‘This teaching life of mine’: A study of teacher renewal through values and purpose-based reflective practice

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Abstract

The purpose of this action research study was to investigate the impact of a form of professional development which focused on teachers’ professional and personal renewal through a reflective group exploration of core values and purpose. Three teachers participated in a professional development program titled *This Teaching Life of Mine* which comprised six workshops over the course of three consecutive months, where the content of reflective conversations focused on core personal values and deeper purpose. Data was collected from the conversational interactions, participants’ results from *A Values Inventory* (AVI), participants’ reflective journals, their stories of Most Significant Change (MSC) and researcher’s field notes and reflective journal. Interviews were also conducted with each participant four months after completion of the workshops. One major impact emerged from the participation in the program. Through reconnecting with their personal values and by articulating aspects of their vocational purpose, participants experienced a strong sense of “Coming Home to Self”. This impact supported a re-alignment between their personal and professional selves, and each reported experiencing a sense of professional renewal. Data analysis suggested that this was due to at least five associated factors: addressing spiritual renewal as the first priority, a practical re-alignment with core values, commitment to practising critical reflection and taking consequent action, the provision of a nourishing physical and psychological environment and the use of mediational tools to support the dialogue, in concert with the careful guidance of the facilitator. The study also found that each participant had either maintained or increased their sense of renewal four months later, which runs counter to results from some previous research. A further finding was the difficulty all participants found in establishing a practice of regular written critical reflection without ongoing outside support. The research demonstrated that the process and focus of renewal is unique to each individual, that statements of vocation are similarly distinctive, and confirmed the importance of attending to the holistic wellbeing of teachers to sustain professional vitality. This research has implications for the content and style of future programs for teacher renewal.
Declaration of Originality

This is to certify that:

(i) this thesis comprises only my original work towards the degree of Master of Education;

(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all material used; and

(iii) the thesis is less than 35,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, bibliographies and appendices.

Signature:
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Chapter 1: Introduction

'We become teachers for reasons of the heart. But many of us lose heart as time goes by. How can we take heart alone and together, so we can give heart to our students and our world, which is what good teachers do?'

(Palmer, 2007a, p. 10)

1.1. Background to the Study

The diverse stances we take to our work in the world are well illustrated by this often told story about the three stonemasons:

There once was a traveller who journeyed all over the globe in search of wisdom and enlightenment. In the midst of one village, he came upon a great deal of noise, dust and commotion. He approached the nearest labourer and said, “Excuse me, I’m not from this village. May I ask what’s going on here?” The labourer replied curtly, “Can’t you see? I’m busting rocks.” The traveller approached a second labourer doing the same thing and asked the same question. The second labourer replied, “Can’t you see? I’m earning a living to support my family.” The traveller then approached a third labourer who was also breaking up rocks and posed the question a third time. With a broad smile and a gleam in his eye, the third labourer replied with great pride, “Can’t you see? We’re building a cathedral.”

(Author unknown, adapted from The Cathedral Within by Bill Shore)

As an allegory, it is possible that each response actually represents the same man on different days. One man or three, the final response comes from someone deeply aligned with his values and with an inspired sense of purpose.

But building a cathedral takes perseverance, dedication and any amount of faith in the face of ongoing setbacks, challenges and complications. The opening quote from leading educator, Parker Palmer may have been written for just such a cathedral builder after countless years of breaking rock, for many teachers begin their careers filled with inspiration to be part of building their own kind of cathedral. As Carotta (1999) has acknowledged, “the act of educating is an artful, sacred and complex task” (p. 2) and countless teachers aspire to rise to
Chapter 1: Introduction

this complex challenge of sharing knowledge, instilling a love of and confidence in learning within all their students, and being part of flourishing and collaborative school communities, communities that are making a difference (e.g., Collinson, 1994; Hansen, 1995; Whitlock, 2003).

Nevertheless, this kind of teaching often comes at a cost. For teachers, particularly those who “refuse to harden their hearts because they love learners, learning and the teaching life” (Palmer, 2007a, p. 2), it can be a profession filled with discouragement on the difficult days. Like cathedral building there is always a “great deal of noise, dust and commotion.” With the demands of crowded, complicated curricula, pressing administrative and extra-curricular requirements and no extra allocation of time to complete it all, the challenging days can be many. If teachers are not supported back into resilience and renewed optimism for their profession, the discouragement can lead to ongoing disillusionment and even burnout (Freudenberg, 1974; Maslach, 1982). Ways to assist teachers in the important task of professional and personal renewal, practices which nourish the hearts and spirits of teachers by supporting them to realign with their important values and purposeful intent are therefore vital to maintaining a vibrant teacher population (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003).

The study described in this thesis report investigated the impact of a series of reflective conversational workshops for a small group of teachers, which used a group exploration of core values and purpose to promote professional and personal renewal. Informed by the work of Parker Palmer generally (e.g., 2000, 2004) and by the Courage to Teach program specifically (Palmer, 2007a; 2007b), a key feature of the study was also the use of A Values Inventory (Chippendale, 1988a, 1988b) as a psychometric tool for eliciting participants’ prioritised values.

1.2. Statement of the Issue

Teachers at their best are agents of growth and change. For many teachers, the work they do is about reaching that insightful part of students and helping them become their biggest and best selves (O’Sullivan, 2005). To be a teacher is also to enter a tradition with inbuilt assumptions about the task ahead: of profound caring for others, of inspiring and motivating students to grow, to live alongside them in a classroom chrysalis of immersed and engaged education, and to cultivate a lifelong love of learning (Blier, 2002; Conti, 2002; Kessler, 2000).

Many people who enter the teaching profession have responded to a sense of calling or vocation (Carotta, 1999; Hansen, 2001; Westerhoff, 1987) and their motivation is to make a
difference in the lives of children and the profession itself (Intrator, 2005; Watt & Richardson 2008b) but it is also a place where it is easy for teachers to experience great self-doubt, disillusionment and even eventual burnout (Brock & Grady, 2000).

The personal cost to a teacher who suffers burnout is far reaching. Not only work performance diminishes but so does a teacher’s health, self-esteem and spirit (Brock & Grady, 2000). Reviving tired, disillusioned teachers requires processes of rejuvenation. Therefore, procedures which seek to re-invigorate a teacher’s sense of idealism, energy, and purpose and therefore support and encourage teacher renewal, appear fundamental to maintaining a vibrant teacher population.

Professional renewal and reinvigoration can be encouraged through forms of reflective practice (e.g., Intrator & Kunzman, 2006a, 2006b), including reflection on the inner lives of teachers and the person that teaches (Larrivee, 2000; Maclure, 1993). Deeper self-knowledge supports more effective teaching and better personal decision making, enriching a teacher’s ability to facilitate students’ learning (Kelchtermans, 1996; Ritchhart, 2002).

Structured reflective practice programs have a role in the support of teacher renewal (Poutiatine, 2005; Simone, 2004), facilitating a personal reconnection to self and professional re-engagement. Defining and living according to one’s personal core values also appears significant to the process of professional renewal. Consciously connecting to and aligning deeply held values with their work in schools may well support teachers in today’s classrooms in answering: “How does your work reflect what’s most important to you in life?” (Henderson, 2003, p. 158)

1.2.1 The Researcher’s Stance

I came to the questions within this study as a teacher, personal development coach, reflective practitioner and researcher. Not currently working in a school at the time of the study, my professional focus had turned towards some of the bigger pictures in life and in education. In particular I had looked at the disposition of the teacher – the person who turns up in the classroom and engages (or does not) with students – who potentially adds immeasurable quality to students’ learning opportunities. I had worked in schools where feelings of disillusionment and sometimes burnout have overwhelmed teaching staff, such that engagement and vitality for the job at hand were often elusive and very hard to sustain.

It had been my personal experience, that useful regular reflective practice is a central component of sustaining a dynamic and engaged teaching disposition. Training for and subsequent consultancy work as a personal development coach added new layers and
perspectives to my professional reflective practice. Critically, I also knew that the differentiation between my personal and professional selves was blurred. Who I brought to the classroom each day was the sum total of the meanings I had made from my life experiences thus far.

In 2009, I ran a series of reflective conversational style workshops with small groups where deeper questions about purpose and core values were addressed. Feedback from participants about resultant personal clarity on these issues and its impact personally and professionally ranged from positive to transformational. As I thought about my old staffroom full of good, tired teachers endlessly responding to bells, yard duty, timetable changes, meetings … and the needs of their students, I wondered what might happen to their sense of “vocational vitality” (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006b, p. 17) if similar reflective questions were offered to them in a collegiate and nurturing environment.

1.3. Purpose of the Study
This study explored the impact of a form of professional development which focused on teachers’ professional and personal renewal through a reflective group exploration of core values and purpose. The research questions that informed this study were:

- What is the impact of a group exploration of personal core values and purpose, as a form of reflective practice, on a teacher’s sense of professional renewal?
- What are the implications of such a program for teacher renewal?

The professional development program titled This Teaching Life of Mine was comprised of six conversational workshops over the course of three consecutive months, where the content of the conversations focused on core personal values and deeper purpose, and included some focus questions taken from the Courage to Teach program (Palmer, 2007b).

1.4. Overview of Research Methodology
Choosing between a quantitative or qualitative research approach depends on the purpose behind the question to be investigated (Patton, 2002). This study intended to explore the impact on participants’ sense of professional renewal using conversational workshops, and the research questions focused on the meanings constructed by participants and how they made sense of their world. Consequently, qualitative research was the most suitable methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; McNiff, 1988; Reason & Torbert, 2001) was chosen as the qualitative method due to the improvisational style of the research design developed through the evolutionary nature of the workshops, guided initially by the research
questions themselves and then by the patterns and themes being elicited from the data produced throughout the research. During the course of the workshops, data were collected from conversational interactions, results from A Values Inventory (AVI), participants’ and facilitator’s reflective journals, participants’ stories of Most Significant Change (MSC) technique and follow up interviews.

1.5. **Significance of the Study**

The profession of teaching is a challenging one. Despite the sense of vocation often associated with teaching, the daily demands of a teaching life carry significant expectations for teachers. As the literature review will demonstrate, many teachers can lose sight of their core values and deeper motives for entering a teaching life and thus are vulnerable to disillusionment and possible burnout. This study aims to contribute usefully to the body of knowledge already addressing teacher renewal as, to date, processes that sustain teachers are sadly lacking within our schools. Findings from this study view teacher renewal through a new lens, and suggest fresh strategies that led to transformative outcomes for all research participants. This will be important information for any educational setting.

1.6. **Vocabulary of the Study**

The concepts of reflective practice, teacher renewal, burnout, core values, purpose and spiritual renewal are key terms used and require explicit definition in the context of this study.

**Reflective practice:** To be reflective has been defined as ‘taking time to step back and to ponder the meaning of what has happened, the impact of it and the direction one is taking’ (Higgins, 2011, p. 584). In this study, the reflective process has a similarity to that of “reflective poetic inquiry” introduced by Henderson and Gornik (2007, p. 71) which includes the intellectual, emotional and spiritual elements of a question. It is specifically attached to personal inquiry, in which teachers give conscious focus to the connection between their personal and professional lives; attending to their inner voices, or asking, as Palmer (2007a) describes it, “Who is the self that teaches?” (p. 4)

**Teacher Renewal:** Processes that seek to re-invigorate a teacher’s sense of idealism, energy, and purpose (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006b).

**Burnout:** A process associated with chronic overwork that is complete “when energy turns to exhaustion, involvement changes to detachment, and the sense of accomplishment becomes one of self-doubt, cynicism, and bitterness” (Brock & Grady, 2000, p. 3).
Core Values: These are “the ideals that give significance to our lives, that are reflected through the priorities that we choose, and that we act on consistently and repeatedly” (Hall, 1994, p. 21). “Core Values” are not to be seen as wholly synonymous with virtues or morals.

Purpose: In teaching there appears a strong correlation between purpose and vocation or mission. “Purpose” in this context is therefore defined as what a teacher sees as “his or her personal calling in the world. In short, the question of what it is deep inside us that moves us to do what we do” (Korthagen, 2004, p. 87).

Spiritual: This report uses the same definition of “Spiritual” as is used by the Courage to Teach program: “the diverse ways we answer the heart’s longing to be connected with the largeness of life – a longing that animates love and work” (Palmer, 2007a, p. 5).

1.7. Summary
The study comprises six chapters. This introductory chapter presented an overview of the problem being studied, an explanation of the purpose of the research, discussion of the significance of the study, presentation of the research questions, and an overview of the methodology to be used.

Chapter Two will provide a theoretical framework for the study by exploring literature in the following areas: the vocational nature of teaching, the disconnect between teachers’ purpose and practice that results in disillusion and possible burnout, reflective practice as a form of professional development, its usefulness for teacher renewal through reflecting on the “person in the profession” (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006b, p. 16) and strategies and foci for renewal.

Chapter Three describes the methodology employed, including the rationale for action research as the chosen method, an explanation of the selection of participants, an overview of data collection and analysis, issues of validity and a discussion of the limitations and ethical considerations of the study.

Chapter Four presents the analysis and findings from the data collected throughout the research.

Chapter Five discusses the findings of the study related to the research questions and reviewed literature in regards to teacher renewal and engagement.

Chapter Six concludes this report, noting limitations and with recommendations based on the research offered for consideration.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Organization of Review
The previous chapter outlined the background to the study of teacher renewal. This chapter reviews literature exploring research and theory related to the study. Specifically, it examines research addressing the vocational nature of teaching where one’s work in the world provides a personal source of meaning and deeper purpose. It also reviews studies that explore the disconnect between teachers’ purpose and practice that results in disillusion and possible burnout. The review then focuses on reflective practice as a form of professional development, and how reflecting on the “person in the profession” (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006b, p. 16) can support ongoing teacher renewal. Strategies and foci for renewal are addressed, including existing structured programs and introducing the concept of values alignment as a way to connect with deeper purpose and thus engagement and motivation. In short, this review explores literature that advocates certain styles of reflective practice as effective methods to sustain the person who teaches and that contribute to vocational vitality and processes which help to sustain the spirits and hearts of our teachers. A summary analysis of prominent themes and findings within the reviewed literature is presented at the end of the chapter.

2.2. The Vocational Nature of Teaching
Research suggests that many people who enter the teaching profession have responded to a sense of calling or vocation (Carotta, 1999; Hansen, 1995; Palmer, 2000; Whitlock, 2003). Hansen suggests that one element of vocation is the intersecting of “public obligation and personal fulfilment” (p. 3) while another dimension is a pursuit of purpose and deeper meaning, a sense that the work is bigger than the person (Carotta, 1999; Daloz, Keen, Keen & Parks, 1996). In his observations of a congruent life, Thompson (2000) notes:

There is a need in almost all of us for a sense of connectedness and purpose in the events of our outer lives, and a deeply rooted desire for our inner lives to have a harmonious connection to a higher source of meaning and value. (p. 3)

To view the profession of teaching through a lens that highlights both the desire to make a real difference in the lives of others through one’s work coupled with the urge to find richer life meaning for oneself (Whyte, 2001), indicates that teaching has the capacity to be more like a vocation, “not merely an occupation” (Metzendorf, 1987, p. 4).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Hansen (1995) tells us that “an individual who is strongly inclined toward teaching seems to be a person who is not debating whether to teach but rather is contemplating how or under what circumstances to do so” (p. 9). Though vocation may feel too strong a word for some, the wellspring of motivation for many teachers is the commitment to make a difference in the lives of children and the profession itself (Intrator, 2005; O’Sullivan, 2005; Richardson & Watt, 2005, 2006; Watt & Richardson, 2008a, 2008b). In an Australian study, Richardson and Watt (2006) identified key motivators for students entering the teaching profession: a perceived ability to teach, the desire to work with children and adolescents, the intrinsic value of teaching, as well as the desire to make a social contribution and to shape the future. A most recent study with international colleagues from three other countries (Watt et al, 2012) found that desires for a teaching career had high levels of motivational similarity.

Associated research (Watt & Richardson, 2008b) found that the group of pre-service teachers identified as “highly-engagedpersisters,” due to their high scores on the four factors of planned effort, planned persistence, professional development aspirations, and leadership aspirations, were also the most likely to describe their intention to become teachers as a vocation or calling, and something they were “supposed to do.” Their enthusiasm for the inherent rewards of teaching was captured in a sample of their comments: “Intrinsic satisfaction” ... “It’s my calling”, and “I am passionate about teaching and know I can be beneficial to students” (p. 417). These were students who intended to devote their entire career to teaching and their reasons included, “Because I want to make a difference in the lives of kids”, and “Because I like to share my knowledge with others and make a difference” (p. 417). These motivations were similar to the findings from a smaller sampled longitudinal study from the University of Sydney (Ewing & Smith, 2003), particularly noting the vocational incentive. It would seem that for many teachers who intend to stay the distance in the profession, a sense of deeper purpose is one of the key motivators.

It is not just the raw untested idealism of the new teacher that feeds the vocational drive. Many studies (e.g., Farkas, Johnson & Foleno, 2000; Lindley, 1993; Lokan, 2003), have noted the commitment and purposeful intent of teachers who continue to inspire students and their school communities even after decades of service. Many of these teachers become important mentors to those entering the profession. Their power, Palmer (2007a) tells us, is in their capacity to help those under their guidance to discover “a teacher’s heart by meeting a great teacher” (p. 22). As Huebner (1987) has observed after many years working with teachers, that while it may not be “a very effective way to earn a living ... it is a valuable life to live” (p. 17).
Teachers who have a sense of purpose or mission bring a quality to the classroom which is more than someone imparting knowledge. Intrator and Kunzman (2006b) suggest that a teacher’s capacity to teach well is linked to a set of difficult-to-define qualities that “often become characterized as heart, passion, or connectedness…These intricate qualities emerge from the inner or core landscape of a teacher’s life and represent the integral feature of inspired and memorable teaching” (p. 16). Westerhoff (1987) reiterates the widespread conclusion that, above and beyond the many tools, techniques and programs, “what finally surfaces as most important is the person who teaches” (p. 193).

Most critically, passionate, committed teaching leads to improved student outcomes. Hattie (2012) calls attention to this when describing his meta-analysis involving over nine hundred studies of the variables influencing student achievement. This revealed that it is the relationship between teacher and student that is one of the greatest influences on students’ successes or otherwise. Hattie emphasises that this emanates from the inspired teacher (Steele, 2009) who teaches with passionate purpose.

2.3. The Hidden Cost of Caring
The quality of the teacher defines in no small way the experience of the students. However, teaching is not for the faint hearted and sometimes too many “difficult days” can overshadow the satisfaction that comes from the importance and purposefulness of the work.

In his compilation of Courage to Teach stories, Intrator (2002) details the advice from a concerned father, which encapsulates what many people have come to believe is the teaching life: “As my dad told me, ‘This job can wear you down. There’s a lot of gratuitous clucking about how we must value and support teachers. Then you get in there and it’s pretty lonely and tough’” (p. 3). Many participants in the Richardson and Watt (2006) study reported a high level of dissuasion, that is, “others had advised them not to go into teaching” (p. 51). These pre-service teachers seemed aware that teaching requires considerable resilience from the person who turns up in the class room each day. As Intrator tells us, “this earnest passion to make a difference, this zeal to contribute, this desire to share the richness of learning with students is what animates our teaching – yet the demands of teaching are intense” (p. xxxviii).

The assumptions placed on teachers’ capacity to rise to any number of often simultaneous challenges are much the same more than two decades after this preface to a 1988 Times article about teachers’ working conditions was written:
WANTED Men and women with the patience of Job, wisdom of Solomon and ability to prepare the next generation for productive citizenship under highly adverse and sometimes dangerous conditions. Applicant must be willing to fill gaps left by unfit, absent or working parents, satisfy demands of state politicians and local bureaucrats, impart healthy cultural and moral values and -- oh, yes -- teach the three Rs. Hours: 50-60 a week. Pay: fair (getting better). Rewards: mostly intangible.

(Tifft et al., 1988, p. 58)

The significant daily demands of the teaching life include facilitating academic progress while providing a supportive learning environment, juggling the needs of the group with the requirements of each individual student and simultaneously guiding an array of learning tasks and assessments for students at different places of understanding and achievement, ensuring that all students’ needs are met (Darling-Hammond, 1997, 2003). These multiple strands have the capacity to be woven into a dynamic classroom program or become a disjointed confusion for all. It is the artistry, time and commitment of the teacher that maintains ordered structure beneath this complexity.

One particular expectation of teachers in classrooms, which can often be filled daily with students displaying challenging behaviour, is that of emotional restraint and sometimes significant suppression of their feelings. Arlie Hochschild (1983, 2003) refers to this as the “emotional labour” associated with some types of work and notes that people in this kind of emotional work often change their feelings to fit a situation or change a situation to fit their feelings (1983, p. 13). To be regularly warm and loving towards a difficult child or children “requires emotions work” (p. 52).

Teachers are therefore required to present a certain kind of “emotional display” and Hochschild (1983) has noted that there is often an inequality in the emotional exchange. The student or visiting parent may choose not to smile but the teacher “is obliged not only to smile but to try to work up some warmth behind it” (p. 7). Hochschild calls this “deep acting” (p. 33) and cautions that, by pretending very deeply to feel something other than what is really felt, an internal alteration occurs. In the classroom, when teachers feel significant irritation but pretend otherwise at a deep level, they are eventually able to suppress that irritation. But when ongoing organized display of feelings is part of the professional transaction between student and teacher there may well be a cost. If it becomes too hard and teachers withdraw emotional labour and “offer instead a thin crust of display” (p. 21) they may feel insincere or dishonest. On the other hand, if the suppression is successful, then they
risk losing an authenticity in how they hear their feelings and what these feelings tell them about themselves. The disconnection between “soul and role” to which Palmer (2004, p. 13) regularly refers is clearly evident here:

Pretending is another name for dividedness, a state that keeps us from cultivating the capacity for connectedness on which good teaching depends. When we pretend, we fall out of community with ourselves, our students and the world around us, out of communion with the common center that is both the root and the fruit of teaching at its best. (Palmer, 2007a, p. 90)

When all these demands of teaching swamp educators in the classroom, and there is no support or intervention, teachers can start to feel disillusioned. Weissbourd (2003) stresses that “strictly speaking, disillusionment is freedom from illusion” (p. 10). It is not damaging of itself but rather an opportunity to respond to challenging circumstances with a sense of reality. However, disillusionment that leads to passivity heads down the slippery slope towards burnout, an insidious process that develops over time (Maslach, 1982). And it is all too clear that the teaching profession contains teachers “who are attempting to engage in transforming lives when their own vocational lives are tired, bored, spiritless and overwhelmed” (Carotta, 1999, p. 3).

For those who have often brought their hearts, souls and consequently their vulnerability with them into the classroom, it is also a place where it is easy for teachers to experience great self-doubt, disillusionment and even burnout (Burke, Greenglass & Schwartz, 1996; Schaufeli, Salanova, Vigonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002). For a weary, once committed teacher to feel disillusionment or burnout is not to revoke the idea that their teaching is (or was) purpose driven. If anything, the opposite appears closer to the mark. Pines’ (1993) existential model links burnout with the search for meaning and significance in one’s work, arguing that “the root cause of burnout lies in our need to believe that our lives are meaningful, that the things we do – and consequently, we ourselves – are useful and important (p. 33). Therefore, as Huebner (1987) reminds us, feelings of disillusionment or burnout really show us “how difficult it is to be a teacher in a school under today’s conditions” (p. 18).

2.3.1 Teacher Burnout

Burnout – a term coined by Freudenberger (1974) – is a phenomenon closely linked with professions where a high level of commitment and dedication is necessary (McMahon, 2003). Teachers suffering from burnout feel emotionally and physically exhausted, disconnected
from students and colleagues and feel ineffective in their job (Brock & Grady, 2000; Maslach, 1982). Burke, Greenglass and Schwartzer (1996) identified disruptive students, red tape, self-doubts, isolation and lack of supervisor support as the common determinants of burnout.

Developing over time, the personal cost to a teacher who suffers burnout is far reaching. Not only work performance diminishes but so does a teacher’s health, self-esteem and spirit, often in the form of physical exhaustion, heart symptoms and depressive moods (Brock & Grady, 2000, Burke et al., 1996). Maslach (1982) has described the three stages of burnout as exhaustion, then cynicism, followed by lack of professional efficacy. Teachers experiencing burnout have ceased to feel engaged with their job (Schaufeli et al., 2002). In a similar vein to Pines (1993), Cherniss (1980) specifically links burnout with a disconnection to vocation: “Burnout is used to refer to the situation when what was formerly a ‘calling’ becomes merely a job. One no longer lives to work but works only to live … [with] a loss of enthusiasm, excitement and a sense of mission in one’s work” (p. 16).

Data included in the ongoing longitudinal Australian study, The Factors Influencing Teaching Choice “FIT-Choice Project, conducted by Richardson and Watt over the last decade (Richardson & Watt, 2005, 2006; Watt & Richardson, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2011) were related to disengagement and burnout. Findings included a perceived disconnection between the increasing administrative and testing and reporting requirements and “the relational work which many teachers see as their ‘real’ job” (Watt & Richardson, 2011, p. 29). Additionally, teachers were likely to experience burnout if they maintained their “high motivations in situations where they cannot be attained” (p. 29). In another Australian study focusing on teacher retention, Ewing and Manuel (2005) recommended “hearing the voices” (p. 13) of new teachers more regularly as a way of offsetting professional overwhelm, disillusion and disconnection:

When I first started teaching I wanted to be a teacher of excellence. Five years down the track I feel I am still a long way off … I am also feeling somewhat worn out. This does a lot to my motivation levels… I think I'm reasonably good at it but it takes a lot out of me so I don't always feel happy. I feel sometimes that I have lost my sense of self. This is a really tough job if you want to do it well.

(Ewing & Manuel, 2005, p. 13)
In their research of teachers and school administrators over the course of one year, Burke et al (1996) confirmed burnout as a process that develops over time, and recommended the design of intervention procedures aimed at alleviating pressure earlier in order to lessen the risk of burnout in months to come.

2.3.2 Teacher Renewal

Renewal, Steffy (1989) tells us:

is a form of rebirth. It denotes a time of increased energy, a positive attitude, and a period of growth. Renewal is marked by the intensity of feelings and perception, and by the internal awareness of change. One becomes in tune with one’s senses and risk-taking behaviour is attempted. (p. 83)

Steffy includes the following characteristics in a teacher experiencing renewal: conceptual clarity, passion and drive, sustained high energy, realism and humour, skilful teaching, enthusiasm, inquisitiveness and increased self-support and agency.

Renewal is more than simply replenishing a well that is emptying. Intrator and Kunzman (2006b) observe that our daily teaching practice mirrors the health of our inner world. Therefore it is important that renewal has an additional enriching quality so that “to the extent that renewal is like the phoenix rising from the ashes, it entails a different bird emerging each time” (p. 21). However renewal also includes re-aligning with what is actually personally important. Returning to one’s passion and purpose for teaching is central to the notion of professional renewal. Noting again the research of Cherniss (1980) which specifically correlated burnout with disconnection to vocation, and that of Pines (1993) which concluded that “burnout is always the end result of a gradual process of disillusionment in the quest to derive a sense of existential significance from work” (p. 40) it is confirmation indeed that having a deep sense of purpose in teaching, that is, making meaning through one’s work, seems to create resilience against disillusionment and burnout (Briskin, 1998; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998; Korthagen, 2004; Peppers & Briskin, 2000).

Loehr and Schwartz (2003) make a straightforward link between definition of purpose and full engagement in one’s work. While they state, like Covey (1989), that full engagement involves harnessing physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energy, it is spiritual energy which is “the most powerful source of our motivation, perseverance and direction”, where spiritual energy is defined as “connection to a set of deeply held values and to a purpose beyond our self-interest” (p. 110). Korthagen (2004) agrees. Deeper than notions of
professional identity, full engagement focuses on “the question of what it is deep inside us that moves us to do what we do” (p. 85).

Teachers filled with vocational vitality display presence, connectedness and purpose. Reviving tired, disillusioned teachers requires processes of both rejuvenation and personal remembering. In his exploration of the link between work and purpose, Whyte (2002) remarked:

I often think that the moment you walk through the door of your workplace can be the moment that you begin to forget why you began the journey in the first place. One of the great tasks of any human being of any human work is to remember the core conversation that lies at the centre of it.

(Sound recording)

Therefore, processes that help teachers remember those “core conversations,” that act as reminders of motivation and seek to re-invigorate a teacher’s sense of idealism, energy, and purpose, practices that support and encourage teacher renewal, appear fundamental to maintaining a vibrant teacher population. One such process for teachers is that of reflective practice.

2.4. Reflective Practice: A Brief Overview

Erlandson and Beach (2008) suggest that the spotlight on reflective practice in education began with the visionary work of Dewey’s (1910) How We Think, and gained significant momentum with the publication of Schöns’s (1983) influential text, The Reflective Practitioner. These foundations have been further developed by many, including Mezirow (1990), highlighting reflection’s role in transformational learning.

While there is no precise definition of what it means to be reflective, there are some central principles. Jay (2003) describes reflection as entailing “a process of contemplation with an openness to being changed, a willingness to learn’ (p. 1). Within most definitions is the notion that there is a situation that is ‘puzzling, curious or perplexing’ on which to reflect (Loughran, 2002, p. 33), a phenomena Mezirow (1990) describes as a “disorienting dilemma” (p. 5). Higgins (2011) tells us that an important role of reflection is that of reviewing practice, “taking time to step back and to ponder the meaning of what has happened, the impact of it and the direction one is taking” (p. 584). Perhaps the impasse encountered in reaching a universal definition relates to the observation of Oberg and Artz (1992) that practising reflection is not specifically about acquiring behaviours or skill sets. To become reflective is rather an attitude, “an approach that permeates everything, something one becomes” (p. 140).
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The purposes for teachers’ reflective practice are numerous. Ghaye (2000) declares that ‘coming to know in different ways is a central epistemological point of reflective learning’ (p. 7), but most of these motivations are underpinned by a common intended outcome: to influence future actions (Barnett, O’Mahony & Matthews, 2004). Wellington and Austin (1996) name five orientations to reflective practice: the immediate, the technical, the deliberative, the dialectic and the transpersonal, thus implicitly supporting the growing consensus that the definition of reflective practice is fluid, depending on the orientation of the practitioner.

Many studies have identified reflective practice as the cornerstone strategy for teachers to remain integrally linked to their teaching, (e.g., Butler, 1996; Larrivee, 2000; Wagner, 2006) and the practice of regularly reflecting on aspects of one’s teaching is now an expectation attached to career advancement (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, AITSL, 2009). However, the time deemed available for deep reflection in a teaching life is diminishing (Jay, 2003).

Schools as educational institutions are historically designed to support the learning and development of the students rather than that of the teachers (Levine, 1989) and “more often deter rather than facilitate the development of adults for whom the school is a workplace” (p. 61). A price is paid when combining this fundamental deterrent with time constraints, pace and structure of the school day and the implementation of multiple reforms. Reflective practice about anything other than requirements for the job becomes “the last item on the priority list” (Jay, 2003, p. 84). This has implications for the vitality of the teaching profession and is central to the current study. In addition to regularly reflecting on one’s teaching practice for professional development, it has also been shown to be a key factor in the professional and personal health of teachers (Brookfield, 1995; Loughran, 2002; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). That is, reflective practice specifically supports teacher renewal.

2.5. The Role of Reflection in Teacher Renewal

Teachers regularly involved in reflective practice are undertaking important work. Through engaging in deep, critical reflection teachers grasp the opportunity to ponder deeply by themselves or to engage in collegiate conversations about those concerns that are important to them as professionals and, equally important, as human beings. Larrivee (2000) asserts that the demanding role of teachers requires self-awareness, self-inquiry and self-reflection. Therefore, sustenance for one’s professional health (Loughran, 2002) is seen as the prime reason for teachers to engage in reflective practice as it is important for ‘improvement,

One fundamental factor that links reflection with renewal is that ‘reflection requires a pause’ (York-Barr et al, 2006. p. 9). Swenson (2003) describes this as a margin, a space between workload and energetic capacity. He concurs with Bryner and Markova (1996) who suggest in a chapter titled, *In the Center of the Storm* that “by taking a moment to allow your body and soul to catch up with your mind, you can reconnect and operate from your integrity rather than being blown off course by the winds of change” (p. 39). Thompson and Pascal (2012) note the irony of choosing not to take time to reflect because of a busy workload.

Ghaye (2000) suggests that choosing to be a reflective practitioner may offer teachers a way of “trying to make sense of the uncertainty in [their] workplaces and the courage to work competently and ethically at the edge of order and chaos” (p. 7) and reflecting as part of a teacher’s professional development covers many aspects of what, how, when and why they teach. Not so regularly however, does reflective practice focus in an intentional way on *who* does the teaching.

**2.5.1 Reflecting on the “person in the profession”**

While examining one’s teaching practice is essential to continuing professional development, equally affirming and sustaining is reflective consideration about what really matters to “the person in the profession” (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006b, p. 16). According to Hamachek (1999), while students may initially value the mind of the teacher, “it is the essence of a teacher’s selfhood that is remembered” (p. 208). Palmer (2007a) is blunt:

> Though technique-talk promises the “practical” solutions that we think we want and need, the conversation is stunted when technique is the only topic: the human issues in teaching get ignored, so the human beings who teach feel ignored as well. When teaching is reduced to technique, we shrink teachers as well as their craft – and people do not willingly return to a conversation that diminishes them. (p. 149)

The professional and the personal selves of the teacher appears forever intertwined and often entangled (Jersild, 1955; Day, Kington, Stobart & Sammons, 2006). Hamachek (1999) and others (e.g., Kottler, Zehm & Kottler, 2005; Newman, 1998) assert that “the more teachers know about themselves – the private curriculum within – the better their personal decisions are apt to be to pave the way for better teaching” (p. 209). Ritchhart (2002) encourages teachers to define their ‘Red Thread’, a metaphor “for describing the beliefs, passions, values
and goals that tie together and unite a teacher’s practice over time and contexts” (p. 182). In a similar vein, Henderson (1992) endorses the practice of teachers creating their own personal metaphor for teaching that reflects their current pedagogy with a view to rewriting or ‘reframing’ (Schön, 1983) as their values and beliefs develop.

An entire issue of the *Cambridge Journal of Education* (1996) is dedicated to the emotional lives of teachers. It addresses concerns including teacher vulnerability (Kelchtermans, 1996), feeling depersonalised (Jeffery & Woods, 1996), the pressure to get it right (La Porte, 1996), never feeling good enough (Acker & Feuerverger, 1996), masking declining idealism from parents (Hayes, 1996) and the heightened emotionality experienced by teachers pushing for reform (Little, 1996). Nias (1996) tells us that, “One cannot help teachers develop their classroom and management skills without also addressing their emotional reactions and responses and the attitudes, values and beliefs which underlie these” (p. 294). The articles in this issue contain the implicit understanding that part of a teacher’s role is to carry the responsibility for the quality of the human relationships as part of children’s learning. Golby (1996) tells us that “to be fully present as an educational agent, teacher or learner, is to make no distinction between the learning of the head, hand and heart” (p. 424). Faced with the magnitude of this brief, reflective practices that support the ongoing renewal of the head, hand and heart of the person who teaches is perhaps the cornerstone of the educational experience.

Anglea (2009) reflects much of the literature concerning the emotional life of the teacher (e.g., Intrator & Kunzman, 2006b; McMahon, 2003; Palmer, 2007a) when she tells us that the kind of professional support, or professional development, that will best help teachers must not only include what and how one teaches but also provide support to the inner teacher. Rarely, she tells us, “is professional development designed to nurture the heart and spirit of teachers, from which good teaching comes” (p. 41).

To begin that professional support, Palmer (2007a) asks his fundamental question: “Who is the self that teaches?” (p. 4) and Intrator and Kunzman (2006b) state that we require “important ongoing conversations about the inner landscape of teachers’ lives” (p. 16).

2.6. Effective Reflection or “just going to courses”?

While professional conversations are certainly ongoing, what counts as valuable reflection remains contentious. Dewey asserted that there were three dispositions required for reflection: open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness (1933, cited in Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Schön (1983) added that a vital component of effective reflection is for
teachers to frame and reframe problems – deciding anew what is worthy of attention. Larrivee (2000) and others (e.g., Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton & Kleiner, 2000; Zeichner & Liston, 1996) expand on this idea by alerting us to the personal lenses we create and through which we view the world; lenses forged from past experiences, beliefs, expectations and personal agendas, combined with a filtering system unconsciously applied to remove data (such as unpleasant truths) from the reflective gaze. Argyris (cited in Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross & Smith, 1994) describe this process as ‘the ladder of inference’ and Senge et al. note that this ascent is so fast we are often not aware that we have started with an incident, added selected data and personal meanings, made assumptions, drawn conclusions, adopted beliefs and taken subsequent action without any critical questioning or objective analysis. Brookfield (1995) also urges us to go ‘assumption hunting’ (p. 218).

For some researchers, there is a clear distinction between thoughtful habits that are usefully reflective and those that are not (e.g., Finlay, 2008; Marcos, Miguel & Tillema, 2009). Loughran (2002) cautions us about the pitfall of misconstruing rationalization of one’s practice as reflection and calls for ‘effective reflective practice’ (p. 42). This is similar to the notion of Senge et al. (1994) who speak of ‘shifting the burden’ (p. 136) and shifting the focus rather than facing the problem. From Butler’s (1996) perspective this is often translated as just ‘going to courses’ (p. 266). Forde et al (2006) caution that if reflection does not lead to effective action it merely becomes an end in itself, while Brookfield (1995) is candid: ‘Reflection in and of itself is not enough; it must always be linked to how the world can be changed’ (p. 217).

2.6.1 Critical Reflection, Transformative Learning and Reflective Poetic Inquiry

Developing awareness for previously hidden assumptions (Brookfield, 1995; Senge et al, 1994) is the pathway to critical reflection, a key component of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 1997, 2000). For Mezirow (1991), critical reflection reconsiders views, beliefs and opinions with a mind open to reframing, allowing for a new frame of reference. Critical reflection allows for depth and breadth (Thompson & Pascal, 2012), looking beneath the surface of a situation and examining thoughts, feelings and values that are not always voiced and add complexity and subtlety to the conversation. This is echoed in the Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) model of “Multi-Level Learning” which invites teachers to peel back the layers of the onion, from more surface concerns of behaviours and further in towards the “core reflections” (p. 53) pertaining to beliefs, identity and mission and revealing the core qualities of the teacher, such as empathy, creativity, compassion, love, sensitivity, courage, decisiveness and flexibility. As Korthagen and Vasalos note (somewhat drily),
“these are indeed essential qualities for teachers, qualities seldom appearing on the official lists of important basic competencies” (p. 56).

Underpinned by constructivist principles, transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1990, 1991) is based on the premise that we construct personal meaning from our experiences, and then confirm that meaning in dialogue with others. Our experiences are filtered through our beliefs, perspectives and habits. Echoing Senge et al (1994), Cranton and Wright (2008) tell us that “we can only see the world through our own eyes, and our way of seeing includes distortions, prejudices, stereotypes, and unquestioned belief systems” (p. 34).

While transformative learning began as a largely cognitive, rational process (Mezirow, 1990), it is now recognised that the process and experience is unique to each person (Taylor & Cranton, 2012) and transformative learning can be accessed from an imaginative, intuitive and soulful approach to learning (Dirkx, 1997, Dirkx, Mezirow & Cranton, 2006; Henderson & Gornik, 2007). Regardless of the pathway in to the experience, “those of us who take seriously the ‘transformative’ in transformative learning are interested in the kind of ‘deep’ learning that challenges existing, taken-for-granted assumptions, notions, and meanings of what learning is about” (Dirkx, Mezirow & Cranton, 2006, p. 126).

Transformative learning occurs when something happens such that we are called upon to question our beliefs and reframe our perspective. While it can be a dramatic event that causes us to pause, most often it is a more gradual process made up of many factors. These events, known as Mezirow’s (1991) disorienting dilemmas, may be extreme such as an illness, or “may be evoked by an eye-opening discussion, book, poem or painting” (p. 14). In this regard, they have much in common with Palmer’s (2004) metaphoric use of “third things”, such as poems, stories, works of art or music. As Palmer explains:

They represent neither the voice of the facilitator nor the voice of a participant.
They have voices of their own, voices that tell the truth about a topic, but …
tell it on the slant. Mediated by a third thing, truth can emerge from, and return to, our awareness at whatever pace and depth we are able to handle – sometimes inwardly in silence, sometimes aloud in community. (p. 93)

Wertsch (1998) refers to tools such as these as the “mediational means” for an action to occur. (p. 28). He underscores that these tools should not be viewed as an “undifferentiated whole,” as different combinations or emphases of each of these elements will affect final outcomes (p. 27).
Incorporating more aesthetic approaches to cognitive, rational inquiries is in tune with “reflective poetic inquiry” introduced by Henderson and Gornik (2007, p. 71). This form of inquiry includes the intellectual, emotional and spiritual elements and is specifically attached to personal inquiry in which teachers give conscious focus to the connection between their personal and professional lives. For Henderson and Gornik, through this kind of “qualitative thinking, the ordinary becomes the sacred; the prosaic becomes the profound; and the fragmented becomes the whole” (p. 72). In parallel with the intentions of Palmer’s (2007b) *Courage to Teach* program, reflective poetic inquiry allows for learning through and renewal of the spirit. Noting again the correlation between disillusionment and vocation (Pines, 1993), through this specific reflective process, "one examines why we are called to facilitate student learning" transforming teaching from a "role or a function into a calling" (Henderson & Gornik, 2007, p. 72). At the heart of teacher renewal is a desire for authenticity: a conversation between personal identity and purpose with the requirements and circumstance of the teaching work (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006b).

Critical reflection, transformative learning and reflective poetic inquiry are all pathways to effective reflective practice, requiring a form of artistry to shape new meaning and from there, to craft steps towards meaningful action (Henderson, 2001; West, 2010). Within this artistry is the quality of contribution to the reflective conversation.

### 2.6.2 The Reflective Conversation

Ghaye (2000) and others (e.g., Whitehead, 2000) ask teachers to engage in reflective conversations as a central component of their reflective practice. Taylor (2009) tells us that dialogue is the essential medium through which transformation is promoted and developed (p. 9). Kemmis (1985) asserts that reflection is not, at its best, an individual process and that “like language, it is a social process” (p. 140) and others (e.g., Zepke et al., 2003) also indicate that ongoing critical reflection with others often leads to more useful insight and is more productive. Mezirow (1997) and Grabove (1997) go further and state that it is *through* communication or critical discourse that transformative learning takes place and is thus “a social rather than solitary process” (p. 91). Knights (1985) describes the important role that the undivided attention of a listener plays in useful reflection, while Jay (2003) advocates the construction of a group of critical friends, including some kind of structure with an agenda rather than purely an ad hoc arrangement.

Isaacs (1999) who is founder of and researcher within the Dialogue Project at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), describes dialogue as “a conversation with a center, not sides” (p. 19). York-Barr et al (2006) distinguishes dialogue from discussion, where dialogue
supports and encourages expansion while discussion contracts, edging towards ultimate solution. “In a dialogue, people are not just interacting, but creating together (Isaacs, 1999, p. 174). This dialogue can, paradoxically, enable participants in the conversation to “hear their own voice” more powerfully than when in solitude (p. 165). Often, it is through speech that the deeper insights reveal themselves.

Isaacs (1999) tells us that valuable conversation can only occur in a “container” created whereby “deep and transformative listening becomes possible” (p. 242). Different atmospheres produce certain qualities of conversation. For example, a library sets a tone of quiet, studious contemplation, and whispered exchanges, while a busy, crowded railway station encourages agitation but limited human connection. The setting for a reflective conversation requires thoughtful consideration to shaping the space in the dimensions supporting the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual.

Physical considerations include privacy, comfort, warm lighting, circular seating and elements that enhance feelings of community such as light food and drink. Intellectual space supporting reflective conversation is not filled with knowing and telling, rather it is opened up for dialogue within which to wonder and explore (Palmer, 2007b). Creating a space that is hospitable rather than unreceptive to feelings supports intellectual or emotional truth telling and Isaacs (1999) cautions us that people in deep dialogue need a setting capable of holding “the intensities of their lives” (p. 243). Providing a space with a commitment to confidentiality creates an atmosphere of dignity and regard that encourages emotional honesty (Livsey & Palmer, 1999). A container that supports the spiritual element is one where deep listening with presence occurs, such that people are able to listen more deeply to themselves. This kind of deep listening does not seek to provide answers. Instead, it offers welcome, empathy and the opportunity to be heard without judgement (Palmer, 2007b).

When these criteria are met, new “fields of conversation” are possible (Isaacs, 1999, p. 261). The conversations are driven by curiosity and the silences, when they occur, are filled with people looking inward, listening for new possibilities. Silences within these conversations are “whole and, at times, sacred. The wisdom of the wider group takes precedence over the chatter of the individual” (p. 288). It is this attentive presence that makes possible what David Whyte refers to as the “courageous conversation that engages people at their creative edge” (2012, para. 6).

The importance of this kind of conversational container was noted by Hunt (2010). During a two year long seminar series exploring the role of spirituality in life-long learning, Hunt ran
meetings with a small group in which they took a cooperative-inquiry approach to insights and issues. At its completion, Hunt concluded:

There would seem to be a real need for opportunities in professional settings where practitioners feel free to share and reflect with others not only on the how and why of practice situations, but on the myths, narratives, life experiences and ultimate questions that are integral to the ‘intangible fabric’ of being human as well as a professional. (p. 168)

Hunt (2010) acknowledged that professional settings are starting to create frameworks designed for collegiate conversation and structured processes of reflection within teams. She questioned whether more of these groups are required or whether instead there is the need for what she terms “unfettered spaces” – “spaces in which professionals feel it is safe to explore, with others, their ‘inner self’ as well as their professional role” (p. 161).

That said, the construction of valuable questions to bring to these dialogues is an integral element of useful reflective practice.

**Valuable Questions**

Block (2002) tells us that ‘transformation comes more from pursuing profound questions than seeking practical answers’ (p. ii). This is not a new or foreign concept for teachers who are encouraged to create a “questioning atmosphere” in their classrooms where questions are rich and “fertile” and thus have the capacity to stimulate and motivate (Harpaz & Lefstein, 2000, p. 55). Such questions may be open-ended, perhaps questioning the status quo, directly connected and relevant to the learner, or perhaps charged with an ethical dimension. This quality of questioning is creative and promotes spirited dialogue, controversy and collaboration. However when teachers are in conversation with other teachers, particularly in a professional capacity, there is often a sparseness of rich questioning and instead a tendency for questions to become closed, to seek solution quickly, and to problem solve towards a speedy outcome (Block, 2002; York-Barr et al., 2006).

Block refers to this as the “how to do something” question and suggests that this “expresses our bias for what is practical, concrete, and immediately useful, often at the expense of our values and idealism” (p. 13). These ‘how’ questions are not useful at the beginning of a reflective dialogue. As teachers immerse themselves in critically reflective conversations surrounding the central question of “Who is the self that teaches? (Palmer, 2007a, p. 4) a question such as: How much will it cost? becomes instead, “What is the price I am willing to pay?” Instead of How long will it take? they may consider the person-centred alternative,
“What commitment am I willing to make?” (Block, 2002, p. 29) Block suggests that good questions are not projects to be completed, but opportunities for deeper truths to be revealed.

The reflective conversation which includes rich, broad and deep questions to consider is thus a key component of effective and useful reflective practice. As Senge et al (1994) and others (e.g., Colins & Chippendale, 1995) remind us, these dialogues are underpinned by participants’ beliefs and assumptions about the world, the outer manifestation of their personal values, which are often unconscious motivators (Nanschild & Davis, 2007). As will be discussed below, identifying and living aligned to one’s core values is a central component of reconnecting “who you are with what you do” (Palmer, 2007b, p.144) and therefore another key element of teacher renewal.

2.7. Values Alignment and Teacher Renewal

Disconnection from that which is personally and professionally important to teachers is one of the key indicators of disillusionment and possible burnout (Carotta, 1999). Conversely, reclaiming “a sense of integrity or congruence between core values and practice” (Gardner, 2009, p. 180) is a fundamental component of re-engagement and renewal. Intrator and Kunzman (2006b) see this as vital:

Renewal is a word that has many connotations. Though a common definition—filling again by supplying what has been used up—may seem apt in this context, this notion of refilling misses a central point. What teachers need is not simply a refill of energy and vigor, but careful exploration of the question: How should I allocate my energy in ways that are consistent with the deepest values I have about myself as a teacher and a person? (p. 21)

Defining and aligning to one’s personal core values is a central component to the process of professional renewal. Nieto (2009) considers teachers’ values to be at the forefront of professional engagement. Whitehead (2000) asks: ‘How do I live my values more fully in my [teaching] practice?’(p. 100) and Block (2002) tells us that when we reconnect with our centre, “we expect our values to be embodied in all that we do” (p. 90).

Hall (1994) defines ‘values’ as: “the ideals that give significance to our lives, that are reflected through the priorities that we choose, and that we act on consistently and repeatedly” (p. 21). That said, the term “values” is often used to describe desirable ideals as seen by others (Mergler, 2008) and the subsequent value choices as a determining factor of good character (Lovat, 2006; Lumpkin, 2008; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Toomey, 2006). Indeed Rohan (2000) has noted the marked inconsistency with definition in values theory and
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research. Observing the Australian research emphasis above of teaching values to students (Lovat, Toomey, Clement, Crotty, & Nielsen, 2009), it is important in the context of this study’s definition to distinguish between values and the more morally weighted virtues. Rather than being synonymous, Hall views virtues or morals as a subset of values. Aligning with Hall, Australian researchers such as Feather (1995), Nanschild and Davis (2007) and Colins and Chippendale (1995) concur that ‘the critical factor in the transformation of people and organizations is their values’ (Hall, 1994, p. 21). Rokeach (1973) demonstrated the significance of priority in the value structure and the importance of personal choice, and this seminal research and values survey design has influenced later values measurement models (Chippendale, 1988; Hall, 1987/2000; Schwartz, 1992, 1996).

That values provide motivation was demonstrated in a study by Lydon (1996) who found that there was a high level of commitment to projects, goals or decisions when these were strongly affirmed by the personal core values of participants. Moreover, this commitment “prompted persistence with a goal or project under adversity” (p. 204). So too Johnson (2002) noted the centrality of values as connected to behaviour, their strong motivational component and the way they apply broadly across specific objects and situations. Consciously connecting to and aligning deeply held values with their work in schools may support teachers in today’s classrooms in answering: “How does your work reflect what’s most important to you in life?”(Henderson, 2003, p. 158)

The proposition that values play a fundamental role in the success or otherwise of both corporate and educational learning organizations, has been widely explored (e.g., Argyris & Schön, 1998; Schechter, Sykes, & Rosenfeld, 2004). Uncovering and declaring the core values of organisations is now a widely held business practice (see Fitzpatrick, 2007) but less frequently are the individual values of employees elicited and highlighted (Gardiner, 2008), and as Nanschild and Davis (2007) note:

Whilst shared mutual values can lead to harmony, understanding and shared vision; a clash in values can and does cause conflict between people. Indeed the clashing of values is often the root cause of failed change management initiatives. (p. 138)

Schools as organizations may be run in ways that are contrary to the deeply held values of individual teachers. In a workplace where often “the focus is on efficiency and outcome focused practice rather than on professional values combined with flexibility and creativity” (Gardner, 2009, p. 180) a tension can be created between how teachers want to proceed in
alignment with their core values and what their school expects of them in terms of accountability and results. A notable exception was described by Scalfino (2005) in an initiative by a South Australian school undergoing whole school change through engaging with the values of the school community. Using the Hall-Tonna Values Inventory (Hall, Harari, Ledig & Tondow, 1986) – from which evolved the values measurement tool used in the study reported on in this thesis – the school first surveyed the values of the staff, senior students in the school and other key members of the school community. Alert to the tension described by Gardner, Scalfino reflected on the importance of identifying complementary and conflicting values which revealed different viewpoints in a variety of areas. This values identification process opened up a wide range of dialogues about education, teaching, learning pedagogies and disposition to work. This provided pertinent data that would support the resolution of several major ethical dilemmas. Scalfino’s (2005) process for school change is uncommon but welcome, as Trelfa (2005) observed that identifying one’s core values creates a solid place to stand and manage the current nature of one’s organization more effectively.

Eliciting core values, and the assumptions that exist alongside (Argyris & Schön, 1998; Senge et al, 1994) that consciously and unconsciously govern behaviour, and holding them up for scrutiny with an openness to shifts in perception, is a process integral to critical reflective practice.

2.7.1 The Exploration of Values within Reflective Practice

Both Whitehead (2000) and Ghaye (2000) place importance on the exploration of values as central to reflective practice. Within his own reflective practice, Whitehead contemplates ways of “representing the influence of [his] spiritual, aesthetic and ethical values” in his professional capacity as teacher and colleague (p. 100), while Ghaye highlights the centrality of values in the reflective conversation:

A distinguishing feature of a [reflective] conversation is its focus upon questioning and exploration of the values that we are committed to and try to live out in our work. This is not easy as most of us have difficulties articulating our values and trying to put our values into practice. (p. 8)

In another Australian qualitative study (Gardner, 2009), critical reflection was used to rigorously explore the professional practice of ten staff from a child welfare agency, where there was “a prevailing sense of powerlessness and hopelessness” (p. 183). By uncovering and articulating core values of staff during a series of workshops it became apparent that
Chapter 2: Literature Review

there was “a sense of disconnection between their preferred but unarticulated values and their values in action” (p. 187) and a resulting clarity about what mattered to them. Through a change of practice there was a noticeable congruence between values and behaviours. Of important note for this current study about teachers, by reconnecting with their deeply held ideals and values, the child welfare agency staff were reminded of the motivations behind choosing their profession. They found identifying their values an empowering experience and professionally sustaining if they were kept in view. Thus, critical reflection played a vital role in helping participants to reconnect with a sense of what mattered, creating a powerful link between their articulation of core values and a reminder of vocational purpose.

2.7.2 The Relationship between Values and Purpose

As noted earlier, Thompson (2000) asserted that meaningful work has the capacity to “be an outlet for our deepest values” (p. 331). Conversely, with a disconnection from purpose through job restructuring or simply climbing the career ladder, Peppers and Briskin (2000) note that this often takes people to “a place absent of your values” (p. 116) while Loehr and Schwartz (2003) underscore the energetic association that a connection with values and purpose has to a sense of full engagement. If any one of these sources of energy is neglected, "our capacity to ignite our talent and skill is diminished" (p. 10).

Heifetz (1994) takes the role of a teacher’s values in sustaining vocational purpose one important step further. He acknowledges the challenges that a vocationally driven teacher has in a swiftly changing and demanding profession, but distinguishes between problems that require technical solutions and ones that require adaptive work. Carotta (1999) agrees, giving examples of adaptive challenges: Superhuman Expectations, Apathy, Complex Issues and Complex Times, and Mediocrity. These challenges requiring adaptive responses involve reconnecting with what is really important – what one values – and developing practices for bringing those values into daily reality. “Practices are a mirror of things that are valued in life, and in fact, when they are enacted, they become life giving and allow individuals not only to survive but also flourish” (p. 51).

Rediscovering a sense of meaning allows a reconnection with anticipation and dreams about future possibilities. Peppers and Briskin (2000) combine values and purpose with hope, “Our hopes represent the deepest, most important parts of ourselves. Imbedded with our values, they offer the key towards purposeful living” (p. 117). For Intrator and Kunzman (2006b), this conscious realignment of hopes, values and purpose is a return to authenticity. This, they tell us is at the heart of teacher renewal.
This review of the literature relating to conditions supportive of teacher renewal has included the importance of a welcoming space where reflection is valued, inviting materials, questions and themes with which to guide the conversations, and time to reflect where there is no specific problem to solve. It will now turn its attention to specific environments that have been created for teacher renewal.

2.8. Environments for teacher renewal through reflective practice

2.8.1 Structured programs

In recent years, a surge of studies have addressed the role structured reflective practice programs have played, specifically in the support of teacher renewal (Carotta, 1999; Coward, 2003; McMahon, 2003; Poutiatine, 2005; Pressley, 1992; Simone, 2004; Whitlock, 2003).

Coward (2003) examined a professional development model that was created to renew (and retain) quality teachers, the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT). This analysis revealed a cycle of teacher renewal: Leaving the known resulting in Disequilibrium; Entering the retreat-based centre, which requires Trust; Being treated with Respect; Learning in a different way which reignites a Love of Learning; Thinking in a different way, leading to Transformation; and returning to work with Renewed Commitment. Findings included that the programming led to deep introspection on teaching practice and an increase in teachers’ vocational reconnection and satisfaction.

The “Courage to Teach” program

Inspired by the works of Parker Palmer (e.g., 2000, 2004, 2007a) the US based “Courage to Teach” (CTT) retreats focus on what Palmer calls “teacher formation”. Different to teacher training, “formation is a concept from the spiritual traditions and it involves a concern for personal wholeness … formation offers the person help in discerning his or her identity and integrity” (Palmer, 1992, cited in Simone, 2004, p. 35). Based on the premise that teaching is a challenging profession Palmer asks teachers to “enter, not evade, the tangles of teaching” (2007a, p. 2). That the curriculum is large and cumbersome and that students are unique and complex are commonplace understandings. The third “tangle” is the acknowledgement that “we teach who we are” and as Palmer describes it: “The entanglements I experience in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life. Viewed from this angle, teaching holds a mirror to the soul” (p. 3).

Many studies (Intrator, 2002; Intrator & Scribner, 1998, 2002; McMahon, 2003; Nollet, 2009; Poutiatine, 2003, 2005; Simone, 2004; Smith, 2007) have researched the effects that the extended retreat experiences have on teachers’ feelings of personal agency and vocational
engagement. In one such evaluative report (Smith, 2007), the most popular reason given by participants for attending these retreats was Personal Development, closely followed by Professional Development, Exploring Vocational Questions and To Experience a Circle of Trust. Key common findings among the evaluative studies included feelings of personal reconnection to self and professional re-engagement, albeit at different levels and for different reasons (Intrator & Scribner, 1998; Poutiatine, 2005; Smith, 2007) as is articulated below:

The quality of my work and life has advanced significantly each time I complete a retreat. It is as if I identify a key piece of who I am.

(Participant response from Smith, 2007)

In 2012, a pilot Australian Facilitator Preparation Program (FPP) for CTT retreats was launched, to run over a two year period with just twelve participants Australia wide. These sparse numbers means the program is yet to reach a significant number of teachers. Currently there is only one Australian CTT facilitator who organises a small number of open weekend retreats in Canberra, while most of the other CTT retreat opportunities provided are requested by specific workplaces, schools, universities and churches (Smith, written correspondence, 2009; 2011).

While a retreat centre appears an ideal solution, time and money constraints make this possibility not always practical. Anglea (2009) explored the concept of a book study group where participants met monthly to share conversation about insights from the chapters in Palmer’s (2007a) The Courage to Teach, taking discussion questions from the accompanying guidebook (Palmer, 2007b). Findings were similar to those of the full retreat programs, suggesting the need for schools to allow a teacher time to reflect on and dialogue about vocational purpose and classroom practices with colleagues as a form of professional development. Another study (Nollett, 2009) concluded with a recommendation to use critical reflection as the focus of teachers’ professional development design through CTT or similar models as it “meets the needs of teachers at every stage of their career” (p. 144). Concerns about sustaining the sense of renewal gained from a retreat have also been raised. In her case study research of the CTT program, Simone (2004) found that teachers had minimal success integrating their increased sense of personal agency and optimism into the rigid, unforgiving structures of their school systems.

2.9. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a theoretical framework for this study, reviewing
literature that explored the desire to teach as a reflection of purpose or vocation, the hidden costs of teaching which can result in disillusionment, possible burnout and a disconnection with purpose. The review of the literature revealed that engaging in a form of reflective practice, specifically rich, reflective conversations, with a focus on core values where these values are realigned with purposeful intent, can provide a process whereby teachers experience renewal and a sense of connectedness with what is meaningful to them as teachers and as humans. Environments that support such programs were also explored.

### 2.9.1 Program Rationale – Investigating Teacher Renewal

Taking into account elements from the literature that appeared to support teacher renewal including recent evaluations of the *Courage to Teach* retreat-based program (e.g., Nollet, 2009; Poutiatine, 2005; Simone, 2004; Smith, 2007, 2012), it appeared that there was a need for research on the impact of such programs which included some modifying elements. Recognising the limitations mentioned of the retreat experience (Simone, 2004), I wished to investigate whether a program with the aspects highlighted in the literature leads to sustained renewal. The above research suggested that a series of workshops in an invitational environment spaced over a period of time, a focus on the articulation of and discussion about personal core values, with close attention paid to the focus of the questions within a critically reflective conversation may be more effective. Consequently, the present study provided a program for a small group of teachers who were experiencing some sense of professional disillusionment and evaluated the impacts. In accordance with Schaufeli et al (2002), the more reactive question of ‘How do we prevent burnout?’ was resisted in the program design and instead the question was “reframed” (Schön, 1983) to consider how engagement might be promoted, adopting Covey’s (1989) four broad areas for renewal: physical, mental, social/emotional, and spiritual.

This program incorporated *A Values Inventory* (AVI, Chippendale, 1988b) within the design as a tool for eliciting participants’ core values, thus both acknowledging the importance of exploring one’s values as well as recognising the difficulty in their articulation, as noted by Ghaye (2000). The program emphasis was a focus on how teachers’ prioritised values were manifested rather than the values themselves. While being mindful of research advocating preference for certain values over others, specifically in regard to values education in schools (Lovat et al., 2009; Lumpkin, 2008; Mergler, 2008; Nielson, 2005; Shaw, 2007) this definition of values has more in common with ethics (Seligman, 2011) and as such, was beyond the frame of reference for this study’s attention.
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Attention was also paid to what constitutes effective and useful reflective practice and key principles of critical reflection, transformative learning and reflective poetic inquiry were utilised in the workshop structure.

Thus, this study sought to investigate the impact of a group exploration of personal core values and purpose, as a form of reflective practice, on a teacher’s sense of professional renewal and the implications of such a program for teacher renewal.

The next chapter of the thesis outlines the methodology and methods employed to address the questions posed in this study.
Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1. Introduction
The aim of this research was to focus on the inner lives of teachers and to explore the impact on participants’ sense of professional renewal after completing a series of reflective group conversations. Close attention was to be given to “the self that teaches” (Palmer, 2007a, p. 4), their values and perceived deeper purpose as educators. The research questions this study sought to answer were:

1. What is the impact of a group exploration of personal core values and purpose – as a form of reflective practice – on a teacher’s sense of professional renewal?

2. What are the implications of such a program for teacher renewal?

This chapter reviews the research approach employed in the study, a description of and rationale for the chosen research methodology, an explanation of the selection of participants, the methods of data collection and data analysis, the timeline for the study, an explanation of the researcher’s role throughout the study, and issues of trustworthiness and rigour. A discussion of the limitations and ethical concerns are also presented.

3.2. Methodology
This study is located within a qualitative paradigm, noting that choosing between a quantitative or qualitative research approach depends on the purpose behind the question to be investigated (Patton, 2002). Kervin et al (2006) describe the underlying principles of the two research designs in simple terms: the purpose of quantitative research is “to study relationships, cause and effect” and the purpose behind a qualitative approach is “to understand social phenomena” (p. 35). My research intended to explore the possibilities for professional renewal looking through a focused conversational lens. I had no hypotheses to be tested and I was unlikely to produce quantifiable outcomes, much less show a causal relationship between variables (Patton, 2002). Importantly, my research questions focused on the meanings my participants had constructed and how they made sense of their world. As such, qualitative research was the most suitable paradigm within which to locate my study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) as this domain – “a site of multiple methodologies and research practices” (p. 3) – has the ability to yield rich contextual data.

Because qualitative research can be seen to lack rigid procedures, its design is emergent (Creswell, 2007), able to be re-styled and re-shaped to suit the phenomenon it attempts to
Chapter 3: Research Design

study. Janesick (2000) compares qualitative research design with dance choreography in that there will be some “fixed movements”, particularly at the beginning of the study, while leaving room for improvisation, in order “to find out more about some critical event or moment in the lives of the participants” (p. 382). My “fixed movements” were represented by the basic structure and number of the reflective workshops and use of A Values Inventory (AVI) (Chippendale, 1988b) as a key research instrument. Also predetermined were some of the renewal issues covered in the Courage to Teach program (Palmer, 2007b), having been identified at the outset as topics that the conversations would include. Improvisation occurred throughout the workshop series after the renewal desires of the participants had been stated, their particular learning styles became more apparent and as the conversations moved swiftly through some terrain and lingered and deepened in others.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) tell us that “all research is interpretative; it is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied” (p. 19). Each researcher’s interpretative framework contains philosophical assumptions of: ontology (the nature of reality); epistemology (how that reality is known); axiology (the role of values); rhetoric (the language of the research) and methodology (the process of research) (Creswell, 2007, p17). I will address each of these assumptions in relation to the current study.

From an ontological perspective, I approached my research from within a constructivist paradigm that does not support the notion of an objective truth or reality, but rather from a core principle that people see their world through a set of lenses or filters derived from past experiences, beliefs, expectations, assumptions and a myriad of other variables that make up a person’s “reality” (e.g., Senge et al., 1994; Larrivee, 2000, Mezirow, 1991).

Creswell (2007) tells us that, regarding epistemology, the qualitative researcher tries “to get as close as possible to the participants being studied” (p. 18). As a researcher, I was closely involved with the participants at all stages of the formal research component, as facilitator within the workshop conversations and through email contact during the months of the workshop series, closing the gap between myself and those I had recruited for the study.

“Qualitative researchers like to make explicit [the] values” of the study (Creswell, 2007, p. 18) and this research axiology was both explicit and multi-layered. The roles of the participants’ values were central to the study itself. My own values were also shared with the participants and were integral to all stages of the research.
Creswell (2007) also states that “qualitative researchers tend to embrace the rhetorical assumption that the writing needs to be personal and literary in form” (p. 18). The language of this research was greatly influenced by story, including the personal story I brought with me to this research, the teaching stories of the participants themselves and the bigger narrative that emerged about the workshops themselves. The decision to use the story telling data collection technique of Most Significant Change (MSC, Davies & Dart, 2005) also highlighted the focus on personal narrative.

Like the procedures of other qualitative research, the methodology was inductive in nature. The direction of the research was guided initially by the research questions and the improvisational nature of the research design ‘choreography’ (Janesick, 2000) developed as the content of the workshops revealed new information. The data emerging from the workshops evoked a new research question in the middle of the study – What are the implications of such a program for teacher renewal? – as patterns and themes surfaced during analysis of the conversations.

Supported by Lincoln and Guba (2000), I sought evidence of trustworthiness and rigour, not from absolutes, but rather from “community consensus regarding what is … useful, and what has meaning, especially meaning for action and further steps” (p. 167, my emphasis). My commitment to a constructivist approach of inquiry, my desire to conduct research with rather than on my participants (Reason & Bradbury, 2001) and the possibility that my research design may support conditions for “mutual transformation” (Reason & Torbert, 2001, p. 15) underpinned the choice of Action Research as the appropriate method for the study.

3.3. Method

3.3.1 Action Research

Action Research as a method for qualitative research is effectively used when the research “addresses a specific, practical issue and seeks to obtain solutions to a problem” (Creswell, 2008, p. 597). Kurt Lewin, who coined the term ‘action research in the 1940s, directed research towards various social conditions, the findings of which would lead to action for change (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Lewin’s method is described by Kemmis and McTaggart as a series of spiralling steps: ‘planning, action and the evaluation of that action’ leading to a new action (p. 8). This cyclical process is the guiding feature of Action Research. Versions of this model have been developed particularly for educational researchers by Kemmis (with McTaggart, 1988), Elliott (with Adelman, 1973) Ebbutt (in Burgess, 1985) and by Whitehead and Lomax (1987). The nature of these steps has evolved along a more
Chapter 3: Research Design

pliable, developmental path to support changing dynamics within the research, sometimes
with interlinking spirals to represent different foci that have arisen during the life of the
project (McNiff, 1988).

From those formative stages, action research has been used by numerous researchers in
diverse ways as part of: action science (Argyris & Schön, 1978), action inquiry (Torbert,
1991), cooperative inquiry (Reason & Heron, 1986), participatory action research or PAR
(Owen & Rogers, 1999), feminist studies (Maguire, 1987; Marshall, 1995), living theory
(Whitehead & McNiff, 2006), and teaching as learning (McNiff, 1993) being some examples.
A detailed and useful depiction of the fluidity of action research across theories and
disciplines has been explored by Reason and Bradbury (2001) and the more recent themes
and trends have been well documented by Dick (2004, 2006, 2009).

What has emerged is a method that has a shape-shifting quality or an “umbrella term” as
Bradbury Huang (2010) describes it that “represents a ‘family’ of practices” (p. 94). If this is
the case, what then identifies action research from other forms of qualitative inquiry? The
description (also used by Chandler and Torbert, 2003) that sits most comfortably with this
research both philosophically and methodologically is that of Reason and Bradbury (2001):

Action research … seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and
practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to
issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of
individual persons and their communities. (p. 1)

My reasons for use of the action research model as my approach were four-fold. First, my
research “problem” was specific: teacher disillusionment and subsequent disengagement, and
I was seeking possible solutions. Second was the reflective nature already inherent within
action research. As reflective practice was a central component of the study, to choose a
method with reflection built into its design made instinctive sense. Third was the more
intuitive response borne of my coaching work with clients exploring life choices and
directions. The coaching paradigm is built around thought moving unequivocally into action.
Shifting negative belief patterns, changing habits that do not serve, creating new lines of
business, all require new ideas or uncovered important truths to be operationalized by taking
some kind of concrete step, however small. Good ideas that reside only in the head (or on the
page) remain just that. Bradbury Huang (2010) asks her doctoral students: “What difference
would you have your work make? [Or more explicitly:] Where is the action in your
research?” (p. 107) In this way, action research reflects Janesick’s (2000) notion of
improvisational steps of experimentation emanating from initial fixed positions of belief or habit.

My fourth reason was related to action research as a method to support social change (Greenwood & Levin, 1998). While aiming to contribute in a worthwhile way to the body of knowledge that has already been accumulated about teacher renewal, I also wanted my research, albeit in a small way, to make a difference to the participants. Already argued for by Reason and Torbert (2001a), I chose action research in order to create a clearer connection between theory and practice, “so that inquiry contributes directly to the flourishing of human persons, their communities and the ecosystems of which they are part” (p. 6). Like Chandler and Torbert (2003) I did not want the action and the research to feel disconnected, instead, I wanted to “bring scholarship to life” (Reason & Torbert, 2001a, p. 7). This decision is underscored by Taylor (2007) who commented on the basic compatibility of action research with transformative learning theory, which informed the workshops’ design: “They share similar assumptions and outcomes about teaching for change, such as a participatory approach, the emphasis on dialogue, the essentiality of a reflective process in learning and the need for action” (p. 188). As Mezirow (2012) has most recently confirmed, “Transformative learning involves participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to assess reasons justifying these assumptions, and making an action decision based on the resulting insight” (p. 76).

Bradbury Huang (2010) has supervised students who were immersed deeply in the action process itself and who consequently received her other key question: “Where is the research in your action?” (p. 107). The question itself aims perhaps to ward off certain philosophical and methodological criticism that has been directed at action research, particularly from those in the scientific community (as debated extensively by Greenwood, 2002 and Gustavsen, 2003, and subsequently discussed by Dick, Eikeland, Levin, Reason and Shotter in Concepts and Transformation, 2003). Some of these critics argue that it is an applied method largely used by practitioners in the field, as compared with university-based academics, and consequently has a dubious relationship with robust theory (Reason & Torbert, 2001a). Pointing to the small scale structure of most action research, it has also been proposed that action research cannot claim generalizability and therefore has little to contribute to scientific research or academic discourse (Levin, 2003). Accordingly it has been dismissed as “‘storytelling,’ consulting, or as soft politics” (Greenwood, 2004, p. 86). However, this study uses story-telling as a tool for transformative learning, and explores the depth and breadth – or
rich, thick description (Geertz, 1983) – that may be possible through limiting the study to a small number of participants.

Feldman (1999) takes this one significant step further and argues that “collaborative conversations which are long and serious oral inquiry processes, are in themselves a form of action research … [if] they are systematic, critical and [made] public” (p. 142). At the heart of this teacher renewal study was a series of involved and complex conversations, recorded and transcribed: rich “sensemaking” interactions with the participants, not distanced research about them (Reason & Torbert, 2001a, p. 10).

In accordance with Reason and Torbert (2001a) who argue that good research is linked with vision, action and “fruitfulness of outcomes” (p. 16), the findings from this action research based study (which will be discussed in Chapter Five) will look at the subject of teacher renewal through a new enabling lens.

### 3.3.2 Participants

In accordance with Patton’s (1990) contention that “qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples … selected purposefully” (p. 169), it was decided to use a small group of participants. This sampling strategy was largely determined by the main method of data collection, namely, audio-taped conversations in six ninety-minute sessions. Previous experience in running group workshops of ninety minutes had demonstrated the importance of time space to give group members sufficient capacity to speak. As these conversations would represent vital data for the research, adequate time for everyone to have equal access to the conversation was therefore a key criterion.

As this research was of a pilot program, purposeful sampling of the participants was important to reflect potential “information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study” (Patton, 2002, p. 230). Consequently, the teachers targeted for recruitment were an homogenous sample group who:

- had been in the profession for at least ten years (31-60 years of age)
- had reflected sometimes, in the course of busy and challenging careers, as to whether they made the right decision to be a teacher.

In the first instance, an additional criterion had been added: that interested participants were currently working in a public school in Victoria. This restriction was removed to allow for a wider range of participant response, acknowledging time constraints on teachers who considered participating.
3.3.3 Recruitment

Recruitment of research participants took place between May and August in 2010. All efforts were made to draw participants from a wide pool. The research was advertised through a Life Coaching newsletter and within the university and school networks, (see Appendix A for recruitment advertisement), resulting in three participants able to commit to all the scheduled sessions as described in the Plain Language Statement (Appendix B).

Table 1 summarises the case-study teacher demographic information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Year level</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Years teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7-12 Northern suburbs*</td>
<td>Art/Visual Communications Year 8 Coordinator</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecilia</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>7-12 Northern Suburbs*</td>
<td>Psychology/English</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqui</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>International students enrolled at an Inner City College</td>
<td>DEGREE: Secondary Art/SOSE CURRENT: English and Vocational training</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Amy and Cecilia teach at the same school

The outcome of this recruitment appropriately reflected the nature of action research, which has the capacity to mould and shape-shift design generally and research focus specifically. The participants were three similarly aged female teachers approaching the end of their formal teaching career, with the capacity to be “information-rich cases” (Patton, 1990, p. 169).

3.3.4 Selection of Site

The purpose of the study was to capture the reflections of teachers on issues of disillusionment and disconnection, together with possibilities for renewal. When choosing a site from which to run the workshops, a key criterion was an inviting and nurturing environment (Isaacs, 1999; Palmer, 2007b). This was a condition that Palmer had described as central to his centre’s three-day renewal retreats and had consequently advised for groups running their own series of conversations when using *The Courage to Teach* (CTT) program. Palmer’s premise was that space was central to the process, defining space in physical,
intellectual, emotional as well as spiritual terms. Preferable was the idea of someone’s home where “the quality of conversation may deepen considerably” (p. 11).

The Auriole Fraser library at the University of Melbourne was the final choice (see Figure 1, below). A small, intimate room, it was separate from the more institutional and academic energy of the university. With a table, comfortable chairs, a grandfather clock, a few cabinets with artefacts from the old teachers’ college, cabinets of books and photos around the walls, it seemed to provide a suitable “container” (Isaacs, 1999, p. 242) that would invite deep conversation.

![Figure 1: Interior of the Auriole Fraser Library](image)

### 3.3.5 Situating Myself in the Research

Rather than being an “unobtrusive researcher” (Kellehear, 1993) or even an obvious, though silent observer in this study, I had not only placed myself directly within the research experience as facilitator, but also recognized that there was a decidedly heuristic component in my participation. Through this inquiry about values and purpose and how it relates to teacher renewal, I had embarked on my own personal journey of dialogue and discovery. At the beginning of the workshop series I was thus firmly within the first phase of heuristic research – initial engagement – when the researcher discovers “an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher, one that holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27). Such involvement in research makes objectivity futile, though Fine (1994) cautions us against distancing ourselves from “Others” in our quest for “scientific neutrality, universal truths and researcher dispassion” (p. 71). So too, Richardson (1997) reminds us that “we are always present in our texts, no matter how we try to suppress ourselves” and consequently wonders, “How then do we write ourselves into our texts with intellectual and spiritual integrity?” (p. 2) I have duly
recognised two aspects of myself within this study: Workshop Facilitator and Researcher, both taking part in the workshop process alongside the other three participants.

Viewing the research through the different lenses of these two roles gave me different “angles of repose” from which to view my data (Richardson, 1997, p. 92). It gave layered context to my recorded reflections, acknowledging different areas of discoveries or new insight. In later discussion of results, (see Chapter Five) these two roles are included in interpretation, with attention given to implications for future research.

3.3.6 The Program

The program, titled This Teaching Life of Mine, was a series of workshops that took place over a period of twelve weeks in the second half of the school year, with each workshop usually positioned a fortnight apart, the sixth and final workshop occurring towards the end of November. For each ninety minute session we met in the Auriole Fraser library, beginning at 5.30pm.

Each week had a specific focus, elements of process and mediating tools that drove the dialogue and reflection (Wertsch, 1998).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Program at a Glance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEEK ONE: Exploring the person that teaches, past and present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK TWO: Introduction to Values and the roles they play in our lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK THREE: Interpreting the Values data generated from the AVI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK FOUR: Focus determined by participants’ specific renewal needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK FIVE: Drafting Purpose statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK SIX: Participants’ Stories of Most Significant Change and closing reflections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 (p. 40) shows an example of one of these sessions, showing the tools, the foci and the process elements. (See Appendix C: for complete program).
### Table 2: Foci, elements of process and dialogue tools for Workshop One

**BEGINNING QUOTE:**
*Getting into the reflective mode sets off ripples and the extent of these cannot always be foreseen.*  
(Ghaye, 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediating Tools that drove the dialogue (Wertsch, 1998)</th>
<th>Key focus</th>
<th>Process elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four key areas of renewal cards</td>
<td>Clarity of intention: Why are you here? What renewal (if any) are you seeking?</td>
<td>“Position yourself within or across the quadrants”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First entry in Workshop Journals</td>
<td>Deciding on the outcome sought by each participant</td>
<td>Writing an intention for the end of the workshops: “It is the 24th November, the day after the completion of the Teacher Renewal Workshops and I feel …”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘People on the Tree’ Picture</td>
<td>Reflection tool</td>
<td>Which person best represents how you were feeling at work today? This term? This year? Which person best reflects you in terms of where you are in your career?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions about teaching history, choices made</td>
<td>Bringing ‘the self’ that teaches into the forefront of the conversation</td>
<td>“What within you was evoked by this field? Its values, its methods, the way it names and frames reality? What does the nature of this field reveal about who you are?” (selected from Palmer, 2007b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Thread</td>
<td>A metaphor for describing beliefs, passions, values, goals that tie together and unite a teacher’s practice over time and contexts (Ritchhart, 2002)</td>
<td>What is your Red Thread? Your students generally know what it is, it is often revealed in what you say over and over again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Reflective Journaling sheet                           | Guided reflection between workshops | General guidance for each week:  
- Insights into my life that have come to me as a result of this workshop  
- Connect/Extend/Challenge (Project Zero, Harvard University)  
Some additional questions included:  
- What do you stand for as a teacher?  
- In relation to your work, what are you most passionate about?  
- To what extent are your passions integral to who you are, such that you would feel diminished of you were unable to express them? (selected from Palmer, 2007b) |
3.4. Data Collection

In a qualitative study of this kind, that sought to shine a light on aspects of a teacher’s inner self, it was particularly important to collect data from a variety of sources. Each data source could then be used as another descriptive picture of a participant’s internal reality, pieced together with others to create a collage of meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). As Denzin and Lincoln note, this process of placing different images of reality together “creates and brings psychological and emotional unity to an interpretive experience (p. 7). Multiple sources of data also help support internal validation of the study (Patton, 2002). During the course of the workshops, my data collection techniques were:

- A Values Inventory (AVI, Chippendale, 1988a, 1988b, see Appendices D and E)
- Conversational Interactions (see Appendix F)
- Reflective Journals including responses to questions from Reflection Sheets (see Appendices G and H)
- Researcher’s Field Notes and Reflective Journal (see Appendix H)
- Most Significant Change Stories (see Appendix I)
- Follow up Interviews (see Appendices J and K)

3.4.1 A Values Inventory (AVI)

The AVI was created in 1988 by Paul Chippendale, a pioneer in organizational change through values technology. He obtained the rights to the Hall-Tonna Inventory of Values (Hall et al., 1986), which highlights foundation, focus and vision value clusters, pointing to where an individual may focus much of their interest and energy at any given time. Chippendale developed and refined the mechanism of analysis and the report format to suit the Australian culture. The instrument became known as A Values Inventory (AVI) which identifies 128 values, comprising the fundamental values that have the potential to appear in the development and life-long growth of an individual.

The values are grouped in eight different clusters of related values: Self-Preservation, Security, Belonging, Organisation, Self-Actualisation, Emerging Order, Wisdom, and Global Transformation (See Appendix D for a full depiction of the Values Clusters framework). While the AVI presents the values in additional clusters and includes information about Energy Field, Energy Management, Brain Preference and Leadership Profile, these were not considered within the analysis of data in this study, though the entire report was made available to each participant.
Chapter 3: Research Design

The online AVI test consists of forty-eight sets of eight forced-choice value-laden statements. The person taking the test is asked to click the button to the right of the one statement that is a higher priority to them than any other statement in each set of eight.

Table 3 below shows an example from the AVI of a set of eight value-laden statements.

Table 3: Example of eight forced-choice value-laden statements from AVI

- Creating new forms of organisations so as to enhance society
- Having the sense of belonging to a family and feeling accepted by them
- Doing whatever is necessary to protect myself from harm
- Being free from anxiety through the security given by a safe place or relationship
- Having a vocation to be in service to others
- Transcending attachment to the material world to contribute to global equality
- Seeking wisdom - i.e. seeking to understand the underlying principles that govern all things
- Working hard and being productive

The first sixteen groups of 8 statements cover all 128 values. Sets 17-32 present different combinations of the same value statements again in groups of 8, and Sets 33-48 present a third combination. Sets 49 to 51 only include value statements previously chosen by the participant and the instruction is to rank them according to personal life importance. These data are then computer processed to generate each participant’s values in rank order by percentage points, 100% being the highest possible. The higher the percentage rating, the more mental energy is assumed as being devoted to that value relative to other values with a lower rank. As sole researcher, it was necessary for me to gain accreditation to both administer and interpret the AVI.

3.4.2 Conversational Interactions

The conversations within each workshop – which were audiotaped and transcribed – were central data to the study. In the period between each workshop I listened to these recordings and transcribed, if not the whole sequence of conversations, at the very least alerting myself to key moments, phrases, insights and/or stumbling blocks. These data were the main catalyst that drove my action research method. They indicated where to emphasise areas that had been neglected, directed reflection sheets towards topics for later thought and, as I became familiar
with the needs of the participants, the conversational desires highlighted in these recordings led me to include more of the poetic and less of the purely practical.

3.4.3 Reflective Journals

The focus of reflection in this study was to move beyond discussion of teaching technique and intended instead to encourage ongoing conversations about the inner landscape of the teachers’ lives with a view to re-igniting their vocational vitality. A reflective task was provided each week with the following instruction (See Appendix G for examples):

*Each week, take the time to reflect on the workshop just completed. This will allow you to record visible tracks of your thinking and how it possibly changes and evolves over the weeks.*

In addition, open-ended questions were provided such as:

- What do you stand for as a teacher?
- Does the subject you teach give you a richer view of the world and a larger sense of self? In what ways? Has that aspect of your work changed over time?

These reflection suggestions provided each session also fuelled the modification component of action research. The topics on which participants were invited to reflect altered from my original planning as the workshop series took on a particular tone or flavour. While weekly written reflection was named as a key component of the research given to all the participants (see Plain Language Statement, Appendix B), this form of data proved more difficult to collect than anticipated, as it was often put to the bottom of each busy participant’s list. This reluctance to remember to write provided another ‘action’ catalyst as I started the practice of sending them reminder emails that had an invitational tone (see Appendix C, p. 135).

3.4.4 Researcher’s Field Notes and Reflective Journal

My capacity to take notes during workshops relied upon several factors and consequently my note taking happened intermittently. While there was no issue from the participants with me writing during the sessions, it became difficult on many occasions to be present in the way many of the conversations called for. On occasions, the participants were experiencing difficult emotions and to take notes at these times could have appeared both clinical and intrusive. I therefore confined most of my writing mid-workshop to taking note of body language (as there was no video) that seemed pertinent to recall. Other writing resembled journal entries, sometimes written sitting at the table before the workshop started or the following day while the emotion of the session was still fresh. Wonderings about further
workshops happened intermittently – sometimes while transcribing one of the recorded conversations. Importantly, these notes and jottings of reflection-on-action (Schön, 1983) fuelled key action modifications in my workshop shape, often including elements I had not anticipated (See Appendix H for examples from Facilitator/Researcher’s Journal).

3.4.5 Most Significant Change Stories (MSC)

As a technique, the MSC was an appropriate and credible process for monitoring change and evaluating program impact. Davies and Dart (2005) recommend use of this technique particularly when “the programs are complex and produce diverse and emergent outcomes” (p. 12). It has also been shown to “play a pivotal role in evaluating programs with less predictable outcomes” (Dart & Davies, 2003, p. 150). As the workshop series was comparatively short and the number of participants was small, using a shorter, modified version of the MSC was a fitting technique to use at the completion of a pilot program where unexpected outcomes were likely. In the fifth session, the participants were asked to come to the final week ready to share a story of change as a consequence of attending the renewal workshops. They were invited to consider the following questions:

Looking back over the last three months, what do you think was the most significant change to emerge as a result of your involvement with the Teacher Renewal project?

Why did you choose that particular change? What was significant for you/your community?

It was emphasised that the story finally chosen to share may not be about the events of the actual workshops but may be something that happened to them at school, at home, with colleagues, with family or purely in solitude. However it was an event that they felt was connected to the workshop objective: to explore a different form of professional development, designed to nurture the hearts and spirits of teachers. Participants were given the choice of making an audiotape of the story at home which they would bring to the workshop, or alternatively to tell their story to the group on the day. All participants chose to speak directly to the group, though one participant had written out her story in full and read it aloud. The other two referred to dot points and cursory notes.

3.4.6 Follow up Interview

Follow up interviews were conducted in the final week of Term One of 2011, four months after completion of the workshops, in each instance meeting with the participants at their place of work. As the main research question was concerned with the impact that this form of
intervention has on a teacher’s sense of professional renewal, it was important to the study to examine the endurance of the insights and feelings of renewal (if any) gained by each participant. A copy of the interview questions are in Appendix J.

3.5. Data Analysis

3.5.1 Audio and Written Data Sources

Unlike quantitative data which is collected first, the data collection and analysis in qualitative research are simultaneous activities (Creswell, 2008). Accordingly, data analysis occurred throughout the course of this study. This was fundamental to the action research method, as new steps were planned and implemented as a consequence of the data collected from each session (Bradbury Huang, 2010). The resulting modified actions within the research were then interpreted through another set of data and the action research cycle began again. Acknowledging this evolving nature of action research, I chose a process of inductive analysis and creative synthesis, thereby also noting the heuristic component (Moustakas, 1990).

Initial analysis began by re-listening to the audio recordings after each session and partially or fully transcribing between workshops. This allowed me to begin finding themes and then later pinpointing signs of emerging engagement and renewal. I used hand analysis of the data (Creswell, 2008). I wanted to maintain a hands-on feel and by transcribing the data myself and then reading, marking it by hand and dividing it into parts, it gave me a “far more intimate knowledge of [my] own data” (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010, p. 161). I colour coded sentences that represented themes I was seeing, yellow being the colour for signs of renewal and/or re-engagement. I used blue to indicate where examples of reflection-in-action (action research) had taken place. Table 4 (p. 46) illustrates the use of colour coding within the transcripts.
Table 4: Examples of Colour Coding for Main Impact and Reflection-in-Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>“Coming Home to Self”</th>
<th>Week / Page No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMY</td>
<td>This (pause) makes me feel excited... Because I can see, these foundation values, I spend my whole life in these foundation ones and these focus ones are actually where I want to be... Everything I’ve said today is in there (pointing at Focus)</td>
<td>3/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACQUI</td>
<td>As a teacher, mentor or coach I’ve got something to offer. (Reading the points from the nine signposts sheet) I’ve got an understanding of how I’ve not been showing up fully in the world by not acknowledging and enacting and realizing my own creative potential</td>
<td>6 / 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reflection-in Action**

JULIA: Yes, very beautiful ... and that’s just what you were saying. I just thought that’s the poem for you today.

C: It’s the poem for all of us today ... It’s interesting that you use the poem at this point in the process...Was that deliberate?

JULIA: No, I had three.

C: Oh! Did you?

JULIA: I had three and I didn’t know if I was going to read any of them but I thought that’s it, that’s the poem for now.

Over the weeks and months following the final stage of data collection I listened and re-listened to the audios many times, re-read the transcripts and journal entries, went back over my own notes and immersed myself in *A Values Inventory* (AVI) data, uncovering links between the situations described in participants’ conversations and the values to which they aspired. In this way, the knowledge was “incubating over months through process of immersion, illumination of the phenomenon being investigated” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 52). I was attempting to become “the researcher as scientist-artist” to whom Moustakas refers, developing “an aesthetic rendition of the themes and essential meanings of the phenomenon” (p. 52).

### 3.5.2 Data from the AVI

Analysis of data from participants’ values inventory results was mostly confined to a focus on each participant’s top ten values and how they were distributed between the three groups: foundation, focus and vision in accordance with the following explanation from the AVI report:
Of particular note therefore were values scoring high percentages which were located in foundation values. These represented a form of ‘Achilles heel’ for the participant, calling attention away from the day to day satisfaction derived from actualising focus values. (An example is detailed in Teacher Renewal Story Two, see pp. 64-65). These data were correlated with written and audio data, both to substantiate what had already surfaced and to contribute further to the emerging narratives of disconnection and renewal.

3.6. Trustworthiness and Rigour

Rigour is best demonstrated in qualitative research when there has been extensive data collection or when, as Creswell (2007) notes, “the researcher conducts multiple levels of data analysis, from the narrow codes or themes to broader interrelated themes to more abstract dimension” (p. 46). This study produced a large amount of data from diverse sources. It was analysed through a range of layered methods, satisfying Creswell’s criteria, including the notion of crystallisation (Richardson, 1997). Richardson uses the metaphor of the multifaceted crystal to acknowledge the myriad ways (or angles) from which data can be approached and observed. This approach acknowledges the reflexivity implicit within a study.
containing a heuristic component and Lincoln and Guba (2000) have argued that, “reflexivity … demands that we interrogate each of our selves regarding the ways in which research efforts are shaped” (p. 183). Richardson’s notion of crystallisation allowed me to both view and analyse the data from the different angles of my role as workshop facilitator as well as the overarching role of researcher.

In a qualitative study, establishing and maintaining trustworthiness underpins all processes of the research (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz 1991). Of her own research Ely asks the questions: “How adequately did I represent what I witnessed? What’s the match between my vision and those of the people I studied?” (p. 94) Lincoln and Guba (1985) tell us that it is only by following trustworthy procedures that we can produce findings that are “worth paying attention to” (p. 290). They advise the researcher that establishing trustworthiness includes prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation, triangulation and member checking, that is, checking with the people one studied. In this particular study with its strong heuristic element, it was of equal importance to make transparent and clarify researcher bias (Creswell, 2007).

3.6.1 Prolonged and Persistent Engagement and Observation

As I actively participated in the workshops and was responsible for the follow up interviews I was “persistently” in the field for the duration of the research process. This gave me the opportunity to hear firsthand the big issues, gain clarification, ask different questions and importantly, redefine and augment the design of the research as unexpected elements emerged (Ely et al., 1991).

3.6.2 Triangulation

Looking for convergence of findings by checking data obtained by a variety of methods is known as triangulation (Patton, 2002, p. 247). As I had multiple data sources – transcripts, journals, results from the AVI questionnaire, MSC and final interview – there were many opportunities to find converging evidence. Maxwell (2005) cautions that triangulating some form of data collected may contain the same biases, particularly those of self-report. The strength in the data generated from this study lies in their diverse nature, including sources other than only self-report.

3.6.3 Member Checks

Given my positioning in the research itself it was important to the credibility of the research that my interpretations of the content of the workshops were checked by the participants.
Therefore transcripts of the workshops were made available to each participant. A copy of the preliminary analyses consisting of descriptions and themes was made available on request.

3.7. Ethical issues

As with any research involving human participants, this research project was conducted with an emphasis on creating and upholding “a culture of trust, transparency and confidentiality” throughout each phase of the research (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010, p. 97). There are always many ethical concerns when participatory research is conducted, including informed consent, confidentiality and the position of the researcher. This study proceeded through all steps of ethics clearance required by the university, including providing a plain language statement to the interested participants which enabled them to give informed consent.

As group facilitator I remained aware of the potential power, control and/or influence that I may be perceived to be exerting (Whitaker, 2001). These were not therapy sessions and my research intentions were to extend the courtesy of asking rich, inviting questions within a group conversation, to provide them with a useful tool – A Values Inventory – with which to explore their personal values and to facilitate the processes of both articulating and writing a draft purpose statement.

In a group where deep questions are presented about participants’ inner lives, the necessity for confidentiality is fundamental. I decided to mirror the Circle of Trust approach – an integral component of a Courage to Teach retreat– and which includes two rules of confidentiality where not only does the information revealed stay within the group but also that group members do not approach each other outside the session with comments or suggestions about what occurred (Palmer, 2007b). (See Appendix L for a list of Circle of Trust practices).

3.8. Limitations

In a qualitative study, results must take a somewhat different slant than the generalizability concerns of the quantitative paradigm (Janesick, 2000). Given the very small sample size of this study, I am not able to extend its results to the general teaching population. However I am able to develop a theory which can be extended to other cases (Maxwell, 2005). Indeed, the power of this research “is its uniqueness” (Janesick, 2000, p. 394) and the impact on the lives of those involved.

Reactivity – the influence of the researcher on the individuals being studied – is also cited as a possible limitation or weakness of some studies (Maxwell, 2005). Eliminating this influence is impossible and therefore the aim in qualitative research is to remain conscious to how this
influence may be occurring. In this study, my role as facilitator, guiding and supporting the participants through processes which aimed to lead to re-engagement and professional renewal, was fundamental, and influential to the outcome. Whether that is seen as a limitation or as a critical component of this research will be addressed in Chapter Five within the discussion of the results.

Finally, a potential limitation of the study was researcher bias, namely my positive personal experience of this form of reflective practice. I came to this study with a history of powerful transformation through similar processes. It was for this reason that I included the heuristic component as it “legitimates and places at the fore … personal experiences, reflections and insights of the researcher” (Patton, 2002, p. 108). Reason (1988) describes this stance as critical subjectivity: “Critical subjectivity is a quality of awareness in which we do not suppress our primary experience; nor do we allow ourselves to be swept away and overwhelmed by it; rather we raise it to consciousness and use it as part of the inquiry process” (p. 12). Therefore, I did not claim objective distance, and my role as teacher and my own personal experiences regarding renewal, were not hidden or minimised. Rather, when analysing the data, I sought the position of suspension of judgement in order to look at the results with eyes open to all possibilities.

In summary, the method of action research together with a variety of data collection tools were used to research a reflective practice process with a small group of teachers and to explore what impact this form of intervention had on a teacher’s sense of renewal and engagement. Given the research questions of this study, the methods used provided useful insight into what can occur when teachers are welcomed into a nurturing environment and invited to reflect on rich, evocative questions. The data gathered also cast light on intervention techniques that sought to promote an enduring sense of teacher renewal.

The next chapter will report on the findings from the data analysis.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

The previous chapter outlined the research design of this study. The purpose of this chapter is to present the analysis and findings obtained from all the data sources. These include transcripts from the conversational interactions during the six workshops and follow up interviews, results from A Values Inventory (AVI), reflective journals of the participants and the facilitator and Most Significant Change (MSC) stories. Extracts from reflective journals in text have been reproduced to simulate the formatting, line spacing and varying font size.

The findings will be addressed through three stories of teacher renewal: Amy, Cecilia and Jacqui.

4.1. Teacher Renewal Story One: Amy

AMY: I actually felt, after we’d had this session for a couple of days I actually felt, nice, and relaxed and … nice.

JULIA: What sort of ‘nice’?

AMY: I just felt a bit more myself again.

(Workshop Two, 14/9/2010, transcript p. 1)

Figure 2: Amy's Highest Foundation, Focus and Vision Values (AVI, EOV, p. 6)

The teacher renewal workshop program had a noticeable and strong impact on Amy’s feelings of renewal. The nature and scope of this impact is described below.

Intimations of this impact occurred very early in the workshop series. In the first week Amy had told the group through the medium of the People on the Tree reflection tool (Source
unknown: see Appendix C, p. 128) that during the term she had felt “sad and dissatisfied” (Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 16) and that her career was symbolized by the small figure falling out of the tree, having climbed close to the top (see Figure 3, below).

![Figure 3: Amy's 'Career' Workshop One, Teacher Renewal Workshops Series](image)

Halfway into the first workshop via the Red Thread (Ritchhart, 2002) exercise, which required participants to think of a metaphor to describe their pedagogy, Amy was reminded of her deepest teaching intention: “Excitement about excellence” for, as she clarified, “They can’t have options unless they have skills” (Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 28) and in the second week she related some significant new insights and decisions. Amy had decided to give up her Year level coordination role and return to the art room. Knowing that classroom teaching only would not be sufficiently fulfilling, Amy decided to hold two exhibitions. This decision had ignited a spark and Amy had spent the week discussing the possibilities with students:
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

So I got all excited about that and started talking to kids, you know, who were going off into senior levels and they got really excited so, and that felt really good… to be relating to kids in that way instead of coordination.

(Amy, Workshop Two, 14/9/2010, transcript p. 7)

In the space of a week, Amy was stating: “I feel like I’m going back to my roots” (Workshop Two, 14/9/2010, Transcript p. 30).

For Amy, it seemed that the opportunity to participate in the renewal workshops had arrived at a time when she was ripe for transformation. As the weeks and conversations continued, Amy’s version of “disorienting dilemmas” (Mezirow, 1990, p. 5) were sounded out, fleshed out, and questioned in the critically reflective way that can result in transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990, Cranton, 1997).

As she went through the process of articulating her values and engaging with the structure of the values inventory (AVI), Amy was realizing with ever greater clarity how many circumstances in her workplace had steered her off the path of the ‘undivided self’ (Palmer, 2007b, p. 28) and away from her highly prioritised values (Gardner, 2009). From her AVI responses, Amy’s world view was categorized as that of Collaborative Project:

The world is a project and I want to participate through offering my unique gifts and skills. I want organizations to be more humane and democratic.

(AVI Executive Overview Report (EOR), p. 11).

However, her coordination role at the school had been directing her focus towards day to day activities that reflected values of an Organizational world view:

The world is a problem with which I can and must cope through belonging and making a living. I need to be successful and to please those who control my future.

(AVI EOR, p. 11)

It could be argued that Amy had perhaps been willing to believe for a while that the coordination role was serving her deeper self as the qualities she was able to express: Care/Nurture, Self-Competence/Confidence, Design/Pattern/Order, Dexterity/Coordination and Duty, were all values she had identified as having some personal importance. Of specific significance however, was that this set of values all inhabited her foundational sector and were all at the fairly low rate of 23%, indicating lower priority values. Though they were included in Amy’s named values list and therefore reflected tasks she was prepared to
undertake for a while, work-day activities that reflected values which ignited her passions – values in the Focus and/or Vision sectors – were all absent.

Amy brought this to the attention of the group in Week 3. Returning from the school holidays, her time away had further confirmed and consolidated her sense that “I need, to replenish myself, and then I’ll be more interested in what I’m doing!” (Workshop Three, 5/10/2010, transcript p. 10). Over the holidays, Amy had returned to personal creative exploration using The Artist’s Way as a tool. “I remembered it and I thought, ‘I need to do something, I’ve got to do something to find my voice again’ because I thought I could do some drawings, you know, but I didn’t have a voice.” Her speaking voice in fact took on a new tone as she shared: “I feel I lost myself! Almost, you know?” (Workshop Three, 5/10/2010, transcript p. 11) She finished her account by saying:

“I feel like I get burdened by duty, like I get in these roles and I can’t, I enjoy them but then they become duty, I forget to be happy … It just came to me, that’s what I feel, have thought… I want to be happy again, in fact I’m going to write that down.”

(Workshop Three, 5/10/2010, transcript p. 12)

As the group began to examine the specifics of the AVI and learn how to read the results in terms of Vision, Focus and Foundation subdivisions, Amy shared:

This (pause) makes me feel excited… Because I can see, these foundation values, I spend my whole life in these foundation ones and these focus ones are actually where I want to be… Everything I’ve said today is in there (pointing at Focus)... and when I’m working and being [at school], it’s all there (pointing at Foundation).

(Amy, Workshop Three, 5/10/2010, transcript p. 23)

While Duty (23%) and Care/Nurture (23%) were listed in her Foundation values, Amy’s focus values were recorded as: Community/Supportive (100%), Integration/Wholeness (77%) Self-Actualisation (69%) Creative Ideation (62%) Adaptability/Flexibility (54%), five from her top ten values (see Appendix F). As noted in her AVI report these areas were consequently where she was highly motivated to spend most of her time and mental energy (AVI, EOR, p. 7).

This session (Workshop 3) appeared to represent the tipping point in Amy’s resolve to make changes. For the first time during the weeks of the workshops series Amy found both time
and motivation to write reflectively between sessions, using the questions on the reflection sheet handed out in Workshop Three as the guide:

Looking at my values it is no wonder I am working in a school. Given the opportunity to fulfil all of them. Though school is part of my life have lost sight of this in my personal life. Creative self is not being nurtured at school. School has become duty/excitement gone/tired all the time/drained. Made roads towards self – Tai Chi, Diet. Allow school to get in the way. Goals & values have changed – importance of myself in the process – the growing of self. Order is important

[at the end of the entry, she noted:]
Want more activity/action – gain control of life not just let it happen

(Extract from Amy’s Reflective Journal, p. 8)

During the next workshop (Workshop 4) Amy told the group just how nourishing the writing had been:

AMY: Actually sitting down on Sunday and reflecting was the most enjoyable thing (with relish) Cos, I’d had a cold and I was feeling pretty eergh and I’d been busy all Saturday so I sat down and put my new rug around me and I had the heater on and I had my little table and the armchair and I just wrote stuff and it was so nurturing, I felt nurtured.

JULIA: So what was nurturing about doing that writing?

AMY: It was listening to myself, Not being so busy that I just can’t even hear myself anymore and I think that’s, that’s where I’ve got lost.

(Workshop Four, 19/10/2010, transcript p. 4)

This progress was further reflected in the observations I recorded in my journal. In reflecting on signs of renewal in each participant:

Amy is doing it with bells on! She said her spirit was in need of renewal and she is taking active BIG steps towards realigning. Quitting coordination back to her passion for art by planning two exhibitions. Going back to meditation gardening, conscious reflection while walking – all things that bring her back to herself.

(Julia’s Reflective Journal entry, 9/10/2010)
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From my observation and through her contributions to the dialogue, Amy seemed more in touch with herself than at the beginning of the workshops and was sharing ways in which she was beginning to listen to her long-ignored needs. The regular invitations to reflect to which she was now responding appeared to be uncovering a wellspring of emotional response. The Intrator and Kunzman (2006b) quote about the connection between values and renewal was read out and distributed in Workshop Four. Amy’s response was, “That made me cry, that last bit, but I do, I do feel like crying” and then continued with passion in her voice, “I want to discover beauty again and I’ve been feeling that over the last couple of weeks, like I’ve been reading some poetry”. Again she described tears coming as she watched an arts program on television depicting:

an old aboriginal guy sitting in front of this, this painting that represented his country, and he sang it and it was just quite, like I’ve been moved by things that … I’ve been giving myself time to sit with some things … I just feel like I’ve been sitting in this wasteland.

(Amy, Workshop Four, 19/10/2010, transcript p. 7).

As Workshops Four and Five directed focus towards the notion of deeper purpose, a process begun by elaborating on earlier discussions about their Red Thread (Ritchhart, 2002), Amy seemed to connect more deeply with her dual desires as teacher and as artist. “I need to go in search of creative groups” (Workshop Five, 9/11/2010, transcript, p. 3). In Workshop One she had described becoming a teacher in order to financially support her art, but that her personal art time disappeared to make room for the school requirements. However, as she shared in Workshop Three, her highest identified value, Community/Supportive: To have, or to create, cooperative groups of peers with shared values that provide mutual support and enhancement of each other, she knew she would not have wanted to be an isolated artist. Now, in Workshop Five, prefaced by, “It’s time to get in touch with my creativity, it’s time to get in touch with my internal person” (Workshop Five, 9/11/2010, transcript, p. 3), she told a story about being welcomed by a group of potters while attending their exhibition. She spoke enthusiastically about being part of such a group that “I can group show with” (Workshop Five, 9/11/2010, transcript, p. 3). Looking to her vision of the future she wanted, Amy’s second highest priority value of Collaborative Individualist: Commitment to a group and its purpose in order to simultaneously maximize both individual independent action and interdependent cooperation, was in full view. This week, in response to the weekly Renewal question, Amy placed herself on the second highest branch, linking arms with a couple who were clearly supporting each other (see Figure 4, page 57).
Figure 4: Amy’s Sense of Renewal Workshop 5, Teacher Renewal Workshop Series

Amy had specifically used the handout from the end of Workshop Four, *The Nine Signposts* (see Appendix C, p. 129), which indicated areas of personal life that may hold clues about one’s deeper purpose. After her meeting with the potters, Amy commented that she went home and, through the lens of the signposts, realized many aspects of herself that she had discarded or forgotten about over the years. Later she told us “this was such, this was a really good process for me to do … I did it at 2 o’clock this morning. I woke up and thought ‘I’m going to do that’ cos I couldn’t get back to sleep so I just sat and did it” (Workshop Five, 9/11/2010, transcript, p. 3).

Her Story of Most Significant Change in the final session also noted the way this Signpost information had confirmed that there were aspects of herself with which she needed to reconnect. “It was coming clear to me that there were key factors I needed to be mindful of and work with’. Amy gave us a list of these in priority order: Inner Me/Spirit; Beauty; Create; Fun/ Humour. She said:
From here I can move forward. I can add them to all the parts of me that are already great such as the nurturing me and the organizing me. I feel truly excited about this. I have changed direction… Basically now I know what I am looking for”

(Amy, MSC, Appendix I).

In her desire for renewal, both professionally and personally, Amy had told us in the very first week:

I want my spirit back, I want to feel that excitement again, I want to feel (pause) good about it again… it’s here – sitting in my heart space – in here, I can feel it, it feels sad, about the whole thing. I’ve got emotional resilience, I really do, it’s my heart and my spirit which needs to be, yeah, needs to be fed… I can be emotionally resilient, I know I can, I can pick myself up and move on, I can do that, but there’s an empty there ,yeah, at the moment that needs to, I need to find something to fill it up again.

(Amy, Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript p. 7)

Three months later, in the final workshop she shared as part of her Most Significant Change story (MSC) that “the sum of [her] small insights formed a large one that I did not need to give up teaching” but that instead “I had to reinvent myself, look at teaching differently, go back to my roots and find myself as the creative individual again at school and in my personal life” (Appendix I). Figure 5 (p. 59) illustrates Amy’s sense of renewal through the weeks of the workshops.

In her follow up interview, four months after the MSC reflections, Amy said she felt more connected to herself than she had been for a long time. Regardless of the often hectic nature of a first term in a busy inner city secondary college, Amy told me that her sense of self was:

back even more, cos it’s being in the classroom. I just love interacting with the kids. I love developing curriculum … So I’m really enjoying being focused on the kids and their development and playing around with materials and doing the arty stuff again

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4.2. Teacher Renewal Story Two: Cecilia

“[This] was a fantastic opportunity at a really critical point in time where I was in dialogue with myself. Could I teach? Should I teach? Would I teach?”

(Cecilia, Most Significant Change story, Workshop Six, 23/11/2010, p. 8)
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For Cecilia, the teacher renewal workshop program also had important impact on her desire for a very different kind of renewal. The written task below, a specific intention for the outcome of the workshops scribed at the commencement of the workshop series, notes Cecilia’s desire to reconnect with herself.

It is the 24th November 2010, the day after the completion of the teacher renewal workshops and I feel glad to have participated, more connected to my practice, clearer about what I want to do next and how I want to do it [and] in closer, deeper connection to myself.

(First Written Task in Workshop One: Cecilia’s Reflective Journal, p. 1)

Renewal, Cecilia told us, involved reinvention. Two months before the workshops, she had returned to work after recovering from breast cancer and Cecilia declared herself in need of renewal in all four areas suggested: emotional, mental, physical and spiritual. This illness was a “disorienting dilemma” writ large (Mezirow, 1990, p. 5). The importance to Cecilia of this need was later underscored by her results from the AVI, which named her highest value as Integration: to harmonise mind, body and spirit. She had been consciously working on regaining her strength:
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“because the classroom can be a fairly, um, robust place (laughs) and so physical health is important, and emotional resilience because one needs to be emotionally fairly resilient to be able to deal with the tos and fros of teaching and ah, I’m actually not sure how much longer I want to stay teaching in a secondary school but whatever I do that teaching is so much part of me … [Later in the same session] … I don’t know whether to lower my expectations about myself, or get out!

(Cecilia, Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 35)

Before the first workshop was over, Cecilia had reconnected with her deeper pedagogical purpose through the Red Thread (Ritchhart, 2002) activity: “You have the choice where to put attention”, which represented a large number of associated statements including to “take responsibility for your interactions with people” and because of the lower socio-economic area she worked in, “I want to inspire them to aspire” (Cecilia, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 29). She had also identified a “hankering” to be more creative, (Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 22), later identified as her second highest value, acknowledged the truth in a suggestion from Jacqui, “You miss You!” (Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 36) while also reaffirming her strong conviction that, as a teacher, “We’re growing Human Beings, what sort of Human Beings do we want to grow?”(Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 30).

These three elements were strongly represented in her teaching experience during the week between the first and second session. In Workshop Two, Cecilia identified her state of renewal as “just getting a handle on it” and singled out the person swinging from the lowest branch on the tree (see Figure 7, p. 62). However, she said, “I think I’ve taught better since last week … more consciously, more deliberately” (Workshop Two, 14/9/2010, transcript, p. 5).

Conversation from the first workshop had helped her reconnect with what it meant to her to teach young adolescents:

A situation presented itself where I think something that had happened here [in the workshop] impacted upon the way I dealt with that situation… it was a lovely lesson, it was perfect, really connecting with these children and just playing with them and in doing so, doing the poems, they were reading the poems and each kid was showing me what they had done and some of the poems that they had written. (Workshop Two, 14/9/2010, transcript, p. 9)
In the same day Cecilia had the urge to spend time in the art room:

and here they are sitting there making these … textile monsters and they were having a ball and I was just, “Can I stay?” so I stayed there with Amy and sat there amongst the kids and helped them pin on their eyes … and taught a couple of them blanket stitch and it was “Oh, miss, I’m tangled up” and it was’ “Don’t panic, it’s ok” and I just went home feeling really positive. I just realized, realized how much I love doing that, I just love that, sitting there doing stuff with them, rather than me always trying, feeling like I fill them up with explanation.

(Workshop Two, 14/9/2010, transcript, p. 9)

As the weeks progressed, Cecilia was feeling more expanded in her sense of renewal. In Workshop One she had described herself as needing equal amounts of renewal in all four areas. In Workshop Three, she drew a diagram of her renewal process with a tiny circle to represent herself in the centre of these four elements. “Then I’m little at the start, like this, I
think I’m more like this, I’ve expanded in each direction, a little bit” (Workshop Three, 5/10/2010, transcript, p. 8).

Also in Workshop Three, the participants’ AVI results were discussed for the first time and between Workshops Three and Four Cecilia took up the reflective invitation from the workshop to “list your first five values and, for each value, identify situations that have so far contributed most to you experiencing that value” (Excerpt from Reflection Sheet, Workshop Three, 5/10/2010. Appendix G)

Cecilia had also created a values map, as suggested within the workshop, which demonstrated the dynamic of the relationships between her key values (see Figure 8, below). It included personal insights such as “Integration/Wholeness needs/requires Creative Ideation and that Integration/Wholeness enables Community/Supportive.” In her reflective journal Cecilia had written at the top of a page in a box: “So busy – I forgot/forget to be happy” (p. 8). Through this reflective process, Cecilia acknowledged some ways these values were already manifest in her life and what she could do to enhance them.

Figure 8: Cecilia’s Values Map showing the connections between her prioritized values
Below is a replicated copy of the entry for her second highest value, Creative Ideation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Creative Ideation</th>
<th>Could Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) mosaics</td>
<td>• Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) garden making √</td>
<td>• Drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) decorating flat ‘home’ √</td>
<td>• More mosaic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expressing me

- WRITING -

(Cecilia’s Reflective Journal p. 10)

Choosing to go through this process for each of her top ten values, Cecilia was creating a potent checklist for living a values-driven life. During Workshop Four, she took the group through her lists while noting that, though it “took me ages to do this” she had really enjoyed the process (Cecilia, Workshop Four, 19/10/2010, transcript, p. 6). It was in this week that the renewal momentum for Cecilia appeared to really take hold. It was also noted that the quote I had chosen to create the tone for Workshop Four seemed to echo the nature of Cecilia’s reconnection with what was important to her:

*Finding your best self is more a poetic embrace than an analytical triumph*

(Henderson, 1992, p. 28).

Cecilia was using the workshop series and the exercises within it to process some deeply personal issues, not always connected directly with teaching. And they were issues relating very much to her Foundation values of Affection (55%), Care/Nurture (36%), Self-Competence/Confidence (27%), Security (27%) and Peer Support (27%). The AVI notes:

Just as a tree’s roots and environment (fertile ground, suitable climate, etc.) are essential for its health, so too, are having effective strategies for living your

*Foundation Values* essential for your overall health and well-being

(AVI EOR, p. 6).

The AVI suggests that higher percentage ratings of Foundation values indicate a need to give attention to related issues that seek resolution. Cecilia’s feelings of loneliness and coming to terms with not having a partner or being a mother, the latter being underscored by a difficult relationship with her own parents, were all reflections of prioritised Foundation values (Affection, Care/Nurture, Security, Peer Support) that needed attention. Until they were
resolved to a comfortable degree and therefore ‘out of sight out of mind’ (AVI EOR, p. 6) it was hard for her to give adequate attention to her high priority Focus values of: Integration/Wholeness (100%), Creative Ideation (91%), Human Dignity (82%), Community/Supportive (73%) and Sharing/Listening/Trust (45%). By confronting some of these difficult personal issues or, her ‘shadow self’ as Cecilia tended to describe it (Nine Signposts sheet, Appendix C, p. 129), she was better able to address aspects that affected her sense of herself as a valuable teacher and begin to feel a sense of renewal.

Realigning with her focus values happened initially within the workshops themselves. The workshops content was focused directly on Integration/Wholeness, the sessions also providing regular opportunities for Sharing/Listening/Trust and feelings related to Community/Supportive. In Workshop Six, Cecilia noted in her MSC that “working out what’s important and realizing that … is communication and being at ease with people” and noting a strengthening of communication with her colleagues, provided avenues for both Community Supportive and Peer support (Workshop Six, 23/11/2010, transcript, p. 9).

Human Dignity, Cecilia’s third ranking value (82%) was a central topic underpinning many of the workshop discussions. Cecilia’s exploration between Workshops Three and Four of the places her important values showed up in her life currently, and how they could be further enhanced, identified ways that not only allowed Cecilia to reaffirm her stand for this value but to also confront her own behaviour.

What I need to work on, sometimes other people around me want to feel superior to me, and I have this thing of thinking “Oh, I’ll sort of almost, I’ll be deferential around them”… I’ve always done that because it’s the easier way, and I don’t really actually want to take people on, but I think that’s probably not a really good way to do – that’s my own human dignity – and the other thing, this is me being really honest here where my own dignity is somewhat compromised, sometimes I think that I manipulate other people for sympathy, like “feel sorry for me because poor me I’m on my own or this or that, I’ve had cancer, or whatever … so I think … actually, that’s not dignified either. I think I’m going to make an effort to not do that anymore. (Cecilia, Workshop Four, 19/10/2010, transcript p. 6)

By Workshop Five, Cecilia’s feelings of invigoration as a teacher had been significantly reignited, illustrated by the following example. One of her favourite school programs was discarded, one in which she shared the responsibilities for design and implementation and
that had allowed her to collaborate with an equally passionate colleague. This part of her job had allowed her to embody three highly prioritised values (Creative Ideation 91%, Community Supportive 73%, Interdependence 64%) and consequently Cecilia made inquiries about a teaching position at another school, one which the principal there encouraged her to seriously consider. This display of confidence in her “really shows something, doesn’t it. It shows [my] competence” (Cecilia, Workshop Five, 9/11/2010, transcript, p. 3).

Cecilia’s sense of renewal over the three months spanning the workshop sessions displayed an interesting and revealing arc on the People on the Tree (see Figure 9, p. 67). From Workshop Two (red arrow) when she was “just getting a handle on it” (14/9/2010, Transcript, p. 4) and Workshop Three (pink arrow) where her feelings of renewal were tied in with getting the support she needed through some reconnection with spiritual practice in tandem with giving support to students such that she felt “very connected to them” (5/10/2010, transcript, p. 9), in Workshop Four (green arrow) Cecilia moved to the centre of the tree which represented to her the circle of renewal getting bigger and expanding towards the corners.

In Workshop Five however (blue arrow), after the program that she was passionate about was discarded, Cecilia positioned herself near the bottom of the tree again, swinging on the rope, “a bit pissed off at the powers and the way they operate” (9/11/2010, transcript, p. 3) but this time, quite open to opportunity and possibility. In the final week (purple arrow), Cecilia placed herself at the very bottom of the tree, being given a leg up to begin a climb. “Here I am, hopping up the ladder … I feel like I’ve got people helping me” (Workshop Six, 23/11/2010. transcript, p. 14). The suggestion was made that renewal is not linear and this may be a deeper layer, maybe even a different tree. Cecilia’s response was “Absolutely!” (Workshop Six, 23/11/2010. transcript, p. 14).

Four months later, waiting for her follow up interview to begin, Cecilia opened the booklet from Week 6 for the first time since the workshops:

And it was just really, really nice, to look at the statement at the front: *We become teachers for reasons of the heart and most of us lose heart as time goes by* and I thought, ‘Yes, I am a teacher for reasons of the heart. I always have been, I think, but it’s still very much so!’ … and then I looked at this one, *The big question is are you going to be able to say a hearty yes to your adventure* and it’s categorically, yes, unequivocally, categorically, yes!

(Final Interview, 5/4/2011, p 1).
Figure 9: Cecilia’s Sense of Renewal during the Teacher Renewal Workshop Series


4.3. Teacher Renewal Story Three: Jacqui

While the impacts experienced by Jacqui as a consequence of attending the teacher renewal workshop program shared some similarities with Amy and Cecilia, her search for renewal had a different genesis and provoked a different kind of response from that experienced by Amy and Cecilia. Her experience is outlined below.

I was becoming really worn out with the demand, or the pull of having to deal with everything else in the classroom other than the content, you know, like you’re so pressured to get content across and they don’t give a rat’s arse … looking at rivers and water conservation and you do the glass half full and the glass half empty … and you can engage them for ten minutes and then they’re off.

(Jacqui, Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript p. 10)
Jacqui had left Canberra and the classroom three years earlier. Like Amy, she wanted to replenish her spirit because, having experienced the demands of “emotional labour” (Hochschild, 1983, p. 13), she had been worn down by behaviour management demands, particularly students in Year 9. “I found I was being shredded in the end” (Jacqui, Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 9). Lacking a partner at home to provide emotional support:

I decided to leave and I just left without really anything else in the offing either… So, I’ve been working towards Spirit [renewal] since then because I found that was what I was lacking in the classroom. (Jacqui, Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 11) In recent months Jacqui had returned to work at an International College. Marking work submitted by international adult students, she was enjoying the camaraderie of a shared workplace again and she showed her enthusiasm for this by positioning herself sitting and waving in the fork of the People on the Tree to represent the day just gone (see Figure 11, p. 69, arrow of dashes). However the term and the year had been more difficult. In recent weeks Jacqui had accepted work as a casual relief teacher.

It’s been a real struggle for me, working out what I actually want and what my priorities are and coming into schools at my age now into a new state system, you’re just completely on your own. (Jacqui, Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 17)
Figure 11: Jacqui’s ‘Day’, ‘Term’ and ‘Year’: Workshop One, Teacher Renewal

Workshops Series

Jacqui chose a figure near the bottom of the tree starting to tentatively climb the trunk to represent this (Figure 11, above), and to demonstrate the precarious feeling of her year she chose a person out on the end of a slim branch (Figure 11, dots and dashes arrow, above) “hanging on for dear life” (Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 17). It became clear that Jacqui had already experienced many work transitions. Spending the first fifteen years of her career as a Visual Art teacher and experiencing all levels between K – 12, Jacqui became a language teacher:

And then I moved into more high school classroom teaching so I took on English and social science, which you can do in Canberra and ACT because it’s school based curriculum development so we worked in teams and there’s a lot more mobility and I ended up in year 7, 8, 9 and 10 classes.

(Jacqui, Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 9).

Jacqui continued to search for her own particular niche - “I did a lot of other study, like for ever” (Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 20), which included obtaining a Masters of
Education through coursework. She also experimented with teaching philosophy until she moved to Melbourne. There Jacqui began a psychology degree which she thought would support her new interests but discontinued that after a year. Choosing a course of study and then changing direction appeared to have been a pattern noted by friends and colleagues, which angered Jacqui:

Because, you know, like a lot of people choose a pathway or choose an idea and they’re shamed into sticking to that for the rest their lives... People say to me, “You just change your mind all over, and I just say, “Well, I like it like that!” You know? And it’s like, well is that a lack of commitment about what I’m doing?

(Jacqui, Workshop One, 07/09/2012, transcript, p. 32)

From outer appearances, Jacqui did seem to lack commitment. One of the reasons seemed to be a lack of family to provide her with a support base as Family/Belonging (85%) was her highest Foundation value. That Family/Belonging was a preoccupation became increasingly apparent, as most weeks’ initial opening dialogues began with lengthy anecdotes from Jacqui about her family, all of whom lived interstate. She seemed to be greatly missing her family and was looking for somewhere to belong in Melbourne. With her need to connect meaningfully with family, combined with her natural desire to seek “new facts, truths, principles and insights” (4th value: Education/Knowledge 77%), Jacqui appeared to be easily side tracked from making work and career choices. Making a long term commitment seemed very hard. Even committing to values was difficult.

It took Jacqui three attempts to fill out the AVI. In the first two attempts, Jacqui chose a different value for almost every set of eight (45/47 out of 48 possibilities), producing results that were unwieldy and of little constructive use to her. For her third attempt, I sat beside her at the computer, facilitating Jacqui through the process by prompting her to think out loud about the decisions she was making. Her values list was now consolidated at 35 (Amy had 33 in total, Cecilia had 37).

There was one constant however. Congruence had appeared at the top of her values list in all three attempts, an indication that Jacqui had chosen this value every time it appeared, unlike any other in the first two attempts. This suggested that the value laden statement for Congruence within the AVI, “Being congruent in word and action (what I say is what I do)” had a resonance for Jacqui that was much stronger than any other of the 127 values. And it was the nature of her irregular commitment to Congruence that became confronting for her
during the course of the workshop series. Workshop Three was pivotal for Jacqui in this regard and, in hindsight, can be seen as a tipping point into some candid critical reflection. At the beginning of this session I asked Jacqui if she had managed any reflective writing:

(pause) Nuh. No, I’m still finding that to be my biggest hurdle, in terms of being honest with myself. …I bought that book, I think it’s *The Artist’s Way* … and I started that. I thought “How can I fit in the exercise I should be doing, the meditation I should be doing and the reflective writing in the morning before I do anything else because these are all the things that I need to do, and so, consequently none of them get done, except I did cook myself a breakfast this morning for the first time in about eighteen months … But, you know, managing to do that as well as writing, meditation, exercise, I’d be up at five o’clock in the morning which is what people do … I haven’t done any reflective writing. I feel like the last two weeks I’ve been in a spin … I’ve got to sort out a few things in my work life … getting to business, trying to refinance my house so I can get a, give myself a financial kick start and that’s all been really draining.

(Jacqui, Workshop Three, 5/10/2010, transcript, p. 2)

These last sentences were voiced with Jacqui close to tears. From an observer’s stance, the daily standards she was attempting to set for herself sounded daunting. Her two highest values of Congruence and Decision/Initiation (92% - Taking personal responsibility for setting direction and initiating) were also very exacting ones, with an inherent expectation of daily self-instigated motivation. Her family, who may have provided tangible support and encouragement, were interstate. In addition, Jacqui’s highly prioritised value of Independence (62%) made it less likely she would actively seek support from elsewhere. All these elements combined and appeared to paralyse her capacity to take much action at all.

With all these factors at play, it is worthy of note that choosing a picture on the tree to depict her sense of renewal was also hard for Jacqui this week, remaining silent for a long time. When I reaffirmed that it was spirit renewal that Jacqui had stated she was seeking she agreed. “Yes, yes, because, the others will happen, you know? You become more emotionally giving, more physically motivated. I think I’m here” (Jacqui, Workshop Three, 5/10/2010, transcript, p. 13), choosing a person wedging themselves into a fork low down on the tree (see Figure 12, p. 72).
The focus of Workshop Three was the participants’ top values, the conversation moving to wondering what their lives would be like if they were living this value to its full capacity. Jacqui responded to this question with a spluttering laugh. Given several minutes to write down initial thoughts, she wrote:

| What would my life look like if I was |
| living my life by my TOP NO. 1 value |

→ congruence !!

I would be getting up at 5 and exercising, meditating, writing and preparing for a new exciting day where I can contribute fully

(Jacqui’s Reflective Journal, p. 9)

Jacqui read aloud the definition of Congruence to the group: “One's words, actions and deeds are in alignment with espoused beliefs. Walk the talk. Practise what you preach” (AVI EOV, p. 5). The apparent inner conflict between desire and deed felt palpable.
Between Workshops Three and Four Jacqui constructed a values map, illustrating the connections between her main values (Figure 13, below). It clearly shows the prominence that Congruence played in Jacqui’s life: every other value was reliant on Congruence being present.

![Jacqui's Values Map showing the connections between her prioritized values](image)

Indeed, “walking the talk” and aligning her behaviours with her beliefs seemed to be the action needed for Jacqui to open up to possibilities for teacher renewal. At the beginning of her MSC in the final week, she stated:

Looking at the values was actually a real trigger for me because it’s like … I mean, Congruence was the top one and I wasn’t even walking that talk because I’m not doing the stuff yet that I want to be doing, you know? … It’s what I value so much about everything around me and yet I wasn’t actually living that myself and so I started taking better care of my diet and exercise and being mindful every minute of what was the impact of what I was going to say… I guess what I’ve got [from the workshop discussions] is closing the gap to meet espoused values, especially Congruence.

(Jacqui, Workshop Six, 22/11/2010, transcript, p. 11)
While Jacqui had demonstrated varying capacities to making a commitment within the workshops and in her own life, what had been consistent throughout the workshop conversations was a well-articulated, personal pedagogy that demonstrated her level of innovation as a teacher. When the dialogues turned towards discussions about the students themselves, Jacqui’s conversational tone became animated and vibrant. She had identified her Red Thread (Ritchhart, 2002) as “Magnifying the Possibilities of Themselves” and had described classes she had taken in Canberra where there was more autonomy to take the reins of the curriculum and develop creative, exploratory programs. This had enabled her to:

… [challenge] paradigms, questioning deeply held values that they may have assumed, that weren’t theirs, but maybe challenging them to develop their own, pushing boundaries and limiting beliefs questioning their own limiting beliefs … Developing empathy and compassion with other people was a major [teaching focus] for me in high school … people recognizing, understanding difference and making connections … challenging assumptions, recognizing where they get their ideas from.

(Jacqui, Workshop One, 7/9/2010, transcript, p. 26)

In these self-styled classes Jacqui had been able to integrate many of her own passions such as philosophy, art, languages and psychology into a challenging and inspiring curriculum. She knew that in some cases she was “pitching a little bit high, but I was so desperately seeking something else more valuable for them and for me” (Workshop One, 07/09/2012, transcript, p. 21). In Workshop Three Jacqui had also come to some new realisations about her identity as a teacher:

It’s not that I wanted to leave being a teacher … just because you might leave the institution of a school doesn’t mean you’re not going to be a teacher… And this is the thing … like when I’m asked to fill out a form I’ll write down, “Um, (in a reluctant voice) yeah, I spose I am [a teacher].” Yeah. That’s ok, you know? And it’s really nice being able to say “Yes, I’m a teacher and I love doing it” but you can do it anywhere, anytime and that’s what I’m starting to understand about where I’m going.

(Jacqui, Workshop Three, 5/10/2010, transcript, p. 20)

As had been the experience for Amy and Cecilia, Jacqui seemed to experience a turning point between Workshops Three and Four. Perhaps uncovering and highlighting her deeply held values together with the conversations about teaching adolescents in innovative ways to see
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the possibilities in themselves had lit an old spark because, unexpectedly, during this
fortnight Jacqui applied for two teaching jobs. One was as a trainer for teachers in the
implementation of a software literacy program that was informed by research into brain
plasticity and the second was a teaching position in Arnhem Land. She started her story with:
“I had an epiphany. Maybe I’m a teacher!” (Workshop Four, 19/10/2010, transcript p. 4) It
was also the first time that she had considered she may have been suffering from burnout.

My brother said, “Teaching! What are you going to do that for?” And it was like, “Oh. Well, I actually did it for thirty years cos I enjoyed the work. It’s
my, it’s what I do, it’s me!” And it’s like, “Yeah, I can say that!” And … it
made me realize that I’d never called myself a burnt out teacher, never …
connected that to me, but I figure I probably was. My intention was to do
something different. That was what I left Canberra for. “I’m going to get a life,
do something different.” But maybe I was burnt out and I don’t mind the idea
of going back.

(Jacqui, Workshop Four, 19/10/2010, transcript p. 5)

It was also the first time that Jacqui had specifically articulated her own needs as a teacher as
connected to her prioritised values and personal pedagogy:

I’ve looked at other jobs here in Melbourne and I don’t want to teach in a
standard school … [But] if I was a senior teacher in a K-9 school on an
aboriginal settlement or mission or whatever they call them? … It’s classed as
very remote and I think it’d be a hoot!

(Jacqui, Workshop Four, 19/10/2010, transcript p. 5).

These insights would have far reaching effects. This week, the little figure that represented
Jacqui’s sense of renewal was the one at the very top of the tree (see Figure 14, p.76, green
arrow). Later, in Workshop 6, Jacqui identified seeing the Arnhem Land job online as her
moment of Most Significant Change.

Apart from the value of Family/Belonging, all of Jacqui’s highest values were Focus values.
As she became more aware of them and consciously found ways to live them daily, Jacqui’s
feelings of renewal and general enthusiasm for new work possibilities began. Of critical
importance was the recognition that the trainer job would allow her to express the majority of
her highest values. This showed her, perhaps for the first time, that it was possible for her to
experience Congruence in a teaching role.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

Figure 14: Jacqui’s Sense of Renewal during the Teacher Renewal Workshop Series

Arrow colours: W2 – Red, W3 – Pink, W4 – Green, W5 – Blue, W6 - Purple

She was also feeling noticed by employers and supported in her choices, something that had been frequently missing since her arrival in Melbourne. This was evidenced in the position she chose for the little person on the tree representing her sense of renewal at the beginning of the fifth workshop: a figure near the top of the tree, being held safe and supported by two others (see Figure 14 above, blue arrow)

Jacqui’s experience in Workshop Five, with the focus on a process to uncover aspects of deeper purpose, seemed pivotal to her sense of renewal. While the other two participants had been a little confronted at the idea of purpose, and Cecilia later admitted to being scared, Jacqui was excited at the prospect of discovery. She was intrigued by the Nine Signposts questions (Appendix C, p. 129) which acted as triggers to uncovering one’s purposeful work and had spent some time reflecting on the questions between sessions. The eliciting process
used in the workshop was a simple one and the result took Jacqui by surprise. She showed undisguised delight as I read out the draft purpose statement which I had constructed, purely from her own words:

JULIA (reading): With insight, courage and an awareness of the big picture, I challenge existing paradigms and open up new possibilities so that people communicate and accept each other with empathy.

JACQUI: Julia, wow! You’re not fair! I love it!

JULIA: How did it feel when I read it out?

JACQUI: Awesome! That was, that was, a trick! (Giggling) It was like it subverted all that conscious resistance that I’ve had, to actually finding out what I’m about… I’m going to put that on this [job] application because that’s what it is about. Oh, far out! Oh, Julia! (nearly in tears) It’s awesome, (softly) thank you.

(Workshop Five, 9/11/2010, transcript, p. 16)

On reflection, Jacqui’s purpose statement was expanded to include words that she used to describe her Red Thread (Ritchhart, 2002):

With insight, courage and an awareness of the big picture, I challenge existing paradigms and open up new possibilities such that people communicate, accept each other with empathy and, in that process, grow into the possibility of themselves.

It seemed that Jacqui now had a keen sense of self rediscovery but at the same time, as she later acknowledged, it also felt like stepping into very large shoes.

During her presentation of her MSC in the final week, Jacqui told us that her stated purpose underscored the understanding that she does not easily fit into working with mainstream curriculum, as it felt bigger than that. “And, and, owning that. That’s why I’m feeling like one of those, you know, like an adolescent, they don’t fit their skin! They’re sort of, trying on new skins, you know?” (MSC, Appendix I). In that final session Jacqui demonstrated her sense of renewal by placing herself at the top of the tree as she had done in Week 4 (Figure 14, p. 76, purple arrow). She finished the teacher renewal workshops with a smile on her face, some unusual teaching jobs on the horizon and a potent sense of the possibilities for her when living aligned to her values and deeper purpose: “Because now I can’t afford not to
pursue my life’s purpose and find work that makes my heart sing, because that’s another lovely expression we use but what does it actually feel like?” (MSC, Appendix I)

However, Jacqui’s post workshop interview revealed that experiencing a sense of renewal and a welcome return to a deeper sense of self did not necessarily equate with an easy, uncomplicated path. Things had not worked out in the way she had hoped four months earlier. Neither the trainer job nor the teaching position in Arnhem Land had eventuated and Jacqui had unsuccessfully applied for many jobs since then. The college at which she was still working was shortly closing down and Jacqui would soon be out of work. Being alone and without any financial support was creating a great strain. Jacqui was again faced with feeling a lack of Congruence and this time also felt that her second highest value of Decision/Initiation (92%) was out of reach. Not having sufficient evidence in her daily life of her Foundation values of Family/Belonging, Peer Support, Self-Competence/Confidence, Education/Certification and Achievement were again taking attention away from Congruence, the value that had been shown to be the driver of her motivation and sense of purposeful living.

However, the subsequent discussion showed that Jacqui’s acceptance of herself as a teacher had consolidated since the workshops and, while she had not been able to secure a teaching position, the workshops had facilitated a big realisation: that the kind of teaching she wanted to do did not happen in institutions and she may have to freelance.

Jacqui spoke about numerous headings and titles of programs she wanted to run and that her purpose statement was:

Awesome, very inescapable. Confronting. My raison d’etre, as if that was what I’m here on the planet for. And then I have to manifest that. It’s like the whole congruence thing. It’s like, what am I doing to bring people to understand that having empathy for others is ok and to do that they’re going to reach more of themselves.

(Jacqui, Final interview, 1/04/2011, transcript, p. 5)

Unlike Cecilia and Amy who were still experiencing renewal with feelings of enthusiasm and re-engagement, Jacqui’s sense of renewal was raw, confronting and vulnerable. She had come to the teacher renewal workshops seeking renewal of her spirit. She had found it again certainly, but with it came a powerful caveat of personal responsibility.

In conclusion, Amy, Cecilia and Jacqui are exemplars of teachers who have displayed long years of commitment to their own individual vocations. They are also examples of the
disconnect that can occur when the demands of a teaching life may undervalue the needs of the person who does the teaching. By linking them directly back to their important values and the deeper purpose that underpin these, each teacher experienced a reinvigoration and re-engagement with themselves and their unique vocational work in the world.

The following chapter will discuss the findings and implications in detail.
Chapter 5: Discussion

The previous chapter presented the key findings in relation to teacher renewal for each participant. This chapter will discuss the study findings in relation to the research questions and reviewed literature.

The first key finding to emerge from the analysis of the data was that a major theme, “Coming Home to Self,” had emerged for each recruited teacher as a consequence of participating in the This Teaching Life of Mine program. While there was some indication of emerging sub-themes including Being Energised by the Workshop Process Itself, and Becoming Agents of Change the data in evidence was less substantial.

A separate finding was that participants had maintained and for two of them, had increased, their sense of renewal four months later. This runs counter to previous research of retreat style renewal programs (Simone, 2004), which found that teachers had difficulty incorporating their reconnected sense of professional self into the demands of their teaching lives. These findings will now be discussed in relation to the research questions.

5.1. Elaboration on Findings in Relation to Research Question One

The study’s first research question was:

What is the impact of a group exploration of personal core values and purpose, as a form of reflective practice, on a teacher’s sense of professional renewal?

As was demonstrated in Chapter Four, each participant experienced a potent feeling of professional renewal through reconnecting with discarded or forgotten aspects of themselves. In other words, by realigning the personal with the professional (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006b; Nias, 1996) the impact they experienced was a profound sense of “Coming Home to Self”.

Analysis of the data suggests that this was due to at least five contributing factors:

- addressing spiritual renewal
- a practical re-alignment with core values
- commitment to practising critical reflection and combining subsequent insights with specific action
- the provision of a nourishing environment
- the guiding role of the facilitator
These are discussed in turn below.

5.1.1 Spiritual Renewal

The most significant finding was that the impact of “Coming Home to Self” for all three participants appeared to be through initially addressing spiritual renewal. Ironically, all three participants noted the importance of spiritual renewal through their acknowledgement of its absence. As will be recalled, in this study “spiritual” is defined as “the diverse ways we answer the heart’s longing to be connected with the largeness of life – a longing that animates love and work” (Palmer, 2007a, p. 5). Though the first workshop presented the possibilities of all four quadrants of renewal, two participants confirmed that they were confident that through replenishing the spirit, the others would follow. The other participant, recovering from breast cancer and searching for renewal from all quadrants, found that addressing aspects of her neglected spirit, brought her back to equilibrium such that she could address the other aspects of her life, which had previously felt too difficult to confront and resolve.

While the literature regarding teacher renewal confirms this emphasis, findings from this study infer a different shape to the model. Rather than being four adjacent quadrants, the implication is rather that the spiritual zone is in the middle of a circle, with the other three elements around its circumference (see Figure 15, below).

Figure 15: Suggested relationship between the four key areas of Renewal

Loehr and Schwartz (2003) support this centrality of spiritual energy as the driver of motivation and purpose, engagement and perseverance, and therefore see spiritual replenishment as the way to begin the outward ripple effect of renewal. Palmer (2007a) also
implies this model, telling us that that the deep focus of *Courage to Teach* (CTT) work is spiritual, because teaching draws on every part of the physical, intellectual and emotional self. Likewise Senge et al (2000) describe keeping whole the dreams of teachers within a framework of “current reality around them” (p. 59).

The content and quality of the reflective conversations within the workshops in this study appeared to address the spiritual needs of the participants first, by adopting a version of Henderson and Gornik’s (2007) poetic reflective inquiry. This supported the more aesthetic approach to the workshop experience in general, facilitating participants in a process of gradual personal and professional realignment. This reconnection was evident in the last session of the workshop series, which finished with each participant telling their story of Most Significant Change (MSC, Dart & Davies, 2003). Workshop One began with exploration of the story behind each participant’s Red Thread (Ritchhart, 2002) and in Workshop Six their MSC closed the narrative loop, taking participants along a pathway of renewed spirit, and then to aspects of emotional, mental and physical renewal, arriving at a remembered and all-inclusive sense of self. This finding is not surprising given the transformative learning research of Dirkx (1997) generally and Dirkx, Mezirow and Cranton (2006) specifically, which noted that such learning is most readily available from a creative, intuitive and spirit-led approach. What is worthy of note however is that addressing the holistic wellbeing of these teachers in this order seemed to positively affect their heart-led engagement in the classroom, with all participants reporting that they felt they were teaching in a more wholehearted and effective way.

### 5.1.2 Values Realignment

Insights gleaned and actions taken as a direct consequence of reconnecting and realigning with their personal core values was also found to be a most important factor contributing to the impact of “Coming Home to Self” for all three participants.

Being consciously and deeply connected to one’s core values as a key aspect of vocational engagement, appears regularly in the literature (e.g., Heifetz, 1994; Gardner, 2009; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). The task given to participants in this current study to identify specific ways of enhancing their highest values appeared to be the first key step in developing practical ways for each participant to live their values every day, contributing to the main impact described in this study of “Coming Home to Self”. This correlates closely with Carotta’s practice of “Remembering Who You Are” (1999, p. 78).
Chapter 5: Discussion

Ongoing discussions about the values which motivated each participant to make the decisions they each made underpinned the entire workshop process of this study, from the articulation of personal values to how these deeply held values were evident in each person’s life. This segued into questioning how these strongly held values supported their deeper motivations, meaningful work, purpose, indeed, their vocation. As was noted by Thompson (2000) and Gardner (2009), purpose is closely connected to what someone values deeply, what ignites their passion and to which they are constantly drawn, while Peppers and Briskin (2000) reminded us of the converse: that disconnecting from purpose also weakens the link with one’s values. Facilitating these three participants to consciously align with their values and constructing draft purpose statements signified a return to vocational integrity (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006b) and seemed to be at the heart of these teachers’ experience of renewal.

5.1.3 Engaging in Critical Reflection combined with Action

The willingness of each participant to engage in critical reflection and corresponding action also appeared to contribute to the impact of “Coming Home to Self”. Each participant was prepared to seek out hidden assumptions, previously held beliefs and opinions, with an openness to exploring these with depth and breadth, thus allowing the possibility of reframing, a stance supported by dedicated reflective practitioners (e.g., Finlay, 2008; Larrivee, 2000; Thompson & Pascal, 2012).

Distinctive to this study was the range of mediational tools (Wertsch, 1998) used to support candid reflection. An integral tool was the People on the Tree picture (See Appendix C, p. 128). It was used at the beginning of each session to initiate conversation, thus facilitating debriefs about significant events and feelings of the day. It proved a highly engaging tool for each participant. The rather whimsical pictures brought lightness to difficult statements, such as Amy declaring in Workshop One that her Career was depicted by the person falling out from near the top of the tree. Using the People in the Tree as metaphor allowed participants to critically reflect on their felt sense of renewal as the weeks progressed, often sparking long and rich conversations before the session’s focus began. Again, the action research approach of this study was able to both accommodate and capitalise on the direction of these spontaneous conversations.

That said, while the participants demonstrated deep engagement with the reflection process in situ, they were not able to maintain that engagement away from the workshop environment. As supported by previous research (e.g., Jay, 2003), all participants experienced difficulty in establishing an ongoing practice of committed written reflection during the months of the workshop series. This was despite knowing about this requirement when agreeing to
participate in the study. Most weeks they would comment that taking time to write reflectively had not happened. However, with very little invitation, the inclination of all three participants was to record their insights within the workshop sessions and again, this featured the action research component of this study as a method that could accommodate this need for flexibility. It does appear somewhat contradictory that, when given opportunities to write in this environment, they were eager and stopped only when time constraints called a halt. This phenomenon of “knowing yet not doing” does seem to reflect a common illustration of human nature: knowing what is beneficial and therefore prioritising its implementation does not always follow. One anomaly to the lack of formal reflection outside the workshop however was the use of the People in the Tree picture (Appendix C, p.128). All participants reported that they had taken this reflection tool and used it widely: placing it in staffrooms for general discussion and also in discussion with their students, both in classrooms and in more pastoral conversations. It would seem that when the reflection tool is engaging enough, priorities will be made and steps will be taken. Further investigation into sufficiently invitational reflection tools therefore seems a most appropriate development from this current study.

A key finding of this study was that these participants required ongoing support to write reflectively and, when time was deliberately taken to do this writing, the benefits seemed to be instantly felt. Examples of this support included the additional intervention of separate, personalised emails between sessions (Appendix C, p.135). This was enough for all participants to remember to find the time and space to write reflectively between Workshops Three and Four. Presenting participants with the Booklets (Appendix C, p. 138) at the end of the final session was another example of providing ongoing support. All participants expressed deep gratitude for the booklet, noting that it contained the processes used in the workshops and expressed appreciation for the addition of a small reading list. This finding has some strong implications for future actions which will be addressed in the response to this study’s second research question.

While reflective writing and conversation can lead to new understanding, unless this is implemented by a corresponding action, enduring change cannot occur. As described, all participants took specific action based on insight gleaned from their values inventory results. Amy relinquished her administration role to return to her passion for the classroom, Cecilia mended difficult personal issues which were distracting her from professional engagement and Jacqui began applying for jobs in alignment with her unique and innovative pedagogy, thereby creating distinctive paths to renewal for each of them.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1.4 A Nourishing Environment

Creating an environment for the workshops whereby rich, sometimes challenging dialogue was supported to emerge (Isaacs, 1999) appeared to be an important factor leading to professional renewal for each participant. Noting that “we seem to know very little about creating spaces that invite the soul to show up, this core of ourselves, our selfhood” (Palmer, 2004, p. 56), the room was consequently set up to include criteria for an atmosphere that would encourage rich reflective conversations (Isaacs, 1999; Palmer, 2007b), attention thus being paid to the physical space and the psychological space. The workshop environment was inviting and welcoming from the beginning. It was a place, an “unfettered space” (Hunt, 2010, p. 161), where they had room to breathe, away from the restraints and demands that usually occur throughout a school building, including the staffroom where professional development meetings often occur. It took the emphasis away from the implicit expectations related to what they taught and the way they did it and instead returned to the person who turns up in the classroom.

As the weeks evolved, this environment allowed trust and rapport to build and, through the consistent use of rich, valuable questions (Block, 2002; Harpaz & Lefstein, 2000; Palmer, 2007a; Whyte, 2012), enabling conversations to occur that were courageous, revealing and, at times, confronting. The initial effect emanating from this workshop environment and conversation theme was that everyone reported that they connected more with their students and enjoyed teaching more in the week after the first workshop. This effect intensified as the weeks progressed: each teacher claiming to be experimenting with and enjoying different ways of being more wholeheartedly in the classroom and in deeper connection with their students.

Another important and often underestimated element in providing a nourishing environment appears to be of a particularly female nature: tea and cake as a conduit to warm rapport, laughter and insightful conversation.

**Women’s Styles of Learning through Tea, Cake and Conversation**

Surrounded by framed photos on the walls of pioneering female educators, four women sat around a table for tea, cake and deep conversation about their teaching lives. They nurtured each other into speech, supported and celebrated the insights, and held the disappointments in the arms of the room. Much research has been conducted into the relational nature of women’s development including the foundational writings of Carol Gilligan (1982), as well as the seminal text, *Women’s Ways of Knowing* (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986). These works remind us that women tend to take the role of caretaker and nurturer,
often putting their needs at the bottom of the list. Conversely, Coates (1996) tells us that the nature of women’s talk with each other is one of intimacy and putting needs first. It establishes a sense of connection between women, with the added potential of being a collaborative tool for exploring their world. Notably, laughter is found to be a very important component in acknowledging shared experience, and indeed this current study found that the laughter ‘ratio’ rose as familiarity and rapport grew.

However, far less attention has been paid in previous research to the ritual itself, the offering of tea and cake, and the resulting nourishment of the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of the participants that this evokes. Care was also taken with the sensory experience. Each week the cake provided was purchased from a patisserie. A particular personal blend of herbal tea was made in beautiful teapots with matching cups. These elements helped to create an experience that was looked forward to with eagerness. All participants specifically mentioned their appreciation of these additional visual touches and described feelings of support and nurturing as related to the tea and cake experience:

Surprisingly, there is almost no literature specifically addressing this aspect. One Australian study was located describing a midwifery program supporting new mothers (Barrett & Taylor, 2002), which underscored this study’s findings. Note was also made of the choice to provide special biscuits “of the special, tasty kind that women put out for house guests … contrasting sharply with the plain and monotonous public hospital variety normally offered to mothers with their morning and afternoon teas. Basically, we … wanted mothers to feel special. One way of doing this was to offer them nourishment of the body, mind, and spirit” (p. 239).

The reviewed literature presented evidence of teachers under considerable daily stress and strain, with very little available at work to tend to their holistic needs. An environment that was welcoming, that provided tea in beautiful china, cake of good quality and facilitated conversations that encouraged the soul into speech rather than acting as pragmatic to-do lists for change, seems to have been an important factor in creating the capacity for the subsequent professional renewal of these three teachers.

5.1.5 The Guiding Role of the Facilitator

While a nourishing environment appeared to be of utmost importance in creating a space with the capacity for transformative learning to occur (Levine, 1989; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009), the role undertaken by the facilitator also appeared to be pivotal to the renewal experience. York-Barr et al (2006) emphasize the importance of a skilled facilitator of a reflective
practice group who “design[s] and implement[s] effective group processes” (p. 156), with the ability to reflect-in-action (Schön, 1983) and adjust the processes immediately when necessary. In this instance, the program required the facilitator to first create and maintain the nourishing environment, and then to fluidly navigate the participants through an experience of unconditional support combined with regular invitations to confront assumptions, habits and beliefs: nurturing tempered with challenge.

The Mediating Tools

The facilitator also carefully selected tools and strategies for each week with which to drive the dialogue: the “mediational means” (Wertsch, 1998) and the “third things” (Palmer, 2004). The People on the Tree picture (Appendix C, p. 128) was used to begin every workshop. Initially, the conversation was intentionally focused on the first story of each participant’s teaching life, the story about the pathway towards the decision to become a teacher and the motivations behind this desire. Ritchhart’s (2002) concept of a teacher’s Red Thread, or personal pedagogical creed, was introduced as a potent way to begin a journey back to each teacher’s sense of purpose, their vocational intent. Carefully chosen questions concerning living one’s values in the workplace evoked stories from these older teachers about feeling discarded by their leadership teams in favour of the younger, less experienced teachers, a conversation that was painful and at times expressing resentment, though finally affirming as they all recognised that their roles as older mentors were valuable. In later weeks, their results from the Values Inventory (AVI) seemed both inspiring and confronting, leading to key insights about reclaiming aspects of themselves that they had discarded or put out of sight. The comprehensive values files that were generated provided rich data sets in the later analysis. The use of specifically selected poems (Appendix C, p. 132) and the Nine Signposts questions (Appendix C, p. 129) added deeper, metaphoric layers to the dialogues.

The construction of draft purpose statements brought the conversation to an unequivocal recognition of each person’s unique strengths and their deeper source of purposeful motivation (Appendix C, pp. 130-131). Each participant realised that their work in the world – their vocation – had an overarching and inspirational blueprint which, before undergoing the purpose process, had remained largely out of sight. A renewed sense of professional possibilities was described strongly by all. It would seem therefore that the skilled guidance of the facilitator together with the specific tools chosen to drive the conversation meaningfully contributed to each participant’s resulting sense of professional renewal.

Finally, two important findings of this study emerged through the particularities of this specific workshop process; the first being that the concept of renewal is unique to each
individual and arrives via its own distinctive pathway. Even though the process was the same for each participant, the workshop tools were rich and open ended enough to accommodate individual journeys. What constituted renewal was different for each participant and their experience of this renewal came from a different source: Amy reconnected with her art, Cecilia looked to the presence or otherwise in her life of identified values to critically reflect and resolve personal as well as professional aspects of her life that allowed healing and renewal to occur on all levels, and Jacqui used the tools within the workshops to help her slow down, focus and reflect on what was truly important, starting with her need for Congruence, her highest value.

The second and related finding was that the nature of vocation was also of a distinctly personal nature, as the same process uncovered three very different purpose statements, yet all exhibiting a strong vocational desire to offer a unique style of service in the education of their students.

These two findings dovetail with previous research of Taylor and Cranton (2012) that indicated the very unique nature of transformative learning itself. It would seem that the factors highlighted as possibly contributing to the impact of “Coming Home to Self” were also generally supportive of each participant’s desired transformative learning pathway.

5.2. Elaboration on Findings in Relation to Research Question Two
The study’s second research question was:

What are the implications of such a program for teacher renewal?

Implications will be discussed firstly with consideration given to specific elements within the program and then addressing implications relating to the program as a whole, together with recommendations.

The first implication of this program for teacher renewal is the significance of the particular kind of reflective practice used in this program, one which sought to realign the values and purpose-based needs of each person with themselves as professional teachers. This seemed a most valuable tool. As reported by the participants, it facilitated these teachers to experience the impact of “Coming Home to Self”, thereby re-engaging with their profession, the students they support, which in turn impacted positively on their teaching.

There has been a steady increase in the recognition of reflective practice as a form of professional development within educational settings. Much has shifted within schools in recent years, particularly since the establishment of The Australian Institute for Teaching and
Chapter 5: Discussion

School Leadership (AITSL) in 2009. Reflecting regularly on their teaching practice as part of their Performance and Development cycle, is now a required part of teachers’ ongoing professional development (AITSL, 2009). It would be hoped that this obligation does not further remove time for reflection on the areas highlighted in this workshop series, as the difficulty for regular ongoing written reflection was evidenced by these teachers throughout the program. However, when supported to reflect in this particular way and then act, each participant seemed to have reconnected with something deep and important to their sense of self as a teacher. This is a most important implication and generates the question yet again: How can we support teachers to connect with these deeper places more often? In this regard, it invokes the question as to whether the kind of reflection in the This Teaching Life of Mine program may have a role in some of the formal processes already in place.

It appears that this need to holistically reflect and connect is recognised at the leadership level, a most recent indication (January 2013) being the release of the 360 Reflection Tool for principals to reflect on their leadership behaviours (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, AITSL). Under the professional practice of “Developing Self and Others”, educational leaders are encouraged to “Take action to look after own physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing” (AITSL, 360 Reflection Tool Attributes cards, 2013). This example implies an understanding of the personal/professional connection which, as this study’s review of the literature revealed, has a long history of division and separation.

This thesis report therefore recommends highlighting the need for this particular form of values and purpose-based reflective practice for teachers at all levels of the profession. The difficulty with commitment to ongoing reflection that was a finding from this study suggests that convenience for busy teachers is paramount and any techniques, tools or strategies that become too cumbersome will not be adopted by teachers, whatever the ultimate benefit. A further recommendation is to provide staff with time for and places conducive to reflective conversation which, importantly, are sanctioned by school leadership. This will require some rethinking and collaboration between teachers and administrative staff as, despite this being noted by Levine (1989) a quarter of a century earlier, schools are still not typically responding to the adult development requirements of their teachers alongside that of students’ growth.

The second implication arising from the This Teaching Life of Mine program as connected to teacher renewal relates to values articulation and the use of A Values Inventory (AVI) as the facilitative tool. A key finding of the study, that the perception and pathway of renewal is unique to each person, gained clarity through viewing the very diverse values structures of
these participants. The benefit of the specific structure of the AVI: separating prioritised values into clusters of Foundation, Focus and Vision requiring different types of attention, was also evident. Each person was, in effect, offered their own custom-designed program of renewal via their highest values data. Therefore this study recommends that access to a similar values inventory be made available to all teachers as a component of their professional development.

The third implication arising from the findings relates to possible replication of the program by different facilitators for other teacher groups. As a cohort, these participants were all women at similar ages and stages of their careers and research indicates this may have enhanced their satisfaction with the workshops’ constructed environment and foci. Poutiatine (2005) noted that teachers attracted to Courage to Teach retreats tend to be mid-career or later and are looking for something in their professional development that moves beyond how or what to teach. These participants also responded most positively to the specific kind of nourishing environment created by the facilitator, suggesting an already existing values alignment with this particular focus. Additionally, research suggests that environments like these may be specifically supporting women’s learning (Barrett & Taylor, 2002; Coates, 1996; Simone, 2004). Finally, the action research component of the study supported modification of the tools and processes and subsequent strategic facilitation of the sessions such that the program became increasingly custom-designed to suit the emerging professional renewal needs of the participants.

Given the finding relating to the unique nature of renewal demonstrated by these participants, creating a generic program would neither acknowledge nor necessarily support these individual pathways. This has implications for workshop content and processes in future programs. It could be surmised that teachers whose values were focused in areas relating to activity and action or control and order for example, would not find the same unhurried and immersive reflective process, or aesthetic inquiry (Henderson & Gornik, 2007), as a useful format. Similarly, facilitators with different interests will instinctively lean towards other tools of mediation.

However, if the key intention of future workshops is to maintain a values and purpose exploration, this does not negate but rather underscores the finding of the study stated above: that the path to renewal is distinctive to each individual. This means that different tools and techniques may be more supportive.

What this study does recommend however, is for the facilitator to maintain the capacity to

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modify the content as the needs of participants emerge. This means that the renewal pathway in effect drives the program.

An important consideration when running similar programs is the participation of the facilitator within the workshops. As noted in Chapter 3, through this investigation into values and purpose I had acknowledged my own process of renewal and had already completed the values inventory both for personal insight and to ascertain its usefulness for the study. My personal participation in the workshops varied, as I contributed to some of the conversations and occasionally used my personal values data to illustrate an important point. These intermittent contributions appeared to add significantly to the trust and rapport within the group. Excerpts from my own reflective journal (see Appendix H) document some of the feelings of doubt and confusion, as well as moments of satisfaction when things happened that underscored the importance of the research. While beyond the scope of this study, the influence of a facilitator’s values data on the program design would be a most useful focus for further research.

Further implications include the composition and size of the groups and the timing of renewal workshops in a teacher’s life and career cycle.

As stated, *This Teaching Life of Mine* consisted of a cohort of teachers all at a similar stage in their career, which made it possible to direct the conversation to specific areas of concern. This implies that the questions and concerns needing to be addressed on the path to professional renewal may change through career stages. Therefore this report also recommends that responding to the changing needs of reflective educators as they move through their career (Steffy, 2000) could be a proactive way of supporting teacher renewal. Addressing the unique concerns of graduate teachers may well go some way to slowing down the attrition rate in these newer recruits. The Australian longitudinal FIT-Choice research project (Watt & Richardson, 2011) is a welcome contributor in this regard but more can be done to serve the needs of teachers at all stages. Teachers in mid-career and transitioning into positions of responsibility and those finding their feet again after returning to work from family leave are two more discrete cohorts who may need support and attention given to their ongoing vocational engagement.

A sense of readiness for change also seems integral to the success or otherwise of such a program. While none of the three participants in this study were actively seeking renewal programs, they were nonetheless eager to join when the offer appeared, all separately voicing that the program had arrived at just the right time for each of them. This suggests that renewal
programs may be keenly attended if more visible advertisements of these opportunities were developed.

Size of future groups will also need to be considered. During their final interview, all participants confirmed their preference for the group experience rather than as a solitary process, supporting the views of other reflective practice researchers (Ghaye, 2000; Grabove, 1997; Taylor, 2009). However, as facilitator, the small size of the group made it possible to provide significant one-to-one support, which would not be feasible in large gatherings. Specific kinds of support also came from the participants themselves. Within the group in this study were two teachers from the same school. Attending the workshops with a trusted colleague seemed to extend the support for these two participants. However, while there were beneficial elements in these participants attending the same workplace, there is no indication that this is an optimum criterion for collegiate support. Future groups attended by peers from different working environments may be a useful variation of the program.

That the program’s participants had maintained their sense of renewal and varying degrees of optimism four months later was an important finding from this study. Previous case study research of the Courage to Teach (CTT) retreats (Simone, 2004) found that teachers struggled to incorporate their still fragile learning into daily actions in schools that did not value this kind of reflective focus. It may be surmised that the finding from this present study may be linked to the structure of the program. Rather than being completely removed from their school environment, these teachers experienced regular “doses” of focused reflection, returning to the reality of their workplaces between workshops. Additionally, the conversations were conducted over a three month period, allowing time for participants’ beliefs and attitudes to shift into less fragile patterns of thought. This study also responded to Simone’s finding by attempting to provide some form of ongoing support at the end of the workshop series through the distribution of the booklet with guiding ideas and further recommended reading (See Appendix C, p. 138, for contents of booklet), though this study’s results suggest that provision of materials alone is inadequate, and more is needed to adequately uphold teachers’ sense of sustained support as well as a connection with enriching ideas and principles.

That teachers do respond to types of ongoing support and connection was documented by Freeman et al (2003) in a three year longitudinal study of a university based professional development strategy targeting student wellbeing. While teachers participating in the study found the workload arduous, they valued the unity and rapport created though being part of the same group over two years and noted that this was a factor contributing to their sense of
professional renewal. This decade-old finding is echoed in the most recent evaluation of a CTT retreat (Smith 2012), specifically the program called Circle of Trust. All the participants had attended at least two retreats and were intent on remaining connected to the Circle of Trust community. Smith found, unexpectedly that participating in the evaluation itself was “a helpful catalyst for them to review, reflect on and continue their Circle of Trust learning” (p. 105). This strongly suggests that, while staying connected to the ideas is important, maintaining connection with the nourishing communities that foster them would be a powerful strategy in the forward planning for ongoing professional and personal renewal for teachers.

These two separate findings from Freeman et al (2003) and Smith (2012) add weight to the findings in the present study about the value of collegiate support within the workshop series. It invites for consideration the possibility of small, critically reflective conversational groups established within regions and perhaps away from school settings, focused on themes of professional renewal and what matters to a teacher’s sense of self in today’s challenging school environments. Groups whose purpose includes nurturing the hearts and spirits of its members takes seriously the hidden costs paid by our teachers in caring for our students.

The final and perhaps most important implication arising from this study is the consideration of the ripple effect such a teacher renewal program might have on student outcomes. With the evidence increasingly pointing to the relationship between teacher and student as one of the most influential on student achievement (Hattie, 2009), the importance of attending to a teacher’s holistic wellbeing, one of this study’s findings, seems vital. Participants in This Teaching Life of Mine described a strong sense of reconnection with their students, increased enjoyment of teaching and a sense that their teaching was more effective after only one workshop. These feelings of enthusiasm, closer connection with their students and teaching efficacy deepened for each teacher throughout the workshop series. It would seem that the impact of “Coming Home to Self” had reignited their “inspired teacher” (Steele, 2009, p. 24): one who is passionate about and committed to ensuring their students’ continuous progress and improvement.

5.3. Supporting and Re-Invigorating the Profession of Teaching

It is clear that more is needed to support and revitalize a profession that is currently in the daily news calling for professional recognition and working conditions commensurate with the complex task of educating the country’s youth. Any consideration that can usefully contribute to the vocational health of our teachers would seem worthy of inclusion.
Recent research from Finland (Sahlberg, 2011) confirms that providing teachers with the conditions they require goes a long way towards maintaining an invigorated teacher population. Teaching is seen as a most desirable, hotly competed-for profession in Finland, and the caveat conditions to which Sahlberg refers are at the heart of this current study. Noted also in earlier comparative research (Webb et al., 2004), the first and foremost attraction to teaching for Finnish graduates is that “teachers’ workplaces allow them to fulfil their moral missions” (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 76). In Finland, professional autonomy is the standard, rather than the exception. Combining this capacity to fulfil their vocational aspirations with a high level of ongoing teacher education oriented towards research, together with a widespread public perception of teaching as a highly respected profession has created a cohort of vital, purposeful teachers.

This would indicate that there is an important place in Australia for a specific kind of teacher renewal program, one which confirms the dynamism of a teaching life underpinned with specific, vocational intent, and fuelled by core values, of which This Teaching Life of Mine is one example.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

The previous chapter discussed the findings from and implications of the study. This chapter concludes the thesis report.

Teaching is a profession with a strong vocational history, and the desire to make a tangible difference in the educational lives of children is strong incentive for many who choose the teaching life. All three teachers participating in this program reported experiences of professional renewal, both at the completion of and four months after the workshop series. Set in a holistically nourishing environment and with invitation to engage with rich, important questions in stimulating, sometimes confronting conversations, the workshop process uncovered what was found to be the very individual nature of renewal. Interestingly, it also underscored the equally unique nature of vocation, as each teacher’s journey back to self through a reconnection with purpose revealed three distinct motivations for being drawn to the teaching profession, albeit under the common umbrella, voiced by one of the participants: “We are growing Human Beings”.

A key feature of this thesis is the finding of the central place required for spiritual renewal. This in itself would constitute the basis of further research. Currently there are academic opportunities to nourish a teacher intellectually, though more could be done to usefully deepen and enrich the dialogues that occur in professional development programs generally. Physical wellbeing is acknowledged in various sectors as important but programs for nourishing the hearts and spirits of teachers are rare. Professional development that turns its attention to addressing the personal as well as the professional self, recognises that the teacher’s inner landscape affects their teaching quality. Significantly, nourishing the inner teacher does much to enhance their teaching and therefore enriches the learning of their students in today’s demanding classrooms.

Critical reflection followed by action was shown to be a key factor of renewal, though, importantly it was also demonstrated that these teachers needed support in maintaining the reflective process beyond the session times of the program. This kind of support can come from a number of avenues and adopting a model of ongoing small groups who meet regularly to give attention to the reflective needs of each member is worth considering within and between educational settings.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

A finding from the recent U.S. Courage to Teach (CTT) evaluation (Smith, 2012) showed interviewees were applying the learning in their professional lives in diverse ways that included establishing similar dialogue processes in their workplaces, setting up reading groups or using third things such as poetry and art in their classrooms (p. 109). This is resonant with an important finding of this current study: that the path to renewal is unique and a program such as This Teaching Life of Mine represents a further possible pathway, with certain important features used to stimulate distinctive and individual journeys.

Participating in critically rich, reflective dialogues about a reconnection to their core values and deeper purpose within a small collegiate group was the kind of professional development the teachers reported on in this study seemed to find useful. In this regard, a program such as This Teaching Life of Mine is quite distinctive from other programs offered currently to schools. Based in strong reflective practice theory with a robust and comprehensive values-focused process, and using an action research method allowed for a custom-designed conversational workshop series to be structured around the specific needs of each participant. Pedagogically, it was dialogic, fluid and open ended enough to support diverse exploration of individual values and purpose, with each participant arriving at a place of renewal and reconnection with vocation via unique pathways. With this broad foundational approach, a program with these elements has the facility to support professional and personal renewal at many different stages in the career cycle of a teacher. Programs like this may therefore be of benefit to the wider teaching population, with a view to promoting continued engagement and teaching vitality rather than only looking at ways to reinvigorate disillusioned or burnout teachers.

That said, a limitation of this study was the very small size and the specificity, including the gender, of the cohort. It is not known whether this program would have been equally successful with other cohorts. Therefore this thesis recommends replicating this study’s broad focus in future research – the exploration of core values and purpose with the overall goal of professional renewal – but recruiting different cohorts and experimenting with different tools of mediation. Again acknowledging a key finding of this study, that individual renewal arrives along unique pathways, it is worth considering whether conducting a similar program with other small groups such as early career teachers, groups with mixed gender or teachers in roles of leadership, may produce similar experiences of renewal by custom-designing the tools and foci to accommodate their differing needs. Further research focusing on teachers with different core values priorities may also cast light on the kind of dispositions that
respond to programs of this nature, as well as those for which programs like this one are not useful.

Whatever the method used to support the renewal of our teachers, perhaps the most important reminder emanating from this study is that teachers with an invigorated sense of mission and purpose are in the optimum position to inspire their students, to promote student enjoyment of learning and to facilitate their continuous educational engagement and progress. This is the real task of the teaching life and therefore helping our educators to reconnect with that desire to make a positive impact on their students’ education is to give attention to what really matters.

This report began with an allegorical tale describing three angles from which to view the task of building a cathedral. Using the findings from this study would go some way in assisting stressed teachers to retain their vocational place in the global community of educators; each of them equally, yet uniquely, motivated to continue their part in the construction of a multifaceted and inspiring cathedral for education, dedicated to the best possible schooling for all our children.
References


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References


Appendix A: Advertisement for Recruitment

Are you a teacher currently working in a public school in Victoria?

AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST TO YOU

Did you join the teaching profession because you were keen to make a difference in the lives of children and/or the profession itself?

Has the busy, often stressful nature of the job sometimes prevented you from feeling that you are able to do the job you signed up for?

Have you sometimes asked a family member, colleague or yourself: “Please remind me why I became a teacher?”

Have you been teaching for at least ten years?

If you answered “yes” to all of the above, I am keen to hear from you.

My name is Julia Reid, currently undertaking a Masters in Education at the University of Melbourne. I am about to begin a pilot study, starting in August or September 2010, which is focused on teacher renewal: supporting and sustaining the heart of the “person in the profession”. At their best, teachers are agents of growth and change but some teachers are vulnerable to disillusionment and even burnout.

The central focus underpinning this study is to explore a different form of professional development designed to nurture the heart and spirit of teachers. It investigates the impact of a reflective practice strategy for teachers' professional renewal using a small group exploration of personal core values and purpose. Processes that sustain teachers are sadly lacking within our schools, and findings from this study will be important and useful information for teachers participating in this study and indeed, any educational setting.

If you would like to know more about this study please feel free to ring me on 0419 885 502 or email me at: j.reid@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au

Even if you do not wish to, or are not able to participate, you may know someone who would like to be involved.

All communication is welcome.

Julia Reid
Appendix B: Plain Language Statement

PROJECT TITLE: *Teacher renewal through a reflective group exploration of core values and purpose*

You are invited to participate in the above research project, which is being conducted by Dr Julie Hamston (supervisor), Ms. Liz Freeman (co-supervisor) and Ms Julia Reid (Master of Education student) of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at The University of Melbourne. You have been selected to participate in this project as a teacher in a public school who has been in the profession for at least ten years and who has reflected sometimes, in the course of a busy and challenging career, on whether they made the right decision to be a teacher. This project will form part of Ms Reid’s Master of Education thesis, and has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

The project is a pilot program which is investigating a reflective practice strategy for teachers’ professional renewal using a small group exploration of personal core values and purpose. The central focus underpinning the study is to explore a different form of professional development designed to nurture the heart and spirit of teachers.

Should you agree to participate, you would be asked to complete a *Values Inventory* questionnaire (AVI), participate in six reflective workshops (conducted fortnightly) with three other participants and a one-to-one interview three to four months after the completion of the workshops. The workshops will be 90 minutes long and the interview will be around 60 minutes long. The workshops will be reflective conversations guided by open-ended questions about what it means to you professionally and personally to be a teacher, and will include particular focus – as indicated of interest by each individual participant – on the values results each group member received from the AVI questionnaire. You will also be asked to write regularly in a reflective journal in the weeks between each workshop. Themes for reflection and questions to consider will be provided. A total of 30 minutes of reflective writing each week is sufficient. In the final workshop you will be asked to tell a story of significant change that you have experienced as a result of participating in the workshop series. With your permission, the workshops and interview would be audio-recorded so that the researcher can make an accurate record of what was said in the conversations and interview. The audio-recording of the workshops and interview will only be used to transcribe the interactions that occurred for analysis.
Appendix B: Plain Language Statement

We intend to protect the anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. It will only be possible to link your responses to your name by the researcher, for example, in order to know where to send you your interview transcript for checking or verification (if need be). In the final report, you will be referred to by an alias or a code. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity; however, you should note that as the number of people participating is small, it is possible that someone may still be able to identify you. The final report of the thesis arising from this research will be available at the library of The University of Melbourne when the project is completed. It is also possible that the results will be presented at academic conferences. During the project, data will be kept securely in the student researcher’s study/office for accessibility while the research project is carried out. After the project is concluded data will be secured in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education for five years from the date of publication, before being destroyed.

Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. Please note that this research is done at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at The University of Melbourne and is not part any program at the/institution of which you are a staff member.

If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and returning it in the envelope provided. Times that are convenient for all group participants will be arranged to conduct the fortnightly workshops.

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact any of the researchers; Ms Julia Reid: 0419885 502, Ms Freeman: 8344 097 or Dr Hamston: jhamston@unimelb.edu.au. Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, on ph: 8344 2073 or fax: 9347 6739.
Welcome Letter

Dear ______________________

I am really looking forward to getting started next week. First, the crucial address details.

The workshops will be held in:

The Auriole Fraser Library,

Room 334 (third floor)

234 Queensberry St, Parkville.

This building is part of the Graduate School of Education. On the first evening (7th September) I will be downstairs at the front of the building at 5.45pm to make sure everyone finds their way to the room.

I thought I would put together a relatively short document, giving you some idea of the background to this research, followed by a few ‘housekeeping’ points about the workshops will be conducted.

‘We become teachers for reasons of the heart.

But many of us lose heart as time goes by.

How can we take heart alone and together,

So we can give heart to our students and our world,

Which is what good teachers do?’

(Palmer, 1998, p. 10)

Not being in a specific classroom or school this year, my professional focus has been increasingly turned towards some of the bigger pictures in life and in education. In particular I have looked at the disposition of the teacher – the person who turns up in the classroom and engages (or does not) with students – that potentially adds immeasurable quality to the learning opportunities for our children. I have also worked in schools where feelings of disillusionment and sometimes burnout have overwhelmed teaching staff, such that engagement and vitality for the job at hand are often elusive and very hard to sustain.

It was my view, and my personal experience, that useful regular reflective practice on the teacher’s part is a central component of a vibrant teaching disposition. But reflective
practice gets quite a bad press in most staffrooms, possibly because it involves the obligatory ‘sheet’ to be handed in at the end of tasks: What went well? What didn’t go well? What will you do next time? And so on. We are told as professionals that we need to ask rich, open-ended, fertile questions of our students, but rarely are we extended the same courtesy.

Due to a combination of other study combined with purposeful introspection I was now respecting myself differently as a teacher by asking myself better, deeper, more relevant questions that attempted to get to the heart of the matter rather than evasively skirting around the boundaries of what was truly important. My reflections were based on my core, prioritised values and I made sure that my reflective questioning took into account the ‘why’ of me, my purpose as I currently understood it to be. As I thought about my old staffroom full of good, tired teachers endlessly responding to bells, yard duty, timetable changes, meetings … and the needs of their students, I wondered what might happen to their sense of “vocational vitality” if similar reflective questions were offered to them in a collegiate and nurturing environment?

Hence my research and this reflective workshop series. Parker Palmer’s book, The Courage to Teach gave me much to think about when planning the nature of the questions. Indeed, Palmer regularly runs retreats for teachers in the US through The Centre for Courage and Renewal.

THE WORKSHOPS

CONFIDENTIALITY

Throughout the workshop series, I am going to ask participants to employ Parker Palmer’s method of Double Confidentiality: not only do we not talk about what has been said by others outside these sessions, we will also not talk about these sessions to each other outside the workshop setting. It is easier to speak one’s truth if you know you will not be called on to clarify or expand on something later.

WE ARE NOT ‘FIXING THE PROBLEM’

These workshops are not about ‘fixing the problem’. Palmer tells us that “the soul doesn’t want to be fixed, it simply wants to be welcomed, attended to and heard by people who are willing to offer it simple hospitality. So we are here to ‘hear each other into speech’, to cultivate seeds of possibility in each others’ lives.”
Appendix B: Plain Language Statement

So, again, I look forward to our time together and see you next week.

Kind regards

JULIA REID
Appendix C: *This Teaching Life of Mine* Workshop Program

**WORKSHOP ONE**

**BEGINNING QUOTE:**
*Getting into the reflective mode sets off ripples and the extent of these cannot always be foreseen.* (Ghaye, 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools that drove the dialogue (Wertsch, 1998)</th>
<th>KEY FOCUS</th>
<th>PROCESS ELEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four key areas of renewal cards</td>
<td>Clarity of intention: Why are you here? What renewal (if any) are you seeking?</td>
<td>“Position yourself within or across the quadrants”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First entry in Workshop Journals</td>
<td>Deciding on the outcome sought by each participant</td>
<td>Writing an intention for the end of the workshops: “It is the 24th November, the day after the completion of the Teacher Renewal Workshops and I feel …”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘People on the Tree’ Picture</td>
<td>Reflection tool</td>
<td>Which person best represents how you were feeling at work today? This term? This year? Which person best reflects you in terms of where you are in your career?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS ABOUT TEACHING HISTORY, CHOICES MADE</th>
<th>Bringing ‘the self’ that teaches into the forefront of the conversation</th>
<th>“What within you was evoked by this field? Its values, its methods, the way it names and frames reality? What does the nature of this field reveal about who you are?” (selected from Palmer, 2007b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RED THREAD</td>
<td>A metaphor for describing beliefs, passions, values, goals that tie together and unite a teacher’s practice over time and contexts (Ritchhart, 2002)</td>
<td>What is your Red Thread? Your students generally know what it is, it is often revealed in what you say over and over again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REFLECTIVE JOURNALLING SHEET</th>
<th>Guided reflection between workshops</th>
<th>GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR EACH WEEK:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Insights into my life that have come to me as a result of this workshop</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Connect/Extend/Challenge (Project Zero, Harvard University)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>SOME ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS INCLUDED:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- What do you stand for as a teacher?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- In relation to your work, what are you most passionate about?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- To what extent are your passions integral to who you are, such that you would feel diminished of you were unable to express them? (selected from Palmer, 2007b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WORKSHOP TWO

BEGINNING QUOTE: Transformation comes from more than pursuing profound questions that seeking practical answers. Peter Block

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools that drove the dialogue</th>
<th>KEY FOCUS</th>
<th>PROCESS ELEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘People on the Tree’ Picture</td>
<td>CHECK-IN TOOL</td>
<td>Which person best represents how you were feeling at work today? Which person best represents you in this renewal process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brave New World Exercise</td>
<td>Introduction to personal key values – Links assumptions to world view which underpins core values (Collins &amp; Chippendale, 1995)</td>
<td>‘You have been told our planet is dying. You are to be relocated to a new planet. You will have all your basic needs met there. You can only take three things with you.’ Clarify choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key-Values sheet</td>
<td>Which values lay beneath the choices made in Brave New World exercise?</td>
<td>Look through the definitions of each value and circle as many as you think are relevant. “Integrity” defined as “living your values”:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUIDED QUESTIONS</td>
<td>Connecting just articulated values with workplace support</td>
<td>- What aspects of your identity and integrity feel most supported and engaged with the work you do? - What aspects of your identity and integrity feel most threatened or endangered by your work? (selected from Palmer, 2007b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING A Values Inventory (AVI)

REFLECTIVE JOURNALING Guided reflection between workshops

- GENERAL GUIDANCE and
- Exploring the concept of ‘emotional labour’ (Hochschild, 1983)
- Exploring the concept of ‘the inner teacher’ who acts as a personal guard, warding off what insults our integrity and welcoming what affirms it (Palmer, 2007b, p. 33)
## WORKSHOP THREE

**BEGINNING QUOTE:**

*What I do today is important as I am exchanging a day of my life for it.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools that drove the dialogue</th>
<th>KEY FOCUS</th>
<th>PROCESS ELEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>‘People on the Tree’ Picture</td>
<td>CHECK-IN TOOL</td>
<td>Which person best represents how you were feeling at work today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Which person best represents you in this renewal process?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual results from completion of the AVI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALUES DISCUSSION</th>
<th>Concretizing Personal Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If you were absolutely living your top value to its full capacity in your life what would your life look like, sound like, feel like, be like? On a scale of 1 – 10, how manifest is the value that you have named the dearest to your heart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALUES DISCUSSION (cont)</th>
<th>FOUNDATION/FOCUS/VISION VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Just as a tree's roots and environment (fertile ground, suitable climate, etc.) are essential for its health, so too, are having effective strategies for living your Foundation Values essential for your overall health and well-being. Vision Values are associated with your view of how you would like the world to be, or how you believe it should be. They are your source of inspiration and motivation. Visit your vision values from time to time to formulate a highly inspirational and motivating personal vision - then get on with the actions necessary to bring it into fruition. Living your Focus Values to the full will create the life-style/life-experiences you desire. You will be in the best position to focus most of your energy on these values when your Vision and Foundation values are “out-of-sight and out-of-mind” - i.e. when you have assimilated them into your life. (From EOV, Chippendale, 1988-2010, p. 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REFLECTIVE JOURNALING SHEET</th>
<th>Guided reflection between workshops</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GENERAL GUIDANCE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SEE/THINK/WONDER (Project Zero, Harvard University)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying situations that have contributed most to experiencing top 5 values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any common themes emerging to help identify how best to increase experiencing these values?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## WORKSHOP FOUR

**BEGINNING QUOTE:**

*Finding your best self is more a poetic embrace than an analytical triumph.*

*(Henderson, 1992, p. 28)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools that drove the dialogue</th>
<th>KEY FOCUS</th>
<th>PROCESS ELEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘People on the Tree’ Picture</td>
<td>CHECK-IN TOOL</td>
<td>Which person best represents how you were feeling at work today? Which person best represents you in this renewal process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values Map homework</td>
<td></td>
<td>Example:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrator extract</td>
<td>Explicit connection of values to renewal</td>
<td>Do you agree and, if you do, how will you start thinking about allocating your energy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poems:</td>
<td>Facilitating deeper discussion about renewal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Thread reintroduction</td>
<td>Linking to purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Williams Nine Signpost Questions</td>
<td>Connecting Values to Purpose</td>
<td>How is the ‘why’ of you connected to who you are as a teacher? See Appendix O for complete set of Nine Signpost questions The Journey - Mary Oliver After – Octavio Paz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poems</td>
<td>Using a ‘Third thing’: Responding to Poetry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose Hunting questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFLECTIVE JOURNALING SHEET</td>
<td>Guided reflection between workshops</td>
<td>See Appendix N for complete set of Purpose Hunting questions • GENERAL GUIDANCE and • Purpose Hunting Questions • None Signposts questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WORKSHOP FIVE

BEGINNING QUOTE: *There is in us an instinct for newness, for renewal, for a liberation of creative power. We seek to awaken in ourselves a force which really changes our lives from within. And yet, the same instinct tells us that this change is a recovery of that which is deepest, most original, most personal in ourselves.*

Thomas Merton

Tools that drove the dialogue | KEY FOCUS | PROCESS ELEMENTS
--- | --- | ---
'People on the Tree' Picture | CHECK-IN TOOL | Which person best represents how you were feeling at work today? Which person best represents you in this renewal process? Guided discussion

David Whyte extract

"Reconnecting who we are with what we do" (Palmer, 2007)

Purpose Process (Canfield, 2005)

Discussing MSC process | A written Purpose statement | 3 Questions Guided writing of statement

WORKSHOP SIX

BEGINNING QUOTE REUSED FROM WORKSHOP FIVE:

*It seems to me that each of us belongs to the world in a very particular way, and that we learn slowly to love out that way of belonging as a faith that can be stronger than any religious dogma. I do not think this is a selfish road; I believe that this is the only authentic way we can give of our self and our gifts to others. This is how we learn to be generous. And it is also how we learn the magnificence and difficulty of living a courageous life.*

David Whyte

Tools that drove the dialogue | KEY FOCUS | PROCESS ELEMENTS
--- | --- | ---
'MS C' | Stories of Significant Change from each participant | Which person best represents how you were feeling at work today?

MSC

First entry in participants’ journals | How much of what they desired to achieve became reality? | Read the first entry from your journal, written at the commencement of the workshops Reading the extract and facilitating discussion

Extract from Palmer (2007)

Did we create a space where each soul could show up?

Take Home Booklets | An invitation to continue using the tools and techniques of renewal | Identifying point of renewal at workshop close

'People on the Tree’ Picture
Appendix C: This Teaching Life of Mine Workshop Program

People in the Tree Picture

Source unknown
Nine Signposts

1. Your inner voice and your inspired ideas

What do you know in your heart you are here to do and be?

2. Behind your resistance – your calling will often activate your resistance

What are you aware that you are resisting the most and talking yourself out of? What brilliant idea(s) of yours do you keep trying to dismiss but which won’t go away?

3. In your shadow life

Where are you hiding out or supporting other people more than yourself?

4. Under the statement ‘I don’t know’

What are you pretending you don’t know or are afraid to become clear about?

5. Through your naturalness, which shows up in other peoples’ eyes

What comes easily to you and what abilities or characteristics are you most appreciated and acknowledged for? What can’t you stop yourself doing because it just flows from you?

6. Behind the words ‘If only I could find someone to pay me to do it’

If you knew you could earn all the money you needed what would you most love to do?

7. In your lost and neglected dreams and your unutilized talent

What did you dream of doing when you were a child that you’ve let go of? What talent of yours is underutilized and itching to be expressed?

8. Behind a wake-up call or even a crisis

What part of your unlived life is trying to get your attention now?

9. In a greater sense of yourself and a new sense of identity

The work we were born to do is often found when we begin to think about ourselves more highly and recognise our significance in ways we may have previously overlooked.
Purpose Hunting Questions

Choose two or three of the following questions that are easiest for you to answer:

- Times in your life that you’ve felt most passionate
- Times in your life that you’ve felt most fulfilled
- Times when you’ve felt your life has had the most meaning
- Times when you’ve felt most aligned
- Times when you’ve experienced ease, flow, synchronicity and serendipity

Answer all of the following questions:

- What did you always want to be or do when you grew up?
- What are you uniquely designed and prepared to do?
- List the things to which you’re consistently drawn.
- What about them draws you?
- If you had a year to live, what would you spend your time doing?
- You have lived to a ripe old age, and you are lying on your deathbed. You look back with satisfaction over a long, fulfilling life. You feel satisfied and fulfilled, because you did or were what?
- You have won the lottery, and all your financial needs are handled. You spend a year traveling, buying expensive toys and having fun, then get bored and decide it’s time to do something meaningful with your newfound freedom and resources. What do you do?

(selected from Kelley, 2009, p. 31-32)
Purpose Writing Process and Participants’ Purpose Statements

The Purpose Exercise

1. List two or three of your unique personal qualities.
2. List two or three ways you enjoy expressing those qualities.
3. Assume the world is perfect right now. What does the world look like? How is everyone interacting with everyone else? What does it feel like?
4. Combine the three above responses into a single statement.

(from Canfield, 2005, p. 23)

AMY

With intuition, a balanced understanding and willingness to work for what is needed, I organise, develop and nurture relationships such that people experience joy, fun and the brightness of possibility when living free to be themselves.

CECILIA

With excitement for life and a resolution to act, I spontaneously and fluidly support people to have what they need in order to feel safe, secure and able to embrace opportunities to grow and to become.

JACQUI

With insight, courage and an awareness of the big picture, I challenge existing paradigms and open up new possibilities such that people communicate, accept each other with empathy and, in that process, grow into the possibility of themselves.
Poems

(selected from Intrator & Scribner, 2003)

The Way It Is
There's a thread you follow. It goes among things that change. But it doesn't change. People wonder about what you are pursuing. You have to explain about the thread. But it is hard for others to see. While you hold it you can't get lost. Tragedies happen; people get hurt Or die; and you suffer and get old. Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding. You don't ever let go of the thread.

William Stafford

Dream Deferred
What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up Like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore – And then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over – Like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags Like a heavy load. Or does it explode?

Langston Hughes
The Journey

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you kept shouting
their bad advice –
though the whole house began to tremble
and you felt the old tug at your ankles.
"Mend my life!"
each voice cried.
But you didn’t stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations –
though their melancholy was terrible.
It was already late
Enough, and a wild night,
And the road full of fallen branches and stones.

But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice,
which you slowly recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world, determined to do
the only thing you could do –
determined to save
the only life you could save.

Mary Oliver

After
After chopping off all the arms that reached out to me;
after boarding up all the windows and doors;

after filling all the pits with poisoned water;
after building my house on the rock of a No inaccessible to flattery and fear;

after cutting off my tongue and eating it;
after hurling handfuls of silence and monosyllables of scorn at my loves;

after forgetting my name
and the name of my birthplace
and the name of my race;

after judging and sentencing myself
to perpetual waiting
and perpetual loneliness, I heard
against the stones of my dungeon of syllogisms
the humid, tender, insistent
onset of spring.

Octavio Paz

Sweet Darkness

When your eyes are tired
all the world is tired also.

When your vision has gone
No part of the world can find you.

Time to go into the dark,
where the night has eyes
to recognize its own.

There you can be sure
you are not beyond love.

The dark will be your womb
tonight.

The night will give you a horizon
Further than you can see.

You must learn one thing.
The world was made to be free in.

Give up all the other worlds
except the one to which you belong.

Sometimes it takes darkness and the sweet
confinement of your aloneness
to learn

anything or anyone
that does not bring you alive

is too small for you.

David Whyte
Emails sent to participants

A copy of this email was sent to each participant:

10/10/10
Hello Amy -
I hope the rest of the week went well after the workshop together on Tuesday and that, despite your frantic workload, you have had an opportunity to reflect on some of those bigger, quite important questions we raised in the group last week about the way your highest values are manifesting in your life right now. I thought I’d send everyone a reminder between sessions this time instead of letting time (and life) get in the way.

So, you were going to continue drawing the concept map that tied all your values together in a meaningful way: the way they relate to each other, what conversations (and/or conflicts) they might have.
You were also invited to think of situations where your highest values were being experienced and to look for possible themes or patterns emerging.

Enjoy this reflection time with yourself and I will see you on the 19th at 6pm.

Be well

This email was sent to each participant:
17/10/10
Hello Amy -

Just a quick note to say that I am looking forward to our session together on Tuesday very much.
Exploring other peoples’ values in this way entices me to look again at my own and question [or at least reaffirm] that the values I have placed highly are indeed the ones that are indeed close to my heart.

I took the Inventory again and, interestingly some things have shifted priority such that I may have to reformulate my concept map :) Have you finished yours yet and/ or looked at the way your highest values currently manifest in your life?
Appendix C: This Teaching Life of Mine Workshop Program

Here’s to tea, conversation and chocolate cake...

NB: After consultation about privacy issues, all three participants were happy to share email addresses and the emails became communal.

20/10/2010
Hello Cecilia, Amy and Jacqui –
Thanks for last night’s session! As usual it was a rich, multi-layered conversation (fuelled by tea and cake) which focused real attention on things that matter deeply to all three of you.
I think that the reflective dialogues that you had with yourselves between workshops added a tangible depth to some of the insights: as Amy said, the benefits of reflection is “listening to yourself”.
As we had so many areas of insight to cover last night, I don’t feel that I really gave you as clear an understanding of what I mean by ‘purpose’ as you deserve, so if you don’t mind, I’ll attempt to clarify here.
I’ve heard the essential question described as: “What is your ‘because’?”
It has been suggested that aligning yourself with your life’s purpose gives you a deep sense of fulfillment and inner peace.
In teaching terms it may be to what end you want to do your work, or even perhaps what you see as your personal calling in the world: the question of what it is deep inside you that moves you to do what you do. It has been described as becoming aware of the meaning of your own existence within a larger whole, and the role you see for yourself in relation to other people.
So, that said, my invitation to you all between now and when next we meet, is to continue to dig below the immediate surface in your reflections and consider what might be the deeper ‘why’ of you.
Attached are versions of the two documents I gave Amy. I have also included a short page about Red Threads, though there is a lot of information that will just take too long for me to type out. What I would prefer to do is to photocopy a page that I have with a few extracts from Ritchhart’s book already pasted on. It is a better document for you to use with other staff, I think.
Until I have a new thought(s) to send you
Be well,
JULIA
PS> I will send each of you a separate email with your personal Executive Overview of your AVI results.
WARNING: This document is really full of information. I suggest you go slowly through it and email any questions you may have. Basically there is a whole lot more data in this document than I intend to explore in the workshops, so if there is something you want to know about, just ask 😊
ATTACHMENTS: Nine Signposts
Purpose questions
Red Thread explanation

31/10/2010
The Obvious and not so Obvious Signs of Renewal

Hello Jacqui, Cecilia and Amy -
Today is Sunday and I am sitting in my kitchen looking at the garden in between rain showers and reflecting on the obvious in a way - what a good dose of rain will do for the renewal of a garden. Gardens barely surviving a drought are just so OBVIOUSLY grateful when they receive the nourishment they need. Water, sun and nutrients - pretty basic, really.
As teachers, our requirements for renewal are probably just as basic. I guess the only difference is that, for each of us, our definition of what provides that nourishment probably varies a little from person to person. Going through this renewal inquiry with the three of you makes me also pause to think again about what is 'water, sun and nutrients' for me to keep me engaged and present in this intensive work called teaching.
I recalled that Amy shared that she wanted to discover beauty again and that she had been reading poetry. This made me remember that I had said I would send you the poems that I read out in the last workshop so the "poems" file is attached. In addition to those three, there are two others in the file. One is about deferring dreams, the other is about the thread one holds onto through life. Maybe today they speak to you more than the others? Maybe not.
I also wonder if you have reflected on whether your Red Thread reflects your values? Or your deeper Purpose? Or both?

Maybe ... as you have dived deeper into this inquiry of yourself you have come to realise a richer understanding of what your Red Thread actually is?

I look forward to seeing you all on the 9th at 6pm.
Be well
JULIA

Attachment: the Poems file

(from Williams, 2008)
We become teachers for reasons of the heart. But many of us lose heart as time goes by. How can we take heart alone and together, so we can give heart to our students and our world? Which is what good teachers do?

Parker Palmer
The Adventure begins ...
Deeper than notions of professional identity, full engagement focuses on "the question of what it is deep inside us that moves us to do what we do."

Kurtzberg
The big question is whether you are going to be able to say a hearty YES to your adventure.

Joseph Campbell
Areas that I need to Pursue Further
Any path is only a path…
The only question is:

Does this path have a heart?

If it does, then it is a good path.
If it doesn’t, then it is of no use.

Carlos Castaneda
INTENTIONS that support me on my path
An Anecdotal Reading List to Support Ongoing Renewal


Any Julia Cameron title


Appendix D: Values Descriptors and Clusters

( AVI, Chippendale, 1988)

1. Values Descriptors

**Sharing/Listening/Trust** - To actively and accurately hear and sense another's thoughts and feelings. To express your own thoughts and feelings in a climate of mutual trust and confidence in each other's integrity.

**Simplicity/Play** - To see simplicity in complexity and take a playful attitude towards organizations and systems that is energising and positive.

**Skillful Leisure** - To become energized by detaching from work and applying skill and concentration to enjoyable activities.

**Social Affirmation** - Seeking personal respect and validation through the support and respect of significant others.

**Social Equilibrium** - To do what it takes to maintain a peaceful social environment.

**Social Justice** - To value every human being equally and place a priority on taking action to correct oppressive conditions.

**Status/Image** - To have the necessary status symbols and appearance to gain the admiration/acceptance of others.

**Synergy** - The energizing, creative relationship of people in a group which results in achievements far surpassing the sum of individual contributions.

**Technology/Science** - Applying one's scientific knowledge of the world to the creation of technologies, including devices and tools.

**Territory/Security** - Doing whatever it takes to defend your property, state, or nation.

**Tradition** - To practise and impart family/cultural history through rituals ceremony or stories.

**Transcendence** - Rising above perceived reality in order to gain wisdom in support of a transformative, planetary vision.

**Unity/Control** - Establishing and maintaining efficiency, order, loyalty and conformity to established norms.

**Unity/Diversity** - Creatively enhancing organisations by unifying diverse groups and ensuring equal opportunity to persons from a variety of cultures, ethnic backgrounds and experience.

**Wisdom** - To seek the wisdom that stems from understanding a set of universal
principles that govern all things.

**Wonder/Awe/Fate** - To have overwhelming feelings of marvel and fear when faced with the awe-inspiring power and mystery of nature.

**Wonder/Curiosity** - To experience a sense of marvel and wonder through the exploration of nature and the physical world.

**Word** - The desire to communicate principles of a universal nature so effectively that readers/listeners gain a greater understanding of themselves which uplifts and inspires.

**Work** - To have the skills, confidence and desire to engage in productive work.

**Workmanship/Quality** - Gaining satisfaction and pride from quality workmanship.
### 3. Values World-View Clusters

#### Alien/Threatened World-View
Protecting self and others from harm in a hostile environment. Doing whatever is necessary to survive.

#### Organizational World-View
Working in, or managing, a successful enterprise. Developing one's competencies to the highest possible level.

#### Collaborative Project World-View
Working together with others on a project or common cause to transform the world-of-work.

#### Global Transformation World-View
Using the media and other technologies to influence people's world-views in order to transform the existing world-order.

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#### Self Preservation Cluster
- Self Interest/Control
- Self Preservation
- Wonder/Awe/Fate

#### Security Cluster
- Sensory Pleasure
- Security

#### Belonging Cluster
- Affection
- Love
- Security

#### Organization Cluster
- Achievement
- Administration/Control
- Communication/Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Values Cluster</th>
<th>Means Values Cluster</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Interest/Control</td>
<td>Self Interest/Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self Preservation</td>
<td>Sensory Pleasure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wonder/Awe/Fate</td>
<td>Security</td>
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#### Self Preservation Values
- Self Interest/Control
- Self Preservation
- Wonder/Awe/Fate

#### Security Values
- Sensory Pleasure
- Security

#### Belonging Values
- Affection
- Love
- Security

#### Organization Values
- Achievement
- Administration/Control
- Communication/Information

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#### Satiable Values/Potential Foundation Values
- Equality
- Integration/Wholeness
- Service/Vocation

#### Insatiable Values/Motivational Values
- Art Beauty
- Being Self
- Construction/New Organization

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#### Minessence Values Framework

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<tr>
<th>Family/Social World-View</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring for and supporting family, friends, and peers. Security through comradery.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Self Actualization/Service World-View</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing one's unique abilities and talents so as to better serve others. Improve the lot of others by being a competent facilitator.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Symbiotic System World-View</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing symbiotic relationships between people and organisations, for the purpose of transforming society.</td>
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#### Alien/Threatened World-View
- Protecting self and others from harm in a hostile environment. Doing whatever is necessary to survive.

#### Organizational World-View
- Working in, or managing, a successful enterprise. Developing one's competencies to the highest possible level.

#### Collaborative Project World-View
- Working together with others on a project or common cause to transform the world-of-work.

#### Global Transformation World-View
- Using the media and other technologies to influence people's world-views in order to transform the existing world-order.
Appendix E: Participants’ Values Data Extracts

AMY’S TOP TEN VALUES

Community/Supportive (100%) - To have, or to create, cooperative groups of peers with shared values that provide mutual support and enhancement of each other.
Collaborative Individualist (92%) - Commitment to a group and its purpose in order to simultaneously maximize both individual independent action and interdependent cooperation.
Intention/Wholeness (77%) - To harmonise mind, body and spirit.
Self Actualisation (69%) - To develop your full potential through spiritual, mental and physical practices.
Creative Ideation (62%) - Transforming ideas and images into concrete form.
Adaptability/Flexibility (54%) - To be flexible and adaptable in response to changing circumstances.
Self Assessment (46%) - To practice self-awareness as well as seek feedback from others for personal growth and development.
Presence/Being (38%) - To be there for another person in such a way that increases their self knowledge and awareness.
Organizational Mission (31%) - To define and pursue an organization's mission in such a way that the organisation is beneficial to its people and society.

CECILIA’S TOP TEN VALUES

Integration/Wholeness (100%) - To harmonise mind, body and spirit.
Creative Ideation (91%) - Transforming ideas and images into concrete form.
Human Dignity (82%) - The basic right of every human being to have respect and to have their basic needs met in a way that will allow them the opportunity to develop their potential.
Community/Supportive (73%) - To have, or to create, cooperative groups of peers with shared values that provide mutual support and enhancement of each other.
Interdependence (64%) - To value personal and inter-institutional co-operation above individual decision-making.
Affection (55%) - To express fondness or devotion through physical touch.
Sharing/Listening/Trust (45%) - To actively and accurately hear and sense another’s thoughts and feelings. To express your own thoughts and feelings in a climate of mutual trust and confidence in each other’s integrity.
Care/Nurture (36%) - To be physically and emotionally supported by family and friends and to value doing the same for others.
Adaptability/Flexibility (37%) - To be flexible and adaptable in response to changing circumstances.
Being Self (27%) - The capacity to be authentic in all situations.

JACQUI’S TOP TEN VALUES

Congruence (100%) - One's words, actions and deeds are in alignment with espoused beliefs. (Walk the talk. Practise what you preach.)
Decision/Initiation (92%) - Taking personal responsibility for setting direction and initiating action.
Family/Belonging (85%) - Having a place or sense of home. To be devoted to people you consider family and to experience belonging and acceptance.
Education/Knowledge (77%) - Engaging in ongoing learning to gain new facts, truths, principles and insights.
Human Dignity (69%) - The basic right of every human being to have respect and to have their basic needs met in a way that will allow them the opportunity to develop their potential.
Independence (62%) - To be free to think and act for yourself, unrestricted by external constraint or authority.
Leadership/New Organization (54%) - Leading/developing a new organization or transforming an existing one.
Personal Authority/Integrity (46%) - To command authority through your knowledge and integrity.
Word (38%) - The desire to communicate principles of a universal nature so effectively that readers/listeners gain a greater understanding of themselves which uplifts and inspires.
Minenessence (31%) - To miniaturize and simplify complex ideas or technology into concrete and practical applications for the purpose of creatively enhancing society.

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Appendix F: Workshop Transcripts Excerpts

WORKSHOP ONE

PAGE 7

JULIA: OK, so I’m going to turn these over (the renewal cards because I am really interested to know what motivated you to come, what form of renewal, can you see those, Jacqui?, so over, maybe we can put them like that, so, I’ve taken out the four elements you know, emotional, mental, physical and spiritual and looked at what renewal of those things might look like. So, renewal of health, renewal of emotions, renewal of intellectual or mental and renewal of, just spirit, So I’ve got these little, funny little cards, they weren’t name tags to put in front of yourself because I’m sure we can all manage to know three names, but I thought a really nice way to start would be if you place yourself either in a quadrant or in a semi-circle or maybe in a threesome or maybe just direct centre, so whoever feels they want to go first, please do.

A: On the bit that’s most poignant to you.

JULIA: Yeah, so for instance, if Jacqui was thinking oh, look, you know, my spirit, I really need to just renew my spirit, she’d do that (placing tag on top of spirit card) … and indeed that’s what Amy’s just done! Okay. Do you want to speak to that?

A: Yeah! I’m feeling really dissatisfied with teaching at the moment and I think it’s because I’ve been a coordinator for a long time I think I’m feeling worn out.

JULIA: Yeah

A: feeling like I just want to get back into the classroom, I’m tired of the politics of teaching that goes on within the school ummm…. I’m feeling dispirited at the moment (General ‘mmm’) but I still love it, but I want my spirit back, I want to feel that excitement again, I want to feel (Mmmm) good about it again.

JULIA: Well that’s pretty clear

A: So there you go

(Some talk I can’t hear)

J: So here, maybe a little bit towards the side (putting A’s name down for her) For the physical health?

Maybe bringing it a little bit towards physical health?

A: Because if

J: So slap bang in the middle

A: If my spirit heals the physical health will follow

J: (laughing) Yes
Appendix F: Workshop Transcripts Excerpts

A: it’s here – sitting in my heart space – in here, I can feel it, it feels sad... about the whole thing .. I’ve got emotional resilience, I really do, it’s my heart and my spirit which needs to be ... yeah... needs to be fed

JULIA: OK, that’s, pretty clear!
A: I can be emotionally resilient, I know I can, I can pick myself up and move on, I can do that, but there’s an empty there (Yeah) at the moment that needs to , I need to find something to fill it up again
JULIA: yeah, yep that’s pretty clear. Either of you?
C/J: Ok, Ok J laughs
C: Alright, I’m right in the middle actually, perhaps not there so much, but in here, but then I need some direction about ... just thinking about ... I’m still thinking about what next ....because I’m just returning to teaching after recovering from cancer, I don’t know whether
A: yeh
JULIA: (nodding) Mmm, sure
C: And I’ve been back at work for two months ... so I’m trying to get this happening (Physical) because the classroom can be a fairly um, robust place (laughs) and ah, so physical health is important ... and, ah, emotional resilience because one needs to be emotionally fairly resilient to be able to deal with the tos and fros of teaching and ah... yeah, so I’m actually not sure ... how much longer I want to stay teaching in a secondary school but whatever I do that teaching is so much part of me
JULIA: No
C: Hmm, I reckon probably (To A) Would you put me anywhere one or another/ Cos Amy and I know each other fairly well Is it all right that we do that?
ME(emphatically): yes! Yes, is the answer to that.
C: Hmm, I don’t know, it feels like it should be there – it’s a bit of everything
A: yeh
C: and finding a, ah ... cos I used to be a really passionate teacher
JULIA: right at the centre
C: Hmm, I don’t know, it feels like it should be there – it’s a bit of everything
A: yeh
C: and finding a, ah ... cos I used to be a really passionate teacher
Interjection from ?
C: and some days I can and some days I can’t
JULIA: Ok

C: Yeeah – finding out how to deal with what’s happened to me and then my, my, my worklife and then perhaps aspects of my own personal life as well and, and, you know, how do I ... the passion’s still there but it’s not activated all the time because I used to call my style of teaching total body teaching
J laughs

C: I used to call it TBT but it’s not something you can do for three 70 minute sessions on the trot… I can’t do it anymore like I used to be able to, and um, so I’ve got to sort of rethink, um, and I’ve had some advice from friends about rethinking the way I do stuff, um … but also maybe thinking about whether I should still be doing it too

JULIA: Ok, that’s pretty clear too

J: Oh, that actually neatly segues to where I am because, um, I left teaching high school three years ago … and, and, and I have been thinking about it ever since because I’ve been teaching for thirty years

C/A: Mmmm

JULIA: And you’re back doing some CRT work

J: Oh yeah … And…um, I’ve thought a lot about going back into … and starting to teach again… in a high school… um, I’ve taught a little bit at a college in the city, you know, RTO, training college in the city … and … I’ve got enormous emotional resilience for some things, I know how much energy it takes, I really think I’m over here (physical) I think probably that’s the reason I won’t go back into a high school is because of rising to that, those demands

C: They’re a big ask, aren’t they.

J: yeah.

JULIA: So, Jacqui, just to clarify … actually I’m going to take a photo of that … um is that heading to … is that in between those two or is it sitting closer to emotional resilience, is it that? Or is it this? Or …

J: Well, intellectual clarity is really important to me because I get fuzzy, you know? So I try … I’ve tried all the time , especially cos I’ve changed what I’ve been teaching all throughout my career because I started off as a visual arts teacher and then I became um, a language teacher and then I moved into a more , high school classroom teaching so I took on English and social science, which you can do in Canberra and ACT because it’s school based curriculum development so we worked in teams and we just… so there’s a lot more mobility and I ended up in year 7, 8, 9 and 10 classes. Nines, I found … I was being shredded by, in the end. I didn’t have enough at home, I didn’t have a, I wasn’t getting anything … anywhere else um, so I decided, I decided to leave and I just left without really anything else in the offing either.

JULIA: Ok

J: So, I’ve been, I’ve been … working towards Spirit since then because I found that was what I was lacking in the classroom.

JULIA: So, now …

C: When you say spirit in the classroom, what do you mean? Energy to engage with kids or… commitment to what you’re doing …

J: Umm… un … what is that, um, Carl Rogers … unconditional positive regard?
Appendix F: Workshop Transcripts Excerpts

C/A: (laughing in understanding) Hah, yeh
J: I didn’t have that for everybody in my classroom
C: Yeh
J: You know? And I felt that I should have and …um… what was the second question, Cecilia?
C: Was it not having the sort of energy to engage with the dynamics in the classroom or not having the mental commitment to want to do it?
J: Oh I was becoming really worn out with the demand, or the pull of, of, of having … to deal with everything else in the classroom other than the content, you know, like you’re so pressured to get content across and they don’t give a rats arse … you know? … looking at rivers and water conservation and, you know and you do the glass half full and the glass half empty during the … you know, and you know, you can engage them for ten minutes and then they’re off and um …
A/C laughing with understanding
J: And I’d say ok, now it’s my turn, you know, I’m going to have a time out, and I say ok because, you have time out and I can’t sustain my concentration, so I’d say to them, and I was becoming really, really honest and in the end I’d, I’d say things and I’d sort of trick them and I’d go ah … they’d say something a little bit outrageous and they’d go ‘Miss, is that true?’ and I’d go (whispering) ‘I actually don’t know’(laughing) and they’d go ‘Is that true?’ and I’d go (matter of fact) ‘I dunno- google it’
A: Mmm
J: or or, you know, I knew damn well and I’m not going to tell you because you’re lazy
C/A: Yeh
J: You just want to, so … (big sigh)
JULIA: So I think we’ve … it’s pretty clear that it’s there (near spirit)
J: Mmmm

WORKSHOP TWO
MIDDLE OF PAGE 3
JULIA: That’s nice. Where are you, Amy … today? We’ve already had a bit of a chat about how you are today.
A: Yeh, I’m just having a bit of a look ….. Um, not a grumpy one, not a sad one today, I don’t feel like I’m at the top of the tree, Probably this one (same as C)
JULIA: Mmm
A: Just there, you know?
JULIA: Just there, that’s a great spot to be, I reckon.
C: I don’t mind it because it feels supported
A: Or even here (sitting in the middle branch, arm in arm) feeling a bit connected to people
JULIA: Which one are you feeling? One of these, mmm
JULIA: So, it’s sort of on a similar level, isn’t it.
A: yeah. Oh, it is too, yeah!
(Something about the other one feeling quite autonomous)
JULIA: Where are you, Jacqui, today?
J: yeah, I had some very needy students today. One of whom … I said, “It’s not your work, is it, mate?” and he said (in a whisper) ‘No” and I said, ‘you’re pretty shy, aren’t you’ because we have to do this report and it’s got to be a reflective report about their experiences and I said (whispering)”They’re not yours, are they” and he’s just such a poor … no confidence, really aware of his lack of skills, so… it was pretty .. and then you know because the other woman who was working with a student went up and said, because you know, he's there and “he’s plagiarizing again” and so, I mean you can’t prove it’s not his work but I’ve got to say, “listen, I’d like you to give your example here” and so then we’ll take out the other one that he has ….so we probably spend more time tomorrow but um, so me? I feel a bit (pointing)
A: Mmm!
J: … like that (sitting on the side with arms folded) and a bit like ..(with someone?) you know that’s what I need to do more, I just feel just ….oh! I just hope ….
JULIA: so… you’re here, though?
J: yeah, I think so.
JULIA: (they have all chosen people on the same horizontal) Look at that… (Mmm, yeah, oh) All in that horizontal position…. three completely different … Ok …Next question, which is really interesting from my perspective, not that that wasn’t interesting from my perspective, but next question is… in this reflective renewal process, we’ve only been even thinking about this for a week, where are you at in terms of… what we started talking about last week and where you feel you are now?
A: There (standing on the ground looking up)
JULIA: Yep
J: I’m here (on the middle platform) (laughs happily)
C: I’m just getting a handle on it (Swinging from the bottom branch)
A laughs
JULIA: how gorgeous Where am I? Mmmm. I want this person,(the climber on the first branch) but I want it up a bit higher … this climbing thing, but not sitting pretty, so that’s what I want but just up there.
Shall we redraw the picture?
JULIA: Well, you could
C: I don’t think that one is sitting pretty… (platform person)
A: No no, it’s feeling supported, chilling out, looking out
C: I think I’ve taught better since last week.
JULIA: Ok
C: Mmm. More consciously, more deliberately
J: yes
C: Which I always try to do but it’s just that … it’s been more there
JULIA: ok. Amy was saying while you were in the toilet that (To Amy) for a couple of days you felt more yourself
A: Mmm
JULIA: Sort of Wednesday, Thursdayish … and then by Friday it’d all gone … gone to hell in a hand basket
A: yes (laughing)
JULIA: Ok. Yeah. This one (the platform person) reminds me of going up the mountain, you know, not base camp but one of those
C: Oh, ? things
ME: Yeah, yeah. Anything to report back about journal work or …
C: I didn’t do it
JULIA: that’s ok
A: I didn’t either, in fact we talked about it
C: Good intentions
A: And I thought I have to … I want to make a time on the weekend to do it so it’s, or soon after , one night.
JULIA: Don’t feel bad
A: because otherwise the week goes ahead and … that’s why I don’t reflect! That’s why I am feeling the way I’m feeling because I don’t … do it
JULIA: Don’t feel bad. That’s exactly what we’re doing here.
A: I did, but then I thought ,” No, no, that’s absolutely … because I did think about it … I just didn’t write it
JULIA: yup. So, maybe
C: it’s the nature of the beast – teaching, because you’re just so go go go
JULIA: So are there things that are worth dot pointing that you thought about? Now?

PAGE SIX
A/J/C: Yes, yes – can we do it now?
JULIA: Yes … please
A: I’m going to write down about smoothed feathers – I’m going to out a picture of a bird on my desk
J laughs
A: Oh, my budgies! I’ve got two statues of budgies – I need to put them on the desk to remind me
14 mins (All three of them write intently – A: 14th today? I’m going to date mine)
After one minute:
A: Actually I did make a big decision which I will …(?)
JULIA: Great
(lots more writing) 4 and a half mins later
C (whispering) Excellent teacups.
A little later, laughing
C: I collect teapots.
JULIA: Do you?
J: I’m going to try and find one of those (Teapot)
C: I’d love to have of those in my cupboard.
A: These are gorgeous (discussion about the two different patterns)
They’re modern
JULIA: I bought them at Vic Market.
C: These cups?
(More discussion about where the cups were bought)
JULIA: I love listening to the pens going.
C: Do you? A: Scrape scrape scrape
JULIA: yeah, it wasn’t that anxious kind of exam writing, there’s a completely different
tension, isn’t there
So is there anything that you wanted to share or reflect on before we,?
A: Yep!
JULIA: Go!
A: I made a big decision this week. I don’t know whether I related to it perhaps last week, not
doing coordination? Going back… I did talk about that, I said that, I’m not going back but
then decided that I … because I’d get bored with just classroom teaching, I need something
else to … that I’d do two exhibitions.

WORKSHOP THREE
HALFWAY DOWN PAGE ONE

JULIA: Don’t suppose any reflective writing got done?
C: Oh God no …
A: No
C: Meant to…. Did reflective thinking!
A: A reflective thought did…
JULIA: great
A: That I did have time and I didn’t do it
JULIA: Was that the reflective thought?
A: Yeah, so isn’t that … now isn’t that interesting?
JULIA: Mmm
A: How much do I want to do it? But … last holidays I was doing the Artist’s Way… and I
did heaps and heaps … I did the Daily pages and all that and it was really, really good…so
that the reflective thought was that I really have to be in the mood, you know? Like it’s a space that you get into that you’re …

JULIA: Mmm

A: Want to do …. Want to do it.

JULIA: Mmm…. What about you, Jacqui? Did you get any writing done?

J: ……… Nuh. No, I’m still finding that to be my biggest hurdle …… in terms of being honest with myself.

JULIA: Okaay… Can you…, um, can you elaborate a bit? I’m not sure what you mean.

PAGE TWO

J: I’ve never, I’ve never been one to have a diary, even as a child, never had a diary.

JULIA: Ok

J: Never put my personal thoughts down cos, I … don’t know, I don’t want anyone to read them … when you’re the kid in the middle, in a large family …. you’d get absolutely slammed if someone had found them, but um, so I guess I became very private …. And, um, you know, I spill my guts, you know, so, to a select few, I suppose, but um, you know, I bought that book, I think it’s The Artist’s Way, yes, that’s the version I have as well. And I started that. I thought “How can I fit in the exercise I should be doing, the meditation I should be doing AND the reflective writing in the morning before I do anything else because these are all the things that I need to do, and so, consequently none of them get done, except I did cook myself a breakfast this morning for the first time in about eighteen months, a cooked breakfast, yeah, before work, it was quite amazing, quite amazing. But, you know, managing to that as well as writing, meditation, exercise, I’d be up at five o’clock in the morning which is what people do.

A: yeah,, they do

J: Yes, and I’m thinking, I still, need to do this and I’m not there yet and it’s like, oh, I did the Artist’s Way, I did that writing before, for about ,ah, two weeks? Not quite enough time to form a habit so,I’m going to start again, but I haven’t done any reflective writing. I feel like the last two weeks I’ve been in a spin. Mmm. I still, ah, you know, just other reasons, I’ve still got to try and get ,I forgot something?

(JULIA bursts out laughing and so do the others because C has just noticed the tape recorder - she had forgotten the workshops were being taped until the end of session 2)

JULIA: You’ve just realized … Are you going to ‘zip’? (Referring to her lips which are tightly closed)

C nods and says nothing

JULIA: Ok (with a smile)

J: What was that? Yeah so, yeah I’ve got to sort out a few things in my work life, um, you know, getting business, trying to, trying to refinance my house so I can get a, give myself a financial kick start and that’s all been really draining

JULIA: Yeah
J: You know what? Every time I do the I Ching or anything it always says: In the Flow – it’s fine, things are happening and you just cannot … hurry … anything! So I’m going …. Breathe! Potter around, do something for fun and then I start worrying again…

JULIA: So hence no reflective writing
J: NO
JULIA: No, that’s ok. Cecilia?

PAGE THREE

C: Look, I’d forgotten that you asked us to do reflective writing until this point in time when I’m back in this context.

JULIA: That’s ok.

C: But it did occur to me over the course of the …over the course of the break that it would be a really good idea to keep a diary …. Especially since I’m going through a lot of changes at the moment as a result of a whole lot of things and naturally being so and you know, actually for the first time I actually thought I wouldn’t mind keeping a diary. It occurred to me last week, um …. a lot of reflective thinking, that was one of the things, about lots of things, but nothing on paper, I just forgot!

JULIA: Hmm
C: I’m sorry, but I just did. I would have if I’d remembered…

A: it’s like, yeah, two days after … it just goes, and I think about it

C: Mmm
A: and I really enjoy it and I think about it and I think “Isn’t this great?” and a few days … and it’s gone, but I just have to say too, lots of reflective … like I reflect all the time

JULIA: Mmm
A: I think, but I don’t write it

PAGE TEN

JULIA: All right … Amy, where are you in the whole … kind of renewal process …

A: Um

JULIA: given that you said at the start of the whole process that you’re not happy, you’re feeling quite dispirited,

A: yeah
ME you said things like, my heart is sore
A: yeah. I think I need to feel excited about what I’m doing and I think I lost that, you know, coordination used to be exciting, I used to love it

JULIA: Yeah ok
A: And I’ve lost it, I’m tired, I think I’ve already said this, so I am excited now about being in the classroom, I’ve applied for money… to do two exhibitions in the year and … they’ve agreed to that … so that makes me feel excited
J: How wonderful
A: So that will be a project which I’ll do with the kids and art staff, um…. I’ve reconnected too, with meditation and just thinking about things in a more spiritual way with myself.

JULIA: Ok, when did you do that?

A: It’s sort of been coming, for six months, I’ve been touching on it, like last holidays I did the Artists way for two weeks and then I just found it too hard because I was working, it just took too much time … interesting, I was going to start again these holidays but I didn’t … that was an interesting … and I was aware, that I didn’t feel to do it. But I got so much out of it, almost like it became the focus of the holiday and I came back feeling energized and renewed from doing it …

JULIA: Now when you say you’re doing the Artists Way, are you doing …

A: Morning pages …

JULIA: Are you doing the book that is talking about reconnecting with your creativity? Or is it the further books?

A: No, it’s the first one, the very first one.

JULIA: So the one where she talks about, re-establishing your connection with your creativity.

PAGE ELEVEN

A: Yes, yes that one … yes, so that was really good, because I actually followed it through … I probably jumped a bit, I’m a little bit more … but I came back feeling, this is what I want to do, I need to find this again … for me to replenish myself… and then I’ll be more interested in what I’m doing!

JULIA: And what made you think of doing the Artists Way again?

A: because … I had it … and I hadn’t done it. I’d sort of read bits of it but I hadn’t actually done it.

A: I took the tram and went and bought it because I remembered it and I thought “I need to do something, I’ve got to do something, to find, my voice again” Cos I thought I could do some drawings, you know but I didn’t have a voice, I didn’t feel … so

C: I think after you’ve done a few years coordination like you have, and like I did, that that’s exactly what you need to do, what we need to do and those people who stay and do it over and over, I think they’re not looking after themselves.

A: I feel like at work I’m not doing anything properly because I’m drawn, I’m pulled in all these different directions, so I run into my classes, and then I run back and I do, so I actually want to go “STOP! This is what I’m doing”. I want to centre myself in that.

JULIA: Ok

A: I started gardening again and sort of pottering around in the garden and doing that sort of stuff, all things to sort of bring me back to myself and just to be, like a meditation. I’ve started meditating, not every morning because sometimes I’m a bit late you know, but I’m doing some, and walking the dog, and reflecting, you know, I reflect as I’m walking along, um, things like that, cos I actually became quite depressed and quite unconfident about
myself and it stopped me from really connecting with people, like I just sort of drew into myself and that’s, reached a point where I had to really try and move something, I feel I lost myself! Almost, you know? SO, I feel like I’m moving out, now, I’m starting to … ME And you’ve done, you’ve done The Artist’s Way,
A: yes
JULIA: meditation
A: Yes

JULIA: Walking the dog
A: yes, gardening
JULIA: Gardening
C: tai Chi
A: Oh yeah, I started Tai Chi but then meetings got in the way, though those meetings won’t occur now, so next year, so I’ll go back, I’ve decided to go back to that cos I LOVED it, so, kept my gym membership up but just couldn’t go there, so it’s not where I want to be, obviously, and just also, it is reflecting and thinking about things …
JULIA: So if you had to choose…?
A:Where I am?
JULIA: Just at the moment?
A: (Pause) Oh, I feel like I’m probably there (standing on the plank in the middle) like I’m a bit, need to balance a bit, you know, I can lose focus a bit, but then I can come back to it…
JULIA: Where are you, Jacqui? In the renewal process?
A: Can I just say one more thing?
JULIA: Please do
A: That just came into my head, sorry
JULIA: No, please do
A: I feel like I get burdened by duty, like I get in these roles and I can’t , I enjoy them but then they become duty, I forget to be happy
JULIA: yep
A: It just came to me, that’s what I feel, have thought,
JULIA: I want you to hold that thought
A: I want to be happy again, in fact I’m going to write that down
JULIA: yeah, I really want you to hold that thought because I want to touch on that a bit later.
Your turn (to J)
J sighs deeply
J: well (long silence) (appears very sad, nearly crying)
JULIA: So it was your spirit, Jacqui, that you said was sad, was in need of renewal.
J: Mmmm, in the beginning?
JULIA: When we first started together here.
Appendix F: Workshop Transcripts Excerpts

J: Yeah, yeah, because, the others will happen, you know? You become more emotionally, giving, um, more physically motivated, I think I’m here (pointing to the person holding onto the trunk sitting on a low branch)

WORKSHOP FOUR
HALFWAY THROUGH PAGE TEN

A: What I find really interesting, I’ve heard two people tonight say “I am a teacher”

A: So it’s working (general laughter) we’re all re-energising into our teaching, cos wasn’t it a thing about coming and being re-energised?

JULIA: Well, it’s teacher renewal

A: Teacher renewal – and we’ve all stated that we’re teachers: you’re (to Cecilia) excited about it, you’ve (to Jacqui) just changed the way you’re looking at it

J: Yeah!

56.50 A: You’re going in a different direction but you’re still … you have actually admitted to yourself that you’re a teacher

J: Yeah! And that, you know, training teachers to use this program will Be, fabulous fun! You know? It’s facilitating other peoples’ um, yeh, children’s development.

A: yeah. And I’m going back to the classroom because I feel like I’ve got all this other stuff that I want to…

JULIA: Yeah, so I love that: (reading) Finding your best self is more a poetic embrace than an analytical triumph, and you’ve all been saying that, the reflecting that you’ve been doing today has all been very, embracing yourselves rather than analyzing and dotpointing yourself, so I just wanted to read you this because this comes from research ….

(Reading the Intrator and Kunzman statement about renewal, not refilling).

C: That’s good, that

A: That made me cry, that last bit, but I do, I do feel like crying

PAGE ELEVEN

C: See, you’ve made a decision about how you want to allocate your energy, I have by deciding I want to be 0.8 and do on the Wednesdays other things, yoga and stuff to manage my health and wellbeing, but also while at school I think about how to, something happened and I think about how do I want to respond to this? Rather than just responding, not, how?

What’s the best way, what’s the higher self to respond to this rather than …

A: I want to discover beauty again and I’ve been feeling that over the last couple of weeks … like I’ve been reading some poetry, I have just been (fed?) up

C: Spring will help with that

A: The other day I watched art and soul, which is on indigenous art, a beautiful documentary, I cried because this old aboriginal guy sitting in front of this painting that represented his country, and he sang it and it was just like, oh! Like I’ve been moved by things that

C: Wow
A: I’ve been giving myself time to sit with some things …
JULIA: How beautiful
A: I come home and I’m just so busy, I feel like I’ve been sitting in it for three years, this sort of, since I started year 7 coordination and moved up through 8 for two years, I just feel like I’ve been sitting in this wasteland. But doing the job and sort of enjoying it but now I feel like, it’s quite full on.
JULIA: oh, well I’m going to read you a poem then! This is called Sweet Darkness (reads it)
C: Wow
A: (whispers “8D” – I assume she means the class)
J: That’s a bit of a punch
C: Actually they could
A: (laughing) Sorry
JULIA: That’s all right
A: Cos we’re doing poetry with them – that’s beautiful isn’t it

JULIA: Yes, very beautiful … and that’s just what you were saying, I just thought that’s the poem for you today
C: It’s the poem for all of us today – maybe that’s the poem, how did you …? it’s interesting that you use the poem at this point in the process
JULIA: Mmm
C: Was that deliberate?
JULIA: No, I had three
C: oh! Did you?
JULIA: I had three and I didn’t know if I was going to read any of them but I thought that’s it, that’s the poem for now
J: And having permission to leave things behind and leave people behind is really powerful… giving yourself permission … really …. That’s what I found, in the last couple of years?
A: I think leaving people behind is a really big, big thing, I think for lots of people …
J: You know, it cuts that co-dependence thing
A: You feel you’ve moved on
J: connections with people who aren’t engendering your spirit, you know, um, vice versa maybe you’re offering them too much
A: But it is a big thing because we care about people and we don’t want to hurt peoples’ feelings and we don’t want to …
JULIA: One of the things that I was going to do now which is not so relevant because you guys are already doing it, was planning rituals for change, but you’ve already done it (to C), and you’re planning it (to A) and so are you (to J)
Appendix F: Workshop Transcripts Excerpts

J: Sort of, I haven’t done as many of the things that I’d sort of ticked off, but I read something really lovely in Eric Pearl’s book about being dragged down by attachment and for the last twelve months I have been meaning to cut a swathe right through my flat.

JULIA: So maybe instead of talking about rituals for change which you’ve already done, can you make that a dot point to continue in your reflection over the next couple of weeks.

WORKSHOP FIVE

CLOSING CONVERSATION PAGE 41

JULIA: Yeah. What about you, Cecilia? Any closing remarks?

C: I found the whole thing really interesting, actually. Yeah, because, I sort of, I’ve had to become the teacher again after a serious illness and a long time off and I wasn’t sure whether how or if or why? And it sort of, it came at a really good time for me in that sense, that renewal. Not because we’re all at that age group and all that but for me it came at a significant time. It sort of helped me redefine things, focus things, and sort of remember things that perhaps I’d learnt in other ways, other forums, just good to remember them again.

JULIA: And in terms of what you were writing at the end of last week or the beginning of your break where you were writing about how you were feeling initially angry about the purpose invitation and then really quite scared at the whole of this thing, I’d be really interested to hear how you feel now with that little fledgling draft statement?

C: Oh, I feel very nice, thank you very much! (General laughter) You see, because I don’t have the wife/mother bit to sort of fuel the purpose bizzo.

JULIA: Ok. It’s interesting that you say that because I haven’t thought of the wife/mother thing as fuelling anybody’s purpose, so isn’t that fascinating!

J: I’m not a wife. I mean, of anyone!

C: But you’re all mothers. (General agreement) And that’s been a big part of who you are. I don’t care what you say (laughing), it has, hasn’t it.

JULIA: Ok, so you’re really sort of questioning: What’s the point of me if I’m not a mother?

C: Yeah, at times, yeah.

JULIA: Ok

C: Because I think the most important thing that anyone can do is, really, fundamentally, the most important thing anyone does, is bring another human being into the world.

JULIA: Absolutely. And yet, you’re launching human beings left, right and centre, and have been for years.

A: Into the world, that’s exactly it!
J: You know what?
JULIA: I think birthing
J: Rebirthing, that’s what I was just going to say!
JULIA: Birthing young adults into the world for the last couple of decades.
C: Yes. Perhaps.
JULIA: And if that’s not birthing a human being with passion and resolution, I don’t know what is, frankly! But that’s just me.
C: So, you reckon the biological stuff’s just ..
JULIA: I reckon the biological stuff has potency, but I reckon that’s just the one end. That’s just me and, I think that’s one end of it and I wouldn’t discount its importance.
J: Cos some people have children, give birth and then, they’re finished. They can’t do anything else with them.
C: Yes.
A: You have kids like that and you’ve picked them up and…
(General packing up noise and a few simultaneous conversations)

A: You know I asked people at school if they wanted to come along and they couldn’t commit to such a long thing and that’s fine but I think what a shame they missed out
J: Absolutely
A: Cos, I’m sad it’s ending now. Cos every two weeks it’s just really nice to come, thinking, “Oooh, we’re going tonight!
J: This is about growing, examination
C: I was reading yesterday, in terms of the wellbeing hormones in your body and your brain. Getting together and having cheese and bikkies with the girls, it actually changes your body chemistry, it de-stresses you and alleviates , I saw it in a magazine yesterday and I was thinking this plays a bit of that role for us, the de-stress role, the feel good hormones and it’s like a chat with the girls.

WORKSHOP SIX

PAGE SEVENTEEN
JULIA: … I want you, to turn to the front of your book.
A: Can I just ask C a question? All that stuff, and C told me all that stuff about her parents and it was really profound and a movement of heart for you, how’s it going to affect your teaching? How do you think it’s going to translate …?
C: I wanted to say something about that ..
JULIA: Please do …
1.09
A: Your presence at school and the whole …
C: I think what’s happened to me as a result of this year and um being here and doing this
sort of thinking and feeling that we’ve been doing, is that my relationships with kids are very soft, they’re soft and playful. I’ve always had that capacity to be playful and light with kids but I look at these children and I think they’re human lives and human life’s precious. Because you know, I could have lost mine and then I realized it’s such an important thing, it’s precious. I mean, 8D can sometimes get me going on Friday morning, I’ve got to admit but, it’s getting better. But just generally with kids there’s a real, ah, and it’s always been there for me from the start but it’s more conscious, is a real, I’m present with this child. You’re talking to me about what’s happening and I’m present with you in this conversation. I’m listening to what you’re saying to me, I’m responding. I’m not trying to dismiss you like you’re an idiot because you’re asking a dumb question. I’m actually hearing it and there’s a softness in there, it feels like a softness. It’s a really enjoyable thing because some words in the Signposts were words that really stuck with me and they actually made me feel really upset so I didn’t put them in my story were words of ‘unlived life’. Cos I have a sense of unlived life because I’m not a mum

JULIA: Yeah

C: Yeah, and so I think what’s going to happen when I get older? How am I going to deal with that, you know? It’s hard to deal with it now, let alone when I’m really old and on my death bed. Anyway I’ll wait to see how things work out but,

JULIA: Yeah, yeah

C: That unlived life. I think, I do try most of the time to live like in the present and to the fullest but there’s always this, there’s this emptiness in me that wants, that wants loving and wished I had children, you know? The unlived life, so partly through the kids. But they are other peoples’ children, they’re not mine. Those words stick here (in her heart) with me still and I don’t know what’s going to happen with that.

A: Yeah

C: I know I’m going to do one more year at our school but I think after that, because I don’t think it is a good time to make a change given health stuff and just, I think after that I’m really going to give it a think about, I’d actually like to teach overseas. I’m a person who loves being in other places. I don’t know why I didn’t do it earlier

JULIA: How interesting, because you’ve just been talking about unlived life and now you’re talking about “I’ll finish my contract” as it were, and your contract is with that group of children, I understand that

C: Is that silly?

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JULIA: “I’ll play out until that contract is closed, so there’s closure on that, and then I might go and teach overseas.” And who knows what will come of that?

C: Mmm. I’m not so scared anymore, like people who hold on tight to things and I’ve realised you don’t have to, you can actually let go and it’ll be alright.

JULIA/A: Mmm

J: It’ll be better
A: That’s pretty profound
JULIA: it’s hugely profound
JULIA: That was beautiful.
C: What?
JULIA: What you just said
C: The unlived stuff?
JULIA: The notion of the unlived life
C: Yeah. That’s been spinning around in my head and I was thinking “Where was that from?” and it was here!
J: The shadow.
C: Oh, and the poems too. Cos that’s the other thing I did last night was to read those poems again.
JULIA: Wow. Ok. The only thing I would say to that is that I would invite you to redefine or broaden your definition of ‘mother’. Maybe make it with a capital M.
J: And maybe also “unlived life”. I mean we all have, I mean I, look …
C: Does anyone else have that feeling?
A; Absolutely!
J: Yes!
A: What about the unlived life of the artist, which I thought I was going to be when I was young?
J: I’ve got the unlived life of a partner, of living with a partner.
A: I’ve got that too. I’ve got a multitude! (Laughing)
General acknowledgement

PAGE NINETEEN
JULIA: So, you’ve just been saying in your story about really speaking truths. You just did it again! You actually did it for the group You spoke a truth for the group. And that’s such a gift. Such a gift. I’d like you to turn to the front of your books.
A: Oh, the first thing we wrote
JULIA: I’d like you to read the first thing you wrote. It is the 24th November, and this time I’d like you to share it with us. So J, would you read yours?
J: (reading) It is the 24th November 2010, the day after the completion of the teacher renewal workshops and I feel exhilarated with possibilities and the resolve and plan to put into practice and create space and develop a greater understanding of my own gifts and contributions I can make.
JULIA: Achieved?
J(laughing): Yes!
JULIA: Nice intention! C?
C: (reading) It is the 24th November 2010, the day after the completion of the teacher renewal workshops and I feel glad to have participated, more connected to my teaching practice, clearer about how I want to do it and what I might want to do next and how I want...
to go about it, and in closer deeper connection to myself.
JULIA: Intention accomplished?
C (happily): Yeah! The next bit’s still a work in progress, but yeah.
JULIA: Yeah! Great! A?
A: (reading) It is the 24th November 2010, the day after the completion of the teacher renewal workshops and I feel excited, happy, in touch with my students, keen to develop curriculum, organized.
JULIA: And? Mission accomplished?
A: Mmm!
C: On track!
A: Probably a bit more!
JULIA: Sensational. Wow, that’s great. I didn’t give this to you [as a handout] but I just want to read this. It’s another piece from Parker Palmer, whose Centre for Courage and Renewal has been constant source of inspiration for me. But he wrote (reading) “In this culture, we know how to create spaces that invite the intellect to show up, to argue its case, to make its point. We know how to create spaces that invite the emotions to show up, to express anger or joy. We know how to create spaces that invite the will to show up, to consolidate effort and energy around a common task. And we surely know how to create spaces that invite the ego to show up, preening itself and claiming its turf. But we seem to know very little about creating spaces that invite the soul to show up, this core of ourselves, our selfhood.” So I guess I want to ask you, did we achieve that? Did we, the four of us, create that space where our four souls were invited to show up?

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C: Absolutely!
A: Certainly for me
J: Definitely
(Various agreeing comments)
JULIA: That’s great
J: Soul finding!
C/A: Yeah, yeah etc
C: So, is it a good idea to make the classroom a space where the soul shows up?
JULIA: For me it is.
J: Yeah!
C: People have said, a friend of mine who doesn’t teach in the same way that I do says to me by doing that you make yourself vulnerable
A: But that’s Ok too.
J: That’s the only way you can be authentic!
C: Cos, it actually makes, if you show your soul, their shy souls come out too and then
A: Mmmmm!
J: They *behave* differently
C: They do! Absolutely!
A: I think it’s OK to do both because if you’re not that sort of person, like, we talk about some people wouldn’t be able to cope, wouldn’t want this [the workshops], they wouldn’t be able to deal with it, they wouldn’t want to deal with it, and so they teach a certain way but if you teach and you soul turns up then the kids accept that because you’re comfortable with it, and they go with it and maybe theirs turns up as well.
**ON REFLECTION ...**

*How can I know what I think until I see what I say?*  
E.M Forster

Each week, take the time to reflect on the workshop just completed. This will allow you to record visible tracks of your thinking and how it possibly changes and evolves over the weeks.

These are guiding ideas for general reflection:

- Insights into my life that have come to me as a result of this workshop
- Connect → Extend → Challenge:
  - How are the ideas and information presented connected to what you know?
  - What new ideas extended or pushed your thinking in new directions?
  - What is still challenging or confusing for you? What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you have?

(Selected techniques from Project Zero, Harvard University)

Reflect also on the questions below and choose a couple to which you are moved to respond.

- What do you stand for as a teacher?
- What do you want your legacy as a teacher to be?
- What are your inner gifts, the gifts you bring to the world simply by being who you are?
- Do you feel able to give your gifts freely? If not, what is keeping you from doing so?
- In relation to your work, what are you most passionate about?
- To what extent are your passions integral to who you are, such that you would feel diminished if you were unable to express them?
- Does the subject you teach give you a richer view of the world and a larger sense of self? In what ways? Has that aspect of your work changed over time?

(Selected questions from Palmer, 2007b)

I hope you enjoy these inner conversations.
2. ON REFLECTION ...

"Finding your best self is more a poetic embrace than an analytical triumph."
(Henderson, 1992, p.28)

A REMINDER: The Reflection Guides:

- Insights into my life that have come to me as a result of this workshop
  - Connect → Extend → Challenge

**EMOTIONAL LABOUR**

The author Arlie Hochschild explores the concept of “emotional labour” and “emotion as commodity”. She talks about the ambivalence many workers in different service industries feel – of which teaching is certainly one – about how much of oneself to give over to the role and how much of oneself to protect from it.

So, in reflecting on her writing, I concluded that when organized display of feelings is part of the professional transaction between student and teacher there may well be a cost. If it’s all too hard and you withdraw emotional labour (or “worked up warmth”) and “offer instead a thin crust of display” (p.21) you may feel insincere or phony. Hochschild also says that if it does work then you risk losing an authenticity in how you hear your feelings and what they tell you about yourself.

* Describe as fully and concretely as possible a real situation that was important to you in which you either changed the situation to fit your feelings or changed your feelings to fit the situation. 

(Hochschild, 1983, p. 13)

**THE INNER TEACHER**

Conversely, Palmer refers to “the inner teacher” who acts as a guard at the gate of our selfhood, warding off what insults our integrity and welcoming whatever affirms it.

* If you think of yourself as having an inner teacher, how do you try to listen to that voice? What encourages you to do so? What impedes you from doing so? 

(from Palmer, 2007b, p.33)
Appendix G: Weekly Reflection Sheets

3. ON REFLECTION …

‘Reflection requires a pause’

(York Barr et al, 2006, p.9)

The Reflection Guides:

- Insights into my life that have come to me as a result of this workshop
- Connect → Extend → Challenge

A New Tool:

See → Think → Wonder

- What do you see?
- What do you think about that?
- What does it make you wonder?

(Selected techniques from Project Zero, Harvard University)

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

In addition to expanding on the discussions from the workshop, consider this elaboration:

* List your first five values and, for each value, identify situations that have so far contributed most to you experiencing that value. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGHEST VALUE</th>
<th>LIFE EXPERIENCES CONTRIBUTING TO THAT VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

* Have any common themes emerged that can help you identify how best to increase your experience of these values?

(adapted from Henderson, 20030)
4. ON REFLECTION...

"Do you invest in reflective practices and if so what is the return on your investment?"

(Shaye, 2009, p.6)

The Reflection Guides:

-Insights into my life that have come to me as a result of this workshop
  - Connect → Extend → Challenge
  - See → Think → Wonder

  - What do you see?
  - What do you think about that?
  - What does it make you wonder?

(Selected techniques from Project Zero, Harvard University)

In addition to expanding on the discussions from the workshop, consider also these questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where have I come from/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What did I know/think/believe/assume?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What has changed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is my new knowledge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why might this thought/belief/assumption have changed?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And then the million dollar questions...

| How will I use this new knowledge to effect change? |
| What is its worth to me? |

(from Reid, 2009, p.60)
S. ON REFLECTION ...

"What is the question that, if you had the answer, would set you free?"
(Bloch, 2000, p.26)

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TECHNIQUE
(Dart & Davies, 2003)

The Most Significant Change Technique (MSC) draws on participants’ experiences and perceptions to provide narrative testaments of participant-based change experienced in response to an intervention.

Story telling has been used for centuries to impart important knowledge and understandings and it seems a particularly appropriate tool to evaluate the impact of these very rich and complex reflective conversations. Over the next fortnight you are invited to reflect on changes that have occurred as a consequence of attending these workshops. Consider the questions below:

- Looking back over the last three months, what do you think was the most significant change to emerge as a result of your involvement with the Teacher Renewal Project?

- Why did you choose this change in particular? Why is this significant for you/ your community?

You are then asked to tell us the story of this significant change.

REMEMBER: This is not a ‘recount’, this is a narrative. The story that you finally decide to tell may not be about the events of the actual workshops at all. It may be something that happened to you at school, at home, with colleagues, with family, with yourself. However, it is an event that you feel happened because of the impact of the Teacher Renewal Project objective: to explore a different form of professional development designed to nurture the heart and spirit of teachers.

This is an oral storytelling technique and can be done in one of two ways. You may choose to spend time in quiet reflection and make an audiotape of your story. If you choose this you will need to bring the recording to the workshop on 23rd November. Alternatively you may spend time choosing and constructing the story you will tell to the group on 23rd November.

I look forward to hearing your stories of significant change.
Appendix H: Examples of Reflective Journal Entries from Participants and Facilitator

Amy

* Don’t be burdened by duty, don’t forget to be happy.

* It is OK to take one path at the crossroads, and if it is not right, take come back & take another one.

Community support:
Small work team - group of very close friends who are friends with each other. Lots of reflecting together, travelling together, supporting & sharing. Enjoying and cherishing.

Work. Like-minded working together. Less bickering, one upmanship; a real community.

Collaborative individualism

Heal myself, love everyone, no one alone.
Appendix H: Examples of Reflective Journal Entries from Participants and Facilitator

What do I see — life run by duty
See — Not developing relationships, community outside work.

Wonder — Why I can do that at work and not outside work. What is scary about it. What do I fear

Wonder — Life unbalanced. When leave work will have lost community support needs to happen outside work.

Now no time. Focus on more next year time to less len to deal.

In school less scary. Etc.

Develop value within work.

Adaptable flexible — felt less flexible become so stressed. They must go to schedule it.

Self-Assessment. Create self-goals. Have but never come of.

as does faith.

Need certainly in myself focus on self-driven towards self.

Self-helped aside in order to cope with work issues.

Creative Ideation — Bored with co-education covered. Job no longer energize. Need to move on.
Appendix H: Examples of Reflective Journal Entries from Participants and Facilitator

Cecilia

Reflection Tool

List top 5 - - -
Identify life experience which enhance these values

Integration / Wholeness
- yoga / meditation / spiritual friendship

Practising key understanding
daily in interactions
- students, colleagues

- Listening / giving attention / responding
- Practising "kindness" when possible
- Willing / able to assist
- Expressing self in conversation
- "Being" in the moment
- Living in the "big love"
Appendix H: Examples of Reflective Journal Entries from Participants and Facilitator

6. Affection to feel able to demonstrate
   - towards students: smile/touch/approach
   - towards colleague
   - towards friends: I tell them that I love them and value them

- Family
  - issues: it's difficult staying neutral is a positive for me.
  - dairy - cuddles 2-3 times a day

- Neighborhood: spending time caring, sharing, helping
  - groceries, drop-off, meals, etc.

hugs
Appendix H: Examples of Reflective Journal Entries from Participants and Facilitator

Sharing/Listening Trust

Sister.

Anna, Sheryl, Anne, Jude, Curle, Sally, James.

In friendships,

-speak honestly
-friend

Care/Nurture

can be an issue for

me at times.

Currently, neighbors, florist, priindent, care/nurture.

Some friends.
Appendix H: Examples of Reflective Journal Entries from Participants and Facilitator

Jacqui

Seeing my very worldly and noble calling - purpose - I still feel recognised / appreciated but very nervous apprehensive of the deep part of it. How is it all to play out?

That is the create part. Every moment we create. We create every moment. Make each moment serve my higher self.

I no longer play hand maiden to the self-diminishing parameters of resistance - both manifest and metaphor. Recognise = Re-recognise = my North Star

becoming awake, knowledge, understanding, realisation, perception, awareness when put in the context of 'conversations elfed' where we are here to Re-member and Re-mind!!

Contextualising the CSF level 20/06 with the Shadowlife - a shock for me - in my valued life. "Your playing small doesn't serve the world."

I feel wonderfully affirmed and optimistic about my future and how I can realise the place I want to be. I now also have an understanding of intent, and how to change my thinking from self-defeating (even fleeting) and re-framing the thoughts.

"Your intentions create your experience. What do you intend to happen? Make sure that your thoughts and feelings reflect your true feelings!"

What do I really feel about my work possible now?
Appendix H: Examples of Reflective Journal Entries from Participants and Facilitator

An intention means that you have set a goal and intend to achieve it. (Intention and experiences)

Values: Collaborative Project, Channize leads.

Closing the gap to meet the espoused values - Expect congruence.
My personal life is evolving towards one where I am happy to take care of myself in different ways - diet and exercise especially. Also spending time reading and watching elevating material.

I understand through being exposed (AVI - some of which I recognize) what my resistance is. Stand up

Stand in my own power.

I am a teacher, this is my work, maybe in various environments.

I wanted to write something about alchemy or gestalt, where the sum of parts <= total.

I am greater than the sum of my parts.
- my spiritual life, awareness, consciousness.

I feel that this work with Julie has been the icing on the cake of the time in Melbourne. I have/ I am developing a program called Heart - all about the language we use to talk about emotions, about the symbolisms and about the complimentaries about maintaining and developing relationships.

Last, 3 months - daily part in a participatory in Shamamic Dreaming Meditations which has added dimensionally to bring in new
Appendix H: Examples of Reflective Journal Entries from Participants and Facilitator

Acceptance of myself. Painting --- that I did when I was 15.

Triune: Head, Heart, Body.

Work with Mandalas.

Feels of individuation and aesthetic.

Stand meaning - encompasses common ground.

Hidden agenda.

The thread is the Heart Line.

Studied outside school to find the sustenance.

Story map.

How do I know what I think until I see what I say.

Mindfulness stars.

Values.

Acceptance - Anna.
Facilitator

Week 2

No reflective writing from anyone – the nature of the beast; so all are wanting to write now.

It seems that this is part of the workshops – creating the space to write.

Should I suggest that this time could be used in this way? Maybe 15 mins earlier?? ?? ??

Little People – made the point that all three have chosen the horizontal plane through different spots.

When “i” is talking about the generational change, her arms are being very evocative, not flailing, but waving expressively.

These people are all reflective writers [even though they didn’t get time]

The words “endangered” and “threatened,” really brought up emotive body language and language.
Appendix H: Examples of Reflective Journal Entries from Participants and Facilitator

On the next workshop - number four?
I am now looking at the goal of each participant, what kind of renewal was each of them searching for?
In some ways this seems straightforward.
My heart is sore. "I am increasingly invisible".
"Where is my place as the younger teacher more so?"
Her values show in that.

17/10.
I have been having real trouble completing week 4.
I have always known broadly what I wanted to put in, but just like planning for reluctant students, I am not sure where they are up to and consequently how best to respond and/or proceed.

Not sure whether to add in the poems or not, mainly because it is reflecting Palmer's work and he gives a lot of trust to poetry to sustain, nurture and promote wonder.
I think the answer is to print them and see.
Reflection on Week 4

Yes it was hard - I found that I was being implicitly required to put my coach hat on in a way I had not used before as they were not moving even vaguely in the direction I wanted.

But is that reasonable? If it is a teacher's reflective conversation, how much should I try to control the direction?

Week 4 was a real case in point of the group hijacking the conversation (in my ten) and exploring things I didn't think were so useful.

But why is it so? There is no doubt that the renewal process is happening in spades with A... both of whom have made major statements about new intentions PLUS taken impactful action to those ends.

I am wondering whether it is in the group under false pretenses? With she does not seem to be a teacher who has ever been disillusioned however, the notion of renewal is just as phoenix-like - rising from the ashes of illness - to take his place back in the classroom the way that reflects his best self as a teacher.

This brings to question: just what kind of renewal is "authentic" renewal...
Appendix I: Participants’ Stories of Most Significant Change

AMY
How to make this a story is easy enough but overcoming the fear of writing a story or imagining how much better other peoples’ will be is another thing. I thought about making a book with small amount of text and a lot of images. That felt OK but then I read on the sheet that it must be oral so I couldn’t avoid it. So what had been the defining moment of change, that was hard to pinpoint. There were so many small shifts and tiny glimmers of hope for change.

To start at the beginning, I was always a teacher who love the students so it was only a matter of time before I become a coordinator. In the early days I was immersed in the art but it did not take long for the wellbeing of my students and their personal growth to become my primary focus. As the school grew it was exciting but along with that came the need for process (that is itself is not a bad thing) and more and more rules to ensure consistency with the growing student body. It became harder and harder to have time to connect personally with students. I was no longer assisting the growth of good citizens, development of character and hope and excitement for the possibilities of their adult life. I was dealing with a cohort of our clientele and how things looked to the outside community. The expectations of the job of coordination and teaching became too big. It has gradually worn me down so I no longer do anything as I would want, neither coordinate or teach well. My daily life is a blur rushing from one thing to the next, often not present and often not mindful. I have coped, until one day at the end of 2009 I realised as I threw my legs over the edge of the bed to launch myself into a new day, I was not happy. I was sad of heart. The school had become a place I did not want to be.

I began watching my feelings and acting on them in small ways, looking for change, looking at my personal life, changing approaches at school. Until I decided I should give up coordination, the single most important job that had defined me for eight years. It would mean I would be ‘out of the loop’, which felt uncomfortable but then I realised I wanted to be out of the loop’. I no longer cared.

In the beginning sessions my renewal truly began in a small way, the nurturing of the teacher part of me, the spirit of the teacher. My colleagues nurture me but this went deeper. The
ambience of the room, the cups of tea, I was listened to and I listened. The conversations were real and touched on the heart of the matter. My feelings felt validated and I experienced insights from myself and from others. It was gentle and my heart was ‘stroked’.

In the discussions I grabbed the insights though they were small, but they made clear the things I had been pondering and thinking. Above all, the sum of those small insights formed a large one: that I did not need to give up teaching and “What the hell was I going to do or be?” That was scary. I had to reinvent myself, look at teaching differently, go back to my roots and find myself as the creative individual again at school and in my personal life.

This was my defining thought and it crept up rather than it being a moment.

The writing and reflection I realised is so important for me to draw out insights and see them. Over the sessions I have realised that I am not quick to see the big picture but come to ideas slowly and that visualisation is one of my most valuable tools. When I decided that I would go back to the classroom I knew that this would not be enough. The idea came to me to organise two exhibitions. The visualisation and ideas development for the junior exhibition has run wild in my head and ideas and activities have developed to the point I can see what it will look like, other faculties are on board and I have funding.

When the session came where we looked at our Values I was slightly surprised. It confirmed that school was a perfect place for me but also confirmed that I had to find the Community Supportive and Collaborative Individualist again. I no longer believed in my job and it was no longer nurturing me. That is why for the last two years I have felt lost and empty. It has not been all bad though. It made me realise that I must gain a better work and personal life balance and I began to look outside school for my growth and enjoyment. Then I could see how hard it was to find the space for it both physically and mentally. For example, I began Tai Chi at the beginning of the year. I absolutely loved it. The school meeting times were changed and that meant I was running to my class and only just made it – not in ‘the right mind’ for anything. So many Thursday night school functions and it was missed. Eventually I gave up, resolved to change and to begin again next year.

In my reflecting it became obvious to me how much of my life is run by duty. Always doing the right thing, always doing what I should do, how others will view me. The values and life experiences session allowed me to see that most of my valuable life experiences were old. I needed to have new ones and regain some of the old. Some of these were meditation and community, or a cause away from school. It has become very clear towards the end of the
Appendix I: Participants’ Stories of Most Significant Change

course that I need to be more mindful of myself, get back to an inner life and nurture my spirit. From this all else will flow.

By this time in the course I was excited. A decision had been made to give up Year 10 coordination. A feeling of renewal had begun, and “The Nine Signposts” sheet overlaid the whole lot. It was becoming clear to me that there were key factors I needed to be mindful of and work with. Being mindful was the biggest one because I was rarely mindful of anything. Rushing had become such a habit. I am going to list them because I fear this story will become a novel and I love lists as clear and succinct:

- Inner Me/spirit
- Beauty
- Create
- Fun/Humour

From here I can move forward. I can add them to all the parts of me that are already great, such as the nurturing and organising me. I feel truly excited about this. I have changed directions. I have let go of “the loop”, the politics of school that became so addictive. I have moved forward and feel lighter because within that new direction it will support the list and allow me to have time to nurture and find new pathways and communities outside my job. This list provides me with a core, to engage and look for activities and people that allow me to experience the list and my values, to find communities that will nurture that. It also allows me to create my work environment around the list and my values. Basically, Now I know what I’m looking for.

CECILIA

This story, my story, is this year, in particular this last half year. In this New Year, I was bald, unwell, physically mentally and emotionally very unwell at times. My body had been poisoned and was irradiated over 20 times, so I was very tired and muddling from one day to the next. Medication issues led to a period of anxiety and depression and that was a really fearful time for me. I wasn’t sure if I could go back to work, let alone when, and I felt under constant pressure to ‘let them know’. I had made myself with anxiety at this point. Treatment finished, (cancer) medication stabilized and slowly I started to get well. I booked a trip away, not knowing if I’d be able to go but knowing it was only a six hour flight home if things went
Appendix I: Participants’ Stories of Most Significant Change

wrong. I did go and it was fantastic. I felt alive, well, free and very much myself and that was the turning point.

So I returned to school with some trepidation and with many unanswered questions. Would my body cope? Would my mind cope? Would I be fast enough? Would I remember my ‘stuff’?

The truth is I found actually planning things really very difficult. I think that was an effect of the chemo where I just couldn’t plan things very well. I just blanked when I tried to plan things. I’ve always been a fairly organised and organic teacher - if that makes sense, two qualities of my teaching - so ‘organic’ it I did and some days were better than others. It took time, it took energy and it took patience with myself.

Early on when I returned to school I was approached to attend these teaching renewal workshops by Amy and it was a fantastic opportunity at a really critical point in time where I was in dialogue with myself. Could I teach? Should I teach? Would I teach?

Through the workshops I discovered: 1 That I am a teacher. 2 that I fundamentally enjoy the role and 3 that in doing it I am being me and 4 that what I offer is valuable and hopefully valued and useful.

As a result of these workshops and some other thinkings that I’d been doing, some really personal things happened to me that were significant things. I was able to let go of some really strong stuff, some really strong resentment with family, and do things in a totally different way, it’s almost a tantric approach, I turned my approach inside out basically and gob smacked them as well as me and sort of changed the dynamic, so, there’s a lot of deep dark shadow stuff in there that’s significant and that’s been holding me back for a long time I think or something I just haven’t been able to work out what you do with it. It’s to do with a history of a dysfunctional family and no one in the family sort of owns it, (45 mins) no one tells the truth except me and it’s difficult to deal with that. So I broke a habit of a long time. The story was, my parents came to visit me I didn’t really want them to be because I’d rather be in the garden and Dad came and I was a bit irritated I suppose but he kept telling me that he and Mum had been to a morning market that I should go to the market and get an interest that I would like the market and three times he said I should go to this market. Sunday mornings are my yoga class and a swim and I just said, “Look, Dad, I do something on Sunday morning, I go to yoga class and a swim, and that’s what I like to do and if I went to the market, if I wanted to go the market I would but I actually don’t want to.” My father cracked the shits and left the house and I was just sort of left holding the teapot, literally. But
what I did do in the end was actually owned up to my part in that interaction and I went to see him two weeks later and I walked in and I said “Dad, I want to apologise for being rude and grumpy when you arrived last Sunday.” And he just went, “Uh!” And it changes things, from hostility to acceptance. I accept you for who you are, mean old bugger that you are and you’ve got to accept me. I said, “Dad, I was grumpy, I do struggle with depression at times. I’ve been struggling this year and that’s just where I’m at. I’m sorry”. And I leant over and gave him a kiss on the cheek and rubbed his hand, even touch, that was a big deal. So that was big, for me that was really big. I came home from that feeling light in my body, this negative energy from this weight of these relationships with my parents just weigh me down and have done for a long, long time

The other Significant change, I don’t know whether you know this, but my ex-partner is a colleague at my workplace and going back to work after being ill was really difficult as it meant I had to see him and we had broken up a few months before I was diagnosed with cancer and then I found out that his new girlfriend had applied for a job at our school so I thought “Oh God, this is a bit much” so anyway I just kept my distance from him and I wasn’t able to look at him, there were many many nights in those months, those first months back at work where I’d just, I would have held it together for the day and just get in the car and just stream all the way home and just cry all the way home. I couldn’t speak to him, couldn’t look at him, I was in just so much pain in the breakup of that relationship because… Until things went wrong I thought I’d had things sorted at last and anyway, I didn’t, so… Anyway I got to the point with this person where I could actually … I needed to say “Excuse me could you help me with the report, I need to deal with you to get this report stuff done. That’s your job and this is my role at this point” and to do that without my heart breaking in two and without feeling like I want to vomit and running away and crying which I … and just keeping an even and professional … I think he would like to reconnect with me more personally. He’s probably indicated that but I think, I don’t want to be a friend. I’m happy to be a colleague and will just leave it at that and we’re certainly no able o be lovers at this point. So, that’s been hard, Amy knows about how hard that’s been, being back at school.

So that was a big change and I think, looking at the shadow stuff, owning the shadow stuff, working out what’s important and realizing that the thing that is important to me is communication and being at ease with people and just communication, sort of like threw me, so that was interesting.

Overall I think I went through being able to see more of my shadow stuff, learned more to be a witness to my own thoughts and feelings, own my own negativity, see how unpleasant it is,
learn to show some strength and courage is a word I’ve written out here. And the situation with the principal. I finally went to see him and told him that I’d been uncomfortable with the fact that he’d been cross with me and waved his finger at me and yelled at me and hadn’t spoken to me for three weeks and that I felt extremely uncomfortable. He couldn’t remember, but anyway, we sorted that out. I said “I feel uncomfortable about this and you actually need to have the conversation you said you wanted to have so that we can get back into a working relationship” which has happened.

The other thing that I think I started to learn to do is sit back and not energise, and I’ve written to not give energy to some negative feelings because sometimes, schools are funny places and they’re full of politics and full of people being treated differently because of where they are in the hierarchy and where they belong, which clique they’re in and, you know, you can observe that and you can get negative about that and then you can fuel that and make it more negative and I just sort of thought “Just try and unhook from it because you can’t change it and it’s the way it is, so just try and keep your own reactions fairly simple. Witness, observe, let go.” I’ve connected back in my head the things I get joy from, one of them at the moment’s being my garden, establishing a new friendship with this 78 year old woman, a neighbor, and I’ve been feeling the creativity rise up in me in terms of some of the things I’ve been doing in the classroom and I feel there’s some strengthening in my connection with my colleagues. That’s it really.

JACQUI

I’ve just realized when you were talking about yours that I kept on studying when I was teaching middle school because it wasn’t enough and I was looking for something and I had no idea where to go, what to do and then I got sick – and according to number three in Nick William’s nine steps, sickness and illness is a way of showing that you’re not fully enlivened in your life and you need to have another look. So! And that was, I’d already made up my mind to leave Canberra and to leave teaching and it was um, I actually felt threatened. Every single time I went into a Year 9 classroom I used to panic in the end because I felt like they’re going to, I’d take everything they say personally, you know? And instead of being on top of it and fresh and optimistic and enthusiastic, which I could do with some of my classes but not all of them and I’m thinking I need to do something else. Yeah, well, I came to Melbourne and didn’t know anybody, didn’t have a job. Didn’t have a clue what I was going to do. So it was all pretty scary but, I didn’t shy away from it because I didn’t want what was left, so, I guess it was, I used the metaphor once of jumping off a cliff and growing wings.
Appendix I: Participants’ Stories of Most Significant Change

So looking at the values was actually a real trigger for me because it’s like, I sort of, I mean, Congruence was the top one and I wasn’t even walking that talk because I’m not doing the stuff yet that I want to be doing, you know? So, that was really, it’s what I value so much about everything around me and yet I wasn’t actually living that myself and so I started taking better care of my diet and exercise and being mindful every minute of what was the impact of what I was going to say. What are the things, and then the salutary moment was like, um I can’t remember where I was, yes, I saw the job online and I thought, “This is so,” on the Wednesday after we’d had a session on the Tuesday, I think, and I thought “Yes! I want to do this, I CAN do this.” I could go back into a classroom now, and even the things that I’ve applied for since, I understand, and looking at my values, I need something off mainstream. I need something that’s different where I can be innovative and work with much more autonomy. And, of course the Darwin one enthused me and there’s one at Wesley which only works with year 9 on a residential which I’m hoping to get something from, because that would be awesome! Working with really, challenging that age group? In an intensive, would be something I would love to do. So, it’s those things that I find really empowering about, um, um, those sessions, um, I guess what I’ve got is closing the gap to meet espoused values, especially congruence and my personal life is evolving towards one that I’m taking care of myself in affirming ways and, re-valuing who I am and I do have something significant to offer and understanding, and it comes up in the nine steps, that, yeah, understanding that you might not be in a place where you’re recognised which is what I’m feeling now and, um, I guess where I can deliver on all of my, (sighs), um, Nup, guess, recognizing my talents and being able to put them into practice so moving to a place now where I can do that is what I intend to do.

Pulling in all the threads of things that I’ve left behind, like my painting and I used to work with mandalas with students, we used to have them painting them on the desks, I used to, not in the art room because I was a frustrated art teacher, I’d bring it into the class, I’d bring in paints and paint brushes and, yeah, and getting back to that and maybe developing programs informally and presenting them in community welfare situations, which is, I’ve got an idea for a program I wanted to call Heart and um, it’s a lovely thing. When I got that idea, I’ve been, every time I get this, flash, um, of an idea and I think that’s great, I get a feather. That’s my sign, find a feather.

When I had the idea of that, I picked up a feather then I walked into a shop and found this little, um, Kit. And it’s got some really lovely stuff that I can prepare, you know, 8 x half day...
Appendix I: Participants’ Stories of Most Significant Change

programs on health and symbolism and the language around heart, the language around relationships so now I’m actually thinking about how I can take it back out there.

JULIA: So, in a nutshell, what you’re saying is that the actual point of significant change was seeing that job online and saying “You know what? I can apply for this, because, you know what?”

J: (laughing) I can do this!

JULIA: “I can do this BECAUSE … I’m a teacher.”

J: Yeah, especially from leaving it and feeling so disillusioned. And so far I haven’t been able to break into Victoria because I don’t have a method per se, cos, you know, schools in Canberra have diluted whatever we graduated with … because I’ve done hundreds of other things, I’ve done middle school English and social science, I’ve done language and technology, and all those things and they don’t want you unless you can talk about VCE

JULIA: So you’re saying it’s more complicated …

JACQUI: yeah, yeah

JULIA: The jobs don’t fit discretely in a box

JACQUI: Yeah, I always have to look now for something out of mainstream and thinking there has to be something out there that fits me, or that I can fit.

JULIA: Yeah, and that was the second thing that you said: that this job I can do because I’m a teacher and I also know really clearly that mainstream doesn’t suit me. And that’s been coming through, I think the three of us would say that’s been coming through loud and clear because what your message is, what your purpose is, does not, easily streamline into mainstream curriculum, it’s bigger than that, it’s BIGGER.

JACQUI: And, and, owning that. That’s why I’m feeling like one of those, you know, like an adolescent, they don’t fit their skin! They’re sort of, trying on new skins, you know?

I was just working from the nine signposts again … I’ve used it as a reference point because now I can’t afford not to pursue my life’s purpose and find work that makes my heart sing, because that’s another lovely expression we use but what does it actually feel like?

As a teacher, mentor or coach I’ve got something to offer. (Reading the points from the nine signposts sheet) I’ve got an understanding of how I’ve not been showing up fully in the world by not acknowledging and enacting and realizing my own creative potential. This reinforces my underlying ideas of not being good enough or anything enough, and I’ve got, whoo hoo!
The very thing we resist the most, and that’s number two, is the most important and significant in my evolution. During this process with Julia I feel as if I’ve been peeling back the layers and accessing some carefully and assiduously stored shit, those things about forgiveness and self-worth, um, just thought these things are metaphors for the stuff I still have stored in my shed and seeing my very worthy and noble calling and purpose I still feel recognized but surprised and apprehensive of the deed part of the thought, word and deed and how’s it all going to play out. And I’m going to no longer play handmaiden to the self-limiting parameters of resistance both manifest and metaphor. (Laughs)
Appendix J: Final Interview Questions

1. What would you like to tell me about participating in the Teacher Renewal Reflective Practice workshops?
2. In light of your participation in the Teacher Renewal program, what has been the most significant change for you?
3. In that first workshop we highlighted four areas: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual as possible domains of renewal. Is there anything you want to say about any of those areas?
4. Do you want to make any comment on the processes that were used in the workshops?
5. How do those processes fit with your personal concept of reflective practice?
6. How do you feel about the fact that the program was conducted as group process?
7. Are there any implications regarding such a program for teacher renewal?
8. Is there anything else you want to add?
Appendix K: Final Interview Transcript Examples

EXCERPT FROM INTERVIEW WITH ‘AMY’

PAGE ONE

JULIA: What would you like to tell me about participating in the teacher renewal reflective practice workshops?

A: OK: For starters I’d like to say that I think it was the most beneficial PD I’ve ever done, except perhaps for a skill based thing where I learnt a lot… In terms of the heart and soul of teaching and reviewing where I was at with teaching and regaining my love of teaching, it was probably the most important thing, for me to look at in a different way and to review my place in the teaching profession and where I wanted to go with that.

JULIA: And you would say that those three things were the,

A: The most important

JULIA: Because they actually happened?

A: Yes. But also looking internally how I was feeling, you know, the sadness of the loss of my love of teaching cos it actually has been my whole life and I’ve loved it and gone away from it and come back to it, and loved it and so really sad that that had gone because, what had happened? And nothing had replaced it, so,

JULIA: Yes, you actually said that right at the start that that’s how you were feeling.

A: Mmm

JULIA: And then you said at that stage how you felt like that had come back in the last workshop that we did together

A: Yep

JULIA: And, how are you now?

A: Oh, I feel like it’s back more because being in the classroom I just love interacting with the kids, I love developing curriculum. So in fact I’ve had much more time to do that and just be focused on one job instead of being torn between two. Well, I did coordinate well but my teaching, it was hard. It was just sort of on the run I could do that. So I’m really enjoying being focused on the kids and their development and playing around with materials and, you know, doing the arty stuff again.

JULIA: Yeah, ok.

A: And it’s interesting because outside our art office are all my Year 8 boys, so I walk out there, you know, from last year and I have all these kids who have a really strong relationship with me so actually it’s really nice

JULIA: But you don’t have any of the responsibility

A: No! So, you know, I can say things like, “How’s your mum?” because I know that his
mum’s been ill or, you know, or “How’s mum going?” That community, sort of feel and they like that because, I think they like it, they respond well to it.

JULIA: And that was one of your values, wasn’t it.

PAGE TWO

JULIA: Ok. Well that was just really broad for whatever you wanted to say. So, in light of your participation in the program what has been the most significant change for you?

A: Most significant!

JULIA: Yeah

A: Internally or externally?

JULIA: Either/or both.

A: Ok. I feel happy. Much more content. Yeah, I feel happy. I’m enjoying the things that I just said, but I’m also enjoying my colleagues. I have time to enjoy my colleagues. I’m enjoying being in the art office and we’ve got quite a few new teachers there and we’ve had a couple of interns. It’s been lovely to have those young people in there with those fresh ideas. And also mentoring them! And it sort of makes you realise how much knowledge you have!

JULIA: “I actually know a lot of stuff!”

A: Yeah! And, the kids know that you know that. Like, I’ve had an intern who’s been teaching some of my classes and the kids have been giving her a real going over! But I walk into the room and it’s like, they’re all on with their work and you realise that you do have that wise woman there and the kids see that, and that experience and the kids, it’s really obvious! And we’ve also got some young teachers who we’ve employed and they’re doing a wonderful job, but some of the classes, they’re struggling, which are classes that I would, well I’m talking “I” but we’ve discussed this as a group, that we wouldn’t struggle with because we do have that experience. And the kids sense that.

JULIA: And it is that sort of built in respect, isn’t it. Or earned respect.

A: Yeah. Which they will get, eventually, you know, a year or two.

JULIA: Yeah, they will. So, are there any other ways you’d describe changes, if any?

A: Um, I think I’m more focused rather than torn, like all these bits and never being able to grab hold of anything really, because you’re, there’s something else waiting to be done. So I actually have a focus. I think my classes are better organised. They were okay before, because of my experience I could run in, but they are, they’re actually more interesting for me because I’m developing new things.

JULIA: Yeah so that’s sort of like an extension of what you were saying before that you’re focusing on art and the students and the curriculum and so your classes are better planned,

A: Yeah, and I’ve been documenting things, which is also to help some of the new guys, I’ve been documenting stuff and giving it to them.

PAGE FIVE

JULIA: How do they, those processes we’ve just talked about, fit with your personal concept of reflective practice?
A: Mmm. Well, I suppose in a way, you know, like reading the poems and looking at the quotations, even though I wouldn’t actually sort of go and look at a quote or look for something like that I might, if I was wanting to reflect or to uplift or to look at myself, I would probably read some things. I would go buy a book that might lead me into, like The Artist’s Way, something like that, that would help me to start reflecting. But I would start, or I’d start writing and just start writing out stuff.

JULIA: Yes, I remember you talking about writing and rediscovering that. Yeah. What about the reflection sheets? I know that no one really had time to use them but, how did you find…?

A: I started off doing some of those. Um, not so much.

JULIA: Uh huh. Any particular …?

A: Though if, I did, I read them quite a lot in the beginning, if I remember. But they don’t stand out as significant

JULIA: Yeah. That’s fair enough.

A: I think it was very much, the things that really stood out for me were the quotes and, and the time we had the poems. There was one session we had a lot of poems and it was really like” Oh! That’s so beautiful!” Like it was almost like getting in touch with beauty again? The beauty of the word and the beauty of the soul and, like, I think I was just ripe to connect with it again, like I was ready!

JULIA: And that was something you said you wanted to connect with in your Significant Change story at the end, you said connecting with beauty was kind of, so, yes, that resonated particularly well with you. How do you feel about the fact that the program was conducted as a group process?

A: I actually liked it! I really liked it because I liked hearing, I felt really safe in that, in the group. So, maybe sometimes you wouldn’t feel safe. Maybe, you know, we had a very good group in that we were like-minded, in terms of wanting to connect with the spiritual sense of teaching and all that. Yes, so there was a feeling of support. The other thing I thought about later is it it’d been a bigger group I might have got sick of listening to people! It was such a nice small group, there was time for everybody to have, to really speak what they were feeling. If you’d had six people it might have got like, you know, yeah. And nobody dominated, it was a really lovely group because everyone was fairly, it was equal in input.

JULIA: In a group of six you wouldn’t have the round table experience. You’d have probably groups of three having the conversations and then bringing back to the group. You’d do it that way.

A: Yeah, but with that, you wouldn’t have your nurturing of the group. Because your nurturing was really like, it really made you feel safe and comfortable.

Excerpt from PAGE SIX

A: I felt like in the sessions you were just immersed in it, like you felt like you were swimming around in it, like in that little room, and everything was just moving towards, you know, that, finding out about it and it actually permeated the week  but then it would wear
Appendix K: Final Interview Transcript Examples

off.
ME: Mmm. And it would wear off by …?
A: the time we came back again, you’d be going, “Oh, we’ve got it tonight! We looked forward to it. Instead of it being like “Oh, we’ve got to go tonight, we’ve got to go out to Queensberry Street in the traffic, it was like, oh, goody! You know, off we go! Lots of, you know, nice conversation and good cakes, good tea (big laughs), but you know what I mean?
And then within the room it was like it was just, it was like a warm bath.

EXCERPT FROM INTERVIEW WITH ‘CECILIA’

C: I decided to do this (meaning look through the folder) and it was just really really nice, to look at the statement on the front, we become teachers for reasons of the heart and most of us lose heart as time goes by…
And I thought yes, I am a teacher for reasons of the heart I always have been, I think, but it’s still very much so …and hopping back there and saying you know I feel a bit guilty that I’m a teacher for a reason of the heart, that’s bit soppy ,that’s a bit pathetic, that’s lacking in ambition, that’s lacking in drive, that’s not going to get you up the food chain but then I thought, no it’s actually ok to be a teacher for reasons of the heart and then I looked at this one, “The big question is whether you going to be able to say a hearty yes to your adventure” and it’s categorically yes, unequivocally, categorically yes, especially as I’m feeling well on a whole lot of levels, and then I loved reading this again! The purpose statement! I remember the process of us sort of arriving at that because it was step by step process
JULIA: Wasn’t it great fun?
C: Yeah, yeah, and I thought,” Gee if I had just some of those qualities just some of the time, it’d be,”
JULIA: And you think you don’t?
C: No, I think I do have all of them, I don’t have all of them at once! But, you know, I have excitement, I have resolution, I have spontaneity, I do do that “I support people”, I do want to make people safe and secure and I encourage people, so I do all of that. I thought “Wow that’s a grand statement” It’s affirming is the word, I’m thinking.
JULIA: Yeah, and I remember also in that workshop where Jacqui was talking about feeling like those dogs with all the flappy skin, all that extra skin, but it is that idea that it’s your best self that goes into the classroom, particularly this year, actually. Last year it was the more fragile self because I was unwell and I was recovering and in retrospect I probably took on too much too soon. But it certainly, it feels to me this year that it’s the best self, the best self most of the time is the best way to say it, but it’s very much the best self that’s standing in front of kids and I think the kids sense that too. They sense that you are giving them your best and I think they respond to that.
JULIA: Yes, I think they do. So is this the first time you’ve opened the book?
Appendix K: Final Interview Transcript Examples

C: Yes. I went home from the workshop, the last one, popped it aside and forgot about it and today I thought, “Oh, I wonder where it is!” I knew I’d put it somewhere. Yes, it is the first time I’ve opened it, just ten minutes before you arrived.

JULIA: And so I’m really interested, that’s why I turned the tape on straight away because you kind of had a different look on your face, in a good way when you said, “I’ve just been doing this, I’ve just discovered it”

C: I got excited again

JULIA: So what were you excited about?

C: Oh, well what I’d been reading at that particular point, I went through the values thing and thought “They’re much the same” and I started to look at these little sheets that we had and read them. I really liked the David Whyte stuff, in fact I actually thought, “I actually like to share this with a particular class I have at the moment, and then I was reading one of your emails and that made me laugh and looking at my map, and then it was the idea of the Red Thread. Oh, I actually looked at these little things and I thought if we were to do something with other teachers you could actually work it around these things because they sort of get people in, and I had a bit of a chuckle because I thought, “Oh God, some people would just react really badly and other people would actually embrace the challenge. And then the idea of the red Thread and I was just rereading the Red Thread and I got up to there and then I got the phone call to say you were here. The idea of the Red Thread I was revisiting and that’s as far as I got. Mind you, we use this Tree a lot. We stuck on the urn in the staffroom and had a bit of a laugh and then some people started being a bit mean with it so we took it down. And that’s it. That’s what I’ve been up to.

JULIA: Ok.

C: But it is nice to revisit these things and just take your mind back and it was also taking your mind back to the discussions as well as to the space, that woody textured space and it took me back to, I can remember how I felt at that point in time, which was wanting to push forward with all that I had but I didn’t have as much as I’ve got now, I think.

JULIA: So, what would you like to tell me about participating in the Teacher Renewal Reflective Practice workshops?

C: I think for me it came at a really important time actually, a time where I was vulnerable, having had a life threatening illness and then having been through a fairly rigorous treatment and then I was stepping back into my profession and I wasn’t sure whether or not I wanted to and whether I could. So it came to me, I found it quite supportive in enabling me to actually do that, partly because of the friendship with A and us doing that together but also it came at a time where, midlife plus having had the life threatening illness, needs to examine what one is doing and whether one is doing what one really wants to do and I discovered, I recognised deep down that I love to teach and that it’s actually ok to love to teach and that, so I found that was probably the best thing. It affirmed what I did, it gave me, I think it just helped me be a bit more centred and feel OK about what I was doing.
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Excerpt from PAGE FIVE

JULIA: In that first workshop we were looking at the four domains: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual as places for possible renewal. Are there any comments you want to make about any of those areas?

C: Well, at the beginning of those workshops I was goddamn smack in the middle. I mean, I think I physically feel better, not because of the workshops but because time has passed and it’s actually a year today, I think, give or take, since radiation finished. I feel physically better and that made me realise how unwell I had felt. Emotionally, I feel, I’ve worked through a few issues, partly through this, partly through other means. Feel more happy just being me. And not having to worry about other things. Ok with that. Spirituality I think I’ve reconnected to the Big Heart – the one that’s bigger than mine. And that puts me in a state, when I’m in connection with the Big Heart, I call it the Big heart and the Big Love, it puts me in a state of loving kindness and that’s the state in which I prefer to operate in the classroom. Mind you, I can go into power mode if and when needed.

JULIA: That’s called a “fluid transition”

C: So spiritually I think I’m a bit more reconnected with some aspects of my practices, my yoga, but more connected to my meditation. Definitely my yoga but also the Big Love It’s so nice to be in that state instead of the “Me! Me! Me! Me! I want! I haven’t got!” And the Big Love goes that way (outward) rather than this way (inward).

JULIA: Ok. So are there implications of such a program for teacher renewal?

PAGE TEN

C: For the person or for organisations?

JULIA: Well, you could go either way. Are there implications of such a program for teacher renewal? I guess that has to go beyond the personal.

C: Look, I think that anything that makes people stop and take stock and evaluate and work out what they’re doing and why they’re doing it and if they can do it in a different way that makes it feel more valuable to them is worthwhile but I don’t think everyone’s going to be open to a process because some people come here, pick up the tub, rock up to class, sit there, give a half-hearted maths lesson or whatever and then go home and really don’t care. They’re just doing it so they get the pay check at the end of the week. Really what they’re interested in is they’ve got other businesses running or they’ve got full on family lives, and so there’s people who are really dedicated and heartfelt to the other extreme of don’t give a rat’s, and everything in between as well and the people down the one end wouldn’t want [this]. There would be a way but you’d have to think about it to get to those middle-y sort of people, which I guess is what you’d be aiming at doing.

JULIA: Given that the goal of such a thing is to nurture the hearts and spirits of teachers,

C: Most people would tell you they don’t even know what their heart and spirit is! Some people! Seriously! They’d go “What? Bullshit!” But some people might think, they have
some sense of something going on inside them and it might be a way of them actually articulating and getting a handle on what’s happening to them because I think the way we are as human beings personally impacts the way we do our job, the way we interact. We’re doing a really important job, tending the next generation. We are. We’re doing a really important job. We really are. I don’t know if people realise.

JULIA: It makes you wonder sometimes.

C: Yeah.

JULIA: Is there anything else that you wanted to say because that’s the end of my questions.

C: Um, I’m just trying to think of how you could improve your tools. Hmm. So that you could, you know, get to the middle-y sort of people and I think you’d probably have to go for the less poetic, the less metaphorical. But I just want to say finally that, sitting back months down the track having a think about “Oh, yeah, I did that last year” and I’m actually really glad that I did that last year and I do think it probably sort of helped set me up to have a good year this year.

JULIA: So, not even the timing in your life. It sound like even the timing in the year was quite good.

C: Partly the time of year but just the Stop, the Think, the Evaluate, the Reflect, the rearrange and realign of a few things, redefine a few things helped set me up and then probably helped me arrive at that decision of “I’m going to have a good year because I can choose to.”

EXCERPT FROM INTERVIEW WITH ‘JACQUI’

PAGE ONE

JULIA: What would you like to tell me about participating in the teacher renewal reflective practice workshops?

J: They were like a funnel for each of those weeks that we met it was like a funnel of everything that had collected in the meantime so it was like a focusing of “What am I actually doing with my, so recognising that, “Yeah, I’m a teacher, there’s no getting away from it, but where am I going to go to do this and how am I going to do it and who am I going to do it with?” That open endedness is daunting.

JULIA: So it actually made more questions than answers?

J: Well, I found the workshops really amazing in being able to discuss the specifics. In terms of addressing some of the significant obstacles in me recognising where I’m going what I’m going to be doing next

JULIA: Obstacles?

J: My limiting beliefs

JULIA: So personal obstacles

J: Well obstacles about how I’m going to get another job, like talking about my past experience in the ACT and working in a K-10 school. You become a generic teacher, you don’t have method. So coming here and then rejecting formal high school, wanting
something alternative, wanting something different meaning why I’m here [the International College] at the moment, and then trying to get back into a Victorian high school where I haven’t done my method, I mean, I haven’t focused on my method for a really long time. All that experience was empowering for me and building my skills as an educator, [but] making me employable here it’s really narrowed my field.

JULIA: So those discussions that we had really clarified your feeling of your knowledge of yourself as a teacher but also laid bare what teaching in Victoria actually means.

J: The narrow parameters of this paradigm here, which is why I applied for the one in the Northern Territory, which is why I applied for this one in Hastings that I still don’t know anything about.

JULIA: So you said [the workshops] were like a funnel, So what you said was it’s really clarified your sense of yourself as a teacher but it’s also laid bare really starkly that Victoria is difficult for me to teach in under the parameters that are current.

J: Unless I try an alternative setting, which I’ve tried. I have to move into the country. Like Week 2 we started to look at the values. I’m finding it really hard to stick to my 100% number one and I’m finding it really hard to stick to my 92% number 2.

JULIA: Do you want to tell me about that?

J: Well, Congruence, you know? What am I actually doing to make myself 100% congruent which is my value, with my beliefs. Because it’s a matter of time and focus so when I’m not earning money I’ve got to be spending all the rest of my time (she breaks down crying here) (Research observation: She is being forced back into her Foundation values again)

PAGE THREE

JULIA: What’s been the most significant change for you since the workshops?

J: Realising that I’m going to have to be self-employed.

JULIA: Because?

J: The things that I want to do aren’t being done in institutions. Like the school that I’ve applied for-an independent school run for boys who’ve been excluded from mainstream, there’s only 15 kids, they do mindfulness meditation, they do morning prayer … That would be fantastic because I would learn so much by being there but at the same time use what I was learning there to develop the kinds of programs that I want to deliver to the public somewhere somehow. I’ve got headings and titles for the programs I want to run. I’m reading The Shadow Effect at the moment and then tying in things like EFT. You know, you understand that things like wholeness and healing and individuation are all the same thing … I want to do that. I want to do that sort of stuff, run programs like that for parents. I want to produce a meditation kit for schools and then teach people how to use it. For normal schools!

JULIA: Would you say that this kind of thinking that you’re now having was part of the change that has come through doing the renewal workshops or do you think it would have happened anyway?
J: No! No! No! Your programs helped me understand that, yes, teaching, facilitating, bringing stuff to people who don’t have access to whatever it is, that’s what I do. Working out that schools wasn’t where I was going to do it was part of that process.

JULIA: And the change that’s happened since then was realising that not only is it out of mainstream that you need to be working to feed this Congruence but bringing in your knowledge of holistic ways of being?

J: Yes. People can’t learn if they’re unhappy. You know? Teachers are unhappy. I wanted to produce a program. NLP for Teachers: How to stop backing the kid into the corner. Hey? How useful would that be! You’d only need to do a program of four! I mean it’s so simple, really, don’t you think?

FINAL STATEMENT PAGE 8

J: I feel like I’ve got Me back! But it’s all of what I only ever saw glimpses of, when I painted, when I stood on the top of Obiri Rock when I was twelve, when I climbed Kilimanjaro, when I talked to my Dad before he died, getting my tattoos which helped me re-establish my relationship with my daughter. Now I know that it’s my responsibility to have that all the time. But, so, working through the shadow and saying “Oh, yeah it’s ok to feel anxious, it’s ok to,” So all of those things are much more, I have a conscious understanding of and if I want to do this work I’ve got to be front brain all the time. All the time. It’s just that awareness without being overwhelmed, how to consciously go “Ah I’ve got to get that walk in so I can pick up feathers again, feel that sunshine.” I feel right now it’s hard, having that sort of responsibility now.
Appendix L: Circle of Trust Touchstones

• Extend and receive welcome.

• Be present as fully as possible.

• What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.

• Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.

• No fixing, no saving, no advising, and no setting each other straight.

• When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.

• Attend to your own inner teacher.

• Trust and learn from the silence

• Observe deep confidentiality

(Center for Courage and Renewal)
Appendix L: Circle of Trust Touchstones
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