whereby a student is expelled from their roll without any duty on the school to find them a new place to go.

But even if teachers were to succeed in expelling all these forms of direct and indirect police presence in schools, such institutions would still be left with all the ways in which teachers police social norms and enforce policies. Extreme examples include behaviour policies that compel students to keep their eye on the teacher and pay attention, impose silence in corridors, and segregate students who have not reached age-appropriate targets from those

who have. As an EP, I am the professional in charge of this part of the segregation. I have referred a child deemed as being far off from the “average” child and, upon assessment, decide where they should be placed and what accommodations can be given to allow for accessibility of learning. The parent cannot do this for their child because they do not speak the professional language of numbers and scores that (unfortunately) “professionals like me” can.

Even at schools with a less explicitly compliance-focused approach, school uniform policies routinely police students’ bodies, taking an obsessive approach to the minutiae of children’s haircuts and jewellery. Schools also demand an increasing amount of control over students’ home lives and families’ parenting approaches, attempting to dictate the use of technology, diet, bedtimes, and other routines. Working-class parents, parents of colour, disabled parents, same-sex parents, parents of disabled children and, of course, parents at intersections of any and all of these are especially likely to have their experience and expertise questioned and undermined under the educator’s assumed position of managerial expertise. But how can educators resist this policing from within? Is resistance even possible, or are the roles of ‘educator’ and ‘cop’ mutually dependent?

Teaching is so often centred around this enforcement, to the proper kinds of a person doing the proper kind of thing in the proper place: sitting in rows, listening, comply. The ideology of the “thin blue line” (Gordon, 2011, p. 11), asserts that “without the constant threat of violent, coercive intervention, society will unravel into a war of all against all... police are the only force capable of holding society together” (Gordon, 2011, p.25). A lot of the teaching done in schools replicates this logic, claiming that educators must enforce compliance lest they are left with a society of lazy, out-of-control children and their neglectful families. They must resist this wherever they find it, including within themselves, including when it comes from an apparently progressive impulse to “help” (which may be, in fact, a desire to manage). While the police order is always trying to shrink the stage in terms of what can be seen and how it should be seen, Rancière (2006) describes the political act of those “impossible” (Davies, 2014) students that I spoke about in Chapter 1 as one which enlarges the public sphere and points towards what is wrong in the system and what should change (p. 299). Surely, Rancière’s account of politics is not the first to emphasise the need to disrupt the distribution of the sensible, but what makes his account of politics unique is his

position that not every disruption is worthy of the name politics (Tanke, 2011, p. 51). Politics occurs in a situation where the logic of the police, as set by the system, such as school, is confronted by the logic of equality of a student who demands to be heard. Otherwise explained, the order is disrupted with reference to equality (Bingham & Biesta, 2010, p. 34). It is only the supposition of equality that allows for speech, action, and organisation to break away from the police (Tanke, 2011, p. 51). The distinguishing factor of politics, thus, is that it operates based on the logic of equality, a fundamentally different logic than that on which the police operate. As Tanke (2011) argues, doing politics

Consists of placing the two logics in conflict, that is, creating spaces where the two can be opposed, and the police hierarchies overturned, however provisionally. The political is this third space of contestation, an indeterminate and always shifting meeting point of the police and politics. (Tanke, 2011, p. 51)

Therefore, in this sense, politics is to be thought of not in terms of institutions or spaces but as a set of relations in which the staging of wrong always occurs in relation to and on the police (Norval, 2000, p. 9). Indeed, for Rancière, one cannot speak of politics without considering its relation to the police distribution dictating what one can say, think, or feel (Chambers, 2011). The name which Rancière (2011) gives to this confrontation between the logic of equality and the logic of the police is dissensus, which is the process by which actors disrupt the politics of the police.

2.13.3 Dissensus Means Creating a Miscount

“Dissensus is not simply a conflict of interests, opinions, or values but a conflict over the common itself. It is not a quarrel over which solutions apply to a situation but a dispute over the situation itself” (Rancière, 2004, p. 6). If equality is staged, it becomes a scene of dissensus because it makes visible the distinction between two very different counts of communities. Therefore, according to the police’s accounting, everyone is accounted for. Everyone has a place and a role, even if they do not have much of a say in how the order is run (Bingham & Biesta, 2010). The assumption here is that the political parties are pre-constituted and that there is a given and known subject of discourse or that everyone can be heard. However, for Rancière, this is precisely the question of politics: whose speech is heard

as discourse, and whose speech is heard as noise? Dissensus is not simply a matter of disrupting the sensible at the level of production or in terms of who can do what or whose activities must be narrowly allotted to certain places and times, but perhaps more fundamentally, it has to do with disrupting implicit divisions in the realm of discourse between those whose voice were deemed significant and those whose voice remained inaudible (Deranty, 2010, p. 8). Rancière (2001) pointedly asks:

How can one be sure that the human animal mouthing a noise in front of you is actually voicing an utterance rather than merely expressing a state of being? If there is someone you do not wish to recognize as a political being, you begin by not seeing them as the bearers of politicalness, by not understanding what they say, by not hearing that it is an utterance coming out of their mouths. (Rancière as cited in Chambers, 2011, p. 96)

Thus, for Rancière (1999), the disagreement comes not over the object of speech but over what speaking means. It must always amount to counting those who do not (who ought not) count, not just in terms of a few actions becoming visible while others are invisible, but also in terms of noisemakers inserting themselves as speakers. Political activity, explains Rancière (1999), makes understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise (pp. 29-30). The “impossible” students in Chapter 1 are the political child that I am inviting the reader to think about because they make demands of educators as equals, asserting their right to disrupt the prefigured “normal” of learning. Furthermore, this engagement with them asks us all the time to re-think what a performative equality of intersubjectivity might require of us as adults and educators. In my engagements as an EP with young ‘impossible’ people, I hope for both their participation and emancipation; I can and should embrace the possibilities of entirely new readings and reactions to what it is that they have to say, embracing interruptions and disruptions of the all too tidy pre-prescribed outcomes, intentions and impacts for the sake of “the political”.

2.13.4 Dissensus: Creating a Stage That Has Not Yet Been Built

It seems, therefore, that political activity itself must transform into the question of whether there exists a common stage where “plebeians and patricians can debate anything” (Ballanger, Norval, 2000, p.3) or, more extensively, where those whose speech is

supplementary to the police order can be heard as speakers rather than noisemakers. As Rancière (1999) argues, this means that political activity is primarily concerned with the conflict over the existence of a common stage and the existence and status of those present on it. It must first establish that the stage exists for the use of an interlocutor who cannot see it and who cannot see it for good reason because it does not exist (p. 27). One's ability to construct a common stage from which one can speak with somebody or make themselves understood as a speaker is, therefore, one of the central questions of politics. Rancière (2007) possibly best captures this notion of politics in the following passage:

I think that the very nature of politics is such that the stage has not been built, that the object has not been recognized, and that the very partners in the debate have not been legitimized as such. Politics begins when it becomes apparent that the debate is about something that has not been noticed, when the person who says so is a speaker who has not been recognized as such and when, ultimately, that person's very status as a speaking being is in question. (Rancière, 2007, pp. 34-35)

I close this section with an example of dissensus that has been offered by Rancière (Rancière, as cited in Rockhill, 2013). The example comes from the feminist protest during the time of the French Revolution. At the time, women were denied the rights of citizens, relegated to the private, domestic sphere and excluded from the public life of civics and work to which men belonged. Against these givens, a revolutionary woman, Olympe de Gouges, famously proclaimed that since women were qualified to go the scaffold, they were equally qualified to mount the platform of the assembly (Rancière, as cited in Rockhill, 2013). In other words, since women could be tried for treason, the border between the private sphere and the public sphere was not quite as clearly drawn as it seemed. Their private life (if they were sentenced to death) could be political. If once under the guillotine, women were seen as equal to men, then they had the right to full equality, including equal opportunities to participate in political affairs (Rancière, 2004c, pp. 303-304). What de Gouges did, Rancière says, was to construct a scene of dissensus by putting a division in common sense: "a dispute about what is given, about the frame within which we see something as given" (Rancière, as cited in Rockhill, 2013, p. 304), in this case, the relegation of women to the private sphere.

Through Olympe de Gouges's argument, the police order was confronted with a speech that was supplementary to its order. Regardless of whether she was heard, she created a case for the verification of equality, not by making a demand but by practically putting two worlds in one and the same world (Rancière, as cited in Rockhill, 2013). This argument places her in a world of exclusion (a world where women did not have the rights that they had) and simultaneously in a world of inclusion (a world in which women act as if they had the rights that they had not). By putting together the world where women's rights are valid and the world where those rights are not valid, creating a world where the logic of politics confronts the logic of the police, de Gouges rejected the "apportionments of the already ordained community in which some are held not to exist by creating a new common world wherein one demonstrates [her] ability to understand, speak, and critique the oppressor's language, thus allowing us to contrast this political world with the everyday world of the police" (Tanke, 2011, p. 64). The oppressor's language has the capability to disempower those of us who are just learning to speak, who are just learning to claim language as a place where we make ourselves subjects (Britzman, 2009, p. 14). The way in which oppressors shape language could be a powerful weapon that demarcates a limiting and defining territory by causing shame or humiliation.

Thus, this creation of a common world represents the "second moment" in the political process (Tanke, 2011). The first moment, discussed in the previous section on equality as staged, brings to the picture the refusal of the places, times, and capacities that had been allotted to an individual by a hierarchical order. Meanwhile, the second-moment "design[s] a rival conception of the world in conflict with the existing one" (Tanke, 2011, p. 65). This is a "politics of world opening" (Tanke, 2011, p. 65). Much like the example of Rosa Parks (Rancière, 2006), who invigorated the struggle for racial equality when she refused to give up her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama (May, 2009), through the creation of a common world, political actors demonstrate a different way of being together, a move which, as Rancière (2009) clearly explains, is at the heart of his politics as a redistribution of the sensible: "Human beings are tied together by a certain sensory fabric, a certain distribution of the sensible, which defines their ways of being together; and politics is about the transformation of the sensory fabric of being together" (p. 56).

Dissensus can thus be summarised in several ways.

First, it disrupts the division of the sensible; a disruption that takes equality as its reference point as the logic of equality confronts the logic of the police. This disruption must result in a miscount, were those whose ways of speaking are supplementary to a given order stage a wrong (a disagreement) over what speaking means. As a result, dissensus is the construction of a stage where the question of who speaks and who is really where speaking-being becomes visible and, at least potentially, threatens to cause a redistribution of the sensible through the creation of a common world. In constructing a scene of dissensus (a stage and a counter-world), political actors can do more than simply play at politics; they can make possible new ways of seeing, doing, and being together.

2.14 The Inventive Reader: Why Could “Equality as a Logic That Creates a Scene of Dissensus” Matter in Education?

Unlike the world that allows for a multitude of roles, identities, and encounters, the school is only a building where teachers and students tend to encounter each other almost exclusively in their role as “teachers” or “students”, respectively (Rancière, 2009). Given these limitations, the challenge of creating a stage where students could invent a demonstration of equality seems even greater. In his efforts to provide a potential educational entry point, Citton (2010) argues that Rancière’s notion of the distribution of the sensible allows one to locate political agency in the figure of the inventive reader who is looking (p. 139). Hence, it is this interpreter who selects from among the superabundant potential meanings conveyed by the scene which ones are to be counted as relevant, which ones are to be discounted, and which ones are not to be taken into account (Citton, p. 138). This is because Rancière does not assume that in the moment of expression, the author is the only real agent in this work. There is, in fact, another agent: the spectator.

In his book, *The Emancipated Spectator* (Rancière, 2011), considered by Rancière to be a sequel to *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Rancière, 1991), Rancière seeks to blur the line between the active and passive through this figure of the spectator. Particularly, he aims to take the spectator out of his place as a passive onlooker and, in this same process, ask whether the spectator is treated as an intelligent person. When it comes to the distribution of the sensible, he wants to suggest that the spectator’s role is significantly important. How one

perceives and sees is, for Rancière, active and political work that can reorder the distribution of the sensible. Rancière (2007) then emphasises that the act of looking is also an action that confirms or modifies the distribution of the sensible and that interpreting the world is already a means of transforming it. When it comes to educators, this raises the question as to how we might engage in more inventive readings when it comes to those children whose speech is supplementary to police order. These children, like Barbara (mentioned in section 2.8) with her insertion of “nana” into the language to mean “bottle”, might become political actors who show us that utterances are always contestable and that, because this is so, there is always a chance for human beings to insert themselves differently into the distribution of the sensible (Bingham & Biesta, 2010, p. 117). The active role of the reader or interpreter, therefore, turns educators into emancipated spectators in the critical moment of the pedagogical encounter when confronting students’ speech and behaviour.

It is my hope for this research to encounter or stage moments of engagement with students and to become more attentive to scenes of dissensus (Masschelein, 2010). I want to re-think what and how I hear and learn to verify competence in children who speak in the political sense, just like Barbara (mentioned in section 2.8) inserted herself from noise into language as a speaker who belongs to a common world of thinkers and speakers. Finally, I hope to be challenged to consider if there is a richer and more complex tapestry than Rancière has given us from which to create resources for dissensus so that I might, in my inventive readings and interpretations of scenes, create new worlds that allow for different relationships between sense and sense and different ways of being together with students in my role as an EP.

2.15 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I attempted to commence from Rancière’s premise that teaching is rarely a site of politics. Beginning from the premise that any political sequence has to begin with this axiomatic equality, I proposed the following framework as one possibility of re-visioning democracy as the practice of equality: equality as a presupposition, equality as staged, and equality as constructing a scene of dissensus. Underlying this framework is an understanding of equality as the primary means of contesting hierarchical and exclusionary distributions of the sensible, making it possible for us to imagine other forms of arrangements (Tanke, 2011, p. 4).

Rancière suggests that this reconfiguration of the sensible takes place through the creation of a stage where there had previously been none and on which those who speak in ways that are supplementary to a given social order can be taken seriously as valid partners in dialogue and people who make sense (Deranty, 2010, p. 11). The underlying assumptions of this theatrical and transgressive notion of politics, paraphrased by Rancière as “power without power”, are, therefore, that anyone can occupy a different position other than the one that they are in and that things can always be different (Rancière, as cited in Luxon, 2016). I attempted to make Rancière’s story of Jacotot my own, suggesting that the practice of equality could matter in education by introducing three potential entry points, which I continue to pursue in the chapters to come:

1. the figure of the child who already speaks;
2. the gap or distance between teaching and learning as a space of declassification in which students and educators can stage new ways of speaking and being; and
3. the educator as an inventive reader who disrupts the order of schooling.

Instead of presenting these entry points as a system to be followed, I wish to use them in the next chapters as tools that might dislodge sensible ways of being together as educators and students, as EPs and students or otherwise, as a deviation from the natural order of things, thus reflecting the fleeting, sporadic, and interruptive character of equality that I have tried to present in this chapter. I simply hope that in this struggle to pick at Rancière’s ideas and tell my own stories of encounters with students, educators and carers in my study, and I will lay out a rich enough “forest of signs” (Rancière, as cited in May, 2008). This is a hopeful lesson, not in the sense of anticipating a better future but in terms of our capacity to cultivate possibility in the present by shifting our orientation to the here and now of pedagogical relations and thus create new demonstrations and perhaps inscriptions of equality in an unequal society, even in an unequal place like school (Ryther, 2009).

CHAPTER 3 - ENGAGING WITH CHILDREN'S VOICE

3.0 Chapter Overview

The critical point about equality, for Rancière (1991), is “not proving that all intelligence is equal but seeing what can be done under that presupposition” (p. 46). Questions like “What if we assume that all intelligence is equal in the sense that everyone can rise to the tasks that life puts before them, and we work under this assumption? What if equality becomes our hypothesis, and we set out to verify it?” this can help us to further think about what can be done under equality’s presupposition (May, 2009, p. 17). Equality becomes then a question of re-visiting what can be seen, heard, and said, and what and who must become visible, audible, and counted in the classroom. This is the thinking that I explore in this dissertation with the aim of revamping the practice around ‘voice’ in education. The two research questions guiding my study are:

What is children’s voice, and how is it accessed?

What is the impact of this understanding on EP practice?

In view of this, the following chapter presents a review of the literature relating to voice. An exploration of the literature was conducted initially to understand the concepts that would inform the research design.

3.1 Introduction

The notion of engaging with children’s voice espouses the ethos of listening that has been recognised in Article 12 of the UNCRC (1989) and mentioned in Chapter 1. This convention advocates for the entitlement of all children and young people to be given the right to express their views and ensure that these views will be heeded. It marks a shift away from dominant discourses of childhood, prevalent in the twentieth century, where children were perceived as vulnerable and innocent and who were ultimately the “property” of their parents (Devine, 2003). They were “expected to adhere to the dictum of being seen but not heard and to behave according to societal norms” (Rose & Shevlin, 2004, p. 156).

The adoption of this perspective of childhood led to children being patronised and marginalised when expressing views about several topics, such as their education (Smith, 2007). More recently, there has been a paradigm shift towards the acceptance that children have views and opinions separate from the adults in their lives (Matthews, 2007). The belief that children have agency and can make sense of their views and share their views on issues concerning them has resulted in the acknowledgement of children's rights. With these rights comes the "power to command respect, to make claims and to have them heard" (Federle, 2017, p. 343). Despite this rationale for engaging with the voice of young people, it does not appear to have been reflected within educational decision-making processes. Reasons for the exclusion of young people from these processes are often cited as a lack of maturity and competence (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998). Devine (2003) comments that schools operate within a predominantly adult-centred framework with little regard for the status of young people within the system. I contend that it is necessary to engage with children's voice if it is to become possible to understand them better during pedagogical encounters. The notion of gaining greater insight into children's views through an engagement with their voice is supported by researchers such as Ainscow (2002), Cooper (1993), and McIntyre, Pedder, and Rudduck (2005). Before examining the challenges and possibilities presented by engaging with children's voice, it is important to consider what is meant by the concept of "voice". Thomson (2011) refers to it as,

... a political concept that brings together past and present, emotional and intellectual ways of knowing, public and private, various parts of social and cultural life, and truths and fiction. 'Voice' is inherently concerned with questions of power and knowledge, with how decisions are made, who is included and excluded and who is advantaged and disadvantaged as a result. Weak forms of 'voice' generally support the status quo or aim for modest reforms. The strongly democratic use of 'voice' equates to a call for a public sphere in which there is dialogue, reciprocity, recognition, and respect. Reaching that utopian state is understood as a struggle to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. (Thomson, 2011, p. 21)

3.2 Systematic Review of the Literature

The method used for this section was that of systematically reviewing the literature around the topic of “voice” (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). It is systematic because my goal was to identify relevant empirical and theoretical articles that would assist me in answering the questions guiding this study. The selection of the studies, which are included in this chapter, occurred in three steps.

Literature Search (Step 1)

I was interested in the discourse on student “voice” and conducted the literature search using three different search engines. The Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) was chosen to discover the education-related, worldwide discourse about student “voice” written in English. I conducted this search via ProQuest. I also incorporated articles whose source was not only in the educational sector but also belonged to other fields such as psychology, philosophy, sociology, or politics. To obtain a comprehensive picture of the discussion about student “voice”, I chose more than one keyword combination and entered the same combinations of keywords in all search engines. Due to the large variety of terms which are used in the field of student “voice”, it was impossible to search every combination. Therefore, I decided to use (a) a combination of terms that were more general, (b) a combination of terms located in the UN children’s rights (United Nations, 1990), and (c) a word combination which covered the democratic education perspective. Due to the large number of publications that have appeared in this field so far, a sample had to be drawn, as it was not possible to assess the entire volume of literature.

Selection of Suitable Articles (Steps 2 and 3)

In Step 2, I applied three selection criteria for the *title* and *abstract*. The selected papers were then entered into Step 3, where I applied the selection criteria to the *entire article*. Those pieces which met the selection criteria in Step 3 built the sample for further analysis. The selection criteria in Steps 2 and 3 were as follows: 1. Participation had to include student activities in school, which went beyond merely attending school or answering researchers’ questions. Student participation had to refer to a student’s influence on the school, 2. Primary

and secondary schools were targeted since, at these levels, the largest part of the compulsory school period can be covered, and 3. The article had to be written in English.

Elaborating on the Focus of the Investigation (Step 3)

To apply the selection criteria in Step 3 and for further analysis, I generated categories as advised by Petticrew and Roberts (2006, pp. 170-177). Therefore, I took systematic notes on every article regarding the following topics: a brief description of content; the article's regional background; the terms used to describe "voice"; any frequently cited sources and important insights, context and assessment of suitability. These notes were open coded (Strauss & Corbin, 1994): I looked for patterns across the articles and identified categories allowing me to build distinguishable groups. I compared the coding of the different articles and looked for codes which appeared several times. This was done manually until a consensus was reached. Based on manual analysis and the exchange at the meetings with my supervisors, initial assumptions for patterns around "voice" were derived. Then I re-examined the apparent patterns systematically across all articles and identified three distinguishable groups of articles or contexts in which student participation was discussed: a) engaging with voice, b) inclusion and c) pedagogy. These three contexts will be further discussed below.

3.3 Engaging with Children's Voice

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989, p. 6) states that children must have "the right to express their views in all matters affecting them and to have their views given due weight". Additionally, Article 12 of the UNCRC (1989) states that any child who is capable of forming his or her own views should be given the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting him or her and that due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of that child will be given due diligence. However, the latter section of this statement may lead to an ambiguous interpretation of what constitutes an appropriate age or level of maturity. Far from ensuring that all children are engaged in decision-making about their education, this could lead to children being marginalised if it is deemed that they do not have the capacity to make informed decisions.

The gap between rhetoric and reality is emphasised by Harvey (2002) of the Children's Legal Centre, who commented on the experiences of 300 children invited to attend a Children's Forum at a UN conference (Harvey, 2002). They were able to discuss their proposals to create a better world for children, but they recounted a feeling of disappointment with the process as their voice were lost among the bickering of states. One delegate participant from the UK who was under the age of 18 commented: "We spoke, but it feels like no one listened". This statement emphasises the existence of a power differential between adults and children. Dalrymple and Burke (1995) conceptualise this by referring to the term "adultism" as the oppression of children and young people by adults (Dalrymple & Burke, 1995). This scenario echoes the theme of powerlessness and exclusion felt by children and young people in relation to those aspects of life that matter to them (Lansdown, 1995).

Freire (1970) refers to the "oppressed" as those whom others fail to recognize as persons. Not only do oppressors keep the oppressed away from being fully human, but they often stereotype oppressed people as "violent" for responding to oppression. To this end, Freire (1970) proffers that the oppressed are not the marginal or those who live outside society but that they have always been "inside the structure which made them 'beings for others' " (Freire, 1970, p. 13). Students can be seen as part of the oppressed group given that they are within the educational system, but the system itself may fail to recognise their potential for equality and respond to their attempts at equality by labelling them "impossible". The solution, he argues, is not to "integrate" them into the structure of oppression but to "transform that structure so that they can become 'beings for themselves' " (Freire, 1970, p.74). This reflects the position I adopt within my study. By understanding the limitations of the system that we are part of, I try to stage places where equality can be demonstrated. By being a spectator who sees things in a different way, I hope that children express their views about things that matter to them freely and without pressure. It is hoped that possibilities can unfold for practitioners to reflect on the comments and consider adapting the provision of pedagogical activities in response to the diversity and individuality of the children.

Epley, Summers, and Turnbull (2010) have promoted an alternative viewpoint which challenges assumptions about children's inability to make decisions in their own best interests. Such references to children having authority over their own "voice" assume that

they possess one homogenous “voice” (Woodhead, *Child Development and the Development of Childhood*, 2009). However, others (Fattore, Mason, & Watson, 2007) recognise children’s agency that affords them some opportunity to shape and negotiate aspects of their own childhood. The work of researchers, such as Levin (1994), points to the variety of “childhoods” that children experience, which will ultimately influence how they are able or willing to express themselves. Ritala-Koskinen (1994) develops this further by arguing that children do not live as one cultural grouping and that there is no single concept of childhood (Ritala-Koskinen, 2012). Subsequently, this implies that if there are different cultural interpretations of childhood, there will be more than one set of relationships between children and adults and, inevitably, more than one set of children’s meanings or voice.

By recognising that there are a variety of children’s cultures and voice, it becomes possible to acknowledge that different children have contradictory wishes and expectations, all of which are equally valid and should be listened to accordingly (Roche, 1999). However, James, Jenks, & Prout (1998) allude to the difficulty of responding to these diverse voice in the portrayal of their minor child, indicating that the difficulty arises when choices have to be made as to which of the voice to heed. Nutbrown and Clough (2009) acknowledge this difficulty. However, they note that,

Though it will not always be possible to accommodate fully all the views and suggestions made by children, it is the case that many of the views that young children offer can often be incorporated into changes in practices and settings, which make the place more inclusive and enabling for all who attend. (Nutbrown & Clough, 2010, p. 202)

Nevertheless, even if attention is afforded to children’s voice to provide more inclusive environments, it is important to note that voice itself is a problematic term since it does not always retain the same meaning. Hadfield and Haw (2001) purport that the construct “voice” has become such a broadly used term that it is in danger of losing much of its specific meaning as it becomes disconnected from the different theoretical sources and critical praxis from which it originated (Haw & Hadfield, 2001). They also suggest that it privileges experience over theory or training as the basis of an individual’s understanding of an issue or activity and the meaning to which it is afforded. Hadfield and Haw (2001, p. 487) contend that it fundamentally relies on an “interior authenticity”, which Britzman (1989) describes as

the ways in which an individual can participate in a community, find the word, speak for oneself, and feel heard by others.

Consequently, voice could be viewed as a social construct; the way in which children are influenced by their life and cultural experiences will ultimately affect their ability to understand their own feelings and communicate with others. Komulainen (2007) supports this perspective and emphasises that there is a danger that the term “voice” could be sensationalised as it takes for granted the view that “children have message-like thoughts that can be exchanged, and intentions that match the situations defined by adults” (Komulainen, 2007, p. 25). She identifies a moral-pragmatic tension at the heart of so-called “child-centred” debates and states that the analysis of children’s voice must include considerations of the dynamics of human communication and interaction. Fielding (2004) thus argues for the need for a critically reflexive praxis and, more importantly, a more dialogic model, not of adult silence or dominance, but one in which adults work in partnership, speaking with, rather than for, young people. In doing so, it becomes less significant whether children’s thoughts can be exchanged to fulfil an adult agenda, but rather that adults attempt to understand the child so that they may present a unified voice. However, this assumes once again the presence of one voice. Cruddas (2006) suggests it is necessary to understand and take account of the multiple and changing notions of self, and thus avoids the term “voice”, preferring the concept of “engaging with voice” operating within a socially constructed space (Cruddas, 2007, p.104). This concept promotes the analysis of both child and adult voice in the context and avoids an overreliance on adult ways of listening to children. It also acknowledges Thomson’s (2011) concern about the emphasis on the singularity of voice and recognises the importance of considering the authenticity of whose agenda is being fulfilled when engaging with children’s voice.

This idea of multiple notions of self has resonance within the field of engaging with the voice of young children. There are theorists who will propose that children can alter their perspectives fairly quickly (Donaldson, 1986) and warn us (adults) about being mindful of this when constructing the social situations in which to engage with their voice. Others may show anxieties about the reliability of the child’s perspective or over the ways in which they are presented. Moore, Jarrold, Russell, and Lu (1995) spoke about the reliability of children’s accounts. Resse and Fivush (1993) also purport that while there is evidence that even very

young children can recall their experiences accurately, exploring children's perspectives can create a situation in which the division between reality and fantasy may become blurred. However, Foucault (1997) counters these arguments by presenting a post-structuralist perspective that truth does not exist. Instead, he believes that what is held to be true is a fiction created through "truth games" (Foucault, as cited in Allan, 2010, p. 220) that express the politics of knowledge of the time and place. Hunter (2007) concurs with Foucault, stating that the drive to understand children's true or "authentic" wishes and feelings is sometimes misplaced (Hunter, 2007). Rather, she purports that it is necessary to scrutinise how children's voice are produced and how they are subsequently interpreted.

Similarly, Moss (2007) states that it is not important to determine whether a child is stating a "truth" or not, but rather to ensure that their voice are heard at the point of utterance (Moss, 2007). Consequently, it no longer becomes essential to consider whether these perspectives can be generalised or to cogitate conventions of reliability and validity of what constitutes an accurate interpretation of the child's insider perspective. The activity to make core assumptions and values contestable are described by Yeatman (1994, p.7) as "postmodern politics", of which he specifies a politics of difference that contests those groups and claims a privileged position of objectivity on a contested subject (Yeatman, 1994). This resonance with Thomson's (2011) concern about the authenticity of voice if adults are placed in positions of power that contest the truth and accuracy of children's voice.

Moore and Sixsmith (2000) maintain that children's perspectives are of value, not only to contest the dominant discourse but also for their own sake (Moore, Sixsmith, & Knowles, 1996). Lundy (2013) concurs, conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC (1989) to address some of the issues outlined above (Lundy, 2013). Her model focuses on four elements:

- "Space: Children must be given the opportunity to express a view
- Voice: Children must be facilitated to express their views
- Audience: The view must be listened to
- Influence: The view must be acted upon, as appropriate". (p. 933)

Lundy (2007) argues that for any space to be inclusive, adults need to ensure that the views of a diverse range of children are sought and that participation is not just afforded to the

articulate and the literate (Lundy, as cited in Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). In this sense, it can be understood to consider the notion of embodiment (Thomson, 2011), where children are enabled to express their views in a tangible or visible form. The engagement with voice carries the caveat that they (the voice) must be allowed to be expressed freely. In some cases, children will need the help of others to form a view, and thus, once more, it raises questions about the ways in which voice can be expressed using different modalities. When accessing the views of children with communication difficulties, there can be a tendency to scrupulously frame questions and procedures to better enable participation (Lester & Costley, 2010). Ironically, this over-prescription can ensure a level of control over disclosures and thus reduce the authenticity of their accounts. Lancaster and Broadbent (2003) state that children can communicate long before they can talk and, therefore, it is necessary for adults to receive training in effective listening, which may involve looking differently and using different tools to access that voice (Lancaster & Broadbent, 2003). Furthermore, Clark (2014) purports that,

“Listening is an active process of receiving, interpreting and responding to their communications. ‘Listening’ includes using all the senses and emotions and accessing children’s range of communication is clearly not limited to the spoken” (p. 1)

However, MacNaughton et al. (2007, p. 458) note that there is “little empirical evidence to support the contention that consulting young children is valuable” (Macnaughton & Hughes, 2007). They suggest that this may be due to the scarcity of research on young children and also the scepticism about young children’s ability to participate meaningfully in policy-making. The UNCRC (2005) released a General Comment (No.7) that summarised some of the arguments that have been used to inhibit consultation with young children.

“They have been regarded as undeveloped, lacking even basic capacities for understanding, communicating and making choices (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)” (OHCHR, 2005, p. 7).

Most children who have been consulted in research have been in their formal years of schooling or older (Burfoot, 2003) Therefore, in keeping with Allan’s (2007) view that it is crucial that the voice of those who have the most direct experience of inclusion are allowed

to influence any future developments of policy and practice, the voice of younger children must also be afforded the same prominence in research. Spyrou (2015) asserts that,

“Listening to and consulting with children, acting on their recommendations, following up on the views that children have expressed and involving them in the ongoing processes are important in all children’s settings” (Spyrou, 2015, p. 24)

Furthermore, Todd (2007, p. 13) states that “education cannot be inclusive without collaborating with children and parents in ways that enable their perspectives to influence the development of schools and systems”. Todd (2007) and Casey (2005) reflect the perspective of Messiou (2006), who maintains that when views are collected in relation to inclusive practices, it is the children’s views that are of particular importance because they experience the impact of inclusionary or exclusionary practices first-hand:

... by directly listening to marginalized and excluded people themselves, we might gain important insights in relation to inclusive education. In this sense, marginalized people’s voice should have a central role in the process of inclusion. Children could be considered as one of the marginalized groups whose voice have been neglected within inclusive education (Messiou, 2006, p. 40).

Although the purpose of my research is not to inform policy, as was the case in Allan’s (2007) research, it still contributes to the discourse that challenges the value placed on children’s ability to have their voice listened to about issues that matter to them. “Voice” is not limited to the spoken word, and as such, new ways need to be developed to provide a multitude of means by which to communicate (Clark, McQuail, & Moss, 2003). The inclusion of children’s voice in research, therefore, necessitates the utilisation of suitable methods and methodologies that are capable of empowering children to share their lived experiences and perspectives. Additionally, it is important to note that listening not only includes the spoken word but, as Uprichard (2008) contends, it is also about the silences. These should be recognised as neither neutral nor empty; they are an integral part of the dialogue and, as such, should form part of the analysis. In keeping with more participatory principles, my research challenges the positivist paradigm that defines children as passive

objects (Martin & Faulkner, 2008). It also enables participants to “define their own reality and challenge the imposed knowledge” (Veale, 2005, p. 254).

3.4 Inclusion

Reliance upon the normal curve as a sorting tool is certainly not a new educational practice. The marriage of science and education proved to be an enduring one, especially following the child study movement, coupled with the emergence of tests and measurements at the turn of the 20th century and the added weight to the concept of “genetically inferior intellect” in the educational system (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 45). The Binet-Simon Intelligence Test was developed in the early 1900s and was used to assess the learning needs of children who needed to be “rescued”/fixed (Baker, 1998). Its importation into the United States by pioneers of IQ testing and ardent eugenicists, such as Terman, Goddard, and Yerkes, paved the way for civilian testing (Cronbach, 1975; Shuker, 1987). Eventually, tests like the Binet-Simon grew widely used throughout the Western world (Adams, 2005). Testing and measurements became a feature of education, and from the 1920s, a number of schools adopted whole-school testing programmes for guidance purposes, streaming students and preparing them for their place in society (Shuker, 1987). Nowadays, IQ and mental ability tests have become the “gatekeepers” to educational status in education (Shuker, 1987). It is almost as if they are perceived to provide scientific evidence for the sorting of people (in this case, children) in society based on their innate general intelligence. However, the testing “largely serves to reinforce and reproduce the existing structures of inequality” (Adams, 2000). The construction of the child forced by these models leads professionals to believe that the problem indeed lies within the child. The child is thus examined, and it is up to the professional to provide an answer or a solution. Moreover, given that the IQ test came out of America’s revered scientific tradition, neither its legitimacy nor the accompanying practice of sorting children for educational purposes was ever called into question. What naturalised these ideas and gave them momentum was their association with the methods of natural science.

The normal curve proved to have the most impact within the institution of special education. In light of the historical relationship between medicine and disability, schools readily embraced the medical model for understanding and responding to disability (Gabel, 2005).

As conceptualised within special education, disability is understood to be a pathological condition intrinsic to the individual, identifiable through scientific assessment (e.g. IQ tests, standardised tests of achievement, and social and behavioural scales), and presumably, responsive to remedial instruction that seeks to restore or approximate ‘normalcy’ (Odom et al., 2005). This route is further strengthened by a number of standard introductory texts in psychology (Eysenck, 2000; Sternberg, 2003) that provide an overview of contemporary approaches to studying the subject. Although there are differences in emphasis, the core coverage in these books usually deals with the following branches of psychology:

1. Cognition, including attention and memory;
2. Language and thought;
3. Developmental psychology;
4. The biological basis of behaviour, including neuropsychology;
5. Individual differences.

In criticising the content of most contemporary academic studies in psychology, the approach exemplified here has understandably had a huge influence on the way many people view the contribution that applied psychology can make to understanding development and learning, as well as on our practice as practising psychologists. This approach has spawned an emphasis on studying individual differences in human mental functioning and finding ways of measuring these differences, often using psychometric instruments. For practising psychologists, such instruments provide a vehicle for exploring the inner workings of the mind and arriving at explanations about the causes of problems in learning and behaviour. Furthermore, based on this approach, if the reasons for school underachievement and behavioural difficulties are not within the child, then they are possibly due to an environmental deficit. This way of thinking, which gained prominence between the 1940s and 1960s, “singled out the family unit as the transmitter of deficiencies” (Pearl, 1997, p. 133).

This particular way of understanding and responding to disability gave rise to the notion that there are two types of children, namely “normal”/“average” and “special”/“below average”, who require qualitatively different instruction and different training (Reid & Valle, 2004). Now, more than 40 years since the inception of special education, it has become so

naturalised to still think in these terms: that a parallel system of education for children with disabilities is regarded not only as unproblematic but, on the contrary, as necessary.

3.4.1 Exclusion through Inclusion

“They sit beside the ocean, combing their long golden hair and singing to passing sailors. But anyone who hears their song is bewitched by its sweetness, and they are drawn to that island like iron to a magnet. And their ship smashes upon rocks as sharp as spears. And those sailors join the many victims of the Sirens in a meadow filled with skeletons” (Homer, 1989, p. Chapter 9)

Much like the Sirens of Greek mythology who sang songs that sailors could not resist, our anxiety-ridden culture seems unable to resist the Siren song of normativity, the compelling cultural message that calls each one of us and defines what each should be doing in order to be considered successful. So enchanted is our culture by the Siren song of normative mythology that its application to education continues to increase. Having established high standards and measurable goals as the means by which to improve student learning outcomes, the federally legislated *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 required schools to develop and administer basic skills assessments to students in certain years. Based on test performances, educators now choose to apply evidence-based practices, which are grounded in scientific research, within their classrooms. Indeed, in the spirit of leaving no child behind, we now strive towards newer and more ubiquitous ways to identify and categorise school children in relation to one another. All manner of rankings, ranging from tests to classroom-based assessments, eventually position children along pre-determined standards. It is as though we are intently rooting out and exposing all differences in relation to an established norm, an institutionalised practice that (Baker, 2002) calls the “hunt for disability” (p. 137).

Countries seem to make it their ultimate goal to develop an educational system that is committed to encouraging inclusion and democracy. Terms like “inclusion” and “inclusive education” have also locally shot to the forefront of the local agenda through the Ministry for Education and Employment in Malta, especially due to the influence of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Salamanca Statement (1994). In 2019,

yet another policy document, entitled *Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion*, surfaced in Malta. This policy consists of various visionary statements uttered by a number of people, including the ex-Minister for Education, the Hon. Evarist Bartolo MP, who said that:

Inclusion, inclusive education and inclusive practices are *fundamental for an operative and effective education* system. We believe that it is the duty of the Government and society at large to ensure that all citizens are given equitable prospects and experiences through an inclusive education that is designed to meet the strengths and needs of each individual child and young person (p. 4)

The Permanent Secretary at the time, Dr Francis Fabri, also added:

Our vision is for Maltese society to *become truly an inclusive community* – a society in which belongingness, equity, diversity and rights play a major role within our education system (p. 5)

Likewise, Director-General Maria McNamara also concurred that:

Every child and young person benefits from involvement in learning contexts that endeavour for quality, recognise and celebrate diversity, and are culturally and socially responsive. The success of this system depends on high-quality leadership, teaching and learning, the engagement of parents and communities, and the ability of *learners to choose meaningful learning pathways* starting from the early years and throughout their life course (p. 5)

The policy document also consists of a section that includes all the related legislation and local documentation that inspired its creation, amongst which are:

- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); and
- the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) (United Nations Educational, 1994).

These two policy frameworks were very important initiatives intended to bring all children to the forefront of education policy on an international level (Hunt, 2011). Indeed, these two frameworks, especially the Salamanca Statement, introduced the idea of inclusive education not only as a political objective that needs to be reached but also as a global policy vision. Whilst on paper, the aims of the Salamanca Statement appear to be truly intentioned to create inclusion, their translation in practice occurs as follows:

1. A student is targeted as having a deficiency relative to the norm;
2. The student is referred to take a standardised assessment with an EP (usually an IQ test and another standardised assessment);
3. The EP prepares a psychoeducational report;
4. The report is sent to the statementing panel;
5. If the report indicates that the child meets the necessary requirements, they are then classified based on categories like specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, attention deficit disorder – ADHD);
6. The child is then statemented (provided with a statementing number) and can thus receive the support of a Learning Support Educator (LSE), who is responsible for assisting the teaching and learning process led by the class teacher, as well as promoting the independence and fulfilment of all learners with a recognised statement of needs in all learning experiences within the educational journey. LSE can offer one-to-one or shared support, depending on the level of need required by the child in question;
7. Each statemented child has an individual educational plan;
8. These students can also benefit from other forms of support, such as early intervention, speech therapy, psychologists, counsellors, etc.

If a student does not respond to the tiers of support provided within mainstream education, a referral to a special educational setup, like the Nurture Centres (referred to as Nurture centres to ensure anonymity given the few places that offer such service), occurs. At present, Malta has five Nurture Centres, which aim to offer students alternative educational provision and mentoring during their reintegration process. The service of Nurture centres has been set up with the intention of inclusion and to offer “*temporary* programmes for learners with severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties” (2017, n.d.)

This last statement clearly shows how, very often, policy consists of a double gesture that contributes to creating inequality in its desire and ambition for equality (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2004). This links to what Rancière calls the “police order” (Rancière as cited in Chambers, p. 71), which was mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, and which refers to the set of implicit rules and conventions which determine the distribution of roles in a community and the forms of exclusion which operate within it. This order is founded on what Rancière calls the “distribution of the sensible” (Rancière, 2006, p. 12). He is here referring to the way in which roles and modes of participation in a common social world are determined by establishing possible modes of perception (those students who are average will be placed in mainstream classes, but those who are below average will be placed in structures that will allow them to work hard to reach if possible the average student—if they are too far off, then they will remain segregated to allow the average student to flourish). By formulating the notion that “every child and young person” is a lifelong learner, as we find very often in educational agendas, the child that does not belong to the notion of “all” children thus poses problems to the schooling system. These policies may intend to create equality while decreasing arbitrary exclusion, but very often, they construct categories that are viewed as problematic.

In *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (1963), Foucault discusses the structure of nosology, which is the branch of medical science concerned with classifying diseases, in the “perspective distribution which enables us to see in paralysis a symptom, in syncope an episode, and in apoplexy an organic and functional attack” (p. 6). Foucault states that within the study of language, there is an extensive discussion over the concept of strata or categories and with each formulation, there is an implied distribution of the visible and the articulable, which acts upon itself. The visibility itself changes in style, while the statements themselves change the system. If education is perceived as the means to prepare children to participate in society in the future, then eliminating those children who do not fall within the scope of education as the tool that shapes and moulds the future society becomes an implicit threat to the said society. From the viewpoint of Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2004, education is all about “making people”; indeed, the political intentions or designs of education become apparent through the policy documents that govern education. The wording behind the intention of Nurture Centres shows that the system itself created this distribution of the sensible in this way:

- children
should *not* display severe social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties;
- professionals/those who maintain power
assess children's (who demonstrate behaviour out of the norm) readiness to go back to mainstream school once they have undergone an intensive programme on emotional literacy, self-esteem, anger management, and social skills training;
- administrators
deciders the number of days children can spend at the mainstream school if good performance is seen.

These solutions, provided through numerous services, continue to insinuate the remediation of an ailment, a construction of deficiency in children or their way of life. This continual swarming around children (Baker, 2002), by testing, identifying issues that go against the norms, designing and implementing strategies, and eventually, issuing referrals to myriads of services, has been happening for decades, although perhaps, the quantity and quality of such procedures have changed over time. Policies have continued to increase the stakes in response to global trends. This response changes and fluctuates all the time, and thus, it can be concluded that policies are in a state of constant becoming, especially when considering how those who come up with and write policies, the practitioners who are to put such policies into practice, and the external actors that form opinions on these policies, all question and interpret the policies at hand.

3.4.2 The Making of People through Policy

When legislation is presented on a national level and international level, there is the risk of malleability, which is both a matter of local interpretations and of the design of the legislation itself. As a policy ideal of education, inclusive education involves different and, at times, contradictory aspirations concerning how education is structured and organised, as well as specific goals with the future society in mind. The way this concept is defined, understood,

and implemented varies greatly in the studies undertaken and in current educational practices; there are also discrepancies between different countries and even within the same country (Amor et al., 2021). Such variations arise as different contexts allow for a variety of understandings and because international policies must be adapted to the existing policy environment of the country in question (Magnússon, Göransson, & Lindqvist, 2019). Thus, it is highly likely that different actors support different arrangements and interpretations of the same policy. Therefore, policies often become a concoction of political compromises, contradictions, and unclear prioritisations that must be interpreted and brought into effect at both the macro (society) and micro (school) levels (Maguire, Ball, & Braun, 2011). Within themselves, policies contain more or less implicit assumptions about how students are to grow into “citizens of and for society” (p. 15), the type of citizen that is to be shaped by education, and the society that is supposed to be constructed as a result (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2004). Thus, it can be said that there is a political aspect to the reason behind schooling, which is embedded in the formulation of the student as a future citizen. Indeed, the current student can become a lifelong learner or an impossible one. These concepts do not only dictate who the child is but also who the child should be (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2004). Therefore, it can be said that policy both defines the desirable student and provides a vision of the future citizen while stating that children who do not fit into that ideal mould should be saved (or rather fixed).

These salvation themes further illustrate the ambition of amending the society of the future, an objective that often features in policies. These salvation themes are based on ensuring the involvement of specific groups of disadvantaged individuals in a society that works towards social justice and adopts measures to that degree. The way an issue is put forward influences how it is understood. Thus, how we formulate problematization can affect how we understand the problem at hand as well as the possible solutions that can or cannot be used to solve the said problem (Bacchi, 1999). The way problems are represented can act as the combined answer to how issues are formulated and solutions are presented. Thus, it can be said that a “learning society”, “a knowledgeable society”, or even an “internationally competitive society” are shaped through the policy goals of utilising education as the means to prepare students so that they participate within these societies. An example of such a policy is the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) which was and still remains the official launch of inclusive education as an international policy project. Thus, it is an almost

obligatory reference in both empirical and theoretical research on inclusion. It is worth citing at length the second article of the Salamanca Statement:

We believe and proclaim that:

- every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning,
- every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs,
- Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs,
- those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs,
- and regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 1994, art. 2).

As a field of research, inclusion does not refer to a single or homogenous ideology; instead, it involves a range of understandings that vary greatly both in theory and in practice and because of this, inclusive education contains several fields of tension (Nilholm & Göransson, 2014). First of all, there is the tension that comes with the question of who is in focus (i.e. which student groups are supposed to be included or are deemed to be excluded (Lassen, Jensen, & Hedegaard Hansen, 2018). Some researchers argue that the identification of educational difficulties and the labelling of students contribute to more explicit practices that could lead to exclusion (Vislie, 2003). Based on this argument, it can be said that the marginalisation of vulnerable student groups will exist so long as educational difficulties are viewed as the result of individual factors rather than contextual or organisational factors (Ainscow, 2002). This argument challenges the legitimacy of special education as a field of research and practice while ushering in inclusive education as a concept that distinguishes itself from special education (Magnússon, Göransson, & Lindqvist, 2019).

The organisational features of inclusion are yet another source of tension. The points cited from the Salamanca Statement simultaneously claim that a person's needs and characteristics must be considered by the educational organisation and that students should receive education through child-centred pedagogies in mainstream schools. Thus, these statements maintain a normative position when it comes to the placement and teaching of students while also allowing variations. It could be argued, at the very least hypothetically, that there may be individuals who require specific educational provisions and pedagogies other than the ones mentioned here. In other words, inclusion can be interpreted to be specifically about SEN students; however, in its most encompassing definition, inclusion can also be deemed to be about all children. To establish the notion of "all children" and, consequently, include the excluded, special programmes are required (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2004). The way the Salamanca Statement caused the reformulation of special needs education into inclusive education can be viewed as a concrete example of how one such special programme can prove insufficient and unjust, making the creation of a different programme necessary. The recurring reference to "all children" in the statement also highlights the risk trajectory of those children who do not fit in the set category and who, ultimately, risk becoming social outcasts as adults. These at-risk children call for remediation, which can be achieved through the reformulation of special needs education and socialisation in the community of the mainstream school, as mentioned in the Salamanca Statement.

The Salamanca Statement allows for multiple interpretations of what inclusion is. Seeing how policies are often the products of compromises, as they are meant for both interpretation and enactment (Maguire, Ball, & Braun, 2011), the unclear definition of inclusion as a policy concept may potentially be by design. The idea of engaging in "New thinking in Special Needs Education", as mentioned in the statement, is, for instance, neither radical nor revolutionary. As already mentioned, the Salamanca Statement's point of departure is traditional special education, and so the statement's primary message is to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools. Despite putting forth several notions concerning relational views on disability (Nilholm & Göransson, 2014) and providing some suggestions to finance and organise education in alternative ways so as to achieve inclusion, the statement fails to question the notion of disability per se or how special education can cause the exclusion of organisational traditions (e.g. Skrtic, 1986). The

statement does not refer to any radical normative demands when it comes to the organisation of education either, apart from the inclusion of students with disabilities students if this is deemed reasonable and cost-efficient by both national and local governments and as long as the dissemination of the necessary resources is possible.

Twenty-seven years after the statement's publication, the empirical claim that mainstream schools with an inclusive orientation are 'the most effective means' to reach the aforementioned goals is still disputed. Ensuring that education is indeed inclusive is both the end goal of the statement and also the means through which one can create a society that features specific characteristics and is made up of citizens that have particular moral values. Thus, apart from recreating the concept of special education under the name of inclusive education, the aim behind the Salamanca Statement was also to construct the future, the society, and the citizens that resonate with the cosmopolitan ideals passed on through education (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2004). Here, a tautological argument relates the improvement of society with the betterment of individuals in a perpetual cycle, implying that "narratives of social or economic progress and the revitalization of democracy will bring personal betterment" (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2004, p. 436).

Indeed, the Salamanca Statement explicitly states that inclusive education has several implications outside the educational context. Inclusive education is, in fact, linked to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), which describes the purpose of education as "the full development of the human personality" and states that education should also "promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups" (art. 26). Thus, education is regarded as a public good, while inclusive education is deemed to be the expression of a vision "inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development" and as a "crucial step" that leads to an inclusive society (UNESCO, 1994, art. 3). These ideas are in agreement with the collectivist view of society, which suggests that undergoing schooling of a certain character should contribute to creating a better and more united society in the future.

3.4.3 Inclusion in Practice and the Role of the EP

The available literature provides several examples of EPs working in ways that directly promote inclusive practices in schools. Even though these may not reflect typical equality practices, there is still the potential to play a major role in developing inclusion throughout the world. Among these examples, there are papers on EPs helping mainstream schools in supporting children with behaviour problems, for example, Barrett (2004), Burton (2004), Frydenberg and Lewis (2004), Hutchings and Huber (2004), McLaughlin, Cox, Franey, and Maddern (2004), and Dawn Honey (2006). There are also accounts of how EPs help to support students with learning difficulties in mainstream schools (Dunsmuir, Clifford, & Dunsmuir, 2006; Hayes & Hayes, 2002; Murray & Brooks, 2016; Hodson & Barnett, 2001; Medcalf, Longmore, & O’Leary, 2014). Other examples consider the work that EPs do to help schools develop general policies on inclusion (Farrell, 2006). There are also examples of EPs working with government agencies to develop countrywide inclusive strategies (e.g. Mnkandla & Matruse, 2002; Muthukrishna & Baez, 2002; van Kraayenoord, 2002). These papers represent just a few examples that clearly indicate how EPs can work to support inclusion through equality. Studies on this matter are on the rise, and there is insufficient space in this thesis to provide an account and critique of each of them.

Moreover, there have been a number of indications suggesting that EPs are striving to become more inclusive in their work. In the UK, there is a nationwide interest group known as *Educational Psychologists for Inclusion* that meets regularly to share ideas and recent developments. Furthermore, the proceedings of the 2002 annual colloquium of the International School Psychology Association (2002) indicated the rich and varied ways in which EPs can support the development of more inclusive practices in schools and among the local authorities. In England, the Association of Educational Psychologists (1999), one of the professional associations that advise the government, local authorities, and EPs about the development of the profession, has provided written guidance for its members on ways to foster inclusion. Similar policy guidance has been issued in the USA by the National Association of School Psychologists (1999). This emphasises the continuing support for the development of inclusive programmes for all children and young people. Furthermore, such guidelines also provide guidance to EPs on the development of inclusive education for students with disabilities. These developments suggest that EPs are embracing the inclusion agenda.

However, evidence is not always as positive. For example, a survey of educational psychology practice in 10 different countries indicates that EPs continue to have a key role in the *assessment* of children with special educational needs and in making recommendations for segregated special educational placements, with this being the most commonly performed task in eight of the countries that took part in the survey (Jimerson et al., 2004). Furthermore, over the past 20 years, a number of surveys concerning teachers' perceptions of the EP's role in the UK and USA indicate that schools expect them to conduct special education assessments (Dowling, 2007). This is also in line with a 2019 Maltese policy which outlined the role of the "psychologist" as involving three key roles, suggesting that EPs in Malta are mainly involved *after* the child becomes a difficulty to the school. These terms are: "assess", "detect difficulties", and "provide strategies".

Farrell (2006) noted that teachers in different countries would like EPs to spend less time on individual assessments and more on consultative and preventative work. This move could act as a lever to change. In the US, new legislation has been introduced stating that special educational assessments will no longer have to rely on IQ tests and that placement decisions can be based on multidisciplinary assessments, something which can have the potential to reduce EPs' reliance on using IQ tests. Meanwhile, developments in EP training in the UK indicate how training programmes are drawing on a much broader range of areas in academic psychology, in particular social and organisational psychology, and that there is much less reliance on the study of individual differences and psychometrics (ISPA, 2003). Moreover, in relation to developments in England and Wales, there have been major changes in the management of children's services; EPs are being required to work in more community-orientated multi-agency settings, where project work, training, and organisational development are being actively encouraged. Furthermore, the British government has funded a review of EP services to evaluate the contribution that they can make within these new arrangements.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has mapped the movements of the concept of student "voice"; the various territories, histories, temporalities, political, economic, and social contexts through which student "voice" has journeyed. I have analysed the rationales that have been formed for

student “voice” and voice of dissent to these celebratory claims. While student “voice” has been argued to position students as knowledge producers, to engender dialogical encounters, to empower students, and to improve schools, its claims about the subject, the possibility of dialogical understanding, power and improvement have also been troubled. “Voice” may listen, understand, empower and improve, but it may also essentialise the subject who speaks, flatten dissenting views through consensus, perpetuate binary relations between oppressor/oppressed, liberator/liberated, and be used to further govern students. Further interrogation is needed of processes of subjectification in and through student voice work. In particular, exploration is needed of how desire and power flow in the enactment of student “voice” work and the dynamics of the apparent inconsistencies and contradictions of student “voice” in a neoliberal milieu. This focus works in the noted “gap” between the ideals of student “voice” and its enactments (Robinson & Taylor, 2009). To work in this gap, it is necessary to further examine the constitution of voice in schools and other associations that murmur around the invitation to have a “voice”.

It is with this chapter’s review of the celebrations and critiques of student “voice” as a concept that the following chapter introduces the methodology for the research. The research questions are concerned with the capacity of “voice” to affect and to be effective: physically, conceptually, methodologically, and textually. The first question seeks to look at what “voice” is, and the second question focuses instead on the effects and effects of “voice”. We know nothing about a “voice” until we know what it can do, in other words, what its effects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other effects, with the effects of another “voice”—such as that of the EP.

CHAPTER 4 - METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.0 Introduction

Rancière believes that it is necessary to fully appreciate the works of a thinker not only by examining what they produce but also how they produce it (Rancière, 1995). A “method”, according to Rancière, means a “path” (Isabella, 2014, p.1). However, it is not a path that a thinker needs to follow but a trajectory that he constructs by himself. When Rancière imperatively stresses the importance of method in his works, it is perhaps because he also claims that what he has been doing so far has been that of establishing a method rather than inventing a theory, for he: “loves trees enough to avoid destroying them to add one more theory to all those available on the market” (Rancière, 2009, p.114). Though asserted in a rather playful tone, Rancière juxtaposes the crucial difference between theory and method, in which the former merely feeds the reader with a belief to be consumed passively, while the latter provides a tool to be used actively. A proper method can show the territory of thought with a critical view. It serves the thinker to map the places they go to while also marking the limitations that they will encounter. Rancière’s method has been characterized as a polemical intervention which draws attention to the bold nature of objects of thinking and situates them in a “field of tensions” (Rancière, 1995, p.114). His method is remarkable for it specifically stages a moment of struggle where ideas are in action and, at the same time, interrupts the established systems of thought. The richness and fruitfulness of this approach are to define scenes where we can see things play out, with the idea that the origin itself is a kind of scene, never yielding to the temptation of linearity or causality but bringing out scenes and instances that together form an intellectual encounter.

Equality as a concept in Rancière’s writings is probably one of the most difficult concepts to grasp, in part because we (especially as professionals within the field of education) have so much familiarity with other arguments for equality. As an EP, I used to perceive myself as experienced and qualified in the area of equality. My work, after all, revolves around embracing statements of vision during an individual educational plan (IEP) that refer to every child as being unique with individual needs and ways of learning that need to be recognised, appreciated, and met. These ways of learning are then put in place via actions that (would hopefully) allow these children to be confident, caring, valued, independent, motivated, supported, self-disciplined, and respected. I believed that I practised equality because I involved the children in these meetings, and I asked for their views (or so I thought). As the “expert” advocating for children, I often embraced a common sense position, possibly

because I was unaware of the implications that listening would entail. Yet, embedded in this common sense position are some powerful assumptions that ironically contribute to the absenting of children's voice because they are often predicated on maintaining the binary distinction between adult and child, educator and student, listening and silencing—a concept far off from equality as intended by Rancière.

As was mentioned in Chapter 2, Rancière (2013) argues that, undeniably, we live in social orders structured by vertical power relations and dominations that are governed by police orders. Rancière (2013) argues that we find equality imminent to the social order, which is structured in domination. He explains this by saying that for social order to sustain itself, it requires one person to remain in their position of relative power and another to remain in their position of relative submission. However, they have to be able to understand each other, so when the dominant carries out their dominator's orders, they demonstrate and verify that they are equal despite the fact that what is carried out is a practical inequality. Yet, what is demonstrated at the end of that situation is that both the dominated and the dominating have the same access to knowledge of the language that the other has; they share what Rancière calls the "equality of intelligence" (Rancière, 2013, p. 176). Rancière says that there are two things one can do with equality:

- Assume it, which means that when encountering another human being, the assumption of equality is granted, and therefore it is assumed that both are equal

or

- Verify it in historical instances, finding moments of eruption where the logic of equality interrupts that logic of domination.

One of the moments of eruption where the logic of equality interrupts the logic of domination was the situation in France during May of 1968. During this time, there were specific categories of people, especially the proletariat, who were an oppressed and dominated category, but, at the same time, they also had a privileged position in relation to power. This is because the proletariat would witness the domination of the capitalist society but could also possibly be the key agential resource for transforming it. Yet, students were leading the

protests when they started to erupt, and students were not part of that category of the proletariat (Rancière, 2011). Louis Althusser's writings (as we have already mentioned in the previous chapter), in some ways, suggested that the students at the barricades were the wrong agents for this political transformation (Rancière, 2011). Rancière's fallout from Althusser was mainly because of this reasoning. Rancière says instead that equality and political transformation cannot be pre-determined and coded into categories because the subject who expresses and demonstrates equality is not a subject that one can know beforehand. But it is only after a political moment occurs that one can then look back and see a political subject emerging as an expression of equality. For Rancière, politics occurs through the revelations of a miscount in which a category that was not to be counted emerges, not just as a category but as a full subject—as an equal political subject. This notion of the miscount becomes absolutely central and what happens in the miscount, for Rancière, is to be called a political moment. This moment of political transformation cannot be understood unless one is open to the possibility that equality will be demonstrated and, in its demonstration, a subject emerges from the bottom up, in resistance to power and one that is both expressing equality and demanding equality. Therefore, it is only by looking back to identify when a political moment occurred that we can see a political subject as an expression of equality.

This complexity and sharpness of observation incurred fear within me (as a researcher and as an EP) because it required a high degree of retrospection. It required me to be standing somewhere further along in the storyline and to adopt a newly realized perspective, a feat that is usually achieved once an ending is reached or is at least in view. Many times, the full narrative arc could only be grasped after the story's resolution. Constructing stories while still searching for their outcome was a disingenuous exercise compared to writing about an untampered-with past. What I found myself doing was reflecting on questions like What will I remember later on, out of all that I am experiencing now? And how will I know when I've arrived at the right "later on" when I have metamorphosed into the woman with the best perspective to finish the piece? As I wrote, I yearned for communion with my own future self so that I could tap into her hindsight, her remembrance of the present moment. It was like trying to escape myself in order to re-arrive in my body. In many ways, my memories are so much stronger than my observations in writing will ever hope to be: The boy who watches the glint of sunlight off the waxen magnolia leaves on the school ground, the boy who is fascinated by the cracks in the sidewalk that the weeds shoot through—these are details I may

not catch if I wait. Even if flawed or incomplete, my memories of this research left lasting impressions on me, and they influenced my inner realities to a much greater extent than the pieces of information I gathered at the moment. Yet, amidst all of this complexity, this dissertation intends to spot these moments of politics where a political subject emerges. It intends to provide a stage and *see* that moment, grasp that moment, and understand it.

The research assumes that:

- These political subjects must have been there before, but their “voice” was occluded by the police order, such that it was rendered invisible or deemed to be noise. Thus, there was no way to see it prior to the moment of politics that made it visible;
- Politics is fundamentally those moments when a logic of equality intersects and interrupts a logic of inequality. This model of politics refuses the possibility of prediction because we can never predict the rupture and the transformation that is about to happen, i.e. politics as a moment or event comes first, and a political subject come after.

I start this chapter by speaking about my ambivalent positionalities and the data associated with them in terms of Deleuze’s figuration of the fold (1988/1993, 1999/1986). Deleuze undoes the assumption of a distinction between the inside and outside of subjectivity and relations, the self and the world, and between the world and texts written. For Deleuze, the “outside” is “a moving matter animated” by “folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside of the outside” (Deleuze, 1999/1986, p. 80). Folds of material selves wrinkle with folds of time and memory and the folds of written text. Human bodies and matter of various speeds and intensities fold around, through, and between each other, threading and unthreading new folds. The world folds into human bodies, shaping movements, stances, utterances and embodied identities, while bodies simultaneously and continually fold out into the world, symbiotically shaping, moving, morphing, and transforming bodies, spaces, texts, and atmospheres. The figuration of the fold disrupts false dichotomies, as the outside is brought within (folding), and the inside is brought without (unfolding). To conceptualise me, the researcher as enfolded is to displace the objective knower, as well as the phenomenological “vulnerable researcher”

(Behar, 1997, p. 32) who seeks out “true feeling” (Berlant, 2011, p. 65) in an educational field. Knowledge is not obtained outside the world but rather generated in enfolded engagement within it (Barad, 2007). The entanglements of the fold render it impossible to ever be unproblematically removed because, as a researcher, I am part of that which I seek to study (Barad, 2007). In making decisions about research methods and instruments, when to start and stop the audio recorder, and what data to include and exclude in writing, I make a fold to what I am enfolded within. Even these “decisions” and “intentions” are formed within entangled historical, social, and material folds of elements that exceed me as a researcher (Barad, 2007).

4.1 Ethics – Part 1

I start this section by talking about ethics, as I did not want to take a cursory approach to ethical matters. The basics of consent, information, considerations of benefits and harm, confidentiality and anonymity and data access/storage requirements will be spoken about at the end. However, I hope that by documenting the research process and speaking about specific ethical issues that, as a researcher, I had to think about at the start of, during, and at the end of the research and discuss the challenging issues that might have risen during the process, is even more important than those which are just within the tick-box of institutional forms. Questions of power, rights, and moral principles underpin research, but ‘ethics’ is never a matter of simply meeting institutional requirements. Ethics is about going beyond the forms that we, as students, are encouraged to submit. (Yes, the form filling has to be done, and it is important, but there is more than this to questions of ethics). Ethics seems to me to be about sensibility, a way of being in the world as a researcher. Ethics is also a way of doing research; it is about the never-ending development of research practice, underpinned by commitments to working with and through normative principles held in tension.

Throughout the whole process of writing, I constantly thought about a number of issues, such as: “who should be the arbiter of what constitutes harm?”, “is it always straightforward?” I pondered upon issues such as “does NOT asking a question to a participant on the grounds that the researcher considers that it might be upsetting constitute a denial of the opportunity for the interviewee to make their own mind up on whether to answer or not?” This is an autonomy versus protection dilemma which often appeared in my research with children. I

also pondered upon ways of dealing with potentially negative analysis. “How do I deal with negative interpretations of the institution in which I was doing the research or of the participants? How should I balance the obligation to the truth with that of potential harm? What about the right to be informed? Must the participants always be informed about critical elements of analysis, and should they have the right to veto elements of the resulting thesis text? What about consent? Is consent simply a form-signing event?”

This chapter is a recognition that these were ethical issues arising in this particular research, and it aims to show a bespoke explanation of how, as a researcher, I understood and tried to resolve them. I emerge from this process with a newfound understanding that the conduct of ethical research is often a matter of finding ways to reconcile apparently conflicting principles. I understand that this means that I must always watch myself, my interactions, and my decisions with an ethical/sensitive eye. Similarly, I want the reader to see that I think about ethics beyond the ethics form and that it informs all my decisions.

4.2 Methodology

“Reality is messy and nuanced, clear lines of engagement are not always straightforward, and reality is multiple, fluid, and ephemeral, with issues being multi-layered and multi-faceted” (Liebling, 2001, p. 476). As a means of grappling with the “messiness”, the “slipperiness” of multiple realities”, Law (2004) advocates the production of a specific research practice called “method assemblage” (Law, 2004, p. 14). As a research practice, method assemblage involves slipping in and out of focus on knowability. I found myself clinging to some key navigational pointers; specifically, that method assemblage, as Law defines it, explicitly draws attention to the part we, as researchers, play in the social construction of reality and of knowledge. Thus, I was encouraged to “show my workings” (Law, 2004, p. 40). Indeed, Law (2004) argues that “social ... science investigations interfere with the world ... things change as a result. The issue, then, is not to seek disengagement but rather with how to engage” (Law, 2004, p. 14). Law (2004) argues that reality is multiple. It avoids ultimate knowability, and it shifts and comes into focus, into being, in a multiplicity of ways depending on the practices and methods used to explore it. He states that methods do not just describe social realities but are also involved in creating them (Law, 2004). If this is the case, methods are always political, and it raises the question of what kinds of social realities the researcher

wants to create. Law (2004) asks us to reflect on what it is that we are trying to see, to “know”, to do; acknowledge complexity (and complicity); and provide context, or rather, give some sense of a multiplicity of contexts, the “slipperiness” of “things” (Law, 2004, p. 24), the multiplicity of relationships between things, contexts, and people.

John Law (2004) is the in-between of Rancière and my research. The “why” of my engagement that Law asks researchers to do will be done through Rancière’s concept of politics and in the identification of moments of politics when a new subject emerges. These political moments will emerge out of a miscount, which Rancière refers to as the “part of those that have no part” (Rancière, 1999, p.11). By drawing attention to the inevitability of the constitutive outside of the social, Rancière forces, a constructive reckoning with the way more capacious conceptions of the political can elide and reproduce the inherently partial nature of the attendant social formation. This concept of a miscount can be likened to the process of a census where every individual is counted, classed, and placed in categories. Politics here becomes a balancing of conflictual forces among these pre-existing groups. Politics for Rancière becomes this very distinct and uncommon activity which occurs when this counting that we think we have got is revealed to be totally disturbed because a category that was not to be counted emerges, not just as a category but as a full subject—as an equal political subject. This phenomenon can also be seen historically in cases where a society thought of itself as democratic. Because we think we have a full account of social reality, we cannot see outside of that. And yet, on the basis of gender, half the population simply did not politically participate at the time. Through feminist movements, there was the mobilisation and the appearance of a political subject.

Similarly, in education, the first assumption about “students’ voice” or “children’s voice”, as it is used today in many local policy documents, is that it is a tool that enables the child to freely articulate a spontaneous, coherent, consistent, and unadulterated position, entirely consistent with their individual conscience and their own interests. But what if there is something beyond what we have already pre-defined as “voice”? What if the children that are labelled as having challenging behaviour are indeed agents for political transformation that help us spot those gaps in the educational system? The purpose of this dissertation is to challenge these pre-defined notions and to spot moments of politics where a political subject emerges.

To this end, the following questions are intended to provide the necessary direction for the current study:

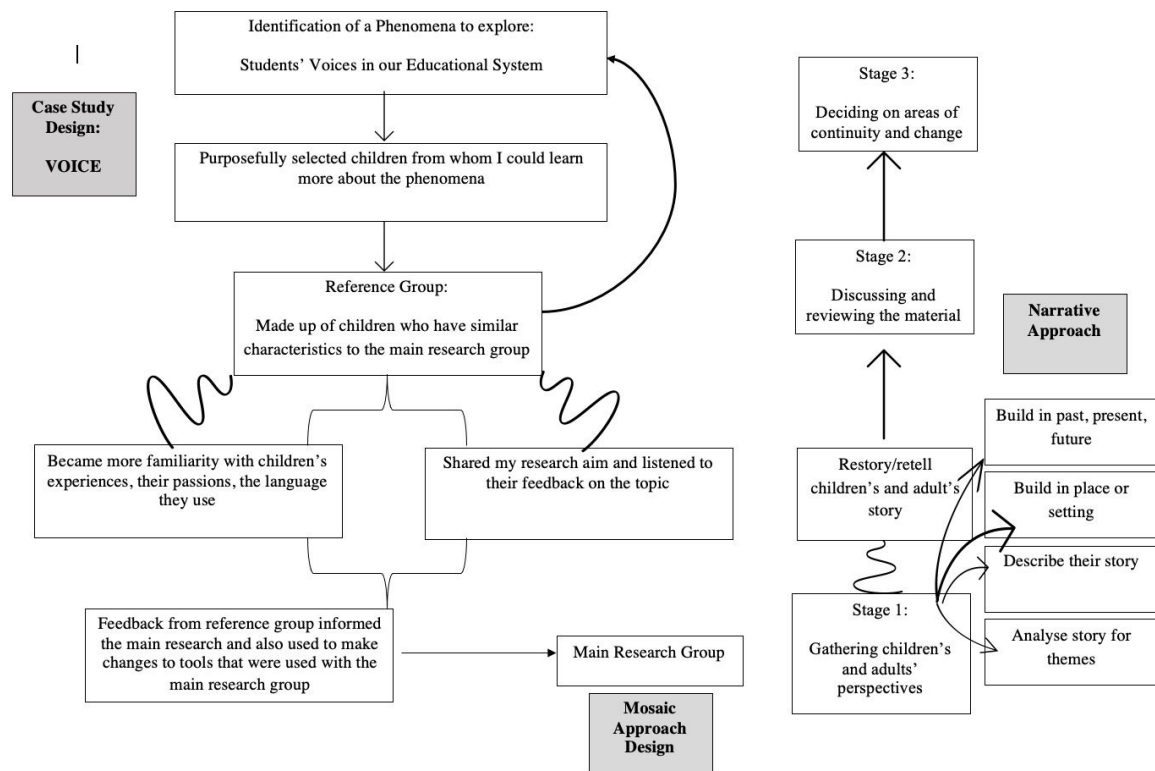
- a) What is children's voice, and how is it accessed?
- b) What is the impact of this understanding on EP practice?

Through these research questions, I aim to explore listening as a social and political process. The politics of listening can disrupt power and privilege and harmful binaries of "Us and Them" with the aim of political equality. I intend to explore why we should listen and how—in adversarial, tense, and unequal political moments. This intervention takes place at the boundary of politics and psychology. This study was conducted utilizing qualitative research, which is appropriate for developing an in-depth understanding of participants' narratives of their experiences (Merriam, 1998). During the process of determining the research design for this study, I considered a number of other methodological approaches but determined that they were not as beneficial as the qualitative case study approach. Phenomenology was considered as an alternative qualitative research design but was dismissed because the goal of investigating the perceived complexities of voice would not have been fully realised with a phenomenological design (Moustakas, 1994). The quantitative method was rejected based on the purpose of the current study, as I did not seek to detail causal inferences by observing a large sample size to develop quantitative data (Allen, Jr., 2017; Babbie, 2010). A study which is qualitative in nature was chosen in that it is an "interpretative study of a specific issue or problem in which the researcher is central to the sense that is made" (Banister et al., 1995, p. 2). This highlights the nature of qualitative research as an interactive and ongoing process between the researcher and the researched (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2013).

The case study methodology fits the needs of this inquiry. Stake (1995) states that the "first obligation" (p. 4) in case study research is to fully develop and understand the case at hand. Through using a case design, a wider exploration of the research question and theoretical evolution will enable me to address the complex issues that need to be explored in-depth and to gain a deeper understanding of the behavioural conditions of such a system based on comments inputs and interpretative perspectives of the participants. Yin (2003) points out that case study inquiry is only successful when built on the collection and analysis of data

from multiple sources. Furthermore, he maintains that “case studies may be based on any mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence” (p. 15). The triangulation of all data, both qualitative and quantitative, should lead to a credible understanding of the case.

Figure 1: a visual representation of how the methodology process functioned



4.3 Method: An Adaptation of the Reggio Emilia and Mosaic Approaches

With every interview encounter with the children, I was questioning my certainty even more. I thought that listening to the voice of children using traditional qualitative approach methods, such as interviewing, would be an easy process. Yet, the more I witnessed what listening to children entails, the more I realised that this was not going to be a smooth, linear narrative (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2021). Rather, it was going to be serendipitous, unexpected, and possibly demanding some difficult conversations and negotiations (including negotiating ethical conundrums).

Picture 1: Children were asked to draw something that reminded them of school:



Picture 1 shows an image of what the children presented me with when I asked them to draw pictures that reminded them of school and, whilst I thought I would end up with pictures of possibly a teacher, the school ground, or a lovely classroom, the images presented were very different. There were a number of other moments during the research that made me wonder:

What am I actually studying?

Why can't I contain the children? Am I supposed to contain them?

Why does the research process keep on going out of focus?

Why did we end up talking about other things that I had not planned for?

Some of these questions were posed in a spirit of self-moralising:

Am I a shoddy researcher?

Why can't I get a properly focused set of interviews?

Am I asking the wrong questions? Misleading the children? Why did the children want to talk about the "wrong" things and draw things that were not related to what I asked of them?

As time went on, however, I learnt to be kinder to myself. This is because it started to dawn on me that the phenomenon I was studying might be a shape-shifting reality. Maybe I was dealing with a slippery phenomenon, one that changes its shape constantly and is fuzzy around the edges. Maybe I was dealing with something that was not definite, that did not

have a single form—a fluid object or even one that was ephemeral in any given form, flipping from one configuration to another, dancing like a flame. Maybe these children were presenting something different because, as a researcher, I allowed (or tried very hard to) remove the police order to make their being visible and their “voice” heard. Each moment with them proved to be a moment of rupture and transformation—a political moment (even if it was hard to spot at the moment). This complexity had to be embraced within this method as I did not want to risk that the end results of the study (i.e. the findings through my accounts of the methodological practice) become a sanitised account with little acknowledgement of the messy social dynamics experienced, negotiated and, indeed, continuously co-constructed between me as the researcher and the participants through the research process (Law, 2004).

The messiness I speak about was brought about by the fact that there are hundreds of different images of the child. Each one of us has inside us an image of the child that directs us as we begin to relate to a child. This pushes us to behave in certain ways; it orients when we talk to a child, listen to a child or observe a child, and it is very difficult to act contrary to this internal image. For example, if my idea of children is that boys and girls are very different from one another, I will probably behave differently in my interactions with each of them. The environment we construct around us and the children also reflects this image we have about the child. There’s a difference between the environment that we are able to build based on a preconceived image of the child and the environment that we can build that is based on the child we see in front of us, the relationship we build with the child and the activities we engage in. An environment that grows out of our relationship with the child is unique and fluid.

To capture this uniqueness, the Reggio Emilia approach was chosen since it includes within it the “pedagogy of listening” (Rinaldi, 2005, pp. 65-68). The Reggio Emilia approach puts forward the key theory of the hundred languages of children (Edwards et al., 2012) that reflects “the different ways children present, communicate and express their thinking in different media and symbolic systems” (Vecchi, 2010, p. 9). Such means of expression can include verbal language forms, drawing, painting, music, dance, drama, clay, and wire, amongst others. The method encourages the use of all the senses in order to “listen with intent, curiosity, and sensitivity” (Rinaldi, 2006, p.71); interpretation and meaning-making; openness to differences; the suspension of judgements and acceptance of change; and the

decision to understand rather than produce answers, as listening generates more questions (Rinaldi, 2006). A pedagogy of listening thus includes:

- “multiple listening”, which acknowledges the voice of both children and adults (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 67);
- “interior listening”, which involves the inclusion of one’s representation of knowledge within a group context (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 65); and
- “visible listening”, which renders visible children’s and adults’ theories, ideas, and processes by documenting the listening process (through photos and notes, for example; Rinaldi, 2006, p. 68).

Table 1: *Core Values within the Reggio Emilia Approach*

The Reggio Emilia Approach	
1. The image of the child	Children are seen as “rich in potential, strong, powerful, and competent” (Cagliari et al., 2016, p. 10). By showing respect to the child, the educator establishes collaboration that yields further engagement amongst the children, as well as engagement amongst the children and the adults within the classroom setting (McNally & Slutsky, 2016)
2. Relationships between children, educators, families, and community	O’Connor (2018) found that relationships within the early childhood setting have a direct influence on the child’s social and emotional development.
3. The environment as the third educator	Particular emphasis is placed on space, engagement, aestheticism, and media to ensure the best learning for children.
4. The hundred languages of children	Children are given multiple media of learning to support their creativity and development.

5. Educational observation and documentation	Observation and pedagogical documentation take the child into account, allowing educators to make “conscientious decisions on the cognitive, social, and emotional needs of the child, thus helping “scrutinize equality” in terms of participation within learning” (Lipponen, Kumpulainen, & Paana, 2018)
6. The atelier: A make-space	Panciroli and Macuada (2017) referred to the atelier in a didactic environment as a component of the environment “to observe, communicate, conceptual elaboration along with verbal and logic elements that developed imagination and knowledge construction” (p. 135).

Inspired by Reggio Emilia's methods, Clark and Moss (2001) developed what they called a “Mosaic approach” to create a “composite picture or ‘mosaic’ of children’s lives” (p. 117). “The Mosaic approach involves putting together findings that stem from observations, child-led tours, conversations, children’s photography, and drawings” (Loebach & Gilliland, 2010, p.5). It brings together children and adults by giving them the opportunity to associate visual and verbal communication and using specific methods to collect data.

Clark (2005) explains that the Mosaic approach involves the following three theoretical stages:

“Stage 1: children and adults collect documentation

Stage 2: put together information for dialogue, and

Stage 3: decide on extension and change” (Clark, 2005, p.15)

Just like the Reggio Emilia approach, the Mosaic approach underlines the belief that children are experts and can collaborate in different levels and contexts. It also allows children to physically see, manipulate, and explore the findings themselves by using diverse modes (Clark, 2005). For the purpose of this study, I decided to blend the principles of Reggio Emilia together with the Mosaic approach. Adopting these two methods to foster an eclectic approach to collecting data aims to encourage children in my study to communicate in a

variety of ways, verbal and non-verbal, to express themselves in the ways they feel most comfortable. My hope was that these methods proposed by Reggio Emilia, and later on the Mosaic Approach, would allow me to get a flavour of those moments when children's voice is heard, and a political subject is seen. This would allow me to get a sense of how different listening to "voice" is from what I think it is, not only in content but also in form, as well as in timing. This process is complex because it deals with what is ephemeral and, if not captured in some way at the moment, then it might be lost forever.

4.4 The Settings

Oftentimes, a child can only express their unmet needs by exhibiting challenging behaviour. Such behaviour is a form of communication in itself; however, all too often in our schools, the response by adults is to react to the behaviour itself rather than to identify and address the underlying needs. Very often, it is assumed that children do not have anything to contribute if they do not have the capacity to behave well. Sadly, this sometimes means that the behaviour of these children is perceived as a barrier, and the fear of challenging behaviour may lead adults to exclude them from decisions that impact their lives. These children form a category that often is overlooked by adults or not counted as important. I wanted to shed more light on these children to spot moments when they emerge as subjects in resistance to police order (adults in their life) and express and demand equality. For this reason, I chose settings which are aimed at providing spaces that are tailored to the needs of children deemed by adults to be difficult or at-risk children and labelled as "impossible" students. Apart from addressing students' behavioural problems and (supposedly) helping them reintegrate into mainstream classes, such settings are also said to aim to improve their levels of literacy and numeracy. The specialised settings that are part of the Maltese College systems will be referred to as Nurture Centres.

With the outbreak of COVID-19, I was forced to alter my research plan since school visits and classroom observations were not possible. Whilst I maintained my student focus specifically on those who were attending these Nurture Centres, the setting from which I would choose participants and carry out the data had to shift. I had already started my data collection within a residential care setting (this will be explained a bit later on), and thus, I

decided to choose participants who attended Nurture Centres but were also residents in institutional care. So my participants now became: boys who are residing in a residential care setting but who are also part of Nurture Centres around schools in Malta. I opted for this because I already had access to the residential institution as an employee. This made it somewhat easier to follow the safety measures in accordance with the National Health guidelines. Because of the nature of my study, I also wanted to follow these boys at school and interview the key workers in their lives. Whilst some key workers worked within the residential care setting, others had to be interviewed at the Nurture Centres. Some of the key workers working in the Nurture Centres that these children attended declined my invitation to attend physically for health and safety reasons associated with COVID-19. Consequently, some of these encounters were held on the online platform Zoom.

Prior to starting this study, I needed to make a decision on how the data was going to be collected. The study was to focus on “voice”; however, the traditional ways of conducting such a study might, at times, hamper children’s participation in matters that concern them. As a researcher and an adult myself, I did not want to impede in any way children’s engagement in the research process. The children in my study are already tightly connected and linked to a certain reality of the world; they have relationships and experiences, and I did not want to separate the child from a particular context. They bring these experiences, feelings, and relationships into school with them. They carry with them pieces of their life; happiness, sadness, their hopes, their pleasures, and the stresses from their life. So the meetings that we were going to have were always going to be “contaminated” (mainstream research uses this vocabulary, and I need to use it because otherwise, the reader might possibly question the validity of the research. But still, I am aware that these concepts police me) with the experiences that they bring with them.

As I write this, an image of me sitting with my dad watching games of billiard on TV comes to mind. When you play billiards, you push the ball with a certain force, and it hits the table and bounces off; there’s a definite way the ball will go, depending on force and direction. It is predictable and reassuring. It always gave me a sense of control and calmness. But here, as I am doing this research with the children, I realise that they are not at all like this—predictable. To help me deal with this unpredictability, I decided to divide the study into two parts:

- Part 1 (reference group): This group was formed so that before the data collection process starts, the children themselves could help me consider their unique experiences in the best possible way. These children were not going to be part of the main research group. This group was made up of children who, in some ways, had a number of similarities to the children in the main research group:
 - They attended a school for students that are considered to have both behavioural and academic challenges and are considered “impossible” by a number of primary schools who refer them and/or
 - They were residing in residential care settings and were attending Nurture Centres because of any academic or behavioural problems.

The similarity in characteristics of the children in the reference group with the children in the main research group does not in any way intend to re-create the universal idea of what children need. The similarity here is used to allow me to question my positioning, my language, my ideas, and my preconceptions as an adult engaging with children. Despite the fact that this process might give me a bit more certainty in my engagement with children in the main research group, many things can still happen that cannot be known or planned for ahead of time. But I want to be open to what takes place and to be able to change my plans and go with what might grow at that very moment of engagement, both within the child and within myself; to have curiosity, to change my ideas, to be comfortable with the restless nature of life. So after the process of the reference group was concluded, data from the reference group was used to feed the main research as well as guide the researcher on the best practices of listening to children.

- Part 2 (main research group): This group consisted of children who:
 - Were residing in residential care
 - Attended different colleges in Malta
 - Attended Nurture Centres

This group also consisted of educators, parents/carers, and other professionals working with them.

4.4.1 Part 1 (Reference Group)

For the reference group, I met with four different groups of children. Each group was made up of 3-4 children. I wanted to spend enough time with the reference group to have more familiarity with these children's experiences, their passions, and the language they use and to share with them my research aim. The time spent with them was used to hold discussions on the nature of my study and the methods that I was going to employ. I wanted to understand the way children would prefer to be questioned on their experiences and what questions would make them feel the most comfortable/uncomfortable, and I also wanted to learn more ways of how I can build a better rapport with the children. This reflexive space allowed me to practise and reflect on what it means to be a researcher conducting such a process with these children. The group of children who are part of the reference group and who attend the school met three times, and the groups of children who are part of the reference group, do not attend the school, but reside in residential care, met only once for a total of two hours per session. The reference group participants' ages ranged between 8 and 15 years. I met the children for a total of 9 hours.

Within the school setting, I engaged in the children's daily activities: I played, coloured, and chatted with them in an informal and playful manner. Within the residential care setting, I took part in their daily routine through games and activities: I played hide and seek, I participated in football matches, and I also contributed to the dinner preparations. The data from the reference group was collected through field notes, observations, photography, child conferences, and focus groups. Some learning points were extracted from the data gathered from the reference groups. They are presented and discussed in the following paragraphs. The data collected from the reference groups were then used to enrich the process with the children in the main research group.

Reference Group - Learning Point 1: Sharing the research aims

The initial sessions with the children were spent explaining the rationale behind my study to the students. During the first reference group session, I also read the information sheet and

the consent form to the children, ensuring that they had an adequate understanding of all the terms and concepts that I was referring to. Eventually, I started to realise that some of the words used in the consent form and information sheet were unfamiliar to the children, or they interpreted them differently than I intended.

Researcher (reading): My name is Stephanie Bugeja, and I am a researcher at the University of Malta...	Student 1: "What is a researcher?" The exchange about the University of Malta yielded a rather amusing response as the students eagerly confided their ambitions. Ismael dreams of becoming a police detective who works with dogs, whereas Robert is keen on owning his own business selling motorcycles. It was heartening to hear about their wishes for the future, and I did my utmost to encourage them, telling them that they were capable of so many things.
Researcher (reading): I need your help to be able to gather the experiences of children who are in this educational setting...	Student 2: "What is educational?"
Researcher (reading): I will be coming to your class to observe...	Student 3: "I am scared when they do that ... once they caught me eating mentos, and I had to give them the mentos. I don't like it when they look at me." Surprisingly, in contrast to one of the other students' feelings about having an outsider in their class, Robert declared that he did not mind being observed at all, as he wanted the relevant figure of authority to get a true picture of his behaviour rather than

	speculating and guessing about his strengths and needs.

Learning Point 2: What question should be asked of the children and why?

Jack thought that I should ask children about things that are safe and that they could easily talk about, such as their favourite animal, food, whether they had any pets, and what sort of vehicles their parents/carers drove.

Robert also indicated that I should ask other students about classmates who bothered or picked on them, as this would give an indication as to whether the children in question were being bullied and consequently required help.

Ismael also told me not to ask for the children's surnames as that might make them feel uncomfortable, especially if they are adopted and consequently have a different surname than that of their parents. Interestingly enough, Ismael is a child who is adopted.

Learning Point 3: Tools to be used during the interviews

I explained to all the groups that I would be using a recording device to record the interviews with the children. This paved the way for an interesting interlude, where Ismael said that the recording device reminded him of the FBI and of his time when he was spoken to by social workers prior to being fostered. This discomfort was immediately overshadowed by his comment that alluded to a prank his sister's boyfriend and a friend of the latter's played on him, where they pretended to catch him in the act while he was supposedly breaking the law because of the way he was riding his bicycle.

As the session continued, the children revealed that they themselves and other children would prefer different methods of recording information. For example, their broad familiarity with mobile phones and other simpler ways of recording information, like taking notes, would make them feel a greater sense of ease when being questioned because they were more familiar with such means.

Ismael also added that to make children feel more comfortable, and I could allow children to use soft toys as these could mitigate feelings of loneliness. Other students, particularly Zayden and Tyrone, felt that stress balls and comfortable chairs would help students who needed an outlet for their hyperactivity, boosting their concentration during the interview.

Leon mentioned the fact that he was allowed to use the trampoline at school, apart from the football. Martin chipped in to add that he, too, used the trampoline. In both cases, it appeared to act as an outlet for the energy and restlessness that both boys displayed in the face of their routine lessons, although Ben also emphasised the fact that it helps with controlling his temper and prevents him from taking his aggression out on his schoolmates.

When asked what the researcher needs to do to make the child feel comfortable during the research process, Jack mentioned that the researcher's appearance makes a difference in how the children respond to them. One student commented that high heels imply a greater sense of responsibility and status, while others felt that adults would find it easier to get closer to children if they wore simpler, more comfortable clothes, such as sports shoes (it was interesting to note the gender presumptions here).

Learning Point 4: Reasons for attending the specialised programme

All the interviewees were able to vocalise the reasons behind their inclusion in the Nurture Centres, learning support zone, and learning support centre. The children started sharing their own experiences of being in these settings, and one of them immediately confided that the time spent in this group had initially not been enjoyable for him because of the presence of a fellow schoolmate with whom he did not get on. Since the group was small, he could not avoid his presence and so his experience there was not a comfortable one. Consequently, even though the aim of the programme was to help him, in reality, it did not. Meanwhile, Zac said that he had been fortunate enough to encounter a teacher who took an interest in his progress and helped him.

Eric and Thomas felt that their school and Nurture Centres experiences were mostly positive ones, featuring teachers who went out of their way to make them feel comfortable and included. Ismael and Jack also weighed in on this and, together with the others, shared how they felt respected by the general attitude of the teachers in this programme but could not say the same about their class teachers.

Other students felt that they had not been given much choice regarding whether to attend or not and that this decision had been imposed on them. Ismael also said that the time spent at the Nurture Centre meeting was cutting into his time allotted to PE, for example, and that he was missing some lessons, which had to be made up for with extra homework. Neil's reaction was similar; he spoke about how he felt that the objective of his attendance to the programme had not yet been reached, and he would rather not attend school at all. All the students mentioned the lack of time dedicated to playing, something which disappointed them.

Learning Point 5: Experiences of school

My interview with Julian, Shaun, and Sam centred around their experiences at school, as well as their thoughts and feelings about the time spent at school.

My first question concerned the physical aspects of the school they attended. Whilst Sam immediately quipped “modern”, Julian and Shaun referred to it as a “home” and “hotel”, respectively. For Shaun, the latter had positive, familial connotations, even if he did not actually use the word “family”. Paradoxically, even though it was Julian who came up with this word, he seemed to backtrack after this, using a word with a much greater sense of the undesirable, that is, “boring”. Perhaps he did this in order to echo Sam, who immediately used this word in his description. Shaun continued to expand on this idea that school equated to a family in his mind but then introduced the element of bullying, which, naturally, detracted from his school experience. However, he remained mostly optimistic and referred to other features of the school that he enjoyed, such as the equipment in various rooms and a number of activities. Shaun also spoke fondly of his experiences with certain teachers and figures of authority, whom he felt had helped him a great deal.

I noticed that Sam was very quick to come up with things that he did not like at school, whereas the other boys needed to be pushed a little more for specifics, especially Julian. Eventually, both Julian and Shaun admitted that the issue of bullying was, for them, still very much one that needed to be dealt with. Sam espoused an attitude of intense dislike, almost disgust, of anything not only related to his particular school but also to the schooling system in Malta, declaring that the only career he could see himself pursuing was one related to football.

Changes are done following the reference group meetings:

Change 1: Changing some of the words used in the consent form and information sheet that were unfamiliar to the children or that they had interpreted differently than intended.

Change 2: Include some safe questions to ask children at the beginning of our conversation, such as questions about their favourite animal, food, whether they had any pets, and what sort of vehicles their parents/carers drove. I also included a question about friends and steered away from asking for personal details such as surnames.

Change 3: I opted for a mobile phone rather than a voice recorder since children were more familiar with that type of electronic device.

I also thought about ways of helping children be more comfortable during the data collection process, such as giving them the possibility to sit on the floor.

I also tried my best to wear simpler and more comfortable clothes, such as sports shoes, during the data collection process since the children remarked that this made them feel closer to the researcher.

Change 4: I wanted to take things less for granted. The children in the reference group made me realise that the children might not always know the reasons why they are part of a particular setting.

4.4.2 Part 2 (Main Research Group)

Offering a home away from home, the residential institution welcomes adolescents and young people from troubled backgrounds. To ensure that children are accompanied throughout their journey towards (hopeful) reintegration with their family of origin or independent living, care team members employ a person-centred approach to build an authentic family spirit and equip them with vital life skills. The residential institution houses around 20 children and young people in units of six to eight individuals.

Children in residential homes often encounter numerous care workers along their individual journeys. In addition to overcoming their substantial personal challenges, they must also fully explain their difficult situation repeatedly to each one of these care workers. These workers might include field and residential social workers, representatives from the Looked After Children Service, speech therapists, therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, the house leader, the head of care, their care team, and innumerable others. The individuals working within each of these roles also frequently changed. Consequently, the child would have to recount their story in full every time, which they often find distressing. At the same time, there are legions of people passing through each child's professional care environment when in residential care. On a personal level, there are even more. These children may have supervised access visits with some family members during the week. The presence of such a stream of ever-changing individuals in each child's focus compounds the overall lack of stability, routine, or sense of familiarity in their young life.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, classroom observations were not possible. Whilst I maintained my student focus specifically on those who were attending Nurture Centres, the setting from which I would choose participants and carry out the data had to shift. Since I had already started my data collection within this residential care setting—with the reference group—I chose participants from here. So my participants now became: children (boys only) who are residing in a residential care setting but who are also part of Nurture Centres around colleges in Malta. To make up for not going to observe them in their classes, I decided to observe these children on their school grounds and in their residential institution setting.

I began by accessing the residential institution setting as a researcher in June 2020. My intention was to spend time observing how the children interacted within the setting, focusing on their day-to-day routine. I recorded my observations in a logbook (an anonymised sample is found in Appendix 27). Reflections were written afterwards, sometimes later in the day, sometimes one or two days later. All of this was written in my field notes journal. Further information was added in the form of drawings and notes from the children; these were added to any collaborative activities like drawing and mapmaking. Although the field notes are not fully presented in this research, they were crucial in helping me to reflect on the dynamics I was witnessing and also to inform my writing of narratives. I managed to write 100 pages during the period of my study with over 50,000 words.

During the visits happening between June 2020 and December 2020, I observed the children who were part of the main research group. I observed how the children related to the care workers, how the children interpreted homework time, how their mood was before and after school, the type of language the children and professionals used, the sessions they had with a number of volunteers, and their daily routine. The adult participants in the main research group included heads of schools, educators, carers, and other professionals that worked with these students. All of them had over five years of experience working in their respective fields. The child participants were all boys and had been part of the residential care setting for at least a year.

4.5 The Role of the Researcher

To be sufficiently reflexive and attentive to the power dynamics of the research process, as well as accounting for and legitimising my readings of the material, I would like to introduce myself in this part of the chapter. I am a 34-year-old (at the beginning of this research journey, I was 27 years old) female EP. Maltese (a Semitic language) language is my native language. However, Malta recognises both Maltese and English as official languages.

By the beginning of the research period, I had spent more than a decade working in this residential institution setting, first as a special educational needs teacher and as from 2014, as an Educational Psychologist (EP), working in both the residential care setting as well as the school setting (within the same institution). Yet, entering the residential care setting as a researcher was different. My relationship with the gatekeepers (those managing the residential care setting and those managing the school site) was thus established for the

purpose of this study. I was there neither to judge the quality of the provision within the setting nor to provide support to the staff members or students in the setting. I had to find a way to make this experience strange, to look with new eyes at what I was seeing. This process was challenging; I needed to almost forget my understanding of what was happening and consider the experience from a different perspective. To do this study, thus, I had to complete certain steps to acquire the necessary data to explore the research questions posed.

4.6 Positionality

Rancière neither proposes a new pedagogy for educators nor suggests how they should alter their pedagogy. According to him, his concepts cannot be applied to comprehensive school reform (Rancière, 1991). In this thesis, however, I argue that schools do possess emancipatory potential, which I shall investigate in the context of ‘equality’. As part of the police order, schools will never be free of stultification, although Rancière himself concedes that schools are locations where the goal of social harmony can be questioned (Pelletier, 2012). According to Rancière (1991), equality can never be attained, but it is a concept that can be continuously pursued.

Two of Rancière's most fundamental themes are inequality and stultification, and certain ways of listening can directly confront the inequality and hierarchical organization that, according to Rancière, is present in schools and can lead to stultification. I propose that there are other ways of being that can promote equality and disrupt societal harmony. I do not believe that the concepts of Rancière can be applied to school reform. In its place, I propose an alternative way of thinking or, more accurately, a different approach to the understanding of ‘voice’; one that is neither dependent on determining progress nor governed by the teaching of specific bodies of knowledge by teachers.

4.7 Participants

The person in charge of the residential institution setting was contacted, and the purpose and objectives of the study were explained. Permission to conduct the study was requested. After further consultation, the manager of the institution and the staff discussed the study with the

young people who were in my target age of eight to 16 years. The children that engaged in the study were self-selecting in that they demonstrated an interest in doing so.

Qualitative research does not have any concrete rules on the number of participants for a study (deMarrais, 2004). Since qualitative research tends to be more focused on depth and detail, having only a few participants is appropriate (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to deMarrais (2004), “less is more” (p. 61). The number of participants in a study should matter less, and the depth in which a participant’s experiences are understood, analyzed, and re-presented should matter more. Seven boys were chosen for the main research study (all of those who volunteered to participate and satisfied the selection criteria became part of the study). I was mindful of the resources and time available to develop an in-depth understanding. It was critical to establish criteria to select participants who could add valuable input leading to a stronger understanding of experiences within Nurture Centres. For this study, the following criteria were in place for selecting participants: the participants had been part of the Nurture Centres for at least three months so that they could be in a better position to reflect on this educational experience.

The sample is considered homogenous because all participants share the same characteristics in the sense that they were selected based on the same risk factors (perceived to be struggling in the traditional classroom, having conflict at home leading to a move-out and living in a residential institution). The child participants in the main study came from families with deprived socio-economic backgrounds. These children had been the victims of violence in their families in the form of abuse. The majority had parents who had experienced deprivation and struggled to cope with these difficulties. The children received some visits (usually supervised) from their parents, grandparents, or other family member. The residential institution setting tries to find other adults that could spend time with the children who are under a care order or who have limited access to their family, but this is difficult for children that have reached adolescence, as families often prefer to foster younger children. None of the participating children had this kind of support. Finally, convenience sampling can be described as selecting participants that may be able to provide the most valuable insight concerning shared experiences of a particular phenomenon (Thorne, 2008). A drawback of convenience sampling is that it may limit credibility beyond the context of the particular study. Thorne (2008) posited that “while convenient samples can create a strong

basis for ‘description’, they tend to create proportionately greater challenges to justifying interpretation” (p. 90). Keeping Thorne’s concern in mind, I draw on extensive literature to contextualize the findings of this study.

Table 2: *Details of Children in the Main Research Study who are in the residential Institution and attend Nurture Centres*

Pseudonyms chosen by the children themselves	Age	Currently in:
Ben	8	Primary School
Kurt	8	Primary School
Nick	9	Primary School
Julian	15	Secondary School
Sam	13	Secondary School
Shaun	14	Secondary School
Martin	14	Secondary School

At the time of the study, all the participating children in the main research group lived in a residential setting for children that had experienced serious problems in their home environments. Some of these difficulties included but were not limited to: housing difficulties, parental abuse, sexual abuse, witnessing domestic violence, anger management difficulties, hygiene, mental health difficulties, schooling difficulties, learning difficulties, and refusal of professional help.

4.7.1 The Parents/Carers, Professionals, and Educators

I first coordinated a visit with each Nurture Centre to learn more about what their programme offers from the point of view of the adults working there. When this was not possible, an online meeting via Zoom was set up. As the interviewer, I scheduled, conducted, and audio-recorded each participant’s interview, posing similar questions. The recordings were transcribed, and the transcripts were used as data to support this study. Some of the children who participated in this study had a number of key workers in common. Interviews were conducted with the key workers for each of the seven children that participated in the study.

4.8 Instrumentation

Clark and Moss (2001) explain that whilst not all the activities that are proposed in the original method need to be undertaken to complete a mosaic, a number of them must be utilised to ensure that the child is given the best opportunity to demonstrate their opinion and that there is sufficient data from which conclusions can be drawn. The researcher then brings together the different pieces of the mosaic to provide a holistic view of the child's voice and experiences.

4.8.1 Beginning the Visits: Relationship Building

The study began with a visit to the setting to introduce myself and explain the study to the children. I took time to ensure that they understood the various terms; for example, the word "research" was discussed and equated with "finding out" and "discovering". I emphasised the voluntary nature of participation, as well as the option to withdraw at any time without consequences. I explained that only some children would be working with me each time I visited. During the first visit, I spent several hours chatting with the children, who involved me in their play, asked me about myself, talked about what they were doing, told me about their friends, and so on. These conversations were not recorded; their role was to develop the children's confidence in me and help me get to know them.

4.8.2 Using Photography and Audio Recording with Children

In the last decade or so, a number of researchers have used photographs taken by children for data generation (Clark & Moss, 2001; Dockett & Perry, 2005; Einarsdottir, 2005; Merewether & Fleet, 2014; Loizou, 2011; Stephenson, 2009). Since they are in charge of the camera, child-led photography allows children the freedom to decide what should or should not be photographed (Einarsdottir, 2005). In addition, photography provides children who may not have strong verbal or written skills with a non-verbal means of representing their ideas (Clark, 2005; Einarsdottir, 2005). Digital cameras were used in this study for their

relative inexpensiveness, ease of use, and low cost of processing. They also offered the possibility of an immediate review of the photos taken.

Some researchers (Agbenyega, 2013; Loizou, 2011) have used child-led photography, where the children were not accompanied by the researcher as they took photos; however, I decided to accompany the children, as several researchers (Clark & Moss, 2001; Einarsdottir, 2005; Stephenson, 2009) have noted the richness of conversation that occurs while children are taking photos. With the children's permission, the conversation that took place was audio recorded and included as observational data.

4.8.3 Child-Led Tours

In order to help the children familiarise themselves with the cameras and research techniques, I presented the cameras to the children, explaining that they were expensive and somewhat fragile. I asked them to place the camera strap around their wrist and showed them how to frame, view, and take a photo. Most of the children indicated that they had used digital cameras before, including one child who told me he had his own camera and that he needed almost no instruction. Another child seemed quite unfamiliar with a digital camera, as he kept holding it up to his eye as if it had a viewfinder. Initially, this child took several photos of his own fingers as he held onto the camera with his hands on the lens. Nonetheless, within minutes, he managed to take photos of his surroundings.

As a familiarisation strategy, I invited pairs of children to show me around the school as an “authentic novice” (Clark & Moss, 2005, p. 97) and record with photos the “interesting, special, important” places in the setting. Although they took a few photos where the framing was off or that were blurred (even though the cameras were self-focusing), overall, on this tour, the children proved themselves to be competent photographers who took deliberate, precise photos. This first tour, however, revealed the importance of having conversations with the children about the photos they had taken. For instance, most photos appeared to have me in them, and whilst thinking that the children did not understand what they needed to photograph, a child pointed out that: “Those are photos of you because you’re important.”

Picture 2: *Some of the snapshots the children took of me during the research process.*



There was another photo (Picture 3) that could have been interpreted as the children's lack of understanding of the task. The children had been asked to take photos of important places, and one child told me that this place (the school's carpark) was important for him because there were cars in it, and cars were very meaningful to him.

Picture 3: *The photos taken by the children when they were asked to photograph important places in the school.*



I could tell that they were very enthusiastic about this task and that they were also eager to display their knowledge of different vehicle brand names. Most of these children have parents/carers who are also car enthusiasts. A couple of students expressed their preference for motorcycles, but the only motorcycle that the group saw was covered and could not, therefore, be photographed. Other students were keen to point out the features of some of the different cars that we came across and pose for the snaps next to the vehicles. Meanwhile, Robert expressed his dislike for Smart cars, recalling an occasion when he was obliged by his parents to ride in the boot, even if this was just for a short distance. For the most part, this appeared to be a beneficial exercise for the students; it was one that allowed them to display curiosity, creativity, and also camaraderie. The sky was also an important scenario for another child who was very keen on birds as this is where they are usually seen flying.

Picture 4: *A photo was taken by one of the children as they were asked to photograph important places in the school.*



The tours not only provided an authentic context for the children to become familiar with the equipment and practice their photography skills but also revealed potential challenges. For example, this is where I first encountered issues with the audio recording application on my mobile phone and how I discovered that what I expected from the children and what the children were giving me were two different things. I also realised that each child needed to have a camera because they were not patient enough to wait for each other to take photos.

4.8.4 Tours of the Outdoor Area

Initially, these tours were supposed to be held inside the school premises, but due to health restrictions, the tours had to be done outdoors on the school grounds. Two children from the main research group volunteered to take me on tour, showing me whilst photographing the important places for them. Together with the recording of the tour with photographs, our conversation was audio recorded in concurrence with the findings of other researchers (Clark & Moss, 2001; Stephenson, 2009), these conversations produced particularly rich data. The tours were conducted at breakneck speed. It was quite challenging for me to keep up as we gallivanted from one end of the outdoor area and back again whilst traversing raised platforms. In one of her publications, Clark (2010) advises keeping a rough map of the tour as it unfolds; I found this to be very useful when cross-checking the audio recordings and the photos that the children had taken later on.

Research of this nature is complex and unlikely to go exactly to plan. While there were no major problems, quite a few mishaps occurred during the tours. One of the cameras was dropped, and although it remained operational, it produced a series of photos framed by a partially opened, jammed shutter. The camera's functionality could later be restored; however, this highlights the possibility of damaging expensive equipment in similar studies. Another mishap occurred when, after the tour, I discovered that despite the fact that one child had appeared to be taking photos and the camera had seemed to be making all the right sounds, inexplicably, there were no photos on his camera. Despite these hiccups, the tours were ultimately found to be a very effective method for generating rich data. They were popular with the children who participated in them with great enthusiasm, especially since they were allowed to communicate according to their own preferences and strengths. For example, one child took only seven photos but spoke a great deal, while another child took 20 photos but spoke very little. The tours were recorded by the children using the video recording app on a mobile phone.

4.8.5 Photo Elicitation Interviews

Einarsdottir (2007) advises that indirect, conversational approaches to interviews with young children are preferable to more structured approaches, although Dockett and Perry (2005) note that conversations with children have a tendency to move away from researchers' goals. Therefore, following the tours, I returned to conduct photo-elicitation interviews (Douglas, 2002; Epstein, Bates, & Goldstone, 2006) with the pairs of children, using their photos as a

focus for conversation. The children were very excited to see their own photos printed out, and they all reacted animatedly to the photos they had taken. Prompting questions like “What can you tell me about this photo?” and “What is interesting, special, important here?” provoked further conversation. Following these conversations, the children were asked to place a sticker on “three photos of the most important places”, and these were glued inside their documentation book. The conversations elicited by this strategy were invaluable. The photos on their own told a partial story, but the children’s conversations added another rich layer of insights. For example, one child’s photo of the games room door provoked a lengthy description of a game he and a friend often played in this area.

4.8.6 Child Interviews/Conferences

Whilst researchers aiming to explore children’s perspectives avoid formally interviewing children, asking children direct questions has been shown to reveal valuable insights (Clark, 2010; Dockett & Perry, 2005; Smith, 2005). Certainly, in this study, the interviews provided another layer of useful data and another piece of the mosaic. Clark (2010) notes interview questions that begin with “tell me about ...” can reveal detailed observations, whereas children may refuse to answer questions beginning with “why”. Therefore, the children were invited to tell me about their favourite and least favourite places, what they like to do in these places and what they would or would not change. With the permission of the children, these interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

Interviews with children can be more successful when held in places of the children’s choosing or on the move, such as during play (Clark, 2010). In this study, although some interviews were conducted while the children and I were sitting down, most of the interviews were invariably conducted whilst on the move or as we were engaging in play or cooking, as the children insisted that they show me the things they were explaining. My experience with some groups turned out to be a herculean task to get the interviewees to respect each other’s input and keep the noise level down. Some children were constantly engaged in loud activities, distracting me and ensuring that I could not hear the information that the other students were sharing. Some children’s attitude throughout the session was, unfortunately, a little hostile. Some were also extremely defensive when corrected and displayed a reluctance to cooperate and follow the simple instructions I had passed on to the group. I could also see

that the boys seemed to be agitated by the presence of stationery related to writing, even if it was there for eliciting drawing.

4.8.7 The Slide Show: Focusing Conversations

This layer of data, or mosaic piece, is another example of photo-elicitation interviewing (Epstein et al., 2006; Harper, 2002). This strategy was inspired by Clark's "magic carpet" (Clark, 2005, pp. 43–45), whereby children are shown a slide show of photos taken by adults of a variety of outdoor environments, including the setting being studied. In this study, however, as a way of providing an opportunity to revisit the photos taken by the children, I included the three photos of the most interesting, special, important places as identified by each child, along with other images I had chosen, to see what reactions they provoked from the children. The slide show provided some useful data, though more limited than expected.

4.8.8 Extending Children's Means of Representation: Drawing

In research, children's drawings have been used to explore their perspectives (Clark, 2010; Einarsdottir et al., 2009; Wright & Forrest, 2007). As drawing provides children with another language (Edwards, 2012) for expressing ideas, following the slide show, the children were invited to draw what they liked about the school's environment. Like photography, drawing gives children the option of non-verbal expression, allowing them to be active and creative. Einarsdottir (2007) advises, however, that it is important to include observations of children's narratives and interpretations as they draw rather than try to interpret what they have drawn out of context. This advice was heeded in this study.

The drawing was certainly familiar to these children. Despite this, few children were keen to draw their ideas about school. Three children responded by saying, "I can't draw," and while two children agreed to draw, they showed little enthusiasm after beginning. Their lack of enthusiasm and furtive looks at their peers, who were playing elsewhere, was taken as a withdrawal of assent, and this was confirmed when they left the activity as soon as they were reminded that their participation was optional. Nevertheless, those children that were confident in drawing eagerly approached this activity. Indeed, for one child, it was a particularly attractive activity that became the focus of our conversation. One of the student's pictures was very cheerful, with bright sunlight. It was also rather telling that one of them

referred to the feature of safety implied by the prevalence of metal and the large gates of the school. The use of a bright, warm shade of colour, even if it is related to the student's uniform, is also noteworthy.

4.8.9 Adult conferencing

The Mosaic approach (Clark & Moss, 2001) advocates what they refer to as conferencing with practitioners and parents/carers to further develop the picture of the child. These conferences take the form of what might otherwise be called a semi-structured interview with a framework of questions as the starting point for a conversation (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002; Mukherji & Albon, 2010). Each conference took the form of a one-to-one semi-structured interview. Additionally, I made use of a pre-prepared interview schedule targeting either adult. Semi-structured interviews can be considered to be conversational, with further questions being asked as themes and interests emerge (Mukherji & Albon, 2010). Such an approach does not necessarily allow the researcher to control the interview, however, as the interviewee can lead the conversation in a direction they are interested in (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007).

In total, I conducted 30 one-to-one semi-structured interviews with adults involved in the lives of these children. These conferences formed a reflective layer of the mosaics. At the end of the conference, I showed the adults working with the children the first layer of the mosaic (data gathered with children) and asked them to tell me what they felt that I had missed. In each instance, I only showed them the mosaic once they had completed their semi-structured interview so that they could provide their own reflections without being influenced by the previous mosaic. The information they gave me was added to create the second layer of the mosaic. The information gathered with the children and the adults would then allow me to create the third layer of the mosaic, sewing together the different views of children and adults in their lives. This critically reflective process proved to be an essential element for understanding the children's and the adults' experiences. It also allowed me to deepen my understanding of children and adults as unique individuals with unique interests and motivations (Hickson, 2015). The layering of the mosaics allowed for thick descriptions of the children's and adults' experiences and for critical reflection on the data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

4.8.10 Participating and Observing

Observation is a major means of generating data in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009) and is an important starting point for listening to young children's perspectives (Anning & Edwards, 2006; Clark & Moss, 2001). Observations occurred throughout this study, forming part of the overall mosaic or picture. These observations were made by me as a participant observer (Merriam, 2009). It was not presumed that the observations were neutral; on the contrary, the study was underpinned by the assumption that observation is not only a process but also involves an element of subjective interpretation (Rinaldi, 2006). In addition, the children and adults who know they are being observed are likely to behave in socially acceptable ways (Merriam, 2009), so I needed to be sensitive to the possible effects of this issue on data generation and interpretation. The continual representation of the data to the children provided opportunities for dialogue about the effects of my presence.

It was my aim to take a "collaborative partner" (Merriam, 2009, p. 125) role in which the relationship between myself, the children, and the educators were equal; nevertheless, the line between being an "observer" and a "participant" shifted during the course of the study, and inevitable power differentials were acknowledged. At the outset, my role leaned towards that of an observer, but as relationships developed over time, they leaned more towards that of a participant observer. As a participant observer, the children frequently came to request my assistance and invited me into their play, conversations, and activities.

4.9 Methodological Framework – Construction of Narratives

This study is grounded in narrative inquiry in order to elicit the stories that depict the perceptions of students who attended these Nurture Centres. Narrative inquiry was useful in characterizing the perceptions of the participants while framing such perceptions against the socio-political backdrop of the structures of traditional and different education settings. Narratives can be a way to understand human experiences, and, according to Fontana and Frey (2008), narrative inquiry can offer a useful format to gain an in-depth understanding of the complexities of the participants' experiences. Narrative inquiry is a methodology that is gaining attention in the world of qualitative research (Kim, 2010). Despite the popularity of narrative inquiry, there are many definitions of what can be considered narrative inquiry (Chase, 2008; Kim, 2010; Riessman, 2002). For this study, the narrative inquiry was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the unique and individual experiences, depths, and nuances

of students within these educational settings (Kim, 2010; Manhong, Ping, & Linlin, 2014; Polkinghorne, 1995). Narratives were juxtaposed next to the interviews, written documentation, and conversations collected during the course of the study. The end product of the study resulted in a narrative that is thick in description (a sample of a transcript-rendered narrative is shown in Appendix 22, 24 and 26) depicting a multi-dimensional rendering of the participant's perceptions and experiences in alternative educational settings (Saldaña, 2009). The representation serves as a medium to challenge the perceptions that persist outside of the social group of alternative education. However, it must be understood that the final representation is intentionally more open-ended and creates further questions regarding students' perceptions of alternative education rather than offering answers that are concrete (Barone, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1995; Saldaña, 2009), stable, and pointing to one absolute truth.

To successfully represent narrative inquiry, the write-up calls for thick descriptions that are rich and cultivates a rendering of the participant's life that is multi-dimensional (Saldaña, 2009). To accomplish this feat, it was necessary to gather the stories contained in the data and re-story them in some meaningful manner (Chapters 5 and 6). It is during the re-storying process that an informal tie will be established among ideas (Creswell, 2007). According to Cortazzi (1993), establishing a chronological sequence in re-storying is what separates narrative from other research genres. Carter (1993) contended that, like in a novel, there are elements involving an issue or conflict, a main character or protagonist, and a plot that ends in resolution. The plot, as described by Clandinin & Connelly (2000), may be situated in a three-dimensional space of interaction, continuity, and situation. The interaction is between personal and social dynamics, and the continuity involves the past, present, and future, while the situation refers to the context in which the story was experienced.

It is within the context storyline that the experiences of the participants have been set, with themes or primary storylines identified for further discussion of meanings the participants and the researcher made (Creswell, Hanson, & Clar, 2007). To develop a storyline that maintained the richness and depth required by qualitative research, the participants were enlisted to evolve into co-researchers as narrators of their own life stories. Rather than taking sole control of the research process, my relationship with the participants was bilateral as we worked together as partners to design, manage, and draw conclusions from the research. Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba (2007) described this process as "research with people rather

than on people” (p. 45). This process gave me additional opportunities to become more familiar with the participants during the inquiry process and gain a deeper understanding of the participants’ experiences and perspectives. Allowing the participants to be narrators challenged the positivist view of the need to capture one absolute truth (Peshkin, 1993) in the process of meaning-making. Since qualitative research is grounded in the assumption that there can be multiple ways to construct reality and truths, representations narrated by the participants cannot be judged as being the only truth but rather a truth as represented by their experiences that can stand alone as a story by itself. It is through the narratives that the participants express how and why specific happenings began and occurred or detailed more open-ended experiences that produce challenging questions instead of offering concrete answers (Barone, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1995; Saldaña, 2009).

Phase I: From Interview to Transcript

After holding all the sessions with the children, I went on to transcription. Transcribing an interview is a tedious and time-consuming process, but it provides the best catalogue for analysis (Davidson, 2017). In the current study, interviews were transcribed in a naturalistic fashion, which included all verbal cues (e.g. smiles, nods), extraneous words and utterances (e.g. hmms) (a sample of the transcripts is presented in Appendix 21 – child interview, Appendix 23 – reference group interview, Appendix 25 – adult interview). The transcripts were then carefully checked against the audio recordings to ensure that accurate accounts were obtained. This practice also allowed for active reflection on the interview by identifying the participant’s mood and tone and the conversation as a whole. This allowed for greater familiarity with the data (Davidson, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Familiarity also included reading the transcript and listening to the audio recording of the interview several times to immerse me in the data. The interviews were done in Maltese, and yet the extracts from the transcription were translated into English, which added another layer of transformation, interpretation and analysis. The process of translation from Maltese to English reminded me of Rancière’s story of Jacotot (mentioned in Chapter 2), who was a French teacher expected to teach Flemish. Translating the conversations held with the participants into the English language made me more aware and appreciative of the versatility experienced through the knowledge and familiarity with both languages. At the same time, it

was impossible to capture the spirit of a phrase uttered in Maltese and directly translate that spirit to English.

During the process of creating the narratives, I took time to reflect on the elements of the story, including the order of events and epiphanies, so as to become fully immersed in the narrative process. To recognize the narrative process was to identify how the participants integrated the events in the context of what had happened (Dietrich, Dicke, Kracke, & Noack, 2015) and to develop a plot that provided contextual information about the individual's social interactions and experiences (Kurtz, 2014). During this process, I recognised even more that the transcript was a messy chronicle that needed to be organized into a series of chronological events. Sequencing narratives from transcripts was an essential part of storytelling as it revealed significant events, major turning points, and the voice of the storyteller (Feldman et al., 2004; Knight, 2009).

Phase 2: Storying the Transcript

Stories are narratives that have been plotted and made into a coherent whole (Czarniawska, 2004; Diedrich et al., 2011). To employ narrative text was to establish a sensemaking mechanism on how events were connected and related. To develop a story, it was essential to pay attention to the spoken language and the way events, characters, and roles were described. Vladimir Propp's structural analysis suggests that all stories share some basic characteristics necessary to make up a narrative (as cited in Czarniawska, 2004; Imabuchi & Ogata, 2012). According to Propp's method, an individual can behave differently depending on the situation. Therefore, the most important element in a story is the function of an action the character plays (Czarniawska, 2004). As such, an individual can take on the role of different characters based on the situation and circumstances. On the other hand, the same individual can make amendments to their thoughts by seeking help or modifying their behaviour. To ultimately weave a collective narrative from the transcripts, each transcript was analyzed using a combination of structural analysis and elements of a story, such as a form, function, and phenomenon. In light of this analysis, it was crucial to identify the roles that the individuals played in the story leading to a chronological plotting of the transcript. Story function serves as the cognitive, affective, and motivational connection that brings coherence and meaning to the old story (Singer & Blagov, 2004). Story phenomenon is about

stories within stories as the story moves through time and society (Czarniawska, 2004; Kurtz, 2014; Singer & Blagov, 2004). Stories facilitate the expression of emotions within experiences and thus act as manifestations of individual experiences that are situated within social contexts (Feldman et al., 2004).

To chronologically plot the events, the transcripts were read and re-read several times in order to become familiar with the timing of events that occurred. The data was then organized and reorganised into events that are “chronologically plotted.” To aid the chronological plot development, the following questions were asked:

- What are the main events?
- How has the participant positioned themselves in the story?

The story was then re-read to determine whether it made sense based on what was represented in the data.

Phase 3: Cocreating

The relationship between the participant and the researcher is crucial to co-create the story. Collaboration goes beyond good rapport between the participant and the researcher (Haydon, Stevens, & Leko, 2008). There needs to be mutual trust and respect between the researcher and the participant about the information that is shared (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). To gain the participants’ trust, confidentiality issues such as maintaining anonymity, filtering any personal information that the participant is not comfortable sharing, and ensuring participants’ ownership of the story were prioritized.

I worked closely with the participants in cocreating the story through active listening and being genuinely interested in what the participant was sharing. Clarification of gaps in the story, such as silences and apparent contradictions, as well as probing for clarity regarding the meanings of certain words and phrases, was carried out during these collaborative sessions. Some of the words used by the participant were examined for embedded meaning in the narratives. Collaborating and cocreating the story with the participants facilitated the

process of attributing meaning to the chronological plot set within the participant's personal and social context.

Phase 4: Meaning-making

To progress from transcript to story, it was crucial to know how the identified segments of narratives fit into a broader context. Understanding the narrative process allowed me to understand the meaning of the narratives that the participant wished to convey (Earthy, Cancel, & Cronin, 2016; McCormack, 2000). This was done by examining the transcripts from various perspectives to convey meanings attached to the narratives. Structural analysis is an approach that emphasizes the way a story is told and tries to draw out the essential meanings relevant to the spoken language (Riessman, 2005). Language is an essential unit of analysis to understand the worldview of the participant. The spoken language is a tool for constructing reality and can be an important device in the meaning-making process (Sirbu, 2015). Individuals have their own personal styles of communication and their own version of the shared culture. Thus, it was important to understand how participants speak about themselves so that meaning can be constructed from their narratives. Through language, individuals develop a mental representation of a particular state of affairs described in utterance (Eerland & Engelen, 2013). The most influential aspects of language are direct and indirect speech quotations, such that direct speech offers listeners/readers more realness when compared to indirect speech, which offers a descriptive gist (Bonabi & Jafarigohar, 2012).

4.10 Shaping the Ownership of Meaning

The stories I chose to tell, and the images I created and included in this research are much more than illustrations of a point. As I share a narrative, I am entering with each of the participants in a creative, imaginative space that has great power in the real world. As a researcher, I made judgments according to the plausibility of the narrative arc and acted on those judgements. Through my shaping of the story, I have imposed a framework on my experience of being with each of the participants; a framework that has an impact on the reader, as it does on me. The narrative ethic with which I chose the stories is governed by the intentions I have towards the reader and towards those whose lives are entangled in the story. The narrative ethic is how I determine the boundaries of my story: what I will reveal

and what I will hold back. Each narrative requires time, space, and characters to act out their story and a presumption of forward movement. I am communicating through story knowing that we are all moving through the time and the space of the story together.

The characters in my stories are seen as collaborators, and as deserving of all the power and agency that such a role affords. The act of deciding when stories should be told and when they should not, was one of the great challenges and dilemmas faced during the research process. Yet, I made the decisions we make about what parts of the story should or should not be brought into existence. The stories or parts of the stories that I chose to present are those that constantly prove and reprove, state and restate how voice is gathered and then lost again-how difficult it is to capture it through listening and how we need to constantly reflect on our accounts in order to remain curious to listen some more. The stories presented here challenged me in a manner which called into question my sense of identity as an EP.

The recounting of each of these stories, becomes a means of sharing a common humanity, a cathartic affirmation of identity, and they contain a sense of an authentic embodiment of the moments I have lived. Each story presented here signifies a transformative moment between the participants and me; a moment of greater clarity in which they shared a piece of their lives with me and that piece became an essential part of this research journey.

4.11 Reflections on Data Gathering Tools used with the Children

Using a range of data collection tools proved effective as they allowed for the children's and adults' interests and strengths to emerge. Drawing, for example, was rejected by a number of children in this study, but for some, it was a powerful tool. The photo-taking activity appealed greatly to the children, providing many insights, while the other strategies helped further these insights. The informal conversation was pivotal to all the strategies; however, these conversations were enhanced when the children had something purposeful to do whilst they were talking, such as playing or cooking.

It was not just the layering of strategies that were valuable in this study. The affordances that the multimodal strategies provided for interactions with the child, children-children interactions, and the possibility to make these encounters and conversations visible were also highly significant. These strategies provided a catalyst for dialogue amongst children and

adults and thus contributed to the development of relationships and the increased ability to communicate with each other in a variety of ways.

By taking a view of children as having “extraordinary strengths and capabilities, linked with an inexhaustible need for the expression” (Malaguzzi, as cited in Gandini, 1993, p. 53) and by choosing methods that provide a “discursive space for differing perspectives and forms of expression, where there is room for dialogue, confrontation (in the sense of exchanging differing experience and views), deliberation and critical thinking, where children and others can speak and be heard” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2007, p. 29), I found children to be informants who are able to convey a clear picture of what was important to them. Clark & Percy-Smith (2006), point out, “participation can be turned into another managerial process in order to tick boxes and meet targets according to policy priorities” (p. 3). This, in my view, would be deeply disrespectful and would be worse than not seeking children’s views at all.

4.12 Limitations

This approach was not without its limitations. This study focused on seven children and thirty adults. The method chosen did not lead to a speedy investigation; apart from the time spent at the setting, large amounts of data were generated, and these were time-consuming and highly complex. The methods used with the children required cameras, audio recorders, and other materials that had to be sourced and paid for. Finally, this research required skills in dialoguing with children and documenting their thinking. Mac Naughton et al. (2007) suggest that a lack of expertise in working with children could be the reason why children’s perspectives are not being heard in the public sphere, and my experiences in this research lead me to agree.

4.13 Considering power relations: The Educational Psychologist (EP) as the Researcher

When adults work with children, there are going to be power imbalances. As Foucault (1987) says, “Human relations, whatever they are – whether it be a question of communicating verbally or a question of a love relationship, an institutional or an economic relationship, power is always present” (p. 11).

Binary distinctions always assume a power relation in which one term is privileged. In the case of an adult and a child, the adult would be more privileged. The received and largely hegemonic view of childhood is located in liberal mythology based on the philosophical ideas of Rousseau and Locke. For Rousseau, the family that predates civil society and paternal authority is understood as natural. From within this social construction of childhood, the authority of the psychologist to support and unlock the immanent rationality of the child is imbued with social legitimacy. Within my research study, the matrix of my professional status as an EP and my female gender with male participants became an important site of scrutiny during my reflections (Walkerdine, 1993).

The quest for access to children's "true" or "authentic" wishes and feelings can, at times, be misplaced. Indeed, the conditions that trigger children's wishes and feelings, as well as the frameworks of interpretation used in any context, need to be carefully scrutinised. The main purpose for researchers when it comes to exploring children's voice is to hear children's views, in contrast to the previously discussed traditional socio-historical conceptualisation of children, which silenced children. So researchers, particularly but not only those working from epistemological positions that aim to minimise the researcher's dominance of the interaction, stress the importance of letting the child set the agenda and have a choice of methods while giving them strategies for not answering and allowing them to decide when to end the interview (Porter & Lewis, 2004).

Throughout this study, I was acutely aware of the power imbalances that exist between adults and children and took a number of steps to minimise them. In attempting to proliferate differences in writing, I attempted to think differently about the authorial voice and to experiment with what writing collaboratively can do. In sole-authored fieldnotes, conference papers, articles and, indeed, this thesis, my authorial voice is enfolded with the voice of others. The I of this thesis is laced through with the voice of the students and educators (and their many voice), Rancière's voice, the voice of other student voice researchers, psychologists, educators, sociologists, anthropologists, qualitative researchers, philosophers and my own sense of an interior monologue. Beyond voice, what I write is tangled up with effects, matter, spaces, and bodies. The I who writes a text is not the writer's voice alone: in this sense, all writing is collaborative and participatory, enfolded with the voice of others (St. Pierre, 2014). Nevertheless, to write with another—or multiple—voice(s), with their words,

affects, bodies, in particular times and spaces, with particular materials, is to do something different to writing alone (even as I am never alone when I write).

Second, to give the children more confidence to participate in the research activities, I gave them the option to work with me in pairs or small groups. Each pair was friendship-based; this also meant that the children did not feel that they were missing out on time with their friends while they were participating in the study. An added advantage of working with the children in groups was that it facilitated the social construction of knowledge as each child responded to the thoughts of others. Third, data generation took place in the children's familiar spaces so that they could be in the place in which they felt most comfortable and familiar.

4.14 Ethics - Part 2

Whilst I can never be completely sure that the children were reassured about confidentiality, of the extent to which they understood the nuances of fully informed consent, or of the extent to which procedures concerning the children's right to withdraw were exercised effectively, the necessary ethical considerations were undertaken.

Informed consent was sought and gained from the children throughout the project. The University of Malta Ethics Committee was clear that informed consent needed to be recorded in a written format, which created several challenges. Apart from being signed, the forms also involved a series of questions that the children needed to agree to (see Appendices 14-20). Since I had already spent time in the setting before starting the study, the children were used to me being present and were happy to talk to me. However, when the forms were produced, several of them said that they could not write, and whilst I told them that they could make an alternative mark to demonstrate whether or not they understood what I had talked about and whether or not they wished to participate, the children were generally not happy with this process which (according to them) involved writing.

Rubin & Rubin (2012) emphasised the need to develop trust between the researcher and the gatekeeper while highlighting the importance of transparency. I provided a detailed description of the purpose of this study and the benefits that could be yielded from it. I

conducted observations prior to starting the data collection phase. After gaining permission from the University of Malta Ethics Committee, I met with the gatekeepers and answered any questions they had, providing as much transparency as possible to establish trust. To address ethical concerns within the data collection process, informed consent was obtained from all the participants prior to any data collection. The informed written consent detailed the purpose of the study and its significance while guaranteeing confidentiality by choosing a pseudonym for each participant or allowing them to choose a pseudonym themselves.

Ongoing consent or “assent” was sought from the children throughout the research. The term assent is used here to distinguish between the formal one-off written consent sought from adults and the agreement to participate that was gained from the children. Verbal assent was sought from the children throughout the data generation process, not just at the beginning of each session. Having informed the children about the study at the outset, they were repeatedly re-informed during the study and asked if they wanted to continue to participate. I also watched for any signs of non-verbal withdrawal of assent. For example, if the children appeared to not be interested in a particular activity, then this was taken as withdrawal of assent for certain activities. The children were frequently reminded that they could leave the activity if they wanted to, which was an option exercised quite often. Although it did not occur in this research, had the children indirectly indicated that they did not wish to participate in any aspect of the study, for example, via educators or other children, this would have also been considered as withdrawal of assent.

A challenge of undertaking research activities with children that are part of their everyday pedagogical experiences is the possibility that “researchers are expressly taking advantage of children’s schooled docility towards such activities (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008, p. 506). In many aspects of their lives, these children are required to “do as they are told” by adults; therefore, I took particular care to repeatedly remind the children and their educators that the children are merely being offered invitations to participate. Thus, I feel more confident that the children’s participation in this study was not the result of their “schooled docility”, as they frequently exercised their right to withdraw assent, depending on their personal orientation towards each activity and what else was happening at the time.

All the participants were also provided with an explanation of the right to participate or to withdraw at any time. Details of the data collection process were also provided to the participants, along with the possible benefits of the study, prior to any data collection. The

participants were informed of the audio recording prior to recording their interviews. Further details addressed any and all possible risks for the participants, who were also informed about confidentiality protection. The participants' interview responses were to be kept confidential between the participants, myself, and my supervisors. The transcript data from the interviews were stored on an external flash drive in a locked cabinet in my personal office, which was also locked. These will be stored for no less than five years. Lastly, to address any additional ethical concerns, some of the participants followed up with me to ask questions regarding the study.

4.15 Trustworthiness and Rigor

Since this study is grounded in qualitative research, there are no attempts to claim that the findings contain one absolute truth; rather, they represent a situated truth, or multiple truths (Glesne, 2011), as experienced by the participants and the researcher. Despite all the measures I have taken that can enhance the merit of this study, there is no way for me to ensure readers will interpret the findings in the narrative in the specific manner that I had intended. The aim is not necessarily for convergence of reading of the narrative but recognition that this is a viable reading. Thus, it is up to the reader/s to determine if the study is deemed credible or not. However, I did employ several procedures to maintain my academic integrity and establish a sense of trustworthiness that I value, informed by predecessors in qualitative inquiry. Trustworthiness, as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), is a set of criteria that refers to the quality of research. They state that the four criteria of trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Several measures were taken to ensure that the findings meet these four criteria of trustworthiness. These measures included but were not limited to, prolonged engagement and juxtaposing the different data next to each other.

Prolonged engagement is characterized as a prolonged stay in the field to conduct research. It is a key component to building trust, learning the culture and context within which the participants operate, and probing for any additional hunches (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The collection of data for the study lasted approximately four months, followed by another six months to analyze the data and write up the findings. Findings from all data sources were analyzed to ensure trustworthiness. Understanding the flexibility of qualitative research and the different methods and procedures that are utilized assisted me in tailoring my research to

meet my specific needs while maintaining what I considered to be rigorous standards (Peshkin, 1993). Furthermore, each procedure was systematically documented, which ensured credible record-keeping. This detailed record-keeping was used to convey confidence in the results, which is described as an account of practice (Freeman et al., 2007). However, no matter how hard I try, it is impossible for me to be able to make certain that the reader/s resonates with the study to find it rigorous and trustworthy. The potential group of readers is not a homogenous set of people, nor will they be from the same walks of life. With their own epistemologies, ontologies, and subjectivities, the readers will identify their entry points to this work. It is my hope, however, that this work will be dialogic and engaging to interested parties. For me, rigour, credibility, and trustworthiness are terms that do not have fixed meanings. At best, I created some possibilities for my work to be seen as academically rigorous. The rest resides with those who interact with this work.

4.16 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the rationale for using qualitative inquiry for this study and provided details of narrative inquiry and analysis as frameworks within which the study is primarily grounded. I have discussed various aspects of research design, including participant selection, gaining access, research sites, and the various types of data collection procedures that were used. Furthermore, I discussed in detail the process of data management and analysis and aligned such processes to create a representation for narratives. Finally, I discussed issues of ethics, reciprocity, trustworthiness, and rigour in informing this study while questioning the stability of such attempts.

CHAPTER 5: A PARTIAL NARRATIVE OF STUDENT'S VOICE AND DIALOGUE

5.0 Chapter Overview

In the previous chapters, I examined the concept of students' voice: its perplexing movements in a school (Chapter 1), Rancière's controversies (Chapter 2) and its historical rationales from the lens of legislation, policy and a number of thinkers (Chapter 3). In Chapter 4, I wrote about the researcher's positionality, ethics, co-theorising, and representation, together with a focus on the need to look at what exceeds the linguistic, while still listening to students, connecting what students say to other assemblages and experimenting with other ways of thinking, feeling, speaking, acting, and relating.

This chapter is intended to explore—with students, educators, key people involved in children's lives, Rancière and others—what “voice” can do in the social and educational field, i.e... the capacity of “voice” to affect and to be effective. Chapter 4 articulated a rationale for writing that does not separate the field of subjectivity, the field of reality, and the field of representation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 23), nor theory from praxis (Deleuze, 2006), but rather connects and experiments in participatory encounters with bodies, voice, texts, the world, and writing. This chapter takes up this complex mode of writing, intersecting earlier reviews of the rationale for student “voice” and the interpretive lens of psychology with accounts and productions of “what happened” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 192) in these encounters. In listening and writing about accounts of “voice”, I question whether focusing my attention on students' standpoint of knowledge necessarily grants the children epistemic respect. Together with Rancière and other thinkers, I map how such reflective intensities, doubts, and desires may exceed patterns of mere recognition of “voice” and suggest that the physical, material force of “voice” might be a vector for transformation of subjectivities and education. I argue that what students' “voice” can do—their capacities to affect and to be effective—is contingent on how children (and their “voice”) can be viscerally apprehended and recognised. I also argue that the affective/effective force of “voice” potentializes an unsettling of usually ascribed roles.

The metaphorical stage (spoken about in Chapter 2) was presented with new ways of speaking under the sign of equality and togetherness (children and adults). The conceptualisation of equality as staged is presented through five narratives – each narrative is

given a name that inspired me based on a theme that struck a chord during my encounters with the children.

Table 3: *The Five Stories/Narratives that Will be Presented in This Chapter*

Story/Narrative Title / Theme	Protagonist
Story 1: Foreignness and Void	Ben (8 years old)
Story 2: The Theatre of Truth	Nick (9 years old)
Story 3: Solitude and Madness	Kurt (8 years old)
Story 4: When Attention Leads to a REarrangement of the Way we “See.”	Part 1: Sam (14 years old) Part 2: Martin (14 years old) Part 3: Shaun (13 years old) Part 4: Julian (15 years old)
Story 5: The Quest for Justice	Martin (14 years old) Shaun (13 years old) Julian (15 years old)

The narratives are partial (I chose which part of my encounters with the children was relevant for the sake of being presented): they are a deliberate arrangement of extracted moments and quotations that puzzled and perplexed my being through their divergent descriptions of events and encounters. Various scenarios created with the children are discussed in connection with a discussion of the political and material force of “voice”. In each story, I consider the context within which the encounters happened, some of the questions and comments raised by the students, together with my reflections which are often presented in italics or within square brackets. Each story also includes a discussion about the potentiality for personal and professional growth brought about by many variables, including (especially) high levels of uncertainty during such encounters.

5.1 Story 1: Foreignness and Void – A Story about Not Belonging

This is a story about the capacity of Ben's "voice" to affect and be effective. By being presented with this metaphorical stage to act under the pre-supposed equality, Ben reformulates the meaning of events and their place in the world and shows me that voice is malleable and fluid and that adults' interpretation of his actions as 'madness' are to him actions done under the sign of interruption that help him make sense of the events around him.

Protagonist: Ben (8 years old)

As soon as I arrive at school, I ring the bell and wait outside the gate until someone from the school administration opens the door for me to go in and asks what I need. I notice the parents gathered outside, chatting about a lot of things whilst waving goodbye to their children. One parent reminds her daughter to leave her jacket on because it is too cold. *This reminds me of my own mother accompanying me to school every day. She always made me wear a scarf to protect me from the cold.* With this thought in mind, I look to the side, and I see a young priest who accompanies Ben and the other boys, residing in the residential institution, to school. He does not wait next to the other parents, but instead, he heads back to the car and leaves. As I head to the administration's office to ask for her permission to go to Ben's class, I am told that they have just finished the assembly and that they are heading back to class. I can see from the other end of the corridor that the teacher is angry at the group of students in front of her. They are not in a straight line, nor are they walking up in order and in silence as she had asked. She raises her voice, showing them that she is angry, whilst asking them to come down again and demanding, "I will not hear one single word this time." The students come back down in better order. I notice Ben's frown and his head looking down whilst mumbling something. He seems out of place here. He continues to stare down intensely. He does not know, I do not know, that this is the very moment he is losing his way. The teacher shouts even further and tells him, "If you want to say something, please say it to my face." At this point, I realised that he would not be up to talk, nor would it be the right time to do so. After the lesson, I manage to have a short chat with Ben. He is angry, his voice is loud, and he starts talking about violence and that it can never be accepted. He remarks how a particular educator had handled him in a violent way and that she had not given him

time to explain what the other boy had done to him for him to react like that. He is frustrated because, according to him, the rules are that children cannot make use of violence, and he cannot understand why this rule does not apply to adults.

I enter the classroom, and Ben is sitting at the back next to his Learning Support Educator (LSE). She is shared with another boy from the same residential institution who resides in the same flat as Ben. The children's desks are in straight rows, one after the other. The classroom is small, rather shabby-looking, and run down. The children are working with their teacher. She has assigned them to work to do. For the third time in a one-hour span, Ben asks, "Miss, is it break time soon?" He constantly looks to the side and is interested in all that is going on around him. He leaves his seat (without permission), walks over to the side where Kurt is sitting and starts picking on him. He has not completed any of the tasks assigned to him by his LSE. When she asks him again to sit down and work, he shouts, "I can't read. I have told you many times, I will not work this out" (some mean and rude words were removed from the conversation). She looks visibly embarrassed and helpless, and she turns to me almost out of a sense of duty and tells me, "The work is really adapted to his needs, you know." She again tries to talk to him and encourages him to lower his voice as he is disrupting the other children with his yelling.

Break time is also very disturbing as Ben is involved in a fight in the courtyard, and he comes in for the next lesson even more restless than he was before. He is very resistant to each attempt the LSE makes to deal with the issue. He does not want to go out for some time-out, but he does not want to stay in class either. The child makes us adults feel helpless. *What can one do in such a situation?* At this point, the LSE turns to me and once again feels the need to justify her behaviour: "it's always the same story; you see, no matter what we do, he does not collaborate." Ben continuously refuses to work on any of the tasks that he is given, despite numerous attempts from the LSE to help him. However, today, he is quite keen to participate in the religion quiz and constantly raises his hand to answer. His eagerness to participate is fascinating to watch. "How many commandments are there?" the teacher asks. Ben raises his hand immediately to answer.

In the evening, I have an activity planned with Ben, during which I ask him if he wants to talk about his behaviour at school. He does not want to- instead, he wants to play with the toys I have in one of the therapy rooms. In a cupboard behind the sand tray, I have some boxes

filled with toys. In one of the boxes, he sees two Action Man figures with which he wants to play. He sits on the carpet and starts narrating the story of how these two action figures are best friends, and they always play pranks on others and laugh a lot together. They are also excellent at fighting and making karate moves. According to Ben, they have special powers with which they can blow up bubbles so big that the bubble would freeze people inside it until they die. When night time approaches, the two Action Man figures go to sleep, and the next morning, one of them seems really sad and is crying. Someone has stolen his machine gun during the night, and he feels really sad about it. He cries and thinks that he can never feel better again. Action Man 1 tells Action Man 2 that maybe someone had come to seek vengeance after being pranked by them. Action Man 2 feels too guilty to just sit there, so he decides to go next to a big stone and wait until he can spot someone and confront them to see if they have indeed stolen the machine gun. Action Man 1 leaves to go hunting, while Action Man 2 sits there in the hope that he can seek vengeance and reclaim his machine gun. As he sits there, he meets three dinosaurs. They are these big creatures with dark glasses and long coats. One dinosaur approaches Action Man 2 and shouts at him for being silly, saying that he needs to grow tougher if he wants to be a good and brave soldier. The dinosaur suggests that Action Man 2 puts on a shield under his clothes to be well protected from the enemy. He also suggests that he starts building weapons from the material he can find around him so that when people attack, he will be ready. At this point, Ben takes some toy shields from other Playmobil toys and places them on the action figure. He uses paper and scotch tape to attach the shield to the Action Man. He also creates a weapon using bits and pieces of Playmobil toys attached to each other to create a long sword. Action Man 2 thanks the dinosaur and embarks on his adventure to find the culprit that stole his powerful gun. He bumps into walls he is climbing one tree after another, and he does not seem to feel any pain when he falls down. Then Action Man 2 spots Action Man 1 hunting, and he punches him. Then he sees a family out on a picnic, and he punches them too. He has become so powerful! Everyone around Action Man 2 is shivering with fear. He can also fly and hurt all the people in the village. "Power up!" Action Man 2 yells as he flies and crashes into all the toys in the playroom.

"It seems to me that Action Man 2 is quite strong now," I say, "but doesn't he feel a bit lonely engaging in all of this violence and making his friends and the other people leave because they are too scared to be next to him?" Ben makes Action Man 2 sit down on the same stone on which he had first tried to become powerful by wearing the shield. Ben turns

to me and, in a low voice, asks me if I can do the part of the tortoise. So I take the tortoise from the carefully laid out toys he has on the carpet and makes it sit next to Action Man 2. “You see, I think the shield made you very strong, Action Man, but it also stopped the nice feelings coming in ... when I am hurt, I go into my shell, but then I cannot see the nice things that are around me ... do you need some help to take off your shield?” I ask. Action Man 2 growls loudly, goes head-on into the wall, and breaks the shield into pieces.

The following week, I have another activity prepared for Ben. As he comes down to meet me, and as soon as I open the office door, he starts asking me about slime.

When I was Ben’s age, I remember playing with Gak (similar to slime). It was a toy sold in the 1990s, which came packaged in brightly coloured plastic containers. It was goopier than playdough, more stretchy than silly putty, and if you squeezed it, it made rude-sounding noises. I recall some old TV ads for Gak that showed a dowdy old teacher recoiling in disgust as children stretched and squeezed their slimy toys. But as a child, I was obsessed with Gak, and so were a lot of other children my age. If only I had known that you could make this squishy product at home with glue and glitter, I would have been swimming in it. So, I was not surprised when Ben asked me (or rather pleaded relentlessly) to bring him slime or to make slime during one of our activities. However, I was worried because slime is messy. As I thought about the possibilities that could go wrong, I couldn’t get rid of the feeling that I did not want to make slime; it can get tiring to keep sacrificing bowls and utensils to a child’s slime-making pursuits. Therefore, I decided against making the slime and purchased ready-made slime instead.

I show him the slime in the pre-packed bottles, and he asks me if he can have one. As we enter the next room, he asks me if I have already made up my mind about who is getting the other slimes. When he sits down at the table, he immediately takes out the slime and asks me if the shop from which I had purchased the slime had any black slime. “No,” I say, and he seems okay with the answer. As we are both engaging with the slime, Ben states how happy he feels as he has been granted a longer visiting time with his mother, and he is thrilled to be able to visit her on Christmas Day. I am about to latch onto that statement to probe him further, but he interrupts my thought by asking for some background music. I ask him to tell me what he wants to listen to, and he chooses to listen to some Christmas songs. We continue talking whilst listening to these songs, and then, very tellingly, Ben expresses his love for a

particular song, a rather melancholic song which, according to him, is about the death of a beloved man. He shares the fact that the song reminds him of his own departed dad. The song is in Arabic, and I am astonished to learn that he has picked up enough Arabic to sing the song correctly. I ask him about this, and he states that he knows enough Arabic to hold a simple conversation in the language with a friend.

Ben: “Have you ever heard this song? [I shake my head to say “no”, and he immediately continues as if he has a pressing need to explain.] It is about a person who has friends of bad influence, and they are not really friends ... and her dog tries to make her happy ... and then dies ... makes me want to start crying when I listen to it ... it reminds me of my own dog and when he died ... now let me play another song and sing it to you”. [He starts singing along to the song as he bounces on the yoga ball.]

Ben: “It is also in Arabic, you know ... the song is called “Ye, Ye, Ye” ... I was only five years old when I learnt all its words by heart ... the boy who sings was bullied as well [I was going to ask about this but he wants to keep on explaining.] ... this time, it is his father who used to bully him. ... the boy wants to go to the police ... this man is not his real father but his stepfather ... the person who is singing is the proper father, and he is saying that if the boy’s stepfather continues to hurt the boy and his mother, he will go to the police ... the boy sings “I hate my family” ... then the wife, the boy’s mother leaves ... the stepfather hated children, and he had killed a young girl once ... this was the first song I ever heard from when I was a young boy ... it helped me speak you know ... find the words to say ... when I was sad, I used to listen to it and felt happier. As the young boy tries to sleep, the stepfather comes along and starts punching his face ... and once, his mother was doing his hair, and the stepfather was hurting his hand, and the boy became furious ... so the boy ran away and went to his real father’s home. Then his mother was also sad and wanted to run away because this man was hurting her as well ... the boy had almost died ... because this man tried to kill him with a knife. Then the police placed him in prison ... he had many chances to change, but he had killed a girl and hurt the boy ... sometimes with his fist or with a wooden plank on his back.”

After he tells me the story behind this particular song, Ben goes on to recount the abuse that he had suffered at the hands of his own mother when she beat him on the face with a wooden plank after the headmaster mistakenly accused him of having blasphemed at school.

Ben: “Do you remember my first day here in the residential institution? I had bruises on my face and scratches. [I can see how important and meaningful this day is for him, and without being consciously aware of it, he made me feel really guilty that I don’t recall this particular day.] The head of school asked me if I was engaging in fights just to spite others or because I am a bad boy ... he had told my mother that I was swearing ... but it was a lie ... because my best friend’s voice was similar to mine. Then when the head of the school called my mum to tell her what I had done, she came for me at school, and when we got home, she said, “Come here, you,” and she took a piece of wood and hit me hard. My body was covered with bruises and scratches, and blood was oozing out, and then the headmaster called to say it was not me who did that, but my friend who had a voice like mine. The next morning, I had to go to school like that ... I was always trying to cover up the bruises and come up with lies. But then the social workers came by and took me somewhere ... the police took me to the hospital to check the bruises ... then other police came by, and they took me to a place where I told them I did not want to go back home to my mother. I was fed up with being at home.”

Despite suffering at her hands, Ben expresses the wish to live with his mother again because she seems to have got a handle on her anger-related issues.

Ben: “But now I want to go back home. Why don’t they believe me now that I want to go home, but they believed me when I said I wanted to leave? My mum calmed down, and I really wish I could go back. I always think about that room they took me to, and they asked me many times if I was sure that I wanted to leave my mother’s house, and I kept saying, “yes, yes, yes, yes” but then I changed my mind, and I told them that I did not want to leave the house even if they made me do it ... if they did, I would run away. I was angry ... very angry ... then they took me and brought me here [in the residential institution] at about 10 pm. I was so sleepy and tired. The first two people I saw were Elizabeth and Mark [his care workers] ... I ate pizza ... that was my first meal here ... The care workers could not believe how hungry I was ... I kept on eating, and I ate four large slices ... I had tasted a pizza once before but never had I tasted anything that good. Mark looked at me and said, “You do eat a lot, eh?” and we laughed so hard.”

After narrating this story, Ben speaks about the musical instrument that most appeals to him, this being drums. He spends some time trying to replicate percussion sounds using different

objects. All of a sudden, his attention is caught by something he did not expect to see. I follow his gaze, and I see him looking at the doll's house; *has he completely forgotten that he was listening to music and talking about musical instruments just before?* He changes his voice as he pretends that he owns a beautiful, clean house. He emphasises the importance of cleanliness to himself and says that although his room is not often that tidy, he fantasises about having a clean space of his own. He also starts to weave a story around the inhabitants of this house, with various characters relating to the members of the household. I notice that certain elements of the characters' lives are negative and almost somewhat fatalistic, including car accidents, thefts, and murder. When asked why one of the characters would participate in such violent behaviour, resorting to killing everyone around him, he replies (after some probing) that it was because the character had been bullied as a child at school. The sense of anger inherent in the role-play is amplified by the continual insistence on the brutality of the attacks that he mentioned. Ben continues to manifest a great commitment to his make-believe world, constantly engaging with me and involving me in his role-playing.

For our next activity, on another day, we set out to cook some treats, as Ben loves to cook for others. As we prepare the coconut balls together, he expresses his displeasure at the poor hygiene practices of one of the other boys, Kurt, who kept touching the chocolate balls he had made last week. His disappointment stems from the fact that then the other boys would not be interested in or, perhaps, afraid of eating what he prepares. This makes him feel very sad as he invests a lot of time in preparing them. As we fashion the coconut balls together, it emerges that Ben is quite good at baking, although he expresses concern about putting on weight, referring to how he has recently gotten heavier. I point out that I do not think that he is not in the least overweight and that if he put on weight, this would probably stabilise the older he got (*as I said, I asked myself, "If I was in his place, would I have believed my own statement?"*). As we rolled the mixture into balls, Ben spoke about his extreme worry about his grandparents, who have, lately, tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. He is anxious about the possibility that his grandmother will pass away after contracting the infection and that he will never see her again. This fear of his is also manifested in terms of his fretfulness over Mark's (his care worker) state of health when he heard that the latter had also exhibited some symptoms that could be related to the COVID-19 virus. I try my best to soothe him down, telling him to remain in contact with them.

Throughout the cooking session, Ben is keen on taking photos of the food and also posing for photos with me, displaying a fondness for capturing memories. Seeing his enthusiasm, I encourage his love of both the cooking process and taking photos while also urging him to sing along with the Christmas carols. We play as we make the coconut balls together. Later on, Ben proudly confides that his partiality to cooking is due to his mother's own cooking skills and the fact that they had prepared treats together before, such as Christmas logs, together. He reiterates his wish to become a soldier like his grandfather while also espousing a great liking for photography.

Ben then starts to open up to me about some of his recent experiences at school and his likes and dislikes. He expresses regret about the fact that as soon as he was admitted into the residential institution, his school was changed. He feels very sad about this, saying that the wonderful memories he had of the time spent at the previous school will be forever lost.

Ben: "It will be my first time in _____ Primary ... I didn't want to go, but they (referring to the residential care staff) continued to bring up excuses about the school bus ... they did not consider the fact that I had friends there ... now all the memories would be lost ... I feel so lonely sometimes ... not sometimes ... most times."

Researcher: "So you think that this move was mainly due to school bus issues?"

Ben: "They always bring up excuses about the school bus ... or that they can't come for me ... but, for example, Daniel attends [name of school], and he goes on the school bus on his own, so why can't I? ... when I tried to tell them, they said that I cannot get on the bus on my own and that they won't have time to drop me off as there will be a lot of traffic ... they also mentioned the roadworks going on which will add more time in the traffic."

He refers to various incidents of bullying at school that he had witnessed, trying to act a little nonchalant by saying that as long as he receives the headmaster's support, he does not care whether he is picked on or not. He then also admits that he, too, sometimes got physical with the other boys. Ben also shares that one of the reasons why he is reluctant to change schools is the fact that he knows he would be placed in the same class as Kurt; Ben complains that the latter had mentioned his family members, especially his father, whom he had lost some time ago. This kind of behaviour provoked Ben to the point that he became aggressive with Kurt,

pushing him so that the latter fell over and broke a tooth. Ben then goes on to describe how his own behaviour had improved from some years back when he used to be a lot more violent.

Ben: “He [referring to Kurt] is always passing mean comments about family members, and that hurts ... and what can I do? I try to keep holding it all in. I know that, sometimes, I pick on them myself, and I also use mean language, but I am no longer as stubborn as I was, and I no longer engage in fights as I used to before ... But they have to understand that I am not mad, I do not invent things ... If he mentions my father, I will punch him in the face because when he mentions him, he makes me remember bad memories. They may think I am mad, but I know what I am doing and why I am doing this.”

Researcher: “Does this happen at school as well?”

Ben: “School is worse ... when I was in Year 2, I was very aggressive. They used to give us toys to play with, and I used to throw them at the other children ... I was so angry ... but I am no longer like that...I am no longer that boy.”

As soon as we are about to end our time together, he turns to me and says, “*Will you please tell Martin (careworker) that I was good today?*”

5.1.1 My Own Process of Writing this Story

Ben is a newcomer to the school and to the residential institution. I first got to know him a few months ago when he was admitted. I was struck by his uniqueness from the very beginning. He always has a very interesting and often divergent perspective on almost everything. This type of thinking often left me curious about how he processes information and what experiences led him to think the way he does. He is a constant reminder of how educators are often guilty of generalising information about the student population as if everyone came from the same experiential and contextual moulds. Consequently, I was quite pleased when I realised that he was going to be one of my fellow researchers because I knew his perspectives would widen my conceptual horizons about children.

As I am writing this story, I realise that I dwell on each word uttered by a child because it is a process that requires trust in the chosen words. This does not refer to the type of trust that the words are always true because the question of verifiability is not the important question here. There is, however, trust in the meaningfulness of the words: to trust that the words may appear meaningful to me and to trust my own ability to engage with the words and find meaning. By taking on this attitude towards words, I venture into a space of uncertainty. Thus, I also need to trust my own ability to walk alone without the safe company of consciousness or some definite criteria for deciding what to believe or disbelieve. However, it is not simply a question of words that is at stake but a general encounter with people and society. Acting and observing with trust demonstrates a kind of respect for myself and for others whose lives, works, and words I encounter as a researcher. In this way, subjects, the self, and the other are distinguished from the reign of representations in which they are hidden behind roles (Blackman & Couze, 2010). However, this approach is equally a singularization as the self, and the other is realised as truly singular entities, indeed foreigners, that cannot be fully represented through socially constructed categories (Blackman & Venn, 2010). This is the practising of an “egalitarian foreignness”, Rancière points out, which “puts into peril everything that is inscribed in the repertoires of society and politics” (Rancière, 2003, p. 52). He adds that “the gaze undoes the confusion of the represented at the cost, of course, of another confusion, that of social identities whose distinction depended precisely upon the first confusion” (Rancière, as cited in Deranty, 2010, p. 54). It seems that Rancière is trying to isolate the most fundamental component of the self—subjectivity. By liberating the gaze from all the representations that society feeds to it, he encircles true subjectivity, the part of the self that is not defined by representations (Rancière, 1999).

When I enter the classroom where Ben resides, I do not enter as a psychologist who wants to be educated about the struggles that these children may face or the helplessness that the educators feel but simply to observe Ben and the other children and see how their day unfolds. What I, the non-teacher in a teacher’s environment, encounter in the classroom demonstrates the forces that work against any liberation of the gaze. What I, as a “foreigner”, perceive in the noise and chaos of the classroom is an assault upon the gaze. The classroom is, in the first place, an uninterrupted movement that hurts the eyes and gives the observer a headache; indeed, it is a never-ending procession of sensory shocks filled with charts of

differing colours, cards hanging from a string that runs from one side of the classroom to the other, and cupboards all around, in which, along with the ability to look, the possibility of thoughtfulness is lost. What I see in the visual noise and audible noise of the classroom is a constant need to be in line, an unstoppable production of work and information-giving, and the constant need to participate. The lack of pauses from the assigned work due to the fact that there is no opportunity to take some time off (because the LSE will notice and the teacher will not be happy) prevents the eyes from looking in a direction other than to the front of the room and in turn await the teacher to give the next task. It prevents the ears from listening carefully to what someone says because no one says anything in the too-loud noise. It also prevents the mind from wandering off and from thinking.

Ben also lives the very same method in the residential institution because there is also a schedule that needs to be religiously followed to allow for peacefulness and smooth running. Not only does society force upon Ben an unceasing stream of rules and rigid schedules, but also the immediate exercise of interpretation and the requirement to take part in that exercise. Behaving badly brings a subject to silence, either by assigning more work, assessing and understanding their profile, checking with a psychiatrist to see how they are feeling, or going through the system of social workers and the myriad of other professionals to see that they are doing well. As soon as a resident arrives at the residential home, they are assessed via an IQ test and other personality assessments that generate a profile of strengths and needs. As an EP, I present words and blocks that Ben is asked to define, say something about or recreate. He is forced to say something about which there is possibly nothing to say. The blocks subtest, for example, is not completely uninteresting to the eye; however, the fact that a description and some associations are required means that the work of the gaze can be immediately tied up by the EP's explanations to a system of representations and meaningful discourses. In this way, Ben can be classified and assessed as above or below average and given a label. This is not said here to criticise the methods that I, as an EP, employ, but it serves as an example of the method of pacification that is general to and embedded in the workings of society.

5.1.2 Emerging Issues

Theme 1: The Relationship Between Intelligible and Unintelligible Discourse

When Ben tells the LSE that he does not want to do the work provided, he gives the one statement she cannot accept. To do “nothing” is to call for something that does not exist and should not exist in the system of education. Doing nothing has neither place nor reason to exist. It generates pure vertigo. However, this is exactly what Ben seeks; he willingly steps aside and walks until he is out of any place. This struggle is repeated again when the headmaster asks him about the motivations for his behaviour. He can only understand his choice in two ways, so he asks him if he is behaving in that way (1) to spite others or (2) because he is a bad boy. Again, Ben cannot provide an answer. His actions do not follow the system of thought the headmaster has adopted; instead, they are in accordance with his gaze and his reflection. What is currently at stake in this ongoing struggle is precisely the effort to liberate the gaze from the assault laid to it by both system and interpretation in order to allow it the freedom to act and “determine the proper gesture” (Rancière, as cited in Rockhill, 2004, p.126).

The relationship between intelligible discourse and the actions and movements of people is very central to this story. By writing about the proper gesture, I speak about Ben’s gaze at the beginning of the story, describing it as looking down, as well as his frown at the teacher’s words: the minutest of the body’s meaningful movements. The gesture is a simple movement that can signal the briefest of feelings but may change a whole course of events.

Nevertheless, the gesture does not carry in it a full understanding of the narrative it takes part. It does not suggest a whole line of following gestures and actions. It is not an action that is carried out with an intended purpose that is grounded in a specific understanding of past events and points towards a specific development of future events. Rather, the gesture is a simple reaction of a body and intellect to what happens in its immediate presence; it is the movement of a body and intellect that signals are meaning.

By focusing on the singular gestures, I perform the labour of attention that liberates the gaze and singularizes the self and the other. Instead of looking at Ben as an example of either this or that pattern of behaviour, instead of integrating all his words and actions into a meaningful

narrative, I dwell on his gestures and gaze. By focusing on the link between these two basic forms of interaction between a subject and the world, these being gaze (and together with it, all the other senses) and gesture, I try to restore to the subject the freedom that is necessary for it to act and not merely reproduce. Simultaneously, I also restore the subject's freedom to not complete an action, to not finish the path they took. It is done so that if one says A, one should not be required to also say B. The series of gestures that make up a recognisable type of behaviour may always be diverted or held back because one is not bound to one course of action. Watching one gesture may invoke an expectation of a following series of events; a gesture may seemingly point towards a specific end, but this might not necessarily take place. One is always free to determine the proper gesture. This does not mean, though, that one is always able to make good decisions as long as one is not influenced by other people's will.

I do not want to make a distinction between the individual and the social that coincides with a distinction between good and evil. Nor does "proper" in "proper gesture" mean the one and only suited gesture in that specific situation. Indeed, it is exactly those rules about the correct ways of thinking and action that the metaphorical stage that is offered tries to liberate Ben from (through my writing). What makes the gesture "proper" is simply the fact that it is determined by observing and reflecting subject. The foundation of the gesture is located in the subject and not in some underlying principle that governs how human relations develop. Thus, the possibility of diversion is opened. Ben's individual power to change his path and clear a space for his agency is restored. There are two different kinds of power at stake here, and they are embedded in opposing positions. On the one side, there is the pervasive narrative power of the child's life history and the rules that surround them. It is not so much a power that forces bodies to act in this or that way but a power that determines what is proper, what makes sense, and what any action, any work, must refer to in order to avoid being considered a non-action or a non-work; that is, something meaningless. On the other side, there is the power of the subject, of reflection. The freedom of the gaze that we may find is not a freedom that the subject gains because it is there all the time. The power is that we may recall it and thus regain the freedom of our gaze, reflection, and actions. Ben regained his power. Little by little, his whole journey has changed him. The journey I witnessed Ben undertake also zooms in at the very moment when changes take place when the gaze converts when the steps change direction. However, this story is not a story that ends on a positive note (far from it). At the end of it, it is not the triumph of a free subject that I see, but a child in a residential

institution who is also placed in a Nurture Centre and who still struggles to derive meaning out of his life story; the power of the system and its interpretation remain unconquered.

Although he is young and is restricted by the system, he is left with the assurance that his own subjective power to be a foreigner is separated from the power of the system and its interpretation. In this way, there is the possibility that Ben remembers himself by becoming a foreigner. Rancière locates the source of the gained insight within the subject itself rather than outside it. Indeed, the gain in insight and power that I recognise in Ben's path through the story is not so much a process of gaining a strength that he did not have before but a process of recalling him, as a thinking subject, to his own destiny; that is, through reminiscence (Rancière, 1974).

Theme 2: Making Sense

Why did he say all of those things to me? Is his behaviour a consequence of the cruelty of the world: the recent admission into care, the abuse he suffered, and the need to belong? I understand that his surface behaviour is only a variety of much greater pain. However, what interests me at this point is what is behind the individual pain that seeks its meaning in this child's sentences. And this pain is not something that can be cured except by action. What I am trying to promote is not attention but consciousness: the consciousness of someone who has disclosed what is hidden. Getting to know Ben is proving to be a journey of discovery through misery and abuse, yes, but also through song, celebration, intrigues, play, and of course, all kinds of other problems, which are personal rather than a variety of the great social pain. When Ben engages with Action Man, when he hears the song, and when he engages with the toy house, he crosses a border and enters into what creates sense to him; thus, he must keep walking under the sign of interruption while facing the risk that he loses his way, or the way set up by others for him.

In the Action Man story, something happens; there is an important event, namely Ben's need to protect himself. This is not something that simply passes by as a recognisable characteristic of a genre, not a familiar twist in the narration, not something that is already suggested by the introduction of the story. Being treated with violence is, for him, an

intolerable event, and I am interested in the apprenticeship of the unique power that goes forth to meet the event (Foucault, 1991); that is, how a person actively encounters an event. The person is Ben, and his gain in power is, above all, reflected in the story he engages in. The story is a story about a boy who reflects, a look that observes and distinguishes, accompanied by another, the observer who follows the work of reflection. My writing is simply the work of reflection as it actually is, physically visible in Ben's behaviours, movements, and facial expressions. My pen tries to frame something far less representable: the moments and places of encounters between Ben and his world and how he is prompted to reformulate the meaning of events and their own place in the world rather than merely repeating themselves. What is at stake here is the simultaneous process of making sense of the events we encounter and formulating our own role and identity as subjects who encounter these events. The engagement with the teacher in the morning led to the play with Action Man and the story that then unfolded.

Theme 3: "To know what was said ... to go see somewhere else."

When Ben plays with the dolls' house, he is called by something unknown; he is drawn towards the house by what it represents. More profoundly, however, what takes place is Ben's encounter with the non-place, the outside of any place. What Ben enters as he plays with the house is the very territory of not yet defined relations and actions. Thus, he enters into what makes there be sense, where new things happen, things that are not already signalised and held together in the map of the society in which he operates. Within this toy house, he is a foreigner because he has left behind his known world, about which he could easily talk, and lost his way. The physical movement, the turnaround to look at the house, is much more than just a detour in his play because what happens is of fundamental importance to Ben. The representations of society and of himself as its member are at stake. In leaving the path on which he was playing (with slime and listening to music and talking about music), he also leaves the situation he feels at "home" in and where he has a specific role—a nine-year-old playing with toys he finds fascinating. The children who pick on him, the educators who annoy him, and the people in his life who tell him what to do are all images that are all too familiar to him and which he immediately knows how to understand and organise. What he now encounters is something else: something outside of any place. He is distracted from his original purpose and drawn towards the house, which leads him further

off track, further into his past. Just as how the play, the song, and the house, bring about a real event, something that had not been suggested beforehand, Ben's step aside too brings about something that is not already held together and made sense of by the discursive maps of the world he knows, by what he expected from his visit to my office.

Before that moment, when he walked along already-defined paths through already-defined places while taking on already-defined roles, what already made sense was merely repeated and verified. Now, however, he is wandering off the path in a landscape out of place. Instead of following a path, he now walks "under the sign of interruption" (Baiocchi & Connor, 2008, p. 5). Interruption: in the same manner as the event, is an interruption that pushes subjects out of their paths and demands them to rework their representations. Such a way of getting lost will lead to the point where what comes back to him from what he says is that no one can see where he's going. This is what constitutes Ben's "madness", that what he is saying about the world around him, what he is saying about his choices and where he walks, is not understandable to others, simply because he does not speak with the words they [adults] know how to decipher. This mad way of walking "under the sign of interruption" (Baiocchi & Connor, 2013, p. 5) is the very same that we saw in Socrates's way of life: a rejection of the standardised way of representation in favour of his own habit of always stopping, thus interrupting the sequence of events and asking again the fundamental questions of the meaning of things (Plato, as cited in Rowe & Ingvarson, 2008). The fates of Socrates and Ben are strikingly similar: both were "put away" by society—sentenced to "death" or placed in a programme because of their simple sin: that of not doing what society expected of them. The fundamental similarity with Socrates is not in how the plot ends. Instead, it lies in the Socratic presence, which is:

First of all, in the relation between the event and reminiscence, in the sign of interruption that sets us walking another way, an interminable walk in the course of which the subject exceeds everything that it intelligibly could be said to be one with. (Plato, as cited in Heimans, Singh, & Glasswell, 2014, p. 9)

Theme 4: “To Remember Oneself”

In this way, the crossing of the borders of ordinary discourse and ordinary methods of operation is simultaneously the exceeding of one's own representation within the context of the said discourses and methods of operation. In other words, the derailment of the trajectories that are integral to our reality is also a derailment of the trajectories of the self. Ben becomes ‘mad’ in the sense that he bids farewell to the consciousness he may have acquired from listening to others and being guided by the thoughts and actions of “rational” people. The alternative he chooses is to become the action of his own reflection. Ben is a being that is capable of letting the powers of his own reflection be the driving force of his actions; thus, he is able to think and act across the trajectories towards autonomy. Autonomy is not represented in its classical sense here but constructed through a notion of foreignness, the foreignness of a “mad” person, someone who is no longer “at home in society”, that is accompanied by trust. When Ben continues to walk into the unknown after the initial interruption, it is because he shows trust in his own strength; this trust leads him to condemn the trajectories and identities he knows as his reality and walks a quite different path.

...and all I can offer to him is the simple gesture that leaves peace for a moment, for a while—the power of an eye that sees, an ear that listens, and a hand that shows a sign of peace, even when the power of the system and interpretation persists.

5.2 Story 2: The Theatre of Truth

This is a story about the capacity of Nick's “voice” to affect and be effective. By being presented with this metaphorical stage to act under the pre-supposed equality, Nick's “voice” disturbs the given boundaries and understandings of what should be counted as speech and voice. Nick's “voice” changes from one moment to the next; he talks in riddles and blurs his speech with ambiguous words; it is difficult to hear it because there is a constant battle of interlocution, of setting the stage and of assigning roles and in this complexity/noise. I am not able to recognise the full meaning of his words. Nick's “voice” reveals what is hidden and

suggests that the meaning of a sentence he utters may be different from what I was able to see.

Protagonist: Nick (9 years old)

I have known Nick for some time now, and he comes across as a sensitive, inquisitive young person with a sweet but restless nature. He walks fast, talks fast, and loves fastness. High gear is his only speed unless he is slowing down to tell you something that he wants you to hear. Last week, he asked me to plan an activity where we could do some Oreo truffles. I am eager to meet him, although I still cannot fathom what it is that made him think that I can actually cook.

I am a terrible cook. Most of the time, I do not even try, but when I do, it is a disaster! My kitchen appliances hate me and refuse to work as they are meant to. I feel so inadequate like I am letting down the whole chain of women before me by my lack of culinary talent. So I was perplexed when he assumed that I could be of help in the kitchen.

It is exactly 4 pm, and he comes rushing into the room. He immediately starts talking and describing his eagerness to return to school because he has missed his friends. He speaks about his LSE and how very much taken he is by her. He says that she always explains a lot of things to him, especially about insects. He used to kill insects because he felt an inexplicable terror that they would, somehow, devour him until his LSE took the time to explain how humans could benefit from them. As he is talking about his leisure activities at school, Nick confides that he prefers to play and spend time with the girls rather than the boys, as the latter would play football, a sport he thoroughly dislikes.

Nick: "Yuck ... at school, everyone loves playing football."

Researcher: "And what about those who don't like playing football?"

Nick: "The girlies never play football. The boys play football ..., and I stay with the girls to play with them."

Researcher: “What do you usually play?”

Nick: [He laughs in embarrassment.] “They tell me to take on the role of the queen, and I tell them that I am a boy, so I have to be a prince ... it is not fun though as the prince or king has to stay on a horse whilst a queen is usually carried by her maids.” [As we discuss the roles to adopt in our playtime activity, he keeps going back and forth between wanting to wear female attire and seeming to regret expressing this desire to me while simultaneously being afraid that Ismael, the care worker, would scold him for this. Nick runs to the dress-up corner].

Nick: “You’ll be the teacher, and you will be angry ... very angry, just like teachers are.”

Researcher: “And what costume shall I wear?”

Nick: “Let me choose a dress for you [shows me a child’s dress].”

Researcher: And you actually think I fit in that?

Nick: “But that is how a teacher should dress because she is a girl! You remind me of Ms Honey ... the teacher in Matilda [Roald Dahl’s book].”

As he skims through the dresses, he expresses that fashion is his favourite and ideal subject. He speaks at length about his love for fashion and costumes, and he adds, with a certain sense of pride, the fact that his teachers always ask for his opinion about their sense of style. We have a brief exchange about the wonderful traditional clothes worn in countries like Africa and India, and Nick expresses his wish to visit these places as inspiration for his own sartorial ambitions. It is very pleasing to hear about the young child’s creative aspirations. As he looks at the dresses, he wants to be Wednesday, the girl character from the movie of Family Addams, while asking me to be Morticia (Wednesday’s mother). He pulls a witch’s dress from the wardrobe and twirls. He seems to love the way the black lace swirls around him. Then he also wants to play the role of Jasmine from the story of Aladdin. Finally, he chooses to portray the characters from the feature film Matilda with himself in the title role.

Nick: “I saw the movie of Matilda so many times ... you know that I always take on female roles during play? Ismael [the care worker] does not like it. Even when I play with the other boys ... they always give me female roles...I do not enjoy it at all!” [In the meantime, he slides into a shiny yellow dress and wiggles into a sparkly pink dress.]

Researcher: “If that is your way of expressing yourself, then it’s okay, Nick.”

Nick: “I wish I could always feel free to do what I want ... my hair is not okay ... it needs to be more like a girl ... let me see if I can find a wig [puts on a wig and smiles in the mirror] ... now can you place a ribbon in my hair?”

He then chooses a large soft pink toy to portray the character of Mrs Trunchbull. Nick talks at length about Mrs Trunchbull’s description, namely her clothing and the expression on her face. You can almost tell what kind of person Mrs Trunchbull is based on the soft toy chosen to represent her.

If there is a short list of fictional characters I would not want to run into in a dark alley, Mrs Trunchbull is probably right at the top. She might be the scariest person I have ever come across as a child whilst reading. She is certainly one of the vilest characters to walk through the pages of a Dahl book. And that’s no small feat.

Nick: “Now Mrs Trunchbull needs to be super angry! Just like my teacher who yells all the time ... and there is that boy who eats cake too!”

Researcher: “Would you like to play that role, Nick?”

Nick: “Nooooo, everyone makes fun of her because she is fat and ugly, and I do not want to feel like that.”

As he fixes the soft toy, he tells me how much Mrs Trunchbull hates children and how she does scary things like throw boys out of windows, use girls for shot-put practice, locks people up, force-feed their cake, and picks children up by their ears and hair. He sets the scene and

says, “Now Mrs Trunchbull terrifies everybody, not just students and parents. Nobody’s safe when she is around ... no one wants to challenge her until I come along!”

Researcher: “What made you think about Matilda?”

Nick: “I love that movie, and Matilda has superpowers!”

Researcher: “What would you do if you had powers?”

Nick: “Oh, I know ... I would have a timer, and I would control when the care worker tells me to go to bed early ... I would use my powers to make time go faster so that the care worker leaves and I can sit and watch TV without anyone telling me what to do! Or maybe ... time travel!”

Researcher: “Would you go into the past or the future?”

Nick: “Future.”

Researcher: “You’ll be a big boy then.”

Nick: “No, sorry ... in the past so that I would be back with mum and dad and I would not be here! [He puts another ribbon in his hair.] Yuck, I look like a girl!”

Dressed as Matilda, Nick says that he has other unbelievable powers and precocity going on, such as the ability to freeze people, but Mrs Trunchbull is her match in terms of pure ferocity and nastiness. I go from playing the part of Ms Honey to becoming in charge of dressing up the soft toy as Mrs Trunchbull and later transforming into the monster herself (Mrs Trunchbull) as we engage in a chase and rough play. Nick looks in the mirror as if all he saw was a stranger staring back. He appears to be disconnected from the person staring back. He turns to face me, his skin white and his face peaked, his wig like mouldy hay, and his expression clouded, and he says:

Nick: “Please do not tell them I wore that costume ... they don’t like it when I do that [dressing up as a girl].”

Researcher: “Why? What might they tell you?”

During our next session, I intend to do the Oreo truffles with him. As soon as he enters the room, Nick immediately spots my camera as he enters the room and his enthusiasm for taking photos becomes evident from the very start. Nick’s liking for photography and his predilection for anything creative comes to the fore several times during this session, for instance, as I explain how the instant camera works and how he should use it. I keep drawing Nick’s attention back to making sweets using Oreo cookies as he had pleaded in the beginning. Yet his mind wanders. He mentions various matters; for instance, he asks whether other boys had been playing football outside, where I had managed to source the packets of biscuits from, and how badly the other boys’ photos had turned out to be. This last point is made triumphantly, very much imbued with a sense of rivalry that seems to characterise the boys’ relationship.

At different points during the session, Nick laughingly refers to the fact that the texture of the chocolate mixture reminds him of faeces with his typically puerile lavatory humour. He also speaks about playing pranks on his classmates and attempting to disgust others by talking about animal manure and soil. I scold him for the revolting allusion to human and animal waste, which appears to delight him all the more. I want to ensure that Nick is fine with getting his hands dirty and joining in with the cooking. Nick seems quite content to knead the mixture. He continues talking about food-related pranks he keeps trying to play on the home economics teacher and the other students. He seems particularly fixated on this idea of playing tricks on people, appearing to derive a sense of satisfaction, and maybe even superiority, from it. I keep having to draw Nick’s attention towards making the sweets, which is quite demanding in and of itself, as his attention keeps veering away from the job that he had pleaded to do. I painstakingly explain what we need to do, whereas he continues to comment about how old my camera looks, as well as constantly mentioning the photos’ appearance. While monitoring the truffles’ consistency, Nick seems pleased by the idea that his sweets could turn out to be superior to mine. I react to his triumphant comments in a neutral manner, being careful not to provoke his competitive spirit in this regard. I want to

emphasise the process rather than the result while simultaneously aiming for well-made sweets.

Throughout our exchange, Nick appears to indicate the importance of certain individuals in his life, the care coordinator being one of them. He also appears very keen to take some sweets to one of the flats and to the priests he encounters, as well as to his mentors and teachers. He also stresses the meaningfulness of the photos we have been taking and the fact that they will serve as mementoes of a wonderful occasion. I am quite moved by his passionate declaration that he wants to preserve them as best as he can. As the session wore on, I tried to hurry our cooking procedure up so that everything would be properly concluded before we left. He expresses curiosity about the assessment forms I use to evaluate the behaviour and issues of the children I deal with, so I detail this to him. I also refer to the toys that I use to help with my appraisal of the children's tendencies and needs.

Whilst I am answering his questions, Nick pokes fun at my expression in one of the photos he has taken of us, pointing out that I look like a murderer. I try to deflect this comment by continuously praising his sensitivity towards the creative and his passion for photography, encouraging him to photograph his activities more frequently. Nick's concentration greatly wavers to the point that he begins to disregard my exhortations to conclude our task. He starts to talk in a raised voice about the photos he wants to take, such as those of cars. He also refuses to cooperate, despite my increasing exasperation and pleas to complete our session.

As my frustration with his inaction mounts, Nick continues to linger, persisting in his fixation with photo-taking. The angrier I get, the more uncooperative he becomes, which increases with the appearance of a care worker, whom he seems to want to impress. Amid his protestations of affection for me, he continues to insist that he could produce evidence of his cooking efforts in the form of the photos we have taken, even though I might relay different information to the care worker about his behaviour. His behaviour has become increasingly more frustrating and his attitude at this point in time ranged from the realisation that he has angered me and that I would not want to conduct a similar activity with him in the future to the futile, almost hysterical clowning around, which I am rather dismayed to see. His sudden change in demeanour is both perplexing and infuriating. The last straw centres around the fact that Nick attempts to leave with all the photos we took, which I had already explained to

him, are needed for the study I am carrying out with the children. This prompts me to end the session. I air my frustrations and want a swift conclusion to an occasion that had started out favourably but ended in a disastrous manner due to his erratic behaviour (or is it also my lack of understanding which is at fault here?)

5.2.1 My Own Process of Writing this Story

“Please do not tell them I wore that costume ... they don’t like it when I do that [dressing up as a girl].”

“Please do not tell them I wore that costume ... they don’t like it when I do that [dressing up as a girl].”

“Please do not tell them I wore that costume ... they don’t like it when I do that [dressing up as a girl].”

“Please do not tell them I wore that costume ... they don’t like it when I do that [dressing up as a girl].”

As I ponder on these words, I ask myself: What if these stories remain unspoken, these words and deeds forgotten? Narrating these lives is a way to manifest a uniqueness that was imperilled and gave sense to an embodied uniqueness, precisely that which some people have sought to erase. In this way, the narration makes uniqueness visible, sustaining something of the Arendtian *daimōn*, “which accompanies each man throughout his life, always looking over his shoulder from behind and thus visible only to those he encounters” (Arendt, 1998, pp. 179-180). So storying these lives can be crucial, especially if politics can be deemed as synonymous with the perpetuity of words and actions, the demonstration of equality to those who deny it, or simply the sheer visibility that allows one to produce emancipatory narratives of its occurrence, as this would make those forms of sociality that escape our gaze necessarily non-political (or even non-existent). Politics occurs despite the well-intentioned storying by authors who make it their topic of analysis. To Arendt (1998),

men’s life together in the form of the polis seemed to assure that the most futile of human activities, actions and speech, and the least tangible and most ephemeral of man-made “products,” the deeds and stories which are their outcome, would become imperishable (pp. 197-198).

Politics takes “voice” into account as speech by recreating new boundaries between voice and speech. When politics happens, it disturbs given boundaries and understandings of what should be counted as speech and voice. Rancière (2004) defines politics as a process that

Makes visible what had no business being seen and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise; it makes understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise. (pp. 29-30)

This story intends to make visible or hear the narrative that is often denied visibility at the price of occupying this silent and invisible (non-)place between adult and child. It intends to make visible the concepts that we have produced ourselves as adults. The problem seems to be located in the very structure of seeing: the oversights are due to the impossibility or prohibition of seeing, which are internal to the structure of seeing. What I can see is a child who wants to maintain secrecy but what his actions portray is the result of an adult who has shown this child somewhere along the way that certain actions are wrong and not tolerated and that denying who you truly are is the way to go. The very structure that is supposed to shield this child and grant him a sense of well-being forbids him from being true to himself. The secrecy of the child and my failure to see the concept they (the adults in his life) have produced are not signs of a poor analysis but a symptom of my own inability to see.

My own inability to see. My own inability to see.

The structures through which we are supposed to see and the roles that give us the responsibility to see simply did not enable me to recognise the full meaning of what adults have produced.

5.2.2 Emerging Issues

Theme 1: Symptomal Understanding of Behaviour

Very often, during my encounters with Nick, I seem to speak to dead ears whilst he produces an extraordinary theatricalisation. I feel a constant battle of interlocution, of setting the stage and assigning roles (we need to cook, we need to take these photos and not those). However, there is an invasion by the proliferating horde of things *he* mentions: personified concepts that speak louder than the child himself. The specific interlocution here is that Nick wants to dance to the beat of his own drum; he wants to take the photos he wants; he wants to tease me; he wants to look somewhere else; he wants to know other things that I did not plan for him to ask. By letting these concepts speak and come out in the session and then in this writing, I try to make sure that these arguments are not mere words that may unwisely slip from his mouth. What he or any child voice may always be a source of suspicion; he may be undecided when he speaks, he may change his mind from one moment to the next, he may talk in riddles or blur his speech with ambiguous words, but the concept, however, will stay pure, will hold its ground and not drift away.

What I want from this session and what he wants are two different things. *He* provides the context, and *he* provides the scope for every utterance in the text: the stage is set (by him and not by me). Perhaps, the most dramatic and difficult ordeal there is will happen here; a journey of discovery to understand the significance of the “simplest” actions of existence, namely seeing, listening, speaking, and reading. The deeds that connect me to my work will start to surface. Reading, together with seeing, listening, and speaking, are simple actions of human existence. Through these actions, we connect our works to the cultural products that we create and share. However, reading and writing, together with the other simple actions of existence, are also what links us to the non-works, to what we have failed to create or see, to what is only half-finished or got stuck in our throats. This is how my writing is formulated, on the border that separates sight from blindness and works from the absence of work.

Theme 2: Knowledge as Production

“Please do not tell them I wore that costume ... they don’t like it when I do that [dressing up as a girl].”

The statement above mentions the production of the correct way of his being. One must not confuse “knowledge as production” with the constructivist idea of knowledge as a construction that finds its ultimate ground in the meaning-making mind of the individual (Kanselaar, 2002, p. 15). In that case, the idea of knowledge as being led forward would not be possible. What I find here is the idea that knowledge is led forward from somewhere, and it presents itself in these moments between children who see and adults who are incapable of seeing. In other words, knowledge is separate from the individual mind.

[dressing up as a girl]: These parentheses demonstrate the presence of something that is mute and invisible, yet it is there; these parentheses mark the place of the missing concept, the hidden insight, the link to the correct answer to my question. The spotted oversights, thus, are the presence or absence in the conversation. Rancière (2004) identifies this concept as a “parousia of absence” (p. 130), wherein what is written is related to what is not yet written or said but will be said. Maybe Nick did not say the words because he felt uncomfortable saying them. These parentheses are there for the missing words, words that the child must restore in a sentence left incomplete. These parentheses that summon the right answer themselves assume the place of another procedure of knowledge, that of the answer to the adult’s question. The words that the parentheses invoke already existed before the sentence was written, but they were knowingly transformed into speech. Putting the correct words in the right place is, therefore, a mere confirmation of a knowledge that the child acquired from the adult and that the adult, in turn, once acquired from society through another adult. So Nick is not simply an active intelligence in a frictionless void, constructing meaning from scratch, as it were. His intelligence, it appears to me, stands in direct relation to a sensible reality that gives him something to think about but is also open to rethinking. Nick cannot experience “untouched” reality, the pure empirical reality that is free from any preconceptions and unfiltered by our faculties. The adult puts the parentheses to the child’s sentence by disappearing into the blank space. If I can disappear into them, of course, it is because I, as an adult, assume I know already what the child intends. The procedure of knowledge that

parentheses assume is a pedagogical procedure, one that seeks to reproduce, transmit, and affirm knowledge. The parentheses, in place of the demanding blank space, evoke all the things the adult represents: the correct answers that together make up the discourse of questions and answers that is our reality and in which the sentence here is embedded in.

Moreover, it is not merely a word that is absent from the text but a concept, that is, an intellectual device that is needed to fully comprehend the sentence as it is written down. The emphasised difference between words and concepts shows what is at stake, namely meaning and the way meaning is organised, structured, and clustered into various concepts. Identifying the absence of a concept, therefore, is to grapple with the very meaning of the sentence; it is to suggest that the meaning of the sentence is different from what I am able to see. It is not about underlying or unexpressed concepts in the text but about identifying the lack of a concept. Parentheses include absence as belonging to the statement in which they function as being its own absence (Appelbaum, 2011). Parentheses appropriate the absence produced by suppressed words. The parentheses designate an absence that points to something that the researcher has not yet thought of. The curious thing is that absence is described as being present in the text, even internal to the statement of the text, as an oversight.

There is the presence of absence in the text, which itself marks a sense of belonging; those words belong to a context. They rest on a specific notion of knowledge—the links between my writing and the theory and between theory and community. And this community is, first of all, that of academics who created theories composed of answers and questions that are still not matched and are still waiting to be matched. In this community of knowledge, the works of scholars are linked together as a massive web of questions and answers, like a cloth. But this story is not intended to be about the actual words but about what lies behind the words by which we grant the words their legitimacy and meaning: the structure of the cloth of knowledge.

5.3 Story 3: Solitude and Madness

This is a story about the capacity of Kurt's "voice" to affect and be effective. By being presented with this metaphorical stage to act under the pre-supposed equality, his "voice" is initially noise to me: it sounds like pure madness, and his usage of words has no foundations. After a moment of reflection and exasperation, I realise that his "voice" seems illogical because he has nothing to say about what I can understand. Kurt's "voice" gives me permission to stop, think and look again.

Protagonist: Kurt (8 years old)

As with every sharing time and almost every part of the day, Kurt's physical and mental energy to share ideas, opinions, feelings, and stories soon takes over. As he interrupts what I am saying with some fact that only he could know, I feel helpless to stop his speaking over the top, his drowning out everyone else. I feel myself getting increasingly frustrated every time he blurts out. He speaks about school and then about his summer school friends and then about his parents, and how he had been locked in the car by his mother and made to cry so that his father would not be able to visit him and then about chocolate. I try to make sense of the sequence of events that Kurt is putting forth, but it is hard to follow his line of thought. Then he moves on to his supervised access visits and talks about the parent he attends these with. He admits that he does not enjoy attending the sessions with his mother because he is not able to play on these occasions, as is the case with me.

Then Kurt gets up and leaves whilst we are talking [without MY permission], and he quickly finds a piece of paper and begins to draw. He states that he is angry, and as he draws, he explains the source of the quarrel to me. It appears that Daniel and Luke (two other boys in his flat) had teased him about his father, referring to him by his father's name, so he had called them names and insulted their mother. During our time together, he explained that he was trying to make amends with them, and he thought that preparing coconut balls for them would be a good idea, even though they had not yet apologised.

Kurt: “Can we please make coconut balls next time? I think they will like them.”

Researcher: “Sure, of course, we can!”

Kurt: “But the special ones ... with colours ... I need them to be special.”

Researcher: “Blue, red, yellow, green.”

Kurt: “Yes ... I can’t wait ... when is the session?”

Researcher: “On Thursday.”

Kurt: “How long till Thursday?”

On Thursday, I felt prepared for the session. All the ingredients are purchased and laid out on the table. Everything he asked me to do, I executed perfectly. In my head, I feel that it is crucial that both of us do what we are supposed to and abide by the assignment of roles; I, as the adult who bought all the items the child had asked for, and the child, as the one who executes the cooking mission perfectly. I am tired on the day, but I still want to listen to the “voice” of the child (he wants to make the coconut balls). Furthermore, these clearly defined roles should ensure that there is no confusion about our positions. And yet something different and unplanned happens:

<i>Researcher</i>	<i>Child</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Researcher: “Kurt, next time, do not ask me to do something with you because you do not help out. I would have seen Ben instead....”	Kurt: “Sorry...”	Initially, Kurt seems to derive pleasure from the cooking process; however, after a while, this changes, and he begins to complain about dirtying his hands. He appears to be obsessed with the stickiness of the colour used to cover the coconut balls, constantly

		wanting to wipe and clean his hands. I scolded him for becoming distracted and refusing to help me make the balls when it was he who had insisted on using colour in the first place.
Researcher: “Refrain from saying “sorry”. You did nothing during the session. I did everything by myself, and I could have seen Ben instead, and you know it. It’s useless playing with that cloth in your hand and telling me that you do not want to participate. You are being mean ... after all, it was you who told me to make the coconut balls.”	Kurt: “I know, but—“	I remind him that the time dedicated to his session could have been used more productively with another student who actually enjoys cooking.
Researcher: “No, because next time, I could have done two hours with Nick or spent time with Ben. It’s useless being here with you while you are doing something else. Does this make any logical sense? I’ll finish it myself, then we’ll go to Room 1 [where he wanted to go] ... time is still pressing ... but if you’re being mean, do not ask and plead to make coconut balls; it doesn’t make any logical sense. Didn’t	Kurt: “I know they’re colourful and usually quite sticky.”	I try to get him to understand how irrationally he is acting. After some time, during which I explained this to him, he seemed to become somewhat agitated.

you know what coconut balls are?”		
Researcher: “And wasn’t it you who asked to make them in colour when I asked you? “	Kurt: “I will not come down for the session next time.”	He was upset by the fact that I got angry, and he asked him if he was going to be obliged to cook against his will.
Researcher: “Why are you behaving like this today? You don’t behave like this usually. Do not sit on that chair, please. It’s broken. “	Kurt: “Broken? So what?”	Did he ask for permission to sit on that chair? Is he goofing off yet again? Perhaps I should tell him to go sit down on the rug. After all, he knows the rules. He does not look at me, and he knows that you should look at people when they are talking to you. He is over there, and I am thinking, “OK, he is being rude. I do not want him to be rude and disrespectful.”
Researcher: “Okay, it’s your call.”	Kurt: “Isn’t it still good to sit on despite being broken?”	Isn’t this a question with an obvious and logical answer?
Researcher: “Do you feel you were fair today? That you wasted the session, and you wasted people’s time?”	Kurt: “No”.	
Researcher: “Mm-hmm.”	Kurt: “I didn’t feel like	He begins to do what he does every day. He interrupts and will not listen to anything that I want

	making the meatballs. "	him to understand. I try to keep explaining, hoping he can get through the rational meaning behind his tantrum, but he continues to interrupt.
Researcher: "Coconut balls, but that's not the point. The point is that it was your choice. You have been asking me to cook. I asked you what you wanted to cook, and you confidently said, "I want to make coconut balls!" I asked you, "Are you sure you do not want to make Christmas logs like Ben did?" and you said, "No, coloured coconut balls," so I got all the ingredients, we started off, and you said, "I don't feel like doing that." Do you think it is fair that I am the one making them?"	Kurt: "No ... let me make them ... now you got angry as usual."	As he argues in a rather loud voice, I worry about drawing attention to this. What if the other children will behave like this and refuse to work next time?
Researcher: "I am not angry! It's just that what you are saying does not make any sense. You're telling me I'm angry because you will make them with someone else. Did someone say that? I am telling you I am angry because I wasted the session. You could have just said: "I do not want to make them because I do not know what they are." I would have appreciated that. But you came for the session, and then you wanted to leave!"	Kurt: [mumbles]	I am angry, in fact.

During our next session, I asked Kurt whether he prefers to make Christmas cards or take photos as an activity, two things that he had spoken about in our previous encounters. I am very adamant that we would not have a repetition of the previous situation, where he had first settled on an activity that he wanted to do and then changed his mind about it, with a lot of complaining. He does seem to show regret about this previous situation and is acting as if he wants to make amends. After a brief humorous exchange about giving Christmas cards out to Santa Claus and his spouse, we eventually establish that he wants to create Christmas cards for his parents. He also wistfully refers to his aunt Veronica, and his grandparents, especially his grandmother, whom, I discover, had passed on sometime before.

But then ... he changes his mind.

He wants to play with a boat. He also lets me know that he wants our activity to be recorded photographically, so I start to take snaps of him while he plays with his boat. He takes a Playmobil figure of a young boy and places him in the boat. Kurt narrates:

Kurt: "One day, Tikku [the name he assigned to the Playmobil figure] was on the boat sailing across the sea. Suddenly the passengers on board and Tikku ran into a fierce storm, a harrowing journey that saw hurricane-force winds and waves swelling really high. The storm was worse than anticipated, forcing the captain to ask all passengers to stay in their cabin until the weather improved. All of a sudden, the boat started to creak and shake, and it started to sink. Tikku fell deep into the underground sea and found himself in a crumbly, screechy place. Then a snarling crab snapped at Tikku, and Tikku was so scared that he cowered. He walked along a bit more, and a big tarantula whacked into him. Tikku felt ever smaller. Then he fell even deeper into the underwater world. And by this time, all manner of creatures had snarled, sneered and squawked at him, and the wild winds had blown at him. The further he fell, the tinier Tikku got. And because he was so small, every other animal wanted to eat him. So Tikku went and hid in a deep, dark hole."

At this point, I intervened and said,

Researcher: "Oh no, is he all alone? How is he feeling at the moment?"

Kurt [impersonating Tikku]: “Very bad...Nothing is good; everything is bad. Then he couldn’t be bothered to do anything anymore but stay exactly where he was.”

I look around the playroom, and I see a soft bluebird toy. I fly it on top of where the ship sank and where Tikku lies and fly down the deep, dark hole. I change my voice, and I say to Tikku,

Researcher [impersonating the bird]: “Hey there! Come out of there and have a chocolate muffin in my tree?”

Kurt [impersonating Tikku]: “No, no, NO, NO.”

Researcher [impersonating the bird]: “Come, I’ll help you fly out. You can ride on my back.”

Tikku seems confused but decides to give it a go. As he flies up from the deep underwater world, Tikku starts to feel a bit better. Although he is still scared, his surroundings seem very different now that he is not on his own.

Researcher: “You know, bird and Tikku together make up a strong team, and if Tikku ever feels as though he’s shrinking back and about to get deep into the water, he can always ask for the bird to be next to him”.

Kurt looks at me and says, “Tikku is happy.”

I am eager to continue this discussion as I feel that there is a lot to unpack. I wonder if Kurt feels as small as Tikku at times, but then he changes his mind.

Now he wants a video of him to be taken until I clarify that the camera in question is not equipped with this function. He explains the make-believe scenario to me, appearing content in his imaginary world. It is also significant that now he is no longer Tikku, now placing himself instead as the captain of the boat. Before we end the session, I ask him, once again, if he is sure of his preference for our next joint activity (Christmas cards), and he replies, “YES,” he would be happy to play dress up... (??).

5.3.1 *My Own Process of Writing this Story*

When it came to presenting the conversation in written format, I wanted to make sure that the different utterances in the text, the different voice it contains, are speaking to each other, that they refer to the same concepts when they use the same word and that when they answer each other, they fill each other's gaps and give meaning to each other's statements. Everything is intended to lead forward to the denouement when the loose ends are tied together and hidden plot details are revealed.

So, what happened?

Maybe the helplessness and anger that Kurt and I experienced were due to a failure to act according to the plan (*my plan*).

As I write and reread our conversation, I get in touch with the solitude of writing as being twofold in nature: on the one hand, my frustration as I try to make sense, and on the other hand, the absence of any attempt to escape the fate of writing alone, risking that my words will appear strange or without sensitivity to the reader. This struggle reminds me of one of the first modern literary heroes we had covered in secondary school, Don Quixote. In one episode, he instructs his squire Sancho Panza to bring a book for him to the nearest village (Gurgen, 2013). There, Sancho must find someone who is literate to copy a letter Don Quixote had written in the book onto proper letter paper and post it (Gurgen, 2013). Sancho points out that, then, he would not be able to get Don Quixote's signature at the bottom of the letter. Don Quixote states that this will not be a problem (Gurgen, 2014): firstly, the addressee, Dulcinea, has no idea what his signature looks like; secondly, she cannot read anyway; thirdly, she does not know Don Quixote; and fourthly, Dulcinea is not really Dulcinea, but a peasant named Aldonza Lorenzo, and she does not know that she is the one Don Quixote refers to as "Dulcinea", the addressee of the letter (Gurgen, 2014). Eventually, the letter was never sent because Don Quixote accidentally put the book in his pocket. Thus, the solitude and madness of Don Quixote come to signify literature itself, the adventure of writing alone, the bodiless letter addressed to someone who does not know that they are the addressee. This is exactly the fate that I attempt to steer clear of.

I want not to derive meaning,

not to address letters without an addressee,

not to be Don Quixote,

not to be the fine soul who fights against windmills,

not to be alone,

not to be the voice of the one crying in the wilderness.

I wish to seek the pure voice behind the chaos. To listen.

5.3.2 Emerging Issues

Theme 1: Chaotic Listening

I have re-read the conversation so many times in an effort to secure the meaning of those words. I try to enhance this by my frequent use of quotation marks and parentheses that displace the statements, modality, and identity of both of us speakers and give consistency to or remove it from voice, as well as italics that withdraw words from ordinary usage and coach them in the direction of their meaning (like I did in the previous stories). The typography used for this story proliferates to surround non-meaning and reduce it to the minimum. This work exorcises my madness; it saturates the page with relationships of community and conflict. The words emphasise how I was driven by the dread of speaking nonsense or to deaf ears. And yet ... when Kurt says that he does not know what coconut balls are and also refers to them as “meatballs”, I get mad, and I feel as if I am losing my temper. This is because the words he utters sound like pure madness to me, words without foundations, inspired and legitimised by something otherworldly rather than by the communal cloth of knowledge (the knowledge we had both agreed on).

In the midst of helplessness, I still wish to silently demonstrate and admit that no conversation is ever devoid of voids and that one never escapes the possibility that their

words will come across as meaningless cries. I wish to demonstrate how the meaning of a conversation is only accessible if one looks at it as one part of a vast network of other works. When Kurt hides what he tries to say by stating that he does not understand, he makes the true intention of his words only accessible to those who are able to analyse them and recognise the link to other misunderstandings. This objection, however, seems to me to rest on the following two misunderstandings:

- Firstly, the argument presupposes that as long as one recognises the words (coconut balls), it is evident what one is referring to and what one is trying to say. There is probably no other session during which diverged interpretations have caused more disagreement than this one. Possibly my references to another's work (which I have not included in Kurt's story: "Ben also did coconut balls," "you should behave like Nick") are just as likely to be misinterpreted by him and are not key to any correct interpretation.

- Secondly, my interpretation of his words here in this story is not simply an attempt to understand the intention of his refusal but also to discover where his intentions might have been misguided or interpreted by me as ignorant and irrational. I want to understand where I became confused and misguided. What he attempts to convey is partly expressed through his reference to the coconut balls as amends to his previous fights and through the imperfection of the reference, that both the reference and the meaning of the concept of the original intention he refers to may be lost on the listener.

Theme 2: The Imperfection of Communication

For me, as an adult, it is important to stick to the rational path, but Kurt's "voice" guides me towards another approach that is not so afraid of solitude, not so frightened by madness, not so obsessed with ensuring that we reach a denouement in the end that clarifies all confusions: his "voice" leads me to the imperfection of communication. This approach allows the subject to be free and to listen, interpret, and find meaning anyhow, even without someone leaning over their shoulders, reassuring them that they understand in the correct way. The outside of the discourse and conversation with Kurt is not a screaming void but a place where I may

find meaning that resides in the regions beyond my confined human existence. The relation between discourse and its outside is reflected through how the community of knowledge does not seem to be standing in relation to anything on its outside as its origin and destiny are itself.

It seems to me, however, that this approach would have to rest on an altogether different notion of the relationship between community and knowledge and a different vision of madness and solitude. The community of knowledge is a structuralist understanding in which knowledge constitutes community and community constitutes knowledge (Althusser, Balibar, Estabiet, & Rancière, 2015). Rancière's philosophy seems to adopt an ontological position as it portrays the individual's interpretations of the world as the ultimate ground for knowledge. In Rancière's philosophy, the notion of external reality is depicted as a sensible reality; that is, reality as it is felt and interpreted by a subject. Consequently, the subject-sensible relation is what forms Rancière's ontology (Rancière, 2004). Thus, one's subjective interpretation of the world becomes the foundation of truth or a community of knowledge rather than just a notion. The absence of external reference points implies that subjects are foreigners, in a way; however, this also validates every subject's meaning-making interactions with their reality, seeing that there is nothing against which equality can be measured. This ontological shift appears to dismiss the traditional notion of "knowledge" as something a person may or may not have (Rancière, 2004). It also seems to erase the foundations for talking about education in the way we traditionally do, where the idea of becoming truly human is linked to the acquisition of culture/knowledge.

The very idea of education to humanity no longer makes sense. There is no humanity to acquire, only humanity to practise (Rancière, 2009). Furthermore, seeing that there is no knowledge to transmit, education should not be seen as a means or a procedure. Meaning that it is derived from social interaction, which ultimately stems from an individual's personal interpretation. Thus, the educational moment is not when knowledge is transmitted but when one reflects on and derives meaning from the said knowledge. Therefore, what, according to Rancière's philosophy, can be referred to as education (i.e. meaning-making), is not confined to situations that are usually deemed educational but are instead the mark of subjectivity and subjective existence (Rancière, 2009). The conversation with Kurt reveals that the community of knowledge between us seems to be constituted by shared knowledge; however,

it also produces knowledge itself. The actions of writing about and reflecting on this conversation with Kurt are not an encounter of inclusion, but themselves make community and presuppose community. Within this community of knowledge that Kurt and I share, there is the assumption of the status of a structural understanding of “the social”. It is not only the sum of subjects but also a force much greater and more profound than any one person, a force that works through the lives and thoughts of subjects.

Knowledge is knowledge because it is the knowledge that a community shares; meaning is meaningful because it is the meaning that is mutually understood by a community and, therefore, holds the community together (Althusser et al., 2015). Seen from this perspective, trespassing the boundaries of the community of knowledge seems to be tantamount to walking into a void; there is no reference point for meaning outside the society. Indeed, the metaphors of “solitude” and “madness” seem to convey something negative; that is, they negate something. The words, in fact, negate community, familiarity, and sanity. However, they could also be ascribed to a double meaning. Solitude and madness are also fates that I dread as a researcher, and yet these negative words acquire a new meaning: the words are linked to the inherent intelligence of the subject. What takes place is not so much a rebuttal of arguments but a change of perspective.

Thus, a word may change its meaning, and words like “solitude” do not necessarily mean the absolute void, the ontological vacuum that the metaphor first may seem to have signified. For instance, even when I cannot follow Kurt’s line of logic and I get confused, there is, of course, still reason in the words he utters. The way I describe the episode with Kurt, however, makes it seem like his words are illogical, but maybe this is because he has nothing to say about what I can understand. I cannot produce an interpretation or analyse what I see to a certain description. This is also so with the nothing that I reply; something did bother me, I was confused by his words, but I had no particular complaint, nothing to point at that would explain his feelings. The illogical sequence of events that Kurt seems to be narrating may represent outside discourse, that which does not make sense to the community of knowledge. Nevertheless, the focus that I wanted to portray here is that there is an event or an experience that gives rise to solitude or the void. The event is related to nothing.

Whereas I reflect on the relation between a subject and the community of knowledge, there seems to be a wider perspective that also includes a relation between the subject and reality

that is foreign to the community of knowledge. This relation is at work in the story that Kurt tells about this family; the story seems to be made up of experiences of concrete events and interactions with real people, like the fact that he had been locked in the car by his mother and made to cry so that his father would not be able to visit him. Thus, this is not a presentation of a mutually excluding dichotomy of a meaningless void and social reality. Instead, the subject has some access to reality that is not social; indeed, I could perhaps say that the subject had experienced a reality devoid of the imprints of the social. The subject may have undergone experiences that displaced him from the community of knowledge.

Theme 3: Reality as “the sensible.”

I am not only interested in the subject and his intelligence but also in the subject in relation to its reality. Rancière talks about reality external to the subject, which he refers to as the sensible. More specifically, he seems to be interested in the dynamics related to what he calls the distribution of the sensible; that is, the way the sensible fits with or is foreign to common conceptions of it Rancière (2012). Rancière (2012), moreover, uses the concept of the distribution of the sensible to point towards how the sensible tends to appear to us as self-evident facts that assure us that we perceive and share the same sensible reality and thus create a kind of politics of aesthetics.

The word “sensible” refers to that which can be sensed with our senses but also to what makes sense or is rational to us. Thus, the distribution of the sensible is the way the sensible appears as comprising both meanings of that word—it consists of self-evident facts that link the sensory to sense; it is the facts that govern how we see the world (Rancière, 2012). The distribution of the sensible, thus, amounts to a conception of what a community of knowledge, or the social world, is. Shared sensibility makes a community. However, the notion of the distribution of the sensible inherently splits up and divides into parts. The distribution of the sensible allocates roles and positions “based on a distribution of space, time and forms of activity” (Grønstad, 2020, p. 141). Rancière (2012) exemplifies how Plato saw it as evidence that artisans could not participate in politics: “They cannot be somewhere else because work will not wait” (p. 61). The way this was a self-evident fact for Plato proves, according to Rancière (2012), the workings of a distribution of the sensible that did

not allow the activities of work and politics to take place in the same space, time, and identities.

I can see something similar in this story with Kurt, where during the session, I say things like, “it doesn’t make any logical sense!” while he replies, “you got angry as usual.” Here, I make Kurt reducible to living the stereotypes of “workers”. The certainty of the session and the room as a place that is different from his school, moreover, is undone, and Kurt no longer feels at home there because of me. We could perhaps say, now, that it was the certainty of distribution of the sensible, in which the room was a place, that had started to unravel. It follows from this that a distribution of the sensible is not set in stone. Thus, the void or nothing outside it seems to be a potential residing within the sensible itself as the possible negation of or displacement from the distribution of the sensible.

There is another parallel to the idea of the void as a potential for the negation of the distribution of the sensible, which I would like to point out. Rancière (2003) characterises the fundamental techniques of society as being “a constant and unceasing procession of sensory shocks, in which, along with the ability to look, the possibility of thoughtfulness and respect is lost” (Rancière 2003, p. 125). On the other hand, society is also comprised of “a system of explanatory attributions and inferences that make up the audible discourses of the social, that create a society” (Rancière 2003, p. 125). Rancière here is mentioned to describe an incident where I do not allow any space for Kurt’s subjectivity. The main components of what Rancière later comes to call the distribution of the sensible are already present in Kurt’s story; there is the sensible or the sensory, and there are the “explanatory attributions” that assure the self-evidence of the sensory. These explanatory attributions are also what create “audible discourse”, the discourse that can be heard (again, a reference to what can be sensed) and that can thus create society.

Kurt: “Sorry...”

Researcher: “Refrain from saying “sorry”. You did nothing during the session. I did everything by myself ... It’s useless playing with that cloth in your hand and telling me that you do not want to participate. You are being mean ... after all, it was you who told me to make the coconut balls.”

Kurt: “I know, but—“

Researcher: “No...”

There is also the acknowledgement that the self-evidence of sensible facts somehow excludes other ways of experiencing the sensible. The series of events that happened denied me the ability to look and the possibility of thoughtfulness; that is, to look twice, to independently pay attention and think about what one has seen. This not only heralds everything about the subject’s ability to observe and reflect independently, but it also seems to suggest what Rancière expresses directly with his concept of the distribution of the sensible; that is, that the sensor is not reducible to the shared sensibility. This openness of the sensible thus seems to me to match the active nature of the subject’s intelligence, “the unique power that goes forth to meet the event” (Rancière, 2003, p. 109)

Provided, of course, that one is granted space to be a subject.

The subject is not simply an active intelligence in a frictionless void, constructing meaning from scratch, as it were. The subject’s intelligence, it appears to me, stands in direct relation to a sensible reality that gives the subject something to think about but is also open to rethinking. The subject cannot experience “untouched” reality, the pure empirical reality that is free from any preconceptions and unfiltered by our faculties; instead, the subject must hold an idea of a sensible reality that is, at the same time, socially shared but also foreign to the social, since it is, after all, subjects that sense and make sense of it. The term “sensible reality” itself makes it clear that we are not dealing with *das Ding an Sich* (the thing-in-itself) to borrow Kant’s expression (Drury et al., 2004). The field of the sensible is limited to the contact surface between reality and a sensing and thinking subject. Retrospectively, all that I have discussed in this story about solitude and madness seem to concern dynamics within this field. The sensible may equally give rise to community and to the subject’s displacement from it; it is meaningful but also comprises nothingness and void.

5.4 Story 4: When Attention Leads to a RE-arrangement of the Way we “See”

This is a story about the capacity of Sam’s, Martin’s, Shaun’s and Julian’s “voice” to affect and to be effective. By being presented with this metaphorical stage to act under the pre-supposed equality, the story helps me to understand that while death and mourning are silent/voiceless, the living must use their “voice” to express the felt silence to be able to come to terms with death and departure.

5.4.1 Part 1: Sam

Protagonist: Sam (14 years old)

The time that I spend with Sam reveals a great deal of sadness and anxiety on the boy’s part. He speaks of school as a place that makes him feel lonely and misunderstood. His acute sensitivity to his surroundings also imbues him with a great awareness of his teachers’ moods, prompting him to keep to himself as much as possible and limit interaction with his educators to avoid angering them. He confides that he does not share any of his feelings with them, preferring to get on with the tasks he is set.

Sam’s conversation then moves on to his family, specifically his father, who has apparently changed his phone number and made himself unavailable for contact. Once again, Sam confirms that he would rather keep this fact to himself than speak to his teachers about it for fear of incurring their anger or, perhaps even worse, indifference. It is a rather telling detail, for instance, that Sam mentions the mobile phone as one of the most important items he would take with him to school, given a chance, enabling him to call his parents and check on them. His major fear is that his father is sick and will not live long enough to take care of him. This is in marked contrast to the statement relating to his father’s availability and his unwillingness to phone his mother. He also reveals that the only occasions during which he truly felt content was in the company of his immediate family members; that is, his parents and brother, although he also admits that this memory is a bittersweet one: “I long to be with my mum, then again there were many sad memories of my time with her”

5.4.2 Part 2: *Martin*

Protagonist: Martin (14 years old)

Our conversation about school soon takes a negative turn when Martin reveals to me that he had punched a teacher on that very day because he felt rather irritable. He admits that he feels his behaviour has recently taken a turn for the worse, so much so that he is struggling to tolerate even the slightest censure of his behaviour. I discovered that Martin has been feeling a sense of loss and abandonment after a person he considers to be rather close to left her job at the residential home. The individual in question held such great importance for Martin that he declared he would like to hurt her former employees for letting her go.

Martin continues to narrate moments in which he was not always in control of his temper, such as the time when he assaulted a care worker in the residential institution, resulting in a slight injury to her face in the form of a black eye. I try probing the reason for his aggression towards her, as well as the time that he broke a window in a fit of rage. He finally described the incident to me, where his anger erupted in a fit of violence against the care worker. He states that her raised voice triggered unpleasant feelings and memories related to the brutality and abuse he endured when he was back at home living with his parents. Martin seems regretful about what had happened, but it also appears important to him that I understand the chain of events that had led to this aggression-filled episode. At the same time, he does not seem to grasp the potential gravity of such a situation, obstinately underlining his defensive reaction to episodes of real or imagined aggression towards him. He speaks of an uncontrollable sense of fury which especially affects him when people address him in raised voice. Further probing his feelings on the matter, I ask him whether the karate lessons he attends allow him to address his anger-related issues. He replies that he had decided to take the lessons because he felt the need to defend himself, also reiterating the fact that certain events brought back wholly unpleasant memories, leading him to take his anger out on those facing him at the time.

He then confides that all he seeks is affection from those around him and the care worker, especially before he goes to sleep.

Martin: Then I would need someone to cuddle me before I sleep ... someone who strokes my hair and tells me goodnight ... makes me feel safe and protected, you know.

5.4.3 Part 3: Shaun

Protagonist: Shaun (13 years old)

Last week someone mentioned the name of a boy while they were having dinner at the residential institution. This brought up a lot of distressing memories for Shaun, and in reaction to this, he got up from the table and left. He was later reprimanded for his departure when he was not allowed to, which made him feel misunderstood. Yet, for the most part, Shaun appears to have a good handle on his relationships with others. In particular, he seems to bond with girls, and he states that he is especially fond of his female cousin, who has introduced him to other children. Thomas also comes up in our conversation, a classmate whose company Shaun enjoys and with whom he plays video games. He also describes his relationship with the resident canine member, an obedient dog whom Shaun also enjoys playing with, even though he grumbles that she tends to mess up his bed and take his soft toys. He speaks about the people whom he considers to be very important in his life, such as his mother, his sister's foster parents, and the social worker. But very significantly, Shaun refers to Peter, a care worker who left his job at the residential institution, as a traitor. He elaborates on this use of the term, explaining that he considers Peter to have deserted his duties because he wanted a change of career, whereas the other workers who left did so out of necessity.

Shaun: "Some of them are traitors, and others are not. John left because he had a baby, and he needed to be with his wife. Alexandra had a baby. Brandon had some issues with his wife. Eight people left. Eight ... I have counted ... Eight, it's no joke, and I have only been here one year and a half".

I wonder out loud that it must not be easy to keep track of the constant change in personnel from an emotive as well as a practical point of view. Shaun confides that one of the care workers possesses an attitude that belies her chosen profession. Irrked by her treatment of him and her tendency to both belittle him and favour others over him, he declares that she is doing

anything but fulfilling the “care” element of her duties because she seems to display no regard for his feelings or circumstances whatsoever.

Shaun: “If she is there just to earn money, then why to choose to be a care worker? I ask her this because a care worker has the word “care” in it, so she is supposed to care. But instead of answering me, she tells me to leave her alone and to not intrude in arguments in which I shouldn’t intrude ... she tells me that it is normal for care workers to leave their job and find somewhere else ... it happens all the time”.

When I ask Shaun to elaborate on how he knows and understands when people behave in a caring and considerate manner towards him, he is eloquent and explains that he can tell that they are genuine by the language they use, their facial expressions, and their willingness to assuage any fears or concerns he might have.

5.4.4 Part 4: Julian

Protagonist: Julian (15 years old)

It is clear to me from the very start of the session that Frank, Julian’s brother, who has recently left the residential institution, has been on Julian’s mind a great deal. The boy admits that his brother’s situation has caused him a great deal of anxiety and irritation, so much so that he frequently feels that he has to vent his frustrations or spend some time listening to music to calm himself down. Julian’s anger stems from the fact that Frank has now run out of money and lost his job and thus may be unhappy because of his current circumstances. Julian feels powerless about the situation. He pieces together the sequence of events that led to these feelings; that is, that Frank had suddenly left the residential institutions without informing any of his siblings and that he had only been informed concurrently by one of the social workers.

Julian also expresses a certain amount of anger about the situation concerning Daniel (his other brother living in the residential institution). The fact that Julian has been separated from his younger brother frustrates him deeply. Although he meets Daniel once a week during a therapy session that they share, this is not enough. The discussion then proceeds to another sibling of Julian’s. He mentions that the two also meet regularly during therapy, although,

once again, he would prefer it if his brother lived in the same residential institution as himself. Julian appears to be especially concerned about the fact that he has been separated from his brothers and given that Julian had grown up in previous homes with one of his brothers and he found the separation from each other particularly hard to bear. Julian states that whenever he attempts to share this with the adults in his life, “they tell me that I need to mature and grow up and to get over it.”

Julian has attempted to map out his journey in the residential care system so far. I am rather astonished by the sheer number of times that he has been moved from one residential institution setting to the next and one flat to another, imagining that it must have been very tough indeed. When I ask Julian to choose an item which he can, hypothetically place in a box and take with him to school in order to make school possibly more pleasant, rather poignantly, the boy declares that he wishes to take his brother with him, mainly because they have always had a mutually supportive relationship.

5.4.5 My Own Process of Writing This Story

I thought I knew what grief and loss felt like. From past experiences of death, knowledge gained, training, and the privilege of being with others who were grieving, I knew I could empathise with others as they shared their thoughts and feelings. I knew and had felt before now the different stages specified by Kübler-Ross and Kessler (2014), namely those of shock/numbness, sadness, depression, anger, and acceptance. I felt confident and comfortable sitting with, listening to, and accompanying clients as they journeyed their paths into, in, and through their grief and loss experiences. I, too, have experienced the loss of important people in my life; I especially felt the loss of my grandfather.

Feelings of shock, numbness, fear, sadness, and powerlessness, along with horror and disbelief, erupted and swirled in my body and rushed to the surface all at the same time, leaving me feeling overwhelmed. Trying to comprehend that in a very short time, my grandfather would no longer be in this realm was an enormity almost too great to bear. With acute awareness, I watched his life’s energy ebb and flowed from health to sickness over and over again until the dreaded death itself became a reality. I witnessed my grandfather’s

physical strength weaken and his body deteriorate while, at the same time, his inner spiritual strength developed and grew. The grief and loss stages became constant unwanted companions. I watched his failing health and his huge determination to live, at all times feeling the loss of whom I had known him to be. My view of life and the afterlife changed many times as I travelled my journey through this time. My past experiences of death were of little comfort now as I witnessed my grandfather die a little more each day. I felt utterly powerless. Day and night brought my emotions, feelings, and thoughts swirling and crashing into each other, all vying for their own space.

His deteriorating health, struggle to stay alive, physical pain, weight loss and, at times, inability to engage left me with a harsh reminder that the inevitable was going to happen. Nevertheless, I wished I could hold onto the now and that time would stand still. Denial (another of the grief and loss stages, according to Kübler-Ross and Kessler) served me well and was most welcome and had a very valuable place in my life. During these trying times, my heart felt sore and heavy. Tears of deep sadness brought some relief. I witnessed my brother living and dying consciously, choosing how he wanted to live the last few months he would be on this earth and, in so far as he could choose, how he was going to die. He rarely talked about his diagnosis or dying. His response when asked, “How are you?” was always the same: “I’ll do what the doctors tell me, and I could have dropped dead from a heart attack or be killed on the road.” He would then talk about life and living, and remembering the past became part of all our conversations. Not sharing about how he felt and/or death definitely helped him live and die in his own way.

Five years on, I am still grieving, facing the many stages of grief now that my grandfather has died. It has not been an easy time. It certainly is not the same as the other losses I have experienced throughout my life. An acute awareness of my own mortality often surfaces. The loss of my grandfather left me feeling vulnerable and sad and repeatedly questioning life and life’s meaning. I miss the ordinary things, the phone calls, our times together around his kitchen table where we drank copious amounts of tea/coffee, and one meal ran into the other. The trips to the market where we always bought something, perhaps a jacket which he liked to wear and a dress or piece of jewellery for me. Precious visits, times, fun, and craic that can never be repeated now.

As I was writing about the children's mourning, I remembered that before my grandfather died, my greatest fear was that our connection to each other would be severed forever, but throughout the past five years of grieving his loss, I have also experienced a parallel process of feeling connected to him in a way I had not felt during his life, through a spiritual connection. Those memories with him remain special, and they will always be present in my head.

5.4.6 Emerging Issues

Theme 1: The Complicated Work of Mourning

One must stop believing that the dead are just the departed and that the departed do nothing. One must stop pretending to know what is meant by “to die” and especially by “dying.” One has, then, to talk about spectrality (Derrida, as cited in Royle, 2012, p. 131)

Oftentimes, we use words before fully understanding what they mean, and it is later on when a new understanding has been reached, that we can look back and realise that the spectre had already been at work in those words without our being aware of it. This is what the anachronic experience of the spectral is—something that haunts or perturbs the mind. I am writing about four boys aged between 13 and 15. Through the spectres in these stories, it is possible to bear witness to the multifarious ghosts that are in these children's lives and analyse the ways in which they are at work. The dead are not just the departed but also those whose presence seems too far away; the departures from their families, their foster families, and the people they encounter in their various placements are pivotal events that mark the arrival of a spectre that continually haunts these boys' thoughts, radically altering their purpose in life and their experience of existence.

The sense of departure leads the boys not only into mourning but into a melancholic disposition:

Sam: “From what I understand about teachers is that teachers have a lot of work, and they have to work with big classes, you know, and teach each one every day, and then, they feel tired and get angry much more easily at somebody if they make a mistake, so that is why

sometimes I do talk to the teacher, but sometimes I just skip classes as there would be a lot on my mind ... at school, I have to do my stuff no matter what I feel, and here at home I also have to do stuff, and I just do it you know ... but these thoughts of the past, of now ... do flood my brain, but I try to keep a straight face and keep it all in, so to speak.”

Martin: “She yelled at me, and the more she yelled, the more she reminded me of all the abuse I suffered and the angrier I got.”

Shaun: “He is a traitor. He left. First, he said he would get into the medical course, then instead; he went to sell property, so he lied. Then instead of working here, he went to work in the other home. So he is a traitor.”

Julian: “They had found a foster placement for me ... in Gozo ... I said, “No” ... I can’t imagine being away from my siblings even if I don’t see them often. At least living on the same island means they are there ... we are close.”

An essential idea that intrigues me from Derrida’s philosophy is that “all work is also the work of mourning” (Derrida, 1996, p. 172). Mourning is laborious, and these boys are absorbed in this occupation. Moreover, not only is mourning influential for these boys, but so is death itself. Death is a spectral (concept referring to the return or persistence of elements from the past) presence in their life’s narrative, and it is one that deconstructs time.

The process of interiorisation goes hand in hand with the work of mourning. Following death or a departure, the bereaved have to accept that, at this point, the dead only continue to exist from within them. Derrida’s (1995) term of interiorisation illustrates the transition of the dead from an external and corporeal existence to an internal and cerebral one (Derrida, 1995). For these boys, this process of internalisation is constantly interrupted by the chaos that is going on in their lives and the constant difficulties they have to face. The arrival of the spectres in the boys’ minds confuses them as they are unable to ontologically discern the remains of those who left. This also instils in them doubt, thus complicating the work of mourning. The ghosts that haunt them are both the catalysts that incite them to act, as well as the perplexing absent presences that encumber them, as they spend a lot of their time trying to comprehend

the spectral continuation of their parents, their family, the care workers who left, and the nature of existence itself (Derrida, 1995).

Mourning and melancholia are two terms that are closely related, and yet, they are distinct from one another. Freud notes the connection between the two and distinguishes the terms in his text *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917). He offers the following definition of melancholy:

The distinguishing mental features of melancholia are a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to the degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches. (Freud, as cited in Carhart-Harris, Mayberg, Malizia, & Nutt, 2008, p. 239)

The boys use words similar to melancholia when they think about their life situation; they are aware of their disposition, but even with this knowledge, they are unable to alter these feelings, as they are in a perpetual melancholic state of mourning. The term mourning is of concern on both a critical and diegetic level, as the children and the adults disagree over the correct length of time in which it is appropriate to mourn.

They tell me that I need to mature and grow up and get over it (Julian)

She tells me that it is normal for care workers to leave their job and find somewhere else ... it happens all the time (Shaun).

The adults here suggest that there is a fixed term to which mourning must be constrained and encourage the children to bring the time for mourning to an end. Like these adults, Freud sees mourning as something that has a fixed term: “when the work of mourning is completed, the ego becomes free and uninhibited again” (Freud, 1917, p. 245). The adults with the children to complete the work of mourning as soon as possible, and in order to speed along the process, they point out the commonality of departure and confront them with the fleeting nature of their placement: “this is not a family” (referring to not being able to offer the children placement permanency). For Derrida (1996), instead, mourning is a continually ongoing process. The term mourning has no beginning or end; instead, it exists

simultaneously (as cited in Davis, 2007). Sorrow and, in particular, mourning are not acts that can be performed and completed; in a Derridean sense, they are not something to do but something to be. Mourning is a state of Being.

Derrida's interpretation that mourning has no beginning or end is a point upon which he and Freud disagree on, as can be noted when contrasting their views on when mourning commences. Freud says that mourning is "regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person" (Freud, 1917, p. 243), but contrastingly, for Derrida (1996), mourning is "prepared" and is that which "we expect from the beginning to follow upon the death of those we love" (p. 176). Mourning is interminable both because it has no finality and also because it has no starting point either. This is in line with the philosophy preached to the workers at the residential institution, which is that "the minute they (the boys) enter, we need to prepare them to leave. This is not a permanent place of residence" (expressed by one of the social workers that were interviewed).

Derrida (1995) also deconstructs time; since the term mourning has no fixed end or beginning, the past coexists with the present and future certainties, resulting in an anachronic understanding of time as a result of mourning. Before reaching the understanding that mourning is "interminable", Derrida (1995) discusses what he terms the "anachronism of mourning" (p. 18). This notion that mourning disrupts a linear understanding of time is something that the boys themselves recognise within the narrative. With this declaration, the boys capture the notion that mourning and the spectre of death and departure are atemporal as time has become disjointed and unhinged. Melancholia and mourning are embedded deep within every instant of their existence, and they are all too aware of this.

Mourning is interminable: it is something that is done before, during, and after death or departure. Death itself is an anachronic spectre. Death is inevitable. The conditions that make life possible necessitate death; it is impossible to have one without the other. While carrying out the work of mourning for his mother's partner, Sam is faced with his own difficulties and begins to question the nature of existence itself. When mourning the bereaved, these children must face the absolute alterity of the dead and accept that they are no longer a part of the living world or no longer in their life. However, they must also understand that the dead or the departed continue to haunt the living. The dead and departed endure within memory after death, and their memory remains as a spectre.

The all-important work of mourning has to comprehend the paradox that the dead and departed are the absolute other that has ceased to exist for that person and the spectre that continues to exist.

Sam: "These thoughts of the past, of now ... do flood my brain, but I try to keep a straight face and keep it all in, so to speak."

Martin: "She yelled at me, and the more she yelled, the more she reminded me of all the abuse I suffered and the angrier I got."

Shaun: "He is a traitor. He left. Eight left."

Julian: "I can't imagine being away from my siblings even if I don't see them often."

In these narratives, the dead and departed are far more than just departed; they are spectres which begin by coming back and work to bring about changes in their state by inciting the children to action.

Sam: "The only break I have is when I go up to my room to do my work, and I don't see the other children or the care workers, and if then, I calm down, and I go downstairs and if I see someone on the PlayStation, then that would ruin my day because I know that for a number of hours, I cannot use it."

Martin: "I got angry, and then I punched her."

Shaun: "I hid in the barbecue cupboard on the roof and remained there until I felt better."

Julian: "Sometimes I think about my family, and I get so angry, but I just can't allow that anger to come out, and so I go on the roof by myself, and I try to calm down ... PlayStation just makes me calm, not happy ... I am only happy when I am with mum, dad, and my brother."

Death and departure move as spectres that recurrently leave and return; the ghost can come and go as it pleases, and on its visitations, it acts as a memento mori, reminding the children of their own imminent departure from the residential institution.

The spectre of death and departure is not only an external presence but also an internal presence. As already mentioned, an integral part of the work of mourning is the process of interiorisation. In the introductory essay “*To Reckon with the Dead: Jacques Derrida’s Politics of Mourning*”, Brault & Naas (2001) explain that, in mourning, we must understand that “the friend is now both only “in us” and already beyond us, in us but totally other” (p. 53); thus, there is not anything we could say of or to them that could reach them in their current state of infinite alterity. To be able to come to terms with death and departure, the children left behind must accept that the dead continue to exist only within them, the living. After death, the dead remain as “the other in us” (Derrida, 1995, p. 20), and they continue to exist from within those who live on. Those in mourning must work at this interiorisation by coming to terms with the newfound interiority of a loved one. And yet, the mourning process is harder because these children have to face their loved ones on occasion; they have to live with the idea of abandonment and making sense of this situation becomes harder.

As a result of these encounters, the children are left not only with ontological confusion but with epistemological doubt. Their presence removes the children’s certainty in the nature of Being, leading them to question knowledge itself.

[If the family was not fit enough to cater for me but can cater for my sibling, then can I trust the words others told me about my family not being fit to cater for my needs?]

Mourning requires the bereaved to understand the unerring silence that comes with death. While the dead become infinitely other due to their silence, the living has to use their voice to express the silence in which they remain while facing death and departure. The children may feel the weight of the survival effect after their loved ones leave, and they need to continue living in very different circumstances. Although death and departure are perceived as silence and the living as the speaking survivors, once again, the spectres that haunt their thoughts complicate this understanding as these have a voice with which they break the silence of death.

5.5 Story 5: The Quest for Justice

This is a story about the capacity of Martin's, Shaun's and Julian's "voice" to affect and to be effective. By being presented with this metaphorical stage to act under the pre-supposed equality, the story follows "voice" as a recreation of a better future. The process of meaning-making that these children engage in and their interactions with the sensible reality is what makes their "voice" aspire towards a better future. Their "voice" can reflect and derive meaning during its encounter with the sensible.

Protagonists: Martin (14 years old), Shaun (13 years old) and Julian (15 years old)

Martin's passion and appreciation for anything related to masonry are immediately apparent in the first few minutes of our encounter. He speaks at length about his love for learning things connected to stone, which he prefers to clay, and expresses his desire to open his own business one day. His idea about opening a business also revolves around the concept of recycling building materials. He expresses a wish for the preservation of the local environment, as well as a passion for the building materials themselves. It is very pleasing to hear about all his future plans and projects. He is very much taken by the idea of owning his own property, together with an adjoining garage, which would be his workshop. He believes that work is inextricably intertwined with the notion of self-fulfilment, conforming to the adage that if you do what truly inspires you, it never really feels like work. Ideally, his employees would feel the same way, he adds. He also aspires to engage in a long-term romantic relationship. Martin reveals himself to be a sensitive, bright young person with great hopes for the future.

Martin: "I would like to have a family one day, and my idea is to have a garage ... a big one, and I would use it to have many rooms in it ... I would have a room for stones, a room for pottery ... the room to create stonework would be at the front ... I love working on stone... it's my passion, and I would have windows ... I would employ people, but if they come only to work for the pay, I would fire them ... because they need to be passionate about what they

do ... and then in the back part of the house, I would have a bed and some rooms for my family ... I wish I can start working on this dream soon.”

Martin also speaks enthusiastically and with aplomb about the schooling he undergoes, which balances out standard formal subjects, such as maths, Maltese, and English, with craft-based subjects like the aforementioned masonry, as well as physical activities, like for instance, sailing and weightlifting. This is heart-warming and inspiring, especially because Martin has changed schools so many times. When asked about the school he is the most attached to, Martin, without any hesitation, mentions the one he is in (the Nurture Centre). He particularly recalls the kind, understanding headmaster who can deal with his behaviour on a day-to-day level, which can be rather problematic at times. *I am impressed by the boy's ability to reflect on these episodes, notwithstanding his troubled past, including the constant change of schools.* Martin also acknowledges the fact that he believes that his behaviour has greatly improved, even seeing a positive shift in the last two years, and this was mainly due to the people around him who showed him love and acceptance.

Shaun, too talks about his career aspirations and refers to a number of different professions that attract him, ranging from that of a care worker to a cruise ship entertainer and, finally, a job in the hospitality sector. He proudly describes his prowess in this subject to me, explaining that he had prior exposure to the industry. I remark that the professions that he has chosen all involve contact with people, especially children, and that some of them are particularly focused on the caring element. His reply is a rather moving one and involves the fact that he wants to show children the attention and nurture that had been missing in his early childhood. When asked how he intends to integrate this element of empathy, Shaun states, in an astoundingly mature fashion, that he would adopt a more hands-on approach than that of the care workers with whom he had occasion to deal and spend more time in the presence of the children he works with. He says that he would consider their feelings in general, as well as their likes and dislikes, and concentrate on making their voice heard as much as possible.

Shaun: “I wish to become a care worker so that I can give back what the care workers in my life gave me since I was still a young boy ... but I would do it differently ... I would invent activities ... lots of them! I would listen to what they like and don't like. I would be more

present with them and not waste time on so many meetings ... and if my bosses tell me that I should not spend so much time with children, I will do the complete opposite ... I would spend all the time with children to help them in the best possible way ... because that is “care” in the care worker role.”

Julian then shares his worries that once school starts, all the problems he is having with his family will take over; he does not think that he will be able to concentrate on his school subjects. Nonetheless, he adds that keeping the image of an ultimate family reunion in his mind keeps him going in this respect and allows him to concentrate a great deal more on the lessons. The manner in which he constructs this sentence is surprising in that the ideal situation for Julian would have been for school to distract him from his familial struggles rather than the other way around. I asked him what he could do to occupy his mind so that he would not feel as if school matters were taking him away from what was troubling him most. Julian responds that the actions which he feels act as a diversion from his burdens are listening to music on the roof, being in class, or practising some football shots against the wall.

The boy also states that he wants to sit for three O-levels and then immediately begin to work, even though I sense that Julian is not very keen on the idea of studying. Indeed, he confirms my suspicion, adding that he wants to do his best to work towards a potential career as a hairdresser. When questioned as to why he aspires to become a hairdresser, he explains that this choice has been inspired by his brother’s own career path decision. Julian also reveals that he had helped run the family’s grocery, dealing with the stock and sundry matters. In a way, aspiring to take up careers that are connected to people from his family makes him feel connected to them. When I question the boy about whether there are moments in his life when he feels misunderstood or not listened to, his reply is that he sometimes feels as if he is not given a chance to speak or explain himself.

5.5.1 My Own Process of Writing This Story

I find myself asking, what is that which mobilised these children into action? Was it their past? Was it the people in their lives? Was it school and the education they received? Did

education (in whatever form) give them something that they did not have before or something that they needed to make them more human? Was education a matter of filling in the gaps, giving them what they lacked?

In this respect, these questions share a fundamental idea about education from a Kantian perspective (as cited in Walford & Meerbote, 1992), which says that “man is the only being who needs education”, whereas “animals are by their instinct all that they ever can be” (Adorno as cited in Jarvis, 1998). Education is needed, Kant (as cited in Walford & Meerbote, 1992) argues, because “our destiny as human beings is to emerge from our natural state as animals” (Adorno, as cited in Jarvis, 1998). So in order to become fully human (i.e. a rational, moral, and reflective being), it is not enough to be born; we must also receive an education. Without proper education, will these “impossible” (Davies, 2014) boys seek barbaric vengeance for the wrongdoings of others?

5.5.2 Emerging Issues

Theme 1: “The Educational Moment”

In some way, these boys seek justice by aspiring towards different futures and wanting to have a career to set right the wrongdoings of their upbringing. Maybe justice can be, at times, confused with revenge, and yet, the distinction between revenge and justice is a crucial one to make. On the one hand, revenge is achievable and culminates in a violent act upon the wrongdoer that is carried out in order to achieve retribution. On the other hand, justice, as a model concept, is an ideal that can never be achieved. These boys take it upon themselves to seek justice as opposed to vengeance in any way they can. In order to ensure that the right actions are taken, one must wait and take the time to learn the truth. The roles that they have taken upon themselves to deliver justice also require them to look towards a future where the moment of attaining justice is possible because, as Derrida says, justice is always *avenir* or to come (1992). Martin, Shaun, and Julian are simultaneously in the process of retrospectively remembering their past as it was whilst also engaging a proleptic view in terms of justice to consider a future where justice can be attained.

The mission of justice is anachronic as it requires them to think futuristically, and this disjoins them from living in the present moment (Lodage, 2015). In terms of justice, time really is out of joint, as can be recognised by taking spectral anachronism (Derrida, 1995), the combination of spectrality with temporality (Derrida, 1995), into account. This disjointure is also experienced in these children's conflicting efforts to internalise the past as part of their work of identity and mourning whilst simultaneously attempting to externalise their internal aspiration to deliver justice. When these children engage in therapy, they are helped through their mourning in order to slowly bring it to a closure so that they can think of a better future for themselves. Yet, it is presumed that a necessary condition for them to successfully complete the work of mourning is the failure to complete the process. Similarly, in the case of justice, it is only through their continual failure to avenge those who may have wronged them and their perpetuation of injustice that they can have the possibility of attaining justice for their past, as opposed to simply revenge. They will enact justice through their future aspirations.

As justice is anachronic (Derrida, 1995) and therefore cannot be achieved in a single moment, the whole process of dreaming of a better future and fantasising about what they will go through is essential to attain justice. Thus, the children are, without knowing, enacting justice. The spectre (Derrida, 1995) of justice can also be recognised to be at work here through an analysis of performativity, which is "that which produces events, all institutions and acts in which responsibility is to be assumed; but it is also that which neutralizes the event, that is to say, what happens" (Derrida, 2000, p. 467). These three boys reflecting on their future and uttering those words are unconsciously producing a new chapter in their life. However, Derrida says that performativity also neutralises the event. The future is not a new event in itself but acknowledges the past and reiterates that which occurred before but with the aim of making it different (and better). Talking about their future plans reaffirms the power that their past experiences have had on them and legitimises the institution that produced it, namely their family in the first place and the institutions that helped them and sometimes failed them.

Another example of this core idea of education as humanisation is brought by the English analytical philosopher Richard Peters, who, in his book *Authority, Responsibility and Education* (1973), argues that education is essentially about the initiation of children into a

tradition and culture of thought. One needs to be initiated, through education, into the culture and the space of reason, into the rational human realm. The following is the image he uses to illustrate this: “They [children] start off in the position of the barbarian outside the gates. The problem is to get them inside the citadel of civilisation so that they will understand and love what they see when they get there” (Peters, 1973, p. 104). In this example from Peters, we can see the same narrative of education at work: education is seen as an initiation to the human sphere of existence. Peters is not arguing that education is the initiation to our nature-given humanity because we are, of course, born human. However, his argument seems to invoke the same idea that Kant (1992) had and the common ideas of education, that humanity is primarily a question of culture and that the natural human is thus only a potential for this kind of humanity. Education is needed to initiate the child into the space of humanity (i.e. the space of reason). However, the framings of education as acquisition, internalisation, initiation, de-barbarisation etc., all seem to be marked by the terminology of inequality.

Rancière seems to revoke this narrative. For him, the ability for thought and reasoning does not come with the acquisition of the necessary cultural artefacts because a subject does not need to be initiated into a space of reason (Rancière, 2004, as cited in Rockhill, 2013). He states that education is not what makes a subject human (Rancière, 2004, as cited in Rockhill, 2013). He invites the readers to think instead of education in terms of training in the use of intelligence, which is the mark of humanity and which we all possess right from the beginning (Rancière, 2004, as cited in Rockhill, 2013). These boys who want to recreate a better future were inspired by their past in the first place and want to make it better. But ultimately, it is their past that led them into this course of action. The process of meaning-making that they engaged in and their interactions with the sensible reality is what made them aspire towards a better future.

Rancière’s writings are not about truth at all, and therefore, we cannot argue that one personal belief is less true than the other. At the centre of Rancière’s texts is a description of a certain relationship between the subject and the sensible: the aesthetic relationship (Rancière, 2015). In Rancière’s texts, there is no reality but the sensible reality, and it is sensible in that it is sensed and made sense of by people. Thus the personal aesthetic relation with the world is not a mere substitute for a truth that is lost or that we do not know but is in itself the very

truth. Rancière's emphasis on the equal ability of subjects to be in an aesthetic relation to the sensible becomes his ontology.

- Martin: Endured severe physical abuse → placed in institutional care → referred to a Nurture Centre → started learning vocational subjects, such as masonry, and met people who believed in him → aspires to open his own shop and find workers who share his passion and to have a family of his own.
- Shaun: Endured abuse → placed in institutional care → fostered → placed in institutional care again → referred to a Nurture Centre → aspires to become a care worker who really gives meaning to the word "care" and who would spend as much time as possible with the children in his care
- Julian: Endured abuse → placed in institutional care → separated from his siblings → feels voiceless → referred to a Nurture Centre → aspires to have a career that connects him to his family

Here the truly educative moment happened not via the transmittance of knowledge but at the point of subjective reflection and meaning-making. The way we understand knowledge has profound implications for how we think about education. What we have at hand is the idea that the only possible knowledge (if the term "knowledge" can even be used) is the one that springs from the individual sensible-subject relation. One consequence of this seems to be that we will have to reject the idea that knowledge can be communicated from person to person. The truly educative relation is the one between the subject and the sensible reality, although there may be another person involved in inducing certain encounters with the sensible. Even when a teacher says something to the student, it is, after all, the student's attention to and reflection on what was said that makes the utterance meaningful. Even then, the utterance itself is in no way a transmittance of meaning, as words only acquire meaning when exposed to the intelligence of a reading or listening subject.

Another related consequence of thinking about education in line with Rancière's philosophy is our understanding of education as a means will change as a consequence of thinking about education in line with Rancière's philosophy. For if we say that education is a means for

knowledge, education is also, if we follow the lines of Rancière's philosophy, the moment when this "knowledge" is constructed. Suppose we think of knowledge as an idea that is legitimated by an authority outside the subject (such as, for instance, universal truth or the Althusserian structuralist understanding of the community of knowledge), the nature of the "educational" can be understood as inherently a means, a procedure with a wanted outcome: knowledge. Here, the student is made to repeat the teacher's knowledge and forced to internalise the teacher's reason. This pedagogical procedure seems to correspond to the traditional idea of education and teaching that Rancière criticises in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*.

Thus, one questions whether "child-centred" education could really and truly replace the old-fashioned textbooks and disciplinary teaching methods. Can we practise education without regard to what society may think of as "useful"? As long as education is founded on the idea that there is a piece of knowledge or insight that the student is lacking and that education can fill in this gap in knowledge, the fundamental figure of education as a procedure and a means will persist. This perception of education is simply the result of an ontology that grounds knowledge in something outside the subject, leading a person's knowledge to become a question of possession or quantity. Such an ontology makes it possible for one to say things like: "This child knows this, but not that; overall, he has a sufficient amount of knowledge." The characterisation of education as inherently a means is perhaps less a critique than an observation.

Rancière, however, grounds his philosophy on a different ontology: the ontology of equal foreignness. There is nothing outside the individual subject-sensible relations. And it is precisely the lack of an external "objective" reference point for knowledge that makes it an ontology of equality; instead of a question of more or less knowledge, of correct and wrong knowledge, there are equally self-contained worlds of meaning.

• Martin, Shaun, Julian	Two completely separate worlds	• Researcher: Good upbringing → helped and supported at home → sent to private lessons to encourage learning → parents paid for tuition and all that was required → managed to do well academically → good job → healthy relationships → safety

More fundamentally, however, Rancière's ontology of equal foreignness seems to me to not only secure the failure of education as a means to knowledge but, indeed, render the idea impossible. This is because the educative moment is also the moment when its outcome is first created. The end did not exist before the means. The educational, therefore, is perhaps better described as something that unfolds or just happens rather than a procedure. Thus, if there is an educational moment within the framework of a Rancièrian ontology of equal foreignness, it seems to be a moment of creativity, where something new takes place—when insight is discovered or a new, unforeseen perspective is found. Even if it resembles what other people had thought before, the thought is still new within the individual person's universe of meaning.

Education is not something that we need to be exposed to; it is already there in our active engagement with the world, in the wish, urge, need, tendency, and inclination to find meaning and make sense.

The educative moment, thus, is the moment when meaning is recognised or constructed by a subject. As much as this offers us a way of identifying what education most fundamentally is, it also seems like the concept of education is beginning to disappear before our eyes. Such “educational moments” do not belong to one domain of practice, like the educational domain, or to certain institutions, like school, but to life in general. What I have defined here as “the educational” seems to me to be inscribed in the very nature and existence of a human subject; it is descriptive of our interaction with the world and our thought. Thinking about education in line with Rancière's philosophy heralds the shift from thinking of education as a procedure, or a means to an end to thinking of education as something that simply unfolds or happens: an event. Ultimately, what Rancière suggests is not only a restaging of education but a restaging of the ground for practising and thinking about education; Rancière leaves us

with a different landscape—a different ontological landscape—wherein a notion of education could take shape. By suggesting an ontology of equality/foreignness, he suggests a restaging of the sensible field that authorises and delimits ways of thinking about or “seeing” education.

5.6 Conclusion

Quotations from multiple transcripts were brought into relation, not with the intention to be a performance of sympathy or pity for students and/or the researcher. Bringing these words into relation is not to substitute places—as if to suggest that I have grasped the standpoint of another or stepped into their shoes. It is also not imitational, taking up students’ words. It is not a moment of mutual understanding between the children and me as the adult or a moment where I empower the “voice” of the children by letting them speak for themselves.

Rhizomatically connecting transcribed moments with other utterances and reflections was a production of a space of exchange between the children in which something happened and me.

This chapter has suggested that what student voice can do is constrained by a dominant image of thought that often apprehends the “voice” and body of the young speaker as “immature”, “irrational”, and “bad”. A common-sense image of thought constraints adult-child relations; children are understood, and their words apprehended according to their age, generation, and, potentially, other categories of identity. A dominant image of thought organises the field of possibilities for what can be seen, heard, and done and the modes of being that are available in school. When voice speak, bodies are changed, incorporeally transformed into what they are named to be. At the same time, as students articulated and dramatised what voice do—how bodies affect and are affected by the force of language and action—these interactions were fraught with doubts and uncertainties that emerged alongside order words. A standpoint epistemological rationale for student “voice” that regards children and young people as beings may offer a view of the child that is more agentic than the developmentally becoming child but may disallow these vacillations and uncertainties. In this chapter, shifts in utterances and assertions of the capacity to act suggest that both younger and older bodies are variously positioned in different spaces, relations and circumstances as agentic and lacking agency, confident and uncertain, knowledgeable and ignorant, mature and immature, rational and

irrational, respectful and disrespectful (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). Ways of thinking, living, teaching, and learning “in uncertainty” are needed (Law, 2004, p. 15) that help us re-think what we know about students’ “voice”, the subject positions of child/student and adult/educator and the institution or context, and that do not disallow these vacillations and doubts, or urge a swift return to certainty (even though the Western mode of political being is centred around certainty, stability and security).

Moments of uncertainty hang in suspension as I end this chapter. “Was I right to react the way I did?” “Maybe I could have changed things a little bit.” The reader may well question what might happen if we lingered longer in suspension above or between the uncertainty. While this chapter has focused on a way of being that structures the habitual modes of relations between children/students and adults/educators, the radical potential of these moments of uncertainty remains under-explored.

The following chapter (Chapter 6) explores how adults make sense of students' voice: whether unsettling fixed segments and roles in dialogue open, communicative spaces where bodies and voice affect and are affected. I argue that troubling the usual scenes of schooling is not so easily affected; reconfiguring children/student and adult/educator roles and encouraging dialogue does not necessarily transform conceptualisations and dramatisations of pedagogical relations. While adults may give accounts and dramatise moments where new understandings form, these moments are fleeting and constrained, occurring behind the backs of the speakers and retrospectively articulated differently by those who engaged in brief relational encounters.

CHAPTER 6 - TROUBLING SILENCES: A PARTIAL NARRATIVE OF ADULTS' VOICE

6.0 Chapter Overview

The previous chapter explored the capacity of children's "voice" to affect and be effective. By being presented with a metaphorical stage to act under the pre-supposed equality, their utterances lodged and produced a shock to what I had previously thought about as "voice". The purpose of this chapter is to explore accounts and productions of adults' "voice" and the ambivalent effects surrounding dialogue and understanding. This chapter tries to create a sense of order in the multiplicities of my engagements with adults by laying down the dimensions that clarify my analysis of what voice can do and bring these dimensions into relation.

I look at how the adults' "voice" and interactions give space for children to speak or how adults' "voice" can occlude their speech. I start this chapter with the narration of a story that inspired me. It made me come to understand how difficult it is to listen to a "voice" and how easy it is to overshadow that "voice" with adult agenda. Themes, substantiated with quotes, are then derived from my encounters with adults. Each theme is transversally intersected with broader socio-political forces and pressures associated with that have an impact on how equality happens or can happen.

6.1 Story: Adults' Misunderstanding of "Voice."

It's the last day of school before Christmas recess, and the children are playing in the schoolyard. The headmaster gave permission to two of the boys who were keen on gardening to enter the school garden. An educator and I follow them. There is an almost leafless and lifeless tree in the corner that needs to be uprooted and re-potted. I am also quite keen on gardening, and as I was about to engage in the process of repotting myself, the two children came running, taking heed of the process. I listen to them engaging in an exchange about whether the old soil should be removed from the plant. I am urged to speak about the importance of the removal of old soil so that there is no salt buildup around the roots and the plant can have all the minerals and nutrients it requires. I resist the temptation to explain. They arrive at a conclusion (after 10 minutes of bickering) that the soil should be removed.

They eventually move to the shed to bring two large bags of compost. The bags are heavy, and yet they find a way to carry them by placing them on scooters that were in the garden. One of the boys even flips the compost bags over and positions them flat on their backs to prevent them from falling over. One of the boys brings a scythe and a pruning shear from the shed. They ask each other what the tools are and what they do. I am about to say something to introduce the tools and explain what they do and their relevance to the repotting, but I stop myself. One of the boys notices the rooting powder and inquires about it. There is a lot of interest in discovering together how the repotting will actually happen. The children take turns using a shovel to remove the old soil from the pot and place the new soil in the new pot. One of the boys who is holding the pruning shear is instructed by the other boy to lower it carefully to the branch and to cut the dead stems and shrubs of the plant. One of the older boys, who was initially playing football, notices the garden door open and approaches the younger boys whilst volunteering to help them. After having debates about how the process was going to work, the older boy removed the plant from its current planter. He turns the plant sideways as he, holds it gently by the stems and taps the bottom of the pot for the plant to slide out. As he loosens the roots, the other two boys add the new compost to the new pot, help the older boy place the plant in its place and finally, water it together.

Later, the educator and I talked about how tough it was for both of us to stay out of the way during the whole process as we both felt urged to demonstrate the process to the children. It was difficult to suppress this temptation to explain this profound need to demonstrate what we know. I felt the tension in my body as I struggled to keep back from demonstrating, and I was aware of the suspense I felt as I grew impatient - it would have been so much faster and easier to just tell them. I sensed the frustration when the children failed to come up with a quick solution and the exasperation at knowing that a process that could have taken 15 minutes took double the time. One of the younger children came up to me and said, “do you see what we did? We saved the plant!”. At that moment, I noticed the knee-jerk reaction that I usually experience, the one where I repeat back to the child the explanation for what had occurred, one that seemed so essential to me before but that at that moment was not there. There was, however, a sense of uncertainty and vulnerability that accompanied the movement away from my usual (ascribed expert) role of explication. Opening myself up to the possibility of new experiences and new opportunities made me feel more attuned to their

journey of discovery. I was welcomed to share in the excitement, wonder, and raw energy that one experiences when on a mission and then proceeds to pass on when recounting their story. As an adult, I would not have been able to convey the same level of excitement and happiness in the same manner that he experienced it as he did himself.

My “voice” (or lack of it) at that moment gave space for children to speak. Despite being a difficult process to listen to “voice”, it allowed me to learn more about myself in that encounter with the children and to reflect on the power that my presence, my words, and my gestures can have in that space shared with a child. Five themes that address the power of “voice” as a means of giving space or occluding space were derived from the encounters with adults:

Theme 1: “This is the Oppressor’s Language, yet I Need it to Talk to You” (Hooks, 2014)

Theme 2: Storytelling Presents a Stage for Equality

Theme 3: A Question and an Answer

Theme 4: Enlightenment Stories of Freedom and Equality

Theme 5: Progressivist Interrupted

Theme 1: “This is the Oppressor’s Language, yet I Need it to Talk to You” (Hooks, 2014)

All around us, there are stories to tell. Some of the more dominant narratives that we all know are not expressed directly but rather are assimilated as we go about our daily lives. They affect us in various ways, and we cannot help but be affected by them in the way we think and act. Our worldview is supported by a dominating narrative, or what Adichie refers to as the “one story” (Adichie, 2015, p. 32). Part of the reason we cling to these stories is that they include messages that bring about continuity. Adichie says she is “just as guilty in the question of the single story” (Adichie, 2015 as cited in Fisher, Frey & Savitz, 2019, p. 71), “recalling her early attempts to write novels that reflected the experiences of white British boys because the dominant narrative told her that a Nigerian novel, especially the one about black Nigerians, would be a failure” (as cited in Fisher, Frey & Savitz, 2019, p. 71). Her own adherence to the dominant narrative did not leave room for an alternative narrative to emerge. These stereotypical stories are incomplete as “they make one story, the only story” (Adichie,

as cited in Gentile, Kinsman, & Rank, 2015, p. 281). Predominant narratives are peculiar in that they are all around us, yet it is difficult to notice when they appear.

Children who attend Nurture Centres or who reside in residential institutions are commonly described by adults as having certain qualities. These preconceived notions how to create a dominant narrative of a child that leaves little space for alternative ways of seeing and hearing these children. The words used to describe them can silence them and leave no space for other ways of being.

Table 4: *Excerpts Taken from Adults' Dialogues*

Role	Stories about the Children they are in contact with	Key Words/Phrases that give rise to the "Single Story."
Teacher 1	"These children exhibit some kind of difficult behaviour; for instance, there might have been cases of physical assault of a teacher or conflict with other students, engaging in harassment, theft, or similar activities."	• Difficult • Involved in physical assault • Engaged in harassment • Involved in Theft
Teacher 2	"Students like these are tempted by the outside world, perhaps more than others. They might, for instance, see a suggestion to steal a mobile phone and split the proceeds from its sale as nothing more than high jinks, an adventure to be lived with someone they may have recently met."	• Stealing

Teacher 3	“They might not weigh up the consequences of an action, and their tendency is to behave in an instinctive manner, as if there are no crucial repercussions to most actions.”	• Not weigh up consequences • Instinctive
Teacher 4	“I think that the residential home lacks members of staff, making it difficult for the child to receive the help he needs. I think he receives help with homework, but I feel that this help is of a somewhat sporadic nature, just like the difference between some students who have fully supportive help from the parents at home, as opposed to others who don’t.”	• The residential home lacks members of staff • Receives sporadic help with homework
LSE 1	“Certain lessons are rather tough for him to handle, and it, therefore, makes sense to have him leave the class ... also in order for him not to disturb the other students.”	• Makes sense for him to leave the class as he disturbs others
Teacher 5	“I think that when students are sent to our centre, the educators think that this centre will keep them from worsening; however, in truth, they need a lot of input which has to be given on an individual basis, and we don’t always manage to do this.”	• Behaviour needs to be taken care of before it worsens
LSE 2	“When I think about a boy coming from residential care, I immediately think that he may require an LSE.”	• They require an LSE
Teacher 6	“Their needs are not academic but emotive, first and foremost. I remember having already established a certain bond with a student in the first week, which remains to this very day. A student asked me, ‘Does this mean that you’re going to leave us too?’ For a moment, I was	• Their needs are not academic but emotive, first and foremost

	flummoxed, but the student went on to elaborate: 'That's what happens here; teachers leave as they can't cope.' It really affected me because it showed me that they want to belong to something."	• They want to belong to something
Teacher 7	"They are students who are encumbered by a host of different problems, most of them related to their domestic situations. These are issues which only some are able to handle, others finding it too heavy a burden to carry. They frequently confide their troubles in us, teachers, especially when an affectionate rapport is born between the two parties."	• Encumbered by a host of different problems
Teacher 8	"Even though the children also follow academic subjects, such as maths and the two national languages, as would be expected, the focus is always primarily on maintaining that connection between student and teacher. This is understood and appreciated by the students, so much so that they lament the coming of the weekend and the closure of the school for the summer holidays. It is difficult for them to detach from the school system for a certain amount of time."	• The focus is not academic but on maintaining a connection between student and teacher
Teacher 4	"With the sorts of students we engage with, it is impossible to cover the national curriculum ...at times a topic is enlarged upon, but often abandoned."	• Impossible to cover the national curriculum
LSE 3	"A number of children find it difficult to trust, for instance. If you approach the child and try to touch them, this lack of trust is apparent but is then gained slowly over time. Their attention span is usually also very short,	• Difficulty trusting others • Short attention span

	whereas their academic level tends to be low, although this is not always the case. Even when a child happens to be very intelligent, they seem to exhibit some kind of obstacle to learning, some sort of carelessness or the inability to focus.”	• Obstacles to learning • Carelessness
Teacher 1	“There’s a certain level of dissociation exhibited by such students; for instance, in cold weather, they go around in nothing but a t-shirt. It is as if they are not aware of the cold. Likewise, they do not seem to acknowledge their emotions, such as anger or disorientation, and they are unaware of why this is so.”	• Dissociation • Do not seem to acknowledge their emotions • Unaware
Teacher 3	“As a teacher, I am here to see the child develop academically; however, it may be very difficult for the student to focus academically if they don’t feel safe. Once this is achieved, they are able to offer you so much. They offer whatever they can, even if it is conversation.”	• Difficult for the student to focus academically • Need to feel safe • They are able to offer you so much
LSE 1	“On being informed about a child who comes from residential care and who will join my class, I am immediately conscious of the fact that such children have already experienced challenging and traumatic events at a young age and so they have a lot of needs, especially emotional.”	• Experienced challenging and traumatic events at a young age • Emotional needs
Teacher 4	“An attempt is made to integrate such students, considering their particular needs, but it is difficult for these sorts of students to feel that they belong in a class setting because	• They need empathy but not pity

	they have not been exposed to a regular routine, so it is important to broaden the circle and make them feel as welcome as possible. They need to feel as if they are a regular part of the school and are no different from the others just because they are coming from residential care. Also, there needs to be empathy, but no pity; such students have experienced many difficulties, but the last thing the staff should do is treat them differently from other students.”	
LSE 2	“Their emotional space is an element to which I give a certain amount of importance, much more than their academic level.”	• Emotional space more important than their academic level
Teacher 1	“Before I started working there, I knew that the school housed students with behavioural problems, badly behaved ones. In fact, I was rather frightened by this, although I didn’t really have much of an idea of what the school was like ... it’s different now, but still, my first year was rather tough, given that I had previously worked in a primary school.”	• Students with behavioural problems • Badly behaved ones
Teacher 5	“I am indeed aware of the fact that the students would probably display a certain attitude; however, unfortunately, over the last few years, we have had students with even greater psychological problems.”	• Display a certain attitude • Greater psychological problems
Teacher 5	“They are sent to the Nurture Centres mostly because of the attitude they exhibited at their school, as well as the fact that the schools were unable to tackle their behaviour and used	• Schools unable to tackle their behaviour

	this method of sending them here to contain them.”	• Need to contain them
LSE 3	“Before I started to work here, I was told by a number of people that they are very naughty children and difficult to work with. I didn’t have any particular opinion on the subject, but, naturally, once I heard a number of negative things from a few different people, I started to worry about my work and to wonder about what I was going to encounter.”	• Naughty children • Difficult to work with
Teacher 5	“A school does need to prioritise the academic side of things, but the person needs to be taken care of, not just their academic level. At this point, the real dilemma arises; am I going to conform to the expectations of the school’s management and attend to the student’s academic needs, or am I going to truly consider the students’ personal needs? The latter is, of course, most commendable and desirable, but then you must remember that you are a teacher, not a therapist.”	• Am I going to conform to the expectations of the school’s management and attend to the student’s academic needs, or am I going to truly consider the students’ personal needs?
Teacher 7	“Should I focus on moving closer to helping this person become a whole individual? Does he really need to learn how to write a story, or is it more important to ensure that he leaves the school equipped with the skills that he needs in life? This is a dilemma I always face.”	• Focus on the academic side or on developing the whole person?
Therapist 1	“(There is a) sense of trauma that the students tend to carry around with them, that is	• Carry a sense of trauma

	inherent in their nature because of their past experience. The expectation is, therefore, for the student in question to be somewhat cautious to keep back from trusting both adults and other children. Naturally, this also depends on the individual's particular circumstances, which frequently determine the extent to which the child is protective of themselves and their own situation. In some cases, for instance, certain children appear to go back and forth between displaying trust and maintaining a distance, including keeping their toys to themselves. At times they seem to be moving towards acceptance of closeness with others, whereas at others, even though the latter might be the case, they would not want to share their toys or other personal possessions with others ... such students often take their time to get used to the system."	• Cautious to trust • Protective of themselves • Take time to get used to the system
Youth Worker 1	"The academic aspect is not usually a priority for such students, owing to various factors, amongst which is the fact that they tend to miss school quite a bit for a number of reasons. The latter inculcates the idea that school is not of paramount importance. There is no room for concentration on the development of such young people, given that they need to experience the different crucial stages in life in order to grow. It is too hard for such students to dedicate their remaining time to school matters, as so much of it would have already been claimed by psychological issues."	• The academic aspect is not usually a priority • No room for concentration on the children's development • Hard for such students to dedicate their remaining time

		to school matters
Youth Worker 2	“They are creative in terms of the way they deal with the hard blows life has dealt them. They are resilient and able to adapt to things.”	• Creative • Resilient
Social Worker 1	“Their academic aptitude is greatly lacking. This could have been caused by a number of different factors, among them the trauma that they have experienced, the fact that their upbringing never gave any importance to learning, or that they are simply unable to concentrate.”	• Academic aptitude is greatly lacking

After hearing these stories and writing about them, the narrative formed about these children begins like this:

When a child in mainstream school misbehaves, the child will be sent to a _____. People working with these children describe these children as being _____, _____, and _____. When working with these children, the priority is not _____ but _____.

These stories become the stories we all know. The dominant narrative here appears to be behaviour regulation enforced through policies to keep every student in check and at par with the expected standards. A participating head of school (HOS1) stated that the referral of students to his Nurture Centre is meant (on paper) to follow a procedure (i.e. a referral followed by a consultation). Case conferences or meetings about the situation of every child referred to the centre are (on paper) meant to include a re-assessment of the situation every six weeks. To discuss together whether the child is going to be retained at the Nurture Centre or reintegrated into the standard system. Such a reassessment is crucial to planning because those who manage the nurturing centre need to determine whether the child is going to be a long-term resident or not (so that the programme can be tailored accordingly). However, HOS1 pointed out the lack of continuity and adherence to procedure, fearing that such neglect towards the student on the part of their referring school is instantly felt and, in certain

cases, even manifests itself in the form of aggression by the students towards the principal of the school from which they came from. The transferral of responsibility results in a lack of continuity, as manifested by the figures of authority involved in the initial referral situation. The EPs involved in my study also stated that they had never been involved in the referral procedure to the nurturing centre of the students who, at the time, were part of their college and participated in my study.

HOS 1 stated:

Very often, school principals and teachers do not see fit to keep themselves updated about the progress of students who are sent to the centres, with the result that a child is, more often than not, not integrated back into the mainstream [as is supposed to happen] with all the consequences that such decisions can carry.

When I questioned HOS1 about the records he is equipped with for the purpose of dealing with his students, he admitted that these are, unfortunately, very frequently incomplete and that students are oftentimes referred to nurture centres when they are not meant to be. For instance, it is sometimes the case that the sort of programme offered by the Nurture Centres which he runs is not suitable for the student in question. This year, he went on to say, the teachers at the centre were particularly motivated because they were working towards the attainment of the Malta Qualification Framework levels, which is beneficial for the school's recognition and would offer certification to the students. However, he seemed doubtful as to whether this should be the goal the centre should ultimately aspire towards. The latter should, rather, constitute reintegration. I could feel his frustration as he highlighted just how vital it is to be aware of the students' profiles before referring them. It is necessary for him to know about the students' issues and weaknesses and to be in the know about their backgrounds. For instance, he talked of being faced with a student which the centre spent four months struggling to rehabilitate simply because no information had been forthcoming about his background. He recounted another incident where two students had caused a ruckus when they were placed at the same centre (due to well-known prior problems at school) and, therefore, had to be separated shortly after. He compared these two situations to one where he and his colleagues had spent an entire summer building a case and gathering information about a child to be prepared as a team and to help him in the best possible way. The

difference was palpable. The extent of his dedication shone through as he talked about how essential it is to be prepared for the children who are to be referred. He sees the students for what they are; young individuals in need of help and with great potential, instead of just burdens that can be shifted from one place to the next.

This participant went on to mention the case of a student who was perfectly capable of sitting for his MATSEC Ordinary Level exams but was then unable to do so because the centre does not offer the same programme as an ordinary school. He said:

If a student is sent to the centre three or four years before they finish school, and no one from the child's school is interested enough in their situation to even visit the centre and check on the student, it does not exactly bode well for the child's future. As things stand in similar cases, it is more than likely that such a student will not be reintegrated into the mainstream system. It is therefore crucial, according to this participant, that each case is properly assessed before a student is "sent" to a centre, not just by the professionals concerned but also relating to the choice of centre.

The latter, according to HOS1, needs to fit every student's strength and skill set and not vice versa. HOS1 explained, "This shift in attitude needs to be brought about and should work to completely dispel the idea that the children present at the centre are wild and uncontrollable." HOS1 spoke about the concept of power related to the perceptions that outsiders have of the kind of students who attend the programme. With carefully measured words, HOS1 said:

People need to distinguish between the notion of "sending" a child to a centre because "they are unable to manage that child's behaviour" as opposed to "really wishing to help such students". The latter perception would help everyone to regard the intervention as a means of support and not simply one of ridding themselves of a problem child.

"Sending a child" conveys a stronger meaning than the phrase "wanting to help", for in the usage of the former, in the placement of those words, lies the spirit of a domineering system that claims language as a site of power. HOS1 added that, unfortunately, sometimes,

children are deposited at one of the centres, to the effect that they are disregarded and forgotten, simply because their disobedience, their lack of adherence to rules was too tough to manage, or their behaviour has been difficult to understand.

This sense of students being “deposited” and “forgotten” is also felt by the adults working with these children, who claim that it is very rare that any professional, like psychologists, for instance, attends the centre to see the children or to speak to them.

When speaking about children, the words “non-compliance” and “disobedience” in relation to their responses to adults’ requests tend to carry negative connotations linked with problem behaviour and deviance. Such associations find their origins in the cultural norms that demand children to obey family members and submit to parental authority (Trommsdorff & Kornadt, 2003). Furthermore, the idea of firm parental control is idealised in studies on parenting (Baumrind, 2012). As a consequence, whenever children fail to conform to adults’ expectations, they are deemed coercive and toxic to both their own well-being and that of the adult in question (Patterson, 1992).

Contrastingly, it can be argued that children’s non-compliance with adult demands could be seen as “resistance”, an expression of their own individuality in the adult-child relationship (Grusec & Kuczynski, 1997). The belief that non-compliance could be an expression of autonomy dates back to the 1920s when studies on the phenomenon of “toddler negativism” or the “terrible twos” were carried out in order to understand children’s refusal to answer certain questions when conducting early intelligence tests (Wenar, 1971). The usage of the word “no” at around 18-24 months was viewed as one such instance of children attempting to assert themselves as individuals whose needs are separate from those of their parents. This notion was followed up in observational studies focused on resistance to parents by toddlers and preschool children (Crockenberg & Li, 1990). The overall argument introduced in these studies is that childhood resistance is probably no different from adult assertion and is thus a manifestation of the universal need for individuals to assert self-determination and consequently protect their freedom to act and choose. Indeed, there are some similarities between childhood resistance and adult concepts like a reaction against control (Brehm & Brehm, 1981), the manifestation of self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and resistance to oppression (Wade, 1997).

It is important that children's non-conformity is considered through an agentic lens for the sake of the children's health and well-being. Such a viewpoint challenges the long-standing, clinical notion that children's failure to immediately and exactly obey adult demands is invariably problematic and thus requires suppression (McMahon & Forehand, 2003). In fact, studies suggest that only socially unskillful or dysregulated forms of resistance are usually associated with negative outcomes in childhood (Van Petegem, Vansteenkiste, & Soenens, 2015). Furthermore, when appropriately expressed, parental acquiescence to children's resistance can even support the children's developing autonomy (Kochanska & Kuczynski, 1991). Indeed, adult autonomy support has been linked to beneficial developmental outcomes that include better adjustment, increased academic achievement in school, improved self-regulation, and fewer behavioural problems (Kochanska & Kuczynski, 1991). On the other hand, according to van der Kapp-Deeder et al. (2017), autonomy-suppressing or controlling adults can contribute to decreasing children's overall well-being while increasing problematic behaviour. Another developmental trend has emerged from studies on the resistance strategies employed by 13-18-year-old adolescents. In agreement with the studies mentioned here, Parkin and Kuczynski (2012) found that adolescents can confidently assert the boundaries of adult authority. The study also details how adolescents' strategies to show resistance further develop to include, for instance, "negotiation strategies, assertive, confrontational strategies, and a category of covert resistance that was previously undocumented and which includes covert transgressions, minimal compliance, and subversive challenges to adult authority (Parkin & Kuczynski, 2012, p. 15).

In this part of the study, I was very interested in exploring the phenomenon of children's resistance strategies as identified by adults. I was very interested in children's strategies for expressing resistance overtly during social interactions with adults if there were any.

According to HOS2, the students who are sent to the nurturing centre

They are not impervious to the treatment they receive; on the contrary, they feel the sense of abandonment strongly and often exhibit it in their own refusal to "belong" to their school, deciding, for instance, that they do not want to keep wearing the uniform of the school that referred them. Instead, they want to design their own uniform.

Thus, according to this participant, the children in question start to feel detached from the college they form part of. HOS2 insisted that these children are still the remit of the heads of schools and the college that originally referred them. To clarify the issue of belonging further, he mentioned how the students' exam papers at the end of the year are sent from their schools of origin.

Children residing at the centres can't, in point of fact, be expected to take exams from their schools of origin when they are following a different syllabus at each given centre. Our priority is mainly managing problematic behaviour and doing a programme tailored to their needs. Thus, they are not able to do those exams, not because cognitively they can't, but because they were not prepared for that material. Forcing them to sit for the exam simply continues to prove they are failures (HOS2).

The lack of coordination between the centres and the students' original schools is a huge problem. HOS1 bemoaned this absence of congruence between the various educational organisations, and he verbalised his frustrations about the fact that the vocational training the students are given at the centres is not even acknowledged in their school leaving certificate. HOS1 also commented about how the students do not always understand that they are meant to be reintegrated back into the referring school, and since they witness no interest from the referring college, they refuse, for instance, a school leaving certificate from their own original college. Often, even the parents of these students argue in favour of the school leaving certificate being issued by the centre rather than the referring school. The educator quoted a parent as saying that it was not appropriate for her son to leave school at Year 11 with a school leaving certificate signed by the head of school "because nobody from that school really knew my son" since he had spent the last two years at the centre and not at the school.

Table 5: *Excerpts taken from Adults' Interviews showing the Discrepancy between the Policy and the Lived Experience inside the Nurture Centre*

What the Policy States	How to Achieve Set Targets	Feedback from Adults in the Nurture Centre	Perceived Acts of Resistance

• “The programme at the Nurture Centre also aims to reintegrate learners back into their mainstream school.”	• “To ensure a smooth and successful reintegration, assessments of learners’ readiness will be carried out.”	• Assessments of these students are not being done, and if exams are the pointers taken into consideration, then they will always fail.	• Refusing to wear the school uniform and want to design their own uniform.
• “The main aim of the Nurture Centre is to help the learner gain skills to cope in a school environment and better his/her future prospects.”	• “A meeting between the Nurture Centre and the learners’ respective college/school will be held to discuss the reintegration plan.”	• Adults (interviewed for this study) feel that there is no sense of continuity manifested by the figures of authority involved in these situations. Very often, school principals do not see fit to keep themselves updated about the progress of those students that had been sent to the Nurture Centress.	• Refusal to sit for exams.
• “Learners receive a balanced curriculum alongside intensive programme on emotional literacy, self-esteem, anger		• Adults (interviewed for this study) commented on their lack of understanding of how, in practice, students should feel part of the college.	• Refusal to collect their school leaving certificate if issued by their college.

management, and social skills training.”			

Language not only disrupts but also refuses to be limited by boundaries. We are one with language; our self is created with words. Language, however, also puts forth certain challenges. Do I dare speak with the oppressed and the oppressor using the same voice? Do I dare speak in a language that can move beyond the boundaries of domination—a language that cannot hold me captive? Language can offer struggles and action; language can show resistance. Ever since I was a young girl, I have always been a fan of literature, and I remember reading a poem by Adrienne Rich, “The Burning of Paper Instead of Children”. This poem speaks against domination, racism, and class oppression in an attempt to graphically demonstrate that stopping political persecution and the torture of living beings is a more pressing matter than censorship and burning books. One line of this poem that moved and disturbed something within me was: “This is the oppressor’s language, yet I need it to talk to you” (Dingwaney & Maier, 1996, p. 295).

I’ve never forgotten it; I don’t think I could have forgotten it, even if I actively tried to, because words impose themselves and take root in our memory against our will. The words of this poem conceived life in my memory that I cannot abort or change. When I find myself thinking about the power of language, these words emerge as if they were always there, waiting to challenge and assist me. They shock me, shaking me awake to the reality of the link between language and domination. Initially, I resisted the idea of the “oppressor’s language”, believing that such a notion can potentially disempower those who are still learning to speak, learning to claim language as the means through which they can make themselves subject. “This is the oppressor’s language, yet I need it to talk to you” (Dingwaney & Carol Maier, 1996, p.295)

Through Adrienne Rich’s words, I have learned that what hurts me is not the language per se but how oppressors use it, how they cause it to limit and defined, and how they turn it into a weapon that can humiliate and even colonise. Gloria Anzaldua gives us a painful reminder of this issue in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, when she states, “So if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language” (del Alba Acevedo, 2001, p. 152).

Only now that I'm older did I start to consider the link between language and these black people and think about the trauma they must have undergone as they witnessed their language being rendered meaningless with the arrival of the colonising Europeans, who deemed foreign languages as unspeakable. When I think about how long it took white Americans to acknowledge the various languages spoken by Native Americans and accept that what their ancestral colonisers deemed as merely grunts or gibberish was, in fact, language, it is difficult to ignore the sounds of slaughter and conquest in standard English. Similarly, I wonder how long it will take for adults to realise that those actions that children engage in that are viewed as misbehaviour and rebellion *are* indeed a language; it is their way of voicing their opinion, their act of resistance against a system that failed them.

Table 6: A parallel thought process is drawn between Hooks' (2014) and Dingwaney & Maier's (1996) native Americans' description of slavery and what these children may be going through.

Native Americans Description of Slavery	Students' Experiences of Being Left Out
"I think now of the grief of displaced "homeless" Africans, forced to inhabit a world where they saw people like themselves, inhabiting the same skin, the same condition, but who had no shared language to talk with one another, who needed "the oppressor's language"...When I imagine the terror of Africans on board slave ships... I consider that this terror extended beyond fear of punishment, that it also resided in the anguish of hearing a language they could not comprehend. How to describe what it must have been like for Africans whose deepest bonds were historically forged in the place of shared speech to be transported abruptly to a world where the	<i>I link this to the grief of those displaced children, forced to be in a place where they see children like themselves, inhabiting the same condition (being sent away by their schools), but who have no means of talking with one another except trying each to understand why they were sent there, what wrongful behaviour they had done. Thus, they needed "the oppressor's language" to regain their freedom. When I imagine the terror of those children as they were sent away, I consider that this terror extended beyond fear of punishment, that it also resided in the anguish of having to abide by certain standards that could possibly be too high for them. I think of those children who are compelled by circumstance to find ways</i>

very sound of one's mother tongue had no meaning?" (Hooks, 2014, p. 169)	<i>to speak with one another in a "new school space" where misbehaviour and not childhood would become the space of bonding.</i>
"Learning English, learning to speak the alien tongue, was one way the enslaved Africans began to reclaim their personal power within a context of domination. By possessing a shared language, black folks could once again find a way to create a community and the means to create the political solidarity necessary to resist. In resorting to the oppressor's language to speak with one another, they also made it their own by reinventing and remaking that language so that it would speak beyond the boundaries of conquest and domination." (Hooks, 2014, p. 218)	<i>Finding their own "voice" was one way for these children to reclaim their personal agency within a context of domination. By possessing a shared language, children could find a way to create a community and the means to create the solidarity necessary to resist. Needing the oppressor's language to behave better with one another and with the adults around them, they adopted this language while also reinventing and remaking it so that it would speak beyond the boundaries of domination. For these children, the so-called "being sent away" was altered, transformed, and became a different speech. These children took their disappointments and disagreements and made them a counter-language. They put together their words in such a way that the colonizer had to rethink the meaning of rehabilitation.</i>
"When the slaves sang "nobody knows the trouble I see", their use of the word "nobody" added a richer meaning than if they had used the phrase "no one," for it was the slave's body that was the concrete site of suffering. And even as emancipated black people sang spirituals, they did not change the language,	<i>When the parent said, "because nobody from that school really knew my son", her use of the word "nobody" added a richer meaning than if she had used the phrase "no one", for it was the school which was supposed to know her child and yet not one body knew who the child truly was and what he was</i>

or the sentence structure, of their ancestors. For in the incorrect usage of words, in the incorrect placement of words, was a spirit of rebellion that claimed language as a site of resistance. Using English in a way that ruptured standard usage and meaning so that white folks could often not understand black speech made English into more than the oppressor's language". (Dingwaney & Maier, 1996, p. 297)	<i>going through. Those bodies (the schools as institutional bodies) caused the suffering. And when the children refused their uniform, their certificate, and their exam, they did not alter their behaviour to please anyone. For in the incorrect behaviour, there was a spirit of rebellion that claimed action as a site of resistance. Using those actions in a way that ruptured meaning so that other educators from the referring school could often not understand their actions made their voice into more than the oppressor's language.</i>

One story is being told for us and retold through us, the one that we all know, the dominant narrative. We are not providing space for "voice" to narrate our own story if we fill in the blanks with the same answers over and over again. Our thoughts and actions tell stories, and praxis is about disrupting the way these stories are approached; it is about looking at how these narratives influence our actions, as well as our thinking.

The rewritten story begins like this:

When a child misbehaves, the child will be sent to a _____. People working with these children describe these children as being _____, _____, and _____. And yet, those students were not passive, but instead, they engaged in different modes of resistance, such as _____!

The narratives of children resisting adults in this study raise the important point of whose perspective one takes when describing children's resistance. The idea that children are passive and that adults are active and also the legitimate authorities are embedded in both traditional models of socialisation as well as in culture and language (Kuczynski, 2003). Indeed, the language of education and adult interventions includes terms like "non-

compliance”, “coerciveness”, “disobedience”, “manipulative behaviour”, “misbehaviour”, “disrespect”, “sulking”, and “backtalk”. Such terms reflect the ways adults perceive children’s behaviour, a viewpoint that can only be obtained from a higher hierarchical position. Although I strove to represent children’s own accounts of resistance from their own perspective using descriptive language that is less evaluative, I am aware that this theory requires further development in order to fully understand the implications of how children view themselves as agents engaged in acts of ordinary resistance. Nevertheless, as seen in the previous chapter, it can be said that the participating children described their experiences of resistance in an embodied way; indeed, their narrations included “meaning-making, moral indignation, views of themselves in relation to others, powerlessness, efficacy, and, sometimes, strong emotions of anger, exaltation, or despair” (Kuczynski et al., 2003, p. 23). It was clear that the narrated experiences of ordinary resistance were significant to the children.

Theme 2: Storytelling Presents a Stage for Equality

There are also dominant narratives that constitute what makes sound academic research, and these narratives strongly influence my role as a researcher. A book written by Jacques Rancière in 1991, titled *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, shows that efforts to alleviate inequality have become increasingly widespread but that even this technique is problematic and unproductive, as both teaching and educational research are often seen as opportunities to maintain inequality. Using terms such as scientific evidence, Rancière (1991) shows how polarities are created and maintained and how research methods, which aim to break down complex ideas into simpler ones in order to explain their relevance and potential applications, can be compared to teaching methods (Rancière, 1991, p. 84). The dominant narrative professes that the secret of good teaching is to be able to “recognise the distance between the taught material and the person being instructed” (Rancière, 1991, p. 5); The heart of the learning practice becomes a mere transfer of knowledge from one who knows to one who doesn’t.

Researchers also use precisely scaffolded ideas to successfully convey their understanding of a subject to those they are writing for. Explaining to the “ignorant” is thought to be necessary by those who employ this methodology because they believe they are unable to learn on their own (Rancière, 1991). “Stultification”, or the loss of initiative of those who have something is done for them (through explication), results in an underlying message that sustains the justification of inequality—the message being that “to explain something to someone is, first of all, to show him he cannot grasp it by himself” (Rancière, 1991, p. 6).

We adhere to our scaffolded explanation in academic writing and teaching because we believe it is essential. Because of the Story, we believe that the interlocutor does not have the same level of intelligence as ourselves. As a result, we believe that our attempts to explain will help the student understand and so bring him or her up to the same level as us. The Story that explaining is teaching and that being explained to is learning—that scaffolded arguments in written research are the only alternative when the interlocutor cannot gain an understanding without a breakdown of the complexities into more approachable parts—could instead perpetuate inequality (Rancière, 1991). Explanation maintains a vertical and uneven space between people.

Table 7: *Excerpts showing Interviewed Adults’ Ways of Accessing “Voice”*

Role	Narratives about the students they are in contact with	Key Words/Phrases
Therapist	“When my colleagues and I listen to the children and perceive what they want, we weigh the options and possibilities to see what most needs to be brought about for the children.”	• We weigh the options and possibilities.
Social Worker	“I think children always manifest the wish to see their parents and live in their original domestic environment, as their desire is to live as regular a life as possible. In order to realise this wish, I first ask what the care workers think about the child’s interaction with the family and ensure that the children’s time with their parents	• I ensure that the children’s time with their parents is beneficial by asking them how they have spent their time at home, and then I (the adult)

	is beneficial. That is what I tend to discuss with the children, for example, asking them how they have spent their time at home and what they did, and then I decide if it is beneficial or not.”	decide if it is beneficial or not.
Head of School	“Voice should be promoted insofar as the establishment of some sort of identity, the discovery of the children’s own sense of self, and the protection of their rights go; children should be enabled to battle in favour of what is owed to them. This giving of voice as being given by the relevant figures of authority who would then bring it to life. This voice of theirs, which has hitherto been smothered, needs to be permitted to convey what is missing in their lives, even if it is vocalised via undesirable behaviour. However, this voice needs to be manifested in a moderate manner, tempered with a sense of responsibility; otherwise, there is the risk that the children in question could continue to demonstrate a dependence on state aid and a sense of entitlement.”	• This voice needs to be manifested in a moderate manner, tempered with a sense of responsibility; otherwise, there is the risk that the children in question could continue to demonstrate a dependence on state aid and a sense of entitlement.
Head of School	“The ability to truly listen, without preparing an answer in one’s mind, is not an easy one, and requires a great effort ... however, the notion of practicality then comes into play; how much of what the children articulate can be truly realised? Some adults are not in the least practical ... so I agree with giving the children a voice insofar as it remains practical and possible ... the adult will then take the necessary action for the child’s own well-being.”	• I agree with giving the children a voice insofar as it remains practical and possible ... the adult will then take the necessary action for the child’s own well-being.

LSE	“I know he [the child] is keen on fashion. He constantly amuses me by referring either to the way he himself or I am dressed on any given day, critiquing my choice of outfit in a positive manner or otherwise. But I draw his attention to the fact that, soon enough, he will have his own mobile phone and will need to know how to read and write in order to send messages. His response is simply that he will have a friend write his messages.”	• The child dreams of a fashion career. • The adult redirects the child’s attention to the importance of reading and writing. • The child uses resistance and states that a friend will do those actions for him.
Youth Worker	“Like all youths, their dreams sometimes take over, so it is important to keep them grounded. My philosophy is to guide them in terms of what they like and what is important to them and then discuss their desires, as their dreams do not always correspond with reality. Well, maybe this last point doesn’t matter because, at the end of the day, they are young and are inspired like all other youths.”	• Keep them grounded. • Their dreams are not always realistic, so one has to guide them.
Teacher	“These students, unfortunately, suffer from the disadvantage of possessing a low IQ and limited academic level. They are frequently unable to sequence things and make deductions. Sometimes they lack ‘logic’, so one has to really weigh what is said by them.”	• Have a low IQ and limited academic level. • They lack “logic”, so one has to really weigh what is said by them.
Youth Worker	“What they say needs to be weighed up, as well as the decision that needs to be taken with regard to their wishes. You need to consider whether the students’ wishes are convenient for you, as well as whether they are truly beneficial for the students themselves. Has a particular	• What they say needs to be weighed up. • You need to consider whether the students’

	item been chosen because it appeals to them or because the student really likes it?"	wishes are convenient for you.
Therapist	"I ask them what they want me to say during meetings that concern them so that I can transmit the children's wishes. Of course, if the latter happens to be detrimental to the student's well-being, I talk to them and try to find out where it's coming from but do not attempt to grant it. Therefore, I try to use the power that I hold as an adult to really help the child."	• If what they wish is detrimental to their well-being, I talk to them and try to find out where it's coming from, but I do not attempt to grant it.

Other dominant stories we hear in Western and colonial thinking tell us that science is better than philosophy, instruction is better than dialogue, the compelling argument is better than narrative, the reason is better than emotion, and what is "unknowable" must be set aside for what is certain (Battiste & Henderson, 2009). The main narratives regarding the roles of teachers and students, parents/caregivers and children, psychology and philosophy, and Western and indigenous ways of knowing all demonstrate this division and hierarchy in educational research (Battiste, 2009). In contrast to the use of scaffolding to explain how one can arrive at a certain conclusion or interpretation, knowledge is presented as something that is sought and "given" to us (Rancière, 1991, p.84).

Rancière (1991) suggests that there might be another way to look at things, one that is not constrained by the prevalent narrative. Rather than proving that everyone has the same level of intelligence, Rancière (1991) reflects on "What can be done under such supposition?" of equality (Rancière, 1991, p. 91). Rather than a transfer of information, the purpose here is not to know what another person already knows or how they know it (we cannot know another person's truth) and to assume either premise is to imply inequality. When we learn anything new, we connect it to what we have already learned, according to Rancière (1991). Learning becomes a means of translation where students or readers are provided with links and translations to access the correct approach to reason. This gives a message that one cannot learn without intervention from superior intelligence, and in that process, the "voice" becomes "silenced". Connecting with another person by speaking our truths and embracing

our shared humanity is a process that values the journey far more important than the destination.

One of the social workers I spoke to narrated the story of two brothers, the younger of whom was unpleasant, arrogant, and showed a lack of decency toward others. When he was younger, he didn't give a second thought to the implications of his actions. Every Monday, his foster parents, who adored him and thought the world of him, were informed about his deplorable weekend behaviour. Almost everything about his life seemed to be going downhill, and many individuals he had met along the way were deeply upset by his behaviour. The residential institution corrected him, told him about his wrongdoing, gave him ultimatums and punished him when he needed to be punished. Nevertheless, the boy still wanted to be within the institution. In response to the social worker's question about why he still desired contact with them despite this, he said, "I know that you love me and the people in the institution love me."

She decided to put her faith in him and give him yet another chance. She had a conversation. She was able to empathise with him. This person has now reached the age of thirty-one. For the past ten years, he's been in a committed partnership. The social worker has lately received a letter from him informing her that he and his partner have moved into a new home of their own. I am amazed at how beautifully this narrative turned out, and I am even more amazed that the student concerned felt compelled to write to her about his current predicament. The social worker remembers inquiring aloud about the fate of this particular boy with a group of coworkers. Looking back, "I wonder how he knew at such a young age that we loved him," she added, "but I am grateful he did", she said. This is a story that starts with equality at the point of departure.

Table 8: Excerpts from Adult Interviews in which they Spoke about the Important Elements of the Relationship with Students

Role	Narratives about the students they are in contact with	Key Words/Phrases
Therapist	"The most important thing for the children at this stage is to create a sense of predictability, a sense of	• Trust • Predictability

	structure and safety appropriate to the background of the particular student, and the trauma that they have experienced ... Rendering this element of safety palpable to the student, so that they can feel a greater sense of comfort in plucking up the courage to come out of their shell and starting to trust. Fashioning this web of safety around the student will help them accustom themselves to the institution's system, especially via a relationship with the carers."	• Safety • Relationship with carers
Teacher	"If you address the most difficult children with a good attitude and kind words, you can bring them around. Taking a forceful approach and challenging them would be the wrong thing to do, as they can react to this in an aggressive manner. To ensure that I bring out their greatest potential, I need to find exercises that will motivate them to excel at my subject. This has reached students with hyperactivity issues, as well as one particular student who had missed three years of school."	• Good attitude • Kind words • Motivate them
Teacher	"My colleagues and I have always had a very positive work rapport and pulled the same rope ... there was never any question of 'they' and 'I', but 'us' working for the benefit of the student. If teachers need to miss a lesson, for some reason or another, it is always rescheduled so that the students are kept up-to-date as far as their syllabus goes. Most importantly, the student's capabilities are always taken into consideration; the same tries to be done, within reason, for their likes. These students need to be constantly encouraged to develop their talents and further their studies."	• Students' capabilities are taken into consideration. • Students are constantly encouraged.

Teacher	“I get to know the students better, and they begin to talk to me about their past, both during group activities and excursions and also when they are alone with me during break time. I tend to draw the information out of them by asking simple questions about their likes and dislikes, preferred pastimes, and so on. Inadvertently, they start to open up to me. As soon as they sense a certain bond with you, they start to confide in you. Ultimately, you garner a reasonably good amount of information about the children. You never learn everything because, of course, they are complex beings, just as you and I are. I always felt that knowing this information helps because I learn about what worries or bothers the student and so on. To this end, this information is greatly helpful because then I am able to gain a better understanding of what irks the student and avoid it in class. It is important to comprehend what the child is going through at that moment because, in that way, you can help them feel part of the class experience. You learn about what makes them tick and what they feel they are good at so that you can help them feel good about themselves during a lesson. Of course, you don’t need to be aware of all the minute details concerning the student, and there is always the danger of tending towards pity; however, my extensive experience helps to guard me against this. It’s not about being heartless, but about teaching people to be autonomous.”	• Get to know the students better. • I ask simple questions about their likes and dislikes, preferred pastimes, and so on. • Knowing this information helps because I learn about what worries or bothers the student, and so on and use this information in class.
Teacher	“I feel that if my colleagues and I didn’t help the students, no one else would. In fact, my job was meant to consist of a three-year position, but everyone on the team has stayed beyond. I worry	• I worry every time I am unwell because I am reluctant to miss

	every time I am unwell because I am reluctant to miss out on any work at school. The children were very upset when they found out that the schools would be closing due to the pandemic, as they would really miss the school and us. We are like a family here.”	out on any work at school. • We are like a family here.
Teacher	“They are so heavily loaded with problems and issues that were fostering a kind attitude is necessary. I have encountered students who have never been accepted by their mothers. This is heartbreaking, and the children feel a great deal of rage about the way some of their parents treat them.”	• Kind attitude
Teacher	“Over the years, I have grown and learnt that children teach you. In the beginning, I considered the academic aspect of the children’s formation to be very important; I wanted the students to get everything right and also hold discipline in high esteem; however, over the years, I have realised that relations are also extremely important. In other words, to build a relationship with the child, to seek what interests them. You need to show that you respect them and refrain from ordering them around. When I see that things are getting somewhat difficult for the children, I refer to their interests, be these related to animals or otherwise; for instance, a lot of children keep horses or some other kind of animal. These are also related to their basic needs. Aside from this, it is a good idea to mention specific things to children in order to attract their attention, such as food or some other goodies, as well as talking about some kind of childhood adventure. Storytelling is also a useful tool that they like using very much. I	• To build a relationship with the child, to seek what interests them. • Negotiate with them. • If you give children the space to express themselves when the moment is ripe, it works.

	also draw on my own personal life, such as sharing anecdotes from my childhood. Another tactic during the teaching of phonetics connected to literacy was to build stories around the diverse sounds, going on to act them out, and even involving my own children in the details of the stories in a fictional manner. Instinctively, the students would pay great attention because I was talking about my own children, even if I was making things up about them or embroidering the truth. For example, if I talked about taking my children to Spain, the students would use castanets and dance to the sound in order to replicate the sound of the word ‘cat’. Some of the tales I spun had an element of truth to them, and the children were able to connect to these a great deal. They could identify with me and understand that I was experiencing a number of different things. If you give children the space to express themselves when the moment is ripe, it works. These children frequently feel a certain amount of anger, which is why you need to wait for the right moment. In this manner, I give them a voice, and they are then able to voice their feelings, telling you what bothers them and what doesn’t. Of course, certain students are reluctant to express their feelings, which is why drawing them out is delicate work.”	
LSE	“It is encouraging to see that they are absorbing information and successfully engaging in the learning process. My colleagues and I believe in a holistic approach, one that considers the student as a complete individual, not just in the academic sense. Schools ought to nurture and allow students to	• A holistic approach is one that considers the student as a complete individual.

	develop in many more ways other than the academic one.”	• Schools ought to nurture and allow students to develop in many more ways other than academic ones.
Youth Worker	“You need to believe in them and their creativity, in their potential, and the fact that they see the world from a different viewpoint, and they also need to be helped greatly, in terms of their academic abilities, as well as their skills at crafts and ideas relating to entrepreneurship; for instance, when it comes to coming up with ideas.”	• Believe in them and their creativity, in their potential, and the fact that they see the world from a different viewpoint.
LSE	“The children feel safe here, mostly because they feel that the management team takes such good care of things and due to the fact that it is united. I marvel at how strongly children feel such things.”	• The children feel safe because the team taking care of them is united.
Teacher	“My steadfast passion for education keeps me interested in this job and endows me with the desire to continuously be of service to my students, even giving up my own free time and refusing payment in order to give private tuition in mathematics to some children in need of help. My point is that I do it because I truly enjoy it.”	• Steadfast passion for education. • Desire to continuously be of service to my students.
LSE	“What keeps me motivated to persist in carrying out my job is very simple—love. It is necessary to always keep this within you, together with empathy. I	• Love

	try to impart to the students the elements which I know they lack.”	
Teacher	“I keep in mind that everyone is human, that we all expect compassion, respect, and love, and that everyone deserves a second, third, and fourth chance. Ultimately, there needs to be a certain amount of respect for an individual who displays specific needs, goals, problems, and happiness in their life. This is what guides me when I deal with students, the fact that they’re all different from everyone else—as I am. It is a matter of respecting each other’s individuality and showing a degree of humanity. Everyone wants to be appreciated and understood, to be heard, and to know that someone is there for that person.”	• Everyone is human, and we all expect compassion, respect, and love; everyone deserves a second, third, and fourth chance. • Respecting each other’s individuality and showing a degree of humanity.
Teacher	“The other day, he [the child] asked me to recommend what I thought was the best shampoo or shower gel. He has also asked me what he should eat before a football match; in other words, the sort of questions that render me conscious about the fact that there is a lack of a maternal figure in his life. I am amazed by the sort of questions he has been putting to me, and I repeat that he asks the kind of questions that would normally be queried of a parent figure. I marvel at this and at the frequency with which she meets him.”	• Lack of maternal figure in his life, so he turns to me for guidance.

Throughout this research, I aimed to examine the connections and disconnections between my own thoughts and actions, in addition to the influence of well-known stories and the paradoxes they contain. In order to do this, the researcher/EP and the student/reader needed to build a commitment to the interconnectedness and interdependence of their connection. A teacher requires a student, a researcher requires a reader, and an EP requires a client - there must always be a person who participates in the dialogue or conversation. Storytelling involves two parties: the storyteller and the interlocutor, and it is from this position of equality that the story is told. As in the story of the child at the beginning of the chapter, which asks about whether or not the soil should be removed for repotting, I also feel here the constant need to explain to the reader and convince him/her of my argument. Can I trust the reader to deduce an understanding of what I am saying without explaining? It is a very anxiety-provoking situation that is filled with uncertainty. My intention is to gently hold hands with the uncertainty that pops up with these encounters about how research, academic writing, and educational philosophy should be done and to think otherwise.

Theme 3: A Question and an Answer

At one point during the data collection process, I was invited to give a talk about Parenting in the Digital Era to a group of parents/carers whose children will be in Year 7. A foldable table has been set up just inside the hall for parents/carers to sign their names on the attendance register as they enter. A cold draught comes in from the partially open entranceway. At the front of the room, I am trying my best not to shiver. As the rows of socially distant plastic chairs fill up, I look around the room. Parents and caregivers of boys in the school make up the majority of the adults in attendance; the occasional grandparent also makes an appearance. The school secretary in the back gives me a nod as the door shuts, signalling for me to begin.

Then I see him, a tall and skinny white man seated in the centre of the second row of the school hall. He is already leaning back, his arms crossed, and his expression indicates that he is not impressed by my delivery. That question, the one that is constantly asked, is bound to come out of his mouth. I begin by smiling at him. Every audience is different when I deliver

this talk, but there are at least two things that remain consistent. A question that I ask and a question I am asked. The question that I asked my audience in the school Hall is a question that was answered in conversation with the adults I interviewed during the data collection process. I ask the adults in the school hall to share the values they wish to instil in the children in their care.

Table 9: Excerpts from Adult Interviews that Express the Dreams that they have for the Children they Come in Contact With

Role	Narratives about the students they are in contact with	Key Words/Phrases
Therapist	“I wish that they make friends not just with the children they live within the residential house or just with the carers who work particular shifts; in other words, just the people that they tend to encounter. I encourage them to play team sports, such as football or even chess—activities that allow them to engage with their contemporaries. It must be remembered that some of these students are two years away from sixth-form age. Thus, at a time when their individual identity is being formed, it is of paramount importance for them to form meaningful interpersonal relationships with others.”	• Make friends. • Have meaningful interpersonal relationships with others.
Teacher	“I want them to acquire the necessary skills to find jobs they love. What distresses me is to learn that some students have strayed onto the wrong path and ended up in prison.”	• Acquire the necessary skills to find jobs they love. • To stay on the right path.

Teacher	“I constantly think about their future. While here they are not overly cosseted, they are, in some way, pampered, as a lot is done for them and in order to help them. As an adolescent, I left secondary school quite early. I felt lost. I went from having a close relationship with the teachers, who would play with the students, and from having conversations with the rector as if he were a friend to not knowing anyone and generally feeling lost. I am genuinely afraid that the students will also experience this, and I try to prepare them for this eventuality.”	• I try to prepare them for when the time comes to leave school so that they do not feel lost.
Teacher	“Some students have found a certain amount of support from their families and have their families to back them up, and they find some sort of niche to work in. Clearly, those who do not have the same sort of help, who are lost in the system, will suffer more. This is particularly the case because they often possess certain traits which render it difficult for them to find fixed employment; however, this does not mean that they are devoid of opportunities. Because of their background, some find it very difficult to commit to something. Students like these need someone to guide them.”	• Those who are lost in the system will suffer more. • Hard for them to find employment. • Need someone to guide them.
Social Worker	“Once they leave, the students have left the sheltered environment that they would have grown accustomed to. Out there in the real world, they are not as protected as they are here. On the other hand, the freedom that they crave is so exhilarating to them initially that they might not ask for help, even when it is really needed. This is something that they need to come to terms with that when aid is truly required; they should not be afraid to seek it. Even	• When aid is truly required, they should not be afraid to seek it. • Psychologically strong to continue seeking help if they

	though they perceive that they have to fend for themselves, it is as if, by a certain point in time, they might have become weary of the system. The optimum situation for them would be to live their lives while simultaneously continuing to seek help when it is required, but this is not always the case. Once ex-students and ex-residents have integrated themselves into the world of work, they need to be rather psychologically strong to continue seeking help if they socialise with people who have been brought up in a stable family and school environments.”	socialise with people who have been brought up in a stable family and school environments.
LSE	“I feel a certain kind of worry about whether such students will be able to function in an autonomous manner once they have left the system and once they enter the world of work. This occurs because these students, especially those who also reside in residential care, are subjected to a rather rigid system and set of rules, which serve to sustain them. For instance, as soon as they neglect something, their teachers are the first to draw their attention to it, something which, for instance, an employer might not bother to do. That is why we try to make sure that the students manifest a personality that is as autonomous as possible; this will hold them in good stead in the future.”	• To be able to function in an autonomous manner once they have left the system and once they enter the world of work.
Teacher	“My colleagues and I often ponder on what will become of the students in question. It certainly isn’t simple for a child brought up in the system to function in a regular way, independently. This is particularly the case if they haven’t managed to	• Making the students aware that they have some control over their lives

	control many elements in their lives. Making the students aware that they have some control over their lives is of paramount importance.”	is of paramount importance.
Teacher	“The students need to display enough maturity to take the tasks they are given seriously. They do not always grasp the fact that because they find it enjoyable to do something, then it is fine to do so. They cannot joke around with building materials, and they should stay away from substances that are harmful to them, such as illegal drugs. A number of students might simply fantasise about having sexual encounters with girls, which, in and of itself, is not a negative issue unless they express thoughts in which they want to harm a girl. Some students are ambitious insofar as they have rather clear ideas about what they want to do in life and have plans for making a living. Their aim is to build a career and earn money, which is pleasing to see and hear. If the student is unwilling to put in a hard day’s work, it is, of course, greatly to their detriment. It is rather hard for the students at the Nurture Centres to be successful once they leave because they are truly taken care of and well guided at the school itself, apart from which they are a small number of students, and can therefore really be given individual attention.”	• They need to be mature enough to take the tasks they are given seriously. • To stay away from substances that are harmful to them, such as illegal drugs • Engage in a healthy relationship. • Have plans to make a living. • Work hard to achieve their goals.
Teacher	“It takes time for students with certain problems to settle into different environments, and it is, sadly, very easy for them to follow the wrong path once they are no longer given the support they had at the centre. They will require the support of a care	• They will require the support of a care worker to follow them and

	worker to follow them and offer some guidance with, for instance, the steps they are going to be taking into the world of work, at least, until they have integrated into their new situation.”	offer some guidance.
LSE	“My greatest fear is that he [the child] will be unable to control his anger and that he will, one day, find himself in a terrible situation. He becomes a different person when he loses his temper. The boy possesses so many positive qualities, but he certainly needs constant guidance. I fear that he will end up in prison or in the psychiatric hospital, as he often appears unable to manage his temper. When he enters a new environment, it will be another blow for him, especially if he leaves the sheltered environment he has lived in so far for one that is a good deal faster.”	• My greatest fear is that he will be unable to control his anger and that he will, one day, find himself in a terrible situation. • I fear that he will end up in prison or in the psychiatric hospital, as he often appears unable to manage his temper.
Teacher	“I fear that they might not be able to manage life outside the school in general, not just connected to the world of work. For example, the question of building relationships with people, how they are going to deal with a letter they receive from the bank, apply for a loan or insurance, take the driving test, and many other instances. It is true that more help is at hand today, but there remains a certain amount of fear as to how such former students are going to deal with certain situations; for instance, someone might be terrified about taking the	• They might not be able to manage life outside school, which may involve building relationships with people, reading a letter they receive from the bank,

	theoretical portion of the driving test, and this fear, in turn, reminds me of their unease with the realm of formal learning, and the discomfort felt about their time spent at school. The great difficulty involved revolves, in this case, around being able to balance the realm of learning with their turbulent lives.”	applying for a loan or insurance, and taking the driving test, among other instances. • Being able to balance the realm of learning with their turbulent lives.

The answer to the question ‘What are the values you wish to instil in the children in your care?’ that was posed in the school hall during my talk yielded sharing, such as: wanting them to find people to share their lives and interests with, develop meaningful friendships with others, learn the necessary skills to land fulfilling jobs, stay on track, have a mentor, and not be afraid to ask for help, avoid harmful substances like illegal drugs and work hard to achieve their goals.

The answers to that question are very similar to the sharing that was done by the adults during my encounters with them in the data collection process: wanting children who will be responsible for themselves and others, who will respect themselves and those around them, who will be creative and who will be able to appreciate the creativity of others around them, who will care about others as well as themselves, etc. It would be weird if, when given the initial question, people called out words like “docile” or “subservient”. Even the word “obedient”, connoting a loss of agency and autonomy, seems weird. There would be no need to wish for obedient children if we engage with respect for ourselves and others.

The set of phrases captured in both instances suggests that we value our needs for happiness, care, thoughtfulness, adventure, respect, and acceptance, as well as the need for others to share in these traits on an equal basis, according to the inventory of fundamental attributes we have created for ourselves and for others. Is it feasible, for example, for one person to live an honest life without the participation of others equally and freely? The freedom to be completely human seems to be a guiding principle for what we desire our lives and those of others (including our children and students) to look like.

Freedom to be completely human does not imply liberty at the expense of others or *carte blanche* to act however one pleases. A society of equal citizens governed by a democratically elected government is the ideal that we strive for in our constitutions and social conventions. As part of the evolution of Maltese society, our educational curricula also emphasise the importance of social justice and solidarity in preparing students for adulthood while also encouraging them to defend democratic ideals and work for social justice. In my conversations with the educators during the data collection process and caregivers during the speech in the school hall, everyone had a desire for the children to be free to be completely human, agreed on by everyone. But a connection must be made between thoughts and deeds; our practice must serve our theory. It is at this intersection that the picture becomes hazier, and the question I posed before comes into sharper focus. In a classroom full of expectations, standards, curricula, benchmarks, assemblies, hallways, and a hundred questions a day, it may be inevitable that we will stray off course. But becoming aware of them, we do go off course, is important.

Returning back to the school hall at the moment of my speech, the question I was expecting to be questioned finally got uttered. As I watched the man, I could see him preparing his thoughts. Slowly, he rises to his feet and raises his hand. I acknowledge him with a smile and a nod of the head. He asks, “How can parents get their children on board with their plans?” Although he is the only one in the group who has raised the issue, this does not mean that he is the only one who thinks the issue should be handled. Educators and caregivers like myself ponder upon this same question frequently throughout the course of our workdays. One thing that helps us regain our sense of security (as it reveals information about the roles we hold) is the knowledge that enforcing rules and regulations that are aimed at controlling disruptive or underdeveloped students is an essential pre-requisite to answer that question (Leafgren, 2009,

p. 68). The dominant narrative of classroom management needs to be rethought within the sphere of whether it serves our view that we want our children/students to have the freedom to be completely human.

Educators today often refer to their approaches as “positive discipline” (Kohn, 2006), believing that these methods will help students develop positive behaviour. I find it intriguing and alarming that the mainstream narrative that children and students require adult control appears in the shape of this Question even when the goal of supporting the freedom to be fully human has just been defined. How easy it is for us to focus on the kind of obedience that undermines the democratic norms we are trying to instil. Freedom and equality cannot be reached by expanding or re-creating inequality and limitations to freedom. As a starting point, reduction implies obstacles and a perspective that detects discrepancy; if someone is seeking to reduce something, there is something to reduce.

During my research, I observed that adults frequently adopt strategies that focus on getting conformity. While helping children grow fully free, we often seek obedience, docility, and subservience at some point. As a society, we believe that reducing inequality is a goal, but we need to start with equality and give (if this is the correct term) space for all individuals the right to be fully human. The freedom of being completely human is not something that needs to be earned or that should be granted by others because, in this way, we would be postponing this freedom and equality.

Theme 4: Enlightenment Stories of Freedom and Equality

In order to achieve our own objective of becoming fully human, we must approach children with faith in their ability and desire to be self-governing. As educators, we are frequently entangled in a dance where the goal is to retain our position of authority. As a result of this endeavour, we are diverting attention away from our genuine purpose of promoting personal growth focused on the freedom to be completely human. At this point, I am not trying to argue for a humanising approach to teaching, but rather I would like to address the reality of the Question, “How can we get students to do what we want them to do?”. Children show us how they are already fully human every day – If only we listen to them.

Table 10: Excerpts from Adult Interviews Showing Examples of How Adults Listen to Students’ “Voice”

Role	Narratives about the students they are in contact with	Key Words/Phrases
Therapist	“I had a child who was not invited to participate in the IEP meetings, so I spoke to the child in advance to see whether he wanted any changes to be made to his current programme and given that I was going to speak on his behalf, I wanted to get it right. This particular student instantly declared that he wanted lessons in chess and Amharic, probably because it had been on his mind for a while. On the other hand, different children may not be so straightforward, either because they find it hard to articulate what they really want or because they suffer from cognitive problems or learning disabilities. Such students may express their wants in the form of objectionable behaviour simply because they don’t know any better and because they cannot conceive of the fact that this action is wrong. Getting it right with a child is very much a case of trial and error. What is, perhaps, the worst thing for me is the guilt that I feel when it transpires that I didn’t grasp the needs of a particular child.”	• He wanted lessons in chess and Amharic.
LSE	“He will not tell you verbally that he is sad, but sometimes, he turns up in the morning already visibly perturbed or dragging his feet from the early morning. He would seem rather down in the dumps but does not mention anything. On the other hand, when he does, it is in an extremely frantic manner, as	• He will not tell you verbally that he is sad, but sometimes, he turns up in the morning already visibly perturbed or

	if he is shooting out one bullet after another, and I ask him to slow down, as I will otherwise miss the information that the teacher is giving out during the lesson. Once he wants to tell me about something, he erupts into fits of anger and frustration if I don't immediately listen, but I try to calm him down by reassuring him that I want to listen to what he has to say; it is simply going to have to wait until the teacher finishes the explanation." "He has gone to the lengths of cutting the pages of his diary in order to avoid doing his homework; for instance, where I would have written something myself. I asked him why he was damaging the pages, querying why the one from the previous day wasn't there, and he asked me how I had noticed. After I saw this, I declared that I was going to start taking snaps of his homework and sending them to the social worker in order to counter his litany of excuses, such as the fact that he was busy." "When he is angry with me, he starts to draw things. For instance, on one particular occasion, he drew a picture of traffic lights and me crossing the road ... he depicted a car that was running me over. After this, he drew a cemetery and wrote all over the picture. He was able to express himself in writing in order to link one picture to the next ... the scribblings were unintelligible, so I asked him what they referred to, and he informed me that the phrase 'I hate you' he would represent it by means of a capital 'I', 'H', and 'U', with an arrow, and this would then continue into the next picture. Of course, I found such behaviour	dragging his feet from the early morning. • On the other hand, when he does, it is in an extremely frantic manner, as if he is shooting out one bullet after another.

	tremendously worrying, asking myself why he was doing these sorts of things. I told him to say sorry, and then he seemed to come to the realisation that this was not appropriate. This usually prompts me to say, ‘Haven’t you just said that you were sorry?’” When later the interviewee was asked about voice and how much value we should place on listening to children, she stressed that the students should feel comfortable enough to express themselves, whether what they utter is positive or otherwise.	
Teacher	“It is hard to put listening to children into precise terms ... it is an instinct, a sort of knowledge or know-how, which needs to inform your practice as a teacher.”	• Listening is an instinct that informs your practice.
Teacher	“I used to teach in a place where I would stand, and the students would sit and write, having listened to my instructions. This mostly worked, but I would realise that there were three students I wasn’t reaching. My emphasis would have been on helping the weaker students; in the same way, I wanted to proceed accordingly. I, therefore, began to do my own research, which yielded results to the tune of the weaker students’ needs being privileged. The thought of why I myself hadn’t been taught that way occurred to me, and I decided to do my utmost to reach such students. I started to experiment with teaching methods, using practical ways to teach such topics as ratios and percentages. Some of my colleagues disagreed with such methods, but they reaped the rewards; not only did the children enjoy themselves, but those students who had found it difficult to grasp	• There were three students I wasn’t reaching, so I began to do my own research, which yielded results to the tune of the weaker students’ needs being privileged. • I started to experiment with teaching methods, using practical ways to teach such

	the subject began to do better. So yes, it is important to allow children's voice to emerge, to understand their feelings, preferences and, finally, what best works for them. Naturally, you mustn't assume that this is the ideal strategy for everyone; notwithstanding this, it is important to divine what the student feels and cater for their needs. Is this always easy to achieve? Not by a long chalk, and sometimes, you get caught up in the trap of the syllabus; however, self-reflection very much aids this, in terms of understanding what can be amended the time after you have tried something."	topics as ratios and percentages. • Those students who had found it difficult to grasp the subject began to do better.
Youth Worker	"A child who had lost his vision in one eye wanted to practise karate. Naturally, I had some concerns about that. We spoke to him about it, but the boy was determined and actually attended lessons. We then knew it wasn't a good idea to try, and we tried at all costs to prevent him from going. However, the boy told us there had been people missing a leg who had scaled mountains and ridden bicycles. At that point, I said, 'Who am I to tell him no?' It doesn't do to be too protective, as he could very well lose sight in his other eye carrying out some other activity. This is why, when we listen to children, we need to listen to them carefully, particularly since this notion has become something of a buzzword of late. When they express something, they express it because they sincerely desire it, and their wants must be recognised as valid ones. No matter whether they are 8 or 17, the individual has verbalised something that they have felt a connection or click with; if they are capable of	• A child who had lost his vision in one eye wanted to practise karate. • The boy told us there had been people missing a leg who had scaled mountains and ridden bicycles.

	this, they are also capable of discussing the matter and justifying their wishes.”	
Youth Worker	“Certain meetings are often held where the children are not present. If I speak to the children and understand what they wish, what goes against their wishes, what hurts them, and so on, I can convey said feelings during the meetings. Viewed in this manner, therefore, the children’s voice can be seen from both aspects; that of being guided along the right path, as well as their wishes being given voice to, especially where stakeholders, such as Appoġġ and social workers, are concerned because they are not around the children as much as we are. For instance, if a child expresses the wish to live with one part of their family and not another, then why the figures of authority should insist on the contrary? Perhaps there is a legal angle to this.”	• Certain meetings are often held where the children are not present. If I speak to the children and understand what they wish, what goes against their wishes, what hurts them, and so on, I can convey said feelings during the meetings.
LSE	“Sometimes, he addresses me as ‘Mummy’ and immediately apologises for it afterwards.”	• Addresses me as “Mummy” and immediately apologises for it afterwards.
Teacher	“Sometimes I perceive from the students’ very ‘good morning’ that it is useless to carry out a lesson about three letter words if they are carrying a certain amount of angst or worry within them that arose over the weekend. I recognise it and work accordingly, but will a production manager be able to perceive this too?”	• From the “good morning”, I realised that it is useless to carry out a lesson about CVC words if they are carrying a certain amount of angst or worry within them that

		arose over the weekend.
LSE	“He looks for perfection ... he is constantly looking for something ... what worries me is that he seems to be perpetually aiming towards something as if he is trying to fill a void ... unlike others, he is a great deal more guarded and is very cautious indeed about what he says.”	• He is trying to fill a void ... unlike others, he is a great deal more guarded.
LSE	“These children do not usually have anyone to listen to them, and, to this end, tend to blurt things out in the middle of a lesson, for instance. The timing is not always ideal, but they must be paid attention to.”	• They tend to blurt things out in the middle of a lesson.
Teacher	“At the outset, it would seem simple because you feel that you are always ready to listen. However, at the end of the day, we are all human, and it is never easy. We have our good and bad days, as the students do, and of course, there will be times when I am more sensitive to their needs than others. At times, we don’t even listen to ourselves, let alone others. When children talk to you, you need to listen to them by recalling your childhood and your needs at their age. Clearly, this is not always a simple task because we have a different perception of the world as adults.” “There are often circumstances where I prepare a lesson and am very proud of it, only to enter the classroom to loud, distracting music and the perception that the students are not in the right mindset for it. What we imagine the children want to achieve during the lesson does not necessarily tally with their actual desires. That is why, from time to time, I actually ask the children what they wish to do, as the situation could, otherwise, prove very	• What we imagine the children want to achieve during the lesson does not necessarily tally with their actual desires. • Listening to children does not simply constitute listening to children but allowing them to make decisions about their lives, acting upon what they have articulated.

	frustrating because you say to yourself that you try to prepare a lesson that is very hands-on and engaging, and they simply don't feel like participating. So, once in a while, I ask them to share with me what they want to do, as they seem to reject all the things that I mention to them, be it writing, creating a story, or speaking. It becomes tasking to think about what they really want. At that point, you take a step back and reflect that, at a particular moment, they didn't need to have a lesson. It could very well be that they had had a tough day or are simply experiencing something negative, which puts the instructor in a quandary, as they are still expected to carry out the academic programme and receive pressure to do so from management." "Listening to children does not simply constitute listening to children but allowing them to make decisions about their lives, acting upon what they have articulated. This morning, a child in my class uttered the fact that somebody he knew had died. Although he vocalised this fact, it wasn't the time or place to act upon it, so he wasn't enabled to truly express what he was feeling and deal with it. This was so for a number of reasons; other than the fact that it wasn't the ideal time or place to address his sentiments about the event, there were other children in the class. It simply wasn't the moment to analyse his feelings, even if he felt comfortable doing so in front of the other students. However, when you truly give children a voice, you not only listen to what they have to say but work on it. Of course, the decision could either be good or bad. This morning, I advised	

	a student to work on an exercise, as it would help him when he receives a letter in the future. I asked him what he really wanted, but I was met with a negative response, as the student decided not to comply. Did I do the right thing? I do not appreciate coercion as an approach and try to eschew it whenever I can; however, there are times when I insist that students need to comply with a task, in which case I usually lose ground too.”	

We did everything adults would do ... what went wrong? (Golding , 2003)

Before one of my interviews with the adults, I was in the school library waiting for the teacher to come in. On the bookshelf, among a number of books, I saw the book *Lord of the Flies*. It is a personal favourite of mine, and as I sat there waiting, this question continued to come up in my mind: If we let go of our authority assigned through ascribed roles, won't we end up just like *Lord of the Flies* (Golding , 2003)?

School children are stranded on a barren island in William Golding's 1954 novel *Lord of the Flies*. The youngsters are left to fend for themselves after the plane they were on crashes. Ralph, the main character, advocates for self-governance and assigns the youngsters various responsibilities, such as collecting water and food and tending to a massive fire as a smoke signal. At first, the other children are on Ralph's side, but as time goes on, some of the children begin to reject the order that Ralph tries to establish, instead adopting self-serving aggression and a disregard for the interests of others. When a navy officer suddenly emerges on the shore and chastises the children for their misbehaviour, Ralph is spared. When he returns, he restores order and rule. A lot of people bring up this book to challenge the idea that children can self-govern. In no part of this chapter am I advocating that adults give children free rein to act out their fantasies? I am also not urging parents to leave their children to figure out life on their own. One of the therapists I met in the journey of the data collection process, in fact, told me:

Although it is very positive to give children a voice, this must be done within certain parameters. It is always crucial to keep the fact that we are responsible adults tasked with the care of such students firmly in mind. For instance, a child who complains that they have not been receiving enough access to their biological family should not be given free rein to do so without any examination of the potential consequences. In fact, I beheld a situation where a parent was introduced to supervised visits following the child's request to have greater access to their parent, with the consequence that the child in question was then triggered into exhibiting behaviour that had not surfaced for nine months. Therefore, the voice of the child and enabling it to be heard is important; however, this needs to be done in an extremely careful, measured way. The children's wishes cannot simply be granted under any circumstances.

Most people believe that there are only two options: control or chaos, and this dichotomous thinking is connected to the not-so-distant notion that we either have power or we do not; we are either masters or slaves. Thinking about the ways in which these stories undermine the progressivist objective of freedom via self-governance can be beneficial in building practice and thinking about the linkages and probable disconnections between our own commitments to progressivist education. The belief that humans are incapable of self-governance or morality is demonstrated when adults are worried that children would act in an unruly, hazardous, and immoral manner in the absence of an adult in authority.

This view is shared by Thomas Hobbes, an Enlightenment thinker, who wrote about it in his book *Leviathan* (1651/2005). *Lord of the Flies* by Golding (1954) largely follows Hobbes' plan. Hobbes (1651/2005) was concerned with individual freedom, arguing that humans are naturally warring, living with an each-against-all mentality that projects the conviction that we are, more often than not, in a me-versus-you situation, where either my freedom or your freedom will be protected, but not both. We all have the same need for food and shelter, and we are all equally vulnerable to injury. As a result, in nature, we are constantly on the lookout for ways to keep ourselves safe, which leads to either our own control over others or the dominance of others over ourselves. Equality, according to Hobbes, does not imply fairness. A lack of authority forces us to continuously be on guard; the difficulty is that when we are constantly at war, there is no room for morality (or self-governance). Children, according to

Hobbes (1651/2005), will revert to a warring state without the community benefits and ideals that society espouses if left to their own devices.

As long as there is an adult authority figure, the “natural” propensity to be self-serving and immoral may be put aside, and behaviour appropriate to society and the laws and expectations that come with it can be enforced. Hobbes (1651/2005) argues that morality is not a voluntary code that we adhere to. A sovereign sets and enforces the laws and expectations that are external to the individual or group. While there is no such thing as right or wrong outside of a governed society (whether it be a country, a classroom, or a home), right and wrong exist within a governed society because the sovereign permits or forbids it. To think that children and people, in general, would resort to violence or ignore their own and others’ freedoms if there were no consequences from an authority or any promise of reward is, to put it mildly, a terrible picture of human nature. In the Hobbesian sense, the child; needs to be prepared for a future role as sovereign by an adult (over a family, students, workers, or citizens).

This dominant Story informs us that we must have some form of control to prevent our innate selves from taking over and wreaking havoc. “It’s just human nature”, people say most of the time in response. There is no alternative possibility, and this argument has the effect of closing down the conversation because it is often used to defend the status quo and the notion that human nature would not allow for such change. Concerns about anarchy and disarray are the most prominent ones. What would the effect be if the starting premise, usually states that is changed children can’t handle their independence, is changed (Morrison and Morgan, 1999, p. 6) Other supporters of progressivist education, such as John Dewey, have argued that human nature is self-governing and that society and its institutions are what make us selfish and manipulable (Dewey, as cited in Sullivan, 2001)? Progressivism and traditionalism are distinguished by their conviction that people have the ability to rule themselves. Rather than evoking Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s (1807/1977) master-slave dialectic idea that children must be handled, the new view holds that we are born with the ability to govern ourselves, which transforms the starting point to equality.

The second concern is how to help children have their “freedom to be fully human”. Control or chaos is embedded in our collective consciousness, making it easy to overlook the relationship between these two quandaries. The adults in my study questioned if treating children humanely and as if they were capable of self-governance would prepare them for the real world. They imply that the solution is for children “to get used to it” by learning how to deal with needs that are ignored and self-governance that is stifled. Some respondents noted that life is not fair, and children should be prepared for that fact. This is frequently cited as an excuse for mistreating children or silencing their voice. As EPs, we claim to be committed to self-governance, but our actions remain steeped in ways that support the traditionalist reasoning that we are trying to reject. This is a paradox because we (as EPs) are required to be more inclusive without getting rid of certain traditional practices. Our role involves assessing and identifying difficulties and providing strategies but very often, these are not intended for children to be self-governing but rather to fit within that system.

If Rousseau had read Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, he would probably say that Jack and the boys who follow him have been miseducated by a culture that is obsessed with controlling them. As long as we have been raised to believe that the only way to keep anarchy at bay is to submit to authority, we cannot be self-governing beings because we would be sidetracked by the dominant Story. To be free to choose an alternative narrative, according to Rousseau (1762, as cited in Johnson, 2012), there may be periods of acceptable chaos because self-governance is a tough business. Self-governance is a natural skill that people have and should be protected and encouraged so that it can be used in society, which has the potential to progress further. But there is a paradox in Rousseau’s proposed steps toward this goal. His approaches are self-contradictory in their pursuit of the progressive objective.

In *Émile*, Rousseau (1762 as cited in Johnson, 2012) takes the reader on a fictional journey where he wants to raise Émile, his hypothetical child, to be honourable and intelligent, regardless of how the public views him. He begins this activity by discussing the challenges of raising young children. Instead of relying solely on books, young children should be encouraged to engage with the real world through hands-on activities. Rousseau is a proponent of instilling in children a foundational knowledge of worldviews. When the tutor takes Emile out to fly kites, he instructs him to follow the kite's shadow on the ground in

order to locate it in the sky. The outing was a success for Emile now that he knows about shadows, related objects, and the motor abilities required to fly a kite. Instead of giving instructions, Rousseau (1762, as cited in Johnson, 2012) encourages youngsters to learn by making inferences. He is a strong proponent of hands-on learning.

Traditional methods of training young people for adulthood did not sit well with Rousseau's progressive political views. Therefore he cast doubt on their efficacy. Children were viewed as miniature adults (Rousseau & Foxley, 2016) under conventional approaches, and the methods used to prepare the child for maturity were designed to mirror this thinking. To put it another way: Rousseau, at the time, believed that the kind of growth that could be fostered by such an environment was not feasible. A child is like a plant that needs the correct conditions to thrive, according to Rousseau. A gardener offers space and water, and nutrients for plants to grow, and the teacher is like a gardener who nurtures what is already there and encourages it to flourish. Rousseau argues that children must be given the opportunity to discover their own unique qualities and capacities if they are to grow up to be self-governing adults. To become a true citizen and fulfil a new social contract, *Émile* is taught to "be something, to be himself, and always at one with himself" (Rousseau, 1762/1974, p. 8). Throughout *Émile*, the theory of Rousseau (1762 as cited in Johnson, 2012) states that freedom can be achieved by avoiding the false narratives that deny self-governance and encouraging the development of a person who is capable of understanding and acting in line with the universal will.

"The route for [the pupil's] management of his own liberty" should be carefully prepared by the tutor, according to Rousseau (1762/1974, p. 30). He suggests that the master should always be one step ahead of his student. Before *Émile* is even awake, the environment is set so that he can be left to his own devices. *Émile* is tricked into thinking he has independence. The master's ability to anticipate and eliminate all potential sources of distraction and temptation is not only unachievable, but it is also impractical and counterproductive to the lesson's goals. Rousseau (1762/1974) sees power and authority as essential and liberty as something that must be "well-regulated" (p. 56). It is necessary to convince a child that their actions are the result of their own thoughts and freedoms, according to Rousseau

(1762/1974): “to lead them as you would, they must be led as they will” (p. 47). Their ideas are being vetted and approved by an authority that they are unaware of.

Rousseau makes the switch from one overt kind of external control to a more subtle one. Émile's schooling may not produce the self-sufficient and autonomous man Rousseau aims for, but rather the governing/governable, self-serving and dependent man that the progressivist goals attempt to overcome. Despite his best efforts, Rousseau is unable to escape the Hobbesian narrative he is trying to debunk. In his efforts to portray nature as a sovereign, he becomes sidetracked by the dominant Story that we need an outside authority. Unless he is supervised and guided by his dependence on the instructor, Émile will not naturally self-govern, according to Rousseau's advised method. The sovereign position is still held by someone else. Until he is of the age of Émile must submit to the authority of his wife, whom he has been schooled to obey. He is unable to operate morally without the guidance of his instructor (Martin, 1985). Émile “emerges from his education with a skewed and glorified vision of authority”, according to a well-known 21st-century philosophical theorist (Peters, 1981, p. 21). It is troublesome and detrimental for a progressive school to rely on methods that are rooted in conservative conceptions of the necessity for external control and undercut the assumption that students can even govern themselves. Is this gap between thinking and practice characteristic of the progressivist educational movement? “Those kids can't handle their freedom” is the message underpinning many progressive actions, even though the goal is liberty (Morrison & Morrison, 1999, p. 6).

Theme 5: Progressivist Interrupted

“If we don't watch out, stultification is going to become greater because it will be less noticeable and easier to justify.” (Jacotot, 1829, as cited in Rancière, 1991, p. 122)

Ideas guide our progress, but we can't move forward without first asking, “Where am I now?” To change our current condition, we need to ask this question. My initial perception of these children was that they were, in some shape or form, disturbed or “damaged” and, therefore, difficult to be in the same space with. However, with the passing of time, I was

brought to the realisation that such students carry as much potential as their mainstream counterparts. The greatest challenge is, therefore, for educators to understand how to separate the prejudice that is inherent in their minds when they encounter these students. It is also, in many cases, a test of our capabilities as educators.

My perceptions of these students have definitely changed over time. These students have allowed me to grow, both personally and professionally; they have challenged me on a number of different levels. For instance, the fact that they lack certain social niceties and are free of inhibitions allows them to express themselves more liberally than adults or myself would, as I tend to usually observe rules surrounding etiquette, diplomacy, and so on. Despite their troubled backgrounds, the students who reside here bring effervescence and honesty, which is refreshing to behold. (HOS1)

I cannot bear the idea of moving to another sort of school, as I feel it would be tantamount to abandoning the children in question. Even though they may be harder to manage because of their difficult backgrounds, it is hard not to feel affectionate towards such students once you get to know them. I feel that I am anything but a traditional teacher or head of school and that my subject has equipped me with a different outlook on things than typical academic ones. Ultimately, I opine, teachers' success with such students is very much predicated upon how hands-on they are ready to be in dealing with various situations. You have to be ready for anything ... Dealing with and helping the sorts of students I work with on a daily basis may be challenging, but it reaps its own gifts. More than anything else, it is incredibly satisfying to think that you have aided various individuals to survive, live a healthy life, build relationships and families of their own, and find jobs. I had a situation with a specific student who, regrettably, ended up in prison. Though his situation is far from ideal, I was very much struck by the fact that this student chose to make his phone call to me, not, for instance, a member of his family. (HOS2)

We should not let our aims be undermined by investigating the stories that inform us where we are right now, even if it leads us to reinterpret these locations or alter the narrative. As a result, like Rancière, I have no interest in counselling teachers on what approaches to use in the classroom or which tactics are most effective for day-to-day classroom instruction. Instead, I tried to present stories (In Chapter 5) of what might happen if we start from

equality and start looking for connections instead of conformity. Disconnection makes it difficult to think about equality, which necessitates a strong sense of community. The act of reasoning is a solitary one, carried out in isolation and unconnected to the actions of others.

As I was doing a role-play activity with Nick (the boy in the main research group), the chosen story he wanted to act out was *Hansel and Gretel* (Grimm & Grimm, 2016). At that precise moment, as we were acting, a new viewpoint on the relationship between connection and equality dawned on me. Nick is captivated by the story of the evil witch who was the master and the two children who were her slaves. Neither the master nor the slaves are at ease; the master worries about losing the position as master, while the slaves worry about being punished or losing any progress toward mastery. Consequently, they are not both free and equal. At one point during the role play, I showed Nick that the roles of the witch (the master) and the children (the slave) had changed. I did this by swapping places with Nick. There were only two choices in this scenario – either I was the witch (the master), or I was the slave (the children), or we could swap places. At the moment of changing places with Nick to become the slave, I brushed by Nick, and he says, “they can talk to each other”. I asked him to explain himself. “If the witch and the children face each other and talk, maybe they can all live happily in the same house made of candy”.

For centuries before the Western age of reason, the insane were adored and understood as a mirror of “everything that is easy, cheerful, frivolous in the world” (Foucault, 1994, p. 25); they were depicted in art and literature as having a special understanding (Foucault, 1994). Townspeople took care of the “village fool” (Foucault, 1965), but as time progressed, a lack of rationality was seen as the worst of all faults. This led to the rise of binary oppositions, such as rational/irrational, sane/mad, and order/chaos (Foucault, 1965). Reason, sanity, and order were deemed “moral” in the narrative, and the insane were deemed to be “socially useless”, necessitating intervention, not only because “the madman comes from the world of the irrational and bears its stigmata, but rather it is because he crosses the frontiers of bourgeois order of his own accord, and alienates himself outside the sacred limits of its ethic” (Foucault, 1994, p. 58). As a result, madness was viewed as a threat to society’s bourgeois order and treated as such (Foucault, 1994). Instead of being driven away or punished, the madman was “taken in charge, at the expense of the nation but at the risk of his individual liberty”, and this was considered as an improvement over chasing the “mad” out the city walls (Foucault, 1994, p. 48).

It appears that power relations are also played out in the everyday humdrum reality of classrooms, which are so commonplace that they are virtually natural and invisible (Oral, 2013, p. 114). Foucault demonstrates the unintended and covert nature of the exercise of power (Foucault, 1994). Power is shifting in Foucault's view; whereas before, it was easy to see and oppose the ways that power operated because such behaviours were so open and directly harmed the body, nowadays punitive measures are either hidden from view or veiled by a dominant narrative - they have become more tolerable as power is also less visible and more acceptable as a result of this strategy.

"We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, and it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based, and each individual, wherever he may find himself, subjects to it his body, his gestures, his behaviour, his aptitudes, his achievements" (Foucault, 1975, p. 308). In the classroom, power consists of the normalisation of specific behaviours among the students, such as sitting quietly and working on the task assigned, while enabling judgement (for instance, acknowledging that sitting quietly and working is "good" behaviour). Productive Power also normalises the teacher's actions; an "effective" teacher has fewer "behaviour problems", and a "natural" teacher appears confident and never needs to raise their voice" (Foucault, 1975, p. 310).

Normalisation and the dominant narrative that maintains and reproduces its message rely on surveillance and discipline. Foucauldian's (1975) analysis would point out that we are not truly in control of our own behaviour, but rather we have learned through normalisation what constitutes good behaviour. We perform good behaviour to avoid punishment or gain praise, and even if we are not being surveilled by someone else, we are programmed to self-surveillance, "perhaps in the desire to be seen as compliant" (Ford, 2003, p. 10).

Progressivist education emphasises self-monitoring, self-control, self-discipline, and self-governance with the hope that students will eventually be able to take charge of their own lives. Unfortunately, the outcome of this process can be counterproductive to our goals resulting in unthinking and blind obedience, manipulation and subservience that does not constitute an engaged democratic citizen. Possibly, there are more alternatives than just these. The emphasis can be shifted from focusing on the individual parts to a more holistic approach that allows for both certainty and uncertainty to coexist while also exposing and speaking

about the other Stories that provide us with an alternative way of seeing and listening. For a long time, “development” in education has been defined in terms of “how” we used to practise or think in comparison to what we do now. We rarely reflect on what progressivism is and how it impacts our encounters with the world around us, especially if we are unable to reflect on narratives. It is possible that this has something to do with the common misconception that educators are seen as incapable of philosophical or theoretical reflection or analysis. When educators and parents are seen as incapable of critical reflection but better able to follow instructions or carry out prescribed procedures, theory and practice are separated, and the latter is given more attention. Putting too much focus on what educators are doing dilutes the term progress and turns it into a measure of what is effective.

Progress is hindered because dominant narratives remain unchallenged, and we remain stagnant and unadvanced toward our long-term goals. There is that one burning question that has not been answered: Why and how should students be nurtured and encouraged to become fully human and equipped for participation in our collective vision of a society in which freedom and equality are celebrated?

There have been many musings on this topic, but they are often accompanied by discussions of who and what, as well as the interconnectedness and interdependence of the various theories and practices under discussion. However, when we seek simplicity and order, these considerations are omitted from the discussion. As a result, our narrative of progress is not grounded in the here and now but rather in a backwards-looking, either-or perspective on the past and the future. Despite the cliché engulfed within the phrase ‘the journey is the destination’, I will write it anyway. Rejecting the idea of teaching as training, Dewey aims to empower teachers to be part of a collaborative approach that includes other stakeholders (such as students, families, citizens, administrators and scholars) in order to avoid having “one expert dictating educational methods and subject-matter to a body of passive, recipient teachers” (Dewey as cited in Simpson & Stack Jr., 2010, p. 146). He believed that “the adoption of the intellectual initiative, discussion, and decision throughout the entire school system” (Dewey, 1903/2010, p. 146) had validity and would lead to a more thoroughgoing democracy. An educator’s freedom is essential. It is essential to progressive education. Nevertheless, this does not imply that they simply stand by and allow the students to run wild. When it comes to working with students, they can shift their perspective from the

‘doing-to’ model to the ‘working with’ model (Dewey, 1903/2010, p. 146). Ultimately, however, more questions remain unanswered:

How much of a knowledge-keeper role should educators play?

It is up to the educator to be infallible, or is it?

To what extent is it the educator’s responsibility to be the ultimate arbiter of all that takes place in the classroom?

Inevitably, educators may say or do the incorrect thing in front of their students. When this happens, educators can confess their faults and apologies, make the necessary repairs, and move on. Isn’t that liberating? They also do not have to organise and supervise every single student in their classroom at all times. What if a student’s inquiry leads them down an unexpected path? What if their lesson is thrown out the window because of it? It is possible that their lesson plan will fail due to a small number of students who are unable to concentrate or participate in class. Is it their job to follow a script or to listen to the students? Possibly, they could enquire as to their options. Can they come up with a solution as a group? Is the educator’s job to control the pupils’ behaviour or to help them cope with their own stress? Having 30 people in one room and expecting them to remain quiet and focused is unreasonable.

But then, how will this define the new role of educators if they are not in charge of everything in the classroom?

Dewey, like Jacotot, advocates for the abolition of social inequality (Rancière, 2010). As long as the child’s self-image is inferior and the adult’s responsibility is to educate the youngster, equality can never be achieved. It is necessary to alter the starting place. How do our progressivist tactics reflect our view of the child and our position as an adult? Schooling, according to Dewey, weakens democracy when its focus is solely on conformity, compliance, and the preparation of pupils for an undefined future (Dewey (1938/1997). Disconnection is a typical occurrence in progressive education, which is why the narrative that the final product indicates efficacy is often used to distract educators. As a whole, the idea of education as a journey and its emphasis on relationships don’t really mesh with traditional ideas about who

is held responsible for what and how science progresses. The belief in self-governance does not fit well with a stimulus-response method, either.

Dewey (1938/1997) often stated that “the road of the new education is not an easier one to tread than the old road but a more demanding and challenging one” (p. 90). He held the view that educational inequality affected both students and educators. Dewey (1938) was dissatisfied with the system in which academics and experts passed on best practices to student-teachers, who then passed them on to their students and to others, and finally, the external regulation of teaching practice through their oversight (Dewey, as cited in Lagemann, 2000). Instead of having one expert telling a group of passive, obedient teachers how to educate their students, Dewey “became more and more convinced that educational scholarship and educational practise should be fused not only within the same institution but also in every person who worked in the school”, (Dewey, as cited in Lagemann, 2000, p. 50). Many of the adults in my study had a lot to say about the educational system’s shortcomings.

Table 11: Excerpts from Interviews based on Changes Adults Want To See Happening within the Educational System

Role	What they want to see changed in the system	Key Words/Phrases
Head of School	“I would like to see the presence of more professionals in the transition from one place to the next; when a child is uprooted from their particular circumstances, this moment carries the potential to be the seat of great trauma, which may later need to be assuaged throughout the rest of the child’s stay.”	• More professionals in the transition from one place to the next.
Teacher	“I would abolish the syllabus, as it tends to treat everyone the same way, no matter their abilities. The students should be taken on a journey where they are taught how to think, reflect, to	• Abolish the syllabus—the teacher would create a syllabus hand in hand with the students based on their needs.

	share things. In such a scenario, the teacher would create the syllabus according to the needs of the students. It would change every year, once again, as determined by the requirements of that particular group. By the end of the fifth form, the ‘reward’ or achievement would be the learning experience, the exchange of ideas and their organisation. That would, then, be the platform on which academia proper would be based, and the student would choose the academic or vocational path. I would donate more responsibility to the teacher by having them create the syllabus hand in hand with the student. At the end of the fifth form, the student would have been given enough food for thought for them to understand that they need to think on their own and for themselves, to realise that they need to be strong enough and independent of the scrutiny on social media, of everyone who sees them on Facebook. This hinders them a great deal. At present, between the demands of their studies and the use of social media platforms, such as Facebook, they haven’t got enough time to reflect. It isn’t enough to simply ask them about the significance of a ‘like’; we have to experience it together. In a 40-minute	

	lesson, if I talk about it, I'm just preaching, and it doesn't enter their minds."	
Social Worker	"Nowadays, social workers tend to mostly concentrate on the children, and the focus on the family unit as a whole has diminished. If we want real change to the system, we need to invest in more work with families."	• We need to invest in more work with families.
LSE	"I would render the education system a more malleable one, granting the students more space for personal growth. I feel that the syllabus should be reduced in order to permit more room for debate. As it is, it is far too packed to allow anything of the sort. Having the student understand how to work a quadratic equation will not hold them in good stead at a supermarket. If this is indeed the case, the students are only being equipped with the skills to pass an exam rather than function well in real-life situations. I don't believe these children should be educated at different schools, simply that they should be given the tools which will nurture them and help to improve their lives in a practical manner."	• Granting students more space for personal growth.

Teacher	“Teaching is a human profession—it’s not simply about categories. For example, the progress covered by an individual is not always predictable. Some days they are able to cover a certain amount of ground, and other days less or more ... whereas before, it was about the teacher’s interaction with the student, it is now also about having to adopt an increased sense of flexibility. Sometimes, I am so busy that I don’t even feel as if I have the time to interact with my students. Record-keeping is important, indeed, necessary, but not at the cost of human interaction. Dealing with adults already carries its own challenges, let alone with children.”	• Understanding more that teaching is a human profession.
Teacher	“I would amend the rigidity of the syllabus because it does not allow the children to express themselves. For instance, the MATSEC exam board does not leave much room for deviation from the set grading criteria on the pain of the deduction of marks. Why should the set syllabus be followed religiously? Certain wonderful subjects have been created, which the children are extremely fond of, such as first aid. If the students change the wording of some of the answers, why should they be penalised	• The rigidity of the syllabus should be amended because it does not allow children to express themselves.

	for it? Why, when the assessment pattern includes two assignments and an exam, is everything ultimately based on that final exam in order to achieve a passing mark at the ordinary level? This angers me greatly. If a student only needs 15% to pass his assignment, but the exam is out of 40, and he gets a 50, why would you fail that student? He would need to then apply for the synoptic assessment dealing with all the material when he has already obtained a pass mark in his assignment. Why all this stringency? This is on the back of constantly plummeting general levels of education. One only needs to cast a glance at the PISA [Programme for International Student Assessment] results. The overall academic level is very low, and instead of encouraging the students, we are rendering the educational experience ever more bitter for them, even for me.”	
Teacher	“Why, then, do we continue to insist on literacy when certain students show that they cannot and will not absorb these skills? Is it simply because of the syllabus? If such students have achieved, for instance, a Level 1 or 2 qualification, what is this going to mean in real life? How is the fact that	• It is not a tenable solution to simply come up with programmes or systems and then expect the students to assimilate them into their lives.

	a child can construct a story or use the article correctly going to translate into transferable life skills? It is clear that being able to communicate in Maltese and English and having a certain knowledge of vocabulary is worth something, but how will it help a student who will, more likely than not, eke a living out of masonry? Of course, life does not only consist of work; however, it wouldn't be right to compare our lives to those of such students. Their life is really a parallel world compared to ours, and we shouldn't impose our reality on them just because we are adults who believe we know what is best for the students. In reality, every individual knows what is best for themselves. What works for me does not necessarily work for my contemporary. Our background and history are different, as are those of individual students. This means that it is not a tenable solution to simply come up with programmes or systems and then expect the students to assimilate them into their lives."	
Social Worker	"I often feel that parents are discouraged by the system. Because of the slow pace at which things happen, they realise that instead of being open and genuine, they need to fit into the	• One must recognise the fact that the people whom the professionals in the sector work with are broken. This element

	system by adopting a certain way of doing things, even if it does not genuinely consist of what they can do. They attempt to modify their behaviour in order to fit into a certain mould, telling me things such as, ‘Didn’t you tell me that this is what I had to do?’, together with ‘If I’ve done it, then why haven’t you increased access to my child?’ If the parents are simply trying to conform to what is expected of them, then change has not really been achieved.” “I would like to engender a sense of both faith and recognition of the fact that the people whom the professionals in the sector work with are broken. This element of brokenness needs to be acknowledged. Professionals need to forego a holier-than-thou attitude and work up from this brokenness, lifting those affected out of it with a great deal of compassion and acceptance, not commencing from the idea that they need to be improved. The quality of being non-judgemental, was one of the first to be inculcated into me as a prospective social worker. It is absolutely crucial to manifest this element, not focusing on what we perceive as the problems exhibited by individuals. Unfortunately, it is often	of brokenness needs to be acknowledged. • Professionals need to forego a holier-than-thou attitude and work up from this brokenness, lifting those affected out of it with a great deal of compassion and acceptance, rather than commencing from the idea that they need to be improved.

	not something that we professionals truly practise, as we tend to judge people all the time in the decisions we take.”	
Psychologist	“Cases are, very often, referred to me and my colleagues when they are already rather advanced, so that it is more about damage control than anything else. I would very much prefer it if I were acquainted with the different situations at a preventative level. I also feel that it is much more beneficial for students to receive help but be kept within the mainstream school system rather than be given aid in a more specialised setting. Integrating the students into their mainstream schools will ensure that they are, at least, able to continue their education and get a decent start in life once the necessary aid has been given to them.”	• More preventive work. • More beneficial for students to receive help but be kept within the mainstream school system rather than be given aid in a more specialised setting.

But how does the educator find a balance between classroom chaos and regimental structure? Is there a way to avoid the “conventional role that is unduly authoritative” while also avoiding the other end of the spectrum and becoming permissive, laissez-faire, and “ineffective”? (Marzano, 2003, p. 49). When “the most effective teachers are both responsive and demanding”, what does the classroom look like?” (Bear 2010, p. 151).

When educators form relationships with students and establish classroom norms and expectations that involve “student input, standards, and consistency, they can prevent a lot of

difficult situations before they start and foster students' desire to respect others (Bianco, 2002, p. 88). A student may be reprimanded in a way that still shows respect, involvement, warmth and care for the person being punished (Bear, 2010, p. 152). Helping students remain on task is easier when they know what to expect and how to be held accountable for their actions.

But since freedom and equality necessitate connection, the classroom management story separates us from the students we care about. Reinforcing our positions as educators, our inequality as master and slave, and our conviction in the dominant Story that students and young people are incapable of self-governance without our highly honed explanations and that control vs anarchy and master vs slave dialectics are the only options, we will keep talking into the abyss. They restrict us to an either/or choice, robbing us of the agency we need to be the parents/carers and educators we want to be. Reflective practice can allow us, instead, to wade through the what, who, and how, lean into vulnerability, and experience an alternative narrative to listen and see differently than usual.

6.2 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analysed accounts and productions of student voice dialogical events and the ambivalent movements of effect entangled in voice and silences from the perspective of the adults. It included quotations from some adults who hoped that students' dialogical experiences would engender new understandings that they would bring back with them to classrooms. Indeed, so much was happening that, at times, it exceeded my grasp and understanding. I worked with and simultaneously interrogated the movements of understanding as it was de-territorialised and re-territorialised, as fears and silences surrounded dialogue.

The accounts and productions assembled in this chapter share a "central nervousness", even as this nervousness took "many forms", varying in translation from the body to body (Massumi, 2005, p. 32). Some of these fragments of encounters suggested that students' voice intended to promote understanding but may inadvertently place the spotlight on students, making some of the adults feel "trapped." Yet, often talking about student's voice and reflecting on it during our encounters did seem to generate new attunements and relations.

New ways of thinking about (and feeling within) the intensities surrounding dialogue are needed. These intensities are at least as unsettling as they are harmonising.

**CHAPTER 7 - WORKING WITH AND
THROUGH UNCERTAINTY:**
*THE 'VOICE' OF THE CHILD AND THE
ADULT IN THE POLITICS OF LIFE,
WITHIN AND BEYOND THE
INSTITUTION OF THE SCHOOL*

7.0 Introduction

Throughout my research, Jacques Rancière's work enabled me to add something different to my thinking on politics/the political regarding children and childhood. The discourse of extensive international policies, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), intrigued me as it frequently characterised its mission as emancipatory and participatory (United Nations Educational, 1994). At the same time, the policy also requires children to be socialised into predetermined, allotted, and politely positioned subjects. Within this research journey, I have watched the dynamic, innovative, entertaining, lively, and little subversive acts of children, even though their subjectivity may have already been decided and laid forth by the rhetoric of rights in relation to the schools' policies. They were introduced to the reader in chapter five of this dissertation through Rancière's work on dissensus (Rancière, 1983).

The purpose of each extensive description of the children's acts was placed there to emphasise the children's status as political subjects. Rancière's concept of "politics" (introduced in Chapter 3) as disagreement becomes crucial here. "Politics exists because those who have no right to be counted as speaking beings make themselves of some account" (Rancière, 1999, p. 27). This can cause disorder because it "proclaims the equality of every speaking being with every other speaking being" (Rancière, 2003, p. 30), and it is an intersubjective method of action that upsets what is already in place (through policies, rules, and standards of education or behaviour) to make a demand. The children's use of language and behaviour reveals their needs as language "is a performative forced-entry that highlights children as figures of equality. This is because of their need to reveal themselves and to be understood in the adult world of individuals who already (possibly) make sense to one another" (Bingham & Biesta, p. 59).

The presentation of these children engaging in acts of "dissensus" is of utmost importance to adults within the institutions of education and demands ever more rapaciously that we (adults working within these systems) describe and prescribe a consensus (consensus is that we all agree on what makes "sense" and that we speak about children in ways which make "sense" to us); that we outline precisely what and how we should interpret as children's intellectual

and behavioural mastery at each stage of their schooling path. The aim to record and anticipate learning and the behavioural standard is seen on virtual learning sites, which set out standards about a course prior to meeting the students, the texts selected for a course prior to meeting the student, in the weekly objectives of our lectures and seminars and in the assessments we engage in as EPs following the dominant discourse of ‘average’ scores—with each of these acts, adults are required to articulate (in advance) what (educational/behavioural) freedom or emancipation could or should look like. Yet the children in my research did not always make “sense” to me. I interpreted this difficulty in understanding as a dissenting act, and this act in itself surprised me, made me stop and look again, and HEAR again: they made demands on me and society as a whole to be treated as equals, claiming their right to disrupt the predetermined “normal” of education and behaviour. I was mobilised to reconsider what “performative equality of intersubjectivity” (Biesta & Bingham, 2010, p.62) may require of me as an adult, educator, and EP. This allowed me to embrace the possibilities of “entirely new readings and reactions to what these children have to say, embracing interruptions and disruptions of my and society’s all too neatly pre-prescribed outcomes, intentions, and effects” (Ballenger, 2009, p. 23) for the sake of the “political”.

This chapter uses the metaphor of “being lost” (Lather, 2007, p. 28) to illustrate how children figured out a response of equality to situations that matter to them. These exchanges encompass what children perceive to be important events occurring in their lives, what they might do individually and collectively in response, and the implications of their ongoing subjectification in a complex, multifaceted, and frequently anxiety-provoking world. By being or becoming active participants in their life, a child is seen as political subject who engages in important issues. This paradoxically requires both children and the adults around them to take time to slow their pace in order to react to the fast changes in their life in order to seize new revolutionary possibilities to alter the status quo.

In this chapter, I will use a theoretical discussion with excerpts from interviews with children and adults to propose new educational practice possibilities that take children’s urgent concerns concerning critical events in their lives (more) seriously. The chapter is divided into three parts. Part I will focus on the content of the research by looking at how every engagement with the children revealed their voice as political and positioned the adults

around them to also acknowledge their political stance. Part II will focus on the politics of voice and its verification, and Part III will focus on the process of the research and how embracing messiness in researching with children could allow researchers to access the voice of the child.

7.1 Part I: The Political Child and the Political Adult

A Rancièrian politics posits that “by virtue of being human, all subjects are political and have the capacity to participate in politics as an ongoing democratic contestation of what it means to live and be human” (Rancière, 2004, p. 19) This contestation includes modes of how to behave with respect to significant objects and circumstances, both within and beyond the school’s walls. Rancière makes an important “distinction between “la politique” and “le politique”. In doing so, a chasm is created between what is established and prescribed (in relation to the school: ways of doing things, and what is designated as knowledge worthy of being taught and counted” (Rancière, 2006, p. 86) as part of an official curriculum and in relation to the residential home environment: ways of behaving and decisions being taken) and what requires attention.

The term *la politique* was described by Rancière as follows:

An order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, being, and saying, and that sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task...an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another is noise (Rancière, 1999, p. 29).

Examples of this term were observed in my research on several occasions. Some examples are below. Excerpts from adults’ interviews:

LSE 1: “On being informed about a child who comes from residential care and who will join my class, I am immediately conscious of the fact that such children have already experienced challenging and traumatic events at a young age, and so they

have a lot of needs, especially emotional.” (Society has already given a lens through which one can understand the needs of someone who resides in residential care)

Teacher 1: “Before I started working there, I knew that the school housed students with behavioural problems, badly behaved ones. In fact, I was rather frightened by this, although I didn’t really have much of an idea of what the school was like ... it’s different now, but still, my first year was rather tough, given that I had previously worked in a primary school.” (Society has already given a lens through which one can understand the needs of someone who resides in such a school setting)

Excerpts from children’s interviews:

Nick: “Please do not tell them I wore that costume ... they don’t like it when I do that [dressing up as a girl].” (Society has already given a lens through which this child can understand what carers deem acceptable or unacceptable)

Ben: “They have to understand that I am not mad; I do not invent things ... If he mentions my father, I will punch him in the face because when he mentions him, he makes me remember bad memories. They may think I am mad, but I know what I am doing and why I am doing this.” (Society has already given a lens through which one can understand such violent behaviour and placed it under a category of “madness”)

“Le politique”, on the other hand, suggests the possibility of a rupture of “la politique” at any moment. It queries dominant modes of knowing, doing, and being” (Rancière, 2006, p. 86). Expectations about what it means to be an educator or student at any particular period in school and beyond, based on a certain consensus, might be included in these modes (Leaney & Webb, 2021). “Le politique is therefore about a political relationship: a mode of acting that perturbs this arrangement ... whatever breaks with the tangible configuration whereby parties and parts or lack of them are defined by the presupposition that, by definition, has no place in that configuration” (Rancière, 2006, p. 88). Examples of this term were observed in my research on several occasions. Some examples are below.

Excerpts from children’s interviews:

Shaun: “If she is there just to earn money, then why choose to be a care worker? I ask her this because a care worker has the word “care” in it, so she is supposed to care. But instead of answering me, she tells me to leave her alone and to not intrude in arguments in which I shouldn’t intrude ... she tells me that it is normal for care workers to leave their job and find somewhere else ... it happens all the time”. (The child here challenges the role of the care worker as understood by the wider system and questions the notion of a normal process of grief)

Julian: “Whenever I attempt to share with the adults in my life the fact that I want to live in the same flat as my siblings, they tell me that I need to mature and grow up and to get over it.” (The child here questions whether maturing and growing up will make the distance from his family more bearable as that was the adults’ suggestion)

Excerpts from adults’ interviews:

HOS: “the children are not impervious to the treatment they receive; on the contrary, they feel the sense of abandonment strongly and often exhibit it in their own refusal to ‘belong’ to their school, deciding, for instance, that they do not want to keep wearing the uniform of the school that referred them. Instead, they want to design their own uniform.” (The head of school here notices the rupture of “la politique” as these children challenge the dominant modes of doing and being and refuse to abide by that mode).

HOS: “Children residing at the centres can’t be expected to take exams issued by the school that referred them to our service because they are following a different syllabus at each given centre. Our priority is mainly managing problematic behaviour and doing a programme tailored to their needs. Thus, they are not able to do those exams, not because cognitively they can’t, but because they were not prepared for that material. Forcing them to sit for the exam simply continues to prove they are failures.” (The head of school challenges (himself) “la politique” and understands that it is not fair and it is highly illogical to force children to do such exams).

According to Rancière (2003), “politics is concerned with a conflict over the existence of a common stage and over the existence and status of those present on it: an ongoing “playing out between *la politique* and *le politique*, which assumes the equality of any speaking being with any other speaking being” (p. 26-27). In the context of the school, this means that the design of the curriculum (overt and hidden), the manner in which it is presented and accorded value, and the social relations between adults and children all become sites of political contestation, thereby creating “the potential for a political subjectivity” (Rancière, 2001, p. 1). This research tried to provide this space or common stage where “*la politique*” and “*le politique*” could be viewed and possibly challenged. The research allowed for a re-writing of “different ways of saying, doing and being” (Clarke, 2015, p. 26) that characterise things that are typically done within an institution, such as a school or a residential care setting. This is well-documented in an example from Chapter 5 of this dissertation, with the depiction of Kurt’s story. The child constantly opposed (*le politique*) any norms of behaviour and obedience I tried to put in place (*la politique*). The space or stage was created by me, and Kurt enacted a scene of dissensus to call to my attention to the fact that he is much more than a child requiring protection but a fully and wholly speaking and political subject.

Researcher: It’s useless being here with you while you are doing something else. Does this make any sense? ...it doesn’t make any logical sense. Didn’t you know what coconut balls are?” (I am pushing *la politique* on Kurt explaining that there is a logic that must be followed: If you ask me to do coconut balls with you, then you must: 1) share my understanding of what coconut balls are, 2) collaborate because you wanted to do these coconut balls, 3) be appreciative of the fact that I allowed you to do them)

Kurt: “I know they’re colourful and usually quite sticky.” (The child, using *le politique*, reveals himself by stating that his understanding of a coconut ball and my understanding are not the same)

Researcher: “And wasn’t it you who asked to make them in colour when I asked you?”

Kurt: “I will not come down for the session next time.” (Moment of dissensus)

In this excerpt, Ben (aged 8) and his teacher engage the politics of participation.

When she (the teacher) asks him again to sit down and do the work, he shouts, “I can’t read. I have told you many times, I will not work this out” (The child, using *le politique*, reveals himself by stating that his understanding of reading is poor and it becomes illogical for the teacher to demand of him, something that he cannot do and has stated many times).

This conversation illustrates the competing hierarchies and inconsistencies of “*la politique* and *le politique* in democratic education” (Rancière, *The Ethical Turn of Aesthetics and Politics*, 2006). *Le politique* (preoccupied with moments of rupture) is the challenging zone of disagreement/dissensus in which children and adults understand themselves as political subjects with equal rights. The engagement with *le politique* involved “becoming lost through a practice of openness” (Lather, 2006), alertness, and readiness to respond and act in new ways to every situation encountered because there is no *a priori* knowledge of what must be done (Marcus & Gould, 2001, p. 32).

Every interaction that the children and adults share demonstrates the potential for Rancièrian dissensus within the school and the residential home (moments of rupture are no longer confined to the streets of Paris, like the protests of May 1968). This is consistent with the work of Nolas (2017), whose international “ethnographic research has focused on reading children’s political activism in mundane activities and in banal spaces” (p. 7) rather than in “the spectacular and remarkable” (p. 9) arenas or parliament halls, assumed by adult authority figures as the spaces of political action that effect change. However, children of school age are fundamentally less able to perform coordinated collective action on the street or in parliament and consequently may rely on adults to take them. This, however, can be impossible and thus, it shifts our attention to moments of politics that happen daily in everyday places where children and adults find themselves. This places the responsibility on the adults around them to notice and listen to what children communicate within and outside of school about situations that matter to them, which may or may not align with what is provided to them through the consensus politics of the school rules and curricula and the home rules. The students’ acts of dissensus, articulated in school and beyond, demonstrated the need for schools to allocate time and space to explore and problematise what issues and situations resonate in children’s lives

7.1.1 School-Based Politics

The way in which places for “dissensus, rupture, and uncertainty can be accommodated within the established political ordering” (Rancière, 2006, p. 45) (la politique) of schooling with its frequently narrowly designed modes of being, doing, and knowledge, becomes an important concern. Even if there might be “some room for the pedagogical possibilities of uncertainty in the younger years, as children progress through school, this becomes increasingly difficult since schools are very certain places: they are certain in their standards, their rationale, and in their ethos” (Nutbrown & Clough, 2010, p. 29). Very often (but maybe more covertly), they are looking to do not just correcting and inputting standardised assessment marks but possibly even the types of children they want to produce. Two teachers noted:

Teacher: “Their life is really a parallel world compared to ours, and we shouldn’t impose our reality on them just because we are adults who believe we know what is best for the students. In reality, every individual knows what is best for themselves. What works for me does not necessarily work for my contemporary. Our background and history are different, as are those of individual students. This means that it is not a tenable solution to simply come up with programmes or systems and then expect the students to assimilate them into their lives.”

Teacher: “Teaching is a human profession—it’s not simply about categories. For example, the progress covered by a child is not always predictable. Some days they are able to cover a certain amount of ground, and other days less or more ... whereas before, it was about the teacher’s interaction with the student, it is now also about having to adopt an increased sense of flexibility. Sometimes, I am so busy that I don’t even feel as if I have the time to interact with my students. Record-keeping is important, indeed, necessary, but not at the cost of human interaction.”

Currently, most of the politicisation of democracy in education, such as the national curriculum framework, manifests itself as an instrumental emphasis on teaching (passing on of information) children technical skills and information. The argument behind this strategy could be, for instance, that they are urged to become better adults, thereby shifting

responsibility to both the individual person and the younger generation. This exemplifies how one aspect of *la politique* in the classroom “is the rising tendency to transform political problems into learning problems” (Biesta, 2013, p. 8). In Malta, schools profess that education is there to prepare children to be responsible, courteous, active citizens who positively contribute to society (Bajada, Callus, & Borg, 2021). Students receive a clear message regarding the limits of their self-regulated acts of citizenship, which leaves little room for disagreement/dissensus (Kennelly, 2009, p. 144). As I was in a school observing one of the child participants, I observed an example of *la politique* in action:

I can see from the end of the corridor that the teacher is angry at the group of students in front of her. They are not in a straight line, nor are they walking up in order and in silence as she had asked. She raises her voice, showing them that she is angry, whilst asking them to come down again and demanding, “I will not hear one single word this time.” The students come back in better order. Ben is frowning, and his head is looking down whilst he mumbles something. He seems out of place here. He continues to stare down intensely. He does not know, I do not know, that this is the very moment he is losing his way. The teacher shouts even further and tells him, “If you want to say something, please say it to my face.”

A Rancièrian conception of the above example implies a policy of “education for behaviour.” However, this logic also argues that there must always be some type of conflict in order for change or transformation to occur (i.e. *le politique*). This, according to Rancière (2006), is not about a group of “political subjects that becomes conscious of itself, finds its voice, and “imposes its weight on society by performing a predetermined set of learning activities. Rather, it is concerned with forming oneself as a subject” (Rancière, 2006, p. 40), which does not occur prior to the “act” of politics but rather in and through it. Rancièrian political democracy for students and teachers at school and elsewhere (what I tried to convey in this research) is consequently concerned with the design of a “metaphorical stage, with the actors and with what their participation” (Rancière, 2001, p. 1) would enable them to know, do, and be, beyond what is ascribed for them by society.

7.1.2 *Discord: Thing-Centered Education*

Vlieghe and Zamojski (2019) adopt a Rancièrian logic insofar as they propose a “thing-centred pedagogy” (p. 57) to the problem listed above. They use Rancière to illustrate the instructional use of shared focus on a single object. Using Rancière's depiction of the teacher Jacotot, who used a single document to teach the translation of a language he did not understand, Vlieghe and Zamojski (2019) underline the transformative qualities of “a thing”: if we can all utilise this one object to acquire new talent, then it must be significant. Obviously, it is not the thing itself that is transformative; Vlieghe and Zamojski are not advocating that instructors should embrace the particular text Jacotot employed; rather, they are citing Jacotot as an example of the transformative power of a singular focus on any object. Important to their argument, and using Rancière to demonstrate this point, is that the object of affection can serve as an authority for both the instructor and the students. The passage was not comprehended by Jacotot or his students. Equal in their ignorance, both the instructor and the students attend to the object and are consequently transformed. Thus, learning takes place. Vlieghe and Zamojski claim that a teacher's educational love can create in students a love for the world and hence, optimism for the world's future by displaying and facilitating the act of solitary attention on a single object.

Material power is thus a technique of levelling the playing field between teacher and student, of achieving a balance between teacher-centred and student-centred pedagogy. While the uninformed schoolmaster is understood as a model educator who confronts hierarchy by his very nature, the thing-centred approach is not presented as a Rancièrian solution to problems intrinsic to education or schooling. In fact, the schoolmaster's ignorance serves as an example of how one can assume equality or be oblivious of inequality (Jacotot lacked knowledge of Flemish and was therefore traditionally considered incapable of instructing the language. He “taught” it regardless of his ignorance). However, Rancière's point was not that thing-centredness guarantees ignorance of inequality but rather that this anecdote illustrates how one can assume equality. The Rancièrian alternative to the standard pedagogical premise that teachers are intelligent and students are not is that a teacher is simply in a certain relation to a student such that the teacher can impose their will on the student's will. It is up to the instructor and student to have beliefs regarding intelligence. Each of us has only our perspective on the subjects of study; our locations and acquaintance with an object may differ, but our intelligence and ability to relate to these objects are equal. The Jacotot example

is misinterpreted if this Rancièrian insight is interpreted to indicate that thing-centredness is the solution to the educational disparity. As noted by Vlieghe and Zamojski, Rancière's advocacy for ignorance of inequality on the part of teachers is an extension of his critique of the pedagogization of society: inequality is perpetuated by the assumption that the world itself must always be explained, that our intelligence is validated by experts, and that intelligence disparities account for all disparities. This pedagogization of society, however, is simply one of the ways in which Rancière portrays a society, which he argues elsewhere is inevitably formed by the police order.

Vlieghe and Zamojski (2009) almost affirm this in their assertion that "an educational attitude attests to a complete affirmation of good in the present" (p. 23); yet, they revert to the notion that teachers should assist younger generations in paying attention to and caring for cherished objects (while also beginning anew in unforeseeable ways). To truly affirm good in the present, one must realise that the student's response is beyond the teacher's control. If the worth of the thing(s) is truly intrinsic, neither the teacher's nor the student's love for it nor the sharing of this love is required. No matter how much we try to communicate and renew our particular affection for particular things, we must love unconditionally and allow others to renew this affection as they see fit. We must allow for alternate universes. The process of education does not need to be linear and unidirectional because the value of the thing(s)/of reality, of existence, will persist and has persisted in each moment, long before and far beyond any generation's attestations to it. My suggestion is that the thingness in thing-centred pedagogy be strengthened so that the educative value exists before the thing becomes a subject matter, a work of art, or a referent; if the things in thing-centred pedagogy are only subject matters and works of art, it may be inaccurate to refer to this as thing-centredness. Vlieghe and Zamojski write that when we pay attention to the world or something in it, we "give a thing a voice, which means we temporarily forget about ourselves." This is not motivated by altruism, as the teacher is perpetually engaged in self-formation through these acts of self-forgetting and letting go. By caring for their object of study, they care for themselves. Truth is vital to Vlieghe and Zamojski, but it is not Truth with a capital T: In this context, truth refers to genuineness, an unconditional affection for the things one loves, and openness about those things. The ego thus exists and dissipates via this act of love, through this attention, and this is where truth is discovered. What makes sense regarding the object or

situation of attention is not determined by the adult educator or the student but rather by everyone who refers to the thing or situation itself.

One of the EPs I interviewed described some of the sessions using (without possibly knowing) a thing-centred pedagogical approach:

“I make it a point to enquire whether the children know why they have been called to me ... a few of them do actually respond by giving a definite statement about the behaviour that led them to an assessment; however, most of them remain in the dark concerning this ... I, therefore, set about expounding the reason for our meeting in the simplest terms possible, avoiding the specific words, such as “assessment”, (so as) not to scare them off or make them think that this is like an exam ... for example, I might refer to playing together, or to the fact that the session is being held in order to assist the student, help them feel at ease in class and so on. I talk to them about what they think about their progress at school, what their favourite subject is, what they think can be done to improve their educational experience, and what the thing they love the most is.”

Some of the children I interviewed in my reference group also described some of the sessions that I should engage in using a thing-centred pedagogical approach (possibly without knowing):

“Jack thought that I should ask children about things that are safe and that they could easily talk about, such as their favourite animal, food, whether they had any pets, and what sort of vehicles their parents/carers drove. Robert also indicated that I should ask other students about classmates who bothered or picked on them, as this would give an indication as to whether the children in question were being bullied and consequently required help. Ismael also told me not to ask for the children’s surnames as that might make them feel uncomfortable, especially if they are adopted and have a different surname than that of their parents as a result.”

Despite Vlieghe and Zamojski’s insistence that a common, true world is required for any educative act, I propose that the common world that should be renewed is the space in which

each person can find him or herself while recognising their relationship to being and things. This is a zone of unconditional attention and love, regardless of what the creature does. This is a zone of attention and self-recognition through other-recognition, or what Barad (2007) calls differential becoming. Consequently, it may not be being itself or things, but becoming —focusing on the things and being conscious of our relationship and connection to them, to the other. As Barad writes in her support of agential realism, practices of knowing and being are inextricably intertwined. We have knowledge because we are a part of the world, not because we stand apart from it. We are a part of the world's evolving diversity. The division of epistemology and ontology echoes a metaphysics that asserts a fundamental distinction “between human and non-human, subject and object, mind and body, and matter and speech” (Barad, 2007). What we require is an “appreciation of the intertwining of ethics, knowing, and being, because each interaction matters, because the possibilities for what the world may become call out in the pause that precedes each breath before a moment comes into being and the world is remade again, and because the becoming of the world is a matter of profound ethics.” (Barad, 2007, p. 185)

The teacher and student can hold space for being aware of things and for carrying care and responsibility for this thingness of reality, of the world, of the other. Renewal of the world requires an awareness of our interdependence—in the fact that our selves are constituted by what we place our attention on, by what we call not-ourselves; in the fact that as we assign value to things through our attention, and in the fact that we cannot force others to replicate our perspective nor our value-attribution. To make something really object-focused, humans must take a step back. We should reaffirm that the manner in which things enter the common world (via perception, conceptualization, and language) and endure across generations is unrelated to the things themselves. If existence has inherent value, it exists prior to our assertion. The manner in which we are continually evolving should be the focus of our affection and attention. There is no subject matter in the continuously present instructive moment; there is simply attention, a mere relationship.

7.1.3 Uncertainty of the Student and the Teacher

As the reader can notice in Chapters 5 and 6, children and adults are wrestling with the complexity and unpredictability of their own lives and of their own position within the system; as a result, they are both a subject and an object of the system, as they are put within it and traverse it on a sensory, spiritual, and material level. The educational system and its policies and politics are, therefore, less of a document on a table to be studied at a distance and more of a thing of which “we are constantly already within, a thing that is operating on us before any political discussion or dissensus begins” (Morton, 2013, p. 39). In the light of the situations brought up in this dissertation, it is no longer enough to leave unexamined the way in which policies speak about the universal child and universal educator and not about the subjectivity of each individual or adult and to speak about ways in which systems that are intended to emancipate us end up stultifying us in the process. It becomes the adult’s responsibility to interact together with the child within the complexities and uncertainties of each and every day.

In addition, it requires the educator to attend to their own subjectification, as they are crucial to the transformative space’s dynamic. This dual position may be challenging for educators. Some excerpts from interviewees revealed the adults’ struggles with how to conduct their professional life regarding the system, perceiving themselves as (very often) too small to make a difference due to its complexity.

EP: “As far as the access arrangements go, unfortunately, there is so much work to be done that I often feel like a factory worker, producing reports all the time. The numbers are so high that I just cannot afford to spend a certain amount of time on a referral. This means that I face a student who doesn’t know me, I carry out the assessments and get back to them with the results, and that’s where it ends.”

EP: “There is no time to see whether you could have done something further for the student, and this gets to me ... but on the other hand, I have to function within the system, which means that I have to find a practical way of doing things while being sensitive to the child’s needs.”

Teacher: “If I could, I would abolish the syllabus, as it tends to treat everyone in the same way, no matter their abilities. The students should be taken on a journey where they are taught how to think, reflect, to share things. In such a scenario, the teacher would create the syllabus according to the needs of the students. It would change every year, once again, as determined by the requirements of that particular group.”

A Rancèrian logic identifies the educator as “paradoxically unique and not unique: unique in demanding the student’s will to derive meaning while attending to the equality of all speaking subjects to activate the students’ and their own interpretive and emotional capacities, as well as the political resource of curiosity” (Rancière, 2007, p. 263). This level of focus is made possible by moments of getting lost and admitting it. For instance, adults who were interviewed admitted that they lacked an expert understanding of what they could do to (apart from verbally acknowledging this) change things in the system.

Social worker: “Nowadays, social workers tend to mostly concentrate on the children, and the focus on the family unit as a whole has diminished. If we want real change to the system, we need to invest in more work with families.”

Social worker: “I often feel that parents are discouraged by the system. Because of the slow pace at which things happen, they realise that instead of being open and genuine, they need to fit into the system by adopting a certain way of doing things, even if it does not genuinely consist of what they can do. They attempt to modify their behaviour in order to fit into a certain mould, telling me things such as, ‘Didn’t you tell me that this is what I had to do?’, together with ‘If I have done it, then why haven’t you increased access to my child?’ If the parents are simply trying to conform to what is expected of them, then change has not really been achieved.”

EP: “Cases are, very often, referred to my colleagues and me when they are already rather advanced, so that it is more about damage control than anything else. I would very much prefer it if I were acquainted with the different situations at a preventative level.”

In my encounters with the children and adults in this research, I also felt a significant amount of uncertainty, and thus it would have been wrong for me to pose as an expert. At times, I was asked questions (especially by the children) to which I lacked the knowledge to respond well (why am I not living with my siblings? Why can't I dress up as a female if that is my wish? Why do the care-workers leave? Why doesn't she understand that I cannot read?)—I had no choice. I believe it was still productive. My increased ignorance while being with the children emphasised my equality with them in terms of making meaning. This requires of me and others what Keats (1819) termed “negative capability”: an openness to “uncertainties, riddles, and doubts” (Kirby & Webb, 2021). This includes an “aversion to creating comfortable but in actuality unsatisfying resolutions” (Wigod, 1952, as cited in Lilley, 2013, p. 384) to change so as to examine the possibilities of varied thought and results in order to determine how to act. This aligns with Biesta's (2020) research on the purposes of education from an educational standpoint. He says that children need an adult to ask them “how they want to exist in the world and whether what they wish for is desirable, both for their own lives and for how they live with others” (Biesta & Bingham, 2010, pp. 10-11). The underlying assumptions of *la politique* on the situations mentioned in chapters 5 and 6 extend beyond the school gates, with the idea that students would voice their viewpoints about things that matter to them, including to the professionals that take decisions (very often) on their behalf. This brings about the complexity of how children must negotiate the tough transition between the classroom and the outside world (Phoenix et al., 2017). A typical school message, for instance, may emphasise the need to not bring sweets or cakes to school, not even on birthdays, yet for some families, the preparation of a cake is treasured since it communicates something about themselves to the world. By adopting a thing-centred pedagogy (discussed in the previous section), the adult is careful not to impose an agenda but to understand and negotiate the different viewpoints.

Rancière's (1991) conception of *le politique* necessitates a disposition of openness to the advent of the new. Biesta (2020) stresses that “students must be able to accept what teachers offer in their own way” (p. 96). He emphasises that regardless of how attractive it may be to regulate what others do, there is a risk that doing so violates the concept of the equality of all intelligence. The situations that the children came up with in Chapter 5 are some examples of pressures that children face daily. The adults' responsibility then becomes the creation of conditions (the metaphorical stage) that enable children to become aware of, investigate, and

respond to these numerous situations. This includes reminding students of their ability to reshape the world by responding to issues that deeply affect and concern them Biesta (2020). As a result, educational “subjectification extends beyond pedagogical subjectification into the larger political arena of *le politique*, allowing for the possibility of subjective transformation” (Biesta, 2020, p. 45).

Biesta (2020) emphasises how the wonderful risk of education includes “a possibility that children seize their freedom and then turn back to us (adults) and say they don’t want or, maybe more crucially, don’t need our attention” (p. 103). Current school policy in Malta prohibits children from not wearing uniforms, which limits but does not eliminate the prospect of their subjectification (Kirby P. , 2020). A child in my study refused to wear his uniform. He has not disclosed the reason for the decision, but the head of the school suspects that the child does not want to “belong” to the school which rejected him in the first place, deciding instead that he wants to design his own uniform.

7.1.4 Urgent Need to Slow Down

Educators, including EPs, intend to impart knowledge, skills and understanding in addition to moral ideals, attitudes and ways of doing one’s affairs. Biesta (2010) criticises the current education policy’s emphasis on efficiency, speed (as an EP, I am in charge of testing these concepts and checking how far off students are from the average standard), and predictability. Their criticism is intended to reduce the risk that students will not get it, to the extent “that education becomes nothing but a perfect reproduction of that imparted knowledge. Thus, it becomes “indoctrination”, and there is no longer a chance for students to exist as subject/s within educational institutions (Biesta, 2010, p. 103). Subjectification necessitates “creating space for students’ sense-creation: something that educators cannot accomplish for their students and for probing the unknown or the unknowable” (Biesta, 2020, p. 103). This necessitates a “slowing down” so that students can confront the reality of the world, as well as themselves and their “own aspirations in relation to what is real” in order to “process through” all of this (p. 98). The emphasis on slowing down stands in stark contrast to the educators’ (including EPs) accounts of the hectic pace of their classroom and working lives. For instance:

EP: “I often feel like a factory worker, producing reports all the time. The numbers are so high that I just cannot afford to spend a certain amount of time on a referral.”

Many of the interviewees emphasised that the current need in schools is focused on a strictly circumscribed curriculum of an existing political and social system, which aims to prepare pupils for a preconceived, predetermined future world. This keeps students in a perpetual condition of readiness for politics, based on the premise that politics exists outside of school rather than, as Rancière argues, being continually enacted subjectively. One of the interviewed therapists said:

“I ask them what they want me to say during meetings that concern them so that I can transmit the children’s wishes. Of course, if the latter happens to be detrimental to the student’s well-being, I talk to them and try to find out where it’s coming from but do not attempt to grant it. Therefore, I try to use the power that I hold as an adult to really help the child.”

This therapist broached the topic of voice and choice herself, despite not receiving a direction from her senior management team to do so. Another teacher noted that:

“my colleagues and I often ponder on what will become of the students in question. It certainly isn’t simple for a child brought up in the system to function in a regular way, independently. This is particularly the case if they haven’t managed to control many elements in their lives. Making the students aware that they have some control over their lives is of paramount importance.”

During the journey of this dissertation, I found it beneficial to personally experience these politics being continually enacted through each subject, and I tried to share it through my writing. Getting lost and slowing down involved noticing and attending to the moments in which *le politique* happens. In contrast, my life (personal and professional) is so hectic that I have little time to listen and observe. But when I was lost in the research process with the children, I was in that moment, and I experienced things, and I contemplated each moment, and I think that this is a useful skill to do with children. Especially at school, where

everything is so timetabled, and daily life goes by from one activity to the next. I am not accustomed to it, and I still do require practice. Adults need to address the subjects and things that the children mentioned, and this entails attentively listening to children's present concerns, as expressed loudly during times in which they shout or reject something/someone (for example, through quiet rejections of wearing their uniforms or reading out loud in class). Their need to be heard as citizens have ramifications for educational politics.

A Rancièrian logic of politics has allowed me to consider the educator's multifaceted role in regard to what it means for students to act against *la politique*. This has necessitated shifting the research focus from the protests of students in the streets to the humdrum of school life while allowing the political to appear through children's responses that the teacher takes seriously. A degree of uncertainty is inherent in taking children seriously; given the boundless nature of the subjects that they speak about, this uncertainty spreads across numerous dimensions. Such periods of uncertainty offer a rupture in *la politique* (Rancière, 2006) and the prospect of new ways of knowing, acting, and being.

Children cannot wait to be adults to send a letter to their college principal stating that the curriculum does not meet their concerns. The purpose of "school curricula is not to assure that children have a correct grasp of it, but to give children the opportunity to engage with information profoundly enough to respond responsibly to it for the common good" (Osberg and Biesta, 2007, p. 48). This necessitates a degree of "uncertainty" in the curriculum's content, which presupposes an engagement with ambiguity in order to assure its sensitivity and accountability to the "contingency of the present" (Osberg and Biesta, 2007, p. 48). Calvino (1998), a proponent of the brevity of shorter literary phrases, is a good example of an artist who works with ambiguity and paradox: maintaining a clear vision of what can be accomplished while methodically selecting the right mode for its realisation. "*Festina Lente*", which translates to "making haste slowly", appears to be his favoured motto for creating this change (p. 57).

7.2 Part II: The Politics of Voice and its Verification

As I have argued throughout this dissertation, what is at risk in education is the ability to speak and be heard. There is a situation in which we have to deal with those who are unrepresented and voiceless, who pose demands that lie outside of the existing terrain of representation. This is the case with overarching discourses on inclusion. The ontic-ontological difference can be productively applied to such demands, which have a two-fold character. Firstly, they stand for the inability to adequately depict society as a whole; they are witnesses to the impossibility of a complete representation. In this sense, they have an ontological status. On the other hand, those demands that cannot be expressed in this precise order are ontical in nature. Because they conflict with the principles that govern the domain of representation, they cannot be implemented in a certain imaginary/order of representation. It is critical that neither the ontological nor the ontic take precedence in this discussion. Instead, they can be viewed as entwined in a web of interconnectedness. It is the transition from being unnoticeable to being noticed, from sound to speech, that's most important from an analytical standpoint. My thesis is that unless we take account of both of these aspects, we cannot escape the limitations of pluralist modes of representation nor the restrictions of an overweening ontologizing of politics.

If we take on board the full implications of the ontological dimension, our emphasis switches to the necessity to focus on the passage from invisibility to visibility (the act of giving voice). It is a matter of making public the relevance of the activities constitutive of that journey from invisibility to visibility. It is necessary, as I have argued, to deal critically with the fact that argumentation spaces are not always ready for the inscription of ever more demands. It is necessary for the stage, as it is, to be changed in order for new demands to materialise. This is an essential structural characteristic that must be considered.

When we talk about democracy's ontic level, we are talking about the necessity to broaden the analytical emphasis to include representations of claims and demands that arise in the larger public domain. At this point, it can be helpful to deconstruct the biases about the politics of dispute that still impede critical engagement with this territory. People who are often marginalised are not only capable of expressing their demands rationally and

intelligibly, but they may also do so critically if we pay close attention to the many dimensions and complexities of the subject of voice in general. These prejudices must be questioned if we are to take the wider terrain of contentious politics seriously as a political argumentation and negotiation ground, which potentially has positive and critical implications for the traditional institutional spheres in which democratic representation is played out. As a result of this questioning, we may miss the fact that contested politics is not simply or necessarily fragmentary but frequently results in important institutional transformations that are not only present but also subject to a systematic examination. Although contentious politics is sometimes characterised as an irrational and non-reflective wasteland, careful attention to the methods in which new argumentation spaces are opened up and to the voiced demands leads us to the opposite conclusion.

Deliberation and reflection are not lacking, but they are expressive and introspective, allowing us to communicate our deepest feelings of unfairness and wrongdoings. It has been argued by the likes of Laclau (2006) that the smallest unit of social analysis is the concept of demand, which assumes that social groups are not uniform entities but rather “that their unity should be regarded as an expression of heterogeneous desires.” According to Laclau (2006), demands often begin as petitions to the institutions of power. Claims may be made against or against institutions if those demands are ignored or not responded to. Understanding how demands are articulated challenges our preconceived notions about how ideas are transmitted from informal to formal spheres of power. Transmission, as a metaphor, obfuscates the intricacies of political coalition building and the articulation of demands into political projects that could inform, strengthen, or even challenge the current form of political dialogue.

In addition, as we have seen, this procedure also includes the creation of the identities of the claimants and the recipient of the claim. Analytically, this interaction necessitates a notion of subjectivity that distinguishes between the various subject positions occupied by an individual and the subject as such, where the focus is on the inability to ever fully reflect the subject. In order to avoid collapsing subject positions and “voice” into represented demands, one must first establish this conceptual separation. Opening this chasm is a necessity of ontic-political life. In order to engage in a critical discussion of representation, it is necessary to understand the difference between ontic and ontological, between representation as a mechanism for the inscription that can never fully capture what is being inscribed in the

space of representation, and the critical space of a radicalised democratic pluralism. As a result, deprivation of “voice” is always an ontic and ontological possibility, and this should be reflected in our critical interactions with democratic practises and our thinking about democracy.

7.3 Part III: Meaning and Messiness Mirroring La Politique (distribution through policing) and Le Politique (re-distribution through acts of “dissensus”)

The complexity of voice leads me to reflect on the complexity of the chosen method to collect data. As a result of this complexity, the chosen method for collecting data has been the participatory research method. These conceptualise research as an evolving and intricate, collaborative enterprise. A variety of voice prod, question, and criticise not only the subject of the research but also its methodology. Learning together (adults and children) was a crucial component of the research process mirroring equality. This involves establishing relational spaces (the metaphorical stage mentioned above) conducive to discovering what can be understood by the child and generating information that was not anticipated at the outset of the inquiry (uncertainty). Participatory research integrates the assumptions and knowledge of a variety of research participants. As a springboard for learning about what “might be” rather than “what is”, it then generates spaces for individuals to expose their own knowledge to personal and collective inquiry and critique. This approach to social learning requires intricate relationships for co-constructed practises.

Using the participatory methods was, to a certain extent, an extension of the above-mentioned concepts of la politique and le politique. This is because, on the one hand, I had the basic assumptions that drove established research paths and processes (la politique—from books and lectures about research methods) and on the other hand, the rupture (le politique) created by the inclusion of those who are rarely heard (thus cannot predict the way in which they will react or answer). This created destabilisation but also novelty and sometimes unexpected ways of comprehending forms of information and associated activities that could not have been anticipated at the outset. Therefore, even the filling out of the research ethics process was part of the la politique because, ultimately, what I predicted (la politique—based on

previous knowledge on research with children) was imprecise rather than specified. I initially planned the conceptualisation of research as a linear, outcome-driven strategy or a process of confirmation, ultimately disclosing the flaws of this line of thought.

In this section, I reflect on my research experiences and describe how I have navigated this frequently surprising and hazardous terrain. This study was initiated because I have a continual interest in working and researching with children in school and residential care settings. I was and continue to be inspired by a concern for “social justice” (Taparelli in 1840) (equal access to opportunities), and I have utilised participatory and innovative research techniques for this endeavour. To better reflect on my experiences in this environment, I have maintained a research notebook (mentioned in Chapter 4) in which I document my thoughts on a regular basis. This notebook offers reflections on how my decisions, behaviours, and beliefs have contributed to the study process. Additionally, I have seen that my research journal has also performed a therapeutic function as it was a resource for chronicling the challenges, highs, lows, misunderstandings, and vulnerabilities faced when conducting participatory research. My mind was occupied by recurring accounts of messiness and chaos. As Harding et al. (2018) write, “research can be complicated, particularly when negotiating access, building relationships with study participants, navigating the research dynamic, and determining what counts as a research site” (p.42). The following passages from my journal reflect some of the research difficulties I encountered.

“Today, while I was working in a classroom with a group of students, a child entered and explained that he had been sent to work with me because of his misbehaviour. I’m still confused as to why he was assigned to me, but I don’t want the other children to assume that they’re also here with me for misbehaviour; that’s not how this project was intended.” (Research Log)

“All I could think of was that I hoped that no school administrator or teacher would enter the room. One of the boys was singing while standing on a chair, another was tossing his shoe at the other while cursing, and the remaining boys were devouring crisp bags as if they recessed. It will be a miracle if I gain any knowledge from this session!” (Research Log)

“Once they began drawing, they began talking about their families, girlfriends, and terrible memories, as well as gossiping about the care workers and teachers. I was originally unsure of how to initiate questioning, probing, and prodding. So much knowledge was being disseminated, and there were so many potentially damaging ideas about roles, women, and life! It felt like a terrible interview when I realise that I have missed too many entry points and opportunities to have a better understanding of what I am attempting to understand, but am unable to regain my composure.”

(Research Log)

As a result of sharing these observations, I have realised that my goals for working with my research participants did not always pan out as expected. I was aware that encounters with research participants can produce uncertainty and need swift answers in diverse contexts. This way of approaching them is not linear and can be messy: considering how to handle the student being sent to me by a teacher, deliberating on how to handle a teacher/head of school who enters the classroom, and observing students who defy the school rules; feeling annihilated by the discussions with the research participants and unable to begin deciphering what was said. Sharing these experiences with my supervisors has filled me with comfort, and, as a result, I began to ask more insightful questions about my own research process (rather than the content). Particularly, these conversations prompted me to think back on my psychology training, which to a certain extent, failed to emphasise the messiness I would encounter.

Lugueti & Oliver (2018) state that “research must be reported in a sanitised fashion, suppressing any indicators of challenges, failures, and paradoxes discovered during the process” (p. 18). Cook (2009), however, finds a number of advantages in expressing messiness, such as a more honest perspective of the research process. Additionally, accepting messiness as a possibility could be helpful for researchers who might “otherwise lose faith in their research abilities” (Cook, 2009, p.25). Cook (2009) believes that such features and experiences are likely to be perceived adversely if they are covered up. In an effort to create a more open dialogue about research with children, this part reflects on my experiences with this mess. I begin by analysing current paradigm shifts regarding the participation of children in research and the increased interest in supporting rights-based research that promotes inclusion, participation, and empowerment. Following this, I consider how one of these

essential features was realised through my research. In these discussions, I would like to be frank about the research's limitations, the obstacles encountered, and the consequent confusion. In my conclusion, I discuss what it could mean if researchers were more transparent about the generally unpredictable, chaotic, and bewildering situations that arise when conducting participatory research with children.

7.3 Conducting Research with Children

In recent years, there has been a change in thinking that sees children as capable social actors (Allison & Prout, 1997), a vision that encompasses human rights and which has percolated, to varying degrees, into international legislation and policy (Groundwater-Smith, Dockett, & Bot, 2015). This modification acknowledges that children are “experts in their own lives and should be treated as such” (Clark and Moss, 2011, p. 34). Greig, Taylor, and MacKay (2013) note that preconceptions about children’s “inability to contribute meaningfully to research have not only altered the nature of the research questions addressed but also impeded the development of methodologies that appeal directly to children” (p. 105). These approaches, according to O’Sullivan and Macphail, (2010), have shifted the emphasis “from research on/about children to research with children” (p. 45). I believe such methods contribute to the “cornerstones of a rights-based framework for children’s research and are driven by a desire to further inclusive, participatory, and empowering research endeavours” (McNamara, 2011, p. 137).

Nonetheless, the presumption that participatory and creative approaches are more empowering and inclusive for participants must be examined critically. These terms cautioned me to extend my reflection on several questions: What does it mean to “include” a person in research? How is the phrase “participation” assessed? What does it mean to be “empowered” by the research process? In answering these questions, I evaluate some of my efforts to create empowering research experiences and challenge notions of inclusion and involvement. By sharing some entries from my research journal, I then describe my experiences with the realities of conducting research with children. I did not utilise a systematic approach to analyse the excerpts featured in this section. Rather, I chose those parts that were most relevant to my growing collective conversations.

7.3.1 Examining and Inclusion

My approach to conducting research with children has been influenced by my interactions with children and my line of work as an EP. I continue to struggle with what inclusive research means while placing inclusion at the top of my thinking. Walmsley, Strnadová, and Johnson (2018) offer a number of principles that underpin “inclusive research with children, including children’s ownership of the research problem; promoting collaboration between the researcher and research participants; involving children in the process of conducting the research; and ensuring that all aspects of the research are accessible” (p. 7). More recently, inclusive research concepts have been criticised for unduly focusing on the research process rather than the impact of the research on people’s lives (Nind, 2017). Participants in my research have been invited to formulate their own opinions regarding the nature and technique of the study. When reviewing my research journal, it is amusing to note that my initial concerns centred on my performance and the prospective outcomes.

“I have never conducted such a study. I am anxious. Will it be a success? What will the students want to accomplish? Will I be able to support them appropriately? Will I collect decent data? What will I do if it is unsuccessful?” (Research Diary)

Reflecting on this paragraph from my journal, I realised there were various issues. Some were associated with my relationship and capacity to work with research participants, as well as their excitement (or lack thereof) for the study. I lacked confidence and certainty in the intended actions. I also appeared obsessed with the concept of it “working”: I invested a lot in this research and was intensely conscious of its need to be successful. The “working was conducted on my terms and for my benefit, and although I do not express it explicitly, I would have focused on gathering good data that may have led to a published result and to the idea of it “working” (Mercieca, Mercieca, & Piscopo Mercieca, 2021). Now I realise that the concept is significantly broader.

Taking the lead from Nind (2017), through the research process, I became more inclined to de-emphasise the importance of collecting “great data” in favour of doing “good research” and recognising that this will be perceived differently by myself, the study participants, and the institution/s. I also anticipated that sharing ownership of the research process and

promoting collaboration would be something that research participants would seek and positively respond to. Similar to Luguetti and Oliver (2018), I realised that I might not learn much about their educational experiences, which were of interest to me, if I permitted the research participants to choose the research agenda and its focus, but it would provide them with a metaphorical stage presented earlier on in this chapter on which to co-construct our viewpoints on a variety of things and situations.

“I am beginning to realise that doing research *with* children is a difficult and laborious job. I have had trouble describing what research is. I believe I underestimated the difficulty of this task. I feel like I do not know how to deal with children. Did I learn absolutely nothing from all those years working with children? When it comes to them, I'm making so many assumptions and responding in an extremely research kind of way.” (Research Diary)

My admission that I was engaging in too much of a research-kind of way suggests that I had been socialised to become a researcher and was making assumptions and acting in accordance with what I know about the role of a researcher (*la politique*). According to Skyrme & Woods (2018), this is unlikely to reflect the involvement of co-researchers like the children with whom I collaborated.

The second principle of inclusive research defined by Walmsley and Johnson (2003) is accessibility. In retrospect, I feel that I should have paid more attention to this issue and less attention to the other concepts discussed. The need for accessible research tools became evident during the reference group data collection part. Interviews/case conferences were the major technique of data collection that I had initially planned to do. However, these children (by refusing to sit down on chairs prepared for them) showed me that my actions had omitted them from a research study. The research design and data collection processes had to be adjusted to match the participants' preferred mode of communication. As I record my journal entries:

“Third week of reference group data collection: It looks like Nick enjoys drawing. Ben is substantially more sociable and enjoys engaging in physical activities. Shaun

enjoys conversing. I can see that the bulk of them would perform poorly in an interview, but they will participate in other activities.” (Research Diary)

Inclusive research is a process, not a result, and depends on the environment and people with whom we are collaborating. Primarily, it depends on whether the researcher acknowledges the varied nature of inclusion and the limitations of a narrow definition of inclusion. Participation is integral to the majority of the research.

7.3.2 My Research and Participation

Engagement in the research process can take various forms (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015). Prior considerations were guided by Hart’s (1992) “ladder of participation”, which attempted to illustrate varying levels of involvement when working with children. Later, Hart (1997) criticised the ladder for being unnecessarily simplistic; for example, the ladder may imply that those participants operating on the higher stages are involved in superior efforts of participation (which is not always the case). A second issue is that the participation ladder does not address the question of who is enabled to participate: the emotionally literate? Those who can easily express themselves verbally? (Renold et al., 2010). Likewise, the ladder fails to acknowledge how other identifiers, such as disability, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic background, may influence involvement and participation.

Additionally, the work of Hart (1997) can be utilised to analyse who engages in a research environment, when participation occurs, and what type of involvement. For the most part, this is a pragmatic option when it comes to participation and access. Due to prior contacts within a school, I was able to conduct research within a particular institution. In an effort to encourage involvement from all, I offered every child in the school the opportunity to take part in the study. I was conscious, however, that by concentrating on including a small number of students that were going to be part of the reference group, I was excluding all others. Despite the fact that many students wished to participate, the scope of the study limited the number of participants. Completing informed assent papers, receiving parental/caregiver/careworker consent, and organising focus groups, 14 boys were selected for the reference group based on the recommendations of teachers and care workers. I

eventually discovered that some of the boys that were recommended for the study were those students who usually cause havoc in the school. I began to question whether participation was ever genuinely voluntary. I also concur that the role of adult gatekeepers in choosing which students were chosen undermines the concept of students as competent social participants (Prout and James, 1997).

Regarding the type of participation, this study project (both the reference group and the primary group) was conducted in a school setting, and all the interactions were influenced by this context. For instance, I attempted to meet with the students during break time or after school, but many students were unwilling to give up their free time, so I was compelled to seek out alternative choices. The school granted me permission to speak with the boys during their PSCD class because it was recognised that a portion of my research was connected to this subject. Participation in research activities and the creation of research artefacts was explicitly stated as an option from the outset so as to distinguish them from official topics.

The sessions took place away from other students and adults, and as the children became more at ease, they ate, conversed, and played. While these practices were not authorised in their regular classroom (O'Brien, 2019), I did not contest them in the hopes that supporting this more informal setting would distinguish my study, me as a researcher, and the whole process from the formality of school. I also endeavoured, in various ways, to distance myself from the identity of an EP. For example, I wore (more) casual clothing, shared stories about my time as a student, and offered a few glimpses into my life. I believed that these strategies would help create trust and disrupt hierarchical power structures (Fitzpatrick and Allen, 2017). Nonetheless, “we cannot know all of the effects of our presence nor be fully aware of our embodiment” (Fitzpatrick and Allen, 2017, p. 54). Consequently, I realised that the students (and others in the school) would determine for themselves who and what I was:

“Throughout my observations and sessions, the children frequently addressed me as Miss: ‘Miss, are you going to do a session with us today?’ and ‘Miss, am I doing this task correctly?’ (I would want to emphasise that I am not a teacher)... During today’s session, a teacher came to the room where I was with the students and informed me about the misbehaviour of one of the students who were with me – almost as if to tell

me that the fact that he is with me is a reward which clearly he does not deserve!”
(Research Diary)

This example highlights the difficulty I faced with the identification of a new role (that of a researcher) while being in the school. Frequently, the adult or EP identity I was attempting to push aside was reinforced, but the researcher identity I was attempting to express diminished in visibility. During data collection involving lesson observations, I utilised strategies similar to O'Brien (2019), such as distancing myself from the teachers and interacting informally with the students. These were conscious and consistent actions of resistance to “mute power” (Fitzpatrick and Allen, 2017, p. 89), establishing trust, and negotiating my identity. Similar to O'Brien (2019), there were occasions when I thought that I had abandoned my educator's/EP's role, only to be reminded of how lost I felt and found myself constantly asking, “who am I?” and “what am I doing?” With hindsight, it is clearer that the expectations of my own identity were wildly exaggerated and that disrupting the existing power system would have required more than a single incident at school.

Yet, by granting the students a degree of freedom, I hoped to begin destabilising the research-based power structures. I noticed, for instance, that students occasionally generated study artefacts that varied from the primary assignment that I had in mind.

“I gave the boys boxes of cardboard that I envisioned them utilising to store things that are meaningful to them or things that they would like to take to school. As students placed items in the box, I believed we could spark conversations about their experiences by examining why particular items were included. Instead, the boys joyfully grabbed felt-tip markers and began adorning the boxes with their school-related likes and dislikes.” (Research Diary)

This proved to me that the research participants might be engaged in a positive manner; however, their participation sometimes (or most of the time) focused on what they desired as opposed to what I anticipated. “Participation in research is influenced by several factors and can have a variety of meanings” (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015, p.67). After experiencing the messiness associated with research, I realised that “participation is not an all-or-nothing

phenomenon” (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015, p.67), and the concept of participation must be regularly explored.

I have gradually acquired the habit of avoiding the term “empowerment” (Gore, 2003). This study did not change my conviction that the term empowerment is an intellectually confusing phrase that I (and possibly many others) had misunderstood and misrepresented (Dominelli, 2000). As a result of my quest to learn how to best enable children in research settings to express their equality, I developed participatory approaches. People often argue that participatory tactics empower participants, yet there are a number of competing opinions (Gallacher and Gallagher, 2008). When I submitted an essay for a PhD seminar, a portion of it revealed my difficulty comprehending the material, especially in terms of empowerment.

“Many times, I am unable to understand what I am reading.” So, I keep reading, and after a few repetitions, I've gotten the gist of things. Afterwards, I'll come across an article or chapter that contradicts or undermines what I've just learned. My theoretical and methodological foundations are now fragile, which is causing me problems. My knowledge of the subject is far from complete”. (Research Journal)

Participatory approaches were “no less challenging or ethically dubious than any other research approach” (Gallacher and Gallagher, 2008, p. 513), as I realised when I started my study. Nevertheless, I had read enough about participatory approaches to see their appeal, so I kept going. As a child, I learned that no method of participation could guarantee that all participants would have an equal opportunity to participate. Participatory methods are often used without consideration of power or inequality (Packard, 2008). Enright and O'Sullivan, 2012), as well as the methodological sensitivity necessary to support participatory research with children (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012), are described in Chapter 5.

“It has shown me that the options for allowing children and adults to choose their own stories to narrate are not restricted to participatory research approaches alone. Now, I have been requested to make dinner by one of the children. I enjoy eating, but I am unsure of my cooking skills. Cooking as a form of data collecting may not have occurred to me if this boy had not asked for it. Despite my hesitation to use the term empowerment to describe children’s participation in research, this boy’s reflection does

show that children can be agents of change in their own lives wherever there are children.” (Research Journal)

It is impossible to ensure the empowerment of another even if we plan and co-create research projects with participants in particular ways (Lather, 2006). “Empowerment is a process one undertakes for oneself; it is not something done to or for someone. Research participants do not require fixing or changing, as the researcher may believe; instead, participants deserve empowerment” (Lather, 2006, p. 4). In light of the fact that children are “capable social agents” (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998, p. 68) who are capable of making rational decisions and acting in accordance with their own personal circumstances, it seems important to acknowledge that we cannot and should not attempt to influence the actions or decisions of our research participants. Recent conversations with children and the other participants have caused me to reflect on how and why I made so many mistakes in the first place.

A lot of effort is required to begin to understand each other's perspectives, to uncover the restricting power relations that exist, and even to try to break them. Whether my study design is participatory, mixed-method, or interventionist is irrelevant to the participants. By being listened to by those around them, however, they were able to have better (at least I hope) experiences both at school and in the residential institution. There is always room for improvement in the concept of empowerment as an analytical tool since it necessitates constant scrutiny of who is prioritising whose values, knowledge, agency, goals, or visions for society in making decisions.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

As indicated by the excerpts from diaries presented at the beginning of this section, conducting participatory research is not as simple as it may seem. Participatory research necessitates an open-minded and attentive researcher who is willing to embrace the messiness and devote the time to muddle through (Plows, 2018). There might be significant ambiguity, which can be challenging to manage, especially while undertaking research. I have realised that conducting research with children poses a lot of intriguing considerations (Coyne and Carter, 2018). My research has prompted me to ask more questions than I can answer: is this

form of research, for instance, superior to more conventional methods? When and why could participatory research be considered a technique, and who determines this determination? Who and how should success be judged? What skills and dispositions are required for a researcher to enable participatory research? Can participatory research sensibilities flourish in circumstances or designs that do not prioritise participatory philosophies? How did the researcher understand the responses of the participants, and how did this affect the study process? I believe that discussions of this sort also contribute to the conversation surrounding inclusion, engagement, and empowerment (McNamara, 2011). In order to get to the point where these three qualities of participatory research are not just presented (un)critically and unquestionably, but rather adopted with a deeper degree of awareness and scrutiny, these conversations are necessary.

CHAPTER 8: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Interviewed Child	Researcher	Thoughts
Sam: My school is modern.	Researcher: What does modern mean to you?	
Sam: It's boring to me (laughs). It's all work, shouting, detention, work... I always hated school! Since I was in kinder! My friend and I started a group where we hated school, and we were gangsters.	Researcher: Sam, is there a part of the school that you like or enjoy being in?	<i>Modern means boring to him? I feel like I am not following. What is the logical sense here?</i>
Sam: The free lessons	Researcher: Oh I can imagine that you all like that, but is there a specific place?	<i>He has already answered me by stating that free lessons are his favourite part of the day, yet I do not feel like he has answered in the way I imagined him to.</i>
Sam: The tuckshop	Researcher: Why the tuckshop? Do you help in the tuckshop maybe? But, what if you had to choose one place in the school in which to spend most time in, which one would it be?	<i>Yet again, he has already answered me by stating that the tuckshop is his favourite place, yet I do not feel like he has answered in the way I imagined him to.</i>
Sam: No...I go to the tuckshop during breaktime. Breaktime is my favourite time of the school day.	Researcher: Why?	
Sam: It's freedom...I can speak to my friends, and I	Researcher: So where do you see yourself after Form 5, then?	<i>I question him again because I cannot seem to fathom what his future will</i>

can eat. I cannot do these things during school.		<i>look like, given that he hates school so much.</i>
Sam: No, I don't imagine MCAST or something...the name is already <i>jaqq</i> ...with classrooms which I don't like ... I don't like it ... I want to play football.	Researcher: I know, but in Malta, it's not so easy to start a full-time career in football.	<i>My anxieties are projected onto the child.</i>
Sam: That's why I want to leave...from the country or from school...but why are we talking about school <i>jaqq</i> ?	Researcher: Maybe we could see if there are things you'd like to change since you're saying it's boring.	<i>Here I can understand that Sam senses the uselessness of my questioning about the school. Possibly he feels that despite talking about it, nothing will change...</i>
Sam: Maybe changing the colour of the uniforms ...school would be better if they got an Xbox or a Playstation or if they allowed us to bring some chocolates and sweets.	Researcher: You can't at present?	
Sam: The school I was in before...they let me, but now ... the people at my school are stupid for not letting me bring sweets to school ... You're not allowed to buy sweets, but you're allowed to buy pizza ...they're stupid. What sense does that make?	Researcher: So, if you're allowed junk food, you're saying you might as well get chocolate <i>hux</i> ...Did you ever tell someone this?	<i>If sweets are considered unhealthy, then shouldn't pizza also be classified as such? I do not know how to answer Sam. He is right!</i> MOMENT OF DISCOMFORT

Sam: No, I would get detention if I told the headmaster this, and he wouldn't let me anyway because they think they are the most powerful!... And when I took a bottle of Pepsi to school, they told me to throw it away, and I ran away from school because I didn't want. They didn't find me coz it's a big school. The teachers drink Pepsi in the staffroom...I see them. They even have doughnuts and other junk on their birthdays and other days...So why can't I?	What should I say? Is he right? He identified the gap in the system MOMENT OF DISCOMFORT

8.0 Introduction

How a “police order” is configured in society varies throughout time and space. This may be related to the ways in which children have frequently been rendered invisible or voiceless within educational systems and beyond. One of the reasons for this process may be related to educational policies and eventual acts of EPs that position children as passive subjects. The reader has already read about the construction of children who are deemed “impossible” and thereafter become symbolically and spatially located outside the spaces of those regarded as “worthy of being listened to”. These children (as we read in Chapter 1) are viewed as causes of trouble in otherwise “well-functioning organisations” like schools because of their behaviour or academic achievement that is *not up to par*. Therefore, the goal is to make institutions operate better by fixing the problem (Bacchi, 2009): the “impossible child”. Central to such an approach is an implicit problematization (Bacchi, 2009) and a discourse focused on the deficit (what the child does not yet *have to get him up to par*). “The discourse of problem children then creates the problem-solving political subject” (Bacchi, 2009, p. 233), which focuses on what works, providing a connection to the concept of evidence-based policing.

As an EP, I am a “problem-solving political subject” and an integral part of this policing dynamic: diagnosing a problem by applying my expert (ascribed title) knowledge “to

construct truths about the subject brought into their gaze, who is therefore understood through the processes of observation, testing, and evaluation” (Ball, 2013, p. 13). The child is made visible and listened to (the distributed version of listening) by strategies of power (IQ testing, reports, diagnosis), through which he is evaluated (p. 48). By comparing children to one another, a ranking of subjects is generated. The knowledge established through such strategies creates “groups and categories of subjects, endowed with certain qualities and necessitating special modes of intervention” (Devine-Eller, 2004, p. 13). The children are assigned recommendations based on these universal qualities (what works for all children with dyslexia, ADHD, and social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties) (Devine-Eller, 2004). These interventions are intended to correct and restore the perceived deviation from the average or possible child. Educators then run the risk of reducing the complexity and uniqueness of children to easily recognisable and generalizable characteristics, such as the “deficient other” (Santoro, 2009, p. 36) and focus on what they believe the students lack in comparison to the other students (Santoro, 2013). This “deficit thinking is a problem representation that pits people against each other” (Bacchi, 2009, p. 16) and is used as a governing technology to “maintain order within populations” (Bacchi, 2009, p. 30); a dynamic which Rancière (2000) refers to as “distribution of the sensible” or “la politique”. In this way, education was becoming permeated by “a normalisation and pathologization process and accomplished within a system of normative behaviours” (Ball, 2013, p. 52). Consequently, although the school serves as a sorting mechanism, the procedures become invisible:

Children come to believe that they sort themselves or that they are sorted by “nature” – the power of the school is revealed not in its ability to force students to do things but in its ability to sort or arrange students in a manner that the students themselves (and their parents) possibly deem logical or fair (Devine-Eller, 2004, p. 19).

Students who are “ahead” POSSIBLE

Students who are “average” POSSIBLE

Students who are “behind” IMPOSSIBLE – *We need to fix this.*

The tactics may also be invisible to educators, and normalisation and exclusion become ingrained in the day-to-day practices of “contemporary mainstream education” (Ball, 2013, p. 115). School becomes “a normalising and excluding machine” (Ball, 2013, pp. 116-117) and (unfortunately) EPs are its operators, presumably convinced of the “naturalness of the school as a sorting machine” (Devine-Eller, 2004). Following the journey of this research, the following implications for EPs have emerged from this study. I argue that we need to develop a conceptual framework that recognises the situated, transformative, collaborative processes through which interventions for and with children deemed “impossible” are developed in practice. This would (hopefully) help EPs to think outside the deficit discourse driven by a longing for order/distribution and the creation of standardised models.

8.1 EPs Open to Moments of Surprise

Throughout the period of this study, I encountered various moments where I felt hesitant, and this hesitation made me feel uneasy. As an EP, my (ascribed) role is that of focusing on problems and their identification to find a solution. Writing narratives about those instances in which children disrupted the established police order and, via their voice, identified gaps within the system (by pointing to what was not working) created a place of unease for me. Reframing acts that I was taught to perceive as acts of dissensus into instances of voice and politics made me feel a sense of surprise because they offered a momentary pause from the usual discourse on the deficiency.

As I have tried to present in Chapters 5 and 6 of this dissertation, there were numerous instances of hesitance that shook my self-assurance in what I knew and thus gave rise to a new problem: not knowing what to do or what to say. It was a moment of discomfort but also a moment that stimulated my creative ideas (Sellar, 2012). Sellar (2012) proposes “that destabilisation of information about ourselves and our worlds may stimulate learning as a response to newly perceived challenges” (p. 61). The pause triggered by the uncertainty disrupted my regular pattern of thought and presumption of what would (usually) follow (assessment – diagnosis – recommendations, usually based on the universal label, e.g., children with ADHD need the information to be broken down in bite-sized chunks) and compelled me to consider, to analyse what was occurring in that present moment (Varela,

1992), and to think again. It was in that moment of surprise that a choice between engaging in a pedagogical revolution or reinforcing the status quo had to be made (this was a moment where I felt that I could reflect on the mechanisms of the system before I would be swallowed again by it). This complexity suspended for a moment the narrative arc of my conscious experience (what I am taught to do), problematising the status quo “while activating the possibility for things to be otherwise” (Sellar, 2012, pp. 62-63).

The moments of hesitation included two components: an emphasis on the self (as an EP, an educator, an adult, and a researcher) and an emphasis on the child in front of me. The hesitation brought upon me an element of unsettlement in my usual self-assurance (Sellar, 2012) that is inherent to being an EP. I experienced the ongoing self-judgment about what it means to be an expert or a professional and started to become preoccupied with what needs to be improved. As an EP, I evaluate myself based on the discrepancies between my everyday practice and my imagined expert/professional self. The self-judgment came to define not only me as the EP but also the child. Implicit in this evaluation is the detection of discrepancies between the child’s behaviour and the imagined ideal student.

Neoliberal thinking tends to focus on investing in what is missing through training to increase potential. Santoro (2013) contends that while addressing the topic of who and what EPs must be, the question of who is feeding us this knowledge is frequently overlooked (p. 316). As an EP, I am part of a system that impacts my professional identity, my assessment practices, my connections with children, and my expectations regarding these children. Goodwin (2010) refers to this as personal/autobiographical knowledge, which enables educators to see that the way they are with students is influenced by both their training and on-the-job learning, as well as their own “biographies, dreams, and aspirations” which impact their work (Goodwin, 2010, as cited in Zhu & Zeichner, 2013, p. 317). “Creating a space of inquiry to come to understand the world differently and to open the possibility of appreciating the strengths rather than the failures” (Sellar, 2012, p. 62) (acts of dissensus *seen* and *heard* as voice and not as noise) is one way in which hesitating may present different possibilities for transformation.

Humphrey, Barlow and Lendrum (2018) highlight the dual effect of hesitation in both reinforcing the language used by professionals and challenging the language used by

professionals. “The predominance of the deficit is evidenced by the prevalence of educational terms based on deficit knowledge, such as behaviour problems – SEBD, ADHD, abusive, at risk, and disadvantaged” (Humphrey, Barlow, & Lendrum, 2018). The moment of hesitation that Humphrey, Barlow and Lendrum (2018) refer to as a pause represents indecision. “That moment of stillness provides both a space to contest the truth of a deficit narrative and a foreshadowing of things to come. The pause enables a different version of seeing and listening to be reached and is, therefore, a space where “active and sophisticated work can be done” (Humphrey, Barlow and Lendrum, 2018, p. 210) to identify alternative ways of describing experiences. The silent pause allows us to see the disjoint between presence and absence, between what is spoken with words and between words, between what absents itself and what presents itself, and between what is transparent and what is veiled. It is this absent presence, this spectre of silence, that defies containment and furtively slips through our way/s of knowing (Mazzei, 2007). This entails rethinking oneself as an expert/professional/EP, as well as one’s interactions with students and other educators to step outside the mainstream problem-solving and deficit-focused ways of thinking and think otherwise (Mazzei, 2007).

8.2 Social Justice within the Field of Educational Psychology

Improving the lives of children and families is a central goal of the field of educational psychology (National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), 2010). This goal is admirable, and aspiring psychologists enter this field with the finest intentions of achieving this goal. This dissertation process aimed to reflect upon the understanding of listening to children’s voice with the hoped potential of improving the lives of children and families by bringing about social justice within institutions of education and beyond.

In the field of educational psychology, social justice has distinct definitions and focal points. In a recent version of the International School Psychology Association’s (ISPA) Code of Ethics (ISPA, 2011), social justice was one of the most prominent guiding ethical principles. In particular, the document states:

“Consistent with the reciprocal commitment between their profession and society, school psychologists are committed to the principle that all people are entitled to

access to and benefit from the contributions of school psychology. Thus, they strive to promote free access to educational, social, and psychological services, to promote changes in schools or other educational practice settings that are beneficial to children and youth as well as educational staff, and to minimize biases.” (p.3)

According to a frequently recognised definition by Bell and Federman (2013), the aim of social justice is:

...full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. (p. 21)

However, the concept of social justice is a difficult idea to describe. There are a variety of ways to interpret this concept, but the easiest way to think of it is as a set of goggles that one wears and uses to acquire data (Kathy & Bettez, 2011). An integrated definition of social justice that incorporates several meanings and objectives carries the risk that “social justice” may simultaneously signify many things and nothing. **Invalid source specified..** My research study has examined the perspectives of EPs on matters regarding voice and listening, which ultimately intends to improve the lives of children and families, which is the aim of social justice. Some of the interviewed EPs most strongly supported a definition of social justice centred on the principle of safeguarding the rights and opportunities of all individuals. Regarding the identification of priority issues in social justice, these EPs emphasised the significance of opposing institutional power systems through advocacy. One of the EPs notes that:

“Unfortunately, it is frequently the case that their voice [the children’s] is not considered at all and that decisions are taken on their [the children’s] behalf by adults without any deliberation on their effect on the children themselves. It transpires that, often, children are approached and asked how they feel about a certain situation relating to their destiny, only to find that decisions have already been taken in this regard. There is no consultation, with the ultimate result that, often, I feel sentiments

of defencelessness, impotence, and a lack of agency, as well as lack of control over what I do.”

EPs also stressed the importance of knowledge (e.g. understanding of best practices and the legislation) and action when asked to identify essential social justice action tactics (e.g. advocacy measures to support children and families). Another EP noted that:

“...as EPs, we must always advocate for the child and push the idea forward that they do not simply constitute a diagnosis, a number, or a statistic in a report. We must get to know the child and offer a more individualised approach; for instance, I have personally witnessed psychologists in other countries giving children a more active involvement in the issuing of a report rather than simply involving the opinion of other experts. If such reports could be presented to the children themselves, obviously, in a very accessible, child-oriented way, I feel that this would be very beneficial indeed. When the report is presented formally to other professionals, it does not acknowledge the work that the child has contributed themselves. If it were, instead, adapted to help them understand it, their voice would be acknowledged to a great extent. It would show them that their thoughts and feelings are being taken into consideration.”

Most of the EPs said that issues of institutional power in schools were crucial to social justice and educational psychology. All of the EPs ranked promoting best practices in school psychology, completing fair evaluations, and fighting for children’s and families’ rights as the most practical activities practitioners can do to enhance social justice. One of the EPs went on to mention some examples of what students are asked during the assessment process for her to understand their point of view:

- what they think about their progress at school;
- what their favourite subject is;
- what they think can be done to improve their educational experience; and
- what the thing they love most is.

While there is nothing wrong with the practices mentioned by EPs as they encourage social justice, one must also be careful to note the manner in which social justice might still be reduced to distribution (the EP who asks and decides which information is important). There is a risk that the context, relationships, and power dynamics become ignored (Gale, 2000). As a result, the distributive and retributive justice models disregard the social structures and institutional frameworks, as well as the connections that have produced them, which dictate patterns of distribution. Thus, there is an overemphasis on making amends for past wrongdoings without addressing the structural and systemic prejudices contained within institutional and opportunity systems that allow discrimination to perpetuate and in which individual rights predominate over communal rights (Young 1990, p. 15). Vera & Speight (2003) contend that this may result in professionals, like EPs, upholding the status quo as opposed to working toward social change. This distinction is essential. For instance, if a number of children from a particular college in Malta are referred for special education evaluation, an EP may conduct these evaluations in accordance with responsible practice, but if they do not examine why such a high number of students from this catchment area of the college are referred for special education, they are likely not fulfilling their potential as an agent of social justice (Mercieca, Mercieca, & Bugeja, 2018). Therefore, engaging in social justice advocacy is a step towards bettering the educational psychology field.

Consistent with this line of thinking, the International School Psychology Association (ISPA) revised its mission statement in December 2014. According to Bartolo (2015), the new mission statement is

“...our mission goes beyond condemnation of discrimination. It obliges us firstly to work towards the ‘promotion of structures that prevent and protect all children from discrimination’. We cannot sit back and just condemn discrimination. We have to work towards replacing those structures that are discriminatory. We have to be advocates not just for changing the behaviour of individuals but for changing classrooms, schools and society so that any barriers to equal respect and dignity and access to resources for any member or group of members are removed. This new goal is captured in the new initiative within school psychology in the US for social justice.”

In 2010, School Psychology International published a special issue devoted to the consequences of cultural diversity for an educational psychology practice. In an article titled “Why school psychology for diversity?” the author addresses this question. Bartolo (2010) cautions against relying on the medical model’s individualist approach (e.g., the belief that all troubles lie within the individual) and instead recommends looking at children in a broader cultural context instead. When it comes to recognising the uniqueness of each person, psychologists are pioneers. But they are also latecomers when it comes to the idea of assisting people by advocating for social change (p. 569). It is his opinion that EPs should adopt a biopsychosocial model in which children are understood holistically and within the correct cultural and socioeconomic context and that EPs serve as advocates. In line with this thinking, Gutkin and Song (2013) state:

“Enhancing social justice in our society will require educational interventions in which people learn about the centrality of equity, fairness, diversity, etc., to the fabric of our society. Expanding social justice is not about curing diseases and pathologies, which is what the traditional medical metaphor would have us focus on. Rather spreading social justice will require effective teaching and education, which is at the very core of our expertise as school psychologists.” (p. 17)

As an EP, I recognise that schools are not only places or spaces in which children spend the majority of their time but also that the educational process that they are subjected to plays a crucial part in the learning and development of possibilities they currently have or will have. With training in psychology and access to schools, EPs are uniquely qualified to promote social justice (Shriberg et al., 2013). The distributive and retributive models of social justice give a tolerant position, in contrast to the transformative objective supported by cognitive justice. This attempts to avoid blaming the child for social justice that focuses on the larger picture of relationships. Its transformative aspect is shown in a willingness to treat differences seriously as a basis for acceptance of collective rights to self-determination and affirmation of inclusion as a foundation for coexistence with differences (Augie & Spoonley, 1999)

8.3 Offering the Space for Children’s Voice to Be and Become

The children in my research were able to explore levels of consciousness, relationships, and ways of expressing themselves that were not only outside of my expectations but also outside (possibly) of theirs. These metaphorical stages of the activities in the data collection process were priceless opportunities for me to explore new ways of seeing and comprehending the world around them. Conroy (2004) describes this as an ambiguous stage in which the children are in transition between a known and past phase of their lives (silenced and thought impossible), as well as a future phase of their lives that they have yet to experience (a moment of dissensus) (Conroy 2004). It was difficult for me, the observer, to make sense of this place. It exceeded my expectations in terms of what I saw and heard. Between other clearly defined zones (the rules and expectations of school life), this transitional zone gave an opportunity to be moulded and defined in new ways while also providing a favourable environment for creative moments of being rather than (re)production.

Children's development was not always straightforward, linear, or uncomplicated. But through the months of being together, they were telling me their stories, and I was witnessing their values and ideas shift and change as they interacted with me. There is a "stretching of the voice" (Barnett and Di Napoli, 2008, p. 202) that occurs when children and adults step outside their normal activities and into new ones. Discuss this phenomenon. These young people stepped into territories that had not yet been explored, putting them in positions of both risk and opportunity. Reframing their identities in new contexts, they took the risk, taking advantage of the opportunity to redefine themselves, and "stretched their voice" (Barnett and Di Napoli, 2008, p. 202) to express those identities in new ways in liminal spaces. Although students are provided access to both the school's physical space and its curriculum, they have little control over how those spaces are defined and regulated, which makes them external spaces for them. These young people have nonetheless successfully created and protected an area where they can express their unadulterated hope for the potential benefits of schooling on their own unique personal journeys (even if the adults around them may not see this yet). A utopia of their own creation, they had a strong, resolute "voice" that conveyed a wealth of life experience—if only we managed to listen to it. Alternative interpretations of the concept of "impossible" could stimulate rather than hinder the fulfilment and expression of the student's voice in schools and beyond.

8.4 Disposed to Listen

Policymakers are unable to hear the opinions of many students who are unable to express themselves clearly about their thoughts on education. As a result, students who are ostracised and silenced, whether they are exiled by others or themselves, find themselves outside the boundaries of particular educational places. In their capacity as outsiders, they have perceptions that must be retrieved. Educators, according to Smith (2008, p. 196), are obsessed with making everything logical and methodical so that they can provide policymakers with the information they believe they need. A danger to policymakers is that they may miss out on innovative and challenging ideas if the familiar and conventional are disregarded.

When listening, we should cultivate the habit of paying attention to previously unheard-of messages, voice, and clues (Barnett & Di Napoli, 2008). The kind of listening we bring to the circumstance is vital because a listener's quality of hearing can either bring it in from the margins or push it into the background. Developing a "voice" for oneself and one's future is about self-affirmation for children. As Tillich (1973) notes, "courage is both an ontological and an ethical idea. It is a human act, as a question of valuing. The ontological concept of courage as the universal and basic self-affirmation of one's being... Confident in one's own identity and purpose, courage is a declaration of one's own self". (pp.14–16)

Participation in the school is influenced by students' ideas and ideals, and this influences their participation and performance. Educators not only encourage and motivate students to pursue higher education, but they also help them make tough choices once they get there, such as deciding that a specific subject or even institution is not the best fit for them. It is possible to gain a deeper knowledge of students' views by examining the sometimes unmapped and hidden hinterland of their ambitions and aspirations. Educators and students alike can benefit from this knowledge, which can be used to develop more effective methods of keeping students in school.

Values and ideas are sometimes overlooked as a facet of diversity. A student's unarticulated ideas and ideals might have a degrading effect on the student experience if they are not taken into consideration. Students' qualifications, test scores, and other forms of evaluation are

often used to create a detailed topography of the students they are presenting. Their hinterland or background may not be as clearly defined. A tremendous influence can be exerted by an area that hasn't yet been mapped, even in the foreground. Listening is a value-laden action in and of itself. They are listening to the voice of pupils who are expressing their own principles and ideals. Listening to students' stories reveals and tests the values of the people doing the listening.

For Corradi-Fiumara (1990, p. 104) to be able to truly hear what a speaker is saying, the listener himself or herself has to risk moving out of the centre and giving that space to the speaker in order to do so:

When the listener chooses to occupy marginal space, that borderline space becomes enabling rather than disabling for his or her relationship with a speaker, empowering rather than weakening the speaker's voice, and clarifying rather than obscuring the communication. Such a shift in position is neither easy nor straightforward: it may pose challenges not only to teachers accustomed to occupying the central space but also to learners whose security depends on being on the margin." (Barnett 2007)

Both the speaker and the listener must have a trusting disposition. Students' voice can only be realised if the link between space and voice is organised; simply having a place to speak does not ensure the formation of a student's voice. Voice can only be realised in certain types of environments. These venues are characterised by certain listening qualities and the values they reflect. In contrast to personal development plans or obligations to keep reflective diaries, students' writing in these places is not always formulaic (Clegg & Bradley, 2004). They provide a place for students to connect what they know with who they are. Adults can use them to help students develop critical and creative thinking skills that are at the heart of educational objectives (Cigman 2004). A probing, questioning, and opposing relationship connects the private and public areas rather than simply contrasting them. Because of the resulting tension, what takes place in public space is defined by what is allowed within those bounds. Students' utopias, which are essentially private spaces, can have an impact on how people interact in a school's public area if an opportunity arises.

Bernstein (1996) describes the interaction between interior and exterior spaces in the curriculum as a wedge "which becomes the site for a new consciousness" (p. 84) that is

driven between the inner self and outer practice. Through the creation of yet another space, an opening is created through which some new and altered consciousness can emerge from what was before the present (Bernstein 1996). A method to see space as a place that both separates and links children and adults is provided by the idea of this gap.

8.5 Research Questions Answered by this Research

I shall attempt to summarize the conclusions I have reached. The two research questions guiding this study were:

1. What is children's voice, and how is it accessed?

In attempting to define 'voice' in accordance with Rancière's philosophy (what I have grown to value as an ontology of equality), 'voice' becomes the subject's creative and distinctive connection with the material. This connection creates moments of equality which are those instances in which a subject recognizes or constructs meaning. As much as this provides us with a means of defining what 'voice' is most fundamentally, it also appears that the concept of 'voice' is vanishing before our eyes for such 'voice' does not belong to a particular realm of practice, such as the educational domain, or to certain institutions, such as schools, but rather to life in general.

What I have defined as 'voice' here appears to be intrinsic to the very character and existence of a human subject: it describes our relationship with the outside world and our thought. In addition, I have demonstrated that thinking about 'voice' in accordance with Rancière's theory signals the move from viewing 'voice' and 'listening' as a process or a means to an end, to viewing 'voice' as something that unfolds or occurs: an event. In the end, what I propose is not only a repositioning of education, but also a repositioning of the ground for practicing and pondering education. I join Rancière in proposing an ontology of equality, whereby there is a reconfiguration of the sensible field that authorizes and limits methods of thinking or 'seeing' schooling.

2. What is the impact of children's voice on EP practice?

Understanding ‘voice’ and ‘listening’ prompted me, as an EP, to reconsider decisions that once appeared socially reasonable and to ask whether they were, in fact, just to begin with. It is ironic and paradoxical that the very institution that strives for social justice moves further away from that objective by attempting to define it. As Rancière claims, I do not argue that this is inaccurate or harmful. Nevertheless, if we acknowledge that social justice is more than the sum of our actions, the work of EPs with their dissenting voices could be viewed as a step along a path. This can help us understand social justice and how to work better towards a different define it. When something is stated as a given (that is, children should be distributed or that is speech and that is noise), there needs to be a purposeful pause before action, so that the EP might contemplate and question the procedure.

During the process of being with children gathering data, I attempted to listen by shedding the trappings that would have silenced them. The mindset emphasized by the Mosaic approach, which is beneficial for EP practice, is essential for listening that does not result in silence. Allowing ourselves as EPs to be surprised and welcoming the unexpected, requires a shift in viewpoint. EPs should be encouraged to work with, rather than against ambiguity. EPs must be like the ignorant schoolmaster, allowing children to talk yet suppressing themselves to prevent their explanations from silencing the youngsters. This provocation is not meant to demean EPs; rather, it is an invitation for the profession to be freed from the necessity to know. As practitioners, we can accept our conflicting condition of being as an integral part of who we are. This attitude and ethics of listening not only safeguards the right of children to be heard, but also involves the profession of EPs in a process of continuous change. Working with uncertainty, enables the continuous development of the EPs professional role, as the constant challenge that openness to listening brings.

The grain that enters the mechanism to help us pause and reflect is vital for recognizing that the system designed to promote social justice is unfair, prompting us as EPs to continuously reassess the existing distribution. Throughout the data collection process, there were occasions when my dissident voice became complacent and blind to the errors it was designed to correct. However, having the space to listen to our intuitions when something does not feel right (even if it means breaking from the norm and disrupting established protocols) and having the capacity to criticize the system, so that we do not end up condoning inequality is hereby suggested.

8.6 Researcher's own Development as an EP: Connecting Developments sourced from the Thesis to the Wider Literature on 'Voice'.

Meaning is never static or ambiguous but is ever subject to negotiation and renegotiation (Bruner, 1986). Foucault, who had much to say about psychology's function in categorizing and stigmatizing various qualities of humans and its subtle facilitation of state authority, explores the role of 'power' in establishing the value ascribed to particular language forms in his work (Foucault, 1973). Educational psychology has been heavily involved in the identification and description of 'difference' since its inception. Such narratives can legitimize 'special' and separate educational settings, which stigmatize and diminish prospects for full engagement in mainstream societies (Billington, 2000). EPs in the present day, within our modern/postmodern culture, will be aware of temptations to collude with such goals.

In a quiet, Foucauldian fusion of power and knowledge, for instance, employers (and others) frequently invite EPs to recommend educational placements, apply reductionist labels, and claim a knowledge and expertise that frequently conflicts with social-constructionist epistemologies and inclusive aspirations. Bakhtin's concept of intertextuality is also applicable to the psychologist who desires to engage creatively and collaboratively with the meanings of others (Bakhtin, 1981; Todorov, 1984). In relation to other narratives that mention the past, present, and future, narratives are produced. To influence the narrative surrounding a child, it is vital to listen to and respond to what people say about them. A single voice can only be heard by blending into the choir of complicated voices already present. This holds true not simply for literature but for all dialogue (Todorov, 1984, p. x)

Bruner (2004) argues that the ability to take a perspective that promotes agency is central to the meaning of selfhood. According to (Bruner, 2004, page 7), when our reality is disrupted, and our experience does not live up to our expectations, we are obliged to build a new story by mining our own memories and experiences and evaluating the cultural meanings we have access to (Bruner, 2004). Our sense of self might shift as a result of new or different experiences, perspectives, or relationships with the outside world. This includes, among other things, the things that people say about us. The stories we tell ourselves become who we are. We are limited and liberated by the range of possible interpretations based on the meanings we find in our language and our culture. It's possible that we are oblivious to our connection

to stories or the range of options available to us. Nonetheless, if we can become more self-aware of the stories, we tell ourselves, the stories others tell about us, and the stories we prefer, we may begin to feel more in control of our decisions and actions (Winslade & Monk, 1999). There is an awareness of the validity of subjectivity and experience when one listens with the aim to hear a story, which may set it apart from information gathering, a common practice in educational psychology. A narrative conveys a point of view in a form that can be understood and examined by others, and it serves as a container, inside which awareness might be depicted. What happens in a story depends on how the narrator and characters understand, feel, and believe about what is going on (Bruner, 1986; Epston & White, 1992, p. 123).

‘Impossible student’ and ‘below average’ are two examples of how the culturally dominant narratives can place a young person into a pathological narrative. Such labels can have the effect of providing overly simplistic explanations, which in turn can contribute to exclusionary norms by limiting the range of possible interpretations. According to Morgan (2002), people live their lives by stories, and in order to comprehend this, we need to dissect the accounts that they give us. This is always a group effort, and it is characterized by a sense of wonder and a willingness to treat others with respect and empathy. By introducing a story and honing a line of inquiry that places the storyteller’s meanings front and center, the practitioner is rendered “decentered but influential” (Morgan, 2002, p. 86).

When we hear the counterexamples to problematic narratives, we can begin to author a new narrative in collaboration with others (Epston & White, 1992; Morgan, 2002; Winslade & Monk, 1999); one that is favoured by the young person, is grounded in their lived experience, and is corroborated by the testimony of those around them. Within EP practice, it is important for teachers, friends, and family, to witness or share the alternative story through conversation or written documents like letters or reports so that they can support the young person in their goals by taking note of their efforts and providing encouragement where appropriate. This inclusive therapeutic space is expanded into the community; the focus is no longer solely on the teen or the therapist, but on the environment in which the teen is immersed. Remembering, as used by White (2000, p. 98), is the psychological and social act of re-adopting someone into a group from which they had become estranged due to their difficulties.

It is hereby hoped that the field of educational psychology experiences a narrative practice renaissance, as evidenced by a growing number of practice-based findings. Imaginative uses of story principles show they may offer a framework for practice, one that might hold together various facets of educational psychology. Recent examples include Hobbs et al (2012)'s article describing their efforts to create a story-oriented EP service. I believe that narrative provides us with a solid theoretical and ethical foundation for our work. Perhaps most crucially, a narrative emphasis serves as a gentle reminder that we are, in fact, storytellers, and that we must be mindful in our storytelling, acknowledging the challenges and constraints to which psychologists are subject when claiming expertise and understanding.

8.7 Conclusion

An “impossible” (Davies, 2014) child may not necessarily imply stigmatisation, exclusion, or a diminished ability to speak for oneself. Becoming “impossible” has, in this dissertation, been associated with an ability to speak with a loud and clear voice. Children's/Students' voice in education and beyond can be encouraged rather than stifled by alternative understandings of the concept of openness, surprise, and space. Offering settings that can amplify rather than quiet “voice” helps foster inclusion rather than exclusion, and children/students and adults/educators are able to discover new ways of being and becoming within ambiguous spaces.

“They tell me to read a book, and I ask them if I can watch a video. They tell me NO and stress the fact that I NEED to read. I ask them why? And I told them that I am an English speaker, so why do I have to continue reading in English?? ...So they tell me that I need to read in English to improve my marks...well, this does not make sense because I can read and I get very high marks in English, like 90 marks and over! So what's the point? ...would they still go for driving lessons if they learnt the skill of driving a car? Maybe my spoken English is not that clear, but it's because I'm anxious, that's all, not because I can't speak. The thing is, I want to move away from school...they make me anxious...they don't give me time to speak, they don't give me time to relax, and they never listen...they never say sorry...they are

always right. They have all the rights, not us... even if they do a mistake, they don't want to say sorry like children are expected to. Why?" (Sam, 13 years of age)

Why?

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Information Letter for College Principal to Participate in Interview

Dear College Principal,

My name is Stephanie Bugeja, and I am a PhD student at the University of Malta in the Faculty of Education. As part of this degree, I am undertaking a research study leading to a dissertation. The title of this research study is *Students' 'voice' within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists*.

My study will focus on students' voice in the context of their learning, interaction and the values that children learn in school. The group of students that I am going to focus on are students who are in residential care and that attend Nurture Centres, Nurture Centres or Nurture Centres. The experiences of carers and professionals who work with or are part of the lives of these students will also be represented. My dissertation supervisor is Profs. Daniela Mercieca. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study, which involves two parts. The first part involves the students. They will be observed in the afterschool time in the residential care setting, and some activities will be conducted with them.

The second part of my study involves an interview of around 45-60 minutes that will be held on zoom (if it cannot happen in person) and audio recorded or video recorded (with the participant's permission) and then transcribed so as to ensure that the transcripts are true to the recordings. These interviews will be held at a time and place (if they happen in person) which is most convenient to them so as not to disrupt their working day in any way.

With your signed consent, the interview will be audio recorded and/or video recorded as I would need to transcribe your responses in order to analyse them. However, should you prefer not to be audio-recorded and/or video-recorded, I would take down notes instead. Should you choose to participate in the second part of the study, the interview will be held at a time and place (if conducted in person) convenient to you.

The focus of the interview will be to understand your experience of working with these students. I will ensure that no clues to your identity appear in the study. Anonymity is paramount in this study. I would like to emphasise that when analysing and writing up for

training dissemination and possible publications of papers, your involvement and responses will be disguised so that privacy and confidentiality will be ensured. The same applies to third-party persons (that is, persons mentioned in the course of the interview discussion) and also educational contexts.

The focus of the interview will be to understand your experience of working with these students. I will ensure that no clues to your identity appear in the study. Anonymity is paramount in this study. I would like to emphasise that when analysing and writing up for training dissemination and possible publications of papers, your involvement and responses will be disguised so that privacy and confidentiality will be ensured. The same applies to third-party persons (that is, persons mentioned in the course of the interview discussion) and also educational contexts.

Participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without suffering any negative consequences. Should you choose to withdraw, your interview data will not be used for the study, and it will be destroyed. Any notes taken and audio-recorded data will be securely stored and will be accessed only by myself. The audio recordings of the interviews will have their speed changed so that the interviewee is not recognisable. Recordings will be used for the purpose of transcription.

If you agree to participate, kindly fill in the consent form and leave it at the school secretary's office. Furthermore, if you agree to participate, kindly contact me at the e-mail below.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me (see contact details below).

Thank you for your kind attention. Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Bugeja

Mobile number: 79302591

Email address: stephanie.bugeja@um.edu.mt

Supervisor's Details: Profs.Daniela Mercieca Email address: daniela.mercieca@um.edu.mt

Mobile number: 00356 99208086

Researcher's Signature: _____

Appendix 2: Information Letter for Head of School to Participate in Interview

Dear Head of School,

My name is Stephanie Bugeja, and I am a PhD student at the University of Malta in the Faculty of Education. As part of this degree, I am undertaking a research study leading to a dissertation. The title of this research study is *Students' 'voice' within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists*.

My study will focus on students' voice in the context of their learning, interaction and the values that children learn in school. The group of students that I am going to focus on are students who are in residential care and that attend Nurture Centres, Nurture Centres or Nurture Centres. The experiences of carers and professionals who work with or are part of the lives of these students will also be represented. My dissertation supervisor is Profs. Daniela Mercieca. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study, which involves two parts. The first part involves the students. They will be observed in the afterschool time in the residential care setting, and some activities will be conducted with them.

The second part of my study involves an interview of around 45-60 minutes that will be held on zoom (if it cannot happen in person) and audio recorded or video recorded (with the participant's permission) and then transcribed so as to ensure that the transcripts are true to the recordings. These interviews will be held at a time and place (if they happen in person) which is most convenient to them so as not to disrupt their working day in any way.

With your signed consent, the interview will be audio recorded and/or video recorded as I would need to transcribe your responses in order to analyse them. However, should you prefer not to be audio-recorded and/or video-recorded, I would take down notes instead. Should you choose to participate in the second part of the study, the interview will be held at a time and place (if conducted in person) convenient to you.

The focus of the interview will be to understand your experience of working with these students. I will ensure that no clues to your identity appear in the study. Anonymity is paramount in this study. I would like to emphasise that when analysing and writing up for

training dissemination and possible publications of papers, your involvement and responses will be disguised so that privacy and confidentiality will be ensured. The same applies to third-party persons (that is, persons mentioned in the course of the interview discussion) and also educational contexts.

The focus of the interview will be to understand your experience of working with these students. I will ensure that no clues to your identity appear in the study. Anonymity is paramount in this study. I would like to emphasise that when analysing and writing up for training dissemination and possible publications of papers, your involvement and responses will be disguised so that privacy and confidentiality will be ensured. The same applies to third-party persons (that is, persons mentioned in the course of the interview discussion) and also educational contexts.

Participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without suffering any negative consequences. Should you choose to withdraw, your interview data will not be used for the study, and it will be destroyed. Any notes taken and audio-recorded data will be securely stored and will be accessed only by myself. The audio recordings of the interviews will have their speed changed so that the interviewee is not recognisable. Recordings will be used for the purpose of transcription.

If you agree to participate, kindly fill in the consent form and leave it at the school secretary's office. Furthermore, if you agree to participate, kindly contact me at the e-mail below.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me (see contact details below).

Thank you for your kind attention. Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Bugeja

Mobile number: 79302591

Email address: stephanie.bugeja@um.edu.mt

Supervisor's Details: Profs. Daniela Mercieca Email address: daniela.mercieca@um.edu.mt

Mobile number: 00356 99208086

Researcher's Signature: _____

Appendix 3: Information Letter for carers to be interviewed about the children in their care who attend Nurture Centres

Dear Carer,

My name is Stephanie Bugeja, and I am a PhD student at the University of Malta in the Faculty of Education. As part of this degree, I am undertaking a research study leading to a dissertation. The title of this research study is *Students' 'voice' within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists*.

My study will focus on students' voice in the context of their learning, interaction and the values that children learn in school. The group of students that I am going to focus on are students that are in residential care and who attend Nurture Centres, Nurture Centres or Nurture Centres. The experiences of parents/carers and professionals who work with or are part of the lives of these students will also be represented. My dissertation supervisor is Profs. Daniela Mercieca. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study, which involves two parts. The first part involves the students. They will be observed in the afterschool time in the residential care setting, and some activities will be conducted with them.

The second part of my study involves an interview of around 45-60 minutes that will be held on zoom (if it cannot happen in person) and audio recorded or video recorded (with the participant's permission) and then transcribed so as to ensure that the transcripts are true to the recordings. These interviews will be held at a time and place (if they happen in person) which is most convenient to them so as not to disrupt their working day in any way.

With your signed consent, the interview will be audio recorded and/or video recorded as I would need to transcribe your responses in order to analyse them. However, should you prefer not to be audio-recorded and/or video-recorded, I would take down notes instead. Should you choose to participate in the second part of the study, the interview will be held at a time and place (if conducted in person) convenient to you.

The focus of the interview will be to understand your experience as a carer to a child who is part of this setting. I will ensure that no clues to your identity appear in the study. Anonymity

is paramount in this study. I would like to emphasise that when analysing and writing up for training dissemination and possible publications of papers, your involvement and responses will be disguised so that privacy and confidentiality will be ensured. The same applies to third-party persons (that is, persons mentioned in the course of the interview discussion) and also educational contexts.

Participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without suffering any negative consequences. Should you choose to withdraw, your interview data will not be used for the study, and it will be destroyed. Any notes taken and audio-recorded data will be securely stored and will be accessed only by myself. The audio recordings of the interviews will have their speed changed so that the interviewee is not recognisable. Recordings will be used for the purpose of transcription.

If you agree to participate, kindly fill in the consent form and leave it at the school secretary's office. Furthermore, if you agree to participate, kindly contact me at the e-mail below.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me (see contact details below).

Thank you for your kind attention. Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Bugeja

Mobile number: 79302591

Email address: stephanie.bugeja@um.edu.mt

Supervisor's Details: Profs.Daniela Mercieca

Email address: daniela.mercieca@um.edu.mt

Mobile number: 00356 99208086

Researcher's Signature: _____

Appendix 4: Information Sheet for Professionals to be interviewed about their work with children attending Nurture Centres

Dear Professional,

My name is Stephanie Bugeja, and I am a PhD student at the University of Malta in the Faculty of Education. As part of this degree, I am undertaking a research study leading to a dissertation. The title of this research study is *Students' 'voice' within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists*.

My study will focus on students' voice in the context of their learning, interaction and the values that children learn in school. The group of students that I am going to focus on are students that are in residential care and attend Nurture Centres, Nurture Centres or Nurture Centres. The experiences of carers and professionals who work with or are part of the lives of these students will also be represented. My dissertation supervisor is Profs. Daniela Mercieca. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study, which involves two parts. The first part involves data gathering with the students.

The second part of my study involves an interview of around 45-60 minutes that will be held on zoom (if it cannot happen in person) and audio recorded or video recorded (with the participant's permission) and then transcribed so as to ensure that the transcripts are true to the recordings. These interviews will be held at a time and place (if they happen in person) which is most convenient to them so as not to disrupt their working day in any way.

With your signed consent, the interview will be audio recorded and/or video recorded as I would need to transcribe your responses in order to analyse them. However, should you prefer not to be audio-recorded and/or video-recorded, I would take down notes instead. Should you choose to participate in the second part of the study, the interview will be held at a time and place (if conducted in person) convenient to you.

The focus of the interview will be to understand your experience of working with these students. I will ensure that no clues to your identity appear in the study. Anonymity is paramount in this study. I would like to emphasise that when analysing and writing up for training dissemination and possible publications of papers, your involvement and responses

will be disguised so that privacy and confidentiality will be ensured. The same applies to third-party persons (that is, persons mentioned in the course of the interview discussion) and also educational contexts.

Participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without suffering any negative consequences. Should you choose to withdraw, your interview data will not be used for the study, and it will be destroyed. Any notes taken and audio-recorded data will be securely stored and will be accessed only by myself. The audio recordings of the interviews will have their speed changed so that the interviewee is not recognisable. Recordings will be used for the purpose of transcription.

If you agree to participate, kindly fill in the consent form and leave it at the school secretary's office. Furthermore, if you agree to participate, kindly contact me at the e-mail below.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me (see contact details below).

Thank you for your kind attention. Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Bugeja

Mobile number: 79302591

Email address: stephanie.bugeja@um.edu.mt

Supervisor's Details: Profs.Daniela Mercieca

Email address: daniela.mercieca@um.edu.mt

Mobile number: 00356 99208086

Researcher's Signature: _____

Appendix 5: Information Sheet for teachers/LSEs to be interviewed about their work with students attending Nurture Centres

Dear teacher/LSE

My name is Stephanie Bugeja, and I am a PhD student at the University of Malta in the Faculty of Education. As part of this degree, I am undertaking a research study leading to a dissertation. The title of this research study is *Students' 'voice' within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists*.

My study will focus on students' voice in the context of their learning, interaction and the values that children learn in school. The group of students that I am going to focus on are students that are in residential care and attend Nurture Centres, Nurture Centres or Nurture Centres. The experiences of carers and professionals who work with or are part of the lives of these students will also be represented. My dissertation supervisor is Profs. Daniela Mercieca. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study, which involves two parts. The first part involves data gathering with the students.

The second part of my study involves an interview of around 45-60 minutes that will be held on zoom (if it cannot happen in person) and audio recorded or video recorded (with the participant's permission) and then transcribed so as to ensure that the transcripts are true to the recordings. These interviews will be held at a time and place (if they happen in person) which is most convenient to them so as not to disrupt their working day in any way.

With your signed consent, the interview will be audio recorded and/or video recorded as I would need to transcribe your responses in order to analyse them. However, should you prefer not to be audio-recorded and/or video-recorded, I would take down notes instead. Should you choose to participate in the second part of the study, the interview will be held at a time and place (if conducted in person) convenient to you.

The focus of the interview will be to understand your experience of working with these students. I will ensure that no clues to your identity appear in the study. Anonymity is paramount in this study. I would like to emphasise that when analysing and writing up for training dissemination and possible publications of papers, your involvement and responses

will be disguised so that privacy and confidentiality will be ensured. The same applies to third-party persons (that is, persons mentioned in the course of the interview discussion) and also educational contexts.

Participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without suffering any negative consequences. Should you choose to withdraw, your interview data will not be used for the study, and it will be destroyed. Any notes taken and audio-recorded data will be securely stored and will be accessed only by myself. The audio recordings of the interviews will have their speed changed so that the interviewee is not recognisable. Recordings will be used for the purpose of transcription.

If you agree to participate, kindly fill in the consent form and leave it at the school secretary's office. Furthermore, if you agree to participate, kindly contact me at the e-mail below.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me (see contact details below).

Thank you for your kind attention. Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Bugeja

Mobile number: 79302591

Email address: stephanie.bugeja@um.edu.mt

Supervisor's Details: Profs.Daniela Mercieca

Email address: daniela.mercieca@um.edu.mt

Mobile number: 00356 99208086

Researcher's Signature: _____

Appendix 6: Permission Letter for College Principals (Government Schools) to conduct interviews with Professions within their College

Dear Principal,

My name is Stephanie Bugeja, and I am a PhD student at the University of Malta in the Faculty of Education. As part of this degree, I am undertaking a research study leading to a dissertation.

The title of this research study is *Students' 'voice' within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists*.

I kindly ask you to read the information below regarding the research, and I would be grateful if you would give me your kind permission to:

- Distribute consent forms and information sheets to professionals

The Purpose of the Study: Researchers can provide information about the meaning that students assign to their educational experiences, but students themselves, their carers and their educators can provide feedback about the experiences of being placed in particular educational settings. The purpose of this dissertation is to listen to the voice of these children. My study will focus on students' voice in the context of their learning, interaction and the values that children learn in school. The group of students that I am going to focus on are students that are in residential care and attend Nurture Centres, Nurture Centres or Nurture Centres. The experiences of carers and professionals who work with or are part of the lives of these students will also be represented.

The Design of the Study: A case-study approach will be used. The case study approach allows in-depth, multi-faceted explorations of complex issues in real-life settings.

One of the advantages of this approach is the close collaboration between the researcher and the participant while enabling participants to tell their stories. Through these stories, the participants will be able to describe their views of reality whilst enabling me, the researcher, to better understand their actions.

Research Approach: The Mosaic Approach to data collection was selected for this thesis. It is underpinned by a paradigm that acknowledges children as active agents in their own lives, capable of commenting on their experiences through different “languages”, as advocated by

the Reggio Emilia education system. The approach utilises a range of methods for data generation and construction, using tools that have been developed to support children's active participation in research.

There are two stages to the Mosaic approach:

Stage One (children and adults gather material): In Stage one, there will be a built-up 'living picture' of everyday life within the classroom through child conferencing, mapping and role play, amongst others.

Stage Two (children and adults discuss children's perspectives). Following the documentation gathered by children and adults and the reflection on what practitioners and carers think life is like for the child(ren), the information will then be pieced together. This information gathered from the child's (ren's) own perspectives will be used to feed the interviews with practitioners and carers and encourage dialogue, reflection and interpretation.

What will the study involve?

1. Activities with students:

I will be carrying out a number of activities with the children during after-school hours on a one-to-one basis and also within a group. Amongst others, such activities include:

- map drawing
- role plays

2. Interviews:

The activities conducted with the children will then be followed by semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour with all or any of the following professionals involved in the lives of these students:

- the College Principal
- the Head of the School
- the Prefect of Discipline of the College
- the SEBD Specialist of the College

- the INCO of the College
- the Educational Psychologist of the College
- the Counsellor/Counselling Psychologist of the College
- Teachers of the Nurture Centre/Nurture Centre/Nurture Centre
- Teachers of the Mainstream Class: (they are the teachers of the children who attend the Nurture Centre and the Nurture Centre)
- LSE who accompanies the student to the Nurture Centre, Nurture Centre or Nurture Centre

How will the data be recorded?

The interviews with these adults will be held on zoom (if they cannot happen in person) and audio recorded or video recorded (with the participant's permission) and then transcribed so as to ensure that the transcripts are true to the recordings. These interviews will be held at a time and place (if they happen in person) which is most convenient to them so as not to disrupt their working day in any way.

The interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim so as to ensure that the transcripts are true to the recordings.

Will their participation in the study be kept confidential? Yes. I will ensure that no clues about the participants' identities appear in the study. Anonymity is paramount in this study. I would like to emphasise that when analysing and writing up for training dissemination and possible publication of papers, their involvement and responses will be disguised so that privacy and confidentiality will be ensured. The same applies to third-party personas (that is, persons mentioned in the course of the interview discussion) and entities or organisations.

What will happen to the information that I am given? The data will be transcribed and will be securely stored. Only the researcher will have access to the data that will be stored on a password-protected hard drive. Your involvement and responses will be disguised so that privacy and confidentiality will be ensured. The same applies to third-party persons (that is, persons mentioned in the course of the focus group/interview discussion) and also educational contexts.

What will happen to the results? The results that emerge from this study will be part of my dissertation write-up. I will be happy to share the findings with your College. I also aim to present the results in various fora and publish the results in research journals.

What are the possible advantages of doing this research? Students, their carers and professionals within the College will be able to share their perspectives and experiences of being part of this particular learning environment. It will contribute to the development of the educational field by helping professionals to question and reflect on their work.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of participants in this study? I am not envisaging any negative consequences for the participants taking part. The Faculty Research Ethic Committee (FREC) has found no ethical or data protection issues with this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisors or me. If you wish to grant me access to schools within the college to conduct my study, you are requested to kindly send me an e-mail or write me a short note on a school letterhead stating that:

You allow this research to take place in your college, you had the opportunity to read the information and ask questions, you agree to act as a gatekeeper in recruiting students and professionals for the study, and you understand that you can withdraw your consent at any time during the interview without consequences.

Please contact me at: stephanie.bugeja@um.edu.mt or 79302591 or my supervisor, Profs. Daniela Mercieca on: daniela.mercieca@um.edu.mt or 00356 99208086

Researcher's Signature

Supervisor's Signature

Appendix 7: Permission Letter for Head of School (Government School) to conduct interviews with professionals in the school

Dear Head of School,

My name is Stephanie Bugeja, and I am a PhD student at the University of Malta in the Faculty of Education. As part of this degree, I am undertaking a research study leading to a dissertation.

The title of this research study is *Students' 'voice' within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists*.

I kindly ask you to read the information below regarding the research, and I would be grateful if you would give me your kind permission to:

- Distribute consent forms and information sheets to professionals

The Purpose of the Study: Researchers can provide information about the meaning that students assign to their educational experiences, but students themselves, their carers and their educators can provide feedback about the experiences of being placed in particular educational settings. The purpose of this dissertation is to listen to the voice of these children. My study will focus on students' voice in the context of their learning, interaction and the values that children learn in school. The group of students that I am going to focus on are students that are in residential care and attend Nurture Centres, Nurture Centres or Nurture Centres. The experiences of carers and professionals who work with or are part of the lives of these students will also be represented.

The Design of the Study: A case-study approach will be used. The case study approach allows in-depth, multi-faceted explorations of complex issues in real-life settings.

One of the advantages of this approach is the close collaboration between the researcher and the participant while enabling participants to tell their stories. Through these stories, the participants will be able to describe their views of reality whilst enabling me, the researcher, to better understand their actions.

Research Approach: The Mosaic Approach to data collection was selected for this thesis. It is underpinned by a paradigm that acknowledges children as active agents in their own lives, capable of commenting on their experiences through different “languages”, as advocated by

the Reggio Emilia education system. The approach utilises a range of methods for data generation and construction, using tools that have been developed to support children's active participation in research.

There are two stages to the Mosaic approach:

Stage One (children and adults gather material): In Stage one, there will be a built-up 'living picture' of everyday life within the classroom through child conferencing, mapping and role play, amongst others.

Stage Two (children and adults discuss children's perspectives). Following the documentation gathered by children and adults and the reflection on what practitioners and carers think life is like for the child(ren), the information will then be pieced together. This information gathered from the child's (ren's) own perspectives will be used to feed the interviews with practitioners and carers and encourage dialogue, reflection and interpretation.

What will the study involve?

3. Activities with students:

I will be carrying out a number of activities with the children during after-school hours on a one-to-one basis and also within a group. Amongst others, such activities include:

- map drawing
- role plays

4. Interviews:

The activities conducted with the children will then be followed by semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour with all or any of the following professionals involved in the lives of these students:

- the College Principal
- the Head of the School
- the Prefect of Discipline of the College
- the SEBD Specialist of the College

- the INCO of the College
- the Educational Psychologist of the College
- the Counsellor/Counselling Psychologist of the College
- Teachers of the Nurture Centre/Nurture Centre/Nurture Centre
- Teachers of the Mainstream Class: (they are the teachers of the children who attend the Nurture Centre and the Nurture Centre)
- LSE who accompanies the student to the Nurture Centre, Nurture Centre or Nurture Centre

How will the data be recorded?

The interviews with these adults will be held on zoom (if they cannot happen in person) and audio recorded or video recorded (with the participant's permission) and then transcribed so as to ensure that the transcripts are true to the recordings. These interviews will be held at a time and place (if they happen in person) which is most convenient to them so as not to disrupt their working day in any way.

The interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim so as to ensure that the transcripts are true to the recordings.

Will their participation in the study be kept confidential? Yes. I will ensure that no clues about the participants' identities appear in the study. Anonymity is paramount in this study. I would like to emphasise that when analysing and writing up for training dissemination and possible publication of papers, their involvement and responses will be disguised so that privacy and confidentiality will be ensured. The same applies to third-party personas (that is, persons mentioned in the course of the interview discussion) and entities or organisations.

What will happen to the information that I am given? The data will be transcribed and will be securely stored. Only the researcher will have access to the data that will be stored on a password-protected hard drive. Your involvement and responses will be disguised so that privacy and confidentiality will be ensured. The same applies to third-party persons (that is, persons mentioned in the course of the focus group/interview discussion) and also educational contexts.

What will happen to the results? The results that emerge from this study will be part of my dissertation write-up. I will be happy to share the findings with your College. I also aim to present the results in various fora and publish the results in research journals.

What are the possible advantages of doing this research? Students, their carers and professionals within the College will be able to share their perspectives and experiences of being part of this particular learning environment. It will contribute to the development of the educational field by helping professionals to question and reflect on their work.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of participants in this study? I am not envisaging any negative consequences for the participants taking part. The Faculty Research Ethic Committee (FREC) has found no ethical or data protection issues with this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisors or me. If you wish to grant me access to schools within the college to conduct my study, you are requested to kindly send me an e-mail or write me a short note on a school letterhead stating that:

You allow this research to take place in your college, you had the opportunity to read the information and ask questions, you agree to act as a gatekeeper in recruiting students and professionals for the study, and you understand that you can withdraw your consent at any time during the interview without consequences.

Please contact me at: stephanie.bugeja@um.edu.mt or 79302591 or my supervisor, Profs. Daniela Mercieca on: daniela.mercieca@um.edu.mt or 00356 99208086

Researcher's Signature

Supervisor's Signature

Appendix 8: Consent Form – Head of School to Participate in the Study

Title of this research study: *Students’ ‘voice’ within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists*

- I, the undersigned, had the opportunity to read the information letter and ask questions.
- The purpose and nature of the study have been explained to me in writing.
- I am participating voluntarily in this interview.
- I agree to participate in an audio-recorded and/or video-recorded interview held on Zoom (if it cannot be held in person).
- I understand that the audio recording/video recording will be anonymised in the researchers’ records. After this point, I am aware that I will be unable to withdraw the information I provided since the audio recording will be unidentifiable.
- I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time during the interview without consequences.
- I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising any possible identifiable information.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the study and any subsequent publication and presentations if I give permission below:

Principal’s Signature: _____

Researcher’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

Head of School’s Signature: _____

Researcher’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 9: Consent Form for carers to be interviewed about children in their care who attend Nurture Centres

Title of Dissertation: *Students' 'voice' within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists*

I, the undersigned, had the opportunity to read the information letter and ask questions.

The purpose and nature of the study have been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily in this interview.

I agree to participate in an audio-recorded and/or video-recorded interview held on Zoom (if it cannot be held in person).

I understand that the audio recording/video recording will be anonymised in the researchers' records. After this point, I am aware that I will be unable to withdraw the information I provided since the audio recording will be unidentifiable.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time during the interview without consequences.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising any possible identifiable information.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the study and any subsequent publication and presentations if I give permission below:

Participant's Signature: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 10: Consent Form – College Principal to Participate in the Study

Title of this research study: *Students’ ‘voice’ within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists*

I, the undersigned, had the opportunity to read the information letter and ask questions.

The purpose and nature of the study have been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily in this interview.

I agree to participate in an audio-recorded and/or video-recorded interview held on Zoom (if it cannot be held in person).

I understand that the audio recording/video recording will be anonymised in the researchers’ records. After this point, I am aware that I will be unable to withdraw the information I provided since the audio recording will be unidentifiable.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time during the interview without consequences.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising any possible identifiable information.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the study and any subsequent publication and presentations if I give permission below:

Principal’s Signature: _____

Researcher’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 11: Consent Form for Professionals to be interviewed about their work with children attending Nurture Centres

Title of Dissertation: *Students' 'voice' within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists*

I, the undersigned, had the opportunity to read the information letter and ask questions.

The purpose and nature of the study have been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily in this interview.

I agree to participate in an audio-recorded and/or video-recorded interview held on Zoom (if it cannot be held in person).

I understand that the audio recording/ video recording will be anonymised in the researchers' records. After this point, I am aware that I will be unable to withdraw the information I provided since the audio recording will be unidentifiable.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time during the interview without consequences.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising any possible identifiable information.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the study and any subsequent publication and presentations if I give permission below:

Participant's Signature: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 12: Consent Form for teachers/LSEs to be interviewed about their work with students attending Nurture Centres

Title of Dissertation: *Students' 'voice' within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists*

I, the undersigned, had the opportunity to read the information letter and ask questions.

The purpose and nature of the study have been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily in this interview.

I agree to participate in an audio-recorded and/or video-recorded interview held on Zoom (if it cannot be held in person).

I understand that the audio recording/ video recording will be anonymised in the researchers' records. After this point, I am aware that I will be unable to withdraw the information I provided since the audio recording will be unidentifiable.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time during the interview without consequences.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising any possible identifiable information.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the study and any subsequent publication and presentations if I give permission below:

Participant's Signature: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 13: Assent Form Information for students attending Nurture Centres for Participation in Research Study

Assent to participate in a research study: *Students' 'voice' within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists.*

Please read out to the children:

It is OK by me that:

- Ms Bugeja will be observing me during after-school hours. She will take down notes.
- Ms Bugeja will be doing some activities with me, such as drawing, photography etc.
- My name will not be shown in any conversations.
- The notes taken will be kept safe by Ms Bugeja.
- I can change my mind about helping Stephanie at any time without any questions being asked.
- Ms Bugeja might talk to someone responsible if she is worried about my safety and/or well-being.
- I will receive a letter that will explain what Ms Bugeja has found out after talking to children and me like me.

My name & surname _____

My signature or special mark _____

Today's date _____

Appendix 14: Assent Form Information for young students (ages 5-8 years) attending Nurture Centres for Participation in Research Study

Assent to participate in a research study: *Students' 'voice' within the Educational System: Complexities, Challenges and Possibilities for Educational Psychologists.*

Please read out to the children:

- Ms Bugeja will be observing me during after-school hours. She will take down notes.



- Ms Bugeja will be doing some activities with me, such as drawing, photography etc.



- My name will not be shown in any conversations.
- The notes taken will be kept safe by Ms Bugeja.
- I can change my mind about helping Stephanie at any time without any questions being asked.



- Ms Bugeja might talk to someone responsible if she is worried about my safety and/or well-being.

- I will receive a letter that will explain what Ms Bugeja has found out after talking to children and me like me.



Please circle YES ☺ if you want to take part in this study.



Please circle NO ☹ if you do not want to take part in the study.



My name & surname _____

My signature or special mark _____

Today's date _____

Appendix 15: Information Letter for students attending Nurture Centres for Participation in Research Study

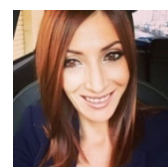
Invitation to Participate in a Research Study (Please read to children)

Dear _____

My name is Stephanie Bugeja, and I am a researcher at the University of Malta. I wonder if you would like to help me find out what children's experiences of being in this educational setting are.



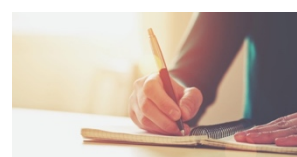
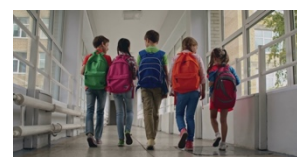
L-Università
ta' Malta



Over the next few weeks, I will be holding a number of meetings with you. Would you like to meet with me and do some activities together? Someone that you know and trust will be there too. I will ask you to draw and talk about your drawing. Then we will do other fun activities together. We will talk about things, people and places around the school that make you feel happy, angry or worried.



Every time we meet, I will make use of a digital voice recorder. I will also use a diary to take note of my observations and our conversations so that I can remember what happened during the time we spent together on activities. I will also remind you of what we will be doing and ask you if you are still happy to talk to me. It is OK for you to say no at any point, and I will not ask you any more questions.



I will safely keep your drawings and any craft materials, but I will also give you copies for you to keep safe. Everything we do together will be used to write a research report, but I will not share your name with anyone else. This means that no one reading my research write-up will be able to tell that I was talking to you or that the drawings and pictures belong to you.



When the research write-up is finished, I will send you a booklet to let you know what I have found by talking to children like you.

Thank you for reading this invitation. Keep it somewhere safe, but if you lose it, I can give you another copy. If you have any questions, please speak to me or someone at school. An adult you trust can help you with that.

If you are happy to talk to me in school, then please read and sign the consent form. Thank you,



Stephanie Bugeja

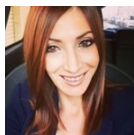
Appendix 16: Information Letter for young students (5-8 years) attending Nurture Centres for Participation in Research Study

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study (Please read to children)

Dear _____



My name is Stephanie Bugeja



I am a researcher from the University of Malta.



Can you help me find out what children's experiences of being in this school are?



Over the next few weeks, I will be having a number of meetings with you.



Would you like to meet with me and do some activities together?

Someone that you know and trust will be there too.



I will ask you to draw and talk about your drawing.
Then we will do other fun activities together.



We will also talk about things, people and places around the school that make you feel happy, angry or worried.

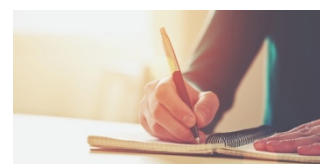


Every time we meet, I will make use of a digital voice



recorder.

I will also use a diary to take note of my observations and our conversations so that I can remember what happened during the time we spent together on activities.



I will also remind you of what we will be doing and ask you if you are still happy to talk to me. It is OK for you to say no at any point, and I will not ask you any more questions.



I will safely keep your drawings and any craft materials, but I will also give you copies for you to keep safe.



Everything we do together will be used to write a research report, but I will not share your name with anyone else. This means that no one reading my research write-up will be able to tell that I was talking to you or that the drawings and pictures belong to you.



When the research write-up is finished, I will send you a booklet to let you know what I have found by talking to children like you.



Thank you for reading this invitation. Keep it somewhere safe, but if you lose it, I can give you another copy.



If you have any questions, please speak to me or someone at school. An adult you trust can help you with that.

If you are happy to talk to me in school, then please read and sign the consent form. Thank you,

Stephanie Bugeja

Appendix 17: Formola ta' Approvazzjoni għat-tfal li jattendu Nurture Centres'

Approvazzjoni biex tipparteċipa f'riċerka: *Il-vuċi tal-istudent fis-sistema edukattiva:*

Kumplessita', Sfidi u Possibilitajiet għal Psikologi Edukattivi.

Jekk jgħoġbok aqra din lit-tfal:

Jien naqbel li:

- Ms.Bugeja tosservani fil-ħin ta' wara l-iskola. Hi ser tieħu wkoll xi noti.
- Ms Bugeja u in ser ngħamli xi attivitajiet flimkien, bħal tpingija, fotografija etc.
- Ismi mhux se jkun qed jidher fuq l-ebda konverżazzjoni.
- In-noti li Ms.Bugeja ser tkun qed tieħu, ser jinżammu f'post privat u sigur.
- Jien nista' niddeċiedi li ma nixtieqx nibqa' parti minn din ir-riċerka u hadd mhu ser isaqsini għalfejn hadt din id-deċiżjoni.
- Ms.Bugeja tista' titkellem ma' xi hadd responsabbli jekk tkun qed tinkwieta dwari.
- Jien ser nkun qed nirċievi ittra mingħand Ms.Bugeja li ser tispjega r-riżultati u l-konkluzjonijiet tar-riċerka wara li tkun tkellmet miegħi u ma' tfal bħali.

Ismi u kunjom

Firma jew marka speċjali

Id-data tal-lum

Appendix 18: Formola ta' Approvazzjoni għat-tfal żgħar (5-8 snin) li jattendu 'Nurture Centres'

Approvazzjoni biex tipparteċipa f'riċerka: *Il-vuċi tal-istudent fis-sistema edukattiva: Kumplessità, Sfidi u Possibilitajiet għal Psikologi Edukattivi.*

Jekk jgħoġbok aqra din lit-tfal:

Jien naqbel li:



- Ms.Bugeja tosservani wara l-ħin tal-iskola. Hi ser tieħu wkoll xi noti.
- Ms.Bugeja u jien ser ngħamlu xi attivitajiet flimkien, bħal tpingija, fotografija eċċ.
- Ismi mhux se jkun qed jidher fuq l-ebda konverżazzjoni.
- In-noti li Ms.Bugeja ser tkun qed tieħu, ser jinżammu f'post privat u sigur.
- Jien nista' niddeċiedi li ma nixtieqx nibqa' parti minn din ir-riċerka u ħadd mhu ser isaqsini għalfejn ħadt din id-deċiżjoni.
- Ms.Bugeja tista' titkellem ma' xi ħadd responsabbli jekk tkun qed tinkwieta dwari.
- Jien ser nkun qed nirċievi ittra mingħand Ms.Bugeja li ser tispjega r-riżultati u l-konklużjonijiet tar-riċerka wara li tkun tkellmet miegħi u ma' tfal bħali.



Jekk tixtieq tkun parti minn din ir-riċerka aghmel ċirku madwar YES ☺

Jekk ma tixtieqs tkun parti minn din ir-riċerka aghmel ċirku madwar NO ☹



Ismi u kunjom

Firma jew marka speċjali

Id-data tal-lum

Appendix 19: Karta ta' Informazzjoni għat-tfal li jattendu 'Nurture Centres'

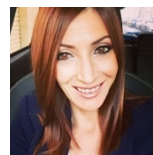
Stedina ta' Parteċipazzjoni f'riċerka (jekk jgħoġbok aqra din l-informazzjoni lit-tfal)

Għażiż/a student/a

Jien jisimni Stephanie Bugeja u jien riċerkatriċi mill-Universita' ta' Malta. Għandi bżonn l-għajnuna tiegħek biex nkun nista' niġbor l-esperjenzi tat-tfal li qeghdin f'dan l-ambjent edukattiv.



L-Università
ta' Malta



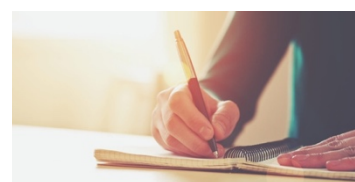
Matul il- ġimgħat li ġejjin, jien ser nkun qed niltaqa' miegħek diversi drabi. Tixtieq tiltaqa' miegħi biex nġamli ftit attivitajiet flimkien? Xi hadd li taf u li tafda dejjem se jkun magħna. Se nsaqis biex tpingi xi affarijiet u titkellem dwarhom. Wara ser nġamli attivitajiet oħra. Ser insaqis dwar oġġetti, nies u postijiet ġol-iskola li jgħamluk kuntent/a, imdejjaq/a, irrabjat/a jew inkwetat/a.



Kull darba li niltaqgħu, jien se nuża apparat li jirreġistra l-vuċi b'mod diġitali. Se nkun qed nuża wkoll djarju biex inniżżel xi osservazzjonijiet u xi konverżazzjonijiet li jkollna halli nkun nista' niftakar dak li ġara meta ltaqajna.



Meta niltaqgħu, se nerga' nfakkrek dwar l-attivitajiet li ha nkun qed nġamli flimkien u nerga' niċċekja miegħek jekk hux tajjeb għalik li nitkellmu. Inti liberu/a li tieqaf minn din ir-riċerka meta trid u jien ma nsaqisx għal raġunijiet.



Jien se nżomm t-tpingijiet tiegħek jew xi krafs oħra f'post sigur u se ntik kopja ta' dawn l-affarijiet biex iżżommhom. Kull attività' li nġamli flimkien ser tintuża' biex tinkiteb din ir-riċerka, pero' ismek mhux ha jinkiteb imkien. Dan ifisser li l-ebda persuna li taqra r-riċerka mhu ser tkun taf li kont qed nitkellem miegħek jew li t-tpingijiet u l-krafs huma tiegħek.



Meta r-riċerka tkun lesta, ser nibatlek ktejjeb biex ngħarrfek dwar ir-riżultati li ksibt permezz tal-fatt li tkellimt miegħek u ma' tfal bħalek.

Grazzi talli sibt hin taqra din l-istedina. Żommha mistura x'imkien li tista' tafda, pero' jekk titlifha, ngħaddilek kopja ohra. Jekk għandek xi mistoqsijiet, nitolbok issaqsi lili jew lil xi adult fl-iskola li tafda u li jista' jghinek.

Jekk tixtieq tkun parti minn din ir-riċerka, jekk jgħoġbok aqra u ffirma l-formola tal-kunsens.



Grazzi

Stephanie Bugeja

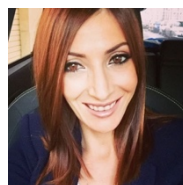
Appendix 20: Karta ta' Informazzjoni ghat-tfal żgħar (bejn 5 u 8 snin) li jattendu 'Nurture Centre'

Stedina ta' Parteċipazzjoni f'riċerka (jekk jgħoġbok aqra din l-informazzjoni lit-tfal)

Għażiż/a student/a



Jien jisimni Stephanie Bugeja u jien riċerkatriċi mill-Universita' ta' Malta.



Għandi bżonn l-għajnuna tiegħek biex nkun nista' niġbor l-esperjenzi tat-tfal li qegħdin f'din l-iskola.



Matul il- ġimgħat li ġejjin, jien ser nkun qed nżurek wara l-ħin tal-iskola sabiex nġamlu ftit attivitajiet flimkien.



Tixtieq tiltaqa' miegħi biex nġamlu ftit attivitajiet flimkien?



Xi hadd li taf u li tafda dejjem se jkun magħna.



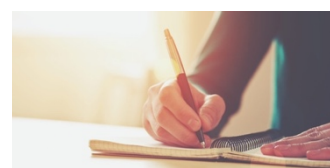
Se nsaqis biex tpingi xi affarijiet u titkellem dwarhom. Wara ser nġamlu attivitajiet oħra. Ser insaqis dwar oġġetti, nies u postijiet ġol-iskola li jgħamluk kuntent/a, imdejjaq/a, irrabjat/a jew inkwetat/a.



Kull darba li niltaqgħu, jien se nuża apparat li jirreġistra l-vuċi b'mod diġitali. Se nkun qed nuża wkoll djarju biex inniżżel xi osservazzjonijiet u xi konverżazzjonijiet li jkollna halli nkun nista' niftakar dak li ġara meta ltqajna.



Meta niltaqgħu, se nerga' nfakkrek dwar l-attivitajiet li ħa nkunu qed nġamlu flimkien u nerga' niċċekja miegħek jekk hux tajjeb għalik li nitkellmu.



Inti liberu/a li tieqaf minn din ir-riċerka meta trid u jien ma nsaqsikx għal raġunijiet.



Jien se nżomm t-tpiġijiet tiegħek jew xi krafs oħra f'post sigur u se ntik kopja ta' dawn l-affarijiet biex iżżommhom. Kull attività li nġhamlu flimkien ser tintuża' biex tinkiteb din ir-riċerka, pero' ismek mhux ha jinkiteb imkien.



Meta r-riċerka tkun lesta, ser nibatlek ktejjeb biex ngħarrfek dwar ir-riżultati li ksibt permezz tal-fatt li tkellimt miegħek u ma' tfal bħalek.



Grazzi talli sibt hin taqra din l-istedina. Żommha mistura x'imkien li tista' tafda, pero' jekk titlifha, ngħaddilek kopja oħra. Jekk għandek xi mistoqsijiet, nitolbok issaqsi lili jew lil xi adult fl-iskola li tafda u li jista' jgħinek.



Jekk tixtieq tkun parti minn din ir-riċerka, jekk jgħogħbok aqra u ffirmja l-formola tal-kunsens.

Grazzi

Stephanie Bugeja

Appendix 21: Transcript Sample – Children

Kurt Kont għadek lanqas għamilt is-session miegħi inti.

Intervistatriċi: Le? Jiġifieri inti qed tirrakontali meta kont qed tgħajjarhom dan?

Kurt Ehe

Intervistatriċi: Fuqix kont qed tgħajjarhom?

Kurt Kont qed ngħajjarhom fuq

Intervistatriċi: Hawnhekk ftaħnih ara gbin.

Kurt —il-mummy tagħhom.

Intervistatriċi: Habba xhiex Kurt imma?

Kurt Bdew joqgħodu jdejquni. Bdew joqgħodu jgħiduli "Ġenjo hawn. Ara Ġenjo"

Intervistatriċi: Ara Ġenju?

Kurt Ġenjo Ġenjo taf li hu l-papa tiegħi inti?

Intervistatriċi: Eee. Bdew jgħidulek Ġenjo habba l-papa tiegħek?

Kurt E.

Intervistatriċi: E orrajt. U allura qbadt tgħajjarhom inti u illum tixtieq tagħmel din ix-xiġa għalihom halli tkun tista' tgħidilhom sorry?

Kurt Eħe.

Intervistatriċi: U huma qalulek sorry?

Kurt [Jagħmel ħoss b'islienu li jfisser le 00:00:57].

Intervistatriċi: Le.Orrajt imma xorta tixtieq tagħmel xi ħaġa għalihom?

Kurt Eħe.

Intervistatriċi: Okay. Mela.

Kurt Vanilla għandna?

Intervistatriċi: Għandna eħe vanilla.

Kurt Dan huwa?

Intervistatriċi: Le għandi hemmhekk ara. Iċċekja dawk.

Kurt Dawk?

Intervistatriċi: Le ta' ġol-borża Kurt.

Kurt Ta' ġol-borża?

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Kurt Dik ta' ġol-borża? Din?

Intervistatriċi: Eħe. Kurt għalfejn għazilt coconut balls? Xtaqt għamilt coconut balls?

Kurt Dan x'inhu dan?

Intervistatriċi: Iċċekja x'għandu miktub. Ara biex jibda. Le dak almond għandu miktub.

Agħti ċans ipprova dan ara. Xomm dan.

Kurt Ħa nara.

Intervistatriċi: Minn hawn hekk ara ara. Dak vanilla.

Kurt Dan?

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm. Mhux qed ixommu? Vanilla. Dak jiġifieri dak toġhma ta' vanilla meta nitfgħuh.Ma titfax ħafna ta' minnu dak. Titfa' f'it.

Kurt Orrajt.

Intervistatriċi: Kif gietek f'moħħok il-vanilla? Kif gietek f'moħħok il-vanilla?

Kurt Nagħmlu lill-

Intervistatriċi: Nagħmlu Oreo ukoll mela le mela le.

Kurt Jekk ittrid niftahomlok?

Intervistatriċi: Iftaħhom iva l-Oreo u itfagħhom fil-bowl halli nkun nistgħu nibdewhom.

[Hsejjes ta'thaxwix fl-isfond].

Kurt Għandkom imqass jew xi haġa?

Intervistatriċi: Iva. Kemm tiehu zokkor hi inti?

Kurt Imqass għandkom?

Intervistatriċi: Ara Kurt ara hekk ara.

Kurt E ? [ma jinftiehemx 00:02:26].

Intervistatriċi: Kemm tiehu zokkor ġbin?

Kurt Kemm niehu?

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Kurt Two. Two. Tnejn zokkor.

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt tnejn ha nagħmillek. Kemm hi xi haġa sabiha li qed tghid inti li għax iġġieldu mieghek ha tagħmlilhom xi haġa.

Kurt Mm-hm.

Intervistatriċi: How nice. Prosit ta. Avolja wegġhuk b'li qalulek hu vera?

Kurt Ehe.

Intervistatriċi: U l-aħħar darba --

Kurt Imma jien aktar wegġhajthom.

Intervistatriċi: Għax imbagħad kellhom il-mama magħhom u l-papa?

Kurt Ehe.

Intervistatriċi: Kurt l-aħħar meta għidtl li iġġielidt l-iskola, tiftakar fuq x'hiex iġġilidt?

Kurt Le.

Intervistatriċi: Dak kien last week meta kont qieghda ma' Ben jien.

Kurt Ha nitfagħhomlok hawnhekk.

Intervistatriċi: Mela hi. Dan tieghek. Jekk tara l-halib hekk għax għandu— Hawnhekk trid titfagħhom Kurt.

Kurt E?

Intervistatriċi: Hawnhekk trid titfagħhom halli nkissruhom. Ha nitfagħlek ftit hawn u jien nitfa' ftit hawn ha nibda' nkisser.

[Jinstema' hsejjes fl-isfond].

Kurt Taf li hemm xi hadd mill-careworkers tagħna jismu Bri? Dik li rajt isfel jisimha Brenda ta.

Intervistatriċi: Brenda. Dik għada ġejja Kurt? Għada ġdida?

Kurt Iva għada ġdida.

Intervistatriċi: Qbadt hekk xi naqra magħha tipo orrajt taraha jew?

Kurt Orrajt.

Intervistatriċi: Tidher paċenzjuża hu?

Kurt Eħe.

Intervistatriċi: Tajjeb.

Kurt Tidher qalbha tajba.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk tidher. Kif tinduna inti li għandha qalbha tajba?

Kurt Għax għax għax meta għax itthaliena nitkellmu.

Intervistatriċi: Eħe?

Kurt Tgħidilna biex -- . Tista' tiftaħomli dawn?

Intervistatriċi: Mela le ħi. X'tgħidilkom iktar. Tgħidilna biex?

Kurt Ħa neħħihom kollha ta.

Intervistatriċi: Mela mela. Għidtli tgħidilna biex nitkellmu hu vera?

Kurt Ħa naqsamhom.

Intervistatriċi: Issa imbagħad Kurt filkas aqbad dan ara l- --

Kurt Vanilla?

Intervistatriċi: Kafe. Le dana ara hekk u ibda krexxja. Hekk ara. Orrajt? Halli nkissruhom orrajt? Tajjeb. U allura ġieli kien hemm xi drabi fejn eżempju forsi kien hemm xi hadd li ma taraħx li kien orrajt? U tinduna minn xi affarijiet? Għax pereżempju dil-careworker indunajt li orrajt hux hekk?

[Kurt jkompli jkisser il-gallettini 00:05:46].

Intervistatriċi: Tajjeb Kurt. Għal min iktar jiġifieri ħa nagħmluha għal Nick u għal Ben. Għal min iktar tixtieq tagħmel?

Kurt Għalija.

Intervistatriċi: Eħe.

Kurt U għal Ryan u għal Daniel.

Intervistatriċi: U għal Daniel. Mela ma kulhadd iġġielidt Kurt?

Kurt Le ma Daniel, ma Ben.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Kurt Magħhom.

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt magħhom iġġiliedt.

Kurt X'qed tagħmel?

Intervistatriċi: Qed inkisser il-gallettini għax dawn għandna bżonnhom ikunu hekk ara tarhom? Ara kif iridu jiġu Kurt.

Kurt Nista' nkomplihom jien?

Intervistatriċi: Mela għamilhom hemm ha nkompli nkisser dawn jien. Oops.

Kurt Ara kif qed inkissirhom.

Intervistatriċi: Tajjeb tajjeb qed tkissirhom. Bravu. Għax huma jridu jiġu trab ta. Ħa tqassam lil xi hadd mill-careworkers Kurt?

Kurt Iva.

Intervistatriċi: Il min?

Kurt Il Brenda u lil Mark.

Intervistatriċi: U Elizabeth le?

Kurt Elizabeth mhijiex magħna.

Intervistatriċi: X'jiġifieri? E illum le imma is-soltu iva u?

Kurt Ehe.

Intervistatriċi: U Jonathan le?

Kurt Ara kif qed inġibhom.

Intervistatriċi: Ehe tajjeb. Lil Jonathan x'tahseb nagħmlulu?

Kurt Ehe lil Jonathan.

Intervistatriċi: Kurt meta għajruk—Meta kienu għajruk fuq il-papa qisu għalfejn hassejt il-bżonn li tgħajjarhom lura inti?

Kurt Għax mhux fair.

Intervistatriċi: Ħabba x'hiex l-iktar? Għalxiex ma tarahiex fair.

Kurt E?

Intervistatriċi: Għalxiex ma tarahiex fair li jgħajjuk bil-papa?

Kurt Għax mhumix għax jien ma noqgħodx ngħajjarhom bil-papa tagħhom.

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt u huma jkunu qalulek kelma pastaża fuq il-papa eżempju?

Kurt Ehe.

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt. L-iskola ġieli għamlulek hekk ukoll?

[Jinstemgħu hsejjes ta' tisbit 00:08:16]

Kurt Ara kif ġie. Ara kif ġie.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm . Bil-mod Kurt. Ma jimpurtax ta ma ġara xejn.

Kurt Minn fejn qed jaqa'?

Intervistatriċi: Qed jaqa' —Don't worry issa npoġġuh hawnhekk. Għax tkun tqattgħet il-borża ta ma ġara xejn. Ma ġara xejn.hekk. Nistgħu niġbruh ta.

Kurt U dak?

Intervistatriċi: Dak nistgħu nitfgħuh u nkomplu nikkraxjawh ta. Tajjeb.

Kurt Nista' nikraxjah jien?

Intervistatriċi: Mela mela mela . Importanti anzi. Ha nilhaq niġbor dawn jien.

[Ikomplu jikkrajjaw]

Intervistatriċi: Tajjeb. Ikkrajjja naqra naqra hekk.Kellek ġurnata tajba Kurt l-iskola illum?

Kurt Mm-hm.

Intervistatriċi: Tajjeb ġbin prosit.

Kurt Qisni qed nagħmel smoothie.

Intervistatriċi: Qisek qed tagħmel smoothie. Ta' x'hiex qisek qed tagħmlu lis-smoothie?

Kurt Ehe tal-Oreos u.

Intervistatriċi: Thobbu daqshekk l-Oreo?

Kurt Mm-hm.

Intervistatriċi: Mmm.

Kurt Qed inizzlu l-oreos qed nagħmlu taht.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm. Kompli għati halli ara---

Intervistatriċi: Ha ngħinek bil—

Kurt Halli jinżel?

Intervistatriċi: Halli jiġi trab trab.Halli aħna u nikluha oop—

Kurt Leee

Intervistatriċi: Bil-mod hekk ta. Halli meta qiegħedu nikluha ma ntellgħux il-gallettina shiha ntiehmu t-trab. Issa Kurt jien dak il-flokk qed narah pulit l-aħjar ixammar il-kmiem għax kif se ngħiblek il-halib ha niġu,ha niġu ha nagħmlu mess [tidhaq 00:10:15].

Kurt Vera?

Intervistatriċi: Għolli hekk halli ma tithammig ta.

Kurt Kif ha jiġi l-mess.Nistgħu mmorru fil-kamra l-oħra?

Intervistatriċi: F' liem waħda hi?

Kurt Fil- kamra ta' one?

Intervistatriċi: Fil-one? Issa ngħidlek x'nagħmlu, filkas ha nlestuhom imbagħad nidhlu hemm ġew ta. Tajjeb għalik?

Kurt Tiegħu ukoll Jessica.

Intervistatriċi: X'inhu?

Kurt Tieħu wkoll Jessica.

Intervistatriċi: Ma fhimtekx.

Kurt Jessica qiegħda hawnhekk ukoll.

Intervistatriċi: Qiegħda hemmhekk qiegħda hemmhekk.

Kurt Tieħu ukoll

Intervistatriċi: Tieħu ukoll? Balls?

Kurt Ehe.

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt mela le. Issa Kurt itfa' ffit, five spoons ta' coconut ta. Itfa' one, two, three, four five hekk. Halli tkun tista' jiġi tgħoma ta' coconut.

Kurt One. Aħjar nitfgħu kollu ta.

Intervistatriċi: Għax dak irrid indawwruhom fih issa għalhekk mhux ħa nużawh kollu.

Kurt One, two, three—

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Kurt Four, five, six.

Intervistatriċi: Biżżejjed.

Kurt Seven, eight, nine, ten.

Intervistatriċi: Tista' titfa' four minn dan ukoll ara jew five kemm trid inti. Kemm tixtieq titfa'?

Kurt Ħa nitfa' qisu. Ħa nitfa'..

Intervistatriċi: One –

Kurt Ħa nitfa' six.

Intervistatriċi: One. Orrajt. One. Ejja naraw kif se tibda' tiġi l-kulur tagħha. One, tlaqna, two-
-

Kurt [ma jinftiehemx 00:12:01] Mmmmm.

Intervistatriċi: [Tidħaq] Issa duqu tibżax issa nagħmlulu l-ħalib.

Kurt [Jisgħol]

Intervistatriċi: Mhux dak dan issa duq għax dak mhux tajjeb. Ħa nagħmillek tazza ilma.

Għandek l-hot chocolate hemm ħa nagħmillek tazza ilma wkoll.

Ħa. Mhux il-hot chocolate trid idduq hekk. Ħa għbin ixrob għax tixraq.

Orrajt? Mela, ara ġejja l-bicċa tal-ħalib. Mela. Thank you thank you. Għandi dik ukoll. Ħa nara naqra.

Kurt Ħa ngiblek il-ħalib.

Intervistatriċi: Ħawnhekk qiegħed Kurt. Ejja ħa titfgħu.

Kurt E?

Intervistatriċi: Ejja ha titfgħu.

Kurt Fejn qiegħed?

Intervistatriċi: Mela ha ngħollihulek u ha titfgħu inti.

Kurt Fejn qiegħed?

Intervistatriċi: Hawn.

Kurt Dak?

Intervistatriċi: Dan tmissux għax jaqta'. Mela zommu sew hekk ara bravu. Aqbad l-ispoon hekk aqbdu sew bravu. Aqbad l-ispoon. Insomma għamlu hekk imbagħad li jifdal għamlu bl-ispoon ta. Tajjeb hekk bravu.

[Hoss ta' taptip] .

Kurt Xi trid tagħmel biex jiġi differenti l-kulur?

Intervistatriċi: Issa ngħidlek għax issa għandna l-bowls. Tajjeb bravu Kurt. Tajjeb. Ha ntik iehor ukoll. Mmmm bravu.

Kurt Qed ngħatti ix-xikkulata kollha.

Intervistatriċi: Bravu Kurt Bravu. Tajjeb issa dak imbagħad għalhekk għidtlek għolli l-din halli—mela. Halli nkunu nistgħu nħawdu anke b'idejna ta. Mela prova dan ha nlaqqatlek l-aħħar naqra, gara dak.

Kurt Ow ow. sappastni.

Intervistatriċi: X'għamilt?

Kurt Sappastni.

Intervistatriċi: Ġieli doqtu inti dan?

Kurt Le.

Intervistatriċi: Qatt ma doqtu? Issa filkas jekk trid idduqu duqu. Taf kemm għandu, għandu togħma helwa. Il-Christmas log wara l-ikel kontu qegħdin teħduh? Wow kemm għandna. Issa Kurt ġejja dik il-biċċa li għidtlek jekk trid tista' titfa' subgħajk ta. Ha ngħidlek din. Issa ngħidlek x'ha nagħmlu.

Kurt Aħh. Nista' nduqu?

Intervistatriċi: Mela mela u żgur tista' dduqu.

Kurt Tajjeb.

Intervistatriċi: Issa nħallat b'din. Duq.

Kurt Tajjeb ta.

Intervistatriċi: Ġieli doqtha t-togħma?

Kurt Tajjeb.

Intervistatriċi: E? U żgur li tajjeb. Għandu togħma ta' helu u?

Kurt Mmmm. Nistgħu nagħmluh mal-cake dan ukoll.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm . Issa ġejja dik il-bieċa ha nurik ha nagħmel hekk pero imbagħad b'idejna rridu ndawru. Orrajt?

Kurt Għalfejn?

Intervistatriċi: Għax trid tiġi qisha għagina din. Ha ngħinek tagħmel naqra hekk imbagħad jekk ma titqazzisx għax imbagħad ha naħslu jdejna tinkwetax. Mela ha ngħidlek. Ha nitfa' jdejja ta. Mela nsejt nagħmel [ma jinftiehemx 00:16:20].

Kurt Jaqq.

Intervistatriċi: Titqazżeż? Aħh jien vera nieħu pjaċir. Issa ndawwarlek jien.

Kurt Orrajt orrajt. Issa nagħmluha flimkien.

Intervistatriċi: Aġhti ċans.

[Jidhqu 00:16:31].

Intervistatriċi: Mela le mela le .

Kurt Ha ngħid lil Jessica ta' ha ngħidilha [ma jinftiehemx 00:16:43]

Intervistatriċi: Le tidholx hemm għax għandha session.

Kurt [ma jinftiehemx 00:06:43] nohroġ barra.

Intervistatriċi: Xiex?

Kurt Minn hawnhekk ha ngħidilha

Intervistatriċi: X'ha tghidilha Kurt?

Kurt Ha ngħidilha li—

Intervistatriċi: Ejja l hawn qieghda session. No ejja l'hawn.

Kurt Ha ngħidilha ha ngħidilha li dak li għamilna l-dak. Ha tkun taf.

Intervistatriċi: Issa tiġi Jessica tibzax. Ejja ha ndawru b'idejna. Ejja ha ndawwwru b'idejna.

Kurt Aqta x'ha nagħmillek.

Intervistatriċi: Isma bil-mod ejja ha irnexxielna nagħmlu għagina. Ejja.

Kurt Ha nibda' jien?

Intervistatriċi: Mela tini ftit ċans ġejja ha nersaqlek.

Kurt Jaqq.

Nippruvaw ma ngarawx il-bogħod halli ma naħlux. Issa imbagħad kif tiġik dik il-mixture kollha, nitfgħuha fil-platt imbagħad laqqatha l-ewwel imbagħad naħslu jdejna. Komplidawwar li hawn taht irid jiġi kollu mxarrab Kurt orrajt? Taħseb li jirnexxielek?

Kurt Orrajt orrajt.

Intervistatriċi: Mela kompli dawwar. Noħodlok bieċa minnha?

Kurt Orrajt.

Intervistatriċi: Ha nohodlok hekk. Komplì dawwar hemmhekk inti halli jien nghaqqad din.

Kurt Iiii.

Intervistatriċi: Ta' taht importanti li jigik ukoll ta ghax inkella jibqa' jibqalek hawn xott. Ha nohodlok naqra minn taht ha.

Kurt Jaqq.

Intervistatriċi: Titqazzez Kurt?

Kurt Ija.

Intervistatriċi: Qatt m'ghamilt dat-tip ta' helu inti?

Kurt [Jagħmel hoss b'islienu li jfisser le 00:18:19].

Intervistatriċi: Le? Aħseb u ara l-log biex għamilnih.

Kurt Jaqq.

Intervistatriċi: Le ifhimni, li hawn gallettini u affarijiet hekk hawn ta jigifieri. Jekk qed titqazzez indawwru jien. Tippreferi ndawwru jien?

Kurt Ehe.

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt. Jekk għamilthom go ħalqedk imma aħsel idejk ta' gbin ha niehdu ħsieb xulxin għal min ha jiekol il-balls.

Intervistatriċi: Kurt taf x'inhì taf x'inhì hawn kuċċarina inti?

Kurt Le.

Intervistatriċi: Kuċċarina żgħira?

Kurt Orrajt.

Intervistatriċi: Mela ġib waħda minnhom halli ngħidlek x'ha nagħmlu biex nagħmlu il- kulur issa ta.

Kurt Nista' din nagħmilha jien dil- bixxa?

Intervistatriċi: Mela le mela le. Ha ngħidlek xi trid tagħmel mela—

Kurt Din b'idejja din?

Intervistatriċi: Aqbad bowl minnhom —

Kurt Ghax jekk b'idejja, ngħajjat.

Intervistatriċi: Mela nibdew bil-yellow.

Kurt Yellow, yellow dan?

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Kurt Imbagħad l- iswed.

Intervistatriċi: Itfa' ftit fuq kuċċarina.

Kurt Għandi bżonn għandi bżonn--

Intervistatriċi: Suppost miftuħ Kurt. Iċċekja ftit.

Kurt Ftahtu ftahtu.

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt, issa. Itfa' l-bowl.

Kurt Ahh kulur l- isfar.

Intervistatriċi: Mela Kurt itfa', aqbad il-kuċċarina u itfa' tnejn hawnhekk. Imma itfa' l-bowl taht halli—Hekk. Dak għalfejn hallejtu miftuħ gbin inti. Bil-mod, daqshekk Kurt titfax iktar, titfax iżjed.

Kurt Għalxiex?

Intervistatriċi: Għax jiġi hafna hafna kulur inkella ta titfax iżjed. Biżżejjed hekk. Dak mhux taht. Għoġbok dak? Hux għoġbok għoġbok [tidhaq 00:20:35] bla toġhma.

Kurt Hux bla toġhma.

[Fil-kamra tidhol mara u tifel 00:20:38]

Mara: [tkellem lil Kurt] Kif int gbin. Qed issajjar illum? Isma dan [ma jinftiehemx 00:20:46]

Hallih hemm [ma jinftiehemx 00:20:48] .

Tifel: Orrajt.

Mara: orrajt?

Tifel: Issa meta narak intihulek.

Kurt Orrajt Man?

Tifel: Ara ara.

Mara: Isma għandek snienek sofor [tidhaq].

Tifel: Vera.

Mara: Dan biex? Jaqaw ha ssajjru bil-food colouring?

Kurt Le għax hadt mill-isfar.

Mara: Iii ara x'għamlu. Gel dak sorry.

Kurt Yes.

Mara: Bil-gel.

Tifel: Ara xufftejh sofor ara.

Mara: Isa hej.

Tifel: [jidhaq].

Intervistatriċi: Ejja naqra Kurt. Int hawnhekk tfajtu?

Mara: Kemm u helu dal papoċċ Kurt.

Kurt E?

Mara: Kemm u helu dal papoċċ

Kurt [Ma jinftiehemx 00:21:21] [Jagħmel hafna hsejjes].

Mara: Ilek ma tarah lil Julian Kurt?

Kurt E?

Mara. Timmisjah hux int?

Kurt Ehe.

Mara: Thobbu lil Julian u?

Intervistatriċi: Enha ndelliklek hawnhek ġol- aħdar.

Kurt Aħna meta morna d-dar ta' Julian morna minħabba l-van aħna.

Tifel: Le minħabba t-trakk.

Mara: Mur hdejn il-Miss.

Intervistatriċi: Kurt isma' wahda ara kif ġie aħdar.

Kurt Ha nara.

Mara: X'qed tagħmel Kurt? Kemm u tajjeb.

Kurt Issa lil Julian nagħtih qabel. Julian [ma jinftiehemx 00:22:03].

Intervistatriċi: X'inhu?

Kurt Ikolli bżonn immur habba l- [ma jinftiehemx 00:22:09] il-Julian daqt.

Intervistatriċi: Ara kif ġiet .

Kurt Nagħtih qabel.

Intervistatriċi: Mela x'kulur għandna iktar? Għandna l-aħmar ukoll? Fejn qiegħed l-aħmar?

Dan użajnih. Taf fejn qiegħed l-aħmar?

Kurt Mhux dak?

Intervistatriċi: Dak aħdar, aħmar, isfar u kellna l-aħmar. Dan? Dan ehe.

[Mara u t-tifel jitkellmu fl-isfond].

Intervistatriċi: Tagħmel l-isfar int jew titqazżeż?

Kurt Nagħmel l-aħmar jien.

Intervistatriċi: Mela żomm.Agħti ċans ha ntik nofs il-mixture.

Kurt B'din ha nagħmlu?

Intervistatriċi: Kif thossok komdu inti ta.

Kurt Orrajt.

Intervistatriċi: Irridu ndawwruha b'mod illi— Qed tifhem ara qed tarah qed jieħu l-kulur?

Mm-hm ?

Kurt Qed tarah tiegħi?

Intervistatriċi: Eżatt eżatt bravu hekk. Nghinek?

Kurt Ha ġhini.

Intervistatriċi: Kurt filkas aħsel idejk.

Kurt Qisu d-demmi. Uff.

Mara: Vera jekk gie. Ahsilhom hi. Orrajt telaqlek?

Kurt E?

Mara: Telaqlek?

Kurt Ha nimsah.

Mara: Ghorok ghorok.

Kurt Qas ghamiltli.

Mara: Ha nagħmlu naqa' sapun.

Intervistatriċi: Ara jien e x'kok.

Mara: Le le le hawn ghorok.

Kurt taf x'ha nagħmel? Kwazi nilhqe jien.

Mara: Inti mhux xi sixty five għandek?

Kurt Le.

Mara: Le kemm għandek?

Kurt Nine. Ghandi disgħa. Ghandi disgħa jien.

Mara: Disa' snin għandek?

Intervistatriċi: Issa Kurt itfa' ghax ara jiena. Idhaq ta. Ejja.

[Jitkellmu bejniethom 00:24:28].

Intervistatriċi: Mela ha nara naqra fejn nistgħu—Kurt trid nagħmlu tlett iplatti? Kurt [Jibqa' jitkellem fuq il-football ma'l-oħrajn].

Intervistatriċi: Kurt, Kurt. Ejja Kurt ghax daqt isir il-hin u ġej Nick ejja. Mela jekk titqazzez titfa' minn dan trid titfagħhom gol-coconut minnflok inti? Intik il-ballun u nitfagħhom fil-coconut? F'dan li poġġejna fil-bidu? Tajjeb għalik? Orrajt. Mela ha nibdew mill-ħamra.

Kurt Mill-ħamra nibdew?

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm. Isma ha nurik wahda imbagħad kompli inti ara.

Kurt Orrajt.

Intervistatriċi: Ara. Orrajt ha nagħmluhom hekk u tpoġġihom fil-platt. Tajjeb għalik?

Kurt Ehe.

Intervistatriċi: Tajjeb?

Kurt Ehe.

Intervistatriċi: Ejja.

Kurt Ha nagħmillu jien.

Intervistatriċi: Ha nti hilek ghax imbagħad titqazzez int. Halli nilhqu nidhlu hemm ġew. Itfa'.

Bravu ġbin tajjeb hekk.

Kurt Għamel naqra. Insejt nagħmlu insejt tagħmel hekk ħares—

Intervistatriċi: X'insejna Kurt?

Kurt Le għax insejt inwaddablu dawn it-tlieta.

Intervistatriċi: Tajjeb tajjeb qed tagħmilhom bravu. Mm-hm. Ħa nħallihilek hemm issa imbagħad qabel ma titla' inħalluhom naqa fil-fridge ta ħalli joqgħodu. Tajjeb?

Kurt E?

Intervistatriċi: Nagħmluhom naqra fil-fridge ta.

Kurt Jaqq. Was sticky [ma jinftiehemx 00:27:13] sticky. Ħa naħsel idejja għax aqta' kemm huma sticky.

Intervistatriċi: Issa nkomplihom jien Kurt ta. Ma jimpurtax għax---

Kurt Għax jehel iktar l-aħmar.

Intervistatriċi: Għax tfajt ħafna ta għalhekk.

Kurt Għax tfajna aktar kuluri.

Intervistatriċi: E?

Kurt Tfajna aktar kuluri.

Intervistatriċi: Tfajt ħafna aħmar

Mara: Fejn għamiltha l-biċċa Kurt? Kurt.

Kurt Buqq.

Mara: Hemm hi ara naħseb ara naħseb qed naraha. Dik hi?

Kurt Yes. Trid biċċa?

[Jidhku]

Mara: Le għalik biex tixxotta idek.

Intervistatriċi: Naħseb aħjar tixxutahom Kurt jiena.

Mara: Għax ħa xxarab l-art gbin.

Kurt [Jagħmel il-hsejjes 00:28:10].

Mara: Ejja nmmorru barra għax qed intellifhom gbin.

Kurt Taf li Ronaldo għalaq kull żmien jagħlaq one thousand euros kull game. Jaqla' one thousand, one thousand, one thousand. Dak irnexxielu--

Intervistatriċi: Bye see you.

Mara: Goodluck Kurt.

Kurt Okay.

Mara: Okay gbin.

Kurt U għid goodluck lil Julian [ma jntfiehmx 00:28:43].

Tifel: Thank you Miss.

Intervistatriċi: Bye hi.

Tifel: Ciao.

Kurt Bye Bro.

Intervistatriċi: Issa Kurt darb'ohra tghidlix biex niltaqgħu għax m'a qed tagħmel xejn. Kont nara lil Ben illum. Le mhux sorry m'intiex qed tagħmel xejn fis-session. Jiġifieri għamilthom kollha jiena u darb'ohra kont nara lil Ben u taf. Għax jekk iddawwar is-servetta u tghidli m'għandix aptit għax qed titqazzeż, inti għidtli li xtaqt tagħmel il-balls.

Kurt Naf imma—

Intervistatriċi: Le Għax darb'ohra kont nagħmel sagħtejn ma' Nick jew niehu lil Ben. Qas haqq qieghda mieghek u inti qieghed hemm. Tagħmel sens? Issa nlesti jiena, nidhlu hemm gew u nititlghu għax xorta ha jsir il-hin jiġifieri— La ttiquazzeż tghidlix biex tagħmel il-coconut balls, ma tagħmilx sens. Ma kontx taf kif isiru l-coconut balls?

Kurt Imma imma imma naf li imma bil-kuluri jkun iktar sticky.

Intervistatriċi: E mhux inti ridt tagħmilhom bil-kulur meta staqsejtek xi trid tagħmel? Eqq.

Kurt Darb'ohra nibqa' fuq darb'ohra..

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt.

Kurt Int ibqa' ma' Ben darb'ohra.

Intervistatriċi: Mhux int għażilthom dawn imma?

[Hsejjes ta' siggijiet qed jiċċaqalqu].

Kurt Iva imma.

Intervistatriċi: E?

Kurt Aktar huma sticky. Jien kont ha ngħidlek bħal dak li għamel Ben.

Intervistatriċi: Ben ta' Ben aktar sticky għax huwa l-log. Issa tini ċans għax qabel ma nidhlu hemm gew irridu nlestu dawn kollha ta. Mhux ha nidhlu qabel ma nlestu dawn la qed nagħmilhom waħdi.

Kurt Orrajt.

Intervistatriċi: E?

Kurt Orrajt.

Intervistatriċi: X'hiex?

Kurt Għidtlek orrajt.

Intervistatriċi: Għalfejn qed tagħmel hekk illum? Is-soltu ma tagħmilx hekk inti. Dak is-siggu huwa mkisser.

Kurt A mkisser! Billi huwa mkisser.

Intervistatriċi: Inti taf.

Kurt Mhux xorta xorta tajjeb billi hu mkisser.

Intervistatriċi: Inti thossha? Tahseb li illum mxejt bil-fair? Jigifieri kieku kien hawn Annmarie magħna illum hawnhekk u Mark għax ha nitilgħu hdejh dalwaqt. Tahseb li jiehu pjaċir la jsir jaf kif qattajtha s-session illum? Li hlejt session u hlejt l-affarijiet ta' haddiehor? Kurt Le.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Kurt Għax ma kellix aptit nagħmel naqra il-meatballs.

Intervistatriċi: Le Kurt mhux dak il-punt. Il-punt hu li inti ridt, ilek tgħid lili u lil Annmarie biex insajjru. Qed niehu pjaċir nagħmel session u kulhadd qed jahseb x'ha nagħmlu miegħek ghidli " Jien coconut balls irrid nagħmel " ghidtlek " Żgur mhux christmas log bhal Ben? " Ghidli " Le coconut balls bil-kulur ". Ġejna biex nagħmluhom u m'għandikx aptit. Tahseb li huwa fair hekk li qed nagħmilhom jien il balls?

Kurt Le. Ha nagħmilhom jien mela [Iressaq siggu] A.

Intervistatriċi: M'hemmx għalfejn tagħmilhom. La qed tagħmilhom kontra qalbek tagħmilhomx u. Jien qed ngħidlek għax inti is-soltu ma tkunx hekk.

Kurt Imma imma nagħmilhom ma' Annmarie mela [ma jinftiehemx 00:21:43].

Intervistatriċi: Imma x'differenza tagħmel jekk xorta tiddejjaq tagħmilhom il-balls tista' tgħidli? X'differenza tagħmel? Jien nixtieq inkun naf nixtieqek tgħidli għalfejn qed tgerger għax għadni ma fhimtx? X'inhu t-tergira tiegħek? Spjegali ftit.

Kurt Mhux vera, għax ha tinda' tinda' [ma jinftiehemx 00:32:05].

Intervistatriċi: Le imma spjegali x'inhu s-sens li ltqajna biex nagħmlu l-coconut balls u inti m'għandikx aptit tagħmilhom? Tista' tgħidli għalfejn għalfejn jiema m'għandix nagħmel n-nervi?

Kurt Jekk naqra sticky.

Intervistatriċi: Jigifieri xi thobb tagħmel? Għax il-log huwa sticky, li ha jagħmel Nick huwa super sticky. Xi thobb tagħmel minnflok hekk?

Kurt Inhobb nagħmel –

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Kurt Xi kejk jew xi haġa.

Intervistatriċi: Kejk super sticky għax trid thallat it-taħlita. X'iktar?

Kurt Jew kejk jew—

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Kurt Ikun xi haġa bix-xikkulata u tagħmlu hekk mhux bhal dak, tkun xi haġa differenti.

Intervistatriċi: Tini eżempju bhal x'hiex. Għax filkas ma nsajjru mhux problema nagħmlu crafts darb'ohra. Qas haqq noqgħodu nahlu l-ingredienti. Nagħmlu crafts.

Kurt Jien nhobbu ikunu xikkulata ikunu hafna oreos oreos hafna.

Intervistatriċi: Oreos li ha jagħmel Nick. Ma nistgħux nagħmlu bħal ma ha jagħmel Nick.

Kurt Le oreos, ikun hemm oreos—

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Kurt U tagħmel l-oreos hekk.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Kurt Imbagħad ithallatha jkollok xikkulata pereżempju imbagħad pereżempju nitfgħu mir-red .

Intervistatriċi: X' nitfgħu?

Kurt Nitfgħu mir-red max-xikkulata.

Intervistatriċi: E?

Kurt Imbagħad titfa'?Għalfejn qed tagħmel hekk?

Intervistatriċi: X'hiex?

Kurt Qed tagħmel hekk.

Intervistatriċi: [Tidhaq] X'hiex? X'qed nagħmel? Għax irrabjata u . U ddizzapuntata. Għax jien kont happy ilni minn dalgħodu happy li ha nagħmel il-coconut balls miegħek. Ċempilt lil Annmarie għidtilha vera kuntenta. Qaltli "Kemmm ha jieħu pjaċir " ġejt hawn u għidtili " Ma rridx nagħmilhom ".

Kurt Ma ċempiltlihiex lil Anthea.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm?

Kurt Ma ċempiltlihiex lil Anthea.

Intervistatriċi: Jien ċempiltliha dalgħodu għax għandha l-birthday illum.

Kurt X'kont ha tgħidilha?

Intervistatriċi: Għidtlek ċempiltliha dalgħodu mhux x'kont ha ngħidilha u għidtilha li ha nsajjar miegħek u qaltli " Kemmm ha jieħu pjaċir " eqq.

[Hoss fl-isfond qisu ta'mixer 00:34:28]

Intervistatriċi: Mela ha nara x'hin sar.

Kurt Din x'inh i din?

Intervistatriċi: X'inh i hi. Dik mat ta.

Kurt Mat?

Intervistatriċi: Eħe. Ha nitfagħhom fil-fridge u nititlghu l'fuq imbagħad.

Kurt E?

Intervistatriċi: Ħa npoġġihom naqra fil-fridge u nititlghu l'fuq imbagħad.

Kurt Nistgħu nistgħu mmorru Room 1?

Intervistatriċi: Nistgħu imma rridu niżbarrazzaw l-ewwel mhux ha mmorru Room 1 hekk f' dan l-imbarazz kollu. Eqq.

Kurt Issa kif jiġi issa?

Intervistatriċi: X'hiex?

Kurt Kif jiġu issa dawn?

Intervistatriċi: Jikshu naqra hu jiġu aktar iebsin. Jiġu t-togħma tal-Christmas log dawk eżatt. Qas il-dan minti ha tiehu? Narmih il--

Kurt E?

Intervistatriċi: Narmih il-hot chocolate?

Kurt Le.

Intervistatriċi: E?

Kurt Hot chocolate ha niehdu fil-one.

Intervistatriċi: Imma nahseb nahseb kesahlek iccekja naqra.

Kurt Darb'ohra ma nagħmlu xejn. Kesah kesah.

Intervistatriċi: Naf li kesah heqq.

Kurt Sorry talli hlejna hafna hin.

Intervistatriċi: Mhux hin hafna affarijiet u, heqq. Qas haqq dan l-imbarazz kollu.

Kurt Darb'ohra darb'ohra ma Anthea kont nagħmilhom dawk.

Intervistatriċi: E? Le darb'ohra mhux ha nsajjru nagħzlu xi haga ohra ghax ma tagħmilx sens.

Kurt Darb'ohra darb'ohra m'Anthea nsajjar magħha.

Intervistatriċi: Int qed tghid affarijiet li ma jagħmlus sens. Qed tghid meta jkun hawn Anthea ha nsajjar. Għadni kif għidtlek għidtlek, inti għadek kif għidli li inti titqazzez issajjar jigifieri m'għandix taqsam ikunx hawn Anthea jew ikunx hawn jien.

Kurt Nagħmel il-meatballs.

Intervistatriċi: Meatballs?

Kurt Il-dawk, coconut balls.

Intervistatriċi: E.

Kurt Dawk nitqazzez nagħmilhom.

Intervistatriċi: Mela għalfejn għazilthom mela, tista' tghidli għalfejn għazilthom?

Kurt E?

Intervistatriċi: Għalfejn għazilt lilhom? Ma kontx taf x'inhuma? l-coconut balls?

Kurt Ghax kelli aptit ftit minnhom imma--

Intervistatriċi: Ma kontx taf x'inhuma l-coconut balls? Tipo semmejtha u ma kontx taf?

Kurt Iva.

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt.

Kurt U darb'ohra vera ma' Anthea kont nagħmilhom.

Intervistatriċi: Iva mhux problema.

Kurt U nagħmel ċikkulata jew xi haġa ma' Anthea.

Intervistatriċi: Mhux problema.

Kurt Hekk inti tkun sad int—

Intervistatriċi: Jekk x'hiex?

Kurt Inti tkun alot sad int inkun sad jien.

Intervistatriċi: X'għidli Kurt? Jekk jien inkun x'hiex?

Kurt Inti tkun alot sad.

Intervistatriċi: E da sad.

Kurt Jekk tkun sad, tkun hafna angry sad--

Intervistatriċi: Kurt jien issa ha nkellem naqra lil Mark ha jispjegalek ghax m'ahniex qeghdin nifthemu. Ha nerga nispjegalek, inti kont ilek tghidli "Meta jmissna s-session?" U jien bdejt ngħidlek ghidtlek "Inti tixtieq tagħmel xi haġa partikolari?" Ghidli "Jien nixtieq nagħmel il-coconut balls". Ghidtlek "Mela le". Ghidli " Imma mhux in-normali, tal-kulur". Ġibt l-affarijiet tal-kulur, qbadt tirrabja inti qed tghidli "Ma nixtieqx nagħmilhom mieghek nixtieq nagħmilhom ma xi hadd ieħor." Ma nistax nifhimha r-reazzjoni tieghek ghax ma tagħmilx sens. Qed tifhem? Issa jekk mhux ha tifhimha minn għandi ha ngħid lil Mark jispjegalek hu ghax nahseb li minn Mark tifhimha naqra ahjar inti li jispjegalek x'ghamilt hażin illum.

Kurt E issa ha tibda' tirrabja bhas-soltu.

Intervistatriċi: Miniex nirrabja Kurt qed ngħidlek ma jagħmilx tagħmel sens li qed tghid. Qed tghidli ghax int irrabjata ha nagħmilhom ma' xi hadd ieħor. Xi hadd qallek hekk? Ghidtlek qas haqq hlejt session. Kieku just ghidli " Miss ma rridx nagħmilhom ta dawk ghax ma kontx naf x'inhuma". Kont napprezza mhux ġejt hawn ghidli trid tidhol is-session, trid titlaq. Mhux problema.

Kurt [ma jinftiehemx 00:39:01].

[Hafna hsejjes fl-isfond 00:39:26]

Kurt Ma hlejnihix iċ-ċikkulata. Ma hlejnihix kollox.

Intervistatriċi: Imma dik ha nużaha ma Nick.

Kurt Ghax ha jkollok tużaha ma' Nick?

Intervistatriċi: E?

Kurt Għal x'hiex?

Intervistatriċi: Ghax Nick jixtieq jagħmle l-Oreo truffles. Dawk għażel il-gimgha l-ohra.

Kurt Oreo truffles x'inhuma?

Intervistatriċi: Tkisser l-oreos tagħmilhom il-ħalib u titflhom ċikkulata melted fuq.

Kurt Nistgħu issa mmorru Room 1.

Intervistatriċi: Imma kull m'għandna fifteen minutes u nitilgħu fuq ta.

Kurt Orrajt. Ha ha.

Intervistatriċi: Le ħallih hemm għalissa.

Kurt Orrajt. Kont ha nagħtihulek. Għax ha nagħmluh s-sanitizer.

Intervistatriċi: Ha nnatfu l-mejda. Il-mess li għamilna.

Kurt Biex ma biex ma biex ma min jmissu jkollu l-covid ma jkunx jista'?

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm. Nick imissu issa.

Kurt Wara Nick.

Intervistatriċi: Wara Nick ma'Martin imissni.

Kurt Wara Martin.

Intervistatriċi: Le imbagħad il-gimġha d-dieħla jmissni għandi lil Ben ha jagħmel xi haġa oħra tal-cooking għax dak iħobb isajjar. Mela.

Kurt Xi hadd isajjar. Mela hi għax ġifieri jien ma nħobbx insajjar ġifieri ha tibdew tghiduli li rrid insajjar.

Intervistatriċi: Kurt nerga ngħidlek— Qed tghid nista' nispjegalek x'inti tghid? Għax hawnhekk m'hawn hadd irrabjat mieghek u mhux qed tifthiem. Hadd ma qallek biex isajjar u hadd ma qallek biex tagħmel xi haġa li ma tridx inti. Ir-rabja u d-diżappunt tiegħi u għax inti l-aħħar darba għidti għax jien irrid insajjar, irrid nagħmel il-coconut balls. Meta inti tiġi hawn u--

tghidli ma rridx nagħmilhom għax jien nitqazżez. M'hemmx għalfejn tieħu għalik jien għandi għalfejn nieħu għaliha għax l-affarijiet xtrajthom jien, ppreparajthom jien, qgħadt wara l-ħin noqgħod mieghek għax vera nieħu pjaċir mieghek u ma ridtx tagħmilhom. Li tieħu għalik inti ma tantx tagħmel sens. U hadd ma qallek biex issajjar, għax jiena--

ma Martin minix se nsajjar ha mmur nitkellem ma' Martin. Sajjarna għax inti ridt issajjar il-coconut balls għax smajt li shabek għamluhom u għidti jien nixtieq nagħmilhom. Mhux problema ma ridtx issajjar għax ma tħobbx. M'hemmx għalfejn darb'oħra nistgħu nagħmlu xi haġa differenti nistgħu nagħmlu craft mhux problema. M'hemmx għalfejn bilfors dawn dawn il-coconut balls.

Kurt E almenu għal dawn ara forsi ma nitqazżisx imma l-oħrajn iva.

Intervistatriċi: Xorta hi għax bil-philadelphia nagħmilhom. Dawn ara. B'dan qisu gobon. Jigifieri xorta abbli titqazżes tagħmilhom. Mela ejja ha nidhlu ftit hemm gew. Trid? Fadlilna ten minutes.

Kurt Ara b'din nistgħu nilgħabu football. Haħaħa.

Intervistatriċi: Nistgħu wkoll jekk trid. X'inhi l-iktar haġa li thobb tagħmel inti?

Kurt Nieħu r-ritratti. Nieħu r-ritratti.

Intervistatriċi: Daqshekk dak.

Kurt Nieħu r-ritratti.

Intervistatriċi: Għax -- Hawn gew ta imma. Tajjeb għalik nieħdu hawn gew?

Kurt Dik x'inhi? X'inhi dik? Tar-ritratti?

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Kurt Nieħu ritratti biha. Nista' nieħu ritratt?

Intervistatriċi: Hekk. Issa kemm iżommha hekk Kurt.

Kurt Ehe.

Intervistatriċi: Daħħal idejk hekk. U tieħu b'din ara bil-buttuna hawn. Orrajt?

Kurt Orrajt.

Intervistatriċi: Ejja nidhlu hawnhekk ġbin. Tlaqna.

Kurt Jien ha nagħmel t-toilet ta?

Intervistatriċi: Mela mela idhol. Ha nixgħelek.

[Jidhol raġel]

Raġel: Hemm Donna

Intervistatriċi: [ma jinftiehemx 00:44:42] Emmuni ma nafx. Għax-spiċċaw therapy—

Kurt [Jinstema' jgħajjat].

Raġel: Hawn min hawn.

Kurt Għax ħadt tal- gwardarobba.

Raġel: Hawn min hawn.

Intervistatriċi: Ħadt tal-gwardarobba? Harget?

Kurt Iva.

Intervistatriċi: Le zomm zomm. Mhux l-ewwel. L-ewwel waħda mhux tajba. Erga ppruvahom għax tkun għada plastic. Pruvaha erga. Erga hu l-istess.

Kurt Kif se nneħieha? Kif se nneħieha?

Intervistatriċi: Hekk, ara hekk. Dik ha narmuha ta. Mur erga hu.

Raġel: [ma jinftiehemx 00:45:15]

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt ta mhux ħazin. Qed nagħmlu naqa' helu tal-christmas.

Raġel: Ahh.

Intervistatriċi: Ma thobbux hux inti?

Raġel: E?

Intervistatriċi: Ma thobbux?

Raġel: Le aqas xejn.

Intervistatriċi: Xejn imma jew?

Raġel: Inhobbu jiena.

Intervistatriċi: Assolutament.

Raġel: Inhobbu jiena tal-Milied.

Intervistatriċi: L-Christmas logs u hekk thobbhom? Għamel il-coconut balls Kurt ta. Issa imbagħad joffrilek don't worry. Ha nidhlu f'it. Ta' x'hiex ħadt ha nara? Ta x'hiex ħadt? Kurt Mhux qed jiġili. Mhux qed jidholli.

Intervistatriċi: Le ha nara ġbin. Għax għadek ma xeghelthix minn hawn. Hekk erga' ippunta lejn x'hiex trid tiehu. Ta' Ġesu trid? E tad-dghajsa. Int u tohodha imma pprova tiċċaqlaqx daqshekk għax— Issa ha ngħidlek x'nagħmlu. Dan trid thallih hawnhekk, u jibda jiċċara. Jekk ha tiehu tiċċaqlaqx ħafna Kurt għax tiġi blurred l-image tiġi m'ajpra ta.

Kurt Orrajt.

Intervistatriċi: Ha nara. Li qed ngħidlek, ara ha nispjegalek xi ħaġa. Ara jekk eżempju jien ha nohodlok tiegħek, ha niehu tiegħek, tiċċaqlaqx mill-ewwel ara. Ara kemm ha ndum hawnhekk ara. Imbagħad niċċaqlaq halli ma tiġix im'ajpar.

Kurt Hażin?

Intervistatriċi: Ha nippruvaw ha nara kif ġej għax issa nkunu nafu, issa jibdew jiiċċaraw. Ara eżempju din id-dghajsa ġejja kważi ara qed tiċċara ara, qed tiċċara. Hmm?

Kurt Hmm. Issa nixgħeluh minn hawnhekk.

Intervistatriċi: Iva hekk mixgħula qiegħda, iva mixgħula qiegħda ara.

Kurt Ha nara, ha nara.

Intervistatriċi: Ma jiġix mill-ewwel. Trid ittih ċans biex jibda jiċċara f'it ta.

Kurt Ergajt ħadt wahda bħal din.

Intervistatriċi: Bħal din ħadtha? Ġej ara ta, ara ġej. Din ta' x'hiex kienet din li ħadt?

Kurt Tal-ballun u tal-ħut. Issa ha niehu ritratt ta' Pikachu imma bl-isfel ha jkun hawnhekk.

Intervistatriċi: Ta' Pikachu? Kemm hu helu. Ara kif ġie ġbin.

Kurt Issa ha niehu ta—

Intervistatriċi: Hekk tippreferi? Jekk trid nagħmlu hekk id-darba li jmiss ta. Nagħmlu hekk? U jien naħseb taf x'naħseb int? Hares.

Kurt Eħe?

Intervistatriċi: Jien naħseb li int il-ħelu tieklu tieħu pjaċir mhux tagħmlu.

Kurt Eħe?

Intervistatriċi: U ? E. X'tippreferi nagħmlu għid id-darba li jmiss craft? Għax int crafts tieħu ġost. Xi crafts tixtieq nagħmlu?

Kurt Karozza.

Intervistatriċi: Nagħmlu karożza? Biex?

Kurt Nagħmlu bil-paint.

Intervistatriċi: E?

Kurt U nitfagħlu nitfagħlu. Inti tagħmilli l-blue u l-isfar.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Kurt Jien nagħmel l-aħdar, l-aħmar—

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt.

Kurt U l-orange.

Intervistatriċi: U x' nagħmlu biha din il-karożza imbagħad? X' nagħmlu biha?

Kurt [Jidħaq]

Intervistatriċi: Għid x' nagħmlu biha l-karożza?

Kurt Yes! Tajba ġiet.

Intervistatriċi: Bil-mod.

Kurt Tajba ġiet.

Intervistatriċi: Taf x' nistgħu nagħmlu wkoll? Christmas cards.

Kurt Vera?

Intervistatriċi: Nistgħu npenguhom aħna l-christmas cards.

Kurt Vera?

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Kurt Orrajt

Intervistatriċi: Issa jekk tgħidli orrajt, ħa nagħmlu karożza u cards. Dawk it-tnejn?

Kurt Eħe.

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt. Kurt din ta' x' ħiex ħadt hawnhekk? Din? Din ta' x' ħiex inhi? Hmm?

Ta' x' ħiex taħseb li hi dik?

Kurt E?

Intervistatriċi: Ta' x' ħiex taħseb li hi?

Kurt Boq. Tal-karożza?

Intervistatriċi: Ma nafx.

Kurt Iva tal-karozza tal-karozza.

Intervistatriċi: Żgur tal-karozza? Fejn qiegħda l-karozza?

Kurt Din.

Intervistatriċi: E, e, ħadtha minn xi angle partikolari għax qisni qas qed naraha. Biex tħobb tilgħab Kurt is-soltu hawnhekk? B'dawn l-affarijiet li qed toħrog?

Kurt [ma jinftehemx 00:50:07]

Intervistatriċi: Ha ngiblek oħra tini ċans ta. Ta' l-aħħar. L-aħħar wahda.

[Jibqa' jieħu r-ritratti].

Intervistatriċi: Ha Kurt ġibtlek dawn ejja nippruvawha. Minuta qalbi tibqax tieħu rridu nbiddlulu l-da ta.

Kurt Imma sabiħa ta ġiet. Sabiħa.

Intervistatriċi: Le imma jekk ma jkunx ħareġ, jiġifieri ma jkunx ha ta għalhekk. Mela hekk ara.

Kurt U hekk tieħu xorta meta ma jkunx hemm karti ma tkunx?

Intervistatriċi: Ma joħorgux imbagħad. Mela prova hekk ara prova hekk. Ha ngib il---Orrajt ħadt Kurt?

Intervistatriċi: Ħadt?

Kurt Għadni le.

Intervistatriċi: Mela. Ha x'jismu hawn. Ha nagħmluhom hawnhekk ha nohdulhom ritratt ta. Iċċaraw ta ħafna minnhom, ġew sbieħ.

Kurt Kif? Ha nara.

Intervistatriċi: Għandna ara għandna is-shelf, il-karozza.

Kurt Din ħażina ġiet.

Intervistatriċi: Il-boat—

Kurt Din ħażina ġiet.

Intervistatriċi: Dik l-ewwel wahda tkun għada għalhekk. Mhux għax int tkun għamiltha ħażina. Dal-ballun u? Dal-ballun.

Kurt E aghmel hekk? Meta ngħidlek one, two, three għamel funny face okay?

Intervistatriċi: Ejja għidli one, two, three.

Kurt One, two, three.

Intervistatriċi: [Tidhaq 00:52:44] Inti hawnhekk qiegħed ukoll ta. Ara kemm ġejt tajjeb. Mela issa nħalluh joqgħod.

Kurt Fejnu tiegħek?

Intervistatriċi: Issa jiġi tibżax. Dik bħal magic toqgħod tagħmlilha hekk u tiġi ta. Issa tiġi. Dan mhux tajjeb tiegħi għax kien għadu ċar. Ħa naraw dan. Inti vera ġejt tajjeb hawn. Tridu dar-ritratt?

Kurt Dawn issa nagħmlu xi haġa bihom.

Intervistatriċi: X'nistgħu nagħmlu bihom?

Kurt E? Dawn issa nistgħu nwaħħlu mal- dawk.

Intervistatriċi: Ma xiex? Nistgħu nwaħħluhom fuq il-card li ha nagħmlu. X'taħseb Mm-hm ?

Kurt Ħa noħodlu wixxu tista'.

Intervistatriċi: X'tagħmmillu?

Kurt Ħa noħodlu wixxu biss.

Intervistatriċi: Wiċċu. Orrajt mela le aħħ kemm hu cuddly dal-bear u? Kurt Ħa ngħidlek x'tagħmel. Ħudu minn hemm għax ma naħsibx li ġej daqshekk tajjeb. Ħudu minn hemm u pponta lejn wiċċu.

Kurt E?

Intervistatriċi: Ipponta lejn wiċċu. Ħudu minn hemm.

Kurt Tajba ġiet?

Intervistatriċi: Ejja niċċekjaw. Ħa nħalluhom joqgħodu issa niċċekjaw. Anke tiegħi ġibthom mill-bogħod naħseb – Tiegħek ġie vera tajjeb tad-dgħajsa. Ġie vera tajjeb Issa naraw.

Kurt Issa nagħmlu d-dgħajsa waħidha hekk. id-dgħajsa waħidha.

Intervistatriċi: Mela Ħa ngibielek ta. Minn fejn Ħa teħodha? Minn hemm?

Kurt Kemm ġej faqa.

Intervistatriċi: X'inhu?

Kurt Ara ara inti. Ara ara.

Intervistatriċi: Din x'kienet Kurt din?

Kurt E?

Intervistatriċi: E s-soft toy dan. Arah hawnhekk ġie s-soft toy [tidħaq]. X'nistgħu nagħmlu bihom taħseb dawn?

Kurt E?

Intervistatriċi: X'nistgħu nagħmlu bihom dawn?

Kurt Nagħmluhom fil-card.

Intervistatriċi: Fil-card? Lil min tixtieq tibgħat card?

Appendix 22: Transcript Rendered Narrative

At the session's start, Kurt explained the source of the quarrel to me. It appeared that Daniel and Ben had teased him about his father, referring to him by his father's name, so he had called them names and insulted their mother. During our time together, he explained that he was trying to make amends by preparing coconut balls for them, even though they hadn't apologised. I referred to a care worker and asked Kurt why he felt that she was pleasant and sympathetic. He felt that she had a positive attitude and encouraged him to express himself. Kurt initially seemed to derive pleasure from the cooking process, although after a while this changed, and he began to complain about dirtying his hands. He appeared to be obsessed with the stickiness of the colour used to cover the coconut balls, constantly wanting to wipe and clean his hands. I scolded him for becoming distracted and refusing to help me make the balls, when it was, he who had insisted on using colour in the first place. When he replied that he would cook with his teacher, I reminded him that the time being dedicated to his session could have been used more productively with another student who actually felt like cooking. I also tried to get him to understand how irrationally he was acting, and that it did not make a difference who he cooked with, if he disliked the activity that much. After some time during which I explained this to him, he seemed to become somewhat agitated. He was upset by the fact that I got angry and asked if he were going to be obliged to cook. I reiterated the fact that we should concentrate on doing an activity that he enjoyed. I then tried to placate him by showing him how to take photos. Finally, we settled on some activities to carry out during our next session together – painting on cars and drawing Christmas cards. We spent the last part of the session trying out photo-taking from different angles and with various effects.

Appendix 23: Sample Transcript – Reference Group

Intervistatriċi: Ejja ha naqralkom ftit il-karta.

Student 1: huwa ġieli....? Hux veru jien ġieli kont magħkom hux?

Intervistatriċi: Mela ħa nispjegalkom x'ħa ngħamlu...

Student 1: Hux veru jien ġieli kont magħkom?

Student 2: making a gesture (i love rock'n' roll sign)

Intervistatriċi: iva...ġieli ġieli kont magħna. Ħa nispjegalkom x'ħa ngħamlu ta

Student 1: anzi anzi tiftakar meta bdejna naqraw jien u inti...jien kont magħkom

Intervistatriċi: (Looking at mobile phone to set recording)...mela mela Kurt...tiftakar Nick konna magħha naqraw...

Student 2: din inti? (referring to my photo on the paper) bla nuċċali! X'inti ħelwa hawn

Student 3: Stef kemm hawn karti uff. dawn kollha biex niktubhom??

Student 2: mela aħna lesson ħa ngħamlu? Jien mghanix aptit lesson!

Intervistatriċi: Ben aħna mhux lesson ħa ngħamlu...mhux ħa niktbu ta serraħ moħħok.

Student 2: aħna nistgħu nużaw l-oħrajn ukoll? Inkella ħa nitlaq 'il barra!

Intervistatriċi: x'inhu?

Student 2: Mhux fair dan għandu l-biros kollha.

Intervistatriċi: mela tuni ftit ċans ħalli nirranga ftit il-bieb ta....u nigi hdejkom.

All boys mumbling between them

Intervistatriċi: Mela ejja ħa nispjegalkom x'ħa ngħamlu ta. Mela ħa naqralkom u nfehmkom ta...

Student 2: Nista' nuża slime?

Intervistatriċi: Illum mghandix imma nżommha f'moħħi Ben.

Student 2: Ejja ngħamlu slime.

Intervistatriċi: Kif tgħamlu slime?

Student 2:....

Intervistatriċi: tafu kif isir slime jew xgħandna bżonn biex ngħamluh?

Student 1: hot glue...kuluri

Student 2: hux kulur kulur!

Student 1: ehe ħi dak tal-kulur il-mixer..u x'izjed?

Intervistatriċi: mela ħa nispjegalkom ftit x'ser ngħamli ħalli mbagħad tkunu tistgħu tiktbu, tpingu u nitkellmu. Jien bħalissa qed nistudja dwar l-iskejjel u t-tfal li ħa nkun qed nagħmel riċerka magħhom huma tfal li jmorru skejjel oħrajn. Imma nixtieq l-għajnuna tagħkom biex naraw flimkien xi affarijiet li nista' nitkellem ma' dawn it-tfal dwarhom. U veru nixtieq nkun naf tfal bħalkom x'opinjonijiet għandhom dwar l-iskola, l-klassi, l-għalliema, l-ħbieb tagħkom.

Student 2: ma nistax ngħid...jien mhux ser ngħid għax personali.

Intervistatriċi: personali f'liem sens? Għax saqsejtek min huma l-ħbieb tiegħek Ben? Okay Ben mhux problema. Hawnhekk għandek thossok komdu li taqsam dak li tixtieq inti. Hadd mhu ser jisforzak. U jekk trid taqsam magħna...mhux bilfors bil-kliem imma tista' tpingi.

Student 3: inpinguuuuuu

Intervistatriċi: qabel ma nibdew nixtieq li naqralikom din il-karta u jekk okay għalikom ha tiktbu isimkom u tgħamli firma jew marka. (I read it out to them) Nick tibda inti? Tinsix din il-karta diga' raha l-care worker u anke l-father.

Student 2: ma jistax ikun għax il-careworker mhux hawn illum.

Intervistatriċi: naf naf għandek raġun. Mhux illum raha. Ġejt drabi oħra nkellem lil care worker u anke lil father dwarha.

Student 3: x'irrid nagħmel ġifjeiri?

Intervistatriċi: Ismek, kunjomok u l-marka tiegħek jew firma tiegħek.

Student 3: Ismi biss naf nikteb...

Intervistatriċi: tajjeb Bray. Fuq dan il-line ara. Ben fejn tmur skola inti?

Student 2: Personali

Student 1: kollox personali int!

Student 3: u kollox hekk inti jaqq xi dwejjjaq fik

Intervistatriċi: ma jimpurtax tgħid xejn.

Student 3: dak Ħal Tarxien imur skola!!

Student 2: (very angrily got up from the desk)...

Intervistatriċi: Jien Ħal Tarxien noqgħod Ben ukoll ta

Student 2: muntun...x'int aħdar! (referring to Nick)

Student 3: iiiiii isimgħu

Student 2: jien mhu ħa ngħid xejn iktar

Intervistatriċi: (referring to Kurt and Nick) l-affarijiet ta' Ben importanti jgħidhom hu. U jekk ma jridx jgħidhom ma jimpurtax ma jgħidhomx! Dan mhux ta bilfors.

Student 1: (referring to Ben) mur hu bajda ta

Student 2: ieqaf man diġa' għedtlek. Tista' tugħż il-care worker wara?

Intervistatriċi: Ben, wara ser nkellmu lil care worker ta u nispjegawlu ftit x'għara.

Student 2: (takes one of the letters meant for them to sign) ara ha...jien ma nafx naqra ta.

Intervistatriċi: jien qrajtilek Sin ta diġa'. Issa hawnhekk tista' tagħmel ismek u firma jew sinjal kif trid int.

Student 2: int id-dar tiegħek antika?

Intervistatriċi: fejn noqgħod jien Sin? Jien Balzan noqgħod. Viċin id-dar ta' Don Bosco. Id-dar tiegħi mhux antika. Taf liem hi d-dar ta' Don Bosco?

Student 2: Kbira ?

Intervistatriċi: Kbira ta. Mhux daqs hawn imma kbira.

Student 3: Mhux fair li kbira! Nixtieq mmur hemm jien.

Student 1: Aħna tagħna villa! Tant hi kbira

Student 3: Kurt taħżiża ha jagħmel idaħħakni jien...jien għallimtu lil Kurt

Kurt inti kbir, firma aghmel mhux sinjal. Qed ngħidlek jien

Student 3: int hekk tiffirma a!! ??

Intervistatriċi: tajba ta biżżejjed.

Student 2: u intom Santa Klara u Santa Klara tmorru skola

Student 1: u jien qabel taf fejn kont? Ħaż-Żabbar!

Intervistatriċi: Iva inti Ħaż-Żabbar kont niftakrek tmur hemm. Mela ha nqassmilkom ftit karti u nixtiqkom taħsbu ftit fuq l-iskola u tgħiduli hekk x'inhi l-ewwel haġa li tiġikom f'moħħkom?

Student 1: Jien irrid il-yellow kollha.

Student 3: Jien il-blue mela hi.

Intervistatriċi: X'inhi hekk l-ewwel haġa li tiġikom f'moħħkom?

Student 2: li nilagħbu!

Student 1 and Student 2: Nilagħbu

Student 2: għandek paint jew glitter?

Student 3 to Student 2: hiiiiii inti għandek iktar karti milli għandna aħna!

Intervistatriċi: nistgħu nergħu niffukaw please?

Student 3: mhux fair istra kemm int tost!

Student 3: Dan (referring to Ben) kollox għalih qed iżomm ta, anke karti!

Student 2: jien nilgħab bil-ballun u trampolin l-iskola.

Intervistatriċi: wow għandkom trampolin l-iskola?

Student 2: Ijja

Intervistatriċi: u min jista' jużah dan it-trampolin?

Student 2: jien biss...għax peress li noqgħod niġġieled u hekk għamluli trampolin

Intervistatriċi: u thossu li jgħinek Ben?

Student 2: mhm

Intervistatriċi: kif thoss li jgħinek?

Student 2: għax noqgħod naqbez fuqu

Intervistatriċi: mmm qed nifhmek. U int Nick bdejt tgħid li ane int għandek trampolin l-iskola. Għalfejn tużah?

Student 3: ijja man qas biss nagħmel lessons

Intervistatriċi: kif l-iktar li jgħinek?

Student 3: le jien tibatni t-teacher fuqu

Intervistatriċi: ġifieri mhux tużah kif qal Ben biex jgħinu għax inaqqas il-ġlied? Imma qisu qed tgħid tużah x'hin trid it-trampolin?

Student 3: inħossni tajjeb wara li nużah

Student 1: jien ukoll nuża t-trampolin l-iskola.

Student 3: Mhux veru int ma tużahx it-trampolin..

Student 1: dan qed jigdeb fuqi li ma nuzahx it-trampolin...int mhux veru tużah it-trampolin

Student 3: giddieb

Student 2: giddieb int

Student 3: *puts marker on Kurt's arm*

Student 1: *yells*

Student 2: jien nużah għax għandi bżonnu ħalli ma niġġilidx..

Intervistatriċi: fuqix tiġġieled l-iżjed Sin l-iskola

Student 2: le huma jibdew għax joqogħodu jgħajjrni u hekk

Intervistatriċi: it-tfal imma?

Student 2: Iva

Intervistatriċi: joqogħodu jgħidulek xi affarijiet?

Student 2: iva...jgħajjrni bil-familja allura jkolli t-trampolin biex ma niżvugax fihom

Intervistatriċi: u meta tkun fuq it-trampolin u jirnexxilek tizvoga mbagaħad kif tħssok?

Student 3: *in the background* - Dan għadu qed iżomm kollox għalih ta!! Mhux fair

Intervistatriċi: hawn biżżejjed materjal għal kulħadd...m'għandkomx għalfejn tiegġieldu.

Student 2: il-glitter ġej qisu slime

Student 3: istra kollox għalih ħa.

Intervistatriċi: *takes papers from Ben – referring to Student 3*: Bray tiegħek pink kienu hux ?
ħu iktar karti ħa

Student 3: uejja ħi mhux fair ta

Intervistatriċi: mhux ħa noħodlok xejn Ben, dawn ta' Nick..

Student 2: le ħi ma rridx li toħduli l-karit...ħa nitla' fuq inkella

Intervistatriċi: isma Sin ..jien f'xi ħin għedtlek li mhux ħa ntijomlok il-karti?

Student 2: u le jaqq ħa joqgħod jaqbad miegħi ..ħa mmur il-bathroom nista'?

Intervistatriċi: Mur u erga' ejja wara

Student 3: kollu tort tiegħek Kurt

Student 1: Tort tiegħek!

Student 3: uxe tiegħek. Issa nugżak għax dejjem jien neħel magħkom

Bryadon: puts glitter in Kurt's hair – ħaħaħa ġejt qisek girl

Student 1: ieqaf ħi għax ħa nugżak lil Stef la tiġi lura ma' Ben – throws chair.. injorant
Ben comes back

Student 2: injoranta ommok ieqaf ħi

Student 1: ara x'għamilli!!!

Intervistatriċi: issa ħa ngħajjat jien għax issa qed nixba' jien...- poġġi bilqegħda issa u ħa nersuq l'boġħod minn xulxin. Il-karti ħa nżommhom jien

Student 1: Mhux Nick dejjaqni man ara x'għamilli mal-flokk

Intervistatriċi: għalxejn għamillek hekk? Poġġi bilqegħda.

Student 2: jekk tkomplu għaddejjin jien ħa nitlaq 'l fuq

Intervistatriċi: Jien nixtieq nkun naf għala mqabbdin tant ma' xulxin.

Student 1: jien mhux naqbad ma' ħadd imma dan għamilli l-glitters mal-flokk

Student 2: it-tnejn li intom għadkom tort – Nick għamilt il-glitters u Kurt jgħajjar bil-familji

Student 1: kulħadd jiġġieled bħall-iskola hawn.

Intervistatriċi: thoss li jkun hemm il-ġlied l-iskola Kurt?

Student 1: L-iskola kulħadd jiġri warajja biex jippruvaw ituni, iġebbduli l-flokk, jgħajtu miegħi.

Intervistatriċi: ill marelli u x'ikun gara biex jinqala' dan kollu?

Student 1: Ghalxejn ta jien nkun bilqegħda u jiġu jaqbdu miegħi, iwaddbuli l-lunchbox mal-art ,jgħajjrni bil-home

Intervistatriċi: u tgħid lil xi hadd jgħinek?

Student 1: imbagħad jien mmur kontrihom..it-teacher tgħidilhom biex jieqfu imma xorta jibqgħu jgħamluha

Student 2: imma Ms dan jideb ukoll ta eżempju l-bieraħ bdejt ngħid li meta nkun id-dar noqgoħd nilgħab GTA wara l-ikel...qabeż Kurt u qal li anke hu wara l-ikel jilgħab

GTA...ikun qed jigdeb.

Intervistatriċi: u għalfejn taħseb li forsi jgħid bħalek?

Student 2: jien naf hi jdejjaqni. Nistgħu ngħamlu slime darb'oħra??

Student 3: l-iskola jaqq dejjem niktbu jew form the sentences u qatt ma jkollna žans ngħamlu xi affarijiet hekk. U meta npingu li jien veru nieħu gost irridu npingu li tgħid it-teacher biss xejn iktar

Intervistatriċi: qed nifhem hux tkunu tixtiequ tqattgħu iktar ħin tgħamlu dak li jgħgobkom.

Student 3: jien qas għandi ħiewb l-iskola

Student 2: nista' nieħu iktar karti?

Intervistatriċi:naħseb li għandek biżżejjed issa

Student 3: ħa nitla' fuq mela għax iddejjaqt

Intervistatriċi: ok Ben tlaqna

Student 2: waħdi?

Intervistatriċi: iva jien u int tilgħin. Ħa ngħid il-Mah li ddejjaqt u ridt titla' e

Student 2: le mela ħa noqgħod hawn

Intervistatriċi: biex toqgħod kontra qalbek? Imxi ħa mmorru

Student 2: ħa noqgħod veru just mgħandix biex inpingi.

Intervistatriċi: trid issaqsi biex inkun naf x'għandek bzon u jekk nista' ngħinek.

Student 3: ejja hdejja sin noqgħodu team mates, inpingu flimkien

Student 2: xtaqt nagħmel xi ħaġa imma ma nistax .

Intervistatriċi: għidli x'inhi forsi ngħinek

Student 2: biex inwaħħal.

Intervistatriċi: glue jgħinek?

Student 2: iva please

Student 3: naf x'ngħamlu! Ngħaqqduhom bil-glue u jiġi qisu slime

Student 2: ħa tugžani lil Mah?

Intervistatriċi: Mah mhux qiegħed hemm imma ħa jsaqsini kif mort żgur.

Student 2: u tgħidlu li qgħadt ħażin?

Intervistatriċi: int kif taħseb li kont illum?

Student 2: mhux fair imma għax jien nkun imqareb għax kulhadd jgħajjarni b'ommi, b'missieri u jafu li missieri mejjet u anke dawn jafu! Għalhekk ikolli n-nervi jien.

Intervistatriċi: jiddispjaċini tal-papa.

Student 2: u kif jarani qed nirrabja jerga' jgħajjarni b'missieri

Intervistatriċi: jiddispjaċini u prosit li sibt kuragg tesprimiha hawn

Student 2: dan (referring to Nick) qabel kien ukoll jgħajjarni b'missieri imma ma kinx idum 5 sekondi u kien jieqaf...mbagħa qala' konsegwenza u waħda jien u ma bqajnix nitgħajjru imma Kurt xorta dejjem baqa' għaddej...

Intervistatriċi: Sin nista' nimmagina kemm hi diffiċli meta jgħajjruk b'hekk. Issib ma' min titkellem fuq hekk?

Student 2: ħa mmur għall-imqass please?

Intervistatriċi: ok mur ara ssibx.

Student 3: ħa mmur miegħu ukoll pls

Student 1: lili ħin kollu jgħajjruni dawk it-tnejn wkoll ta bin-nanna l-mejta u b'ommi u b'missieri

Intervistatriċi: u għalfejn taħseb li jgħamlu hekk?

Student 1: ħa ngħidlek għala, għax qabel..fil-home konna jien u Nick biss u konna best friends imbagħad gie Ben u Ben koqgħod dejjem ma' Nick u Alla jbierek lili lanqas nilgħab magħhom ma jħalluni

Intervistatriċi: mela qed nifhem serw li int tixtieq tqatta' ħin mal-ħabib tiegħek Nick u tħss li ma tistax.

Student 1: Ehe nħossni li mgħandix friends.

Intervistatriċi: u ssibha diffiċli tgħidlu lil Nick? Qisek bil-ġlied taf tgħidomlu?

Student 1: ehe hekk għax kuljum istra jilagħbu huma biss

Intervistatriċi: kif nista' ngħinek imma? Trid ngħidlu jien lil Nick dak li qed tħoss?

Student 1: ijja please

Intervistatriċi: ok jien ser nipprova imma Ben imbagħad...Ben qal li ma joqgħodx miegħek mhux għax iddejqu inti imma għax int tgħajjru meta tkun miegħu. Min jaf kieku tipprova tgħdilu lil Ben li ġieli tiddejjaq għax ikun ħafna hu ma' Nick

Ben and Nick are back

Intervistatriċi: mela boys Kurt xtaqt jgħid xi ħaġa importanti. Xtaq jgħidilkom għala kiultant jiġġieled. Kurt ilu fti fil-house u qabel kien joqgħod ħafna ma' Nick u meta ġie Ben...Ben iħobb ukoll joqgħod ħafna ma' Nick u jhssu left out xi fti

Student 3: e trid toqgħod ħin kollu miegħi qisni seftur imma jien ma nistax

Student 2: imma ma jistax isib ħabib ieħor?? Dak taf kemm iqabbd u jagħmel affarijiet lil Nick! Ġibli ħobż u ġibli tazza u jien naqbeż għal Nick

Intervistatriċi: Nick hawnhekk hawn 2 boys li qed jgħidu li jħbbu l-kumpanija tiegħek u jfittxuk biex tkun magħhom.

Student 3: Kurt jibza' ħafna u jien għalhekk noqgħod miegħu biex ma jibzax l-iktar bil-lejl jew fid-dlam. Biex ma jbatix

Student 2: imma biex jitgħajjar ma jbatix ilsien

Ben takes a shoe in his hands and throws it at Kurt

Ben is removed from the room for a while

Kurt crying and sobbing and is hugging me

Intervistatriċi: Nick kif qegħdin aħna biss ejja nipprovaw nifhmu x'għara

Student 3: dak joqgħod jilgħaba li ma jafx u innoċenti Kurt imma kollox ikun jaf fuqna u fuq it-tfal tal-house u l-familja tagħmna u meta taqbużlu jgħajjarna bihom u ma jehillux ilsien. Jien Alla ħares jgħidli bin-nanniet għax nifqagħalu snien

Intervistatriċi: hadd ma għandu għalfejn jgħajjar il-hadd jew jerfa' jdejh hawnhekk

Student 2: comes back in after he has calmed down

Intervistatriċi: x'taħseb li hi l-iktar ħaġa diffiżli li tagħmel? Li tiżvoga? Jew li żżomm go fik? Li żżomm go fik u int rnexxilek għal ħafna ħin Ben. Issa li prova jgħidilkom Kurt kienet li meta jkun mdejjaq, hu ma jafx jiddefendi lilu nnifsu u ma jafx kif irid jagħmel allura biex jiżvoga juża t-tgħajjir. Int ġieli ġralek hekk l-iskola?

Student 2: le għax l-iskola kif tkun ħa taqbiżli t-teacher toħroġni fuq it-trampolin

Intervistatriċi: u dejjem jirnexxilek iżżomm?

Student 2: le ġieli naqbad ntihom għax ikunu għajruni bil-familja, jew ikunu wegġġhuni.

Imbagħad jien qbadt il-tifel darba minnhom u sabbattu mal-ħajt f'nofs il-grawnd.

Intervistatriċi: u taħseb li jkun jaf is-stwazzjoni tad-dar u tal-familja tiegħek qabel għajrek?

Student 2: le ma jkunx jaf imma xorta e u dan Year 4 ikbar minni imma xorta tajtilu u tajtu daqqa ta' ponn

Intervistatriċi: imma qed tgħid li mhux biex iwegġġhak la m a jafx eżatt dwar il-familja.

Student 2: le imma jien taf x'ngħid? Minn fejn ikunu jafuhom dal-kliem pastaż? Forsi mid-dar? Jien il-kliem pastaż idejjaqni ħafna. *Talking to Nick and Kurt* – ieqfu gġieldu ghid nixtieq nitkellem

Student 3: aħh llejla ħa joħduna Bugibba l-Fr u l-brother ħa nieħdu ġelat

Student 2: ġejja l-għarusa tiegħi magħna ħaħaħa

Student 3: Lili telqitni uff

Student 2: jien tajtha ċurkett tad-deheb hi

Student 3: tiegħi Ingliża miss ilha 5 years Malta. Jien ukoll kont ngħix l-Ingliterra u ftit ilu ġejna Malta. Inħossni komdu ħafna nitkellem bil-Malti imma u l-Ingliż mindu ili hawn fil-home qisni nsejtu

Intervistatriċi: Prosit hi congrats Ben. U jiddispjżini Nick imma issa ssib oħra ta ☺

Student 3: u mela

Intervistatriċi: u int Kurt x'tgħidilna?

Student 2: Stenn int taf li Luke għandu problema biz-zokkor?? U dan Kurt iqabbizomlu u joqgħod jimbuttah u hekk. mhux ovvja li Luke jgħajrek lura mbağħad u ma jridux joqogħodu miegħek il-girls

Student 1: *continues to draw*

Intervistatriċi: kemm tinnota Ben u naħseb Kurt jaf anke hu meta jagħmel ħażin.

Student 3: ahh issa mmur nilgħab Minecraft sakemm noħorgu.

Intervistatriċi: dik fuq il-buildings hux?

Student 2: iva taf kemm nieħu gost nilgħabha

Student 3: Ara x'għamilt Miss

Intervistatriċi: wow kemm int kreattiv Nick! Prosit!! Xi gmiel gietek

Student 1: wow kif għamiltha?

Student 3: secret

Student 2: Ms ħa ngħinek tagħmel il-glitters f'postok

Student 3: trid nagħmillek in-nail polish darb'oħra?

Intervistatriċi: taf tgħamlu ?

Student 3: iva qisu drawing

Student 1: anke jien naf ngħamlu

Student 3: taf x'pingejt?

Intervistatriċi: għidli għax għandi kurżita

Student 3: jien miexi barra fil-kampanja l-iktar li nkun happy

Student 1: jien pingejt qawsalla għax dik tgħamilni happy . tiegħi iktar sabiħha?

Intervistatriċi: tat-tnejn ġew sbieħ ħafna.

Student 1: imma l-isbaħ ta' min?

Intervistatriċi: tat-tnejn ta. It-tnejn differenti u sbieħ ..ejja ħa nitilgħu għax sar il-ħin ta

Appendix 24: Transcript Rendered Narrative

My experience with this group turned out to be a somewhat aggravating one. It proved to be a herculean task to get the interviewees to respect each other's input and keep the noise level down. The worst offender in this respect was probably Zac, who just couldn't seem to sit still, and was constantly engaging in loud activities, distracting me and ensuring that I couldn't hear the information that the other students were sharing. Zac's attitude throughout the session was, unfortunately, a little hostile. He was extremely defensive when corrected and displayed a reluctance to cooperate and follow the simple instructions I had passed on to the group.

However, when all is said and done, I managed to glean enough information to be of use to my project. I began the session by explaining that I required the students' input regarding the sorts of questions I should put to other students who attend the Nurture Centres. Isaac's answer was immediately forthcoming; he thought that I should ask them about their favourite animal, food, whether they had any pets and what sort of vehicles they drove.

I then turned to the subject of the current interviewees themselves and asked them what their own experience of the Nurture Centres had been. One of them immediately confided that his time spent in this group had, initially, not been an enjoyable one, because of the presence of a fellow schoolmate that he didn't get on with at all. He also indicated that I should ask other students about classmates who bothered or picked on them. Jake shared a positive experience about his participation in the Nurture Centres, while other students felt that they had not been given as much of a voice as they felt they should have. Yet other students, such as Jayden and Tyrone, felt that their school experiences were mostly advantageous ones, featuring teachers who went out their way to make them feel comfortable and included. Isaac and Jake also weighed in on this, and, together with the others, shared about how they felt respected by the general attitude of the teachers.

Sensing Zac's restlessness throughout the session, at certain points I would attempt to gain his feedback on some topics, such as, for instance, whether he thought students preferred the use of balance balls as seating options instead of traditional chairs. His answer confirmed the preference for the balance balls, which could then be used for exercise. Zac pinpointed a

classmate whom he confided was belligerent at school, displaying antagonistic and challenging behaviour. Notwithstanding this, Zac was fortunate enough to encounter a teacher who took an interest in his progress and helped him, and he shared this with me willingly. Ultimately, it emerged that the reason for the intensified twitchiness and agitation of some of the students, especially Zac himself, was the fact that they didn't really have much of an outlet for their energy any longer. Their break-time activities had been restricted due to COVID preventative measures, and this was affecting their behaviour greatly.

When asked what items could enhance the students' learning experience, Isaac was the first one to answer, referring to how he felt soft toys could mitigate feelings of loneliness. Finally, I turned the question back to the students' more recent experiences in their Nurture Centres. Isaac mostly had good things to say about this, except for the fact that the group was cutting into his time allotted to football, and that he was missing some lessons which had to be made up for with extra homework. The last thing that the students shared with me, particularly Isaac and Tyrone, was that they felt that game consoles and mobile phones could be of help to students who needed an outlet for their hyperactivity and an aid to their concentration.

Appendix 25: Sample Transcript – Adult

Intervistatriċi: Walter li xtaqt nibda' billi nsaqsik, min inti u r-rwol tiegħek f' din l-iskola?

Intervistat: Mela jiena Walter Muscat u jiena l-Learning Support Centre Coordinator Boys Learning Support Centre tal-Ħamrun.

Intervistatriċi: U tiltaqa'mat-tfal b' liema frequenza?

Intervistat: [00:00:17] Il-ħin kollu prattikament jiġifieri hawnhekk mhux Learning Support Co-ordinator mhux Head tradizzjonali ejja nġidu hekk jiġifieri mhux persuna li tista' tingħalaq ġol-uffuċju. Jiġifieri l-kuntatt mat-tfal huwa minn x'ħin jiġu filgħodu, inkun l-ewwel wiehed li nilqagħhom u l-aħħar wiehed li nġidilhom, "Ciao." u matul il-ġurnata kollha prattikament so t-tfal issir tafhom inside out outside in.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk hu. Walter qabel kont hawn kont involut fl-iskejjel? Kellek xi rwol forsi divers minn dak ta' illum?

Intervistat: Mela jien il- [ma jinftiehemx 00:00:49] dejjem kien dan it-tip ta' tfal. Meta ġradwajt, iġġradwajt bħala PE teacher u dak iż-żmien kont mort shared bejn il-Verdala Junior Lyceum dak iż-żmien u Fortini Secondary u l-ewwel sena ġiet iċ-ċans illi nagħzel fejn immur fulltime għax kont shared dak iż-żmien u kont għazilt il-Fortini għar-raġuni li dejjem ħadt-- pjaċir naħdem ma'dawn it-tip ta' tfal. Fortini għamilt kważi ten years bħala PE teacher. Sakemm kont il-Fortini imbagħad servejt ħafna rwoli differenti. Kont Guidance il-Fortini, so on and so forth. Meta nholqu l-Kulleġġi imbagħad , u l-Fortini ġiet faced out biex immorru l-Verdala, l-iskola tal-Verdala. --

Dak iż-żmien kien hemm is-sur Cachia bħala Prinċipal u kien qalli, "Tridx nibdew proġett u nżommu l-Fortini peress li l-building kien għadu jaqa'taħt il-Kulleġġ u nbiddlu l-Fortina u nagħmluh forma ta' Learning Support Centre." Dak iż-żmien kull ma kien hawn Learning Support centre wiehed li kien il-Furjana. U konna bdejna proġett ta' qisu sentejn SPA-- kien jismu Space for Progress and Aspiration li kien prattikament bħala Learning Support Centre imma konna ingibu studenti for a week or two. Dawk li konna nġidulhom excluded students. Flok kienet jagħmlu exclusion id-dar, kienu jiġu excluded il-Fortini.

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt istra.

Intervistat: U l-Fortini konna nagħmlu ġimġha, ħmistax jiddependi kemm kien excluded nagħmlu speċi ta' programm magħhom, il-behavioural programme. Naraw x'mar ħażin, naraw setgħux actjaw differenti, naraw li jiskuzaw ruħhom speċi naraw kif ha jidhlu lura so on and so forth. U li kienet tajba ħafna. Kienet ideja tajba ħafna to be honest. Maż-żmien

iddeċidew li Fortini jiġi Learning Support Centre, b'mod speċi ta' di sentu u għamilt tlett snin il-Learning Support Centre bħala Head hemmhekk imbagħad minn hemmhekk kelli ċ-ċans li mmur—għax kont Acting hemmhekk, giet opportunita xogħol barra minn Malta, għamilt hames snin Ġibiltà.--

Meta mort Ġibiltà, l-ideja kienet illi kellhom bħala pajjiż Ġibiltà kellhom crime age li kienet qed tgħola hafna. Huma ma kellhom l-ebda setup ta' centres fejn jistgħu jagħmlu dawn il-behavioural programmes so kienet esperjenza sabiha għax għamilt hames snin nibbildja dawn il-Nurture Centres. Kont Head of Projects speċi ta'--

L-ewwel sentejn kont Head of Projects, kont ngħallem, naħdmu Behavioural and Emotional support team kienet, sakemm actually tawna l-placements bħala postijiet. Bdejna fis-sett centru dawk li qishom learning Zones, iktar qishom more forma ta' Nurture Centres li għandna ahna Malta għax qisu support centre go l-istess skola u ftaħna tlieta maż-żmien jiġifieri on the fifth year imbagħad ġejt lura Malta u kont għamilt l-interview biex niġi hawnhekk u ġejt aċċettat.

Intervistatriċi: Il-marelli x'esperjenza istra.

Intervistat: Ija.

Intervistatriċi: Wow esperjenza rikka hafna.

Intervistat: [00:03:53] Ezatt. Dejjem ma' dawn it-tip tat-tfal jiġifieri but on the side pereżempju kelli—naħdmu hafna ma' Duke of Edinburgh awards u naħdmu hafna f'less developed countries speċjalment Africa and so on and so forth. U għamilna hafna proġetti mat-tfal, f'behavioural programmes ma' tfal u ftaħna centri l-Ghana, Kenya u dawn il-postijiet.

Intervistatriċi: Il-lallu marelli. Walter qisu x'taħseb li hi l-perċezzjoni tiegħek ta' dawn it-tfal li jattendu l-Nurture Centres versus tan-nies ta' hemm barra. Naħseb hija diversa.

Intervistat: Ara bħalissa qed naħdem biex—din kienet dejjem kienet stigma li kien hawn Malta. Mhux biss Malta f'ħafna postijiet li inti kont tiġi mibgħut il-Learning Support Center għax inti tifel imqareb mhux għax inti tifel li għandek bżonn support hemm differenza għax inti trid tibgħat tifel x'imkien għax għandu bżonn support u għax trid tibgħat tifel x'imkien għax ma tistax--

timmanigħjah u dan imqareb – to start with jiġifieri l-intention l-għaliex inti ha tibgħat persuna, l-Learning Support centre, mill-bidu trid tkun differenti. Ir-risposta jtuħilek it-tfal fis-sens li meta tara t-tfal hawnhekk, tarhom ferħanin tibda' tgħid, “imma jien għaliex qed ikolli l-impressjoni li lit-tfal ddumpjajt hawnhekk meta taf li t-tfal qed jieħdu pjaċir hawnhekk?” --

Allura l-ideja hija ħażina ħafna għax l-ideja tan-nies t'hemm barra hi illi jekk tmur il-Learning Support Centre, tfajtu hemmhekk għax dan ħadd ma jista' jikkontrollah u għie hawnhekk. Fil-verita wkoll xi kultant jiġri hekk fl-opinjoni tiegħi li tifel jiġi ddampjat u minsi u daqshekk għax sempiliciment ma nistax nikkontrollah u t-tfal iħossuha. It-tfal iħossuha u jafuha infatti waħda mill-affraijiet li tipically tiġri mat-tafl kollha, li ma jkunux iridu jilbsu l-uniformi ta' l-iskola ta' fejn marru.

Intervistatriċi: Istra.

Intervistat: Jew tal-Kulleġġ ta' fejn marru.

Intervistat: Huma suppost jiġu b'dik l-uniformi jiġifieri?

Intervistat: [00:05:58] Huma suppost jiġu bl-uniformi tal-Kulleġġ għax aħna this is a re-integration programme jiġifieri l-ideja dawn huma parti mill-Kulleġġ u l-ideja li nżommu l-identita tal-Kulleġġ minnfejn ġew. Pero jirrifjutaw direttament jiġifieri. Ħafna minnhom tant ġew rejected jew tant they failed to integrate f'sistemi differenti illi lanqas biss ikunu jafu x'Kulleġġ ġejjin minnu.

Intervistatriċi: Istra

Intervistat: Jiġifieri għadna daww speċjalment li jiġu bejn il-Junior--, bejn l-Middle u s-Senior school bejn Form 3 u Form 4 ħafna drabi nbiddlulhom l- Kulleġġ għax inbidlulhom is-suġġetti u anqas huma ma jkunx jafu. U huma jħossuha t-tfal, they feel the rejection, issa mqarbin kemm huma mqarbin—

Intervistatriċi: U żgur.

Intervistat: It-tifel iħoss li dan ma rridux jiena miegħi jew ma rridux-- . Infatti waħda mill-affarijiet li qed nagħmlu bħalissa, għadna kif għamilna l-logo il-ġdid taċ-ċentru biex ninqatgħu, mhux ninqatgħu għax xorta parti minn St.Thomas Moore imma biex lanqas nagħtu fl-għajn li aħna parti minn St.Thomas Moore b'mod kbir, għamilna l-logo taċ-ċentru, it-tfal

malli raw--infatti ġibtilhom it-tracksuits ħa nagħmlilhom is-sweaters li lanqas huma il-kulur tal-Kulleġġ tagħna, għax huma--fil-verita m'għandna l-ebda tifel mill-Kulleġġ tagħna aħna, tfal kollha minn Kulleġġi differenti ġejjin u minn ta' St.Thomas Moore l-ebda tifel.

Intervistatriċi: Il marelli tista' tiġri din jiġifieri? Imma suppost--?

Intervistat: Iva għax aħna għalkemm aħna naqgħu taht Kulleġġ fil-verita taht l-Students services naqgħu jiġifieri—

Intervistatriċi: Fhimtek orrajt.

Intervistat: Aħna parti mill-Kulleġġ biex inkunu parti minn Kulleġġ pero m'għandna l-ebda roots ma' liema area jew mill- catchment area tagħna [ma jinftiehemx 00:07:30] tlieta issa

Nurture Centres għax għandna wieħed, issa ftahna wieħed l-Msida wkoll, il-Hub u jiddependi mit-tfal li għandha, nippruvaw meta jiġi tifel b'referral naraw liema Learning--

Centre f'dik is-sitwazzjoni huma l-aħjar. Ġieli jkollna ġiex itfal ta' l-istess—huma hbieb u kienu jagħmlu herba go skola biex nifthemu allura nippruvaw nifirduhom. Wieħed imur go Nurture Centre u wieħed imur go Nurture Centre.

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt.

Intervistat: Jekk inkunu nafu li ġej tifel minn go Nurture Centre li huwa ħabib ħafna ma' tifel li għandna hawnhekk nippruvaw naraw jekk hux worted jew jiġi hawnhekk għax forsi it's a positive influence jew ikella if it's a negative influence jmur fl- Learning Support Centre oħra so that's an advantage. So aħna ngibu tfal minn kullimkien. Għandna tfal minn Bugibba u għandna tfal minn Birżebbuġia. Ma tagħmilx differenza.

Intervistatriċi: Istra.

Intervistat: [00:08:22] Ehe pero din hija wahda mill-affarijiet, l-identity tagħhom--Bħalissa qegħdin nagħmlu rebranding kbira biex nifthiemu. Nippruvaw nuru lilhom illi isma intom t'hawnhekk għax huma għalkemm hawnhekk they feel belonging, huma pereżempju jistaqasu, “ Nistgħu mmorru nilgħabu football bhala team tal-iskola kontra centru ieħor?” għax huma jkunu jridu jkunu—

belonging t'hawnhekk u peress li it is not clear if it is a re-integration programme hawnhekk u ha nkun onest jew it's a school illi tifel gie hawnhekk u allura l-probabilta li jmur integration hija minima aħna pereżempju din is-sena gratilna kellna żewġ itfal ma riedux letteralment ma riedux jieħdu l-ischool leaving certificate mill- College tagħhom u ma riedux infatti għadhom hawnhekk.--

Ma ħaduhomx. U l-mummy ta' tifel minnhom qalti, “ Ma tarax ha nieħu school leaving certificate iffirmit minn dak il-Head meta t-tifel għamel sentejn magħkom hawnhekk u dak qas biss jaf min hu.”

Intervistatriċi: Il- marelli. Jaqbadni il-bard

Intervistat: Jiġifieri to that extent li huma għandhom dak ir-rejection –

Intervistatriċi: U żgur kemm l-uniformi, kemm--

Intervistat: Li aħna you think it' not important imma għal dawn it-tfal li m'għandhomx illi they look at a astructure, u they look at belonging to somewhere għax ħafna minnhom dik il-problema li għandhom, minħabba problema li għandhom il-familja, problema fil—jispiċċaw m'għandhom ħadd li huma belonging. Jien pereżempju l-Form 5's il-ġiex Form 5 li għandna l-istess feelings għandhom--.

Jiġu jistaqsuni, “Imma ahna nistghu nigu nghidulkom hello s-sena d-diehla?” Jiġifieri dawn diġa qed jibzghu—ghadu Marzu diġa jibzghu s-sena d-diehla ma jafux x’ha jiġri minnhom ghax tant sar ġew belonging illi ma jafux—infatti dik inhi l-problema li qed nippruvaw nibbildjaw bridge bejn hawn u fejn sejin.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm. Walter imma kieku jkun programm ta’ re-integration, kif kienet suppost kienet ha taħdem jiġifieri għaliex anke għaliha għadha naqra hekk?.

Intervistat: Ara l-ideali—

Intervistatriċi: Ghax hawnhekk tant kemm għandkom programm partikolari li—

Intervistat: [00:10:28] Fil-verita hemm abbozz ta’ policy li s’issa għadha ma ġietx ikkonfermatha, għadha ma ġietx signed. Illi jien ilhaqt l-ahhar biċċa ghax jien bejn wieħed u ieħor, ġejt is-sena l-oħra. Ergajn għamilna review, batnieha d- Direttur, ma nafx, qatt ma ġiet lura għadna. Basically the procedure would be very straightforward ta--.

Jiġifieri dan għandek referral inti pero once li jibda r-referral, ir-referral jiġi by consultation mhux referral as in Walter il-Head ta’ X iddeċieda illi dan jagħmel referral u bagħatu--- jiġifieri referral jon paper jiġi wara li inti ippruvajt dak kollu li stajt tipprova l-iskola ghax dan fl-ahhar mill-ahhar qed tneħħih minn go mainstream u qed titfghu go l-specialised -- programme inti ,which is not as easy, it is not as nice as it may seem. Ahna għandna student hawnhekk li kien kapaċi jagħmel l-O levels kollha kieku baqa’ fil-Mainstream so il-Mainstream tiftitlu din l-opportunita ghax ahna we can’t run exactly the same programme as a normal school.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur. U żgur.

Intervistat: So l-idea kieku once l-iskola ppruvat dak kollha li setgħet ippruvat miegħu, kien hemm referral. Ir-referral ġie kif qeghdin ngħidu by consultation jiġifieri dan mhux, “Ara fejn ha nibgħatuh lil dan? Hemmhekk ejja nagħmlu referral għal hemmhekk” Jiġifieri raġuni valida by a Psychiatrist, by the Councillor, by the Social Workers, Isma jaf ikun hemm-- benefiċċji jekk imur hemmhekk jaf ma jkollux. Jekk ahna ċ-ċentru tagħna għandna hafna vocational skills u inti taf li dan it-tifel assolutament he’s not a hands on person. Mela taf li ha titfghu hawnhekk and he is going to fit ghax ahna that’s the line tal-Hamrun. Forsi l-line tal- Fortina għandu inqas vocational skills.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: So it has to come within that – isiru case conferences kif suppost u ta vera jiġifieri qabel ma jidhol tifel ahna nkunu diġa nafu x’ behavioural programme ha nagħmlu miegħu. Inkunu nafu x’inhuma l-weaknesses, x’inhuma l-flaws tiegħu speċjalment x’inhuma l-affarijiet illi hu vera jhobb.

Għandna tfal hawnhekk fejn jiena qass kont mistieden għall-case conference u sibthom mal-bieb ta' barra [ma jinftiehemx 00:12:45]semplicement, "Minn għada ha jibda jiġi dan it-tifel." Irrangajna kollox. Imbagħad għandna min għamilna sajjf nagħmlu case conference kif suppost, taraha d-differenza. Wieħed istragiljajna għal erba' xhur experimenting which is a very bad thing għax jien qas inkun naf x'kundizzjoni—jekk jien qas naf x'kundizzjoni għandu dat-tifel minjaf jekk--

hux qed nagħmel ħsara jiena? Orrajt I might know that he is autistic jew that he's got ADHD imma jien minix, not the expert in the field. Jekk ituni profile ta' x'nista' nagħmel biex dat-tifel ngħinu, għandi psychiatrist jgħidli, "Isma Walter," pereżempju affarijiet żgħar "Issemilux lil ommu għax mejta." Just the basic.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: [00:13:27] Fhimt? Jiġifieri it helps. Ahseb u ara affarijiet b'aktar dettalji. Case conference tajba, kif suppost. Naħdmu on a month's work kif ha nagħmlu—u ndaħħlu t-tifel. B'target illi t-tifel ha jerga jmur lura mhux b'target li issa t-tifel qiegħed hawnhekk, għalaqtlu l-bibien, thank God hlist minnu u daqshekk. Jien pereżempju nista' nqabbel għax kont f'pajjiż ieħor. Id-differenza bejn Malta, li nsib Malta u li nsib barra minn Malta mhuwiex kulhadd għax ma tistax titfa lil kulhadd f'keffa waħda Malta.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: Huwa hija l-Heads of school jew l-SMT's ta' barra jew it-teachers meta kont naħdem barra, they were responsible for the kid jiġifieri jekk għalihom it-tifel ma jmurx mainstream, it's a failure u l-awtoritajiet isaqsu, "Għaliex dan it-tifel baqa' go Learning Support Centre u inti ma rnexxilekx integrajt?"

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u

Intervistat: U they would be responsible for it mentri hawnhekk għandna tfal qas jafu x'Kulleġġ għandhom aħseb u ara—għandna tfal by luck inkun naf li suppost gie ffolowjat minn dan l-Counsellor jew suppost iffolowjat jew qiegħed ma'dan il-Kulleġġ u letteralment by luck għax peress li t-tfal tagħna kollha ffolowjati mis-Social workers, abli tiġi Social--Worker tkellmu u tgħidlek, "Imma dak mhux iffolowjat minn dik, dik, dik pereżempju?" So you start putting up the [ma jinftiehemx 00:14:50]. So once li jiġu hawn dejjem iridu jkunu hawnhekk bit-tir li ha jmorru lura. Issa anke jekk inti taf—jien għandi tfal jiġu hawnhekk, wara xahar tgħid, "Dan it-tifel probabli--" Jekk għandek tifel li jiġi f'Ottubru tal-Form 5, tal-Year 11 ninety nine percent dan you won't reintegrate him

Intervistatriċi: U U żgur għax dan--

Intervistatriċi: [00:15:09] Għall-aħħar hames xhur so dan, that's okay. Imma jekk għandek tifel ta' Form 2 li baqalu erba' snin u minn meta gie dan it-tifel qas qatt xi hadd ma resaq l hawnhekk xi hadd mill-main school tiegħu, aħseb u ara jiena kemm ha mmur b'wiċċi l-quddiem u ngħidhom, "Dan ha nagħmlulu re-integration." It's a lost case diġa.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: Mhux ha tiġri jiġifieri. Għandna tifel hawnhekk kien il-Gardian Angel gie hawnhekk. Jien fl-opinjoni personali tiegħi with a good LSA kien kapaċi jkampa. Trid tkun LSA ta' vera illi studjajet lil min ha tibgħatlu. Imma he would be good re-integrated in school. Okay he is autistic u jtuħ it-tantrums so what allura ha noqgħodu sejr in kull min hu autistic ma jistax imur – i mean he has improved a lot jekk inti tkun taf it-triggers tiegħu jew minn qabel tara x'tagħmel, you won't sit down and do the lessons allright imma inti għandek tant riżorsi go skola kbira u tant attivitajiet, ma tistax ittih LSA u tagħmillu programm speċjalizzat għalih u tarah jimpruvja naqra naqra? That would be a satisfaction for the whole school.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur.

Intervistat: Imma that's the situation at the moment. Nagħmlu dawn il-case conferences, dik hi l-idea u it's an ongoing assessment every six weeks – Ara teoretikament it-tfal li jiġu hawnhekk on paper ma jiġux iktar minn six weeks.

Intervistatriċi: Istra.

Intervistat: And they will be re-assessed after six weeks that's what is written on the paper what's happened hija tkun differenti.

Intervistatriċi: U re-assessed minn professionals tipo Psychologists?

Intervistat: Yes suppost technically isir case conference, jagħmel six weeks hawnhekk dan it-tifel u ngħidu, "Isma wara six weeks he needs re-integration?" jew ejja ngħidu term ha jekk mhux six weeks għax forsi—u wara term ngħidu, "Nerġgħu nagħmlu re-integration?" Lilna tagħmlilna differenza kbira għax aħna qed inħarsu lejn it-tifel ha jiġi re-integrated jew it-tifel ha jibqa' hawnhekk? Jekk it-tifel ha jibqa' hawnhekk you can plan long term. Jekk taf li hemm ċans li t-tifel ha jiġi reviewed ha tippjana mod ieħor.

Intervistatriċi: Qas huma Walter. Qas it-tfal stess għax [ma jinftiehemx 00:17:20] ma jkunu jafu għal x'hiex telqu, għalxiex ġew, Kemm ha jdumu hawn.

Intervistat: Qas il-ġenituri.

Intervistatriċi: Jiġifieri fl-ghama, speċi se jiġi hawn—

Intervistat: [00:17:30] U they need constant reminder jiġifieri jekk inti—inti tgħid, "U iva kull six weeks nagħmlu review." Imma jekk inti—ejja nsemmu persuna, l-Prefect of Discipline

tal-Kulleġ pereżempju li dan għamillu referral biex jiġi hawnhekk. Għamillu referral, ġie hawnhekk. Sakemm ġie hawnhekk, dan kien jarah darbtejn fil-ġimgħa, tlett darbiet fil-ġimgħa. Once li ġie hawnhekk, dan sparixxa. Dan kif tippretendi li t-tifel ha jagħmel re-integration lura jekk inti qtajtlu dan il-bridge li kellek?

Intervistatriċi: U żgur.

Intervistat: Għax dawn tinshiex. Dawn mhux angli għandna aħna. Dawn trid tibbildja relazzjoni magħhom qabel ma terġa ddaħalhom go l-iskola.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u

Intervistat: Jien qed ngħidlek għandi tfal qas biss ikun jridu jaraw wiċċ il-Head issa jekk inti l-Head mintix lest tissagrifika naqra mill-hin tiegħek biex tkellmu li dan it-tifel u terġa, taf kif, trawwem naqra l-fiduċja tiegħu lejk ma tistax tirijentagrah lil dan għax kull darba li ha jiġi l-iskola—

Intervistatriċi: U żgur.

Intervistat: He can be physically aggressive.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur. U kif qed tgħid inti, imbagħad juri l-power tagħhom fis-sens billi ma jridx jilbes uniformi, ma jridx iċ-ċertifikat jiġifieri they are showing illi ma jridux lanqas.

Intervistat: Kelli tifel mar għand il-Prinċipal u sa qaliblu kullimkien.

Intervistat: Marelli.

Intervistat: [00:018:48] Infatti l-Councillor qalet, “Ma nistax nifhem-- ” Għax ippruvajna inżommu dak il-bridge imma min-naħa ta’ fejn kien ġej ma ridux iżommu dna il-bridge so—

Intervistatriċi: Jien ġieli nibda’ ngħid, “Tgħid iktar ma nikkrejaw spazzji, iktar ikollhom ċans fejn jibgħathom lil dawn it-tfal?” Fis -sens jiġifieri kieku ma ġewx ikkrearti qatt l-ebda tip ta’ support whatsoever, taħseb li kien ikun hemm aktar responsabilta min-naħa tat-teacher to actually—?

Intervistat: Jien għalhekk għidtlek, meta bdejna nagħmluh, il-Ġibilta, l-idea kienet li l-istudent jibqa’ go l-iskola u jibqa’ – issa jien qed ngħid kontrija għax jiena – imma jibqa’ taħt is-saqaf tal-Head ta’ l-iskola biex inti—

Intervistatriċi: Jkun responsabilta tiegħu.

Intervistat: Jibqa’ responsabli tat-tifel. Waħda mill-affarijiet positivi li kellna aħna pereżempju kienet jekk kien parti minn dal-Learning Support Centre within, ġol-boundaries ta’ l-iskola. Jekk it-tifel hu tajjeb fil-maths, inti tista’ tibgħatu għal-lezzjonijiet tal-Maths.

Intervistatriċi: Istra.

Intervistat: Jekk inti taf li dan qiegħed Form 5 imma għandu ċans iġib ċans iġib żewġ O levels kont tibgħatu għal dawk il- lezzjonijiet imbagħad jerga jiġi lura għal-Nurture Centre. Halli

imbagħad ġol Nurture Centre jagħmel l-affarijiet kollha li għamlu – imma almenu t-teachers joħduhom għal dawk il-ġiex lezzjonijiet u jekk inti taf illi illum qiegħed --

ħażin pereżempju, imma illum ma bghattux għal- leżjoni tal-Maths, iċempilha u tghidilha, “Isma illum mhux ġej għal-lesson tal-Maths ħa jibqa’ miegħi illum.” Biex imur erba’ lezzjonijiet oħra tghidilha, “Isma għandek klassi oħra fejn tista’ ddahlu?” Halli jista’ jlahhaq ma’ dak.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur.

Intervistat: Li tikkreja spażju extra, it can backfire u. U there is a thin fine line biex ngħidu tissegħreghom biex ngħidu, “We fulfilled our duties.” U—Issa to be honest it-tfal li għandna hawnhekk din is -sena, bejn il-covid u bejn is-sitwazzjoni kif inhi, it’s hard to re-integrate them. It’s hard to re-integrate them ukoll għax int trid toħodhom ġurnata sħiħa ġo l-iskola, allura—kif se taqbad tgħid--

Intervistatriċi: Jidhirli kont nattendu xi Nurture Centre, kont nagħmel xi observations. Ma nafx hux Haż-Żebbuġ insejt. Fejn kien hemm jumejn Nurture Centre, tlett ijiem hemm qisu two years ago.

Intervistat: [00:21:15] Li jiġri u-- li hija idea tajba, Jien ma kontx hawn is-sena l-oħra, imma kienet issir. Pero tinsieix li il-Primary, it-tfal ikunu ġo klassi.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: Jiġifieri inti you are going back to your class imbagħad.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur.

Intervistat: Meta inti qiegħed Sekondarja, għandek timetable hija mixed ħafna u ħa tbiddel il-klassi skond l-options, allura diffiċli tibgħat tifel—Once li jgħaddu dawk is-six weeks, dawk il-da, allura diffiċli tifel jiġi jaqbad lura fil-mainstream għax dan, orrajt ħadtu ġurnata inti imma dak ħadtu ġurnata l-ġimgħa u l-ġimgħa kellhom jien naf, Malti, Maths u Inġliż.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur.

Intervistat: Ma’ dawk.

Intervistat: Jiġifieri mhux – you’re not building a bridge ma’ l-iskola.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: Jiġifieri diffiċli ħafna. Once li t-ifel jiġi disconnected, trid taħdem biex terġa tikkonetjah ma’ dik ta’ l-iskola sakemm ma ssiblax xi ħaġa—it-tifel bright irid jagħmel l-Matsec certification allura tgħid, isma tippuxjah fuq dik il-ħaġa li hawnhekk ma tistax tagħmilha so diffiċli. Is-sistema kif inhi diffiċli.

Intervistatriċi: U qisu l-aħħar darba baqet ħafna miegħi dak it-tifel li qalli, “Għax poġġewni hawn” nimmagina t-tfal l-oħrajn qisu—mhux għax hu happy għax anzi happy imma qisu they

don't know what happened biex hemm ġew hawn u issa kif qed tgħid inti dil- loss of identity ta--.

Intervistat: Ehe. Din twegġahom lilhom. Għandna tfal ġew rejected minn erba' skejjel pereżempju . Jien pereżempju waħda mill-affrajiet li ngħidilhom dejjem, “ Jien qatt m'hu ha nkeċċik.”

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: [00:22:59] Huma jaraw—ħafna minnhom jgħidu, ħafna minnhom meta ngħidilhom, jaqbd u jgħidli “Isma ha ntikom ġimgħa cooling down period.” Jgħiduli, “Għax int għidt li qatt mhu ha tkeċċiena.” Jigħifieri ituhilek mill-ewwel mill-ewwel .

Intervistatriċi: U it's a fear they care with them ukoll.

Intervistat: U għalihom —pereżempju illum bgħatt wieħed id-dar fuq ċuċċata bgħattu imma sempliċiment ridt nurih illi, “ Isma ż-żejjed kolli żejjed imbagħad.” Qalli, “Lili m'għidtlx li qatt mhu ha tkeccini.” Għidtlu, “Jien mhux ha nkeċċik, jien ha ntik break, biex taħsibha. U jekk trid tiġi, ejja għada.” U malli wasal id-dar ċempilt l-ommu qaltli, “ Qallek sorry.” Qalli, “ Ġej għada”

Intervistatriċi: Jaħasra.

Intervistat: Għax huma għalihom it's a second home. Huma jafu li ġew rejected allura they make it—u l-fatt li huwa żgħir u they get to know their teachers better u we try to push on their potential jigħifieri – we don't underline their failures imma nipprovaw kemm jista; jkun naraw x'hawn tajjeb.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: Jew x'hemm tajjeb fihom.

Intervistatriċi: Jiena nemmen li that's what all school should be all about ta jigħifieri -- In-numri enormi li tħossok one over eight hundred students ma nafx anke mal-high achievers taħdimx għax naħseb kulhadd ikun irid iħossu parti minn xi haġa.

Intervistat: [00:24:16] Jien il-karriera tiegħi dejjem kienet fi skejjel żgħira x'hin konna l-Fortini, għalhekk mort—meta kont fil-bidu tas-sentejn [ma jinftiehemx 00:24:121] kont kont għażilt secondary għax secondary tal-Fortini kull ma kien hemm mitejn tifel u they were—kont nafhom kollha t-tfal.--

Kont nafhom kollha, il-familjari tagħhom wara ħames snin li jkun għamli miegħek you're a friend more than anything u jsibuk bħala Counsellor illi, “Isma ġejjin naqra s'għandek halli nitkellmu daqsxejn.” Jigħifieri dawk l-affarijiet. Iktar kemm ikunu kbar l-iskejjel iktar titlef l-identita tat-tifel, iktar jintilef, it's quite normal u.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: Issa għalxiex Malta bħal hafna pajjiżi l-iskejjel qed jikbru mhux jiċċien, I guess it's resource problem u mhux. It boils down to teachers u--

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u. U naqbd u sistema li tkun qed taħdem f'pajjiż f'kuntast ieħor.

Intervistat: It's quite obligatory ta għax anke fejn jidhlu t-teachers, we don't have enough teachers.

Intervistatriċi: Dik hi ukoll.

Intervistat: [00:25:16] Ahna ngħidu li isma l-klassijiet iridu jkun iżgħar imma jekk inti m'għandikx teachers, il-klassijiet ma tistax tagħmilhom iżgħar.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: : U l-Ġvern ma jistax jaqbad jiddeċidi li hawn mitt teacher oħra jekk m'hawnx teachers l-Universita.

Intervistatriċi: Walter nittkelmu hafna fil-pajjiż dwar nisimgħu l-vuċi tat-tfal. temmen li nagħmluha fl-iskejjel tagħna li nisimgħu l-vuċi tagħhom?

Intervistat: Jiena naħseb nagħmluha sakemm il-viċi tagħhom tkun iddoqq għal widnejna jiġifieri –hawnhekk classic case hawnhekk il-vuċi tagħhom ikissru w jfarrku.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: That's the way they communicate. Issa jekk irridx nifhimhom jew le meta jkissru w jfarrku dik hija mod tiegħi u.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: Xi kultant anke jiena taqbiżli semplicità—imbagħad xi kultant taħseb u tgħid, tibda tagħmel one plus one imma kif qegħdin ngħidu it all boils down kemm tqatta' hin mat-tifel u tara għaliex kisser u farrak.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: Jew għaliex hebb għal dik it-teacher jew għaliex—imma din li nisimgħu l-vuċi tat-tfal, “Isma poġġi bil-qieghda, għidli kif qed thossok.” Speċjalment ma'dawn it-tip ta' tfal ma jaħdimx. Dawn it-tip ta' tfal they are too streetwise and they won't open up illi, “Isma għidli kif qed thossok.” Jew jiġrilu xi haġa jiġifieri –

Intervistatriċi: Qed nieħu pjaċir li qed tgħidli għax kumbinazzjoni ltqajt ma' xi haddieħor li jmexxi skola u qalli, “Xi kultant tiltaqa' ma' tfal tistaqsihom kif inhuma u ma jkellmukx.” U għidli, “Ipprovajt imma affarijiet oħrajn mhux just talking -?” għax dawn ha tpoġġi miegħu ha tgħidli, “Kif inti?” diffiċli hafna jgħidlek.

Intervistat: [00:27:05] Ftit ilu ġew tad-Drug Unit insejt x'jisimhom u ġew ta' l-Aġenzija Żagħżagħ jagħmlu xi affarijiet hawnhekk u dejjem l-istess haġa jistaqsuni, jgħiduli, “isma jekk nagħmlu dawn l-attivitajiet tħseb li jingagħaw it-tfal?” u dejjem din il-haġa ngħidilhom, “ It-

tfal tista' tagħmlilhom li trid fil-verita, jiddependi inti kemm tibni relazzjoni magħhom u inti kif ha tipproponi ruhek."

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: Għax inti tista' tghidilhom l-istorja ta' Snow white, jekk huma jaraw li inti persuna li jistgħu jafdaw u jistgħu jikkomunikaw miegħek they take it. Jekk le tista' tagħmlilhom l-ilma jiżfen għax xorta ma—Kellna sessions, Kellna sessions ma;-Aġenzia Żgħażaġh fejn is-session kienet tal-ġenn u teoratically riedu jagħmlu teamwork u on paper tghid, "Il-lallu kemm ha jieħdu pjaċir." U kienet diżastru.--

Imbagħad darba minnhom għamlet session letteralment bilqieghda m'għamlet xejn għax insiet xi affarijiet u qaltli, "Illum waħda mill-aħjar sessions li kellna għax qbadna nitkellmu fuq hip-hop u qbadna nitkellmu fuq ir-rap imbagħad għidna għax għandhom stigma għax tal-hip-hop jieħdu hafna drogi w bdejna fuq id-drogi." Jigifieri—

Intervistatriċi: Istra she found a way around it madoff.

Intervistat: Jigifieri anle meta ngħidu, "Nisimgħu tt-tfal." Skond kif irrid nismagħhom jiena, skont kif irrid ninterpretar dak li qed jippruvaw jgħiduli.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: Għandi tifel hawnhekk wara li ħabb għal xi tlett teachers, erba' teachers qalli, "Imma inti thobbni hux?" jew, "Taf li jiena nhobbok." Dak il-hin tghid—tkun bir-ragħwa f'halqek, tkun taf l-istorja tiegħu, missier, il-partner ta dak jtuħ ix-xebgħat so għalih dak li jfisser imħabba jigifieri tinda' tghid heqq you do one plus one, taf kif, you mellow down, tifhem.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: Hux hażin jew tajjeb hu haġa oħra imma li tifhem it's the first step to deal with the problem.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm. U meta tghid, "Kultant ikissru w jfarrku." Tkun rabja li ġejja minn affarijiet tal-familja, affarijiet li jkunu għabu hawnhekk?

Intervistat: Ara aħna Josef il-youth worker li jahdem magħna jgħid sentenza li hija tajba hafna illi pratikament jgħid li, "Pratikament dawn it-tfal għamdhom pressa fil-moħħ u jridu jiżvugawha." U vera. Hafna minnhom meta jiġu filgħodu pressa tarhom ikollhom, letteralment pressure cooker li b'xi mod jew iehor trid tiżvoga.--

So il-mod tagħhom il-fatt li hawnhekk iħossuhom safe jiżvugaw magħna. Mhux għax hawnhekk mhux qed ngħid ma jimpurtax jekk ikissir imma jaf li ha nifhmek ha nipprova nifhmek. Jekk ġara xi haġa jaf ha nipprova nifhmek so għalhekk pereżempju hawnhekk

jieħdu ħafna għalihom u they're very sensitive meta you let them down u trid tagħmel ċert li jekk wghedthom xi ħaġa--

ittihilhom għax għalihom jekk inti wghedthom xi ħaġa u kif taqbad tgħid ma tajthilhomx it's a massive failure għax għalihom qed jafdaw iktar milli jafdaw—

Intervistatriċi: Kultant anke lill-familjari tagħhom probabilment. Walter joħolmu dawn it-tfal jiġifieri joħolmu li jkollhom futur wara hawnhekk?

Intervistat: [00:30:41] Ija ta. Pjuttost naħseb li joħolmu ħafna xi kultant. Fis-sens li pjuttost sfortunatament inkunu rridu nkunu aħna, u din hija dispjaċir illi once li jaslu sa ċertu punt, joħolmu li jaslu ċertu postijiet illi fil-verita kapaċi jaslu kieku ma tilfux tant meta kienu iżgħar. Imma trid tgħidilhom, “Isma issa din hi r-realta, inti tlift ħafna skola.” Pereżempju tgħidlu, “Żgħir mhux ħa tasal biex tagħmel xahrejn oħra l-Matriculation certificate.” U imbagħad hemm il-problema ta' meta jispiċċaw mil-year 11.--

Illu jibdeu joħolmu pero malli jispiċċaw mill-year 11 ma jsibu l-ebda tip ta' support jew is-support ideali biex ikompli sejrini. Aħna Year 11 ħa jispiċċaw tnejn din is-sena. Thank god wieħed barra li ħa jaħdem mal-papa diehel l-ischool of Arts.

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt.

Intervistat: Għax he is very good sculpture, għandu talent, skoprewh waqt li kien għandna hawnhekk u hi xi ħaġa li bbustjatlu ħafna l-mural infatti ilbieraħ kellna laqgħa mal-Head ta' l-school of Arts u qalulu, “ Ħa tibda bid-diploma mill-ewwel qas irriduk tibda mill-level 4, ħa tibda mill-ewwel bid-Diploma halli tkun tista' tagħmel id-Degree.” U l-iehor it-tifel l-iehor diehel il-youth.ink --

it's a good thing li ħa jidhol Youth.ink għax joħolmu, għandhom aspirations speċjalment meta jibdeu—issa halli ħafna minnhom iridu jaħdmu li għalihom it's a good aspiration isma, “Nixtieq immur naħdem jien għax għada pitgħada jrid ikolli flat għaliya jew dar għaliya.”

Għax kollha huma aspirations.--

Qisna aħna tipprova tigajdhom biex ma jieħdux tisbita kbira jekk din l-aspiration ma tasalx so tkun naqra realitika fil-verita. Għandna issue pereżempju ta illi they are very strong physically u jridu jiġojnjaw l-army imma we know illi minhabba l-mental issues tagħhom żhur ħadd m'hu ħa jafdahom u mhux ħa jgħaddu mill-ebda test ta' l-armata so kif taqbad tgħid--

tipprova maż-żmien tgħidilhom li għalkemm għandhom din l-aspiration—tipprova tgħidilhom maż-żmien għalkemm għandhom din l-aspiration jippruvaw ma ttihihomx, “Isma inti ma tistax [ma jinftiehemx 00:33:02]għax qatt mhu ħa tgħaddi minhabba minhabba l-issue

tiegħek.” Imma ehe joħolmu daqs kemm xi kultant naħseb joħolmu aktar milli joħolmu naħseb, t-tfal normali, just accademic to be honest.

Intervistatriċi: Tinkwieta Walter hekk xi diffikultajiet li jistgħu jiltaqgħu magħhom fil-futur wara li jitilqu minn magħkom speċi?

Intervistat: Aħna l-ikbar issue tagħna dik li once li jitilqu minn taħt idejn l-Education ma jkollhomx ebda support. Hafna minnhom għandhom bżonn support on a daily bases biex nifthemu. Illi isma “ Kif mort? X’għamilt? Fejn mort? Ha nara kif inti sejjer?” They still need that structure around them speċjalment taf li d-dar min-naħa tal-ġenituri m’għandhom l-ebda tip ta’ struttura jiġifieri dawn once li jispiċċaw l- O levels qegħdin waħidhom full stop.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: : [00:33:54] So ma nistax nimmaġina—

Intervistatriċi: Istra u xogħol mal-familji—Malta ma tantx hawn drawwa li jsir hafna xogħol mal-familji. Fis-sens qiegħda tkun hafna b’ mof volontarju, “Trid?” Jekk, “ Le ” qisu ma—

Intervistat: Ha ngħidlek, jiena dejjem ngħid li kieku għandi xi setgħa l-benefiċċju soċjali ntihom a patt u l-kundizzjoni ta’ ċertu obligations li jridu jagħmlu l-ġenituri.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: Għax jien jekk naf li għandi henoturi għandhom mental health issues, t-tifle għandu mental health issues imma dawn qed jirrifjutaw li jieħdu medications jew li qed jirrifjutaw li jmorru għand Psychiatrist jew li jiġu followed jew kull tip ta’ support allura almenu we make it obligatory, “ Isma int toħodhom il-benefiċċji soċjali tajjeb pero I will make sure illi you give something back.”

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: Jiġifieri –

Intervistatriċi: : Lit-tifel tiegħek jiġifieri mhux xi –

Intervistat:[00:34:48] Biex tobbliga n- nies għax in-nies it boils down to money at the end of the day jiġifieri –

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u. U aħna jkollna hafna tfal li jkun hawn l-HTTPS tal-Appoġġ illi jħabbtulhom imma jekk inti tirrifjuta ma tiħux terapija.

Intervistat: Din bħal medication, jekk inti tirrifjuta tieħu medication, imma jekk il-ġenituri jirrifjutaw ma tieħux medication. Okay għandhom dan id-dritt pero imbagħad tiġix titlobni biex intik l-benefiċċju soċjali jekk inti—

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: Mela inti s-support soċjali mhux tieħdu bħala pariri u bħala dan imma l-cash, il-cash in hand tridhom so—

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u. U iktar jizzied marelli. Kull darba iktar. Bħala nies importanti fil-ħajja tagħhom, il-ġenituri li jsemmu jew ikun hemm nies oħrajn? Eżempju fil-kas ta' Martin, Martin jsemmi lilkom bħala nies importanti fil-ħajja tiegħu.

Intervistat: Ara ħa ngħidlek, fil-veritait-tfal li għamlu tul ta' żmien hawnhekk naħseb jekk tistawsihom min huma n-nies importanti fil-ħajja tagħhom, naħseb kolha it-teacher jgħidulek.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: Aħna ħafna tfal jiġu hawnhekk biex ikellmu lit-teachers fullstop jiġu għalabibhom mill-iskola imma għax it-teacher. Martin case in point illi jsemmilek lil Eman , lil x'jismu, jaqa' down u din hija problema wkoll għax jaqa' down jekk xi hadd jitlaq – Johann pereżempju -għalihom ma tagħmilhomx differenza, “Isma dan huwa l-job tiegħi.” Speċjalment meta tiġri ħafna bis-social workers. Meta jkun hemm turnover kbira ta' social workers.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: [00:36:35] Illi dawn ikunu ilhom jaħdmu magħhom sena jew sentejn, ibbildjaw it-trust u l-għada letteralment ma jafux hux ġej, x'gara jew ma ġarax. Il-ġenituri dejjem jibqgħu l-ġenituri so ħalliehom għax huma l-ġenituri. Pero ħafna jirealizzaw maż-żmien illi jew il-ġenituri għandhom problemi jew they neglected them, jibqgħu l-ġenituri tagħhom pero mhux daqskemm illi they care għalihom għax huma jirealizzaw.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: U illum il-ġurnata—qabel keinet iktar taboo iktar milli hija illum illi għax il-ġenituri—illum hawn ħafna separazzjonijiet, hawn ħafna divorzji. Jiġifieri m'għadhiex dik it-taboo illi għax ma nkellimx lil omni daqshekk jew ma nkellimx lil missieri daqshekk—qisha kważi xi ħaġa normali din. jgħidulek, “Jien lil omni ma nkellimhiex” jew, “Lil missier ma nkellimux.” Għax iħossu differenti imma l-ġenituri dejjem jibqgħu l-ġenituri.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u. Walter għax baqet miegħi dak li għidt li t-teacher forsi flok dak li huwa akkademiku, iktar min hu tt-eacher iktar iħossuhom safe. U jien eżempju tinkwetani ħafna li fl-istess ħin il-course tat-teaching huwa bbażat li tidhol skond kemm għandek A levels eċċetera. It's not base don who you are—vera jsir it-teaching practice imma it's not based—il-course ta' psikologu—

hemm courses oħrajn illi jiċċekjaw inti min inti qabel ma tidhol għall-course. Taraha din id-differenza bejn teacher li just ġej jittrasmetti s-sillabu u teacher li vera jitfa ruħu u ġismu illi—għax hanhekk pereżempju nħossha ħafna li t-teachers imorru oltre ħafna milli dak li hemm on papaer expected to do. Jiġifieri they –

Intervistat: [00:38:23] Ha ntik eżempju, a quite funny example. Jien meta dħalt l-Universita jien way back 1998 sewwa, l-istess we would go in by o levels pero, jien fil-każ tiegħi kelli PE. Fil-class tiegħi ta' PE teacher, kellna nagħmlu-- għax dak iż-żmien ma kellniex O level tal-PE allura kellna nagħmlu l-in-house l-Universita niftakar konna xi erbgħin. U minn erbgħin qalulna mhux ha nagħżlu iktar minn ħmistax.—

U niftakar we had this interview plus il-physical fitness test pero through that intgħażlna ħmistax u bħala classes ta' 1998-2002 bħala PE teachers għaliex kellna dak l-interview, we were above bħala teaching. U jekk tara illum fejn qegħdin it-teachers ta' dak iħ-ħmien, dan tal-PE ta' dik is-sena, ħafna minnhom huma SMT's illum il-ġurnata.

Intervistatriċi: Istra.

Intervistat: U baqgħu. Imma għax kien hemm dan l-aptitude test li għamlulna b'kumbinazzjoni għax ma kienx hemm dawn l-A level imma meta għamluhulna riedu jagħżlu min jaħsbu li kienu teachers u kien hemm min kien atleta kbir u ma daħalx u kien hemm bħali min ma kienx atleta kbira imma dħalt għax forsi kelli—għax raw li kelli din il-vokazzjoni biex nifthemu.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: Once again jien ġej minn sistema oħra, pereżempju Ġibiltà meta jibgħatuk bħala teacher, they don't take care of the subject you teach u jdaħħluk l-iskola u tghallem li hemm bżonn. Tgħidli, “Orajt jekk jien li kont Malti pereżempju mhux ha jtuni ngħallem l-Ingliż għax kien hemm L-ingliżi ingliż.” Pero you are a teacher you are not a maths teacher imbagħad jekk jaraw li din is-sena tista' tghallem X tghallem X u the teachers will act jiġifieri pero—

Intervistatriċi: U l-preparation tagħhom tkun iktar general jiġifieri? Jiġifieri tkun aktar fuq skills?

Intervistat:[00:40:28] Huma li jagħmlu, is-sistema Ingliza milli stajt nifhem jiena, jibgħatuhom, once li jispiċċaw, jigradwaw, jibgħatuhom sena jgħallmu imbagħad wara dik is-sena jgħallmu, jagħmlu l-assessment tagħhom, ikun hemm teacher li qed jagħmlulhom l-observation imbagħad ituhom il-warrant, ituhom id-degree jiġifieri huma jagħmlu sena jgħallmu qabel ma jieħdu d-degree.

Intervistatriċi: Il-marelli istra.

INTERVISTAT: Which makes a huge difference għax inti taf illi—

Intervistat: Qed tafda lil xi ħadd.

Intervistat: Inti anke il-fatt li taf, kif qed tghid inti. Taf li jien diehel l-Universita imma waqt li dhalt l-Universita, rrid ngħallim jiena allura mhux semplicilment dhalt biex niehu degree. Biex ngħid, “ Isma jien għandi degree ta’ xi haġa minnflok immur-- ” Allura ma titlifx nies.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: So that makes a huge difference. Ovvjament dan bħal Youth workers, bħal social workers, tobba. Kull min jaħdem vocational u professionals li jaħdmu man-nies. Illi inti fl-aħħar minn l-aħħar trid tkun adattat għax-xogħol li għandek. Jekk inti tidhol semplicilment għax għandek il-vaganzi tas-sajf kif ngħidu aħna.

Intervistatriċi: Mhux hekk. U żgur. U ma’dawn it-tfal b’mod speċjali.

Intervistat: You won’t survive. U iktar ma jgħaddi żmien you will survive less. Din mhux l-ewwel darba inkunu qed nitkellmu aħna, ngħidu aħna, ġieli nkunu nafu nies li iffeljaw jew eżempju teaching practice go l-iskola jkunu sejin tajjeb imbagħad l-Universita struggling milli jgħaddu minn xi ġixx credits pereżempju imma they are very good teachers u. Jiena għandi--

classic case ta’ ġixx LSAs pereżempju hawnhekk. Illi they could be amazing teachers u infatti ha nitkellem ha nara jistgħux jagħmlu xi course, xi evening course biex igibu l-warrant, it-teacher’s warrant għax jaħasra they are very good imma minhabba l-fatt li m’għandhomx A levels.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u. Ma nafx l-IFE kienx qed joffri xi haġa part time.

Intervistat: Ehe qed nippruvaw naraw part time –imma huma Għawdxin biex tgħaxxaq so that might be a difficult thing.

Intervistatriċi: Ehe. Għax naf li kellhom course mhux bħal MTL jiġifieri xi haġa iffukata fuq hekk għax—

Intervistatriċi: [00:42:36] Imma le t-teacher tagħmel haġa differenza kif tkun bħala persuna u kif tmur magħhom. Jiena—ngibu hawnhekk l-għalliem tal-Hiphop pereżempju. He would be a perfect teacher. Jiena jiddispjeċini n-nies ma ppikjawhomx li isma—jew ma promotjajnix il-karriera ta’ teaching biżżejjed biex nies bħal dak illi jgħallim—għax dak jgħallim hiphop jiġifieri.

Intervistatriċi: Chris tal-Hiphop għidt?

Intervistat: L-għalliem ta tal-Street Elements.

Intervistatriċi: Orrajt. Istra jiġi jgħallimhom xi affarijeit hawn?

Intervistat: : Jagħmilhom session fil-ġimgħa through il-proġett Kreattiv.

Intervistatriċi: Istra.

Intervistat: Imma amazing u. Jiġifieri --

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: He is an amazing teacher u not just—tghidi, forsi Hiphop. Mhux bħala Hip hop, il-mod kif ikellimhom, il-mod kif japproċjahom it-tfal, il-mod kif ilaqagħhom u joqgħod ikellimhom u jtihom il-pariri jiġifieri mhux just dancing he would be good, any type of subject.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur. Imma Malta qisu dejjem l-akkademika tibqa' tiegħu l-preċedenza f'ħafna affarijiet.

Intervistat: Ħa ngħidlek, l-akkademika importanti—jiena in the long run tibda' tifjem għalfejn l-Universita għamilt il-lessons tas-psychology imma they could be like—kif taqbad tghid, lifelong learning hux? Jiġifieri jekk tghidli nofs l-affarijiet li għamilt l-universita, hela ta' hin kienu. Aħjar tawni sena iktar teaching practice tutored minn xi teachers li naf li kienu very good teachers u nitgħallem minnhom, u nosserva minnhom u nara fl-aħħar minn l-aħħar irridx insir teacher.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: Għax dik oħra, trid tara.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk kont ser ngħidlek. Hemm differenza bejn it-teorija u l-prattiku b'mod speċjali fejn tidhol il-qasam ta'd dawn it-tfal b'dawn id-diffikultajiet?

Intervistat:[00:44:21] Ħa ngħidlek it-teorija dejjem hija tajba imma inti trid tkun taf tifhem illi t-teorija hija t teorija u l-prattika hija mod ieħor. Xorta trid tibqa' tuża t-teorija, hija bżonnjuża jien immur ħafna seminars u affarijiet u tisma' u tghid, "Ara, din tajba għaliya, din napplika, din bullshit, din qed tghidha sempliċiment għax il-ktieb tagħha għadu kemm ippublikjat."--

Ħafna mill-affarijiet ikunu repetition imma anke r-repetition ta xi haġa li int qed tagħmel, tghid, "Mela sewwa qed nagħmilha jien il-haġa." You need to be excited, irrid ikollok l-ispazju għax dik oħra tat-teachers illum il-gurnata m'għandnix spazzju. Hawnhekk orrajt imma teachers in a mainstream m'għandhomx l-ispazju li kelli jien fi 2002 meta bdejt ngħallem illi jesperimentaw illi --

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u. Ħabba s-sillabu sewwa?

Intervistat: Niegħu PE li tekniku it's a very free sport imma meta kont fi 2002, meta bdejt jiena il-Fortini, konna nagħmlu l-magics konna nagħmlulhom il-houses għax dak iż-żmien kien moda Harry Potter u noqgħod nagħmlilhom il-karrijiet tal-Carnival, u tournaments bejniethom u it used to be fun sports u x'jismu.

All of a sudden kien daħal l-O level u kien daħal ġie ġie differenti sew, ġie acadmic ħafna so that freedom imbagħad kienet marrieti. L-istess pereżempju għandna l-fatt illi m'hemmx

extra curricular dawk li konna ngħidulhom extra curricular activities qabel fl-iskejjel m'għadhomx jeżistu jiġifieri jekk jiena teacher fil-break, qabel kien ikollna ħafna supervision jekk nixtieq nagħmel Duke of Edinburgh award pereżempju il-Fortini.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur.

Intervistat: Kont ngħid lis-surmast, “Isma f'nofsinhar ħa nibda nagħmilhom?” Kien jgħidli, “Mhux problema nhallsek tagħha.” Illum il-ġurnata bejn 25/26 lessons full on, qed tagħmel sugġett tiegħek. Kollox by the book m'għandek l-ebda freedom of interaction mat-tfal jew—

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: “Isma ejja nagħmlu club ta' xi ħaġa.”

Intervistatriċi: Ma jfissirx li naqqasna jew għollejna l-livell akkademiku at the end of the day għax le pjuttost students are scoring quite poorly fuq ħafna scales.

Intervistat: Hekk u. U fil-verita, on the long run, iktar kemm--jien qed ngħidlek involut f'ħafna NGO' id- Duke of Edinburgh award huwa basically an extracurricular—ħafna mill-pajjiżi forsi Malta bħal ħafna affarijiet academically u għax academically [ma jinftiehemx 00:46:46]--

ħafna pajjiżi they take more consideration those skills il-fatt li inti—jew socialising skill, jew leadership skill milli l-academic għax l-academic huwa—qiegħed hemmhekk huwa importanti imma l-ideja tagħhom hu li l-academic jista' jilħqu kulhadd. Jekk tintefa' bil-qiegħda d-dar u tistudja, kulhadd jista' jgħaddi mill-O level tal-Maths.--

Imma jekk inti għandek job u għandek bżonn tiegħu decision making jew leadership jew team building jew working in a group, dawk you only get them through experience u through practise.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: U jekk l-iskola ma tagħmilhomx-- jiena narhom lil dawn. Dawn għax jagħmlu ħafna iktar interaction bejniethom u jagħmlu iktar decision making waqt li—ġieli mmorru u rarament immorru ma skejjel oħra u dawn jagħtu opinjoni pereżempju dawn jgħidulek, jekk ma jgħogobhomx jgħidulek. Anke jekk ikollhom jgħidulek b'mod li – imma jgħidulek. Jaqlgħuha, “Jiena ma tgħogobniex dik.” L-oħrajn, xi kultant it-tfal l-oħra joqgħodu hekk.

Intervistatriċi: They conform u.

Intervistat: [00:47:47] Dawn peress li ggāndhom ħafna communication skills, huma aktar streetwise, they use it and it is fun to see them interact li meta ġie l-Head tal-School of Arts, Luke, fetaħlu l-mobile u qallu, “Ara, nagħmel hekk, nagħmel hekk, nagħmel hekk.” Dan hekk qalli, “Prattikament għamilnilu l-interview over and above l-interview li nagħmlu lill- --

istudenti li rridu ndaħħlu.” Qalli, “Għax-- ” Ghidtlu, “ Eħe imma hawnhekk dik hi s-sitwazzjoni, they discuss with the teacher, x’jgħoġobhom, x’ma jgħoħobhomx x’nistgħu nagħmlu.” Mentre it’s not spoon feeding jew, “ Isma aghmilli hekk, jew ġibli dan it-tip ta’homework. Aghmilli hekk u li ntik trid tagħmlu.”

Intervistatriċi: Eħe.

Intervistatriċi: Walter bħala schedule haawnhekk intom għandkom il-VET’s hux hekk imbagħad Maths, Malti u Ingliż ukoll bħala?

Intervistat: Aħna nagħmlu basic academics Maths, Malti u English u ICT għax issa daħħalna l-ICT ħalli jkunu jistgħu jagħmlu l-ECDL ukoll plus il-VET subjects. Li qed nagħmel issa li kemm jista’ jkun mill-VET subjects qed ingibhom konformi mal-MQF levels so huma jkunu jistgħu—għax il-problema li kien hawn qabel ma ġejt jien kienet, li t-tfal kienu qed jagħmlu-- ħafna imma ma kienux qed jiġu recognised so allura kienu qed joħorġu minn hawnhekk with no certifications pereżempju din is-sena bdejna bil-clay sculpture infatti Lee għandu MQF level 3 u [ma jinftiehemx 00:49:19] level 2 x’hin jispiċċa. Princes Trust l-istess, Lee ħa jkollu MQF level 3 u [ma jinftiehemx 00:49:37] MQF level 2 so that is already 2 GCSE standard.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur.

Intervistat: Qed nagħmlu Duke of Edinburgh award illi għalkemm it’s not an MQF level imma it’s quite recognised nowadays. Qed nippruvaw nagħmlulhom ħafna pereżempju l-course ta’ Health and Safety so kemm jista’ jkun ikollhom il-qualifications biex la jitilqu minn hawn ikumu aħjar through l-affarijiet li jagħmlu.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: So dik l-idea li mhux jiġu hawnhekk , għal kemm jiġu hawnhekk u they acclaim the subject imma fl-istess ħin’ jieħdu xi ħaġa illi ta’sittax il-sena jekk imorru jagħmlu interview, juru l-papework.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u. Ikollhom xi ħaġa akkreditatha.

Intervistat: [00:50:01] Għax sfortunatament il-paperwork illum huwa importanti. U nibnu portfolio. Nibnu portfolio magħhom. Kull wieħed nibnu portfolio over three years jiġifieri anke l-assessments, nieħdu ritratti ta’ l-affarijiet li għamlu forsi anke xi activities li jkunu għamlu bħal leadership skills so on so forth. Biex jekk il-quddiem imorru--

Intervistatriċi: Biex meta joħroġ minn hawn ikollu xi ħaġa iktar x’juri. Walter xi jzommok hawn? Il-filosofija forsi li timxi biha fix-xogħol tiegħek ma’ dawn it-tfal jew tfal li kienu bħalhom f’kuntasti oħrajn.

Intervistat: [00:50:37] Le jiena l-idea li żżommni hawn ha nkun onest, hija illi jekk ma nkunx hawn aħna min ha jiehu hsieb dawn it-tip tat-tfal? U dik hi xi haġa li dejjem żammitni ngħix ma'dawn it-tfal. Imma jien onestament niehu pjaċir ma'dawn it-tip ta'tfal jiġifieri jien għaliya I am not the traditional Head of school or the traditional teacher illi noqgħod go klassi— qatt ma kont I come from a PE background jiġifieri dawn it-tfal huma hafna iktar lively fl-istess hin. Bil-malti iġieghluk tidgħi iktar minn tfal oħra pero iġieghluk tidhaq iktar minn tfal oħra jiġifieri ir-relazzjoni li tibbildja magħhom hija—plus li once you egt to know them, it's hard not to love them. Fis-sens illi jekk tara l-background tagħhom, jekk tara il-x'jismu. -- Then it's all kemm tkun vocational inti u. It's not really a teaching job, it's more vocational fis-sens—jien rajt teachers wara għaxar minuti—jien rajt teachers godda tkun taf wara l-ewwel ġurnata tgħid, “Din mhux ha tkampa” jew, “Dan mhux ha jkampa.” This is not the type of teaching, by rights jien jekk teacher nixtieq nigradwa bħala teacher jien nista' nipretendi ha mmur fil-klassi u nibda l-lezzjoni— imma hawnhekk this is not the type of scenario ta' hawnhekk. Hawnhekk trid tkun hands on. You have to be ready for everything jiġifieri mhemmx limitu ta' x'tista timmagina imma in the end of the day it's rewarding.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: And it's not rewarding ta “Isma dan għaxar snin oħra ha jilhaq tabib.” Imma it's rewarding tarah għaxar snin oħra u tgħid, “Dan it-tifel almenu seta' jkun sitt piedi taħt l-art u illum qiegħed—sab xogħol u għandu familja.”

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: Jiġifieri –

Intervistatriċi: Naħseb kważi kważi—

Intervistat: U sorry—they, jirrikonoxuhulek hafna iktar milli irrikonoxulek studenti li dehrilna [ma jinftiehemx 00:52:39] jiena classic thing, meta ġejt lura mill-Ġibiltà kont qiegħed il-bank u ġie jhabbat wieħed bil-hood kollu tatoos u għidt, “Ha naraw x'ġej.”

Habbatli u telaq għidtl, “Orrajt.” Hriġt barra u rajtu ġej għaliya u nehha l-hood u qalli, “Sir, sir, sir m'għaraftniex vera?”--

u dar u qallha “Sephora Sephora ejja .” U ġie bit-tifel u l-mara u qallha, “Kieku ma kienx dan jien il-ħabs qiegħed mhux bil-baby u t-tifel illum.” So that is a huge reward għal dak li tagħmel fhimt. Anyway. Jew għandi tifel qiegħed il-ħabs ilu sitt snin il-ħabs issa. Meta jkollhom ċans iċempel lili għax jgħidli, “Jien ma nkellem lil-ħadd., jien inċempel lilek.” Issa tgħidli il-ħabs qiegħed imma l-fatt li--

jċempel lilek jew irid jagħmel komunikazzjoni miegħek għalija it's every rewarding għax ngħid, "Alumenu dan għamilt xi haġa biex fil-ħażin kollu tiegħu iċempel lili" għax jgħidli, "Jien biex inċempel lil xi hadd aħjar inċempel liek." So it's that little things that makes it—u trid tkun adattat naħseb jien. It's not for everyone li jaħdem speċjalment f'dawn iċ-ċentri.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm. U kont ser ngħidlek tibża meta jkun wasal xi hadd biex jieqaf marelli mit-teachers li jkunu waslu fl-aħħar—

Intervistat: [00:53:54] Din hija problema kbira li għandna pereżempju.

Intervistatriċi: U min ha jigi qisu u.

Intervistat: Jien hawnhekk għandi 2 teachers, wiehed għandu 73 u l-iehor 74.

Intervistatriċi: Il-marelli istra.

Intervistat: Which is not a joke. Wiehed għandu 65 jigiifieri għadu hawnhekk, wiehed għandu 61 u supposti mean hareġ bil-pensjoni, imma ġeddidha għal sena so—u replacement tagħhom—biex tgħaxxaqha hands on subjects u skills.

Intervistatriċi: Il-marelli 73. Qas kont naf li hemm xi hadd daqshekk hawn dan —

Intervistat: Madeline 74 għandha.

Intervistatriċi: Min?

Intervistat: Martina tal-Ingliż 74 għandha

Intervistatriċi: Il-marelli istra.

Intervistat: So—problema. Ma tantx hawn nies iridu jaħdmu [ma jinftiehemx 00:54:36]. Dak huwa fatt.

Intervistatriċi: U meta jitilqulek dawk in-nies kollha għax qed titkellem fuq erbgha hekk.

Qisek biex iġġib erba' nies oħra minn barra.

Intervistat: Nofs l-istaff li għandi.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur.

Intervistat: U mhux biex iġġib nies minn barra għax jibgħatulek lil xi hadd imma nies tajbin, trained.

Intervistatriċi: U bil-qalb u.

Intervistat: Għax din oħra, inti semmejt it-training. Waħda mill-affarijiet which is definetly missing huwa t-training għal dawn it-teachers illi jridu jaħdmu għax we are specialised dteachers we are not just class teacher. Bħal ma hemm maths teacher, english teacher aħna we are specialised teachers dealing with students with SPDs u. There should be a special training on a yearly basis.

Intervistatriċi: M'hawnx bħalissa għall-SPD soecialists imma no to teach jigiifieri—

Intervistat: Imma they need to have specialsied training dawn it-tip ta'tfal.

Intervistatriċi: Qisu kultant we shy away mill- ideja ta' special imma fil-verita we created something illi hekk hux special—we didn't adapt to it lanqas.

Intervistat: [00:55:51] L-LSE għandhom iktar training biex jiddiljaw ma' dan it-tip ta' tfal milli għandhom training it-teachers. JżGħax alumenu jafu x'inhu tifel autistic, jafu x'inhu tifel dyslexic, jafu x'inhu tifel b'ADHD għax għamluha fil-course.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: Teachers ma jafux u jew mhux—m'għandhomx esperjenza iktar milli ma jafux because they don't focus. Aħna dan huwa l-focus. Il-Maths, Malti, English it's a secondary level –

Intervistatriċi: Subject.

Intervistat: --of importance. L-importanti huwa l-behaviour tat-tifel u . U s-social x'jismu tiegħu. Tinduna. Tinduna ħafna tfal. Jien għandi ħbieb teachers illi ngħidilhom, "You won't survive half an hour fejn qiegħdin aħna."

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm. Walter biex nerga nifhem qabel ma nikkonkludu. It-tifel responsabiltà tiegħu apparti inti imbagħad min jiġi? It's no longer the College, it's the SPS f'danil-kas? SPS?

Intervistat: Ie il-College .Technically speaking il-College.

Intervistatriċi: On paper il-College. Il-Kulleġġ.

Intervistat: Technically speaking il-Head tiegħu dejjem jibqa' il-Head tal-iskola tal-mainstream għax jiena I'm not a Head, ngħamilha ta' Coordinator.

Intervistatriċi: Imma ma nafx ikollokx meetings fejn titkellmu ma' Nurture Centre ohrajn. They share the same--? The Principal wouldn't, jew the Head of School wouldn't qisu wouldn't be responsible esaċċ għax għaddih lilek.

Intervistat: The Head of school is responsible. Issa jekk għaddiħx lili u ħasilx idejha jew le imma the Head of school is still responsible.

Intervistatriċi: Jiġifieri jekk it-tifel jiġrilu xi ħaġa, the worst case scenario

Intervistat: Jiena Head tal-programme.

Intervistatriċi: Eħe. Wegħha t-tifel.

Intervistat: [00:57:27] Jiena just to make it clear, il-karta tal-eżami tal- Year 11 sal- Year 10, il-Head jibgħatili tal-iskola.

Intervistatriċi: Allora how are they expected to do the paper eżempju jekk--?

Intervistat: That's the flaws in the system.

Intervistatriċi: Imma isn't there an evaluation process ta' meta saru dawn il—

Intervistat: No jiġifieri stuck in a limbo.

Intervistatriċi: Eĥe.

Intervistat: Għax m'hemm—

Intervistatriċi: Pero jiena din il-helplessness ngħixha ovvjament għax jien u għalhekk ġejt esperta biex nagħmel xi haġa tat-teżi. Qisu shared by everyone.

Intervistat: Trid tkun taf l-opinjoni tiegħi? L-opinjoni tiegħi, Malta għandna hafna riżorsi, hafna riżorsi għax jien kont il-Ġibiltà waqt li kont il-Ġibiltà, kelli ċans, morna l-Amerka, morna Finland. Ara kemm ngħidu għal Finland, Morna l—Ingilterra. morna hafna postijiet għax kellna budget tajjeb u meta morna nifthu dawn iċ-ċentri kont naf il-flaws ta' Malta u għidtilhom, “Ejja nfitxu naraw.” U morna hafna postijiet differenti. Malta għandna hafna hafna riżorsi, hafna riżorsi u hafna human resources.

Intervistatriċi: Hafna servizzi.

Intervistat: Hafna servizzi pero m'hawnx co-ordination bejniethom so everything—kull haġa, il-loss of time, u loss of effort, u loss of energy li hemm għax m'hemmx co-ordination tajba bejn kulhadd u mhemmx kollox ċar, kollox black and white u policies li trid tiffollowja step by step kif suppost u actually jiġu ffolowjati u actually xi hadd illi huwa kapaċi to step his foot down u jgħid, “Le.” --

Għax jien technically jekk nara ha jibgħatu tifel hawnhekk u dan mhux jikkonforma mal-procedures kollha, nista' ngħid, “Le.” X'ha jiġri jekk ngħid, “Le?” I don't have the leverage or the power.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: [00:59:14] Probabli jekk iridu jiġi ta' fuqi. Mhux ha jiġi ta. Imma jgħidli--

Intervistatriċi: Trid tiegħu.

Intervistat: “Isma trid tiegħu.” Ma nistax ngħidlu le għax m'hemmx—ma nistax nggħidlu, “Għax dan m'għamilx hekk hekk u hekk.” għax we go round in circles.

Intervistatriċi: Walter għax bqajt nhewden fuqha- il-karta? Għax jien qed nagħmel dan il-programm u tajtni karta tal-Ingliż, Malti u Maths. Qed nissoponi dawk biss hux hekk? Mhux ta' kollox?

Intervistat: Ta' kollox.

Intervistatriċi: Ta' kollox. Jiġifieri tifel bħal Martin li għandu l-karti kollha quddiemu x'jagħmel?

Intervistat: Martin mhux ha jagħmel mocks. Il-Year 11 mocks.

Intervistatriċi: Jiġifieri l-oħrajn ikollhom History, Social. Kull m'hemm fil-Kulleġġ. U jagħmlu xi haġa fil-karta? What's the point behind the paper?

Intervistat: Issa jiena mhux din Steph. Is-sabiha hi, what they do here is not recognised fl-school leaving certificate tagħhom.

Intervistatriċi: Jiġifieri meta gew hawn, gie tifel xi--?

Intervistat: Issa nurik school leaving certificate ta' tifel għamel sentejn hawnhekk zero kollox għandu issa jekk Lee, ejja ngħidu Martin. Jekk Martin huwa tifel tal-ġenn fejn jidhol il-ġebel pereżempju u għandu skill, that skill is not recognised on his school leaving certificate. It's recognised as an extra curricular activity bħala nota.

Intervistatriċi: : Tniżżilha extra fis-school leaving?

Intervistat: Imma ejja nkunu onesti, jekk jiena nara l-ischool leaving certificate, ha nkun l-employer tiegħu, inti l-ewwel page tara.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u. Imma responsibility for having failed taħseb li hawn xi hadd li jzommha għax jien kif għidtlek meta mort primary din il-helplessness anke fil-primary kelli tfal ta' St. Patricks li għadhom year 4 u diġa t-teachers helpless tipo qisu their idea is containment basta joqgħod kwiet matul il-ġurnata. Għadu year 4 aħseb u ara—

Intervistat: [01:01:13] Meta jiġi mainstream.

Intervistatriċi: Jiġifieri dawn the minute li ġara xi haġa d-dar they are doomed basically f' Malta.

Intervistat: Imma—ara jiena naħdem hafna mal-Appoġġ, naħdem hafna mas-social workers, naħdem hafna ma' ċerti social workers u councillors tal-iskejjel, għax mhux ha nitfa lil kulhadd fuq keffa waħda.

Intervistatriċi: Le u żgur.

Intervistat: Għax hawn councillors li jibqa' jiffollowjawhom. They are amazing imma we all work in a parallel level. Int tagħmel tiegħek, Int tagħmel tiegħek, Int tagħmel tiegħek, Int tagħmel tiegħek, Int tagħmel tiegħek, Int tagħmel tiegħek. U it takes so much effort to bring together a plan pereżempju jew—illi—

Intervistatriċi: Pereżempju IEP ikun sar Walter fil-bidu? Jew?

Intervistat: IEP isir.

Intervistatriċi: Ikun sar.

Intervistat: Imma once again l-IEP li jkun sar fil-mainstream mhux l-istess IEP li jsir fl-iskola tagħna.

Intervistat: L-IEP isir u it is much more simple than it used to be.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur. Bis software. Imma eżempju f'dak il-kas il-councillor tagħhom ma taghtix input li ha tibda--?

Intervistat: Le. Between teachers basically u to be honest l-IEPs tat-tfal li jiġu hawnhekk huma very close to each other għax once li jiġu hawnhekk you funnel down to behaviour.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: Behaviour difficulties jiġifieri dik hi—

Intervistatriċi: Hemm barra ma kull min għamilt interview qalli behaviour. Pero behaviour qisu you don't have to do something jiġifieri malli jiġi fil-kas tagħna minn St.Patricks, jiġifieri minn residenza qisu awtomatikament gie impoġġi fil-Nurture Centre jew fin-Nurture Centres.

Intervistat: Hekk u.

Intervistatriċi: Awtomatikament. He doesn't need to do something. Il-label—

Intervistat: Għalkemm we push u nifilosofizzaw din il-positive reinforcement when the push comes to shout, you just underline the negative. Sewwa? Jiena, għandi lil daż-żgħar Jago.

Jago iffissat. Jago tih jagħmel outdoor activities u ttihx iktar, xejn iktar. Dan għax ma setax joqgħod fil-klassi, mill-primary spiċċa Guardian Angel, mill- Guardian Angel spiċċa-- hawnhekk jiġifieri. Guardian Angel, it was a good move li mill- Guardian Angel jiġi hawnhekk. Il- Guardian Angel hemm hafna tfal—ma nafx għaliex kien hemmhekk- ma tfal li għandhom—

Intervistatriċi: Disability severa.

Intervistat: [01:03:36] I mean physical disability u disability severa msieken. U kif gie hawnhekk ha r-ruħ it-tifel għax ovvjament għamel xahrejn jikkopja l-behaviour t'hemmhekk sakemm jissetilja u dan.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur. I mean u ejja come on tih LSA jekk inti Head of School jew INCO aħseb naqra, aghmel naqra studju tajjeb tiegħek tih LSA kif suppost imma once again. We don't work in a team, kulhadd, “ Issa ssettjajtu hemmhekk, Issa ssettjajtu hemmhekk.” Mela għandek l-Appoġġ il-priorites tagħhom li qed imur l-iskola, li qed jiekol u għandu saqaf, għax għandhom human resources-- Għax ir-rizorsi tagħhom huma limited allura they tick these boxes and that's it. Għandek il-Prefect of Discipline mela orrajt a he's done, he's in the school, he's settled

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: U ijwa hemm Walter jieħu ħsiebu u jimxu hemmhekk. Għandek il-Heads of school, “U ija jiena xogħoli għamiltu pruvajt nagħmel xi haġa l-iskola, u tfajtu hemmhekk. ” So it's not a – għandek hafna rizorsi imma fl-istess hin Social security services m'għandhomx jikkuntatajawn? Jew inkella jkun hemm programm fejn jgħidlek, “Isma

warren qed nagħti lil din l-omm seba'mitt euro fix-xahar. Din l-omm qed tagħmel effort biex lit-tifel itellgħu kif suppost?"

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: Għax jekk le niġbdu naqra r-riedni. So hemm hafna servizzi imma they are not—allura dak li jkun inti helpless. Jien hekk inhossni helpless. Hawnhekk inhossuna vapur illi naqdfu waħidna naraw x'nistgħu nagħmlu biex inwasslu t-tfal x'imkien. Biex meta jispiċċa minn hawn ngħidu – u to be honest ix-xogħol irid isir hafna iktar meta jkunu żgħar mhux issa. Għax issa—

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u. Pero mhux qed ngħidlek kwantitativ imma t-tfal li għandna magħna li qegħdin fil-primary li tkellimt mat-teachers tagħhom, kif qed ngħidlek it's about containment jiġifieri basta joqgħod kwiet, basta jekk idejjaqni noħorġu barra fil-ground.

Intervistat: [01:05:33] Għax inti kif semmejt pereżempju, dħalt fil-klassi. Għalxiex hawn hames ċentri tas-sekondarja u ċentru wiehed tal-primarja?

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm. Ċentru tal-primarja, Nurture Centres tal-primarja?

Intervistat: Għaliex hawn wiehed? Għalxiex hawn wiehed? Għaliex dawk it-tfal kollha li qed imorru fil-Nurture Centres tas-sekondarja, fil-primarja fejn kienu? Kienu angli kollha dawn? Imbagħad splodew?

Intervistatriċi: Ma kienx hemm post so they tried to contain them hux.

Intervistat: Jew ma kienx hemm post, jew ma kienux imorru skola, jew u ija għax primarja, tgħajjat miegħu, toqgħod bil-qiegħda meta inti bil-kontra suppost ikun hemm. Suppost min ikkreja dawn ir-riżorsi messu għamel 5 ċentri tal-primary halli you get them young, you catch them young u taħdem mal-ġenituri tagħhom.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk hu.

Intervistat: Biex int imbagħad il-ftit jibqalek meta tmur is-sekondarja milli għandhom bżonn imorru go ċentru imbagħad halli tara, tiggerja ċentru wiehed, b'facilities tajbin biex jiggerjaw għoxrin tifel jekk hemm bżonn imma inti l-catchment area u x-xogħol li għamilt, għamiltu mal-primarja semmejna l-mummy ta' [ma jinftiehemx 01:06:38] il-mummy ta' [ma jinftiehemx 01:06:40] ilha—it-tifel għandu sittax -il sena. I mean, issa ha nibda' naħdem magħha jien mal-mummy?

Intervistatriċi: U żgur.

Intervistat: Li ilha tiġi sittax -il sena ttelgħu hekk it-tifel?

Intervistatriċi: Kien għadu il-Ħamrun meta—

Intervistat: Jekk aħna nafu, let's be honest, illi din il-mara għandha problemi, jew din il-mara għandha problema. Ha nkun stupidu l-mara, pregnant. She is going to have problems minn

meta jitwieled it-tifel fullstop. Jekk jien għandi lil Kyle pereżempju. Kyle, his mummy. He is a drug baby, he had to take methode minn meta xi sena wara li twieled. Naf li ha jkollu problemi dan.--

Naf li l-mummy tiegħu ha jkollha l-problemi, il-papa tiegħu ha jkollu l-problemi. Dak il-ħin irrid naqbadhom. U jekk hemm bżonn nieħu drastic actions, dak il-ħin irrid nieħu drastic actions. Inutli ta' ħmistax -il sena il-tifel, il-mama tiegħu mietet, il-papa tiegħu miet jigiġifieri t-tifel he's over the place.

Intervistatriċi: Għalfejn taħseb Walter li m'hemmx Nurture Centress għall-primarja wieħed biss? Jigiġifieri hemm reasoning behind it?

Intervistat: Għax forsi qed jaħdmu iktar? Ma nafx I don't know.

Intervistatriċi: Kieku tagħmlu anke li jkun preżenti l-ġenituri f'dawn il-Nurture Centress.

Intervistat: Jiena kieku, issa din kontrieha qed ngħid. Jien jekk ikolli naqbad ir-riżorsi kollha fil-Nurture Centre, nippreferi nidiżmentiljhom u nitfagħhom fi programmi, actual programmes tal-primarji u ngħidu, "Isma ejja naraw lil dawn it-tfal milli l-Head ikollu hjiel li dat-tifel mill-Kindergarten jew mill-year 1, illi għandu hjiel ta' tifel illi għandu social difficulties jew CBD. Ejja naqbd u programm biex naqbd u minn dak iż-żmien halli aħna through Nurture Centre through Nurture Zone bi support services kollha li għandna ngħinu l-familjari u bl-għajnuna ta' Social Services, l-Appoġġ and so on so forth."

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: [01:08:46] Jiena għaliha there is a lot of waste of resources. Alot. U hafna riżorsi-

Intervistatriċi: U repetition ta' l-istess riżorsi. U repetition ta' nies li qed jaħdmu fl-istess mod, kif taqbad tgħid, anke Social worker field u residential.

Intervistat: Ara ha ngħidlek, jien Walter nista' ngħidlek. Meta jiġi tifel hawnhejj jiena nagħmel l-isbaħ sitt xhur nipprova nifhem dan il-tifel x'għandu, għaliex qiegħed hawn, minn liema skola ġej.

Intervistatriċi: Ma jkollkomx file Walter?

Intervistat: Il-ġenituri min huma, x'history background għandhom. 6 xhur ta' mhux u jien ilni hawn sena u t-tfal narhom il-ħin kollu xorta ma nafx eżatt—

Intervistatriċi: Għax il-file jibqa' l-Kulleġġ?

Intervistat: Ismagħani, jkollok file imma—

Intervistatriċi: Ma jkunx hemm miktub fuqu hux?

Intervistat: Ma jkunx hemm miktub kolli fil-file, jew li jkun hemm fil-file nofsu lanqas temmnu għax jekk inti għandek sfortunatament ta, l-impressjoni hija, illi jekk inti taf li dan it-

tifel int trid tirreferih għal-Learning Support Centre, tmur għand it-teachers u tghidilhom, “Isma rreferuli.” u jibdew herġin referrals u—

Intervistatriċi: Naf x’qed tghid mela.

Intervistat: Taf kif inhuma l-affarijiet.

Intervistatriċi: Aħna bil-maqlub. Aħna niktbu li perfett, dan m’għandu xejn—

Intervistat: [01:10:02] Eżatt.

Intervistatriċi: Fil-kas tagħna hekk tkun. Fil-kas tiegħek tkun l-oppożitt.

Intervistat: Jiġifieri—

Intervistatriċi: Eħe.

Intervistat: Imma hemm ħafna mis-coordination kif qegħdin ngħidu starting from the fact, are we a programme or are we a school? Illi jiġu t-tfal hawnhekk u jibqgħu hawnhekk jew għandna programm illi they are here for a certain amount—għax jiena dejjem l-underline hi, mhux bilfors, jekk aħna programm mhux bilfors ha jaħdem ma’dawn it-tip ta’ tfal jista’ jiġi jkolli xi hadd li ma jiffittjax hawnhekk. Dan il-programm mhux tajjeb għalih.

Intervistatriċi: Mm-hm.

Intervistat: U jkolli tfal. Għandna tifel hawnhekk is-sena l-oħra, illi assolutament it-tip ta’ mod ta’ kif imexxu aħna, l-affarijiet li nagħmlu u dan it-tip ta’—ma kienx jgħodd għalih u spiċċajna tlietli għax jien jekk dan it-tip ta’ programm mhux tajjeb għalih nista’ lil Head u ngħidlu, “Isma jiena li jiena in charge qed ngħidlek li dan il-programm mhux tajjeb. Sorry ħafna sib programm ieħor.” Qas biss tiġini f’moħħi li nagħmilha dik.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur. U qisu in a way we are containing them for some time and hopefully xi haġa it hits imma we are—

Intervistat: U having this idea—

Intervistatriċi: It continues to recreate wkoll.

Intervistat: Demotivates the teachers.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: The whole system fhimt? Issa pereżempju this sena the teachers are very motivated għax moħħna f’dawn il-MQF levels u almenu għandhom target u qed jieħdu pjaċir issa li qed jaħdmu u t-tfal jwassluhom ha jieħdu ċertifikat. Imma is it the right target? Because it is not the right target fil-verita the right target would be re-integration. Imma la re-integration mhux qd isur alumenu la dat-tfal nafu li ha jibqgħu hawn għal tlett snin alumenu johorġu biċ-ċertifikat.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur. Jiena il-biża tiegħi, meta ahna nkun wasalna għat- third generation tat-tfal. Ikollhom it-tfal jerġgħu jiġu għandna, jerġgħu jkollhom it-tfal tagħhom u nibqgħu hekk, it continues to recreate itself.

Intervistat: [01:12:03] Eżatt u inti taf—

Intervistatriċi: Ikun persentaġġ żgħir ta' tfal.

Intervistat: Inti taf illi jiena naf illi t-tfal ta' X, li hu student hawn, in six years time ha jkollhom bżonn is-support.

Intervistatriċi: U jien sfortunatament iltqajt ma'tifel l-aħħar darba qalli, “ Kelli tifel.” U nibda' ngħid, “J'Alla ma jiġix. ”Imma l-feeling ikun li ha jerġa jiġi għandna u ha nerġgħu nibdew is-sistema mill-bidu.

Intervistat: Mhux hekk.

Intervistatriċi: U l-ġenituri ta' dawn it-tfal diġa jkunu forsi in care u hekk jiġifieri ma—

Intervistat: Le le ismġhani it's a cycle. Kif qed tghid inti, mhemmx m'hemmx—

Intervistatriċi: Imma as long as kulhadd jiffitja x'imkien it's okay.

Intervistat: Mhux hekk.

Intervistatriċi: Basta ma jkunx hemm tfal barra mis-sistema speċi.

Intervistat: Hek naraha jiena. Sakemm it-tifel qed jiekol, għandu saqaf fejn jorqod, imbagħad jgħidu isibuh il-puluzija once li jikber.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u. U daww huma l-istatistiċi, li tifel—m'għandniex tfal barra mill-iskola fil-verita. Imma it's more than that u.

Intervistat: L-aħħar darba konna qegħdin nitkellmu, għidtilhom, “Jien niehu pjaċir, Walter jiehu pjaċir jekk ma jkollix referrals u hawn nagħlaq.”

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: Jien hekk niehu pjaċir kieku. Qed ngħid kontrija għax imma—jien I am hoping li one day il-Heads tal-iskejjel jirnexxielhom ikollhom enough resources li ma jibgħatux—

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u. Tfal.

Intervistat: [01:13:09] U it can happen ta jiġifieri għax jien pereżempju nkun naf illi l-Prinċipal tagħna he wn't accept illi jiġu tfal mill-Learning Support Centre. Ahna m'għandna hadd mill- Learning Support Centre.

Intervistatriċi: Istra.

Intervistat: Għax l-ideja tiegħu hi li kemm jista' jkun naħdmu magħhom.

Intervistatriċi: Eħe.

Intervistat: Ġo l-iskola. Vera irid ikun tifel. Għandna tifel mill-Kulleġġ tagħna qiegħed Learning Support Centre tal-Fortini mar hemmhekk as a re-integration u ha jiġi re-integrated.

Intervistatriċi: Istra.

Intervistat: U he followed him personally.

Intervistatriċi: Għax il-filosofija hi—

Intervistat: Għax il-filosofija tiegħu hi hadd—dan huwa tal-Kulleġġ u jibqa' fil-Kulleġġ.

Għandna biżżejjed riżorsi. L-ideja hi li nżommu tfal mainstream u jibqa' mainstream issa—insibu riżorsi ġol mainstream. Ħafna minnhom b'LSA ta jkunu.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u. Hekk u. Pero kien hemm ħafna Prinċipali li qaluli li, “Ma nafhomx it-tfal.” tipo, “You don't need to interview me” taf kif, “Għax ma tantx naf fuqhom.”

Intervistat: Ħafna.

Intervistatriċi: Jew—għandi Psikologu partikolari, mhux f'dan il-Kulleġġ qalli, “Inutli, m'għandix ideja. Ma naħdimx magħhom.” Jigifieri tibda tgħid, “Marelli imma.”

Intervistat: U dawn Steph huma l-iktar tfal.

Intervistatriċi: Għalxiex--

Intervistat: Fil-bżonn.

Intervistatriċi: U żgur. U żgur.

Intervistat: Jien ma naċċettax li jekk jien għandi College li għandu tifel, Martin, ejja ngħidu Martin. Għax lil Martin nafuh. Ejja ngħidu Martin jew wieħed bħal Martin u jiġi il-College Psychologist jew Psychiatrist u jgħidli, “Ma nafux.” Ma naċċettaħiex din. your priority, la mhux qiegħeg ġo mainstream huwa priority iktar minn kull tifel li qiegħed—għax dan lanqas biss qed tiħhandiljah il-mainstream.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Intervistat: Super extra red flag dan mhux sempliciment imqareb jew.

Intervistatriċi: Eżatt.

Intervistat: [01:15:05]Jigifieri ma dan trid titfa' r-riżorsi.

Intervistatriċi: Eżatt. Jien imbagħad I start questioning inclusion to be honest għax nibda ngħid, “Inclusion.” Qisu on the surface iva għax we are offering the service imma imbagħad x'inhu jiġri—if inclusion is just keeping them in class għax qegħdin hemm, it has to be more than that u. Jigifieri—

Intervistat: Din bħal kollox u. L-affarijet huma sbieħ sakemm ikunu chilled. Meta l-affarijiet isiru problematiċi—ta'inclusion it's easy tgħid, Inclusion għal tfal li huma bravi, joqgħodu bil-qiegħda u forsi akkademikament tajbin u naqa'inqas imma tista'tinkludihom plus daww it-tfal, this is also inclusion mela this is not disability bħal ma hu tifel fil-wheelchair.

Intervistatriċi: Hekk u.

Appendix 26: Transcript Rendered Narrative

The first thing that I ask Walter concerns the exact nature of his role at the Learning Support Centre in Hamrun, to which he replies that he works as the Learning Support Centre Coordinator for the boys' section. Walter explains that his position differs from that of a traditional school principal, in that a person occupying his role has persistent contact with students all day long. His job therefore allows him to get to know students very well indeed, rather than being locked up in an office. Walter goes on to detail his experience with the kind of students he is now dealing with, telling me that he is used to helping students with similar needs. His career starts off soon after he graduates as a PE teacher, when his services are used as a shared teacher between two particular schools, the Verdala Junior Lyceum and Fortini Secondary School. The latter immediately strikes a chord with him more than the first school, as he feels that he could do more for the students there, so he decides to choose it as his place of full-time employment. He spends 10 years as a PE teacher at the aforementioned school, afterwards acting as a guidance teacher, apart from fulfilling a number of other roles.

Once the system of integrated colleges is set up, Fortini school is absorbed into Verdala school. The then head of school proposes the idea of using the Fortini building as a learning support centre, which Walter is clearly very enthusiastic about. At the time, it is already being used as a kind of care centre. Walter proceeds to outline the programme that what he calls "excluded students" followed at the time, just for a week or two. The so-called behavioural programme takes a week or two, and is aimed at reintegrating the students back into their mainstream classes as quickly as possible by finding out what they had said or done and how they could have amended their behaviour. It is also important to ensure that the students concerned apologise in a sincere manner for their behaviour. After the inception of the Learning Support Centre, Walter spends three years as its head, then leaves Malta to pursue an opportunity in Gibraltar, where he spends five years. He describes his experience outside of Malta as a very rewarding one indeed, in which he counts himself lucky as having been able to build a number of Nurture Centres from the ground up. The reason for the interest in such centres, he clarifies, lies in the fact that, at the time, the crime rate in Gibraltar had been steadily increasing for some time. His position in Gibraltar allows him to take on several different roles; for example, both acting as head of projects and teaching, as well as constituting a vital part of the emotional and behavioural support team. This is until he receives a fixed placement. Clearly proud of his achievement – a sentiment which I echo

wholeheartedly - he tells me that three such centres are, eventually, conceived. As he reaches his fifth year in Gibraltar, Walter is extremely content to have these centres come to fruition, and he returns to Malta to accept his current position in this frame of mind. Apart from this experience, Walter also speaks of aid given to countries such as Ghana, Kenya and other less developed countries. This help is obtained via the Duke of Edinburgh Award, which he becomes involved in after a while. Again, in this case, Walter's engagement with the organisation is directly related to the conception and running of similar Nurture Centres. I am suitably impressed by the range of experiences Walter has had in the care sector, and convey this to him. My next question relates to perceptions that outsiders have of the kind of students who attend such Nurture Centres. I imagine that they are different to those of people in the know, like Walter himself. He replies, with carefully measured words, that people need to distinguish between the notion of sending a child to a Nurture Centre because they are unable to manage that child's behaviour, as opposed to really wishing to help such students, and regarding the intervention as a means of support, not simply ridding themselves of a problem child. This shift in attitude needs to be brought about, he explains; in addition to this, the necessity for it is brought on home when a viewer sees how contented the children are in this environment. It should work to completely dispel the idea that the children present at the care centre are uncontrollable. In fact, it sometimes, very sadly, occurs that children are deposited at one of the Nurture Centres, to the effect that they are disregarded and forgotten, simply because they may have been difficult to understand, and their behaviour tough to manage. We must not imagine that such children are impervious to this treatment; on the contrary, he says, they feel the sense of abandonment strongly, and often exhibit it in their own refusal to 'belong' to their school, deciding, for instance, that they don't want to return to wearing their uniform. He comments on this reaction to their compartmentalisation by noting that the children in question feel this detachment from the college they form part of. They are supposed to continue wearing their uniform, but many times, do not, and directly refuse to do so. Also, the whole point of the Nurture Centre is to help the students feel as if they are part of their mainstream school; however, of course, it doesn't always work this way, and they feel the sense of rejection. He adds that the fact that the schools they attend are sometimes integrated into other colleges because of their choice of subjects or the subjects that are deemed appropriate for them, and that they have to adapt to a new organisation, must be a confusing and disorienting experience for them. In fact, Walter stresses that, in order to lessen this feeling of isolation and rejection on the part of the child, he and his colleagues are working on trying to integrate the logo of the college into that of the supporting Nurture

Centres he works for, in order to create a closer association between the two. Albeit the fact that the students the Nurture Centres is currently receiving are not affiliated in any way with the college it supports, he feels that this would be a positive move. When I ask him about the reason for the fact that the students being helped come from all sorts of different colleges, he replies that it is because the Nurture Centres falls under student services in general, rather than simply serving a single college, and therefore receive students from all colleges. Walter mentions the fact that, since there are now three Nurture Centres, a new one having recently been opened in Msida, it is now possible to assess each student's needs and to place them in the most appropriate centre for them. For instance, he mentions the situation of two particular students who caused a ruckus when they were placed at the same centre, and therefore had to be separated. Thus, every case is examined on its own merits. Students hail from all parts of Malta, and part of the centre's rebranding exercise includes instilling this sense of belonging in the students, since they do not always understand that they are meant to be reintegrated and refuse, for instance, a school leaving certificate from their own original college, with even the parents of the said student arguing in favour of the certificate coming from the Nurture Centres. Walter quotes the parent as saying that it wasn't appropriate for her son to leave with a school leaving certificate signed by a head who didn't even know the child, since he had spent the last two years at the Nurture Centres.

Walter continues to stress that it is of the utmost importance to foster a sense of belonging in the children who attend the Nurture Centres, and that it is important not to underestimate this factor. That is why he and his colleagues are attempting to connect the centre with the colleges that the students will be moving on to. He also says that, as far as the current system goes, there has, unfortunately, been an abuse of policy, to the extent that consigning students to the Nurture Centres is meant to follow a procedure; it is not just about a referral, but a referral followed by a consultation. It is always important to keep in mind, he emphasises, that these students are being removed from the mainstream system and put into a specialised programme. For instance, Walter goes on to mention the case of a student who was perfectly capable of sitting for his 'O' levels but was unable to do them because the Nurture Centres does not offer the same programme as an ordinary school. It is, therefore, crucial for each case to be properly assessed before a student is sent to a particular Nurture Centres, not just by the professionals concerned, but also relating to the choice of centre. The latter needs to fit every student's strengths and skills set.

I can feel Walter's frustrations as he highlights just how vital it is to be aware of the students' profiles. It is necessary for him to know about the students' issues and weaknesses, and to be in the know about their background. For instance, he talks of being faced with a student which the centre spent four months struggling to rehabilitate, simply because no information had been forthcoming about his background. He compared this situation to one where he and his colleagues had spent an entire summer building a case, and the difference was palpable. The extent of Walter's dedication shines through, as he talks about how essential building a case for every student is. He sees the students for what they are, young individuals in need of help and with great potential, instead of just burdens that can be shifted from one place to the next. Walter talks of a transferral of responsibility which, unfortunately, tends to happen in Malta – there is, often, no sense of continuity manifested by the figures of authority involved in the different situations. Very often, school principals and teachers on the island do not see fit to keep themselves updated about the progress of students who are sent to the Nurture Centress, unlike the professionals he has encountered abroad, with the result that a child is, sometimes, not integrated back into the mainstream. For instance, if a student is sent to the Nurture Centres three or four years before they finish school, and no-one from the child's school is interested enough in their situation to even visit the Nurture Centres and check on the student, it doesn't exactly bode well for the child's future. As things stand in similar cases, it is more than likely that such a student will not be reintegrated into the mainstream system.

Walter explains that the case conferences – that is, special meetings about the situation of every child who enters the care centre system – are meant to include a re-assessment every six weeks about whether the child is going to be retained or reintegrated into the standard system. Such a re-assessment is crucial to planning, because Walter and his colleagues need to determine whether the child is going to be a long-term resident or not, however, things rarely go according to plan. Once again, Walter highlights the lack of continuity and adherence to procedure. Such neglect towards the student on the part of their original school is instantly felt, and, in certain cases, even manifests itself in the form of aggression towards the principal of the school which the student came from. It cannot be forgotten that some students exhibit problematic behaviour, which often includes violent tendencies, and it is not easy to control these. In fact, the interviewee stresses that, even though he operates a Nurture Centres, he feels strongly about such care spaces being in close proximity to the students' original school, if need be even forming a physical part of it, so that if a child demonstrates a

strength in a certain subject, they can be allowed to continue taking that subject at the mainstream school, returning to the Nurture Centres in order to follow the specialised programme. However, he recognises the logistical difficulties of this, especially when the child is a certain age and given the different timetables. All these factors contribute to the challenge of reintegration, which may sometimes seem like an insurmountable task. In particular, the idea of allowing the student to benefit from the care programme whilst also being able to achieve 'O' level certification is hard to manage.

At this point, I interject by telling Walter that what has often struck me is the fact that certain students speak about their participation in programmes at the Nurture Centres in terms of having been placed there, with distinct overtones of abandonment. Walter confirms this sentiment on the part of the students, saying that, very often, students have been shifted from as many as four schools, leading to a loss of identity as well as sense of rejection, so much so that he finds himself telling them things such as "I'll never send you away." As soon as students misbehave slightly and are told that they will be sent home for a week for a cooling-down period, they immediately accuse him of deserting them. However, even though Walter understands this fear, he wants to ensure that students don't take advantage of his kindness, and is, sometimes, rather strict with them, sending them home for a day or two, which usually does the trick. He recounts that one of the students who was disciplined told him "You didn't tell me that you would never send me away." When the boy gets home, Walter contacts him, and is told by his mother that he is apologetic about his behaviour. He also announces his intention to return to school the next day.

Walter shares the fact that the Nurture Centres is regarded, by such students, as a second home. The more intimate setting means that the students are able to build a better rapport with their teachers. He also underlines the fact that the students are allowed to blossom, with their potential, rather than their misdemeanours or failures, being highlighted. The interviewee goes on to praise the benefits of working in a small school – after a while, he says, you feel as if you have become part of the students' families. He regrets the fact that schools in Malta seem to be increasing, rather than decreasing, in size for this very reason, putting it down to a lack of resources. I then move on to another significant question, regarding the importance of allowing children's voice to be heard. I question Walter about the extent to which he thinks schools help this. His answer is rather interesting – he deems that this only happens when, as he says, the voice that the figures of authority hear is to their

liking. For instance, Walter tells me that sometimes, the only way in which these students can communicate is through aggressive behaviour. Then, he says, it is up to us to make sense of such an attitude, but it is certainly difficult, especially because such students find it very difficult to open up verbally. There has to be some other kind of activity that will prompt them to express themselves. As Walter explains it, it is crucial to find common ground with such students, who often hail from difficult backgrounds and are reluctant or, perhaps, afraid to speak their minds, unless they feel a connection with the individual who is trying to get through to them. Therefore, he says, it is important to explore how to communicate with them. Certain students, he goes on to say, impress upon him their constant need to be loved, and being aware of their background as he is, this does not, in the least, surprise him.

Ultimately, such students are like a ticking time bomb who vent their frustrations on those who attempt to rehabilitate them – which, he says, is a kind of positive sign, as it reveals a level of trust that they demonstrate towards those individuals who are genuinely trying to help them. Disappointing them, no matter in how small a way, results in a huge let-down for such students, since they have a persistent fear of rejection. Another hard part of the job involving dealing with these sorts of students is allowing them to dream, but only to a certain point, because the reality of their situation – for instance, education-wise – needs to be brought home to them. The fact, for example, that some students will not succeed in obtaining their ‘O’ level certification in a few months because they have missed too many sessions pertaining to the curriculum is a hard pill to swallow. In some cases, Walter adds, the students are successfully helped to pursue a post-secondary or tertiary course, but this is not always possible.

Naturally, Walter and his colleagues attempt to guide them to the best of their ability, encouraging them where they see true talent, as in the case of a particular student who was found to be skilled at sculpture. However, in some other cases, it falls to Walter and his colleagues to gently break it to the students that they cannot, for example, enrol in the army because of the mental issues that they are suffering from. Another fault of the system is that, once they leave school, former students cannot avail themselves of support. At this stage, they are very much in need of a support structure, something which is denied to them simply because they are no longer at school. This fact concerns Walter very much, because he knows that the families of these students do not offer a supportive environment. In fact, he feels rather strongly about the issue relating to the reception of benefits from the social services

department only if the family accepts the help it is given, for example in the form of psychiatric care, medication or therapy.

When I ask Walter who he believes the students consider to be the most important people in their lives – for example, their parents or he and his colleagues – he replies that it boils down to how long the students spend at the Nurture Centres. Martin is a case in point. Walter uses his example to illustrate how keenly the students feel the change of social workers or teachers, particularly because they would have established a strong relationship with them. If the social workers decide to leave for any reason, it is a good deal more devastating for the student in question than not having a strong relationship with their parents, especially since separations and divorces are becoming more common today. Although the latter are still usually respected by the students because of who they are, the bond between parents and offspring may not be strong, especially after some students realise that their parents had neglected them earlier on in life. Some students will, therefore, mention the fact that they are not on speaking terms with their parents quite casually, without any seeming element of regret, whereas they might see a social worker's or teacher's permanent absence from the school as a deep betrayal.

I comment on the fact that it is probably more important for a teacher to have empathetic qualities than to be academically gifted, specifically if they end up working with students who need special attention. A kind of aptitude test or an evaluation of an individual's background might go a long way towards assessing their suitability to the profession, rather than having someone who is simply interested in transmitting the contents of the syllabus. Walter confides that, in order to become a PE teacher, he and his course-mates had to submit to an aptitude as well as physical fitness test in the absence of formal certification related to sports as an entry-level qualification. In this case, he said, he and some of his contemporaries might have demonstrated less physical prowess than others, but were infinitely more suitable for the teaching profession because of their other qualities. Walter also speaks of the British teaching system, which places a greater emphasis on actual practice and classroom skills, rather than knowledge of the subject. He goes on to mention the case of certain individuals who have the potential to be brilliant teachers, as they are immensely suited to the profession, but are struggling academically. He is trying to help them obtain their teaching warrant notwithstanding the latter, as he feels that they would be an asset to the profession. Another such person is a hip-hop instructor, whom Walter says is wonderful at putting things across to students. Walter notes that he himself would have greatly benefited from an extra year of

teaching practice while being tutored by dedicated teachers, so that he could have observed them and learnt from their own methods.

When I ask Walter whether he thinks that there is a difference between theory and practice, specifically when it comes to the application of the former to the teaching of children with various difficulties, he replies that theory is always useful, but nothing replaces practice. Also, teachers should, ideally, have the space to be able to experiment with different teaching methods, and this is next to impossible in a mainstream school. This is because of the logistics aspect, in contrast with the specialised schools such as the Nurture Centres, which make allowances for this aspect. Walter discusses at length the fact that the eventual rigidity in the syllabus of a subject like PE has greatly hampered the initiatives of teachers like himself to do anything creative and constructive with his students. The continued insistence on the academic factor has not left he and his colleagues the space to organise anything extracurricular, when this would be so much more beneficial for the students. I add the thought that despite this heavy reliance on standard academic performance, students' overall results have, over the last few years, suffered. Walter continues to make the point that other skills, in particular socialisation and leadership skills, are not given the prominence they deserve in Malta, which is, indeed, a shame. He then goes on to proudly state that, compared to students from other schools, those attending the Nurture Centres are used to communicating their likes and dislikes.

Walter then explains the range of subjects studied by the attendees of the Nurture Centres – in addition to their vocational topics, they follow the syllabi of Maths, English, Maltese and ICT. He stresses that one of his most important duties in this regard is to make sure that the vocational, or VET subjects conform to national MQF levels, in order to bring them in line with the standard and to offer the students a chance to pursue further studies by making sure that they are in possession of entry criteria into various courses – that is, the 'O' levels needed. Once again, he focuses on certification related to subjects that are not strictly academic, but bring recognition with them, such as the aforementioned Duke of Edinburgh award and Health and Safety. The idea is for the students to be able to present certification that is well valued and will stand them in good stead once they enter the world of work. I ask Walter what it is that keeps him rooted to this particular section of the education sector. His reply is both pragmatic and touching. He says that he cannot bear the idea of moving to another sort of school, as he feels it would be tantamount to abandoning the children in question. He adds that, even though they may be harder to manage because of their difficult

backgrounds, it is hard not to feel affectionate towards such students once you get to know them. He also feels that he is anything but a traditional teacher or head of school, and that his subject has equipped him with a different outlook on things than typical academic ones. Ultimately, he opines, teachers' success with such students is very much predicated upon how hands-on they are ready to be in dealing with various situations. You have to be ready for anything, he adds. Dealing with and helping the sorts of students Walter works with on a daily basis may be challenging, but reaps its own gifts. More than anything else, he says, it is incredibly satisfying to think that you have aided various individuals survive, live a healthy life, build relationships and families of their own and find jobs. Former students are very grateful, and recognise the contribution of people like Walter to their personal situations. He recounts the situation of a specific student, who, regrettably, ended up in prison. Though his situation is far from ideal, Walter is very much struck by the fact that this student chooses to make his phone call to him, not, for instance, a member of his family. I hit on the point that it must be rather devastating for the students at Nurture Centress when some teachers leave, mainly because they have reached retirement age. Walter mentions a number of teachers who are aged over 60 that constitute half his staff, so it is an issue that he feels rather keenly, especially because some of the teachers in question instruct skills-based subjects. These will need to be replaced by teachers who are not only knowledgeable about the respective fields they will be teaching, but also capable of dealing with students who come with very specific needs; in this case, sensory processing difficulties. Such professionals are required to have sound training in this area. He goes to explain that, in many situations, LSEs are actually better trained than teachers to manage the behaviour of students suffering from the above learning difficulties, as they are, at least, able to identify the various learning challenges they come across. In the case of Nurture Centress such as the one he runs, the specialisation in the subject is of lesser importance.

I proceed to the subject of responsibility towards the individual students. Walter insists that it is the remit of the heads of the schools that the students originally come from. To clarify the issue, the students' exam papers between grades one and eleven are sent from their schools of origin. He is simply the centre's programme coordinator, not a school principal. This is another of the problems faced by the centres; that is, the lack of coordination between the latter and the students' original schools. Students resident at the centres can't, in point of fact, be expected to take exams from their schools of origin when they are following a different syllabus at each given centre. I am somewhat incredulous about this fact, and I confirm what

Walter has said, because the sense of impotence felt by educators is rife, and is something I have also encountered in my research. Walter bemoans this absence of congruence between the various educational organisations, saying that his travels to different countries have clearly demonstrated that this is not, in fact, caused by a deficiency in resources. Walter also verbalises his frustrations about the fact that the vocational training the students are given at the centres is not even acknowledged in their school-leaving certificate. I counter with some of my experiences with primary school teachers who suffer in class when they have students with particular needs, both because of the flawed system in general and their lack of training. Their priority is to merely manage problematic behaviour, not really help the student, and they can't be blamed for this. Naturally, it is never helpful to generalise, but the issues referred to above are rampant. I ask Walter whether IEPs are still held, and he replies in the positive. Notwithstanding the notion of positive reinforcement, and the sterling work of some counsellors, certain students are automatically labelled as having behavioural problems, and sent to the relevant Nurture Centress after having been branded in this manner. Once again, both Walter and I underline the lack of continuity present in the system, and the extent to which the different departments wash their hands of students who are sent to other schools or centres. Apart from the absence of communication between departments, there is also the fact that students' problems are not being addressed early enough.

Aside from this, no checks are carried out in terms of whether parents are making proper use of social benefits, for instance, or bringing up their children with specific needs in the appropriate way, until it is too late to step in and rectify the situation. Walter paints a potential case scenario which has its roots in some of the situations he has actually seen. I counter by asking him whether he feels that parents should be present at the Nurture Centress. Walter vehemently disagrees with this suggestion, saying that it is all a matter of resources being used, and being utilised in an appropriate manner. Squandering and repetition of resources is something that he is, unfortunately, all too familiar with. When I question Walter about the records he is equipped with for the purpose of dealing with his students, he says that these are, unfortunately, very frequently incomplete, and that students are oftentimes referred to Nurture Centress when they are not meant to be. For instance, it is sometimes the case that the sort of programme offered by the Nurture Centres which Walter runs is not suitable for the student in question. Walter has experienced this situation, and it is not easy for him to come to terms with it. It is crucial, he says, to distinguish between the kind of sanctuary that the centre offers, whether it can be described as a programme or a

school. This year, he goes on to say, the teachers at the centre are particularly motivated because they are working towards the attainment of the MQF levels, which is beneficial for them and will offer certification to the student. However, he is doubtful as to whether this should be the goal that the centre needs to ultimately aspire towards. The latter should, rather, constitute reintegration.

I discuss with Walter the regrettable occurrence of receiving third-generation students at the Nurture Centress. When I meet former students who tell me that they have had children, my fear is that, as they get older, the latter might find themselves as part of the care system. This is largely because of the unfortunate attitude described above, where no concerted effort is really made to follow students' cases in a profound and thorough manner. The most important thing, as far as the authorities go, is that students with sensory processing difficulties are placed at some kind of educational centre, not that their situations are looked into on the basis of their discrete and defining elements. The urge to have everyone 'fit in' at the various Nurture Centress no matter their issues has long-lasting and deep repercussions for the residents of the assorted centres, which is, clearly, something that the educators working at such centres would like to avoid. The ideal situation, as Walter goes on to articulate, is not to have to run such centres, or rather, to have a situation where the centre co-exists and functions in parallel with the particular mainstream school, actually forming part of said school.

The intention would be to essentially keep them in such schools, with the added support of LSAs. He goes on to explain that the principal at the school he is connected with is very much on board with this idea. In fact, Walter himself coordinates the learning support centre which works in tandem with this particular school. He states, rather proudly, that the head of school personally followed the case of a student who was referred to the Nurture Centres, and oversaw his reintegration into the school he runs. Once again, the idea is for the students to be kept within the mainstream sphere of education. I express surprise and admiration at this determination, noting that it is unusual, especially when there are situations where even certain psychologists express ignorance about some of the students whose cases they are meant to be monitoring. If the resources are available, Walter goes on to say, this is utterly unacceptable; if a child has been removed from the mainstream sphere, the social workers or psychologists concerned need to pay extra attention to their case. The interview ends with both myself and the interviewee musing about the notion of inclusion. If the latter is to work,

I note, it needs to be handled properly, with the full use of all available resources. Walter adds that it is easy to speak of inclusion when things run smoothly. It is, he concludes, when things take a turn for the worse that the mettle of the school and its staff members is really put to the test.

Appendix 27: Sample Entries from a Research Log

Week 2

The first session started with a group of children from Year 7. As they did not come down in order, the class teacher showed them she was angry with them and told them to come down again. They did and in a better order. After the lesson, I had a short session with the group and I found time to process the feeling with them. I get a strong feeling that boys compete for my attention during the observation sessions.

The first issue was violence and that it can never be accepted. Clifton showed as a small act about how a school personnel handled James in where the participants received as very violent. This input influenced all my feeling throughout the week. The stop movement emotional statue game was done and enjoyed. I believe that participants are learning a lot about their feelings and the right they have to express them.

At the end of the session, they performed a truly nurturing feeling even for a new student, Nathan, who joined the year recently. It was so nice to see an atmosphere name of cooperation rather than the competition that is very much “palpable” in the group. The arts & craft involved building a strong wall “around” a protected object. I feel that the group is really ready for self-disclosure. During the session, Kirsten was on the side saying he was hit by a legless figure that he told me was his father after an accident at work.

I made use of a game story-completion game to induce creativity amongst story telling. A strong emergent category seemed to be that of someone who is not accepted by his friends; this was the theme which came out of Nathan’s work. Someone who is not accepted in a new place. Nathan is a newcomer to the school. Is he in any way dealing with such feeling? Do not remove the pain but acknowledge in and empower participants to acknowledge it himself.

Week 3

We had a session in class due to some disruption happened in the previous room. In the first minutes we processed the idea of consequences and the general feeling of sadness, uneasiness, nervousness or the fear of having to stay in class. I was surprised at the children’s ability to arrive at conclusions which are very logical. Though I had no hand-outs to

distribute, the activity I prepared developed into a “game” everyone enjoyed immensely and there was a general feeling of wanting to discover new things about others, who wrote that etc.... a lot of happening on the level of self-disclosure and sharing. I observed the large number of participants who said they behave in class in order to avoid punishments. A palpable feeling was that of “loneliness; I feel lonely; I feel alone”. This exercise was continued throughout the 2nd session. My problem is always balancing between behaviour modification and facilitation.

Week 5

Work with the group has to carry-on on another level; The group is putting much more effort to work and enjoying a good session. The first session was devoted to cutting pictures and posting them on our body-map. The picture chosen are intended to be about their perception of friends. It was interesting to see how they only chose only pictures of animals and not people (only 1 or 2 human figure) as friends.

A fear that remains very much true is the inability to work as a team. I am very pleased seeing Jesmond working cutting pictures and posting them on. Kevin’s leadership skills are very much noticeable and need to be worked upon. Roderick’s ability to deal with a theme in a very serious manner is also noticeable. He would be very choosy in the picture he chooses and take time in clarifying his choice. Jesmond’s sense of responsibility sprung from the moment he was appointed week’s helper. At a point he turned onto his friends and urged them to take a decision about which body map is to be given to me and which one left could be taken home. These characteristics need to be praised.

When we processed the maps, we could notice the large amount of picture about women that related to Kevin. We spoke about puberty and the change this brings to our life. We also spoke about the difference between being worried and being friends. Adrian chose a picture of a homosexual couple and I tried to empower the group the process the point of homosexuality as acceptable in today’s world. I did not feel so comfortable speaking about it to a group of children. The laughter level increased and slowly the session come to an end.

Week 7

The first session was very disturbed as Kurt was involved in a fight in the courtyard; Marley was involved in another fight with Rennie. Martin and Clifton were quite restless. I was tired

being my last session on a Tuesday. Marley was very resistant, resisting each attempt I did to deal with the issue. The issue however seemed to revolve around bullying by Rennie. Marley was able to speak about it in front of everyone at the end. The session was going well but then collapsed again. Certainly, it was important for Marley to be able to confront Rennie about his bullying. His friends agreed with Marley.

The only way I could involve Kurt was by telling him to bang on the tambourine in order to give a start to the emotional greetings. It was interesting showing how Martin spoke during the improvisation on the feeling of sadness interpreting it with muracas of acting out “imdejjaq ħafna jien għax jien bla familja” and he would quickly cover it with all up. It’s maybe also indicative that the day after Martin spoke of how once he struck the revolver from his uncle because he was beating him up. The situation might not be exactly as he described it as he might have wanted to impress others but there could be some truth.

The second session was much better and more settled. The finger-painting activity made everyone feel engaged and completely immersed in the activity. Clifton repeated the pattern of the weeks before; he would not be happy with his picture and want a new paper. His painting was still trees next to each other. A lot of trees come out through the painting. Brian painted a burglar breaking in a house where a young kid lived. Marley intuited on an explosion in which cars were involved and people killed. Martin painted an open coffin with a dead man in it.

Week 8

During the session, James and Gordon came into the room running after each other but specified that it was just a play. I just continued with the activities and gave no attention to them. When I called them, they stopped and came next to me. I felt that we could converse with one another. I realised that Gordon wanted to do a play where he plays the tough guy and where there is a lot of aggression. We negotiated that this play would be played after the story. The story highlighted the killing of a witch; an event that was met with much enthusiasm by all in fact that was expressed through a dance with instruments etc... Gordon who is usually aggressive was now dancing maybe because I did not force /tell him to do so. The room was filled with a lot of energy, I felt a bit baffled should I let them carry on or else enforce discipline. I decided to let them carry on and my decision, I think was rewarded. John’s painting the day after, recalled the killing of the witch and how he associated fun to it.

I recall a magical moment when the box was opened and was also surprised by Gordon who was acting so strong as the father embracing us and telling us “mhux ha nhallikom toqtlu qatt izjed”. The words must have struck; otherwise it would have been difficult for him to recall them. The aggressive bar seemed to continue. I was afraid regarding such aggression but on the other hand I know it needs to be expressed. The scene presented two drunk men in a bar starting off a fight. The amount of aggression was palpable. The painting session started off well; the only problem was convincing Victor at the end to wear his uniform again.

The painting exercise involved choosing a feeling and painting a scene on it. Gordon at first chose a happy feeling and painted a seaside picture showing the sea. His rendering was very linear and the use of paints very rigid. No effort to go beyond simply putting colours on paper. He was more interested in playing with Sammy. I am surprised how a puppet can still interest a 13-year-old boy. He keeps on asking me to do a session on puppet construction. I told him that it will be done. At a point I felt I could ask Gordon, “Do you want me to paint you?” His was eager “yes”. I painted red lines around the perimeter of the paper. I asked him what he thought they were. He told me “xewk” (thorns). I did not have any intention to make them look like thorns. Gordon spoke and painting the two-fold nature of his character, one he called Jews and the other Satan, the painter.

Victor’s talent at painting is noticeable. He is very creative with the use of colours. Mario painted different faces writing down the feelings as well. John’s sense of creativity is poorly diminished and cannot be observed. John needs a lot of individual work in order to re-awaken a name of creativity inside him. James painted a boy who is being hurt by others who are throwing stones at him. Julian frequently seems to be in a world of his own.