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2002

Narrative, meaning making and personal development: Teachers' storied experience in Montessori, Steiner and other primary classrooms

Gayle C. Ward
University of Notre Dame Australia

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Publication Details

Ward, G. C. (2002). Narrative, meaning making and personal development: Teachers' storied experience in Montessori, Steiner and other primary classrooms (Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)). University of Notre Dame Australia. <http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses/32>

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Chapter VI

Using Narrative for Personal Transformation

Used as a reflective and integrating force, narrative can assist the teacher or student who has found an inner authentic voice to experience transformation through effecting psychological change or spiritual development. In appropriate situations, the individual, who has learned to recognise and cherish the uniqueness of his/her journey and to respect other individuals in the context of their lives, becomes open to finding deeper meaning in life. This quest entails envisioning a goal related to personal change and coping with obstacles on the pathway to its achievement. It entails experiencing creativity as an outward expression of inner balance. It involves being empowered by discovering universal truths and values and relating these to one's life through interweaving archetypes that transcend cultural limitations.

How educators mentor students and each other in this quest for spiritual meaning largely depends on how they view the potential of an individual to transform and how they view the role of education in facilitating spiritual experiences. All four types of educational methodologies explored are developmental in that curriculum content and learning expectations become more complex as the student gets older. As discussed in Chapter V, all four methodologies also recognise individual variability within developmental parameters. "Students develop and learn at different rates and in different ways, constructing new knowledge and understandings in ways which link their learning to their previous experiences" (Curriculum Council, 1998, p. 17). For

children, the disequilibrium encountered as constructs change developmentally can precipitate new directions in learning. Carrigg (1997) who researched adult transformational learning concluded that, for adults, change results from disorientation, discourse and reflection. Langer (1997) demonstrated that change in context or circumstances can lead to greater mindfulness and consequent change in learning and attitudes for children and adults.

Recent research by Gad Yair (2000) supports the premise that, for students, change might be either cumulative or precipitous. This research implies that if we adhere too rigidly only to a cumulative paradigm we deny the impact of short-term intervention or the profound influence that some teachers can have on students' lives. He adds that "the cumulative approach to the assessment of educational effects is unable to explain non-linear and rapid changes in students' knowledge, values, and behaviour" (Yair, 2000, p. 2). He thus recommends that we consider a "big-bang" approach "sensitive to abrupt, strong, and transformative educational experiences and effects" (Yair, 2000, p. 3). Changes ensuing from these intense educational episodes include pragmatic decisions on life choices, self-empowerment, reevaluation of values and beliefs and behavioural changes (Yair, 2000). In my own experience, my introduction to a 'whole language' approach at Murdoch University and my participation in a Montessori culture workshop both resulted in precipitous change to my beliefs about education. (Refer to Prologue.)

For both children and adults, change results from making connections that inspire us to view or do things in a new way. Transformation is more than the predictable change one might expect along an individual's learning journey. Whether the change

is cumulative or episodic, when it reflects a new connection that deepens the meaning of our journey, it is transformational.

Transformation can be termed “spiritual” when the connections that have been formed are beyond sensory and intellectual experiences. It is a oneness or flow that is greater than the sum of the observable parts (Wolf, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997)

From the interview data, educators from all four of the educational traditions represented concurred with the words of Eldon Katter:

If the goal of our educational system is to help people become fully integrated and whose physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual natures are in harmony and balance, we cannot leave the development of our inner being to chance and accidental self-discovery. We all have the power to integrate, to make associations, and to form unlimited connections. Left to chance, the integration of our inner and outer worlds goes on recklessly like a car without a driver. We blindly grope for the meaning of life. (Kattner, 1997, p. 4)

Kattner (1997) goes on to say that to act we must make choices, have values, know our inner world and understand the nature of the universe. To this one can add Wolf's (1996, 1998) suggestion that educators must counter the influences of a consumerist society by helping students realise that their inner being is defined by what they are, not what they have. The interview data of storied experience and a literature review reveal a range of beliefs and practices for helping students and teachers to find deeper meaning in their life journeys through making connections. Significantly, narrative

can prepare an individual to make connections that lead to transformation by providing:

- engagement and orientation – providing a focus for reflection and self – discovery through

meditation, reflection, wonder and values,

journalling and

creativity and balance

and

- the plot – exploring the possibilities of personal change through

personal goals and

models of transformation including

influential teachers

analogies and bibliocounselling and

archetypes.

Engagement - Providing a Focus for Reflection and Self-Discovery

As explored in Chapters IV and V, awareness of personal narrative can be fostered by the rhythm of silence and activity, by rituals and traditions, by sharing our own stories

in authentic dialogue and by exposure to stories and autobiographies. For these experiences to precipitate personal change, they must be reflected upon to enhance self-awareness and precipitate responsible decision-making. Palmer (1997) recommends that some ways of finding that pathway to the ‘inner teacher’ are “solitude and silence, meditative reading and walking in the woods, keeping a journal, finding a friend who will simply listen” (p. 9). Palmer also observes that “we can speak to the teacher within our students, only when we are on speaking terms with the teacher within ourselves” (p. 9). So, to scaffold the process of inner reflection with children, it is important for teachers themselves to explore their identities through meditation and reflection, journalling, meaningful discourse, and creative endeavours (Palmer, 1997, 1998; Popov, 1999).

Meditation, Reflection and Wonder

What does one meditate for? Adams (2000) suggests that we meditate to determine what we value. Perhaps this is another way of saying that we meditate to determine the highlights and meaningful patterns of our personal journey and perhaps to discover universal truths through connecting our experiences. The terms meditation and reflection were often used together in the literature and teacher interviews. Both use the narrative qualities of temporality – moving us from past to future as we make the present relevant. Both use the narrative quality of prioritising what is important to us. Meditation also connotes disciplined focus on life’s meaning that may or may not be based on personal events. By contrast, reflection entails internally exploring connections discovered while examining and reconstructing one’s own experiences.

The Catholic teachers embraced the idea of reflection and meditation. Built into their RE curriculum¹⁰⁴ are reflection topics for students and teachers. For example, in a unit entitled “I Am Special”, a reflection suggestion for teachers is:

What are some of the things I usually do which help me feel refreshed and renewed? What changes within me when I do one of these? When was the last time I did one of these? How can I make room in my life to do one of these things that refresh and renew me more frequently? (The Director of Religious Education, 1998, p. 4)

A reflection suggested for Year One is:

Each of us is different from every other person. Take some time now to think about how you are special, then you might like to say a spontaneous prayer of thanks to God for making you special.

(The Director of Religious Education, 1998, p. 42)

Within the Catholic tradition, meditation is viewed as a way to pray and so involves a religious pathway to spirituality. Catholic educators are taught to scaffold meditation for children. “It is suggested that meditation is introduced slowly to younger children. They need to be introduced gradually into the art of sitting still. The teacher

¹⁰⁴ RE curriculum = Religious Education curriculum

can be a great model for the children in this prayer form” (The Director of Religious Education, 1998, p. 39). Initially through careful prompting, children are taught to use their imaginations to visualise biblical stories and their personal stories in detail.

The RE programme underpins values that are related to and explored in other curriculum areas. For instance, in Kate’s classroom, the value focus was on friendship. Children reflected on friendship and then related what it meant to the characters in *Charlotte’s Web* and to their own personal life stories. When the children went outside to sketch, the teacher encouraged them to reflect on the unique way each child approached the problem reinforcing the “I am special” value focus. One of the teachers I consulted for clarification on the RE programme in Catholic schools commented “I could build the entire curriculum around the RE themes. They flow into every subject” (Peel, 2001).

Interviewee Kate indicated that, in addition to having RE weaving throughout the curriculum, she found it helpful to have a time in the morning for children to participate in the ritual of prayer and song. She has discovered that establishing meditation as part of the rhythm of the day can help children to focus on the relevance of spirituality to their own lives.

Well, otherwise, like today, we had a prayer circle, where we sat down and sang a couple songs and thanked God for our friends. We didn't have to do some work to do it, it's just that realisation. (Kate: 60)

Vicky uses meditation and yoga in her remedial classes that cater for children who attend Government, Catholic and Independent schools.

With kids, I like to do a little bit of meditation – not necessarily God-centered because kids all have their own path or their parents do, but just something where they quieten down and listen to themselves and the universe. I like to do Yoga with the kids...I suspect it has powerful effects on kids. Yoga is a spiritual thing to me. All the movements are spiritual. (Vicky 4: 70)

Interestingly, the two interviewees who specifically practised meditation as a means of reflection had both studied both Eastern and Western religions in their personal quests for meaning. Vicky has participated in Catholic and Anglican churches. However she has travelled frequently in Asia and has been greatly influenced by Eastern guides to meditation and views this as an important means of clarifying her personal journey.

My path, I think, is in an Eastern way. I know it isn't anti-Christianity, but it has an Eastern slant to it. I'm just letting it happen. But I'm getting back into meditation and feeling like I want to be part of a fellowship. I wouldn't mind occasionally going on a withdrawal thing - perhaps going to India and going to a meditation thing. That's always been a part of me. (Vicky 4: 68)

Montessori teacher, Nigel, grew up in a family practising Judaism but he too has turned to an Eastern influenced philosophy to guide his personal reflection. This incorporates meditation.

The philosophy I follow has at its core the idea of meditation and that meditation being an overall awareness in one's life, 24 hour sense of being part of the whole creation and the whole creation has as its source and essence – a unifying energy which one could call God. And therefore being a part of God's creation and, in a sense, bring reverence and respect in the day to day living. And then there is the separate drawing back meditation. (Nigel 2: 17)

Kate and Vicky create context for meditation for children through providing quiet reflective times and visualisation. Nigel views meditative reflection as having two aspects applicable to both his personal life and his teaching. He thus provides a quiet place in the classroom (Refer to Chapter IV) to prepare the way for the “drawing back meditation” and following Montessori philosophy, nourishes a sense of wonder in the children in his care to pave the way for them to experience the cosmic “unifying energy” linked to an awareness of all of life.

Interestingly many educators now support the shared view of Montessori and Steiner that nurturing wonder is an important purpose of early childhood education.

In order to perceive the genius and developmental potential of childhood, one must quite simply give the universe back to the child, in as rich and dramatic a form as possible. (Houston, 1996, pp. 93-94)

Montessori educators do this by introducing children to the wonder of the natural world – the plants, the animals and the stars of our amazing universe. It is difficult, however, to foster wonder in children if this is not part of our inner teacher, our personal journey as well. (Palmer, 1998) I participated in a professional development workshop for teachers where naturalist Eric McCrum walked us around the Montessori school where most of us had worked for more than a decade. We only got to the front gate when I learned for the first time that the tree guarding the pathway was a sheoak and must have a partner in the grounds which I found after years of blindly walking by without appreciating this ‘tree-family’ connection. We spent another hour remarking on the pattern of five repeated over and over in one plant. We learned which plants chose to live here on the sandy soil by the ocean. With my inner teacher thus awakened I could share in the children’s wonder. I never ventured into the schoolyard again without a sense of amazement in the biological patterns of our environment. Wonder paves the way for transformation in that it makes us put everything in a new perspective. In interacting with nature, I became convinced of the accuracy of Montessori’s observation that one could not equate classroom learning with the opportunity to interact with real biological species.

There is no description, no image in any book, that is capable of replacing the sight of real trees, and all the life to be found around them, in a real forest.

Something emanates from those trees that speaks to the soul, something no book, no museum is capable of giving...and which no one can bring into the school.

(Montessori, 1948/1976, p. 35)

Steiner teachers concur that the child's first spiritual experience is wonder and for this to be fully realised, students must be able to appreciate the wonder of the natural world.

First of all for the very young child, the religious aspect in our school would be wonder, just wonder, just nature. (Sam: 488)

For children up to the age of seven, Waldorf teachers are aware of providing experiences that will "awaken and preserve the child's innate sense of wonder, awe and reverence for life." Inward activity is viewed as being of equal importance to outward activity and the study of nature and is nourished by such environmental preparations as soft colours, a candle on the table and perhaps a pentatonic scale. Rhythm, ritual and routine support the child in finding inner calm (Wishart, 2000). In the Steiner school these are the seeds of a reflective life.

Wonder can also be experienced for an adult figure. Steiner educators believe that being someone worthy to be imitated is part of the teacher role in the child's early years. It is acknowledging that "the imitative faculty of the young child betokens an unconscious attitude of deep devotion to life" (Edmunds, 1992, p. 27).

Rudolf Steiner taught that in the primary school years the key quality that the teacher should embody is authority. ... But, we believe that if children at a young age can really accept and love an authority figure, that's something that later transforms into themselves...Steiner [said] that if a child can't feel reverence for a human being, when you are almost shaking when you are going to see this person, not out of fear, but out of real wonder for someone. ...There is a respect, a respect of authority. If a child can't do that, they won't be able to bless anyone as an adult. There would be no sense of that wonder that you can bless or be blessed. (Sam: 628-641)

According to Steiner's anthroposophy, as the children mature, they are encouraged to reflect on how their observations of nature are related to their own unfolding. The wonder generated for the external world is thus linked to the wonder of the interior world.

You could say using the outside world as a key to understanding yourself. Using the inside world as a key to understanding the outside. ... They might study the kangaroo paw. How could you be like that? How could you be like a prickly bush or a soft mossy bed? Reflecting back how we can find that parallel within ourselves. The human being is spread out – out there in the universe. (Sam: 332)

In contrast to the Catholic schools, the process of meditation and praying is not scaffolded in Steiner schools. Rather, the environment is created that will support a self-discovery of spirituality. In Waldorf schools the teacher keeps in mind that, for the first seven years, goodness is the ideal striven for followed by beauty for seven years and then truth (Demanett, 1988).

Going back to the seven year cycles, I talked about, characterising the first seven years, is the underlying statement that one works with the children that the world is *good*. Children in that time will experience that the world is good. The second seven years is that the world is beautiful so that the primary school years are about *beauty*. The third seven years is that The World is true, or there is truth. So *goodness, beauty and truth* are the three works that underpin our education. So in class one, they are six turning seven so they are still in that phase of life and that the world is good is reflected in the fairy tales. The good is just. The evil gets the punishment. That moral quality is really there throughout the years. We won't preach it. "If you be good, this will happen..." It's just a story. The children just pick that up. (Sam: 104)

I asked Fran who had taught in both Government and Catholic schools how she viewed the difference between the two pedagogies in terms of laying a foundation for spirituality. She replied that she thought Religious Education influenced teaching in all areas in the Catholic schools.

The underlying position on religion, the ethos of Christian values, in the Catholic Schools gives a certain freedom. The teacher knows that the parent

has accepted that in enrolling the child. This was very different from my experience in the Government schools. I had to be very careful as I was very aware that I shouldn't influence children to my way of thinking. (Fran 2: 3)

As in Catholic schools, the Steiner teachers feel free to explore aspects of Christianity with the children because that is a philosophical foundation.

Gay: Do parents accept the Christian orientation of the school?

Sam: When parents come here to enter the school, we let them know that this is our philosophy and what we are doing and if they feel comfortable, because at Easter time we will be telling Easter stories and singing Easter songs and at Christmas time we will be singing Christmas songs although everyone basically does in schools. This time of year, Springtime, we sing about St. Michael which is the image of overcoming the dragon. The children love it. They draw pictures of the dragon. For an adult, it's overcoming inner dragons, if you like. (Sam: 466-468)

Also, like the Catholic Schools, many Christian festivals are celebrated.

Then we try through the festivals that we have each term to try to find an expression of spiritual reality as we understand it and we understand it on a Christian base but Rudolf Steiner wasn't just mainstream Christian church but

brings a new understanding to it too. That doesn't go to the children in any preached or direct way. It's experienced. (Sam: 492)

In contrast to the Catholic Schools, children in the Steiner school also explore the pathways that others have chosen to find spirituality.

They'll hear stories about St. Michael and the dragon or a similar problem. One year we did Indira from India because here is a counterpart for St. Michael in Indian mythology, the sort of thunder god. So we sometimes find different cultures as a way for expressing it. Certainly as we get to the high school, they look at studies of religion. Certainly in the stories we study each year, Rome, Greece, Egypt, they get lots of gods of mythology in that. (Sam: 506)

In Montessori elementary classrooms, children are also afforded the opportunity to explore different religions. Part of the curriculum is to study how fundamental needs are met in civilisations. Montessorians incorporate both physical and spiritual needs in the framework for this study.

The Government school teachers differed from the other three educational perspectives in that while acknowledging the importance of the core values in the curriculum, they did not indicate a specific plan of how to approach this other than a literary based one. Both Dan and Lynne spoke of discussing values in terms of stories

studied in class. After reading a book by Sid Fleishman on a family swindled in Iowa, Dan's class would "talk about honesty. That sort of thing. Being honest with people. You know how you deceive" (Dan: 89). While reading *Little Brown Monkey*, Lynne's class focused primarily on language structure, but there was some discussion on feelings of acceptance and rejection (Lynne's Class Observation: 10/98).

In a follow-up interview a few years later, Lynne indicated that value focus was taking a more central place in her curriculum planning. This was partially influenced by the core values in the *Curriculum Framework* (1998) that has been adopted in the interim, but also based on her years of experience with disadvantaged children.

My intention at the beginning of the year was to try to get a curriculum and focus on the child and make the child feel respected and show respect. We did a display board to do with respect, showing what it looks like and talked about it. Again, respect is a word that the children don't know the meaning of unless you get down and actually explain it to them...For those children, it's more important that they learn to feel good about themselves. Until they do, they're not going to learn anything. In fact, there's the hierarchy of needs...Maslow's needs. they need to feel that they are special and that they are successful and that they are respected... That was the idea of the programme – to make them feel special. (Lynne 4: 83-90)

Montessorians Nigel, Ellen and I have been using the Virtues Programme (Popov, 1990, 1999) as a basis for engaging students in exploring values. The Popovs use the

term ‘virtues’ to indicate universal values. It is significant that all three of us independently were attracted to aspects of this programme to give us a specific way of nurturing the spirit of the child in the Montessori classroom. I have also seen it being used in Independent (Uniting Church) schools in Australia (Biggs, 2000). To help children to discover the goodness in themselves and others, they need a vocabulary of goodness and *The Virtues Guide* (Popov, 1990) identifies 52 virtues ranging from assertiveness to unity and including the prayerfulness, scaffolded in the Catholic curriculum, as well as the respect that Lynne was exploring with her class. Before children can strive to make a virtue part of their being, they need to know what it is. I found that with my upper elementary class drama and discussion were excellent ways to introduce the virtues. We also used the vocabulary by providing feedback to each other in class meetings. Thus, compliments such as “You’re nice.” or “You’re fun.” were replaced with tributes on taking responsibility, generosity, joyfulness, etc.

MacIntyre (1984) noted that virtues are hooks that help move us on our spiritual quest and that stories help us find these virtues. Ellen and Nigel both found it helpful to discuss the virtues of story characters with their 6-9 year olds to help them identify the nature of virtues and the scope of goodness.

Some stories are told to work in with the virtues and to incite, inspire moral development. (Ellen 1: 16)

On a visit to Nigel’s class, he described how virtues were clarified for the children by identifying virtues in the Aboriginal story, *Dabu the Dugong* (Dhanganal, 1992) and comparing animal and human virtues.

I must tell you a wonderful thing in class today in this whole area again. We're doing a story as a whole class. It's called *Dabu the Dugong* ... So we've read the story and we've talked about it. And what came up in discussion this morning was the difference between animals and humans in terms of the virtues. I spoke to them about lions and lion cubs and how they have the virtues of strength and courage and love for the lion cub, but no consideration. No sharing out. The strongest lion cub survives, and if there isn't enough food, then the weak one dies. But human beings are different. And we talked about the virtues of consideration and care and empathy. In human families, if there's not enough food, it's shared evenly so everyone gets enough to survive. And that helped them see that strong difference. (Nigel 2: 57)

According to Steiner and Montessori, young children's first experience of spirituality is wonder – wonder for the natural world and in the Waldorf view, wonder for their teachers or significant adults. Narrative also serves to engage children in their spiritual journey by serving as a means for scaffolding the processes of reflection and meditation. Utilising the narrative properties of temporality and setting, students can view experience from different perspectives. Catholic programmes suggest scaffolding reflective and meditative practice by regular and ritualistic devotion and contemplation times with specified topics. Teachers from all four educational approaches demonstrate a belief that children should learn to identify values and

virtues as a platform for their unique spiritual journey. Drama, discussion and story are some ways these values are introduced.

Journalling

Journalling is the tool used to record personal narratives. Just as prayer is a form of meditation, journalling is an avenue for reflection. According to Carol LaChapelle (1997), it lies on the left end of a spectrum of creative writing where the recording is just for the writer, the self is the only audience. She views the writing as having three levels – what we think about an experience, what we feel about an experience, and what we learned from an experience. Somehow in this process of writing reflections, our perspective can change. This is due to the power of narrative to weave past, present and future and to highlight important events. Part of the power of journalling is caused by placing the writer firmly in the centre of his/her experience. “I am the one thinking these thoughts. I am the one having this response” (La Chapelle, 1997). In a safe venue, free to make mistakes, journalling can be used not only to record thoughts, but to “think thoughts.... figure things out, learn something, focus thoughts” (La Chapelle, 1997).

We have experienced firsthand and have witnessed in others the “conversion” teachers and students experience when they are given permission and the opportunity to write what is important to them, when writing becomes a means of naming, interpreting, and revising one’s life. (Ritchie and Wilson, 2000, p. 25)

In the interviews, those teachers who use journalling endorsed it as a powerful tool. Vicky uses it creatively to merge the past and present with her future plans and dreams.

I've journalled for years and years. I don't always write much, but it does help. I write my dreams, my feelings and I write notebooks. I have daybooks. This is Daybook #3 for the year and they get filled up with everything I do – ideas, jottings. (Vicky 4: 48)

Allison feels journalling has a role in maintaining life direction despite stresses.

And even personally – I think journalling for myself is really important. So often, teaching is a very stressful occupation and very political. ...Keeping track of one's own plot is very important. I would like to do that in a better way. I would be a bit clearer about just where my story is going. Reflection on teaching – I think that's very important. (Allison: 325)

Palmer confirms that many find journalling a process of thought clarification. He states that “people often report that the first step toward clearness comes with putting the problem on paper. Doing so forces us to winnow our feelings and facts, allowing the chaff to blow away and getting the issue outside of our heads, into the light of day, where problems often look different than when we recycle them endlessly through our fears and doubts” (Palmer, 1998, p. 152).

During the last several years, I have used journalling in the tertiary courses I have taught. I am convinced that this medium empowers student teachers to make connections between their reading, experience and discussions. It also precipitates a process of revisiting and later reflection and allowing for these revisits should be part of the journalling process. Using their writing to connect the various sources of input into their lives produces a unique understanding. No one can tie input together with preexisting experience in the same way and so every authentic journal is a creative endeavour. I have been teaching intensive courses to Korean teachers during the past three years and have encouraged participants to explore their thoughts and feelings in journal form. One of the experienced participating teachers shared that journalling was the most important thing she learned in the communication course. Recording significant experiences from the course and her reflections on how resulting realisations affected her in her personal life was a profound experience. Perhaps the empowerment of journalling results from the writer realising that she/he is the one holding all these diverse experiences together and journalling serves to highlight the meaning of these connections.

Journalling is a mature process where thought and literacy are inseparably interwoven. Like meditation, reflection and virtue recognition, it is a process that needs to be scaffolded. From my interviews and literature review, it became apparent that teachers value the process of journalling and approach the task of nurturing this personal form of expression differently.

Firstly, it is unlikely that teachers, who do not use journalling themselves, will prioritise it as a reflective tool in their elementary classrooms. La Chapelle(1997) suggests that teachers themselves need to practise strategies for facing that blank page until they are comfortable writing about experiments in their classrooms, what happened and what new understandings they have gained. Some of the strategies she suggests for facilitating this process are writing a list, a monologue, a dialogue, an imaginative visualisation, a description or engaging in free or continuous writing. Once the teacher has writing on the page, he/she can focus on what is important to him/her and begin a reflective process. Through journalling, the writer gains new insights and thus can solve problems and move on.

Ritchie and Wilson (2000) also note the transformation possible through the journalling process by teachers and student teachers.

We have experienced firsthand and have witnessed in others the “conversion” teachers and students experience when they are given permission and the opportunity to write what is important to them, when writing becomes a means of naming, interpreting, and revising one’s life. (Ritchie and Wilson, 2000, p. 25)

Ritchie and Wilson (2000) had their students keep an in-class journal to explore issues in pedagogy and experience. La Chapelle would argue that this is not a journal as the audience is the lecturer. One of Ritchie and Wilson’s students suggested that keeping two journals – an in-class as well as an out-of-class personal journal – was

worthwhile in that this maintained a venue for exploring personal thought but also allowed a dialogue with the lecturer provided through the in-class journal.

Interviewee Fran, who teaches trainee teachers as well as elementary students, feels the personal aspect of journalling is critical. Her student teachers submit a journal but it is marked only pass/fail so that individual entries are not read beyond viewing that the student teacher has reflected on certain issues. She explains, “I only look at the headings because if I assess it with a mark or percentage, then they’ll write for me.” (Fran 2: 29) During classes, she will often stop to ask students to reflect on an issue that has arisen. In this way, she scaffolds their use of their journals as a tool for reflection – not an assessment item.

I use it with students at _____. My own theory about learning is that you remember your own thoughts. You don’t remember other people’s thoughts. Your own thoughts are powerful. So if during a lecture, they listen or get involved in an activity, I then want them to capture the moment and write it down. (Fran 2: 19)

Understandably, if teachers need the journalling process demonstrated and scaffolded, primary children require an even more active support program. Government teachers, Lynne and Dan, both expressed their frustration with a process that became tedious in their classrooms. Dan described the process as “boring”.

Dan: We write journals, not daily journals because I find that boring at school. Once or twice a week. (Dan: 222)

Lynne had abandoned the idea of keeping a personal journal as part of the classroom expectations.

I haven't had that many children who were capable of that level of thinking.
...I know it was suggested this year and so we tried it but we just gave up. It wasn't very productive at all. (Lynne 1: 134)

However, in an effort to foster a practice of metacognition, Lynne did continue to try to get children to keep a learning journal.

Lynne: Reflecting is something very difficult for the Grade 4's.... All that seems to come out is "It was fun" or "I like drawing pictures". They are not reflecting on how well they used the plan that was given to them.... (Lynne 4: 50)

In an interview dialogue with Vicky we discussed possible strategies for scaffolding the journaling process.

Gay: I'm wondering if they are not ready to explore their thoughts in a journal in that way or maybe they're being pressured to recount which is not really about reflecting. It can be a sentence – just write a thought. Maybe that

would be a better way to scaffold journalling and maybe they would write something everyday besides, “This is what I had for breakfast.”

Vicky: I know. I get sick of it. “I put on my clothes, got the bus, went to school.” When I’ve introduced reading journals with kids, I read a page of a book and then we stop and reflect. “How would you feel if you were that character?” I’m really fascinated with what Frank Smith talked about regarding journalling. Writing is a way of getting to know yourself. It’s a way of knowing...He was really on to something there. (Vicky 4: 54-56)

Fran concurred with Vicky in implying that by scaffolding the learning journal process, one could encourage the reflective thought that is the substance of personal journals. She describes stopping a class to have children write down their individual thoughts just as she does in a university lecture or workshop.

There are points where I would get them to write down a thought at the moment ...I do it for their own learning – their journey through that unit to track their thoughts. ...So in that Year 6 class, I might ask them to write their personal thought about the water cycle before they go out, or any thought they have about Captain Cook’s journey. We could share that later... So with journalling, I like to use it as an aid to thought. But personal thought - not what the teacher wants you to think of Captain Cook. (Fran 2: 21)

Fran does not assess the journal, but she does invite the sharing of ideas that indicates if journalling is supporting a reflective process.

Fran indicated that by Grade 6, with some prompting, students could put their reflective thoughts in writing. Vicky recommended that getting upper primary students to write journals from a character's point of view could help scaffold a personal reflective process. What would be appropriate scaffolding of journalling in the earlier primary grades? From the experiences of my interviewees I am led to conclude that journalling – putting our reflections in writing – is a developmental process that is often poorly scaffolded. Sam noted that children in Class 5 “start writing more about an inner life. They can't do that in Class 2, but by Class 5, they can do that. They're writing more about their thought and feelings.” (Sam: 542)

In my own 6-9 year old class, I thought I could scaffold reflective writing and discourage daily recounts in journals by reminding children that their journal might include:

- plans I have,
- thoughts or ideas I have,
- feelings I have,
- things that happened to me.

My observation is similar to that of Steiner teacher, Sam. I found that even children who eagerly engaged in the writing process did not display what might be termed

reflective writing until they were close to moving from the middle primary to the upper primary area. Samples from Emily (age 7 ½) are as follows:

Plans I have: “ Today we are going to go and have swimming.”

Thoughts or ideas I have: “Today I am going to the moon after school in a rocket. I have been there before and last time the rocket fell off the moon and we had to jump off the moon. We landed on earth in a country called Turkey. I thought it was a funny name for a country. I had to go. I found a new rocket and I flew to the planet Saturn. It was lovely there until we fell through the ring. ...”

Feelings I have: “Today I feel really very happy.”

Things that happened to me: “Today we went to Underwater World and it was very fun.”

The seed was planted in this classroom to use the journal for a variety of types of reflection including ideas that might become stories. In that sense it fits the description of journalling by La Chapelle (1997). However, the vocabulary was often stilted and lacked the descriptive language that this child used orally. I suspect that this constricting effect was partially caused by the awareness that the teacher was going to be reading this and providing some feedback (to the journalling process – not editing). However, I also believe that the child was not yet developmentally ready to engage in reflective dialogue with a written text.

If this is true, Shawn’s “oral journalling” is probably a much more effective scaffolding for the reflective, transformative process than daily written recounts.

Children, not limited by the conventions of written vocabulary and punctuation, are able to use the narrative process to tell their stories in a much richer way. They can tell experiences and tell why it is important to them in terms of their feelings and thoughts. They are using oral journalling to find meaning in their life journeys. Oral language has become equated with thought but literacy is a later development.

Shawn's students "journalled" the following stories orally:

One day my dad was walking up the stairs carrying my sister and me. The stairs were slippery because it snowed. Daddy slipped and Camille rolled down the steps. I didn't hurt myself but Camille hurt her whole leg. I felt scared because I thought my sister was hurt. (Isabelle, Age 6)

I like to do things in the trees. I like to climb up them. Birds like to sit on the branches. They build their nests on there. One time I made a nest and put it in a very tight spot, so if a bird doesn't know how to make a nest, they can be in my nest. It was grass and Papa carried it and put it in the tree. We went where we made it and it was still in the tree! Birds will come. I have real sticks for my nest. I think about my tree all the time. This is the nest for baby birds. Like when birds come in and want a nest, they can find my nest.

(excerpt from Silas, Age 3)

In both of these oral journals, the children are clearly reflecting – making sense of the event by reference to feelings, knowledge and past events and using descriptive language impossible if they are limited by writing. In both cases children have been

influenced by past dialogue – Isabelle by family dialogue and Silas by classroom dialogue (Refer to Chapter IV for dialogue on birds in Silas’ preschool class). As in written journals, the narrator places himself/herself in the center of the experience. (La Chapelle, 1997)

La Chapelle (1997) emphasises that journal writing is private writing with the writer as the only audience. If we are to use journal writing in teacher education classrooms, it is thus important to minimise the lecturer as audience. This might be achieved by having a journal as a pass/fail exercise or writing a learning journal that is separate from a private journal. It might be achieved by never requiring that the journal is submitted but ideas developed from it for later presentation and assessment. In this case, student teachers should be invited to write their own thoughts down at frequent intervals during class time or practice. In whatever way possible, authentic reflective writing should be encouraged.

Since journalling is a process that needs to be scaffolded, totally private journals are not realistic in early elementary years although recognition of private authentic thought is critical. Demonstration is important and perhaps predictably, it was the teachers who used journalling themselves who persisted in using it with children. These same teachers sought ways other than the daily recount book to scaffold journalling. It seems clear that when we have children write a daily recount, we are scaffolding a single written genre rather than a reflective process. More success has been reported by affording children the opportunity to journal orally in the early years and later to encourage them to have a nonassessable booklet for recording assorted ideas and feelings – an idea book separate from a recount book or a draft book.

Regular reflection writing points in a lesson has also proved effective for children as well as adult students. This is encouraging them to record ideas that they may want to revisit and reconsider. To effectively journal, we need to be able to transform our stories as we write them. It is a vehicle for having a dialogue with ourselves about our journey. Teachers need to scaffold the reflective process. There are other occasions to scaffold punctuation, comprehension and writing style.

Creativity and Balance

Before the many potential pathways on life's journey can be contemplated, they must be discovered by exposure to a multitude of disciplines explored through varied forms of expression. Experiencing the world in a variety of ways lays a fertile foundation for the multitude of meaningful connections that can lead to personal transformation.

The pedagogies of the four educational traditions explored all emphasise the importance of creating an environment and curriculum that supports the child's construction in all domains including physical, cognitive, linguistic, social/emotional and creative. All the domains overlap and the creative domain makes new connections integrating the other domains. In the classroom teachers can provide an environment conducive to creativity by providing a balanced curriculum and acknowledging varied learning style preferences and multiple intelligences that are used to make connections. It is important to note that personal transformation, the resolution of our own conflicts, does not occur effectively without establishing a setting rich in alternatives through which individuals can make a selection that contributes to a balanced life. Two of the implications are that schools should support a rich and varied curriculum (Refer to Chapter VIII) and that teachers themselves should be models of balance by exploring their own journeys in a variety of ways.

I assumed that for teachers to find balance, they would pursue varied interests in addition to their classroom based elementary school focus. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) notes that “when people do a hobby, get involved in exercise, play a musical instrument, or go out to a movie or restaurant, they tend to be more happy, motivated, concentrated, and more often in flow than in any other part of the day” (p. 39). Yair (2000) stresses that exploring interests and abilities leads to self-discovery which is fundamental to motivation and thus change. These ideas prompted me to ask interviewee teachers how they found balance in their lives.

Government teacher, Lynne, sings in a choir and volunteers at a hospital.

I went to a workshop on administration last year and one of the days they spoke about how we should try to have balance in our lives by doing something for ourselves, something for our family, and something for our community. I do ample for my family, but I began singing in a choir and I volunteer at the kiosk at Charlie Gardiner Hospital. There is some balance, although there will never be balance as long as I am a classroom teacher because of the nature of the job. (Lynne 4: 95)

As mentioned in Chapter V, Government teacher, Dan, uses thematic reading for self discovery and has recently focused on World War II and Chinese history (Dan: 349-353). He also refinishes antique furniture as a hobby

Catholic teacher, Vicky, reads, draws and travels.

I put Bach on. I put lavender oil all over my clothes, and I grab a really, really good book and I just sort of sink and bathe myself with fiction. Or sometimes I look at a tree or fly away somewhere. I don't think I've felt more balanced than sitting in an airplane, looking at the pattern of the land below. I always want to draw it. It seems that you are away from all the little problems when you are looking at the big picture. I often sit and look down at the land and write in my journal. Sometimes I even cry when I look at clouds. It's rather expansive. (Vicky 4: 44)

Catholic teacher, Fran, sees finding balance as allowing equal attention to work and family.

Practically, I really don't do anything. Other than I think it's being purpose driven. In my life, my top value is my family. Absolutely top, non-negotiable top priority...The biggest thing I learned was to be confident that going to a child's swimming carnival was like a meeting. That's in my timetable so I can't fit anything else in there. (Fran 3: 9-15)

Many educators have observed that for those who do find "flow" in their lives, there is not a distinct separation between outside pursuits and teaching and they do feed each other and overlap. Rather the teacher-learner model is a flexible one. Effective teachers are also on a journey of self-discovery (Steiner, 1923/1996; Montessori, 1948/1988a; Palmer, 1998; Smith, 2000; Ritchie and Wilson, 2000)

In term-time you married the school and in the holidays you had a brief affair with The Real World. This unnaturally neat division may work for some but it did not then, and does not now, work for me. Quite apart from anything else, it makes for bad teaching. (Smith, 2000, p. 94)

Interviewees Steiner teacher, Bernadette, and Montessorians, Ellen and Shawn, most clearly embody this creative “flow” between their classroom and personal explorations.

Bernadette enjoys reading Shakespeare and mythologies and listening to music when she has time to herself. However, these interests and knowledge overflow into the classroom. In this way her journey of self-discovery is constantly regenerating her work as a classroom teacher.

If I get some time off, that’s the first thing I do – is go back to my stories and my music and that sort of thing. Even people like Jung say that people that have art and music in their lives are much healthier in their soul life and I want to model that for the children. I want them to always know that they have music and I’ve encouraged lots of them to learn musical instruments.

(Bernadette: 319)

Ellen enjoys studying other cultures through travel, attending multicultural festivals and theatre and by exploring folktales and art forms. This knowledge and enthusiasm is transmitted to her classroom where children also have the opportunity to explore

the stories, music and art of varied cultures. For example, they studied a Ukrainian Easter story and decorated eggs according to that tradition.

This is a Ukrainian Easter one. *Rechenka's Eggs*. The old woman cares for a wounded goose and then the magic element comes in and the goose has to return to the wild but it leaves a gift which is a little gosling which will stay with her forever. The care between human and animal and also the beauty of the illustrations just is captivating. (Ellen 1: 101)

Shawn's interest in creative writing connects her own passion, her community outreach teaching of adolescent girls, and her work in pre-elementary and elementary school.

Women Writing for (a) Change is a huge part of this. I continue to take classes once a week and to teach various workshops and the Girls' Camp in the summer. I find the reflective aspect, as well as the community aspect, of my participation there feeds me in many spiritual ways. The opportunity to hear so many different voices, to focus in depth on listening, giving feedback, reading, and working on my own writing, of course, all contribute to a rich and stimulating experience. I find that I need to write to center myself, to brainstorm, to grieve, to acknowledge, to plan and elaborate on plans. ... There is something about putting pen to paper that frees me from intruding thoughts and allows me to stay focused. It is different from other written activity, as if a different part of my brain is engaged. It is energizing. Reserving time for writing is reassuring – something important I do for myself. I disappoint myself when I fail to keep

those appointments with myself. Because much of my work of the past few years has been personal, life writing, recording events and impressions that I want to remember and share, it feels like meditation, celebration, discovery, and gratitude much of the time. Giving voice to feelings, dreams, a multitude of ideas continues to feed me. And I am constantly inspired by work of other women and readings in class. And I read a lot. (Shawn 4: 10)

In 1999 I participated in a workshop *My Muse and Me* given by Montessorians Lisa Kilcran and Julie Meridan at the American Montessori Society National Conference. They recommended that teachers and students should journey together to find their individual muses. Their programme incorporated creative writing and art activities including describing their judge whom they have dramatically put in a box, writing poems and stories and producing art works centered around the muse and elements that helped to identify that muse and its name including lists of favourites – words, quotes, colours, sounds, etc. Muse booklets became a reflection of children's and teachers' personal creative beings. In the past two years, I have replicated aspects of this workshop with great success with reluctant writers, student teachers and experienced teachers. The tentativeness with which all of these groups begin to participate in these activities and the enthusiasm with which they share their muse stories at the close, supports the view that too often we separate our pathways of self-discovery from classroom activities.

Teachers who are on a pathway of self-discovery are more likely to experience the balance and creativity that comes from making meaningful connections between their work and private lives. As their explorations spill over into the classroom, they

provide windows for the creative explorations of their students and the consequent spiritual experience that comes from connectedness beyond the immediate and concrete.

Creativity is an experience – to my eye, a spiritual experience. It does not matter which way you think of it: creativity leading to spirituality or spirituality leading to creativity. In fact, I do not make a distinction between the two. In the fact of such experience, the whole question of belief is rendered obsolete. As Carl Jung answered the question of belief late in his life, ‘I don’t believe; I know.’ (Cameron, 1992, p. 2)

As preparation for personal change, for the evolution of our stories, values are defined through reflection on experiences. These experiences should include wonder – a first spiritual experience that motivates the child to explore the meaningful connections in his/her world. The individual makes sense of these experiences through journalling and it is suggested that oral journalling might effectively precede written journalling. The stage for transformation is further set by having a variety of creative experiences that contribute to a balanced life characterised by a flow between classroom and leisure pursuits.

The Plot – Exploring the Possibilities of Personal Change

Through wonder, meditation, reflection, and creative experiences, we are given a window into our own potential. If our experiences represent a broad spectrum, then

each pane in our window might reflect a different facet of our lives that we want to develop – taking care to keep a congruence in the image.

Montessori teacher, Nigel, indicates the first step to opening ourselves to transformation is to recognise all the different roles that we assume in our lives and to try to integrate them in a meaningful way.

At any moment, there's a multiplicity of forces hingeing. As a conscious being, you only really notice one at any given moment. Actually there's a lot going on in your life. Coming to terms with that and trying to integrate that into my narrative that I am a multi-faceted being, with different things pulling me in different ways, different roles. To use my differences to make a life that is harmonious, joyful and leads to flow. (Nigel 1: 45)

Gradual personal transformation is scaffolded by determining the desirable denouement of a person's story and then identifying intermediary goals to achieve this envisioned outcome. Models of transformation in the form of archetypes and other people's relevant stories and new ideas encountered in discourse can contribute to this gradual progression in self-development or, as discussed above, may lead to more precipitous life changes.

Personal Goals

The temporal property of narrative facilitates the ability to envision oneself in the future, farther down the pathway on one's journey. If a person is able to respond in detail to the question, "What do you want to do with your life?", or "Where do you

see yourself in ten years?”, then they are probably adept at using this narrative technique as part of their internal monologue. One of my sons decided at 13 that he wanted to be a yacht designer. This dream led to goals of moving to another continent, training in naval architecture and marine engineering until he ultimately assumed his dream job. A younger son aspires to be a figure skater. His personal narrative that allows him to envision himself as a competent skater has motivated him to practise diligently. Our personal narratives can thus be motivating, driving forces in our journey. These narratives can also serve to help us make choices. As a child, I constantly revised my personal narrative as I envisioned potential pathways of my journey. I considered being a golf professional, a concert violinist, an anthropologist before ultimately focusing on psychology and education. These mini narratives continue to be threads in my story in the form of maintained interests.

What about those people who don't have an envisioned narrative? Some people view themselves as having a pathway, a future, but some of the details are vague and need to be filled in. They may need to experience more precipitating events until dealing with a challenge that focuses their lives. Others, however, may not have a sense of story at all. Kevin Dilks (2000), Minister for the Wesley Mission Church in Perth, reported that the staff addiction counsellors had noted that addicts did not have an ongoing internal monologue making sense of their journey through connecting their experiences. Part of their treatment is to scaffold their story construction - helping them to go back to their roots and identify their family trees before looking at the present and potential future events of their lives. A key strategy of counselling was to employ narrative therapy to help each of these patients view his/her life journey

with a past, a future and a choice of pathways leading from the present to the future (Journal 29: 91).

For story to be a motivating force, one must have a sense not only of its existence, but also of its importance. South Australian educator, Elizabeth Mansutti (2000) shared her experiences working with troubled illiterate youths. She asked them to tell their stories and was met with the response, "You wouldn't want to know about our lives." By sharing interesting stories she had heard at the local pub, she convinced them that their stories would be interesting to her and they voice recorded them. These were printed out and used for reading motivation, but they also provided emotional motivation by allowing these youths to sense the importance of ownership of personal stories (Journal 28: 5).

There is no doubt that cognitive and even value goals are prescribed in school for children. For them to take these on board as part of their story, they must participate in creating and meeting them. Current interest in metacognition acknowledges this need. Children are asked to reflect on their own learning through collaborative group sharing and journalling. A focus on authentic thought as described in Chapter V encourages the process of students reflecting on their own thinking and the purpose or goals of that thinking. Interviewee Fran effectively helps students to set their own learning goals within the context of class explorations.

So, let's say I'm doing a relief in a Year Six and I happen to do water cycle.

Before I even do that, I'll say, "Okay, write down four thoughts you have on water cycle." Then I'll number them off and get them to discuss with a partner

those four things so they should end up with more because they listen to their partner. Then I get them to rank those thoughts and they should come with a top thought. The top thought they share around the room. I whiteboard it. I can then say, "Year Sixes, this is what is important to you about the water cycle." So in that way, they've thought and written and they've talked and listened. Then they've shared. So they should have some powerful beginning to the whole topic of the water cycle. This is what we know. Then we need to go to what they need to know. I use this process a lot. I call it List-Rank-Discuss. (Fran 3:19)

In Western Australia, where the new *Curriculum Framework* has been introduced during the course of this study, teachers are focusing on outcomes as descriptive learning goals.¹⁰⁵ The Framework encourages finding varied pathways suitable for individual children to reach these goals, rather than prescribing a set curriculum. My Government and systemic Catholic school interviewees are all in the process of making this transition. Consulting interviewee, Uniting Church independent schoolteacher, Victoria Biggs (2001a), has thoroughly implemented the Framework in her classroom. The work of her fourth grade students reflects personal goal setting and personal assessment for every piece of work completed and incorporates both cognitive task goals as well as social relationship and affective goals (Cole and Garrett, 1995). Reading a student's portfolio reveals the shared class journey, but also the individual narrative.

¹⁰⁵ Outcomes – *outcomes* refers to learning goals in the Curriculum Framework. This is in contrast to the frequent use of the term *outcomes* to mean standards in American educational literature.

In Montessori schools choice is traditionally afforded to the child in meeting learning goals and the teacher is trained to facilitate the cognitive goal setting process in varied ways according to the needs of the child. In my upper primary class, we would decide on class focus areas for a term and children would be invited to add their individual focus areas to the plan as well. Weekly or daily, depending on their needs and preferences, they would record their plan of action to achieve subgoals. Although interpersonal and intrapersonal goals were discussed orally, I had no format for helping children to systematically address these goals as part of their personal life narrative.

Montessori teacher, Nigel, also felt this was a neglected area in his classroom and introduced what he called the Virtue Quads. This was his own extension of the Virtues Project (Popov, 1990). He believes that virtues complement each other. When a child has displayed one such as enthusiasm he/she may need to focus as a personal goal on the complementary virtue of patience. For this child the virtue quad is diagrammed with enthusiasm, patience and moderation in a triangle and respect as a hub.

That's a very powerful one. That one sits at the top, because one of the kids in my class is enthusiastic. He is such a positive person. He does hassle other kids a bit. He doesn't have the respect he should have for other children, but his enthusiasm completely overwhelms everything else so he's always got a joke, he's always playful, he's basically hyper. But instead of telling him negatively all the time, I'm able to say to him, "I appreciate your

enthusiasm, but it's a little too much. You need to tone it down. You need to find patience. You need moderation and you need to be respectful." (Nigel 1: 14)

I like to think that we are constantly weaving our own story. We are having the story of our own life woven by the relationships we have. So for someone like that, I've woven a thread for him which shows the connection between joyfulness and enthusiasm, but patience and moderation. (Nigel 1: 18)

Nigel uses story to reinforce the child's awareness of his/her own virtue goals and achievements and his/her life threads. Once a term, each child has a turn to stand up and select a gemstone from the virtue stone basket. The teacher tells the child which of the 52 virtues (Popov, 1990) he believes he/she has attained this term and tells a true story involving the child that demonstrates this. Then the other children (aged 5-8) take turns nominating other virtues he/she might want to consider as a special virtue attained this term and they relate other incidents involving the child that support this. After listening to all the stories that feed into his/her experiences and sense of goodness and achievement, the child selects the nominated virtue that he/she wants the special stone to represent. This introduced classroom ritual celebrates the child's moral journey. Since observing this ritual in Nigel's class, I have tried the stones with a class of trainee teachers and one of experienced teachers. In both cases, the groups welcomed the opportunity to tell positive stories about their associates. They supported my belief that introducing such rituals into the staff room could contribute to a positive culture.

Cole and Garrett (1995) state that *personal agency beliefs* are important in attaining one's goals once they are in place. Personal agency beliefs are based on the person's perception of capability (evaluations of one's ability to effectively accomplish one's goal) and context (evaluations of the responsiveness of the environment needed to support effective functioning). Allowing children to have an authentic voice in the classroom can help the teacher to understand how students perceive their learning journeys and they can then help them to identify appropriate goals to help them on the way. Inviting children to participate in setting these goals and providing feedback by sharing positive stories helps them to interweave value threads in their lives.

Interviewees Fran and Nigel and consulting teacher, Victoria Biggs, have all found ways to help children in their classrooms to identify realistic goals and recognise their own *capability* of achieving these goals in a *context* that offers support, stimulation and choice. Teachers also influence the journey of their students by being adult models with attributes that children in their care emulate or repudiate.

Models of transformation

Influential teachers.

The connectedness students have with their teachers, their mentors, contributes to personal transformation.

The power of our mentors is not necessarily in the models of good teaching they give us, models that may turn out to have little to do with who we are as teachers. Their power is in their capacity to awaken a truth within us, a truth we can reclaim years later by recalling their impact on our lives. If we discovered a teacher's heart in ourselves by meeting a great teacher, recalling

that meeting may help us take heart in teaching once more.” (Palmer, 1998, p. 21)

Ritchie and Wilson (2000) emphasise that teachers need to be encouraged to go beyond recall as suggested by Palmer and to critically analyse the stories of teachers who influenced them. In this way, teachers can appreciate how experience is constructed as they begin to understand how they have formed their own ideologies. When, through this reflection, they discover conflicts in their own narratives of learning and teaching, positive growth is promoted. “Change is made possible and becomes sustainable when teachers gain critical perspective on how their identities have been constructed by/in the culture and how the cultural narratives of teaching have shaped their personal and professional subjectivities” (p. 24).

In the following case study of Theodore Stoddard, M.D. (Ballard, 2000), the teacher Mrs. Thompson changes her teaching strategies after identifying her own ideological inconsistencies as well as the conflicting narratives describing this student.

Her name was Mrs. Thompson. As she stood in front of her 5th grade class on the very first day of school, she told the children a lie. Like most teachers, she looked at her students and said that she loved them all the same. But that was impossible, because there in the front row, slumped in his seat, was a little boy named Teddy Stoddard.

Mrs. Thompson had watched Teddy the year before and noticed that he didn't play well with the other children, that his clothes were messy and that he

constantly needed a bath. And Teddy could be unpleasant. It got to the point where Mrs. Thompson would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen, making bold X's and then putting a big "F" at the top of his papers.

At the school where Mrs. Thompson taught, she was required to review each child's past records and she put Teddy's off until last. However, when she reviewed his file, she was in for a surprise.

Teddy's first grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is a bright child with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly and has good manners...he is a joy to be around."

His second grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is an excellent student, well liked by his classmates, but he is troubled because his mother has a terminal illness and life at home must be a struggle."

His third grade teacher wrote, "His mother's death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best, but his father doesn't show much interest and his home life will soon affect him if some steps aren't taken."

Teddy's fourth grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is withdrawn and doesn't show much interest in school. He doesn't have many friends and he sometimes sleeps in class."

By now, Mrs. Thompson realised the problem and she was ashamed of

herself. She felt even worse when her students brought her Christmas presents, wrapped in beautiful ribbons and bright paper, except for Teddy's. His present was clumsily wrapped in the heavy, brown paper that he got from a grocery bag. Mrs. Thompson took pains to open it in the middle of the other presents. Some of the children started to laugh when she found a rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing, and a bottle that was one quarter-full of perfume. But she stifled the children's laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on, and dabbing some of the perfume on her wrist. Teddy Stoddard stayed after school that day just long enough to say, "Mrs. Thompson, today you smelled just like my Mother used to."

After the children left she cried for at least an hour. On that very day, she quit teaching reading, and writing, and arithmetic. Instead, she began to teach children. Mrs. Thompson paid particular attention to Teddy. As she worked with him, his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded. By the end of the year, Teddy had become one of the smartest children in the class and, despite her lie that she would love all the children the same, Teddy became one of her "teacher's pets."

A year later, she found a note under her door, from Teddy, telling her that she was still the best teacher he ever had in his whole life.

Six years went by before she got another note from Teddy. He then

wrote that he had finished high school, third in his class, and she was still the best teacher he ever had in his whole life.

Four years after that, she got another letter, saying that while things had been tough at times, he'd stayed in school, had stuck with it, and would soon graduate from college with the highest of honors. He assured Mrs. Thompson that she was still the best and favourite teacher he ever had in his whole life.

Then four more years passed and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor's degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still the best and favourite teacher he ever had. But now his name was a little longer-----the letter was signed, Theodore F. Stoddard, MD.

The story doesn't end there. You see, there was yet another letter that Spring. Teddy said he'd met this girl and was going to be married. He explained that his father had died a couple of years ago and he was wondering if Mrs. Thompson might agree to sit in the place at the wedding that was usually reserved for the mother of the groom. Of course, Mrs. Thompson did.

And guess what? She wore that bracelet, the one with several rhinestones missing. And she made sure she was wearing the perfume that Teddy remembered his mother wearing on their last Christmas together.

They hugged each other, and Dr. Stoddard whispered in Mrs. Thompson's ear, "Thank you Mrs. Thompson for believing in me. Thank you so much for making me feel important and showing me that I could make a difference."

Mrs. Thompson, with tears in her eyes, whispered back. She said, Teddy, you have it all wrong. You were the one who taught me that I could make a difference. I didn't know how to teach until I met you."

For Mrs. Thompson there was a conflict between a curriculum-based approach and a child-centred approach to learning. To reach children like Thomas, she needed to adopt the latter and she grew in positive ways from critically analysing this conflict. She also had an inbuilt script that said she should treat all children the same, but felt anxiety because she knew that she liked the children who were succeeding more than those who weren't. Minimising comparisons and responding to each child's uniqueness as she helped each one to achieve his/her potential was a way of resolving this conflict. Perhaps she still liked children who were succeeding, but they were all succeeding when the expectations were in keeping with their own interests, abilities, and personal narratives. I believe that in resolving these conflicts, Mrs. Thompson, would have reflected on her own teaching and learning experiences. If so, she may have reflected on the teachers who made a difference in her life and what qualities they displayed towards her.

I tried to ascertain if there were common qualities – either positive or negative – in teachers' memorable mentors by asking my interviewees to share their reflections.

Shawn reported two primary teachers as being especially significant in her life. Her fifth grade teacher listened to her and not only acknowledged her unique gift, but found a way for her to share it with her class.

My teacher, Miss Contos, had limited resources and a tiny library in our classroom closet! I told her about the books I was reading and she offered to let me set up a lending library of my own books. I kept track of who had what and kept everything dusted and in good order. I loved it, and when she would let me stay in from recess to organise and communicate, I thought I was in heaven. I was an early reader and couldn't imagine how awful it would be not to have new stories to read on a regular basis. So, at 10, I felt important. I also felt listened to, since it was my passion and she allowed me to build on it. Powerful acknowledgement. (Shawn 3: 17-19)

Her other influential teacher is recalled for having really listened to her and for being interested in her personal narrative.

Another teacher, Sister Margaret Catherine, used to talk with me when I was 11. I loved her. She listened intently to every anecdote, dream, wish and plan I made that year. I have to wonder if that was the root of my own passion for personal stories. She listened without judging, acknowledged quietly and one-on-one. The girls' classes I now teach are models of what she lived and breathed. (Shawn 3: 19-20)

Vicky explains how contrasting experiences have influenced her to value fairness and respect for differences in interacting with students.

When I was about 9 there was this skinny teacher with black hair called Miss Blake. I was actually never very naughty but this day I was talking to somebody and I had to go up to the front and get smacked on my hand six times. I can still remember being determined not to cry - just standing there. I've always remembered that terrible feeling of unfairness. I get so irritated and angry with teachers who won't let kids have normal everyday conversations in classes. There are times when they have to be very quiet. I tell all my students about that. Poor Miss Blake has been immortalised. (Vicky 4: 10)

There was another teacher called Mrs. Gamming when I was only in Infants in England when I was about seven. She was very kind. She understood that I wasn't quite comfortable with a lot of the kids. I was never very popular. I was always stuck out somewhere by myself thinking my own thoughts. Somehow she made it a bit easier. The teachers who meant something to me - more than the actual learning - were teachers who helped me because I didn't actually fit. She could see that I didn't fit even though there wasn't anything wrong with me.

(Vicky 4: 12)

In talking about teachers who influenced her, Lynne (Lynne 4: 24-26) noted that they “talked to us as people” and “would talk about issues rather than sticking to the

syllabus.” In other words, she identified effective teachers as those who changed the focus of the class in response to the ideas and needs of the students.

Nigel also recalled the influence of teachers who listened to and responded to the students genuinely and added that genuine emotion was important including anger and humour.

One I remember the most actually came to my Bar Mitzvah. He just had this vitality about him. You could talk to him and know he was really listening to you. That was a key. He used to always ask me general knowledge questions which I used to love. He had a sense of humour and a laughter and an anger. You would always know by the pulse he had in his forehead. (Nigel 2: 70)

A positive quality of influential high school teachers was again cited as viewing each student as a whole person rather than merely a student of language or maths.

Another teacher was Mr. Hathaway, my high school maths teacher. I remember how he came in to the office one day when I was tutoring a blind student. He sat and watched for a time and then began asking me about other interests. He was interested in my writing and work on the literary magazine. When, in Year 12, I had to drop maths to take history to satisfy College requirements, he was still supportive and interested in my journey. (Gay: Journal 31: 115-119)

Added to the high school profile of positive teacher qualities by interviewees was the ability to make subjects interesting and to invite their active participation as readers, writers and thinkers.

I had an English teacher in high school who inspired me, told me what I could do. He made me see myself as a writer. I had this amazing biology teacher in high school ...Her lessons were the most creative, brilliantly interesting lessons that I've ever seen. (Vicky 2: 12)

Vicky also mentions that valued high school teachers made her feel safe. She implies that learning was exciting for her when she felt valued and safe.

Actually, there was a teacher named Len Watkins and I think he's still alive. He was a teacher of mine at Narambeen Jr. High and he really helped me believe in myself. He loved learning. Loved teaching. Absolutely adored teaching. Every single day in his classroom was fun, it was fair. I was never bullied or hurt in his classroom. That was important because I was bullied a hell of a lot at school. His classroom was always a safe place. That's very important. He probably had the most emotionally intelligent, safe classroom. (Vicky 4: 38)

Nigel values the qualities of communication, and comradeship with respect that he experienced with a high school teacher.

His name was Dankin. He was a very young man. He also had that

sense of being able to communicate. You could talk to him. You also used to be able to call him by his first name. Everyone else was "Sir". He was able to do the first name basis and he had the respect of everybody. (Nigel 2: 70)

Interestingly, the idea of responding to a teacher who is a friend at high school level reflects the Steiner view of the changing role of the teacher. Sam explained that whereas the teacher should be viewed as a venerable wise model by young children, older children would value teachers who were companions in their journey.

Just this idea that things metamorphosise. This respect for authority born out of not fear, but of love and knowledge. The teacher loves and tries to understand the child and the child has a sense of authority. As they get older, that tapers off as they have their own authority to fall onto. (Sam: 648)

Teaching approaches valued and later emulated by interviewees included listening, acknowledging the uniqueness and individual interests of each student, viewing them as “whole” people, teaching to the students – not to the curriculum, making the subject interesting and inviting the active participation of students including encouraging student dialogue where appropriate. In addition, interviewees valued high school teachers who could act as companions on their journey and still command respect. These approaches were valued in teachers in all four explored educational traditions.

Using analogies and stories to model alternative or goal oriented behaviour can be effective in guiding “a person resolving some predicament.” Narrative analogy makes the problem more “explicit and gives it definite structure, provides a natural basis for raising questions about causal relations and for modelling goal-oriented action; and distances the listener emotionally to a sufficient degree to sidestep that person’s defensiveness and anxiety” (Robinson and Hawpe, 1986, p. 122).

In guiding a child to cope with a difficult situation or to alter ineffective behaviour, one might draw analogies from personal experience stories, or the known stories of family or community.

When you commiserate with a child over the difficulty of succeeding at a new task by telling an anecdote about the time you thought you'd never learn to ride a bicycle, you are sharing a story. (Diz-Imbelli, 1998, p. 32)

Dan uses analogies to help a child put his abilities in perspective. The child he describes here demonstrates great gifts in creative arts but requires extra tutoring for language arts.

He doesn't want to go to after school lessons and his father is pushing him... “Imagine if someone is not good at art, and they wanted to be as good as you, just imagine how many hours they would have to spend in tutoring on Saturday mornings to get up to your standard.” Or I might say, “It's like the difference between driving a Rolls Royce or a VW. You want to be fine

tuned. You're running around like one of these VW vans that you see putting around. It's going fine, but you want to be more like the Rolls Royce that's just purring along.” (Dan: 214)

Often using the characters in a story known to the child will help him/her to develop insight into his/her own handling of a situation. Hughes (1991) employs this term to describe the phenomenon whereby a person identifies so clearly with a character or a dilemma in a story that he/she is comforted to discover that he/she is not so unusual after all. “In fact, reading about the experiences of others often helps one gain insights into one’s own life” (Hughes, 1991, p. 227). Data revealed that teachers representing varied pedagogies appreciated that bibliocounselling could comfort children and provide guidelines for their lives.

I think the thing about children, the most wonderful thing about them is they know and are grateful for something that takes them forward either in their thinking or maybe an example - one day a child might think, "I remember in *Charlotte's Web* they had this problem and..." Just that dawning of that idea. (Fran 1: 166)

Data from Montessori and Steiner interviewees revealed an intent to select stories that would aid children in solving dilemmas.

This story is one of my favourites [indicates *John Brown, Rose, and the Midnight Cat* (Wagner, 1977)]... The profound relationship between this trio and I have used this in talking to children about trios. I had three girls and two

of the three could be friends, but they made each other miserable as a trio and this book came to me as an example that we could talk about. (Allison: 236)

Here, Catholic schoolteacher, Fran, and Montessorian, Allison, both cited examples of the occasional use of story to focus on specific problems in the classroom. By contrast, the Steiner teachers used story consistently as a technique to help children to gain insight into their behaviour and to promote change in behaviour through the modelling of these examples. When I observed Sam's classroom, he helped children arguing over a ball on the playground to reexamine their situation by telling them a story about two creatures meeting on a bridge – neither allowing the other to pass. He then allowed them to reflect on their own situation. Ultimately, they arrived at a method of sharing – each had a turn at the ball. (Sam's Class Observation: 9/99) In an interview, Sam explained that he might later allude to characteristics apparent in the fables or mythological stories studied.

So we use those stories, again without the moral. We won't say, "Slow and steady wins the race," but we just tell the story and that's enough. We don't have to hammer it home. Then we might allude to that. You're being a little bit foxy today or a bit like that hare trying to dash your work off. (Sam: 108)

You can do that in many ways. You might do it in many small ways to just give a picture – that point out like the fables. If you always rush ahead, you might not be the one who gets there first as you have to be steadfast, keep your path. You can't be just rushing about everywhere.

So you might just give a little picture. Or you might tell a story,
"When I was a child, my best friend..." Even if it's just a made up story
to illustrate how someone did something and what the outcome of that is.
Again, not in a moralistic sense, but to say if you run down that track, you'll
keep running into a brick wall... You're not nagging at the child. You are just
saying that, after all, if that happens, then that might happen. So they can see
it externalised and laid out in picture form in front of them. They can see that
it's kind of a sensible thing to go down that track. (Bernadette: 154-161)

The use of story is a primary mode of discipline in the Steiner School and was also
frequently used in the Montessori and some of the Catholic classrooms observed.
Their method of dealing with discipline problems contrasted greatly with the
classrooms I observed where behavioural reward systems were firmly in place. It
seemed to me that the classroom energy was more focused without the distraction of
points, smiley faces or stickers being awarded at regular intervals. Teachers
comments were more subject connected and less behaviour directed. Kohn's (1993)
assessment that allowing for collaboration, content and choice removes the need for
token systems. Narrative rich classrooms tend to welcome *collaboration* and provide
meaningful *content* and a *choice* of pathways for the students. Addressing specific
behavioural problems with story is in keeping with this alternative triad. The children
discuss and explore the stories together rather than competing with each other for
rewards; the children are interested in the stories because they provide relevant
images and guidelines for coping with problems and they are respected by having a
choice as to how to proceed in using this new perspective. Kohn cites classroom
research studies by Lepper and Greene (1975, 1978) and by Deci (1971, 1978) to

support his view that extrinsic rewards kill intrinsic motivation in pursuing an interest or a task.

Montessori and Steiner pedagogies emphasise that teachers need to guide children as they unfold and experience their *will* (Finser, 1994; Steiner, 1923/ 1996, Montessori, 1948/1988a)

Of course I am not referring to any kind of enforced authority here; the authority I am speaking of must never be imposed externally. And if, in some cases, an authoritarian approach is necessary for the sake of general society, the child should not be aware of it. (Steiner, 1923/ 1996, 98-99)

But if a child has to be rewarded or punished, it means he [sic] lacks the capacity to guide himself; so this has to be supplied by the teacher. But supposing he sets himself to work; then the addition of prizes and punishments is superfluous; they only offend the freedom of his spirit. (Montessori, 1948/1988a, p. 224)

Extrinsic rewards are at odds with fostering this autonomy. Using narrative in guiding children to reflect on their own behaviour, on the other hand, is in keeping with intrinsic motivation goals and explains why interviewees from these traditions were more comfortable using bibliocounselling as a tool. The Catholic teachers I interviewed had the same training as the Government teachers, but with an added religious education component. In this component teachers experience using biblical

and other stories to provide analogies to behaviour. There is scope for further teacher education research here, but one could hypothesise that as there is an increased use of bibliocounselling, there would be a decrease in the use of extrinsic reward systems. It would also be interesting to explore to what degree an increased emphasis on collaborative learning, meaningful content, and choice in Government school classrooms will result in a decrease in extrinsic reward systems. A student teacher I observed recently in a Government school complained:

I hate giving out and taking back points and smiley faces; it makes me feel like I'm supposed to play God and I'm not there to be God; I'm there to guide the students. (Sharon: Student post-observation interview 5/2000)

Later in the practice, the same student exclaimed,

That lesson went so well. The students were so interested that I didn't even have to worry about giving out rewards! (Sharon: Student post- observation interview, 5/2000)

In the lesson to which Sharon referred, the children had choice in how they collaboratively explored a lesson with meaningful content. Certainly, teachers like Sharon prefer using meaningful stories to giving tokens for behaviour modification.

Analogies and bibliocounselling drawn from real and fictitious stories are used as one alternative in guiding children in intrinsic rather than extrinsic ways. Such stories

can also help people to view their own concerns and discoveries in a global context. When narrative images serve to explain a universal human truth, they are termed archetypes.

Archetypes.

Jung termed human patterns of emotional and mental behaviour ‘archetypes’ (von Franz, 1968b). Archetypes are the universal type patterns that appear in mythologies. However, the term archetype might also apply to characters who assume these same universal type patterns in other narratives including fairy tales, biblical stories, classic and contemporary literature and real-life heroes who embody universal qualities. By studying archetypes appropriate to their situations or predispositions, people gain insight and instruction into how a relevant life pathway might eventuate (Jung, 1968; Bettelheim, 1977; Campbell and Moyers, 1988; Bolen, 1989; Estes, 1992; Houston, 1996).

Myths have such power because they are full of archetypes. Archetypes are many things--primal forms, codings of the deep unconscious, constellations of psychic energy, patterns of relationship. Our ancestors saw them in the heavens, prayed to them as Mother Earth, Father Ocean, Sister Wind. They were the great relatives from whom we derived, and they gave us not only our existence, but also prompted our stories, elicited our moral order. Later, they became personified in mythic characters and their stories--the contending brothers, the holy child, the search for the beloved, the heroic journey. As major organs of the psyche, archetypes give us our essential connections, and without them we would lose the gossamer bridge that joins spirit with nature,

mind with body, and self with the metabody of the universe. (Houston, 1996, p. 99)

By relating to archetypes we amplify and transform our lives. “Myth leads us from the personal-particular concerns and frustrations of our every day lives to the broader perspective of the personal-universal... Gradually we discover that these stories are our own stories, that they bear the amplified rhythms of our own lives”(Houston, 1996, p. 98).

Mythologies are studied in each of the four educational traditions visited in this research. In the Government and Catholic schools, reference was made to Greek, Roman, and Aboriginal mythologies primarily in either a literary or a historical context. In the Montessori schools, numerous mythologies are studied, but again in a literary or historical context. For example, in every Montessori school visited, the origin of the universe is explored in the primary school. Often, the imagination of the children is incited by the “Big Story” of *The God With No Hands*, which provides scientific experimentation against a backdrop of spiritual mystery. The God With No Hands is an archetype, a spiritual metaphor. I have noticed that in many Montessori schools, the story has been rewritten in purely scientific terms. (Refer to Appendices K and L for both versions) Those using the redrafted version support a view that science and spirituality should be viewed separately.

I never found comfort with the stories of creation. There was a certain emotion that I received it from that I didn't feel comfortable with. My approach is just to get down to the nuts and bolts. Here we are. This is what

the scientists are saying. I actually bring in the wonder and the mystery by saying that "No one really understands this." Maybe they lose something from it because I don't try to create the fairy tale or myth of it. I do try to talk about what we know and what we don't know - the wonder. (Nigel 1: 98)

Others would question if by eliminating the archetype, the spiritual doorway to the mystery of the universe is removed. Whatever story version is presented to describe the origins of the universe, various creation stories are also explored. These stories are used to demonstrate how humans create narratives to understand phenomena. They are also used to exemplify how humans meet their fundamental spiritual needs. Nigel explains how he uses the story to demonstrate how different cultures explained "the truth" in different ways.

As part of our three-year cycle, we do one session where we take cultures from across the world and look at their creation stories. So, take a Maori one and an Aboriginal one. We read the stories and we show the pictures or we tell the story and show the pictures, depending. And we try to get them to work on their own myths. Then, it's the same thing, but it's a genre instead of - the danger I find in telling a story in a mythical way is that it sounds like it's true. Now I'm going to tell you the story of creation. One day, one God got the spirit ... and then you leave it. A lot of it's true. A lot of it's grey area. ...And I say, this is the scientist's version. Today, we believe that this is true. But for those Aborigines, that was true and for those Maoris, that was true. That's like saying to them "These different cultures had a version of truth

which worked for them in their eyes and I think it's..." That's how you affirm multiculturalism. ... I'm more interested in it as in comparative religion.

(Nigel 1: 96-98)

The implication is that although cultures define truth mythologically in different ways, scientifically we have been moving closer to the truth. In contrast, for Steiner educators, the universal patterns that are discovered when one looks at varied mythologies reveal truths about humans, relationships and spirituality – not disproved truths, but rather enduring archetypal truths. An archetypal truth is not a fact, but a metaphor for a spiritual experience.

If you have a mythology in which the metaphor for the mystery is the father, you are going to have a different set of signals from what you would have if the metaphor for the wisdom and mystery of the world were the mother. And they are two perfectly good metaphors. Neither one is a fact. (Campbell and Moyers, 1988, p. 20)

Steiner teachers explain that by carefully selecting mythologies as a basis for the curriculum, children will be helped in their self-understanding and expansion of consciousness through their exposure to appropriate archetypes. Of the four pedagogies explored through interviews, only the Steiner method consciously uses a knowledge of archetypes to foster each child's personal insight and spiritual understanding. The sequence of mythologies that form the basis of curriculum are carefully selected so that children's concerns at each age will be addressed by relevant archetypes.

Well, the basic principle is that the child will go through the same stages in personal development that humanity has gone through in its development. So that the stories will represent sort of a changing consciousness. So we start with fairy tales which are magic and fantasy. Anything can happen. (Sam: 100)

The primary curriculum reflects the child's growing consciousness by moving to fables and Saints in Class 2, biblical stories in Class 3, Norse mythology and Aboriginal myths in Class 4, Greek mythology in Class 5, Roman mythology in Class 6 and the Renaissance in Class 7 (Carlgren, 1986; Finser, 1994).

I guess the whole thing is based on the fact that the individual development is a recapitulation of the development of the whole of humanity. So one of Steiner's tenets of philosophy is this evolution of the human consciousness. ...The Ancient Greek didn't have the same perception and didn't have the same type of thinking that we do now and the further back you go, the more different it is. If you look at mythologies, you will always have this picture of a Golden Age and there is some kind of fall away from the Gods...As soon as you get this fall everything is kind of a duality...there's good and evil and there's heaven and earth, and life and death. (Bernadette: 141)

The child has to work to educate himself and part of this quest is to regain a sense of the spiritual world. The range of archetypes from Year 1 through high school is thought to provide direction for this quest.

Even in the archetypal figures, we start with the fairy stories. They are so purely archetypal. There's nothing individual. Children know they're not real people and they're not real events. Then we move to Class 11 to Percival and the Grail Story....That really is about the individual path. Percival has a universality as well, but it's about the individual path to obtain the grail through the path of adventure, the path through life. (Bernadette: 8)

The distinct difference between the Montessori and Steiner use of archetypes is exemplified by their use of fairy tales. Montessori did not recommend fairy tales for use with preschool children because they were frightening and detracted from the beauty and wonder of reality (Montessori, 1917/1964; Leith, 1989). For the primary aged child, fairy stories were viewed for their literary and historical value rather than any spiritual message (Claremont, 1993a). In contrast, Steiner viewed them as reflecting the mythical thinking and wonder of the early primary child and saw them as tools to minister to the psychological needs of young people. Steiner would have predated Bettelheim in noting that fairy tales give guidance for life predicaments for the young child facing the huge challenges of life in the face of older models.

The message that fairy tales get across to the child in manifold form: that a struggle against severe difficulties in life is unavoidable is an intrinsic part of human existence – but that if one does not shy away, but steadfastly meets

unexpected and often unjust hardships, one masters all obstacles and at the end emerges victorious. Modern stories written for young children mainly avoid these existential problems, although they are crucial issues for all of us (Bettleheim, 1977, p. 8)

Fairy tales thus subconsciously give a message of guidance and hope in a way that the child thinks – in polarities of good vs. evil, ugly vs. beautiful without the ambiguities on the spectrum representing the complexity of people that the child has not yet discovered (Egan, 2000a). For example, *Cinderella* contains a grain of truth for children reflecting how badly they are made to feel by other family members. It also contains the grain of hope that they will triumph over the misery experienced from being “ravaged by sibling rivalry” (Bettleheim, 1977, p. 238). Fairy tales thus suggest that transformation is clearly possible.

On a visit to Sam’s class I observed the children, now Year 3, performing a play centred on the biblical tale of *Joseph and the Coat of Many Colours*. I was struck by how appropriate this content was for an age when children were beginning to understand the nuances between good and evil. Joseph was not entirely good and nor were his brothers or his fellow prisoners entirely evil. Forgiveness became a mediating force. (Sam’s class observation: September, 2000)

I also visited Bernadette’s Year 4 class and they shared some of their stories on the Norse Gods. Bernadette explained how the metaphor of the Nordic Gods provided an appropriate metaphor for this age group. (Bernadette’s class observation: July, 2000)

They can also begin to feel a bit depressed, a bit out on their own. Social things can become a real issue if they get excluded. Often the girls begin to band together and form little groups and boys do it in a different way. And of course, there always has to be someone who is out of the group so they can be in it, if you know what I mean. That one who doesn't dress properly, or whatever. All that stuff starts to go on as they sort out their own identity. And they can feel very isolated and insecure. And it's also the age when they start worrying about death. They can actually not want their mother to go out in case she gets run over. They can be quite clingy to their parents. They often think they're adopted or start to ask, "Am I really your child? Are you really my parents? And if they do lose a parent at this stage, they can be devastated. The thing with the Norse philosophy in a very dramatic style, it plays out those events in an archetypal, mythological sense what they are going through. You have this figure, Balder, whose the shining one, this radiant being, and of course he's killed and that brings on this whole day of destruction which Steiner talks about as this twilight of the Gods. Loss of the Gods. Death of the gods that comes out of the German folk tradition. And the death of Balder is an image of that. It is the death of their childhood. After this great battle which is where they are at. They are pretty full on. Nine and ten-year-olds start getting really naughty, you know. In Class 1 and 2, they all pretty much sit there and do what they're told, or they try to, they want to. They have a great respect for authority and they believe in their teacher and in their parents and everything they

say. But, this is the age where they question authority as that all falls away. So you have to be able to give them the certainty that after this great battle of Ragnarok, a new dawn will come. (Bernadette: 146)

Catholic teacher interviewees referred to biblical story archetypes as guiding images for life. Fran noted that good literature including but not limited to biblical stories could be archetypes for children's reflections.

You have the example of the Prodigal Son which demonstrates an interesting story that reflects our lives as often good literature does. Again, you have a sense of journey, and you have different interpretations of what is good and what is not good in it and people's reactions, one to the other. Through that, you still have the child relating to the story hopefully in an individual and critical way having a thought to reflect on that has moved them forward. (Fran 1: 144)

Montessorian interviewees admitted to what may be termed archetypal experiences themselves through relating to novel characters. Although there is no reference to a clear sequence for the introduction of varied archetypal experiences for their students, they do indicate that an awareness of universal qualities influences their selection of classroom stories.

Nigel: I'll tell you what I've been thinking about story and storytelling. How it very much shapes the characters of all of this. I was thinking that probably I try to model myself on a mixture of Robinson Crusoe and Robin Hood. These

are the character traits that I value: courage and independence and gentleness, adventure in the context of nature. I always think of Robinson Crusoe. When I was growing up I had this book on Robinson Crusoe that my mother used to read me. I used to look at the pictures and the pictures still affect me today.

Gay: Is Robinson Crusoe an archetype for you?

Nigel: Yes, Robinson Crusoe and also Robin Hood. I remember my mother reading me that story and there is no doubt that many of those stories of those early years shaped me enormously to the kinds of the values and choices that you make in your day to day about "Are you going to do something or not?" in terms of loyalties, responsibilities - all of those moments that make an enormous difference in how you interact with other people and just with the overall environment - one's life. (Nigel 2: 5-9)

Nigel himself might also have been moved by stories of Hermes, the mythological god who like *Robin Hood* and *Robinson Crusoe*, was a traveller who did nothing by the book. For students with similar qualities, the copy of *Robin Hood* on the classroom shelf may help them gain insight. Personally, I recall being greatly influenced by women overcoming great odds to achieve goals such as Madame Curie, Maya Angelou and Helen Keller. Perhaps the Goddess Artemis would have been a classical Greek archetype (Bolen, 1984) for one who responds to focusing on a goal in the distance. During my child rearing years, I was more interested in heroines who managed complex relationships rather like the female protagonists in contemporary

books mentioned in Chapter I – *Jewel* (Lott, 1991), *Snow Falling on Cedars* (Guterson, 1995), *Alias Grace* (Atwood, 1996) or *Fortune's Rock* (Shreve, 1999). It could be said that my self-understanding was enhanced by female archetypes in the mould of Demeter and Hera (Bolen, 1984). In my primary classroom we explored the heroic qualities of a range of figures from Australian explorers to famous scientists and including fictional heroes in myths and contemporary stories. In retrospect, I realise that children at this stage of Romantic understanding were indeed interested in heroic archetypes and readily responded to Greek and Roman myths which portrayed heroic tasks such as those portrayed in the *Labours of Hercules* or *Theseus and the Minotaur* (Finser, 1994; Egan, 1997).

On reflection, there is evidence to support a theory that self-understanding can be enhanced by focusing on universal patterns. These archetypes will change depending on stages of life. Nevertheless, only the Steiner curriculum prescribes which mythological narratives will be the focus of an age group depending on the general needs and challenges of that age. They also insist that the development of the consciousness of the individual mirrors the development of civilisation. Although there is some indication that Montessori herself also believed certain archetypes could enhance the spiritual experience, many teachers choose to separate fictional archetypes from scientific fact and explore heroes and heroines primarily from an historic or literary point of view. Catholic teachers are very aware of biblical archetypes and these are presented through bible stories in the RE programme. Most archetypal figures from myths and literary works are explored in terms of character analysis or thematic comparisons in the non-Steiner schools. There is no evidence

that universal themes and patterns are consistently or regularly related to the individual challenges facing class members in these other traditions.

The first step toward transformation is to have a goal, a sense of direction for change. Influential teachers, bibliocounselling and archetypes can serve as models for this transformation by helping the student view personal change against a backdrop of universal meaning. Teachers from all four pedagogies agreed on the profound influence that teachers can have on student's self-assessment and goal formation. Nevertheless, there were variations in the use of bibliocounselling and archetypes with the Steiner teachers displaying the most consistency in using narrative to influence behaviour as well as in using age-related mythologies and archetypes to foster the development of consciousness. Government schools represented the other end of the spectrum with frequent use of extrinsic reward systems and no mention of age-appropriate archetypes.

The stage for personal transformation is set by experiencing a sense of wonder in the world and engaging in meditation and reflection. Living a life that is balanced with complementary personal and professional interests and oral and written journalling can aid in this process of self-discovery. In addition to providing this reflective environment, evidence provided through literature and interview data suggests that for personal transformation to occur, goals and purposes must be established supported by a sense of the potential outcomes of one's personal narrative. Stories can also be used effectively in the form of analogies to alter behaviour in contrast to external

methods of control. Models including past teachers and heroic archetypes from stories and mythologies are particularly influential in inspiring change and providing direction for meaning-making in a spiritual sense. However, for any change to occur, obstacles must be confronted and conflicts resolved. In fact, conflicts or the experience of disequilibrium created by exposure to new perspectives and knowledge is essential for self-construction and personal transformation.