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Embodiment in Teacher Education: Widening the Field

By

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B.Ed., M.Phil.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Supervisors: Professor Kathy Hall and Dr. Róisín O'Gorman

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I have read and understood the regulation of University College Cork concerning plagiarism.

Signed:

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Date: 2nd May 2024

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, there has been an increased interest in and acknowledgement of the embodied nature of teaching and learning within the field of education. While such understandings have also become more evident within the literature on teacher education, the dialogue between research and practice in this domain is still in its infancy. Furthermore, in light of traditional dualistic influences within this field, there is evidence that the role of more embodied modes of engagement in the education of teachers is becoming a theoretical point of concern. This is particularly evident within a number of probing texts on the role and nature of aesthetic education and identity formation in the teacher education process. In view of such considerations, this doctoral study explores the ways in which principles and practices from the field of somatic education may support the professional development of student teachers in the context of an arts education module at Dublin City University (DCU). As such, it contributes to a relatively new dialogue between three complementary fields of enquiry – somatic education, arts education, and teacher education.

The methodological approach to the study is qualitative in nature and reflects an ontological and epistemological orientation that is grounded in embodied and situated principles of enquiry. More particularly, it entails a phenomenological case study approach to three iterations of a new and evolving module on embodiment, which I facilitated with student teachers over a two-year period. It also includes a complementary engagement with the principles of autoethnography, aesthetic-based research and somatic education itself. While the data for analysis included engagement with content from a range of sources to

include reflective journals and post-module questionnaires, one of the most significant features of the data collection process was a series of in-depth interviews which drew on aesthetic and embodied modalities informed by the somatic education tradition. This research thereby seeks to contribute to and extend modalities of engagement within the phenomenological and aesthetic-based research traditions from an embodiment perspective.

A thematic analysis approach was used to review the data and generate the findings for the study. These indicate that the dedicated somatic emphasis of the module was linked with a newfound somatic awareness and responsivity in participants, which seemed to generate perceptual and dispositional shifts in the areas of artistry, reflection, identity, and relational attunement. From a teacher education perspective these represent significant features of an effective teacher's tacit engagement within the professional space, and are complex to teach due to their interaction with issues of personhood and disposition. In light of such ambitions, this study affirms the significance of the arts in the teacher education process, and more particularly it supports the inclusion of an enhanced somatic emphasis within this domain.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In recent years, there has been an increased interest in and acknowledgement of the embodied nature of teaching and learning within the field of education. While such considerations are beginning to become more evident within the theoretical literature on teacher education at the current time, the dialogue between theory and practice in this domain remains relatively under researched. In this light, this doctoral study aims to explore the ways in which principles and practices from the field of somatic education may support the professional development of student teachers.

The lesser well-known field of somatic education, sometimes referred to simply as 'somatics', can be described as:

> a field of study and practice concerned with holistic body-centered approaches to assist people in experiencing and transforming the self through awareness relative to the living world, the environment and others. (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 5)

Eddy distils the notion of a somatic education further to denote "The experience of bringing attention to the living body while in stillness and moving" (Eddy, 2017, p. 6). The subjective orientation of this approach distinguishes it from the more common dualistic or representational approaches to interpreting and engaging with the body in the Western world. The orientation of somatic education may thus be considered to address in practice a broader theoretical concern with the phenomenon of embodiment, which has been amplified across a range of academic disciplines since the mid-1950s. Embodiment is an umbrella term, associated initially with the phenomenological writings of Mearleau Ponty, and more recently elucidated within the fields of cognitive science, social studies, and the performing arts. It represents a critique of dualistic conceptions of mind, and orients towards an integrated understanding of the relationship between the physical and experiential body as one engages

with the world (Bresler, 2004; Merleau-Ponty & Smith, 1962; O'Loughlin, 2006; Varela et al., 1991). From such a perspective, phenomenologist Csordas elucidates that:

> the body is a biological, material entity, while embodiment can be understood as an indeterminate methodological field defined by perceptual experience and the mode of presence and engagement in the world. (Csordas, 1993, p135)

The particular impetus for the focus of this study arose from my relatively recent accreditation in somatic movement education and therapy at the Gorse Hill Centre in Greystones Ireland, with pioneering dance artist and psychotherapist, Joan Davis (Davis, 2007, 2018). This accreditation, and my professional development in the interim, spurred a desire to explore such principles and practices in the context of my work as a teacher educator and arts educator at Dublin City University (DCU). In this regard I wished to deepen my understanding of the relationship between teacher education, arts education, and the field of embodiment, and to contribute to an emerging literature that seemed to be calling for deeper empirical research into this relationship.

1.1 Personal and Professional Background

In the context of the auto-ethnographic elements of this project, and my dual role as researcher and teacher within the research process, it is appropriate that I would provide some essential information from the outset about my relevant background and core values. I am originally a primary school teacher, with a long-held interest in drama and the arts, which I carried into my undergraduate degree in education at St. Patrick's College Dublin, and into my early years of teaching. I subsequently went on to complete an M. Phil in Irish Theatre Studies at Trinity College, through which I chose to focus on the relationship between theatre, education, and personal and social change. This was most particularly reflected in my dissertation which focused on the inevitably complex nature of a community theatre project in Northern Ireland. My research during this period, also led to my subsequent role as

education officer for the highly regarded TEAM Educational Theatre Company in Ireland, before ultimately commencing my career as a teacher educator at St. Patrick's College in 1999.

At this point I have worked within the field of teacher education for over twenty-three years, with particular responsibilities within the area of drama education. This role has involved not only the facilitation and co-ordination of courses and mentoring of students and staff members in my own subject area, it has also offered extensive opportunities to contribute to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in education more broadly, and to gain considerable experience of supervising students in the area of school placement. During this period, I have also had the opportunity to work with experienced teachers in the context of in-service education programmes, summer schools and my varied roles within the Association for Drama in Education in Ireland (ADEI) since its foundation in 1999. I have also engaged with the fields of arts education and teacher education on a national and international level through my participation at a range of conferences, and through my own academic writing (Murphy, 2007, 2010; Murphy & O'Keeffe, 2006; Ní Áingléis et al., 2012).

Throughout this period, I have always held a firm belief in the value of the arts in education, not only in terms of the particular quality of aesthetic experience which they offer, but also in terms of their capacity to evoke personal and social transformation. In this regard, I have been inspired by the work of practitioners and authors such as Augusto Boal, Elliot Eisner, Maxine Greene, Dorothy Heathcote, Johnathon Neelends, and Cecily O'Neill (Boal, 1992, 2013: Eisner, 1991, 2002, 2003; Greene, 1995; Neelands, 1984, 2013; Neelands & Goode, 2015; O'Neill, 1995: Taylor & Warner, 2006; Wagner, 1976). Parallel to, and indeed extended by such inspirations from the arts, I have also maintained a deep commitment to critical and emancipatory pedagogical principles, which were inspired initially by my interest

in the work of Paulo Freire during my undergraduate years (Freire, 2013). Throughout my career, I have consistently aimed to meet with the challenge of emulating such values in my practice, and this attempt has indeed led to much enquiry, experimentation, and exploration both within and outside of the academy.

In relation to the latter, I would like to acknowledge the significance of a number of formative explorations that I engaged in since 2005 in the areas of voice, movement, and sound, with a series of practitioners outside of the formal education system. These were initiated to a large degree by an initial workshop and subsequent series of residential modules with Chloe Goodchild of The Naked Voice Foundation, UK (Goodchild, 2015). The naked voice modules explored a range of practices in both voice and movement that aimed to support the individual to bring into consciousness the full expression of their personal identity, and to explore the consequent impacts on their interaction with the world. The profoundly influential experiences that ensued from these processes gradually influenced my deeper personal enquiry into wider issues of self-actualisation, consciousness and spirituality, and the role of voice and movement in these domains. Such interests led me to pursue an accreditation in the area of sound healing with the College of Sound Healing in 2011 (https://www.collegeofsoundhealing.co.uk), and to engage in a series of subsequent summer schools with Caitriona Ni Ghiollaphádraig of Deora Dé in the area of five rhythms dance (https://embodiedbrain.ie/5-rhythms). In 2012 I began the more extensive Origins programme with Joan Davis, which represented the key impetus for this study, and which I will describe in more detail in the next section. For now, I feel it necessary to point out that, notwithstanding the richness of my experiences within the formal education system throughout my life, there was something in the approaches I found in these trainings that extended my experience and understanding of myself, and the creative and pedagogical process in a newly transformative way. Most striking was the way that they helped me to

engage with my own experience at a level I had hitherto not encountered. I now understand that one of the most influential contributors in this regard was the way in which they facilitated me to engage with and incorporate the wisdom of my own body in my relationship with the world.

1.1.1 Origins Programme and New Acquaintance with the Field of Somatic Education

Between 2012 and 2017 I participated in the Origins programme at the Gorse Hill centre in Greystones, Ireland, which is an approved programme of the International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association (ISMETA). The director of the programme, Joan Davis, is a pioneer of contemporary dance and of the somatic approach in Ireland. Davis has also studied extensively with leading international experts in the field of somatic education, namely Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, originator of the body-mind centering approach, and Janet Adler, founder of the discipline of authentic movement (Adler, 2002; Bainbridge-Cohen, 1993). As a training, Origins thereby offered explorations in a range of somatic modalities at a highly experiential level. These included body-mind centering, developmental movement patterns, resonance and mindfulness, the art of witnessing, object relations, attachment styles, and authentic movement. As a further distinguishing feature of the approach to embodiment within this programme, it addressed the cyclical and integrated nature of human development from conception to standing. The metaphor of spirals was used to acknowledge the structure of the programme in this regard, and the predicted nature of the participant experience that ensued. In her own words, Davis explains that:

> As human beings, body, spirit, emotion and thought all evolve in relationship to each other. The process of our physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development occurs in overlapping spirals and is neither linear nor hierarchical. It is more like an elaborate dance that unfolds as we grow. (Davis, 2018, p. 710)

The philosophy of the accreditation element of programme was underpinned by the principle that a practitioner's quality and depth of embodiment is directly linked with their capacity to facilitate others. With this in mind, the overall programme represented a deeply personal process for me in the first instance, as it did for the other participants who were drawn to it from a wide range of backgrounds. While it should be acknowledged that the accreditation element had a clear therapeutic orientation, the overall programme was wide reaching in its scope, and was cognisant of its potential application in a range of fields. This was evident not only in the personal changes I began to recognise as my engagement with the programme unfolded, but also in the shifts I noticed in the quality and content of my teaching as I began to explore its principles at the university. Ultimately, my challenge towards the end of the process, and since its completion, was to explore more deeply how its principles and practices might apply within my own context of teacher education.

Since my decision to take this exploration to PhD level, I have continued to deepen my experiential engagement with and understanding of this field through my participation at somatic conferences, and through the ongoing professional development opportunities offered by ISMETA (see Appendix A). Furthermore, I have continued my very valued monthly contact with the peer group that I engaged with during the Origins process. I have also participated in bi-annual weekend meetings with members of the wider Origins group, through which we continue to practice and reflect on aspects of the programme together. Most recently I have joined a new community of practice led by one of my Origins colleagues, which seeks to bring together practitioners from this developing field in the broader Irish context. These experiences have served not only to extend my practice with others, but perhaps more importantly to ground my continued learning process in my own body and to access the particular support and knowledge that this offers.

1.2 The Research Context

At this juncture, I will provide a general introduction to the research context within which this study took place. This pertains to the broader teacher education landscape of the Irish context, and the particular university context within which I work. In both cases the period leading up to the implementation of this study could be characterised as one of significant reform and change, the repercussions of which provided a noteworthy backdrop to the orientation of this study.

1.2.1 Policy Change in Teacher Education in Ireland

From a policy perspective, Hyland would tend to echo the understanding of most analysts of the contemporary Irish teacher education context, in her assertion that:

> The key catalysts for the reform of initial teacher education during the period 2012 to 2017 were the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy issued by the Minister for Education and Skills in 2011, and the 2012 Report of the International Review Panel led by Pasi Sahlberg (commonly known as the Sahlberg 1 Report). (Hyland, 2018, p. 19)

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) *Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People* was published in 2011 (DES, 2011). This was in response to the comparatively poor performance of Irish students in these domains, as reported within the previous OECD PISA test results of 2009 (OECD, 2010). The literacy and numeracy strategy thus contained far-reaching recommendations for subsequent reform within teacher education programmes, to include significantly more emphasis on literacy and numeracy across all programme elements, and an overall promotion of increased accountability and measurement of standards in the sector. Among the further recommendations within the report were an extension of the B. Ed degree from three to four years, an increased emphasis on school placement, and a shift from the humanities orientation of previous specialist

options within the degree to reflect a closer alignment with the subjects of education (Hyland, 2018).

It is interesting to note that policy analyst Paul Conway recognises a crisis of confidence in the quality of teaching and teacher education in Ireland arising from the PISA report, and that this represented a considerable departure from the hitherto broadly positive perception of the field within this jurisdiction (Conway, 2013). Furthermore, he considers the overall response to the report in Ireland to reflect an international trend within teacher education towards a closer alignment with the neoliberal orientation of the global education reform movement (GERM). In this regard he asserts that:

> The move toward GERM in Irish education policy reflects a considerable redirection, from a more general focus on standards, a strong emphasis on broad holistic curriculum (particularly at primary level), and an earlier emphasis on moderate rather than stricter accountabilities in Irish education. (Conway, 2013, p. 52)

Having lived through this 'redirection' over the course of my career, I can attest to this description, and to the various tensions it has created within the field of teacher education in this jurisdiction in recent times. Indeed, I would argue that the field of teacher education in Ireland now finds itself somewhat buffeted between a range of somewhat conflicting influences. Not least of these are its parallel commitments to its earlier holistic and child-centered orientation as referred to by Conway above, and as distinctly evidenced in the 1971 curriculum for primary schools in Ireland (Department of Education 1971a, 1971b), and again more recently in the Aistear curriculum framework for early childhood education (NCCA, 2009). In this regard, I believe that we in the field are currently at a defining moment in our history, where critical choices of direction are likely to have considerable long-term effects on Irish Education landscape.

One of the other relatively recent policy developments in this context that has aligned with my own values relates to the commitment to an appreciation of the life-long learning process that exists across the teacher education continuum. This orientation is outlined within the teaching council's *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* published in 2011, and takes cognisance of the relationship between all phases of a teacher's career to include pre-service education induction, mid-career, and late career phases (Teaching council, 2011). For me, such a policy orientation crucially acknowledges the developmental nature of the teacher education process and the understanding that the teacher will require different qualities of support and input at different stages of their career. The difference between what a pre-service student teacher might require in comparison with a more mature and experienced teacher is of particular interest to me in this regard. Moreover, it is worth noting that the life-long learning movement more generally, tends to ascribe a more agentic role to the learner who is considered to be the main driver of their learning experience across the lifespan. In my view, this emphasis contrasts with a more neoliberal orientation towards teacher development, which is more likely to suggest that the teacher's learning process and future pedagogical influence within the field should be driven predominantly by external directives and standards. I would consider the self-led and reflective nature of somatic practice, which will be described in more detail in subsequent chapters, to have particular resonance in relation to the principles of such a policy development.

Another related influence coming from the international educational field in recent decades, and perhaps also more aligned with the previous holistic and student-centered orientation of the Irish system, is the focus on the relationship between the personal and professional in teacher education. From this perspective, issues of identity and belief are considered to have a significant influence on teacher development and should be prioritised in the teacher education process (Beijaard et al., 2004; Beijaard & Meijer, 2017; Bullough,

1997, 2008; Kelchtermans, 2009; Korthagen, 2004, 2014; Palmer, 2007). I give more attention to this phenomenon in chapter three, but for now I wish to acknowledge Furlong's recognition of this particular orientation in the Irish context, in spite of the overarching neoliberal agenda of the current period (Furlong, 2013). In this regard, it is worth noting that 'personal and professional identity' is one of the five core pillars that underpin the relatively recent design of the four-year Bachelor of Education programme at DCU.

In light of all of the above, I also note the significance that has been attached to the notion of teacher agency within the framework for the redesign of the Irish primary school curriculum, to be implemented from 2025 (NCCA, 2023). This is in the context of a vision for a more integrated curriculum for primary education, with the inclusion of discretionary time that will be determined by the capacity of the class teacher to respond to the needs of the children in their class. This tends to reflect and extend further the relative autonomy that has traditionally existed for teachers within the primary sector in Ireland, notwithstanding the aforementioned influences of recent years. This has oftentimes been in stark contrast with the constraints experienced at post-primary level due to its culmination in a state exam that determines access to third level education. In any case, I would suggest that such a valuable agentic vision for the role of the primary teacher requires careful consideration across the continuum of teacher education, not least during the formative years of one's pre-service education. The current emphasis on teacher as researcher of their own practice, as espoused by the teaching council' guidelines for initial teacher education programme providers (Teaching Council, 2011b), and their more recent *Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education* (Teaching Council, 2020), may be considered to represent one such preparatory element for this role. The broader emphasis on the relationship between the personal and the professional within the B. Ed programme as alluded to above, is also likely to offer an important contribution in this regard in my view.

As illustrated in the paragraphs above, the teacher education sector in the Irish context is currently beset by a range of sometimes competing interests from the local and international spheres. In addition to the immediate concerns of the fieldwork of the study it was thus important for me to remain cognisant of how a module on embodiment might find its place and purpose within this context. In light of the research questions of this study, which will be outlined in the next section, I suggest that a phenomenological study of this nature has the potential to unearth not only the experiences of the participants involved, but also to throw light on how such an exploration may serve to support or challenge the pedagogical culture and policy context within which it exists.

1.2.2 DCU Institute of Education

My own specific teacher education context has also undergone significant structural change in the years leading up to and since the implementation of this study. In 2016, the previously named St. Patrick's College was incorporated into Dublin City University as part of a broader rationalisation of the teacher education sector in Ireland. Such rationalisation is considered to have been influenced significantly by the economic downturn of previous years, and the subsequent *Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland* (DES, 2012). Albeit on the same grounds, I now work in the newly constituted DCU 'Institute of Education', which represents an amalgam of previously independent colleges of education and the education department of the university. In terms of identity, the Institute distinguishes itself in the Irish context by bringing together staff and students of education across all sectors from early childhood to primary and post-primary, and further and higher education, and thus reflects the full continuum of education referred to previously. The Institute also prides itself on the increasingly strong research profile of its staff at a national and international level. At this point, it is still however a continuously evolving entity due to its relatively new and multifaceted dynamic and the

implicit challenge, as reported internationally, of attempting to integrate the particularities of teacher education into the broader culture of a university (Dolan, 2012). Referring to the commonly reported challenges of the transition in question at an international level, Dolan asserts that:

> Many teacher educators are now struggling to balance the demands between delivering high quality, intensive teaching required for teacher education programmes with the academic demands of conducting research, so much so that teacher education remains what Maguire (1994) has called 'the impossible job' (122). (Dolan, 2012, p. 469)

Finding myself also in this juxtaposition between the various demands of being a teacher educator working in a university context at the current time, I have indeed pondered the question - Where does the slow and physical nature of the embodied 'research' that I have been undertaking in various forms for many years, find its place in this changed local, national, and international landscape? The research I refer to includes the longer-term exploration that the embodiment process invites into the relationship between my own personal and professional life, and the related explorations that I have embarked upon with my students. In light of the changing emphases and values of the third level sector (Biesta, 2020; Walker & Boni, 2013), what kind of 'outputs' can such activity produce, and when they slowly do emerge, will the significance of their value be recognised?

It is important to point out that such deliberation and uncertainty has also taken place in the context of my more general conviction that teacher educators must continuously strive to move themselves into situations of challenge and uncertainty in this way, if their practice is to meaningfully grow and develop. As Dolan points out:

> This group of professionals need to perceive themselves as lifelong learners, need to be lifelong learners in practice and need to model positive models of lifelong learning in every aspect of a teacher education programme. (Dolan, 2012, p. 472)

For me, it is the slow, exploratory, and experiential groundwork that such research entails, in whatever field of study the teacher educator finds their passion, which can lay the foundations for an expansive pedagogical practice, and a related expansive quality of research.

1.3 Field Work and Research Questions

The particular fieldwork for this PhD exploration took place in the context of the advancement of a new module on embodiment which I was developing at the university at the time of its commencement. This module was situated within a new education specialism in drama education and included a broad arts orientation. The research in question involved a phenomenological case study design pertaining to the first three iterations of the evolving module within the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and Professional Masters in Education (PME) degrees over a two year period, and included elements of autoethnography, aesthetic based research and somatic education itself. Through my engagement with students in this module, I wished to improve and understand the potential nature and purpose of my own emerging somatic practice within this convergence of disciplines, and to get a deeper understanding of the role of embodied practices within the field of teacher education more broadly. With this in mind the overarching research question for the project was,

> *What do the principles and practices of somatic education offer in the context of an arts education module in a teacher education programme?*

This question generated two further sub-questions, which sought to give a more precise focus to the study,

What is the nature of the lived teaching and learning experience of a somatic based approach to an arts education module within a teacher education context?

And,

What does this experience reveal about the potential relevance of somatic approaches in the teacher education context?

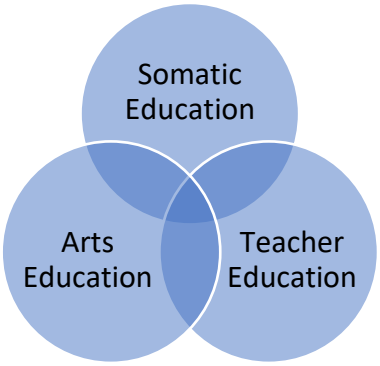
The overview of the chapters in the next section offers an outline of how these questions are treated and addressed over the course of the overall report. In the first instance these questions are probed within the next two chapters via the existing literature from the three fields in question. They are then explored empirically through an analysis of the data collected during the case study process as described above.

1.4 Overview of Chapters

Following this introductory chapter, I present two chapters which review relevant literature from the three key fields that this research attempts to bring into dialogue as illustrated in Figure 1 – somatic education, arts education, and teacher education. The overall aim of these chapters is to offer a context for the study and its underlying questions. In this regard they seek to explore at a theoretical level the extent to which the principles, values and practices of these fields may have relevance for each other, and the questions that a meeting between them might generate. In spite of the dearth of empirical research pertaining to the specific focus of this study, they will also explore the extent to which they have already come into contact with each other at the level of practice-based research even in a preliminary manner.

Figure 1

Dialogue between Three Fields of Enquiry



Chapter two, entitled Somatic Education, provides a definitional and historical overview of the arguably lesser-known field of somatic education within the field of teacher education in Ireland. It thereby includes an engagement with its core principles and practices arising from its original foundations in the areas of health and dance. It also provides an overview of its subsequent application across a range of disciplines and considers some areas of potential relevance to the field of teacher education. Chapter three, entitled 'Embodiment and the Field of Education' provides an overview of the nature of historical and contemporary discourse on the body within the field of education. It does so initially in the context of shifting interpretations of the nature of learning and cognition more generally, and then in the context of learning in the specific areas of arts education and teacher education. Potential for the relevance and application of somatic education in this context is again considered in light of these deliberations.

In chapter four I provide a rationale for and description of the phenomenological case study design that I devised for this study, as well as explicating the other methodological influences which support it, namely autoethnography, aesthetic-based research, and somatic education itself. In terms of data collection, this chapter also offers a rationale for the specific data collected, and more particularly for the exploratory approach to the interview design, which formed a central element of the data gathering process. It also offers an overview of

the module in question, my approach to the analysis of the data, and the ethical considerations which were taken into account throughout.

In chapters five and six I outline and discuss the key findings of the study under the respective headings of 'Exploring and Expanding Identities' and 'Expression and Regulation in Aesthetical and Pedagogical Process'. Each of the findings in question is discussed with respect to illustrations from the data gathered and dialogue with the literature from the early chapters. Chapter seven brings the presentation of the research to a close by comprehensively reviewing the findings in order to identify a number of key implications, potential limitations, and related recommendations for future research in this domain.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided an introduction to this research study from a range of perspectives. It began with a broad overview of the focus and nature of the project, which included a definitional orientation in relation to the field of embodiment, and more particularly somatic education. In light of the auto-ethnographic elements of the project and my dual role as researcher and teacher within the process, it then provided a broad overview of my personal and professional background and values. This included references to my pedagogical and aesthetic education both inside and outside of the formal educational system, and an acknowledgement of the significant influence of the latter on my longer term personal and professional development. As it represented a key impetus for the implementation of this study, I then went on to provide an overview of the principles and practices that I encountered within the Origins programme at the Gorse Hill Centre in Greystones, and my related accreditation in the area of Somatic Movement Education and Therapy.

In the second half of the chapter, I focused on the context for the study itself in terms of the broader Irish teacher education landscape at this time, and the particular university context within which I work. In this regard I highlighted the backdrop of significant change

that has taken place in both respects in the lead up to the implementation of this study, from the perspective of policy orientation and institutional restructure. The potential significance, and indeed potential challenge, of a study on embodiment was contemplated in light of the competing forces that are considered to have evolved within the sector during this period. In the final section of the chapter, the research questions for the project were given a broad introduction in order to provide a clear frame for the reader in relation to both the theoretical and empirical content to follow. This was followed by an overview of the focus of each of the subsequent chapters in in terms of their contribution to the overall report.

As you the reader now embark on your own engagement with the material that I have shared in these pages, I invite you to also welcome your own embodied response to the theoretical and experiential content that you will meet, and the dialogue that I hope it will generate with your own personal and professional experience.

CHAPTER TWO: INTRODUCTION TO SOMATIC EDUCATION

In this chapter I extend the recent efforts in the literature to synthesise the history and nature of somatic education, with a view to rendering its principles and practices more accessible and more widely understood in a range of contexts. The scope of the discussion is necessarily broad for a number of additional reasons. In the context of the qualitative and auto-ethnographic nature of this research study, I am also attempting to enhance and crystallise my own understanding of the somatic field as I interpret it from the perspective of a teacher educator, who is making relatively new and incremental transitions from participant to facilitator to researcher within this domain. Furthermore, I am attempting to introduce the principles and practice to a new audience, as I grapple with its potential application in the relatively unchartered context of teacher education. In summary, the combination of these elements, and the question of relevance at the heart of the research, calls for a broad exploratory approach, which has the potential to unearth outcomes pertaining to a wide range of literature on the subject.

In the first part of this chapter, I will introduce the history of the field as it is still emerging through the contemporary work of a range of authors. This will include the gradual naming of the field, its consolidation, and its relatively recent attempts at a comprehensive definition. I will then go on to explicate the broad principles that have continued to underscore the range of disciplines associated with somatic education since its earliest conception. In the second part of the chapter, I will discuss the more recent diversification of the field and its continually expansive application in a range of contexts. Of particular interest from an education perspective, I will finally identify a number of key elements of practice that tend to be contained within what has recently come to be known as ‘somatic pedagogy’.

2.1 Naming of the Field

Somatics tends to be commonly regarded as a phenomenon that existed before it was named (Mangione, 1993). It was former theologian, philosopher, and early student of the Feldenkreis method Thomas Hanna who first coined the term in the 1960s to acknowledge and extrapolate the central tenets of the range of long-established body-based disciplines, which were generating renewed interest in the Western world at the time (Hanna, 1970). In this regard, Hanna was highly influenced by his experiences at the Esalen institute in California, a dynamic hub for the exploration and sharing of such practices. In 1975 Hanna's 'naming' of the field was further consolidated by the setting up of the Novato Institute for Somatic Research and Training with his wife Eleanor Criswell Hanna. They subsequently founded the magazine *Somatics* in 1976 which formally initiated the process of acknowledging the work of somatic practitioners and disciplines, in line with evolving a shared theoretical foundation.

While acknowledging the significant influence of eastern body-oriented philosophies and practices on the work of many somatic practitioners, somatics is considered to have emerged as a largely Western phenomenon due to the particular influence of the bodily sciences, contemporary dance and phenomenology on the field (Barbour, 2016; Batson et al., 2012; Fortin, 2002; Fraleigh, 2015; Liu, 1998; Mangione, 1993; Mullan, 2014). Some of the better-known somatic disciplines which have emerged predominantly during the twentieth century include - authentic movement, Bartenieff fundamentals, body-mind centering, continuum, eutony, Feldenkrais method, ideokinesis, sensory awareness, Skinner releasing technique, Rosen method, and Topf technique (Eddy, 2017; Mangione, 1993; Mullan, 2014). While distinctions between these practices and their emphases clearly exist, common to all is a commitment to the practice of developing one's conscious awareness of the process of living in a human body (Eddy, 2017).

2.2 Consolidation of the Field

Philosopher Don Hanlon Johnson, who is also widely credited with the further consolidation of the field of somatics since the 1970s, recounts the rationale for the move towards aligning the various somatic disciplines (Johnson, 1995). In summary, these moves towards a more integrated field seek to give recognition to a range of practitioners who possess a clear point of alignment, a long lineage of empirical exploration with proven benefits, and who have operated on the margins of academia in their commitment to bridging the traditional theory-practice divide. Johnson concludes that together, they also present a powerful confrontation to the traditional mind-body dualisms which have been endemic in the fields of academia, medicine and ironically some approaches to physical health and the arts – and have had disastrous implications for the respect of human dignity worldwide. The need for increased consolidation and integration in the face of the impact of such dualisms is passionately expressed in the introduction to Johnson's seminal 1995 publication, wherein he hopes that the attempt in question:

> will increase the likelihood of joining somatic practitioners more effectively together with community organizers, tribal peoples, ecologists, artists, and others who are struggling to be heard over the bloated bellowings of those who would continue the old savaging of flesh under the guise of an obscure superior knowing." (Johnson, 1995, pxviii)

Following on from the work of Johnson and Hanna, significant research has continued in recent decades into the historical roots of the somatic field, the shared principles in question, and the challenge of definition involved (Green, 2002b; Barbour, 2016; Brodie & Lobel, 2004, 2014; Eddy, 2009, 2017; Fortin, 2002; Fraleigh, 2015; Mangione, 1993; Mullan, 2014; Whatley, & Weber, 2014). Indeed, the charting of the historical evolution of somatics continues to be a very live and rich area of study due to its variety of cultural influences and range of contextual applications (Eddy, 2017; Fortin, 2002; Fraleigh, 2015).

Martha Eddy's recent 2017 publication *Mindful Movement; The Evolution of the Somatic Arts and Conscious Action* deserves specific mention at this juncture for its comprehensive and up to date analysis (Eddy, 2017). Accompanied by other significant contributors, Eddy sets out in this publication to provide both an historical and contemporary overview of the field to include its key principles, goals, and practices. In doing so she acknowledges the long lineage of practices from both eastern and Western traditions that inform and are informed by the principles of somatic education today. Michelle Anne Mangione (1993), Kelly Mullan (2014) and Sylvie Fortin (2002) also deserve specific acknowledgement for the various ways in which they have traced the somatic lineages to the contemporary context, and in which they highlight current trends, complexities, and challenges within the field. The relatively recent interest and incorporation of somatics within the academic field, and the dialogue between universities and the non-institutionalized settings from which such practices have tended to emerge, has also provided fertile and creative ground for exploration and development (Eddy, 2017; Reed & Whatley, 2017; Williamson et al., 2014). Without doubt, the International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association (ISMETA), which was set up in 1988, also deserves considerable acknowledgement for their ongoing work in formalizing and furthering the research, practice, and recognition of this ever-evolving domain.

2.3 Definition

Fortin describes somatics as "both a way of perceiving one's body and a specific field of knowledge" and highlights the challenge of its definition in this regard (Fortin, 2002, p. 128). In a similar vein Mullan explains that "..as both an art and a science, somatics is informed by a physiological understanding of the body, yet taught in a manner which is creative and intuitive" (Mullan, 2014, p. 254). However, while understandings of somatics tend to be influenced by context, purpose and emphasis as alluded to thus far, most contemporary

researchers and practitioners tend to draw on Hanna's definition which explains it as "the field which studies the *soma*: namely, the *body* as perceived from within by first person perception" (Hanna, 1988, p31). Influenced by Husserl's notion of somatology, Hanna's distinction between body and soma has continued to represent a defining feature of most approaches to somatics (Eddy, 2017; Martha Eddy, 2009; Fortin, 2002; Mangione, 1993; Mullan, 2014). The former refers to a third person perception of the appearance and physiology of the body, while the latter refers to that which is perceived from the inside.

According to Hanna (1988), these "separate modes of cognition" (p.31) produce distinct types of information. While he states that neither is more important, he critiques the medical profession for largely ignoring the data provided by the soma on the grounds that not only is related assessment and diagnosis incomplete in such analysis, but a vital part of the healing process is likely to be overlooked. He argues that this attitude ignores a fundamental discovery of the early somatic pioneers, which is based on the essential unity of mind and body and the related human capacity for self-regulation (Hanna, 1988). This and other defining premises, features and emphases of common somatic practices will be explored in the following sections, as will variations on Hanna's definition above.

2.4 The First Generation of Somatic Pioneers: Somatics and Self-Healing

Key to the inspiration for the work of many of the first generation of somatic practitioners in the first half of the twentieth century, was the successful self-healing of personal injuries and medical conditions for which the medical world could hitherto offer no further assistance (Eddy, 2009; Eddy, 2017; Hanna, 1988; Mangione, 1993; Johnson, 1995). Examples of the above include the healing process of Elsa Gindler who suffered from tuberculosis, F.M. Alexander who struggled with voice problems in performance, and Moshé Feldenkrais who confronted a persistent knee injury (Johnson, 1995, pxi). Mangione explains that "the idea that humans have more self-regulating potential than is commonly assumed and

that there are learnable methods for such regulation were basic tenets of the somatics pioneers" (Mangione, 1993, p42). The discoveries in question ensued from a deeply experiential process of observation, trial, and error. The subsequent analysis and consolidation of the self-healing process for these pioneers formed the basis for their own somatic disciplines, and for fundamentally challenging dualistic conceptions of the relationship between mind and body in the Western world.

For Hanna, as for many somatic practitioners, the soma's capacity for self-regulation is fundamentally centered around an increased experiential awareness of the highly integrated nature of the human nervous system**,** from cortex to spinal cord to nerve ending. In particular he focuses on the sensory-motor system within the body, and its relationship with the conscious mind (Hanna, 1988). In the first instance he points out that all forms of motor activity generate a sensory response, and that all forms of sensory awareness generate a corresponding motor response. However subtle the awareness or response in question, he summarizes that it is impossible to sense without acting and to act without sensing (Hanna, 1988, p. 32). During the act of focused self-awareness therefore, it is the oftentimes subtle 'activity' that is brought into an area of injury, numbness or 'freeze' that forms the basis for incremental healing and release. Furthermore, the act of self-awareness also ensures that the area of concern is either introduced or re-introduced to the field of voluntary consciousness in a process oftentimes referred to as 'repatterning'.

Hanna uses the term 'somatic learning' and later 'somatic education' to describe the incremental process of consciously accessing and utilizing such knowledge on the part of the participant (Hanna, 1988, p. 34). In this regard, he emphasizes the active nature of the process in the context of "a learning that expands the human soma's range of action as well as perception" (Hanna, 1998, p.34). Indeed, many contemporary practitioners emphasise the notion of somatics as a facilitated learning process rather than a healing process. This

represents a challenge to a perspective that entrusts the act of healing to a therapist or external agent. For Hanna, and many other somatic theorists, one of the defining features of somatic education is therefore its longer-term tendency towards self-governance, agency, and autonomy. This includes the understanding that personal patterns of engagement with the world are not inalterable, and that participants have choice and agency in relation to such patterns (Bainbridge-Cohen, 1993; Hartley, 2004).

At this juncture I wish to clarify that while other helpful terms are used in the literature to refer to this field of practice such as 'somatic movement education' (ISMETA) and 'mindful movement' (Eddy, 2017), I will be using Hanna's original terms 'somatics' and 'somatic education' for the remainder of this document. For me, these tend to suggest a comprehensiveness of practice, and acknowledge the principle that a somatic education involves self-awareness in both movement and apparent stillness.

2.5 Fundamentals of Somatic Process: A New Orientation Towards the Body

For a practitioner-oriented elucidation of the somatic learning process I now draw on Elizabeth Behnke's article entitled 'matching' which was considered to have had an enormous impact on the 'self-understanding' of the field in the 1980s (Johnson, 1995; Behnke, 1995). Through her analysis of Judith Aston's principle and technique of 'matching', Behnke explains the somatic process in terms of three stages which are considered to be in constant reciprocity - "(1) awareness of something in one's own body; (2) an inner act of matching or aligning oneself with this; and (3) allowing something to change" (Behnke, 1995, p. 319). Behnke explains that the interplay between these stages facilitates a complex internal process of gently 'possibilizing' healthier, more creative, or more effortless alternatives (Behnke, 1995, p. 325). It should be noted that there is a subtle relationship between *learning* and *allowing* implicit in this process which I believe is critical to the many benefits which have been shown to accrue from the somatic disciplines. This relationship can

also be potentially confusing for the Western mindset. Firstly, traditional notions of learning, particularly those of a behaviourist nature, may tend towards a process of prior identification and pursuit of precise and clear outcomes. Somatics, as Behnke's stages suggest, tends rather towards a sensitization, or indeed a familiarity with a process, and a trusting in the unfolding which ensues (Johnson, 2004). There is indeed an ultimate trust in the inherent intelligence of the body implicit in this approach, which many somatic practitioners consider to be paramount (Adler, 2002; Fraleigh, 2015; Olsen, 1998; Tufnell, M., Crickmay, 1993, 2004).

Furthermore, the integrative and self-sensing nature of the somatic process not only challenges the tendency towards an 'I-it' relationship between person and body (Behnke, 1995, p325), it actively encourages an orientation towards *being-with* the body, and indeed ultimately to a greater sense of *being* a body (Collinson, 2015; Sills, 2009). It is in this sense that the somatic disciplines have relevance beyond the healing of physical ills to include contexts which focus on creative, spiritual, educational, or wider therapeutic aspirations (Collinson, 2015; Fraleigh, 2015; Green, 1993, 1996; Williamson et al., 2014). These applications of somatic practice will be given further attention later in the chapter.

At this point however, it is worth highlighting the challenges that such an orientation can present for those who are unfamiliar with such processes. For many the necessity to learn what might otherwise be considered 'natural' skills must be understood in light of an alienation from the body that tends to ensue from the cultural, educational and societal milieu in which we exist, and also from the natural psycho-physical defences which we tend to accrue in our lifetime. In other words, the capacity to become aware of, engage with and allow the unfolding of one's personal experience of the human body is not something that can be taken for granted, and is indeed often resisted in the context of various forms of conscious or unconscious fear, conditioning, or self-judgment (Bauer, 2018; Collinson, 2015, Gustafson, 1998; O'Loughlin, 2006). Given the age range, cultural context, and generalist

backgrounds of the students with whom I tend to work, I undoubtedly needed to be mindful of such issues in our work together. In general, the skills in question are multilayered and need to be practiced and honed for the many benefits of the somatic experience to unfold. It is with this in mind that the key somatic skills of accessing and witnessing 'the felt-sense' of the body will now be addressed.

2.6 The Felt Sense; Sensation, Movement and Self-Knowing

Somatic practitioners universally tend to emphasise the significance of sensory awareness or the 'felt sense', a term coined by Eugene Gendlin, as the basis for repatterning, or as Fraleigh would phrase it, expansion of consciousness (Fraleigh, 2015; Gendlin & Olsen, 1970). In this regard access to the felt sense is considered to be a fundamental source of aliveness, change, learning and indeed 'un-learning' in one's continuously evolving knowledge of self and the world. In this process, the significance of the interconnectivity of all aspects of the nervous system in somatic practice has been noted, as has the need for an increased experience of and understanding of the same. In order for us to experience the full benefits of the somatic approach, we need to learn to know on a deeply experiential level that "we are an interweaving of processes, not just collections of parts" (Johnson, 1995). Fundamental to this understanding is the significance of the oftentimes neglected and underestimated role of felt sensation in the maturation process. As Johnson further explains:

> Just as the mind organizes the rest of the body's tissues into a life process, sensations to a large degree organize the mind. They do not simply give the mind material to organize; they are themselves a major organizing principle. (Johnson, 1995)

In light of the above, it is worth noting Eddy's assertion that somatic education involves the awareness and integration of information coming from both the inner and outer senses to support a better understanding of self and one's relationship with the world (Eddy, 2017). Eddy explains that while the five senses associated with experiencing the external

environment (extero-reception), have tended to be relatively well recognised in Western forms of education and culture, a further two senses associated with experiencing the internal body (intero-reception) have tended to be given scant attention outside some specific forms of dance and theatre. These include proprioception and kinaesthesia, which refer to one's experience of the internal body, and to one's awareness of the body in movement respectively. Eddy refers to the seven senses in question as the 'somatic awareness toolkit' (Eddy, 2017, p. 6). Together they contribute to one's capacity for accessing one's full 'felt sense' of human experience as opposed to a partial, abstract, or intellectual idea of the same.

As alluded to above, fundamental to the somatic process is the significant role of movement in our capacity to sense ourselves and the world we live in. We touch and are touched by our environment through movement. For the developing child, the information that ensues from this meeting becomes key to an emerging sense of self as the distinction between self and non-self becomes increasingly differentiated. The felt experience of touch that is facilitated by their physical negotiations against, with and through the external environment continues to influence ever deeper levels of differentiation within the physical and psychological body (Bainbridge-Cohen, 1993). While highly influential at the early stages of development, the sensitive quality of awareness that typifies this stage can be generated and renewed with significant impact at any stage of the lifecycle. This is the basis for the body-mind centering approach, which represented a fundamental influence within the Origins programme at Gorse Hill.

2.7 Body-Mind Centering

The somatic discipline of body-mind centering (BMC) offers a multi-layered understanding of the relationship between sensation and movement in the early maturation process, which it also draws upon in the facilitation of somatic processes with adults. As a discipline, BMC has influenced many other somatic practices and has significantly informed

the central principles of the field generally (Hartley, 1995, 2004; Olsen, 1998). It emphasises the significance of both a biological and developmental understanding of the human body. For example, one of the key dimensions of BMC involves the revisiting of the early human developmental movement patterns which underlie and facilitate the dynamic nature of human formation, and which continue to exert influence throughout the lifespan. According to Bonnie Bainbridge- Cohen, the founder of BMC:

> This is when the relation of the perceptual process (the way one sees), and the motor process (the way one moves or acts in the world) is established. This is the baseline for how you will be processing activity, either receiving or expressing, throughout your life. (Bainbridge-Cohen, 1993, p. 99)

Within this perspective, the centrality of movement in initiating the innate patterns which take us from conception to standing is greatly emphasized, as is its role in all subsequent development. In describing the dialogue between genetic and environmental factors within this process, Cohen explains that "the patterns are not accessible to us until they are actually stimulated into existence, until we actually *do* them" (Bainbridge-Cohen, 1993, p. 99). The movement patterns continue to stimulate an ever-more subtle dialogue between sensation and action as the child negotiates their relationship with the world.

Just as movement stimulates the initiation of pre-wired patterns, the evolution of each pattern stimulates new movement experiences and new sensory information for the developing nervous system. This includes both internal and external engagement with the core elements of fluid, gravity, and space in the pre and post-natal environment, each of which has a particular impact on the child's physical and psychological experience. Significantly these delicate early movement experiences are considered to invoke many of the most fundamental impulses of our lives, which tend to play out in a continua of physical and

psychological gestures from expansion to contraction, bonding to defending, yielding to pushing and reaching to pulling.

The BMC approach is also concerned with the sense in which the interplay between movement and sensation influences *form* in the embryological, infant, and indeed adult body. In this regard, a significant aspect of the experience for adults includes the conscious re-engagement with the continua between the fluid and solid elements of the body. This ranges from the fundamental experience of cellular awareness which underlies all of the body systems, to experiences which invoke the relationship between fluid, muscle and bone in the developed body. The notion that focused engagement with specific body systems offers different states of consciousness or qualities of human experience is also an important understanding with the BMC approach. For example, while engagement with the skeletal body may tend to offer experiences of structure, definition and form, engagement with the fluid body may offer contrasting experiences of flow, malleability, and integration (Hartley, 1995; Olsen, 1998). As Cohen explains "we discover their voices by consciously and unconsciously exploring them in different combinations" (Bainbridge-Cohen, 1993, p. 4). The implications for increased body-mind integration which ensues from such exploratory processes, and for extending the range of one's perceptual and expressive field in relation to the world, is well captured by Cohen in the following:

> As we are more able to experience our consciousness at the cellular and the tissue level, we are better able to understand ourselves. As we increase our knowledge of ourselves, we increase in understanding and compassion for others. As we experience the uniqueness of cells within the context of tissue harmony, we learn individuality within the context of community. (Bainbridge-Cohen, 1993, p. 5)

It is worth noting at this juncture, that engagement with the fundamental forces that inform movement became an important underlying emphasis within the evolving DCU

module of this study. This included for example the exploration of one's relationship with gravity, one's capacity to yield in relation to the same, and the overall psychological impact which can ensue from such experience. As indicated in the module description discussed in chapter four, an exploration of the impact of engagement with some of the fundamental systems of the body, to include fluid, bone, and muscle, was also a significant feature of the process (see Appendix B).

2.8 Diversification of Goals and Outcomes of Somatic Enquiry

The preceding sections have provided a broad introduction to the relatively recent and ongoing attempts to both define and chart a history of somatic education. They have also sought to outline the basic premises pertaining to the integrated and dynamic nature of the human body-mind system upon which somatic education is based, and to related self-awareness processes which have the capacity to impact it in previously unforeseen ways. These premises include the following,

- All aspects of the human body-mind system– emotional, physical, cognitive – are interconnected and in reciprocal relationship.
- Significant aspects of human development – physical development, brain function, sense of self – arise through sensory-motor engagement with the physical environment.
- Change and expansion within the body-mind system are possible via engagement with somatic self-awareness processes.
- Heightened levels of self-awareness in relation to sensation and movement can reintegrate the body-mind system and thereby repattern various aspects of the system that have been spilt through injury, trauma, or cultural/educational practices.

It is worth noting that many of the discoveries and premises of the early pioneers in relation to body-mind interconnectivity and neuroplasticity are now being confirmed via neuroscientific research (Bacon, 2015; Batson et al., 2012; Fraleigh, 2015; Schmalzl et al.

2014). However, it is arguable that the realization of the implications of these premises, in terms of goals and practices which have the potential to enhance the human condition, has and continues to be led by research and practice from the somatic field. In this regard Fortin frames the diverse range of pathways which somatic practitioners have forged in recent decades, as celebrating "multiple kinds of empowerment" (Fortin, 2017, p. 147). Furthermore, she observes that they have served to ask new questions about the form and goals of somatic practice, while also continuing to acknowledge its essential qualities. In the next sections, I provide a broad overview of the diversification of goals and outcomes that have evolved within somatic practice since the discoveries of the first pioneers, and up to the present day. I consider it important to chart such possibilities in this chapter, as we continue to consider the potential merits of somatic education in a teacher education and arts education context.

2.8.1 Second Generation of Somatic Pioneers: Somatics and Dance

In order to attempt a summary of the increased application of somatic enquiry in a range of contexts, it is helpful to return to and continue the historical analysis of the evolution of the field (Eddy, 2017; Fortin, 2002; Fraleigh, 2015; Mangione, 1993; Mullan, 2014). The context for the narrative thus far has largely focused on the basis for the scientific and healing discoveries of what Eddy has referred to as the first generation of somatic pioneers. As explained, their emphasis was predominantly on the healing of physical injuries for which the mainstream medical field could offer little assistance (Eddy, 2017). It was during the next phase of evolution however, that a clearer understanding of the wider therapeutic, social, and aesthetic benefits of somatic practice began to crystalise.

Led by visionary dance educator Margaret Myers, the work of the second generation of pioneers, was characterized by a surge of experimentation in terms of the potential complementary relationship between somatic education and the field of professional dance.

Among others, this phase included influential contributions from Anna Halprin and Elaine Sommers, followed by a second significant post-war wave of innovation to include the work of Sondra Fraleigh, Bonnie Bainbridge-Cohen, Emile Conrad, and Nancy Topf (Eddy, 2017). The expansion of enquiry that this phase generated is considered to have fuelled the seeds of a field which was to eventually become known as Somatic Movement Dance Education (SMDE) (Whatley, S., Brown, N., & Alexander,K. 2015; Williamson et al., 2014).

As Fraleigh explains, the synergies that have ensued between the two fields, are fundamentally fuelled by an understanding that "somatics and aesthetics have an intrinsic bond through their core concerns for perception: its active and receptive aspects, and its affective hues" (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 29). The literature would suggest that the somatic influence seems to have thus impacted the education of professional dancers in two key related ways. In the first instance, it is considered to have heralded a significant pedagogical shift, which many would credit for the expanded range of outcomes which were discovered within this context (Barbour, 2016; Burnidge, 2012; Dragon, 2015; Enghauser, 2007; Schupp, 2017). As discussed previously in relation to the work of the first pioneers, the somatic lens is considered to complicate traditional notions of expert or healer, and transfers increased responsibility and potential expertise to the client. In the dance education context, this manifests in a challenge to the traditional student-teacher dynamic as movement proficiency, safety and expression become guided by a more internal orientation within the dancer (Batson, 1990; Dragon, 2015). The evolution of what became known as 'somatic dance' thus contrasted with the more dominant pedagogy of the field which tended to be characterized by imitation of 'the expert' and a predominantly didactic and competitive inclination (Batson, 1990; Dragon, 2015; Enghauser, 2007).

As might be expected, the internal orientation of the pedagogy was also influenced by a significantly increased emphasis on the sensory awareness of the dancer. The somatic

practices which fuelled this awareness served to address what somatic practitioners would have considered an imbalanced emphasis on motor sequencing via visually orientated imitation, without due cognizance of broader sensory receptivity and impulse (Batson, 1990; Reed, 2015). It is the heightened body-mind communication produced by this sensory awareness, that causes the dancer to encounter inhibiting and previously unconscious patterns of movement, while new possibilities are gradually introduced. In short, the somatic lens encouraged a significantly more holistic and self-led engagement from the dancer, the outcomes of which are considered to ultimately support an evolution from technician to artist (Batson et al., 2012; Brodie & Lobel, 2004; Enghauser, 2007; Schupp, 2017).

2.8.2 Somatics and Self-transformation

As alluded to above, while the initial impetus for engagement with somatic education for many in the dance field may have tended to focus on the potential for enhanced movement efficiency and injury prevention, increasingly the heightened sensory-motor awareness and exploration was also credited with significantly broader aesthetic and personal benefits for the participant (Barbour, 2016; Burnidge, 2012; Dragon, 2015; Fortin et al., 2002; Schupp, 2017). In this vein I have already referenced the broader psycho-physical benefits of somatic practice in the context of the far-reaching impacts of engagement with the fundamental development movement patterns within the discipline of BMC. The growing interest in the impact of somatic practices on the broader body-mind system is also well illustrated here by Joan Skinner's discussion of the fundamental principle of tension-release within somatic practices:

> The release of tension, of distorted alignment is, in effect, a release of perceptions, of preconceived ideas, of psychophysical habits which are manifested in alignment. In order to participate in the aligning process, one releases the tyranny of conscious control, of the

> intellect and of preconceived ideas to experience the natural laws of movement as they apply to the human organism (Skinner et al., 1974, as cited in Eddy, 2017, p123).

In the second half of the twentieth century, such observations within the field of practice began to increasingly fuel broader enquiries into the relationship between somatics, psychology, aesthetics, and spirituality, and the possible reciprocal relationship between them.

Fraleigh's seminal work at the Shin Somatics Institute reflects the expansive nature of such enquiry as she and her colleagues became at least as concerned with human development as they were with enhanced physical movement proficiency, or concerns regarding the artform (Barbour, 2016; Fraleigh, 2015; Lester, 2015). Indeed for a significant number of pioneers during this period, it could be argued that movement was considered to be as much a process as it was a goal, towards the ultimate "discovery (or rediscovery) of the wisdom of self" (Fraleigh, 2015, p. xv). Fraleigh's definition of somatic inquiry, as drawn upon in the introductory chapter, is noteworthy in this regard wherein she describes it as:

> a field of study and practice concerned with holistic body-centered approaches to assist people in experiencing and transforming the self through awareness relative to the living world, the environment and others (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 5).

The reference to the transformation of self in this definition reflects the significant therapeutic dimension which has continued to evolve within somatic practices in recent times (Bacon, 2015; Adler, 2002; Collinson, 2015; Hartley, 1995, 2014; Payne et al., 2015). Such an emphasis has tended to acknowledge the capacity of somatic practice for both accessing and integrating unconscious states of experience through the process of embodiment. In this regard, psychological as well as physical blockages may be addressed, in the context of the safety which both the physical and relational field offers within such practices (Adler, 2002; Collinson, 2015; Hartley, 2014). The role of dance and aesthetics in such processes has

nonetheless continued to be a defining feature of the work of visionaries such as Fraleigh and Cohen. In this regard, Fraleigh emphasizes the joy and flow of movement which an improvised and playful dance approach can bring to the self-actualizing process that can accompany a somatic approach to dance (Fraleigh, 2015). Cohen similarly emphasizes the integrative function of dance to complement the more detailed sensory-motor explorations of her BMC system (Eddy, 2017). It is important to note here that whether practitioners demonstrate an artform or personal development orientation in the emphasis of their somatic practice, these goals are not considered to be mutually exclusive. Indeed for many dance practitioners a focus on the wholeness of the person has been found to be one of the key ingredients in the development of artistry over technique (Batson et al., 2012; Brodie & Lobel, 2004; Enghauser, 2007; Schupp, 2017).

At this juncture, it is important to make reference to a number of important nuances that are highlighted within the literature, in relation to the evolving focus on self-discovery, empowerment and transformation within the somatic field. The first relates to a notable complexity in terms of the underlying understanding of selfhood, upon which many of the practices are based (Barbour, 2016; Fortin et al., 2017; Fraleigh, 2015; Green, 1996, 2015; Williamson, 2016). For example, Fraleigh illustrates a belief in the fundamentally relational nature of self within somatic practice, when she articulates that, "Soma, as whole body consciousness is interactive….We are not simply self-aware. Others and the environment are part of self-perception" (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 46). Fortin (2017) and Green (1996, 2015) further reflect on the post-modern concept of selfhood that can be evoked within such work in terms of a constantly evolving rather than static phenomenon. In the somatic field, the dynamic and multifaceted nature of self, is in a constant reciprocal relationship with the physical and social field within which it arises in a given moment and over time. The consequent depth of relational experience which arises through embodied engagement is considered to have

profound implications for a quality of consciousness which extends beyond individual concerns. This will be expanded on further in the subsequent section on 'social somatics'.

2.8.3 Somatics, Transpersonal Experience and Spirituality

The particular quality of inter-relational experience inherent in a rich somatic encounter is also considered to be the basis for the spiritual or what Batson refers to as the 'meta-kinaesthetic' experiences which can be associated with the field (Adler, 2002; Batson, 2014; Hartley, 2014; Stromsted, 2009; Williamson, 2016; Williamson et al., 2014). In much of the literature this tends to be characterized by an experience of connectedness within and beyond the individual body (Eddy et al, 2014). It is worth noting that the spiritual dimension of somatic practice has become a growing field of academic inquiry and reflection in recent years, and has led to the publication of the *Journal of Dance, Movement and Spiritualties* in 2014 and to the publication of a significant book anthology in the same year, which includes chapters from many of the journal's leading contributors (Williamson et al., 2014). As one of the lead editors of this publication, Amanda Williamson explains, these authors "foreground the moving, feeling, reflecting body as integral to spiritual and transformational processes" (Williamson et al., 2014, p. xxxi). Referencing Todres, Heidegger and Sartre in a later publication, she refers to a confidence within somatic movement pedagogies in an 'opening power' that is enabled by the particular quality of embodied activity in question (Williamson, 2016, p. 284). In this regard she and other writers speak of a unifying and underlying life-force that can be accessed through embodied somatic experiences.

In light of the above, the somatic field is considered to offer a challenge to secular and dualistic positions within modern Western culture, and more specifically within Education. In this regard, Williamson describes it as "a revolutionary movement against materialism and mechanistic science and its fragmentation of lived experience" (Williamson et al., 2014, p. xxviii). However, it is also worth noting the particular nature of spirituality that tends to be

referred to in connection with somatic practice. In general it tends to involve a here and now, earth-bound, situated, and relational interpretation of the term as opposed to an other-worldly, or traditionally religious understanding (Eddy, 2017; Williamson, 2016). In this regard, it tends to align with Eastern, feminist, and ancient 'earth-based' spiritual practices which emphasise engagement with the earth-bound and fleshy nature of the human body in order to encounter transpersonal experiences of wholeness and interconnectivity.

Examples of somatic disciplines that emphasise the spiritual or transpersonal nature of somatic practice include authentic movement (Adler, 2002; Stromsted, 2009) and the embryologically oriented processes encountered within the discipline of BMC (Hartley, 2014). As alluded to earlier, both of these disciplines featured strongly in the Origins training and represented key influences on my understanding of somatics. Hartley draws on Web's notion of a pre-trans axis to articulate the pre-personal and trans-personal experiences which have been known to be encountered through these practices. For example, the deep embryological somatisications within BMC, are understood by many to reflect the process by which spirit enters matter (Hartley, 2014). Furthermore, the implicit conscious re-engagement with such dynamic and primal somatic experiences is considered to renew and reconnect the adult system with the rich continuum of polarities which fundamentally continue to support life.

2.8.4 Authentic Movement

The discipline of authentic movement is also associated with engaging both pre-and transpersonal consciousness in the context of a present moment, physical and relational experience (Adler, 2002; Bacon, 2015; Hartley, 2014; Stromsted, 2009). Central to the form is the relationship between a mover and witness, which is supported by a wider field of engagement with these roles among the group. Through an initial engagement with the felt-sense, movers are encouraged to move and be moved by arising impulses. This tends to be

accompanied by a deepening quality of consciousness and presence via the support of the relational field. Described as an embodied spiritual or mystical practice (Davis, 2018; Hartley, 2014; Stromsted, 2009), this process is importantly grounded and enriched by the deep tracking of sensation and the compassionate witnessing practices that are fundamental to it. In light of our broader discussion on embodiment, authentic movement highlights the significant role of a compassionate and non-judgmental relational field in the facilitation of the oftentimes challenging process of connecting with one's whole body (Collinson, 2015; Hartley, 2014). In this regard it is a versatile discipline that has been used in the context of aesthetic, spiritual and therapeutic processes (Bacon, 2015; Meehan, 2015; Stromsted, 2009). As explained in chapter four, while authentic movement was not practiced in its pure form within the module I facilitated with the students in DCU, many of its core principles were employed and practiced throughout our explorations. These included the practice of listening to and following the impulses of the body in present moment aesthetic exploration, and engaging with the witness consciousness and the relational field to support such enquiry.

2.8.5 Ecosomatics

The spiritual dimension of somatic practice also tends to be associated with, and in many cases arises from, a deep connection with the natural world. Many contemporary somatic practices involve embodied explorations in the natural world that allow the participant to recognize an interconnectedness and resonance between body and the wider web of life (Bauer, 2008; Eddy, 2017; Enghauser, 2007; Fortin, 2017; Olsen, 1998, 2002; Reeve, 2013; Williamson et al., 2014). Eco-somatics, a term used to refer to practices which include such an emphasis, focuses on 'the awareness of both our internal milieu, our external milieu, and the reciprocal action between the two" (Fortin, 2017, p. 148). Enghauser thus describes the influence of an ecological lens on her somatic dance pedagogy:

> An ecological lens draws students' attention to a larger context of the self: the eco-body. As I charge them to venture outside to find analogies that connect their anatomical self to the natural world, the students awaken to new possibilities in regard to body and self, both in and outside a dancing context; both physically and philosophically (Enghauser, 2007, p. 85).

Williamson describes such practices as biocentric and eco-literate in nature, as they seek "deeper unification with others, nature and the cosmos; and sacralize the inner self as a site of inspirited, inspired intelligence" (Williamson, 2010, as cited in Williamson, 2014, pxxix). Eddy and Williamson also highlight the relationship of care that can arise from somatic engagement in the natural world, and the way in which such experience can give rise to environmental activism and protection (Eddy, 2017; Williamson, 2016). It is worth noting here that the Origins programme also involved significant exploration in the outdoors. Indeed, the programme culminated in a five-day camp in the Wicklow mountains, during which participants employed authentic movement to connect with self and other in the richness of the surrounding environment. As will be further expanded upon later, the eco-somatic dimension that was initiated within the module of this study, evolved into a bigger component than expected, and culminated in a site-specific project in the local Botanic Gardens.

2.8.6 Social Somatics

In light of the above discussion, Green, Fortin and Eddy draw particular attention to the social and political agency which can emerge from somatic practice (Eddy, 2017; Fortin, 2017; Green, 2015a, 1993). They argue that the potential of somatic practice in this regard can sometimes be forgotten, in a field which has had to continuously make a case for the value of internal sensory experience. In this regard, Fortin explains that:

> Despite somatics being an inward-looking practice, it has the potential to question and critique the dominant social discourse and practices of neo-liberal societies, in which the life of people is increasingly subject to control, surveillance and regulation. (Fortin, 2017, p. 146)

Like eco-somatics, the relatively recent emergence of the field of 'social somatics' acknowledges the skills, values and attitudes that tend to arise from a holistic and embodied process of engagement with the world. These tend to manifest in an increasingly sensitive and compassionate quality of response to social and environmental issues as the quality of relationship between self, other and environment is deepened (Barbour, 2016; Schupp, 2017; Shapiro, 2020). Eddy argues that the very experience of exploring one's wholeness tends to activate the need to advocate for this in others, and to combat conditions which prevent this realization (Eddy, 2017). This can extend to the areas of conflict resolution, environmental protection, health, and education.

The field of social somatics also acknowledges the potential of somatic practice for unearthing cultural influences and tensions which can be deeply manifested within the body, and which may be profoundly influencing or limiting behaviour on an unconscious level (Fortin, 2017; Williamson, 2016). On this note, Fraleigh evokes the possibility not only of the exploration of a dynamic and constantly evolving self, but moreover of the potentially liberating revelation of 'many selves' within the process. She thus explains:

> If the body is culturally conditioned, it is also the means by which we can unhinge cultural conditioning…There could be several answers to the existential quest for the self, if the self can indeed be sought. Those who go directly to their bodies for insight seek the revelation of possible selves, or at least a glimpse of self-limitations hidden beneath words and habits. (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 34)

From a critical pedagogy perspective, the potential of the social and political dimension of somatic education is of particular interest in light of an understanding of the critical relationship between educational process and the potential for a just society.

2.9 Somatic Pedagogy

Moshe Feldenkrais memorably described somatic practice as a process of 'learning how to learn' (Batson, 1990; Eddy, 2017, p. 111). In this chapter, I have drawn on the literature to consider what and how participants may be learning through this process? In this section, I will seek to distil this content further with a particular focus on the fundamentals of what has come to be known in the literature as 'somatic pedagogy'. In this regard I will draw on the writings of a growing cohort of dance educators who have come to discern and acknowledge, not only the sensory and movement oriented somatic principles which they employ in their work with dancers, but also the broader pedagogical tenets which underpin a rich somatic enquiry (Barbour, 2016; Burnidge, 2012; Dragon, 2015; Schupp, 2017). Given the context for this research, this section will give further attention to the unpacking of these elements in order to explore what may be considered to be distinctive and complementary about this pedagogy in relation to broader educational practice.

2.9.1 Movement Principles

The sensory-motor oriented principles of somatic practice tend to focus on the process of fully embodying the cells, tissues, and systems of the body, through experiencing the body from the inside. While many continue to follow the distinct techniques of specific somatic disciplines to this end, there is an increasing tendency for practitioners to incorporate an eclectic mix of somatic approaches, which draw on a number of core movement principles (Eddy, 2017; Mullan, 2014). Many authors in the literature tend to refer to Brodie & Loebel's extrapolation of four core somatic movement principles in this regard. These include breath, sensing, connectivity, and initiation (Brodie & Lobel, 2004, 2014). Fundamentally, these

principles highlight the way in which engagement with ground and with space in the surrounding environment can deepen one's sensory experience of the body. In practical terms, this requires the facilitator to frame and co-ordinate exercises which propel the participant to viscerally encounter the impact of the principles in question. It involves a skillset which not only includes a deep experiential knowledge of these principles, but also a capacity to facilitate this enhanced awareness in others.

The combination of these movement principles with a very improvisatory approach to their exploration, is considered to be fundamental in terms of opening up fresh and new neural pathways within the body-mind system, and to developing what Enghauser refers to as "perceptual plasticity" (Enghauser, 2007). In this regard, she explains that "Finding ways to think and perceive with a freshness of mind and body is difficult in any context, yet it can often be a key factor in facilitating growth" (Enghauser, 2007, p. 86). Indeed, in the view of a number of authors, such a focus on expanding habits of perception through engagement with the core somatic movement principles would seem to be central to many of the broader outcomes associated with the practice.

2.9.2 Somatic Values and Wider Pedagogical Principles

This brings us to the broader pedagogical principles and values which are considered to underpin somatic practice, the significance of which has been given increased acknowledgement in recent publications (Barbour, 2016; Burnidge, 2012; Dragon, 2015; Schupp, 2017). By way of illustration, in the following extract Schupp distinguishes the wider somatic values which she now considers to be equally fundamental to the effectiveness of the practice. She describes these as:

> the beliefs and ethos that permit and encourage this [*movement*] exploration and promote student empowerment. Somatic values (prioritizing process over outcome, honoring individuality, use of improvisation, focused attention, proactive reflection,

> and teacher as facilitator) are less tangible but are requisite to establishing the atmosphere and spirit of somatic inquiry (Schupp, 2017, p. 164).

In light of this statement, it is interesting to note that a common feature of the reflections of dance educators who have begun to include somatics in their practice, is a gradual recognition of an initial narrow implementation of the somatic approach. This tends to reflect a predominant emphasis on the movement practices and outcomes that it entails. In this regard, Dragon (2015), Schupp (2017) and Burnidge (2012) engage in significant contemplation about the limited success of such an interpretation, because of a realization that their efforts continued to be informed by the traditional pedagogical model of the conservatory dance tradition. In contrast, the influence of a more comprehensive interpretation of somatic enquiry in Burnidge's subsequent pedagogical approach is strikingly captured in the following extract:

> I realized that to embrace a somatically informed pedagogical philosophy, my teaching methods needed to evolve to allow for individual ideas, identities, and diverse backgrounds to be present, to encourage students to take ownership and responsibility for their own learning, and above all to facilitate an educational terrain that valued inner experiences and self-knowledge. As I deepened my examination of somatic inquiry as a leading pedagogical tenet, it became impossible for me to continue with traditional modes of instruction.' (Burnidge, 2012, P38).

As alluded to above her deliberation also reflects an implicit critique of the traditional pedagogical practices which continue to pervade within the dance profession, whereby dancers are expected to follow a teacher-centered curriculum within which technique is pre-determined, and then appropriated by the learner. The growing literature on somatic pedagogy would suggest that a somatic approach to dance offers the alternative of prioritizing principle over technique, process over product, and improvisation over procedure. This is all

in the context of an embodiment process, which is trusted to facilitate the dancer to allow their own artistic process to evolve (Barbour, 2016; Brodie & Lobel, 2004; Burnidge, 2012; Dragon, 2015; Enghauser, 2007; Johnson, 2004; Schupp, 2017).

The manner in which engagement with a comprehensive somatic pedagogy generated a deeper reflection, critique and expansion of one's broader pedagogical orientation in these studies, is particularly interesting for me as a teacher educator, who consistently seeks to find experiential ways of generating such a quality of reflection in my students. Furthermore, the recognised consistency of somatic education principles with democratic and emancipatory theories of education in these studies is also striking. This will be returned to in a subsequent section.

2.9.3 Self-reflection

Interestingly, Burnidge made the additional observation in the article referenced above that this pedagogy encouraged her "above all to facilitate an educational terrain that valued inner experiences and self-knowledge" (Burnidge, 2012, p38). According to the literature, a considerable emphasis on self-reflection is considered to be an essential tenet of somatic practice across all of the emerging pathways discussed in the previous section (Collinson, 2015; Eddy, 2017; Fraleigh, 2015; Lester, 2015).

The particular notion of a somatic approach to reflection is worth some consideration at this juncture. Fraleigh refers to somatic reflection as "phenomenology in action" and views its rich texture as paramount to cultivating somatic ways of learning and knowing (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 19). In the first instance, a somatic reflection focuses on particularity of experience. It begins with a keen focus on the sensory experience of a given moment, so that preconceived patterns or habits do not override the holistic process. The tracking of such experience as it arises is therefore encouraged, as well as various forms of subsequent journal activity as close to the exercise as possible (Adler, 2002). This may take various forms from

written to artistic expression, and includes observations across the body-mind system (Fraleigh, 2015; Schupp, 2017). The emerging skills for observation and awareness can gradually lead to a perception of personal pattern and subtle shifts in the same, as the subconscious is given the opportunity to speak (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 19).

The gradual development of a compassionate internal 'witness', particularly evident in authentic movement practice, is also considered central to this process of 'allowing' experience to evolve and be observed within the present moment (Bacon, 2015, Collinson, 2015; Stromsted, 2009). Such reflection also gradually extends to experience outside the classroom in terms of observations of how such patterns and shifts within the overall body-mind system may be transferring into ordinary life. This chimes with Bainbridge-Cohen's assertion that the process of embodiment is fundamentally not a doing, but a being process (Bainbridge-Cohen, 1993). Indeed, this observation of transfer to the practice of living is considered by many to be a significant element of deepening the impact of the pedagogical process (Barbour, 2016; Fortin, 2017). Throughout the Origins process, I also engaged in such an approach to reflection within various relational contexts and using various media. This included journal reflection, peer reflection, group processing, art making, and of course movement itself. In my work with students during this study, I also attempted to model and provide opportunities for students to engage with a somatic approach to reflection. An illustration in this regard can be seen within the journal guidelines that I have provided in the appendices (see Appendix C). As discussed in chapter three, the importance of self-reflection has become an increasing concern within teacher education, and the need for more holistic approaches in relation to the same (Korthagen, 2004, 2014). The student experience in relation to the implementation of a somatic approach to reflection within this study was therefore of particular interest.

2.9.4 The Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher, not only in terms of facilitating engagement with the somatic movement principles discussed above, but also in terms of encouraging certain values within the wider pedagogical environment, is also given some attention within the literature. In this regard, it is interesting to note Barbour's reference to the way in which she feels she ultimately *embodies* certain values as a teacher within the somatic dance class. Influenced by her background with Fraleigh in Shin Somatics, she names these embodied values as somatic awareness, movement as well-being, agency and freedom, caring and belonging (Barbour, 2016, p. 190).

With the latter two particularly in mind at this juncture, it is important to consider that the practice of non-judgmental witnessing as previously discussed, pertains not only to one's relationship with self but also to the wider relational conditions within the group. The resultant atmosphere, which such values can generate over time is paramount to the sense of safety which is necessary for the surfacing of the delicate and oftentimes vulnerable present-moment sensation, pattern, or expression upon which subsequent progress is based. The facilitator is understood to play a considerable role in both modelling and encouraging these qualities within what is referred to as the evolving relational field (Collinson, 2015; Lester, 2015). Collinson concurs with Miranda Tufnell who interprets this aspect of the process as pertaining to the facilitator's quality of 'presence' (Collinson, 2015). Indeed Tufnell contends that "our quality of presence may be more potent for the client than anything we actually 'do'" (Tufnell, 2010, as cited in Collinson, 2015, p. 234). Both writers also highlight the significance of the facilitator's own level of body awareness in this regard. With this in mind, Collinson discusses her distinct preparation for working with others in a somatic way and emphasises the importance of slowing down, becoming still, and listening and feeling in to her own body. The relationship between such preparation and her subsequent quality of

presence is sensitively articulated in her assertion that “my preparation attunes me to the silent, non-verbal realms of being and gets me ‘underneath’ my thought processes and preoccupations with thinking and knowing” (Collinson, 2015, p. 231). Lester also emphasizes the importance of the teacher’s attention to their own quality of embodiment both before and during the teaching process (Fortin et al., 2002; Lester, 2015). In relation to the latter, she asserts that the somatic teacher “senses that a lack of personal embodiment will communicate to the student’s body, and thus interrupt the lessons’ fluidity and possibilities” (Lester, 2015, p. 98).

2.9.5 Alignment with Progressive Educational Theory

In light of the above characteristics it is worth noting that many professional dance educators who incorporate somatic modalities into their work are increasingly aligning their practice with progressive movements within the field of education (Barbour, 2016; Burnidge, 2012; Dragon, 2015; Lester, 2015; Shapiro, 2020). The strong emphasis on experiential learning, process over product, a democratic teaching and learning environment, and reflective practice has led to increasing parallels being drawn with emancipatory, critical, and feminist pedagogical perspectives (Barbour, 2016; Burnidge, 2012; Lester, 2015). While some authors acknowledge such theories as having had a significant influence on their somatic practice, others interrogate the reciprocity of the relationship further again in terms of the direction of influence in question. These authors suggest that the nature of somatic inquiry not only aligns with the pedagogical principles above, but that it offers the potential to embody them (Barbour, 2016; Burnidge, 2012). Burnidge for example outlines the way in which six principles of feminist pedagogy as collated by Webb, Allen, and Walker (2002) are implicitly reflected in a somatic approach to dance (Burnidge, 2012).

The notion that engagement with somatic practice may offer the potential not only for the meaningful embodiment of progressive pedagogical theory, but also for constructive

critique of the same, is also evident in the somatic dance literature. In this regard, dance educator and philosopher Sherry Shapiro's expresses both alignment with and critique of the critical pedagogy perspective:

> While critical pedagogy has offered me a perspective of incalculable value, on the philosophy of education and teaching, I have come to view the philosophy as having serious shortcomings. None of these is more apparent than the way it, as a discourse, has continued to speak in terms of mind/body dualism. I argue that any approach committed to human liberation must seriously address the body as a site for both oppression and liberation. (Shapiro, 2020).

It would seem that such criticisms from outside the field of education need to be acknowledged and engaged with seriously in the context of potential blind spots or contradictions which may exist within contemporary pedagogical theory and practice. In my view, the persistently cognitive nature of the evolution and presentation of such theory may have much to learn from the nature of the theory-practice dialogue within the somatic field.

As a final reflection on my synthesis of the literature on somatic pedagogy, it is evident that the process and goal of self-empowerment persistently emerges as a key dimension of a range of practices across the field (Barbour, 2016; Burnidge, 2012; Dragon, 2015; Enghauser, 2007; Fraleigh, 2015; Schupp, 2017; Shapiro, 2020) It is also noteworthy that the empowerment in question is considered to derive from both the movement and the wider pedagogical components of the process. In relation to the former, Batson & Schwartz articulate what they view as a core premise of somatic enquiry, that "Internal authority is the determination of agency from internal physiological cues and conscious kinaesthetic awareness of the self in action" (Batson & Schwartz, 2007, p. 48). In the context of somatic dance, it seems that it is this emerging sense of agency on both a physical and psycho-physical level that moves a dancer from technician to artist, and which has the potential to

effect change in the participant beyond the context of the classroom (Batson, 1990; Eddy, 2017; Fraleigh, 2015; Lester, 2015). Serving as a reminder of the widening impact of the relational and physical elements in question, Lester asserts that "If we nurture the whole person, self-learning will happen and choices will be made from empowered and embodied lives" (Lester, 2015, p107).

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has served as an initial foray into potential areas of significance within somatic practice for the field of education. Pertinent in this regard is not only the definitional and historical overview provided, but also the broad exploration of the scientific basis for the healing discoveries of the first pioneers. Through this initial enquiry in particular, it was observed that the self-directed and learning oriented elements which were seen to be common to a range of foundational somatic disciplines, were already suggestive of a strong pedagogical orientation within the field. Indeed, this orientation was seen to represent one of its key distinguishing features in relation to the other mainstream medical and therapeutic approaches of the period. The latter sections of the chapter, which outline the subsequent diversification of goals and outcomes within the somatic field, and the particular examination of its evolving pedagogy in the somatic dance context, pave the way for a more particular and provocative dialogue with the field of education. As domains that were shown to hold the ultimate empowerment and holistic development of the individual as priorities, their parallel aspirations would suggest a mutual interest at the very least, while inviting further investigation at the level of practice.

In light of the particular research questions of this study however, it is clear that significant gaps remain in the literature in terms of the wider application of somatic practice. Apart from a number of notable exceptions, which will be discussed in the next chapter, much of the relevant terrain which has been reflected upon to date has been largely confined

to the health, therapy and dance sectors. Within the dance sector, this has principally focused on the education of professional dancers. Notwithstanding the apparent distance of such analysis from the context of this study, I would posit that this chapter has nonetheless alluded to a number of potentially enlightening interfaces with the field of education. These include the particular areas of identity formation, well-being and arts education. Furthermore, given the potential parallels that exist in terms of a belief in the developmental and holistic role of arts education in the broader education of the individual, a more detailed examination of practices and purposes within the literature on somatic dance has demonstrated compelling avenues for further exploration.

It is in light of such reflection that the reported shifts that arose as a result of the somatic influence within the dance profession come to mind. The noted relationship between its methodologies and a distinct quality of artistry are of particular interest in this regard. This is not only of interest in relation to the field of arts education itself, but also in light of Eisner's memorable proposal that both the broader project of education and the act of teaching within it, rest fundamentally on considerations of an aesthetic and indeed somatic nature (Eisner, 2002a, 2003). Such theory will be considered in more detail in the next chapter. However, for now, with such a perspective in mind, certain questions continue to arise with more urgency as we approach the end of this chapter - What might the introduction of principles and practices from the field of somatic education offer in an 'arts education within teacher education' context? More particularly, given the significant focus on the role of the facilitator that we have seen in the somatic literature, what might they offer in the education of student teachers and teachers of the arts that might not already be available to them? It is with all of this in mind that we now turn to chapter three, which gives a more focused attention to the current context of education, arts education and teacher education,

and the growing significance that is being attached to issues of embodiment within these domains.

CHAPTER THREE: EMBODIMENT AND THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

In the prelude to her seminal *Knowing Bodies, Moving Minds*, Liora Bresler raises the question of what it means to work in "a paradigm of embodiment" within the context of education (Bresler, 2004a, p. 7). This of course raises further questions about how embodiment tends to be interpreted within different contexts of enquiry, and the extent to which it can be variously understood as an academic analytic lens or a domain of practice. From a somatic dance perspective, Williamson draws on Bainbridge Cohen's writings to describe embodiment as a process of "becoming aware of the relationships that exist throughout our body-mind" (Bainbridge-Cohen, 1993, p. 1), and furthermore that it involves **"**entering into feeling-full relationship and reflective dialogue with one's subjective and subjective-relational moving lifeworld" (Williamson, 2016, p. 277). This description reflects the distinctly experiential and practice-based orientation of the somatic education lens, in that it emphasises an intentional process of engaging in heightened consciousness and feeling in relation to one's own body-mind system as it relates to the world. How might a somatic orientation to embodiment be interpreted or find its place within the field of education? In order to answer such a question, one must consider the current and historical orientations towards the body within the field of education. How do they reflect or depart from the understandings of embodiment within the field of somatic education in terms of theory and practice? What level of readiness or openness may there be for such an orientation in the educational context? These questions allow us to bring the various fields pertaining to this enquiry into deeper dialogue.

This chapter provides an overview of the nature of historical and contemporary discourse on the body within the field of education. In the first instance it does so with reference to its perceived relevance within shifting interpretations of the nature of learning and cognition generally, and then to its perceived role within the specific areas of arts

education and teacher education. Due to the inevitably inter-disciplinary nature of such an endeavour, it will traverse literature of a philosophical, psychological, sociological, and aesthetic nature. It will also draw on the theoretical lens of Richard Shusterman's somaesthetics in terms of the particular emphasis on practice which his consideration of embodiment includes. The latter sections of the chapter review the current learning paradigms pertaining to the body in the arts and teacher education, and where they may be lacking in terms of practice-oriented approaches to embodiment. The potential relevance of somatic education in both contexts will be given specific attention.

3.1 Education and the Body: Historical and Philosophical Perspectives

The body in contemporary society is often presented as an object to be controlled, trained, decorated, and 'read' in the effort to be perceived by the other and society in particular ways (O'Loughlin, 2006). O'Loughlin explains that this has led to the modern perception of *owning* a body over *being* a body in terms of the fundamental relationship in question (O'Loughlin, 2006, p. 1). Such an orientation echoes Behnke's concern regarding the evolution of an "I-it" relationship between self and body, as discussed in the previous chapter (Behnke, 1995). Ambivalent attitudes towards the body and their consequences however, are not confined to contemporary culture. They are indeed evident throughout the history of Western civilisation and are considered to have had a significant influence on a range of cultural phenomena, not least that of education (Johnson, 2004).

A key dimension of the literature on embodiment within in the field of education is devoted to a historical understanding of the emergence of a series of dualistic interpretations of the nature of knowledge, cognition, and learning, which are considered to have had a profound influence on the field to this day (Greene, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 2011; O'Loughlin, 2006; Peters, 2004; Stolz, 2015). Maxine Green (1994) offers a comprehensive account of what she regards to be the key theoretical movements which have influenced

theories of knowledge since Plato. Central to this quest is the prevailing debate about the existence of an objective form of knowledge which can be acquired or incorporated into the mind in the form of an uncomplicated transferal process, and which continues to exist there in the form of an accurate symbolic representation.

While the above viewpoint has been revisited at various historical junctures, Green concurs that its deepest roots are seen to have originated in Plato's theory of idealism and were refined more sharply in the work of 17th century philosopher, Rene Descartes. For Plato the intellect was the soul's survival mechanism in the necessary attempt to rise above opinion, impulse, sensory experience, and desire. Descartes rendered the mind-body rupture, which was perceived to be essential to the pursuit of 'pure reason', even more explicit. In both cases an association between reason and divinity was to the fore, while bodily sensations were viewed as a distraction to be overcome. The eighteenth-century enlightenment theories of Locke and Kant represented a further reliance on rationality to overcome the distraction of emotion, particularly in light of what was seen to be the superstitious and mythic nature of religious and pre-religious experience (Greene, 1994).

In the longer term, the seemingly unshakable weight of these influences is considered to have fuelled a persistent positivist and mechanistic drive within the field of education. Not only is this based on a belief in the possibility of objective, trans-historical and disembodied understandings of the nature of knowledge, but it is also based on a series of accompanying assumptions about the nature of human processing and cognition itself. These were markedly advanced within the field of psychology throughout much of the twentieth century, and built upon the fundamental supposition that it is both possible and necessary to separate the problematic attributes of sensation and emotion from the process of human reasoning. Furthermore, as the conviction that intellectual activity consists of an uncomplicated mirroring of external reality was cemented, the focus of cognitive science became

predominantly concerned with the existence and manipulation of internal mental representations or symbol systems over all other possible factors in the learning process.

3.1.1 Alternative Philosophical Perspectives on the Body in Education

The seeds of an alternative and less dominant viewpoint however were also sown during the twentieth century and served to significantly 'muddy' such understandings of the nature of knowledge and human perception. The pioneering research of Vygotsky and his peers for example, represented a significant departure from previous interpretations of knowledge formation by demonstrating the social and cultural nature of the cognition process, and thus foregrounding the influential socio-cultural, embedded and situated learning theories of the current era (Lave, 2009; Ormrod, 2012; Wenger, 2009). From this perspective, knowledge exists neither outside nor inside the individual, but rather culminates from a process of interaction between the two. It is facilitated and co-constructed with others in the context of a human embeddedness within overlapping webs of a social, environmental, cultural, and linguistic nature. Thus, a key component of the predominant constructivist paradigm in education at present is the conviction that meaningful forms of knowledge are constructed rather than received, via collaborative problem solving and linguistic negotiation (Illeris, 2009; Ormrod, 2012).

The twentieth century philosophical writings of John Dewey and Merleau Ponty pertaining to the complexity of the body-mind relationship furthermore served to muddy the waters of what was beginning to be recognised as an intensifying cognitive revolution. Dewey's significant contribution to this line of enquiry centres around the significance of pre-reflective bodily knowing as the fundamental basis of all subsequent personal knowledge. In his distinction between 'practical' and 'propositional' knowledge, or what he refers to as 'knowing-how' and 'knowing-that' respectively, he emphasises the accumulative bodily knowledge or 'habits' which ensue from the ongoing process of coping with and adjusting to

one's environment (Dewey, 1938; Krueger, 2009). The premise here is that as a result of an increasing sensitivity to interactions with the environment on a sensory-motor level, the body develops a form of "non-cognitive motor intentionality", which becomes the basis of what might be referred to as bodily intelligence (Krueger, 2009, p. 42). The notion that such a responsiveness is not predicated on an initial referencing of mental representations signals a significant departure from the more dominant 'two stage' interpretation of the relationship between intention and action within cognitive science. In Dewey's words, "what the facts testify to is not an influence exercised across and between two separate things, but to behaviour so integrated that it is artificial to split it up into two things" (Dewey, 1928, P7).

Throughout his career, Dewey continued to emphasise the integrated nature of intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic experience, and indeed to attempt to break down the neat categories within which these elements had been interpreted to function (Dewey, 1928). He thus bemoaned the poor quality of educational experience that seeks to separate these naturally interconnecting dimensions, particularly from the perspective of motivation for future learning (Dewey, 1934) As an alternative, Dewey stresses the life enhancing and self-perpetuating nature of experience that can ensue when the whole organism is 'alive' in the dynamic interplay between perception, action, and environment (Dewey, 1934). Interestingly he purports that many of the dualisms which pervade our cultural and educational systems have their root in fear of this same capacity for creatural responsiveness and aliveness. He asserts that "Oppositions of mind and body, soul and matter, spirit and flesh all have their origin, fundamentally, in fear of what life may - bring forth" (Dewey, 1934, p23).

Merleau Ponty's phenomenological theory echoes many of Dewey's principles above and further underscores the significance of the influence of the pre-reflective body in any attempt to understand the nature of human functioning. From his perspective the Cartesian notion of a universal subject who can lay claim to a vantage point beyond the reality within

which they exist, is utterly inconceivable (Gallagher, 2010; Greene, 1994; Merleau-Ponty & Smith, 1962). His 'phenomenology of perception' contends therefore that human knowledge is inescapably rooted in subjectivity, and furthermore that this subjectivity arises from the body's particular way of enmeshing itself within its own environmental and relational constellation (Abram, 1988; Gallagher, 2010; O'Loughlin, 2006). His theory expounds a bodily intelligence that arises from a deep alignment between perception and action, and proposes that all human knowing is therefore generated and accessed from a present moment state of intersubjective *being*. In Ponty's view, our present moment relational interactions are the most reliable indication of our knowledge and understanding.

For me, the principles of both Dewey and Ponty's philosophies as summarised above deeply echo the fundamental understandings upon which Somatic Education is based, and which were elucidated in the previous chapter. The notion that the fundamental basis of all knowledge is in the pre-reflective body, and in one's present moment enmeshment with one's environment, are particularly resonant with a somatic education perspective.

3.2 Contemporary Cognitive Theory: Embodied Cognition

It could be argued that the ramifications of Deweyan and Pontian theory are perhaps only beginning to gain significant momentum and influence within cognitive theory in recent times. In this regard, I would posit that the relatively recent emergence of the field of embodied cognition and cognitive neuroscience signal a new energy and readiness for a meaningful re-engagement with such theory and with the significance of the body in education.

The field of embodied cognition is considered to have emerged in the 1990s. It was particularly influenced by Varela's notion that the mind itself is an embodied phenomenon (Varela et al., 1991), and by Lakoff and Johnson's research on the embodied nature of linguistic communication (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Building on an extensive range of

empirical research, such theory ultimately purports that "the body intrinsically constrains, regulates, and shapes the nature of mental activity" (Foglia & Wilson, 2013, p. 319). In her overview of the field, Wilson (2002) echoes the Deweyan and Pontyian understanding of the significant contribution of sensory-motor activity to cognition, and emphasises a related evolutionary drive in this regard. She explains that "we have evolved from creatures whose neural resources were devoted primarily to perceptual and motoric processing, and whose cognitive activity consisted largely of immediate, on-line interaction with the environment" (Wilson, 2002, p. 625).

In light of the above, Spackman and Yanchar (2014) have extrapolated four key themes which have emerged from embodied cognition research in recent years.

1. Embodied mind is comprised of body, environment/tools, social history, and internal representations.
2. Memory is distributed across the body, environment, and tools and is encoded situationally.
3. Language and abstract concepts are understood through situated embodied action.
4. Perception and action are inseparable.

(Spackman & Yanchar, 2014, p. 48).

These themes confirm a multifaceted understanding of cognition as a "a continuous process with changing boundaries and, thus, much more than what takes place within the individual mind" (Rambusch & Ziemke, 2005, p. 1085). Combined with influences from socio-cultural theory, they contribute to the emergence of what has recently been referred to as a 4E model of cognition, which serves to affirm and distinguish the embodied, enacted, embedded, and extended attributes of cognition (Menary, 2010; van der Schyff et al., 2018).

It is worth noting at this juncture that the differing emphases of proponents for each of the attributes of the 4E model of cognition which underlie many approaches to embodied

pedagogy, should not be underestimated (Menary, n.d.; van der Schyff et al., 2018). Indeed, their internal debates can sometimes reveal noteworthy disagreement regarding the implications of embodied theory for practice. For example, in the dialogue that Rambush invites between the overlapping fields of embodied and embedded or situated cognition, he recognises the paradoxically limited role that can sometimes tend to be attached to the body. In this regard he notes that while a significant value is placed on the notion of 'activity' within the field of situated cognition, it nonetheless:

> …often appears to be conceived of as a cognitive process which is somehow detached from the body, making the body just an additional tool for the subject and not an integral part of human cognition….Very often, the body is "just" another factor, briefly acknowledged and mentioned, but in fact understood and analysed very little (Rambusch & Ziemke, 2005, p. 1803).

This notion of body as tool for a priori objectives, as opposed to critical to the emergent discovery itself, alludes to a key area of concern for those who maintain that even recent developments in cognitivist science may not have fully grasped the significance of the body in the ways that Dewey or Ponty may have envisaged. Spackman & Yanchar (2014) would claim that this manifests in continued debates about the existence and role of mental representations in various forms. Such debates reflect a deeper concern within recent criticism that in spite of an apparent commitment to active and interactive learning processes in current educational theory, and an acknowledgement of the significance of the body in this regard, many influential practices and indeed theories are still underscored by strong hangovers from a more traditional cognitive science perspective (Dreyfus, 2002; Michelson, 1998; Spackman & Yanchar, 2014; Stolz, 2015). In this vein, Michaelson would contend that while experiential theories encourage physical engagement with the world, so-called

embodied learning is still often fundamentally seen as a cognitive activity within which the body is perceived merely as:

> a gathering tool deployed by the mind, and the senses the passive transmitters of information, as if observation were not also an activity, and as if bodily and emotional responses were not also a form of learning in themselves (Michelson, 1998, p. 224)

It is in light of these concerns that I would posit that the particular emphasis within somatic education practices on listening to the impulses of the body, may have the potential to add an important subtlety to the welcome growth of active learning methodologies within education.

3.2.1 Neuroscience; Cognition, Emotion, and Plasticity

This section acknowledges the significant contribution of the relatively young field of cognitive neuroscience in terms of its confirmation of the complexity of the cognitive process discussed thus far, and of the strong influence of biological make up on cognition. It is also credited with offering a particular insight into the relationship between emotion and cognition, and the significant role of one's physicality in that relationship. Furthermore, its pioneering research on the 'plastic' nature of the brain, also offers an optimistic perspective on the nature of learning, and a deeper understanding of the inherent challenges and opportunities of the learning process.

Since the 1990s neuroscience has used the latest in brain imaging technologies to engage in the measurement of electro-chemical activity, and connectionist modelling to further examine what these have to offer to our understanding of the nature of human functioning (Frith et al., 2013; Goswami, 2008). Most interesting in light of the concerns of this study, is the discovery that tasks which may have been previously associated with isolated brain functions, are revealed to trigger activity in a range of areas in the brain simultaneously. In light of embodied cognition theory for example, a noteworthy correlation

includes the triggering of motor responses when an individual is engaged in perceptual tasks that do not involve any explicit movement (James, 2007, as cited in Goswami, 2008). Not only does this attest to the centrality of physical activity within knowledge generation and retrieval, but the co-existence of neural activity in various brain centres during specific tasks offers further tangible grounds for adopting a more multisensory approach to education (Goswami, 2008).

The second key area of interest in light of this study is the confirmation of the strongly emotional nature of cognition, and the embodied nature of emotion (Damasio, 2021; Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007; Immordino-Yang & Gotlieb, 2017). In this regard, Damasio's empirical research has demonstrated the significant influence of positive and negative emotion on levels and quality of cortical function (Damasio, 2021). As Immordino-Yang and Damasio explain:

> emotional thoughts, either conscious or nonconscious, can alter the state of the body in characteristic ways, such as by tensing or relaxing the skeletal muscles or by changing the heart rate. In turn, the bodily sensations of these changes, either actual or simulated, contribute either consciously or nonconsciously to feelings, which can then influence thought (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007, p. 8).

Reflecting on the potential implications of such findings for educational theory, the authors contend that "the relationship between learning, emotion and body state runs much deeper than many educators realize and is interwoven with the notion of learning itself" (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007, p. 3). Furthermore, Damasio suggests that a key element of educational practice should therefore be focused on the recognition and regulation of the emotional content, which underscores all cognition (Damasio, 2021). As noted in chapter two, learning about somatic self-regulation forms an important dimension of the overall somatic education process. In light of the understandings and recommendations above, this

would suggest that such practices merit further consideration within the education field. Such a viewpoint is also echoed within Shusterman's writings on somaesthetics, wherein he argues that "If improved somatic sensibility helpfully augments our emotional knowledge, then it can likewise improve the conduct that emotion shapes" (Shusterman, 2020, p. 250). We will return to Shusterman's writings on somaesthetics in more detail later in the chapter.

Neuroscience also offers fascinating insights into the brain's relationship with learning, growth, and change from an embodiment perspective. Not only does it recognise an interconnectivity in the way the brain functions within present moment activity, it also recognises the strengthening of related neural pathways over time as activity is repeated and refined (Goswami, 2008). Neuroscience has ultimately detected what has become known as the plasticity of the brain, which reflects its capacity for continued growth and change into old age. Not only does this offer a more optimistic perspective on life-long learning than would previously have been the case, but related research also suggests that much of the grounds for such change are in active, whole-bodied engagement with the environment. In this regard, Vaisvaser draws on a range of neuroscientific research to explain that "in accordance with the brain's embodied engagement with the inner and outer environment, plastic processes were shown to be highly action-dependent and modifiable by experience (Fields, 2008; Tomassy et al., 2016; Sampaio-Baptista & Johansen-Berg, 2017). (Vaisvaser, 2021, p. 8). I would consider the somatic understanding of the relationship between movement and repatterning as discussed via the writings of Hanna and Behnke in the previous chapter to be highly pertinent in relation to this discovery (see section 2.4 & 2.5).

It has also been shown however, that the potential for plasticity in the brain does not come without inner resistance. Research shows that the brain is wired not only for experience-dependant plasticity as inferred above, it is also wired for experience expectant plasticity (Goswami, 2008). This is due to a growing tendency for prediction within the

system, as strongly established neural pathways tend to be relied upon when one encounters experiences of a familiar nature. On a deeper level, experience expectant plasticity also manifests in the organism's overall bias for homeostasis and survival throughout the lifespan (Damasio, 2021). An evolutionary sensitivity to opportunity and threat is therefore another key factor in our understanding of the affective and embodied nature of learning, and also the resistance to learning that may be encountered in our schools (Blatt-Gross, 2015; Carroll, 2004).

In light of all of the above I would posit that the maintenance of brain plasticity must represent an important priority for educators in terms of challenging potentially unhelpful habits, and encouraging the continuous creative breaking of new ground in the learning process. In terms of practice, I am mindful here of the demonstrated effectiveness of established body-mind somatic approaches, in terms of challenging habitual behaviours and thought patterns in participants. This is particularly evident within the field of somatic therapy (Collinson, 2015; Payne et al., 2015), but such principles clearly have a wider application as reported within the field of professional dance (see section 2.8.1).

At this juncture, I would like to draw attention to the visionary research of neuroscientist and psychotherapist Daniel Siegel, who seeks to combine neuroscientific and phenomenological research for pragmatic purposes (Siegel, 2007). While his core research pertains to therapeutic practice, he has also given attention to the implications of such research for education (Siegel, 2007). His particular research on the influences of mindfulness activity on the brain is of specific interest in this regard. I also draw attention to such research because of the way in which it may offer further insight into the role that mindful awareness and compassionate witnessing, tends to play in the somatic education process (Adler, 2002; Bacon, 2015; Stromsted, 2009).

Siegel's clinical therapeutic work with clients has similarly focused on the mindful practice of heightening a client's awareness of the reciprocity and interactivity within their own body-mind system. His studies on the impact of such practice on the brain have demonstrated a growth in the prefrontal cortex, an area of the brain which has been shown to play a key role in neural plasticity. The pre-frontal cortex is responsible for "body regulation, attuned communication, emotional balance, flexibility, empathy, insight, fear modulation, intuition and morality" (Siegel, 2007, p. 265). With all of this in mind, Siegel suggests that an intentional focus on growth of the prefrontal cortex area offers significant benefits to the learning process. Essentially, he recommends a renewed and perhaps reconceptualised focus on the area of reflection within education. For him, this would constitute a fourth 'R' which would comprise a particular focus on self-awareness. In this vein, he offers an interesting critique of the traditional emphases of education when he observes that:

> We learn to read, to write, to calculate numbers. Perhaps this approach stems from our educational system's emphasis on a curriculum of content, rather than one that focuses on the process of cultivating the mind itself. (Siegel, 2007, p. 259)

The significant role that self-reflection plays in the teacher education process comes to mind in relation to such recommendations and critique (see section 3.4.2). The implication above that reflection should entail an explicit understanding of the body-mind system itself represents an important consideration for teacher education in my view. The extent to which somatic educators would assert that their practices go further than traditional mindfulness practices in this regard, because of their distinctive engagement of the body in the process, is also worth remembering here.

In summary, recent research in cognitive science and in neuroscience offers compelling evidence for a renewed and deeper consideration of the way in which biological, factors influence learning. They also point to the way in which such factors manifest and can

be regulated through practices of self-awareness in relation to the interconnectivity of the body-mind system. As educators, I would posit that we need to take further account of these evolving understandings so that our teaching practice is more fully compatible with and enhances the learner's organic mechanisms for engaging with and processing experience. As Goswami surmises, "Biological, sensory and neurological influences on learning must become equal partners with social, emotional and cultural influences if we are to have a truly effective discipline of education" (Goswami, 2008, p. 397).

3.3 Arts Education and the Body

As the fieldwork for this study took place within the context of an arts education module within the B. Ed programme, the potential relationship between the arts and somatic education was obviously of particular interest throughout this research process. In this section I firstly consider some of the literature which focuses on the nature and role of the arts in education, and the diverse ambitions which have been associated with this field. I then give particular attention to Eisner's theory of aesthetic education, due to the particular significance he attaches to somatic intelligence in the realisation of such goals (Eisner, 1991, 2002a, 2002b). The further question of how and if it might be possible to educate people in relation to such intelligence, as it is raised within this and related literature, is also given some consideration.

3.3.1 The Role of the Arts in Education

In the first instance it is important to acknowledge the multifaceted purposes which have been attached to the arts within the field of education. These consist not only of skill building in the arts disciplines themselves, but because of the educational context, they also pertain to the role of the arts in enhancing personal, social, and cognitive development. Indeed, tension between discipline and person in terms of emphasis has given rise to much debate, and even divisiveness within the field in recent times (Fleming et al., 2015). This has

tended to manifest in proponents attaching themselves, often fervently, to one end of the continuum over the other. Such polarities have also given rise to related debates about the relative value or emphasis placed on process or product, and pedagogy or discipline (Bresler, 2004b; Sawyer, 2000; Stinson, 2016). Some theorists however have been more inclined to follow Dewey's earlier take on such matters in terms of the way in which they align the very nature of the aesthetic process itself with its broader impacts on the person (Bresler, 2006; Dewey, 1934; Doddington, 2015, 2018; Eisner, 2002b, 2003; Shusterman, 2004, 2020). From such a perspective, while the latter may fuel the purpose of the arts in an educational context, the particular manner in which the art form is engaged with is considered to be critical to such benefits. This is reflected in Sue Stinson's writings when she explains:

> I still think that the life skills students can learn in dance...are more important than any dance content we teach. Yet I also am convinced that the best way to accomplish these goals in dance is to emphasise rigorous content at a level of appropriate challenge, sharing our love for dance as well as our caring for students and our determination to help them create meaningful lives (Stinson, 2004, p. 125).

It is in light of such a perspective that I draw attention to Eisner's aesthetic theory of education and the relationship he draws between the qualitative nature of arts practice and 'the creation of mind' (Eisner, 2002b, 2003). Ultimately Eisner argues that "the arts are fundamental to how we make sense of the world around us, how we see ourselves in relationship to our world and how we interact with it" (Siegesmund, 2004, p. 94). Essentially, he draws on an examination of the nature of aesthetic practice to propose an alternative to what he regards as the prevailing "technically rationalised industrial culture" within the field of education (Eisner, 2003, p. 375). His argument principally rests on comparing the likely impacts of traditional and aesthetic processes on the disposition of the student. He associates the former with an orientation towards homogenisation and standardisation, which he

believes pervades much of our schooling today. In this regard, he notes the values of control, prediction, and production that underlie such an approach, and bellies the limited and restricted impact of such an education on the development of the child.

As an alternative, he proposes that a deeper consideration of the nature and related values of aesthetic activity would offer a more suitable paradigm for contemplating the goals and processes of education. Ultimately, he draws on the writings of art historian Herbert Read to propose that the wider educational project should be contemplated in light of the education of artists, and that in this pursuit all aspects of the child's development would benefit (Eisner, 2003). The relationship between artistry and a capacity for a sensitive responsiveness to the world is central to Eisner's perspective. In biological terms, he explains that "humans are sentient creatures born into a qualitative environment in and through which they live" (Eisner, 2002b, p. 20). In this regard, he emphasises the contribution that the arts make to the developing child's ability "to perceive subtleties and to recognize complexities among the qualitative relationships encountered in the phenomenological environment" (Eisner, 2002b, p. 21). Each art form facilitates new and often unforeseen opportunities for qualitative engagement with self and with the world. In this vein, Eisner proposes that arts practices support our growing capacity for differentiation and ultimately make us more 'qualitatively intelligent'. Citing Goodman, he explains that:

> The arts teach students to act and to judge in the absence of rule, to rely on feel, to pay attention to nuance, to act and appraise the consequences of one's choices and to revise and then to make other choices. Getting these relationships right requires what Nelson Goodman calls 'rightness of fit' (Goodman, 1978). (Eisner, 2003, p. 277).

While they may use various terms for it, the ability to play and to improvise in this way, is considered by many aesthetic theorists to be a fundamental skill in the creative process (Dewey, 1934; Ellsworth, 2005; Powell & Lajevic, 2011; Sawyer, 2000, 2008).

For Eisner, the longer-term personal dispositions that such feeling-oriented and improvised practice generates tends to manifest in "the promotion of self-initiated learning, the pursuit of alternative possibilities and the anticipation of intrinsic satisfactions" (Eisner, 2003, p379). Indeed, the anticipation of intrinsic satisfactions arising from the qualitative feel of an aesthetic situation would seem to be core to his understanding of motivation in learning and echoes a key dimension of Dewey's concept of meaningful educational experience (Dewey, 1938). He ultimately argues that such dispositions are better suited to our broader need for meaningful motivation and flexibility in human functioning, and in our longer-term capacity to engage with the ever-changing reality in which we live. It is in this sense that Eisner views the arts as central to the creation of mind, and to the ongoing re-education of self (Eisner, 2002b).

3.3.2 The Role of the Body in Arts Education

Even more significant in terms of the focus of this study are Eisner's observations about the embodied nature of the arts, and the significance of this dimension. In this regard, he argues that in the absence of algorithms or 'rules' for judgement within an aesthetic process, one must rely on one's somatic knowledge, which he describes as "the sense of closure that the good gestalt engenders in embodied experience" (Eisner, 2003, p. 377). Eisner draws particular attention to the way in which the arts seem to access and cultivate such intuitive knowledge. He explains that in the course of aesthetic activity, "the body is engaged, the source of information is visceral, the sensibilities are employed to secure experience that makes it possible to render a judgement and to act upon it" (Eisner, 2002b, p. 201). Fundamentally, engagement with somatic knowledge would seem to be the core component of aesthetic practice that generates not only advancement within the arts, but more fundamentally the broader qualitative intelligence which Eisner considers to be central to human development.

In light of the merits of this perspective, one might assume that attention to bodily experience would represent a significant feature of theory and practice within the field of arts education more generally. While Eisner argues that the arts offer a preferable alternative to mechanistic conceptions of education in terms of the compatibility of their goals and methods with the broader needs of the person, a number of theorists raise concerns about the quality of arts education theory and practice in terms of this pursuit, particularly from an embodiment perspective (Bowman, 2004; Bowman & Powell, 2007; Bresler, 2004b; Davidson, 2004; Osmond, 2007; Powell, 2007a; Stinson, 2004). This concern is generally considered to be related to the distorted impact that traditional cognitive theory has had on understandings of the nature of aesthetic process. In this vein, visual arts educator Judith Davidson suggests that "by virtue of the fact that the arts are placed within the disembodied framework of knowledge that dominates schools, the capacity of the arts to support an embodied framework of knowledge must be compromised to some extent" (Davidson, 2004, p. 197). Music educator Wayne Bowman even more strongly asserts that "There can be no genuine progress in our efforts to explain and justify the contributions of artistic endeavours to education until the meanings of things like intelligence and cognition are reconstructed" (Bowman, 2004, p. 29).

The magnitude of such traditional influences, alongside an acknowledgement of a dearth of research and theory related to the body in arts education generally (Powell, 2007), is worth unpacking further at this juncture. I address this here in light of the arguably more significant investigations of this nature that have taken place within the field of music education. Furthermore, I would suggest that the observations that have been made within this field have resonant echoes, albeit to greater or lesser extents, within the other arts areas. In this regard, related concerns have increasingly become more evident in the literatures of visual art, dance, and drama education (Bresler, 2004a; Davidson, 2004; Osmond, 2007; Perry, 2011; Perry & Medina, 2011; Stinson, 2004, 2016a).

Bowan and Powell (2007) suggest that music education has been pervaded by dualistic and hierarchical structures, which have historically tended to prioritise the notion of a listening mind over a performing body, and have failed to recognise the centrality of an integrated body-mind to all aspects of musical engagement. In this regard, they explain that:

> The history of reflection on the nature and value of music is a game of hide and seek: hide the body and its materiality, its subjectivity, its temporality, and its specificity; then seek compensatory value in characteristics deemed durable, objective and trustworthy – the formal, the structural, the ideal (Bowman & Powell, 2007, p. 1087).

Using the term 'somatophobia', they highlight a suspicion, and oftentimes blindness to the embodied and enacted nature of music activity, as abstracted, representative, and culturally blind notions of what might be considered valuable content knowledge dominated the field (Bowman & Powell, 2007, p. 1088). Thus, in the traditional concern for 'representing' emotions, ideas or scores which have been identified outside of or in advance of a 'knowing-in-action', Bowan and Powell argue that much is lost and misunderstood. Drawing on ethnographic and phenomenological accounts of the aesthetic process of professional artists and indigenous cultures, they offer an alternative account of music making that, arising from its embodied nature, is temporal, dynamic, and corporeal, and which thereby contributes to personal and collective identity (Bowman, 2004; Bowman & Powell, 2007; Powell, 2004, 2007).

In recognition of the discrepancy between accounts of artistic practice from professional artists and indigenous groups, and the nature of practice which has evolved in many educational contexts, Bowan & Powell (2007) call for more 'bodily informed pedagogies' (p1101) and the development of clear theoretical frameworks to support such an orientation (Bowman & Powell, 2007, p. 1101). In their view, the first step in a longer journey towards improvement in this regard, is to foreground more strongly the embodied

nature of aesthetic practice within arts education theory. Referring to the increased theoretical acknowledgement of the distortions described above, they propose that:

> Acknowledging these as truths is the easy part though; the difficulty, the challenge we have only begun to address, lies in rebuilding our pedagogies, our theoretical frameworks, and our research practices in ways that foreground that fundamental truth (Bowman & Powell, 2007, p. 1101).

3.3.3 Is it Possible to 'Instruct' Someone to Feel?

One of my key interests in this research is to consider what 'rebuilding our pedagogical practices' might look like in light of a more robust theory of embodiment in arts education. In this regard, a further question arises as I engage with this literature - Is a better *understanding* of the embodied nature of aesthetic practice sufficient for improved pedagogies to evolve within the system? For me this is linked to a fundamental question, which is less evident in the literature on embodiment in arts education, but which is pertinently posed by Richard Siegesmund in his review of Eisner's aesthetic theory - "Is it possible to instruct somebody to feel? (Siegesmund, 2004, p. 84). Both he and Eisner would seem to suggest that somatic knowledge can and indeed should be taught. In this regard, Eisner recommends the design of curriculum activities "that call attention to such matters, activities that refine perception in each of the fields we teach", and furthermore that "this will require activities that slow down perception rather than speed it up" (Eisner, 2003, p. 378). The significance of a supportive democratic environment, a freedom from the dictates of others, and a fuller immersion in arts-based practices themselves are also highlighted as significant features of the development of somatic knowledge. However, it would seem that the overall assumption, which I think is also echoed more widely, is that to a large extent, the arts practices in and of themselves will draw out the embodied intelligence in question. I believe that while there is a good deal of truth in this perspective, it may somewhat overlook

the pervasive power of the Cartesian influence that has been recognised in all aspects of education in the discussion thus far, even when intentions are directed acutely away from this influence. The system, like the individuals within it, may be seen to be deeply immersed in such a perspective, and change from the perspective of embodiment is therefore incredibly challenging to implement. As Bowman explains,

> The habit of treating body as the disavowed condition of knowledge (the subordinated counterpart of mind) is an extraordinarily difficult one to shake. Deeply built into our inherited languages are the remains of conceptual structures in which mind is separate and superordinate to things bodily….Teaching old words new tricks is extraordinarily challenging (Bowman, 2004, p. 30).

I would add that the task of teaching experienced bodies new tricks is even more challenging, due to the inevitably embodied nature of how dualistic messages have also been perceived. I am reminded of the human resistance to change as discussed within the previous section on neuroscience in this regard. As we have seen from the introduction of somatic education in the professional dance context in chapter two, there may be significantly more intentionality and repatterning of a body-mind nature required, for the desired aesthetic and personal goals discussed in the chapter thus far to be realised. As Fraleigh explains, "if the body is culturally conditioned, it is also the means by which we can unhinge cultural conditioning…" (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 34).

This would also seem to be the direction that arts educators Liora Bresler and Sue Stinson are pointing us towards when they reflect on their own practices and that of other dance and arts educators (Bresler, 2004b; Stinson, 2004, 2016b). Making reference to the somatic theory of Thomas Hanna in this regard, they concur that a focus on inner bodily experience and perception should be distinguishing features of high-quality dance teaching

from both an arts and broader educational perspective. Taking this a step further, Stinson goes on to articulate,

> I would even go so far as to suggest that it is time to claim education of the lived body as appropriate terrain for not just dance education, but all of arts education. The arts begin in education of the senses: Seeing, hearing, and feeling from the inside are essential if one is to be an artist or appreciate the arts (Stinson, 2004, p. 165).

It is in light of such a perspective that I would posit that the established somatic education processes of actively and subjectively getting to know one's soma more fully, its integrated nature, its habits, its limitations and its potential - may merit deeper consideration within the field of education. Based on the theory discussed above, I would also suggest that the area of arts education may be suitable location for such an explicit focus, due to the clear complementarity of purpose between these fields.

3.3.4 Somaesthetics

I now turn to the theoretical lens of somaesthetics, as a way of considering somatic education in the context of a broader theoretical framework on embodiment that is relatively new, but becoming increasingly well recognised. As a theoretical field that concurs with the need for an intentional and practice-oriented approach to embodiment, I suggest that it may also serve to support the thrust of the argument I have initiated thus far.

Philosopher Richard Shusterman has been outlining and refining the scope and content of the field of somaesthetics since the early nineties (Shusterman, 2004, 2009, 2020). He describes it as an overarching theoretical structure which evolved in an academic context as a means of both understanding and meliorating theory and practice related to embodiment. More specifically he defines somaesthetics as,

> the critical study and meliorative cultivation of the experience and use of the living body (or soma) as the site of sensory appreciation (aesthesis) and performative and creative self-fashioning (Shusterman, 2020, p. 245).

In relation to the latter part of this definition, it is worth pointing out that like other theories referred to in this chapter, somaesthetics finds its roots in pragmatist philosophy in terms of a concern with enhancing the aesthetic quality of lived experience.

In general terms Shusterman distinguishes three interrelated branches within the somaesthetic framework, which offer a broad scope for analysis of the range of ways the theme of embodiment tends to be addressed in theory and practice across a range of disciplines. These branches include analytic, pragmatic, and practical somaesthetics. Analytic somaesthetics, refers to the theoretical analysis of the role of the body in cognitive, aesthetic, and cultural activity. Considerable attention has been given to such understandings within the earlier parts of this chapter, with particular cognisance of the impact of the dualistic misapprehensions of the past (See section 3.1). This branch of somaesthetics also includes a social and cultural analysis of embodiment, and the way that cultural inscriptions on the body have been served to sustain social and political power (Shusterman, 2020). As suggested by O'Loughlin, this has tended to represent the most dominant focus on the theme of embodiment within educational studies to date (O'Loughlin, 2006).

The second branch of somaesthetics, referred to as pragmatic somaesthetics, focuses on analysis and comparative critique of the diverse range of somatic practices which focus on attending to and enhancing the representational, performative, and experiential dimensions of bodily experience. Shusterman's theory would seem to distinguish itself by drawing particular attention to the experiential dimension. This would include attention to many of the somatic disciplines and principles discussed in chapter two, and is therefore of particular relevance to this study. His explanation of experiential somaesthetics echoes the defining

features of somatic practices, in its recognition of the value of processes that encourage a deeper quality of feeling in the body-mind, and a deeper quality of awareness of that feeling. In this regard, he elucidates that,

> Experiential somaesthetic methods aim to make us "feel better" in both senses of this ambiguous phrase…to make the quality of one's somatic experience more aesthetically rich and pleasing, and to make one's awareness of that experience more acutely perceptive and insightfully enlightening (Shusterman, 2020, p. 249).

The third branch of somaesthetic theory, referred to as practical somaesthetics, involves the *practice* of engaging in and experiencing somatic modalities in one's analysis of embodiment. Shusterman bemoans the extent to which much academic discourse on the body tends to be devoid of such engagement on the part of theoreticians themselves. He echoes Stinson and Johnston's similar concerns in this regard (Johnson, 2004; Stinson, 2016a), and contends that "this dimension, not of saying but of doing, is the most neglected by academic body philosophers, whose commitment to the logos of discourse typically treats the body in mere textual terms" (Shusterman, 2004, p. 54). It is vein that I am grateful to the way in which my own embodiment process has contributed to this research process. I would contend that the embodied knowledge and disposition that I gained from the Origins programme has helped me significantly in the design of this research project, the teaching within it, and my reflexive engagement with my experience throughout.

It is worth pointing out at this juncture, that while philosophy and the arts have represented the prevailing applications of somaesthetic theory to date, Shusterman continues to invite further phenomenological research in other domains. In this regard he welcomes more recent applications in the areas of political theory, gender studies and educational theory (Shusterman, 2020). In relation to the latter, Christine Doddington's engagement with somaesthetic theory has led her to insightful analysis of current theoretical frameworks within

the field of education (Doddington, 2013, 2015, 2018). The motivation for her engagement with somaesthetic theory is partly informed by a concern about the damaging effect of body-mind dualisms which are likely to be encountered by young people in the system, and the dulling of the senses associated with the excessive sensory stimulation in modern life more generally. Like others we have discussed, this has led her to devoting particular attention to the area of arts education. Further echoing earlier considerations of this chapter, she draws on somaesthetic theory to argue for an increased emphasis on aesthetic sensibility over disciplinary skill within arts education, thereby enhancing the benefits of the arts to education generally and to the practice of living (Doddington, 2015). Like Shusterman, she clearly emphasises the need for a heightened bodily consciousness in this pursuit and explains:

> To acquire mindful, heightened corporeal sensibility and receptivity as we undergo, shape and seek meaning from our lived experience may be the ultimate life-gift educators could pass on to the young. (Doddington, 2015, p. 66)

Doddington also echoes Eisner in highlighting the significance of the educational environment in relation to such an embodied orientation. In this regard, she also draws particular attention to the educator's philosophy and sensibility in the creation of a productive educational environment. However, she similarly stops short in terms of offering more specific suggestions about how such an embodied sensibility might be fostered. In her 2015 publication, this is the point at which the philosopher hands over a set of very pertinent questions to the educator,

> How could the space itself or the approach to that space be more conducive to rich bodily aesthetic experience? How might the aims of such experiences be framed for both participants and other concerned parties so as to express their value? How does an educator 'set the scene' for somaesthetic experience with their language, their questions, their own bodily stance and reaction? (Doddington, 2014, p. 66).

While Doddington does not include deliberation at the level of specific somatic education practices in this regard, I would posit that her engagement with somaeasthetic theory would certainly seem to be encouraging her in this direction.

3.4 Teacher Education and Embodiment

As the wider context for this study is the education of student teachers, this section provides a broad outline of the core and contested values and trends within the field of teacher education at the time of writing, particularly those that tend to reflect and extend some of the issues raised in the chapter thus far. In this regard I give particular attention to the growing emphasis on the relationship between teacher identity, self-reflection, and disposition within this field. I also allude to the current pedagogical approaches within teacher education, which seek to fulfil its various intentions, not least the role of arts education in this context. In light of the previous chapter on somatic education and the discussion of embodiment in this chapter thus far, it provides a further opportunity to consider ways in which somatic practices might be considered to be supportive of or challenging to the current orientations within this field.

In the first instance, there is no doubt that the field of teacher education has also been significantly influenced by the dominant behaviourist and cognitive theories of the twentieth century, and has indeed received varying levels of critique in relation to both influences. However, of particular concern since the late 1990s is the neoliberal conflation of political and economic concerns with the project of education as discussed in chapter one, and a renewed preoccupation with objective standards, outcomes, and competencies within the field (Apple, 2017; Baltodano, 2012; Cochran-Smith,2005, 2021; Conway, 2013; Furlong, 2013). The consequent coupling between teacher and student performance in relation to narrowly defined priority areas has clearly had an influence on teacher education policy internationally, and indeed more recently within the Irish context (Baltodano, 2012; Conway, 2013; Furlong,

2013; Hyland, 2018). For many, this trend tends to sit uncomfortably with an earlier and continuously evolving humanist influence within the field, which offers an alternative take on the priorities of education, and consequently on the nature of the teaching and learning process within teacher education (Bullough, 1997; Cochran-Smith, 2005, 2021; Eisner, 2002a; Greene, 1994; Korthagen, 2004, 2017; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2009; Palmer, 2007; Sameshima, 2008; Van Manen, 2007, 2016b). From such a perspective, the development of the person tends to be at the core of the educational project, and informs the nature of all other strands which may contribute to this purpose.

In light of this perspective, a vigorous rearticulation of the fundamentally personal, relational and situated nature of the practice of teaching and learning has become central to counteracting the persistent attempts to narrow the field of teacher education in recent times (Greene, 1994; Korthagen, 2010; Todres, 2008; Van Manen, 2007, 2016a). Unsurprisingly, this has given rise to a renewed emphasis on the complexity of the role of the teacher and, and thereby of the teacher education process. This has become a particular concern at pre-service level, and has manifested in a renewed attempt to maintain and extend the focus of programme content beyond matters of curriculum and pedagogical theory.

3.4.1 Teacher Education and Identity

In light of the above, and of interest to this study, is the considerable literature that has continued to evolve since the 1980s, which draws attention to the relationship between the identity of the student teacher, the quality and style of their teaching, and their capacity to sustain commitment to the profession in the longer term (Beijaard et al., 2004; Beijaard & Meijer, 2017; Bullough, 1997, 2008; Korthagen, 2014; Korthagen, 2004; Palmer, 1998b; Palmer & Scribner, 2007). Drawing on McLean's (1999) research, Korthagen summaries that,

> after decades in which 'the person' was largely absent from the theory on how best to educate teachers, we are now witnessing a surge of interest in the question of how beginning teachers think about themselves and how they undergo the substantial personal transformations they pass through as they become teachers. (Korthagen, 2004, p. 82)

One of the core premises of such a growing focus within teacher education programmes is the recognition of the significance of the integration between one's personal and professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2004; Beijaard & Meijer, 2017; Korthagen, 2004, 2009, 2017). This contrasts with a previous approach which prioritised theoretical instruction in the hope that students would somehow adapt their behaviour to such abstract ideals. With this in mind, Rogers & Raider-Roth (2006) bring particular attention to the compromising effect of 'a divided self' which can be experienced by beginning teachers, when they supress their personhood in an effort to perform to the expectations and values of the system. In this regard, they observe that,

> This distance between personal and professional selves can cause a tentativeness, beyond the tentativeness that naturally exists for new teachers, that undermines both their trust in themselves and, thereby, their students' trust in them (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 272)

In spite of a growing consensus in relation to the above, the literature acknowledges that teacher identity is a phenomenon that is notoriously difficult to pin down in terms of definition (Beijaard et al., 2004; Korthagen, 2004). Nonetheless, Bullough's well-cited understanding would seem to encompass many of the key elements referred to across the literature in this field.

> Teacher identity—what beginning teachers believe about teaching and learning and self-as-a- teacher—is of vital concern to teacher education; it is the basis for meaning

> making and decision making. Teacher education must begin, then, by exploring the teaching self (Bullough, 1997, p21).

Such understandings of the teacher education process are obviously of particular interest to this study, given the considerable focus on self-awareness within the practices of somatic education.

3.4.2 Teacher Identity and Self-Reflection

The notion of 'self-as-teacher' includes a wide frame of reference across the literature, to includes one's beliefs, ideals, personal qualities, and behaviours as they relate to the profession. These elements of course tend to be emphasised differently depending on one's academic orientation. However, the literature would suggest that in contrast with the abstract theoretical approaches of the past, the fundamental emphasis of much pedagogical practice in this area at the current time, is on bringing consciousness to the significant influence of one's personal core beliefs on practice (Beijaard et al., 2004; Beijaard & Meijer, 2017; Korthagen, 2004). For example, for many students the personal experience of oftentimes more traditional pedagogical practices as a young person, is considered to dominate over the influence of subsequent engagement with progressive theory. The notion of 'exploring the teaching self' therefore tends to involve supporting the participant to become more conscious of the source and nature of such beliefs in the first instance. As Hamachek explains,

> the more that teachers know about themselves—the private curriculum within—the more their personal decisions are apt to be about how to pave the way for better teaching'' (Hamachek, 1999, as cited in Korthagen, 2004, p82).

In light of the above, the agency of the student teacher is considered to be fundamental to the pedagogical process in question, as is an increased emphasis on self-reflection (Beijaard et al., 2004; Beijaard & Meijer, 2017). In many teacher education

programmes this tends to manifest in a significant focus on the nature and practice of reflection itself via the examination and implementation of a range of models of reflection, which tend to be adopted in professional contexts. However, in spite of their desired focus on the interrelationship between reflection and improved practice, critique of such models from some quarters has highlighted the largely cognitive and potentially 'quick fix' nature of their use in practice (Korthagen, 2017; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2009; Michelson, 1998). Furthermore, the phenomenological critique of many approaches to reflection within the field notes their focus on approximation to curricular outcomes over pedagogical experience (Van Manen, 2016a).

Nonetheless, considerable nuance has emerged in relation to reflective practices in the area of identity formation in recent times to reflect the further complexity of the task in question. In this light, the literature notes an increased focus on the biography of the student, to reflect the significant influence of prior educational experiences across the lifetime (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1994). Clandinin and Schaefer's focus on the use of narrative and storytelling in this regard heralds an important development in the area (Clandinin & Schaefer, 2019). Of interest to this study is the implied acknowledgement in such approaches, not only of psychological and therapeutic influences on the field, but the way in which they point to a greater appreciation of the situated and embedded nature of identity formation.

Korthagen's multidimensional understanding of the nature of professional identity would seem to acknowledge an even deeper complexity in relation to the phenomenon in question, by drawing particular attention to the relationship between its unconscious and behavioural dimensions. In this regard, he purports that,

> Professional identity, then, often takes on the form of a Gestalt: an unconscious body of needs, images, feelings, values, role models, previous experiences and behavioural tendencies, which together create a sense of identity. (Korthagen, 2004, p. 85)

In light of the notion of professional identity as gestalt, his well-researched ‘onion model’ suggests that identity is most effectively understood in the context of a deep reflection on one’s experiences of a particular moment of practice. Within this approach students are supported to identify the relationship or incongruence between their ideals and the practice in question via a multi-layered reflection process (Korthagen, 2004, 2017). Korthagen would argue that this model represents a more holistic approach to reflection, in that not only does it bring more consciousness to the dispositional nature of one’s belief system, but it also seeks to unpack it more deeply by examining the emotional and motivational content of the moment in question. Indeed, drawing on Damasio’s work, the significance of emotion in a teaching moment, and the need for one’s heightened awareness of the same, has become a stronger feature of the Onion model of reflection as it has continued to evolve (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2009; Korthagen, 2017). However, I would argue that while Korthagen’s approach clearly draws attention to the more personal and affective aspects of one’s practice than previous models have done, he does not explicitly acknowledge the role of the physical body in terms of how it may be informing these dimensions, or indeed how it may be drawn upon to modify and extend one’s practice from these perspectives.

3.4.3 Embodiment and the Arts in Teacher Identity Formation

Notwithstanding the above, the premise of the approach of Korthagen and Vasalos would seem to affirm the assertions of the fledgling but growing body of literature which acknowledges the tacit and embodied nature of teacher identity and disposition (Andrews, 2016, 2018; Latta & Buch, 2008; Sugrue, 1997; Todres, 2008). This is particularly evident to those whose research has been focused on observing the practice of teaching in real time (Andrews, 2016, 2018). Reflecting on her ethnographic doctoral research of this nature, Kimber Andrews observes that,

> the abiding theme that undergirds the findings is the importance of both the physical body and the role it plays in communicating, as well as a deeper connection of embodying one's vision and manifesting that through the way one teaches in the classroom (Andrews, 2018, p. 182).

However, as Andrews' ultimate recommendation for an increased focus on the area of embodiment within teacher education would seem to suggest, a theoretical understanding the embodied nature of one's pedagogical raison d'etre represents just one part of the equation. Knowing how to fruitfully harness the implications of such an understanding in supporting the growth and *evolution* of the student teacher is another. As Van Manen reflects, "it is much easier for us to teach concepts and informational knowledge than it is to bring about pathic understandings" (Van Manen, 2007, p. 21). In this regard, it is worth noting that many researchers have commented more generally on the premise that issues of identity and dispositional orientation are notoriously difficult to shift (Bullough & Bauman, 1997). I would suggest that this is because they represent aspects of the self that are deeply embodied.

In light of the above I would like to return to the relationship that Eisner draws between aesthetic practice, identity formation, and dispositional orientation, and to consider its particular implications for teacher education from an embodiment perspective. In the first instance, he explains that.

> the arts are a means of exploring our own interior landscape. When the arts genuinely move us, we discover what it is that we are capable of experiencing. In this sense, the arts help us to discover the contours of our emotional selves. They provide resources for experiencing the range and varieties of our responsive capacities. (Eisner, 2002b, p. 11)

In light of our consideration of teacher identity formation, what I would draw attention to in this extract is the dynamic nature of identity exploration that is offered within aesthetic

practice, as Eisner envisages it. From this perspective, ongoing engagement with the arts provides the individual with the opportunity to engage not only with who they are, but also who they may become at a very experiential level. As he explains, "These experiences are consequential, for through them we engage in a process through which the self is remade" (Eisner, 2002b, p. 12).

For Eisner, the potential for such a dynamic unfolding of identity, is predicated on the dispositional orientations that the arts tend to generate, particularly those that are rooted in improvisation and present moment responsivity. It is interesting to note Eisner's proposal in other texts that these are also the very dispositions that might be considered most desirable in the practice of teaching itself, and may indeed be the basis for all effective teaching interactions. In this regard, he explains that,

> Teaching profits from—no, requires at its best—artistry. Artistry requires sensibility, imagination, technique, and the ability to make judgments about the feel and significance of the particular (Eisner, 2002a, p. 382).

Echoing aspects of Eisner's work discussed earlier, he would further argue that the teacher's ability to be present to 'the feel and significance of the particular' is also central to the 'in flight' decisions that he/she must make in a given pedagogical moment. In this regard he compares the teacher to the improviser in a jazz ensemble, who must respond to a felt sense of when to come in, when to hold back, and when to improvise (Eisner, 2002a). For Eisner, this would seem to be fundamental to all of the other core relational and pedagogical qualities we might wish teachers to embody.

3.4.4 Teaching, Relational Presence and the Body

In light of the above, it is worth pointing out that Korthagen and others have also begun to draw more attention to the significance of the particular "state" of consciousness of the teacher in a given moment in recent times (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2009; Rodgers &

Raider-Roth, 2006). They refer to this state in terms of a 'quality of presence', a much referred to phenomenon in my experience of supervising school placement with others over the years, but one that I would argue is relatively undertheorized and under attended to at the level of improving practice. Addressing this dearth at a theoretical level, Rogers & Raider-Roth describe presence in teaching as

> a state of alert awareness, receptivity, and connectedness to the mental, emotional, and physical workings of both the individual and the group in the context of their learning environments, and the ability to respond with a considered and compassionate best next step (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 265).

Indeed Korthagen & Vasalos would seem to suggest in their 2009 publication that this is the capacity that all effective reflection is moving towards, and they link it with Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow in this regard (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014).

In a similar vein, phenomenologist Van Manen has given much attention to describing the significance of a present moment orientation in teaching, and what he refers to as the 'pedagogical tact' that it requires (Van Manen, 2007, 2016a). For Van Manen pedagogical tact "shows itself as subtle influence, as holding back, as openness to the child's experience, as attunement to subjectivity, as situational confidence, as improvisational gift" (Van Manen, 2016a, p. 79). In particular, he would argue that it is central to the relational quality upon which all effective teaching encounters hinge, regardless of subject matter. Ultimately in his view it derives from a form of attunement, which the teacher has the ability to experience with a child or group in a given moment. In attempting to describe further the conditions for such attunement, he explains that "True pedagogy requires an attentive attunement of one's whole being to the child's experience of the world" (Van Manen, 2015, p. 83). As alluded to in this statement, and of particular interest to this study, is the significance he attaches to the

embodied, pre-reflective and pathic nature of one's professional interactions in this regard. He proposes that.

> Professional knowledge is pathic to the extent that the act of practice depends on the sense and sensuality of the body, personal presence, relational perceptiveness, tact for knowing what to say and do in contingent situations, thoughtful routines and practices, and other aspects of knowledge that are in part pre-reflective, pre-theoretic, pre-linguistic (Van Manen, 2007, p. 20).

Whilst coming from different fields, Van Manen would here seem to echo Eisner's view that it is ultimately the quality of one's underlying somatic intelligence that informs the potential for an effective improvisational disposition in aesthetic and pedagogical communication. Like Eisner, Van Manen not only offers a description of the somatic nature of sensitive teaching in this regard, but he also gives much consideration to the question of how such a sensitivity and responsiveness might be cultivated. Exploring the complexity of the task in question, he suggests that the process cannot be a matter of teaching superficial gestures and signals, because pedagogical tact ultimately manifests from a deeper mode of relational being. He reflects such an understanding cogently in in one of his vignettes, wherein he contemplates the significance of a glance that takes place between a teacher and student. Here he observes that,

> To treat the glance as a mere teaching technique is to treat the knowledge of the glance as a set of rigid principles. An effective teacher can be effective with a glance because the teacher *is* the glance. The glance is already the teacher's way of understanding and living the classroom situation. (Van Manen, 2016a, p. 83)

Not only can we detect here echoes of an appreciation of the overlap between identity and action as alluded to previously, but we can also discern a call for a deeper and perhaps slower pedagogical process, in order to explore this premise more effectively. To an extent Van

Manen echoes others who emphasise the importance of self-reflection to this end. However, he suggests that there is an inherent subtlety of a temporal nature in the reflection process which may need further attention within the field, if it is to be effective from a dispositional perspective. In this regard, he ponders.

> Where and how does the experience of reflection enter the reality of the lifeworld? How is reflection in action experienced? And how may this be different from the conceptualisations of reflection in action as found in the literature? What kind of reflection or thinking, if any, is possible in practice? (Van Manen, 2016a, p. 53)

Similar to Korthagen, he proposes that the more subtlety and nuance one can discern in relation to one's lived experience of teaching, the more one is likely to incrementally translate such reflection into a form of mindful awareness and action in a given moment. In this regard he explains that "Phenomenology of practice is formative of sensitive practice, issuing from the pathic power of phenomenological reflections" (2007).

3.4.5 The Case for a Focus on Embodiment within Teacher Education

In light of the above provocations from the work of theorists such as Korthagen, Eisner and Van Manen, it would seem that the teacher education field is currently calling for a continued exploration of the overlap between issues of identity, embodiment and teaching in both practical and theoretical terms. While there seems to be a consensus among these authors in relation to the desirability for a refined improvisational disposition on the part of the teacher in this regard, and an appreciation of the embodied identity that is likely to underpin this capacity, they would seem to differ somewhat in terms of how this might be cultivated. While Eisner would tend to emphasise the impact of continued embodied engagement with aesthetic experience in this regard, Van Manen & Korthagen tend to emphasise the impact of practicing sensitive phenomenological reflection.

In light of such recommendations, I would suggest that the theory and practice of somatic education, as outlined in chapter two, has much to offer in terms of the enrichment and integration of these inclinations. In the first instance it offers a long tradition of refined practices which have evolved to support an enhanced re-engagement of the body, so that the participant may be better able to discern and follow the subtlety of a more holistic response in various situations. Secondly it entails subtle reflective strategies for bringing the immediacy of such experience to consciousness, with the longer-term impact of recognising and indeed effecting current patterns of behaviour. As Shusterman explains,

> Experiential somaesthetic methods aim to make us "feel better" in both senses of this ambiguous phrase... to make the quality of one's somatic experience more aesthetically rich and pleasing, and to make one's awareness of that experience more acutely perceptive and insightfully enlightening (Shusterman, 2020, p. 249).

Indeed, it would seem that it is the particularly nuanced and gentle integration of the experiential and the reflective in these approaches that heralds the opportunity for the incremental transformation of self. In addition, through the persuasive accounts from a range of practitioners in the somatic dance field, we are also reminded of the particularly rich potential of employing somatic education strategies in an arts-based context, from the perspective of both identity formation and the quality of arts practice itself (Batson et al., 2012; Fraleigh, 2015; Schupp, 2017). As Batson surmises "Dance training opens us up to possibility and artistry, expanding our notion of being in the world, and this can be augmented by somatic practice and scientific enquiry" (Batson et al., 2012, p. 189).

In summary, the notion that the potentially rich reciprocal relationship between aesthetic practice and identity formation as proposed by both somatic and arts education theorists, can be harnessed and augmented in a particular way by somatic education principles, has important implications for the field of teacher education in my view. It is in

this light that I am reminded of Eisner's conclusion to his treatise on artistry and teaching, that the conditions used to enhance artistry in other fields must become relevant resources for thinking about the improvement of teaching (Eisner, 2002a, p. 383). In light of the focus of this study, I also consider his more vehement provocation in relation to the fundamental improvisational and relational subtleties of teaching, to be particularly compelling,

> No conception of teaching can be adequate without attention to the ways in which such processes function and no teacher education program will be optimally effective that neglects their cultivation. (Eisner, 2002a, p. 383)

3.5 Relevant Studies

As outlined in chapter two, the existence of somatic practice in the Western context has been charted since the early part of the twentieth century. However systematic research in relation to the lived experience of such practice is still considered to be in a preliminary phase (Eddy, 2017). Indeed many of the studies of interest that I identified during this research process were in the form of doctoral theses arising from a small number of universities in the UK, US and Canada that include a particular focus on somatics. Furthermore, from the perspective of the interests of this study, it is worth noting that the predominant focus of somatic studies with an education lens tends to be on significance of somatics for dance education or physical education. Overall, while I did identify a number of noteworthy studies of some relevance to my own research questions during the process, (Buono, 2019; Liu, 1998; Paparo, 2016; Tarlow-Morgan et al., 2017; Tsouvala, M., & Magos, K., 2016), it became clear that there was a dearth of research available that examined the lived experience of somatic principles and practices in the context of teacher education. This was with two notable exceptions that I wish to give some attention to at this juncture. While there are some noticeable differences between these and my own study in terms of their specific focus, researcher background, cultural context, and participants, I suggest that they do nonetheless

serve to underscore its significance and help to support its findings. The studies in question pertain to two Canadian PhD studies that have been completed in recent years.

The first of these, is entitled *Learning to move, moving to learn: Metaphorical expressions in teacher education* by Paula Rosehart, and was completed at Simon Frasier University in Canada (Rosehart, 2013). This study uses the research methodologies of artography and phenomenology to focus on Rosehart's experience of working with immigrant recertifying teachers through a somatic oriented module at the university. During the fieldwork, Rosehart developed what she refers to as a 'somataphorical' approach to the teaching and reflection process, wherein students used metaphors inspired by Laban dance methodologies as departure points for reflection on their experiences of teaching. Due to the nature of the research methodology in question, the study did not involve a thematic analysis, but nonetheless I would suggest that its aesthetic content illustrates and echoes some of the themes and findings of this study, which will be elucidated in later chapters. Most strikingly, it underscores the power of a somatic approach to support immigrant teachers to reflect on their current pedagogical beliefs and practices in an embodied way, and to meet with the challenge of personal and professional integration during a period of cultural transition. In the final chapter of her thesis Rosehart points to the need for an increased focus on embodiment at pre-service level, and she thus shares a model for developing a somataphorical approach at this stage of development.

The other pertinent study, which I identified in the latter stages of my research process, was entitled *Toward Somatic Coherence: Five Teachers Engaged in Embodied Ways in Their Professional Development Path* by Genevieve Emond Muza (Emond, 2022). This study was completed at University of Sherbrook in Quebec in 2018. It involved a phenomenological enquiry into the experience of five practicing elementary school teachers who participated in four somatic workshops led by the author within a master's programme at

the university. In light of my previous critique, the focus of this study was interestingly to extend the integration of the internal and external dimensions of a teacher's professional identity and practice in the context of Korthagen's onion and ALACT models of reflection (Korthagen, 2004, 2014). Ultimately the researcher also recognised the richness of Korthagen's models in terms of their capacity to generate a more holistic reflective practice among practicing teachers. However, she similarly recognised the absence of a clear somatic dimension therein, and developed a series of additional questions within her implementation of these models to reflect the potentially rich contribution of the somatic field to this approach (Emond, 2002).

Anticipating the findings of my own study, both of the aforementioned Canadian doctoral studies elucidate the enhanced engagement with self, other and environment that the somatic approach tends to generate, and moreover demonstrate the relevance of this engagement to one's continuously evolving teacher identity and practice beyond induction. I would thereby propose that they underscore the need for increased practice and related research within this evidently relatively new meeting of fields. Notwithstanding the richness of these particular studies, it is clear that research in this domain is still at a very preliminary stage. In this regard, I would suggest that the dearth of qualitative research in relation to the experience of somatic education at preservice level within teacher education, signals an important invitation for exploration at this time. Moreover, in light of the content of this chapter, I would suggest that the location of such a focus within the arts education dimension of a teacher education programme, which involves a broader emphasis than dance education, adds another potentially rich layer of enquiry.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has shown the extent to which issues of embodiment have become more pertinent within the field of education in recent years. Significant shifts in understandings of

the nature of cognition and learning arising from the philosophical discourse of Ponty and Dewey, and more recently from the fields of embodied cognition and neuroscience, have demonstrated the somewhat distorted nature of previous understandings, and their pervasive impact on the field.

Furthermore, in light of their deepening recognition of the significant impact of bodily engagement in learning, such shifts in understanding have heralded a reconsideration of the nature of practice in our schools. The arts are considered to represent a particularly good example of subjects which can potentially recognise, celebrate, and enhance the intelligence of the body in meaningful ways. However, many efforts and practices of an embodied nature in education and in the arts have also been shown to be thwarted by the continued influence of dualistic perspectives, and by inadequate theorising about the role of the body within the field.

Furthermore, there would seem to be an assumption within the field of education, and particularly within the arts, that the intelligence that an integrated body-mind has to offer can be implicitly accessed and enhanced through continued exposure to artistic experience. I would speculate that to a certain extent this is true, but I would also argue that this does not take adequate account of the continued influence of Cartesian perspectives on all parties within the education system, not least its teachers. If such influences are held within in the body, as sociological theory would suggest, its capacity for full engagement and expression may not be as accessible to learners as imagined without a more explicit focus on issues of embodiment.

It is in this light that a somatic education lens may offer a recognition of what may be lacking, or at least significantly less pervasive, in our relatively recent attempts at recognising the body in education. I suggest that the field of somaesthetics offers a helpful theoretical framework in this regard, which includes but goes beyond consideration of the more

dominant sociological orientation of research pertaining to the body in education. Somaesthetics recognises the need for theoretical and practical attention to *practices* of a somatic nature, that facilitate the individual to go beneath their habitual thinking and behaviour in order both understand and engage with their subjective body-mind system more deeply. In this regard, a meaningful understanding of the instrument of the body-mind may move participants from the oftentimes partial proposals of theoreticians to the subjective experience of learning, and thereby offer further empowerment in the longer-term goal of learning how to learn.

The final section of this chapter looks more specifically at the significant shifts that have also taken place in the understanding of teacher education in recent years, particularly those which may be of relevance to the thrust of this discussion. In this regard, I suggest that the shifts in emphasis from teacher training to teacher education, from content to identity, and from competency to disposition, may offer fertile ground for considering the value of the embodied emphasis of this study. Furthermore, Eisner's proposal that the goal of teacher artistry provides a rich lens through which such issues may be addressed, is also of particular interest given the arts education dimension of the fieldwork of this study. It is in this light, and in light of the possible deficits to the approach to embodiment within the field of education as suggested above, that I seek to explore how somatic education may be combined with arts education practices to more deeply support the personal, artistic and professional development of the student teacher.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I illustrate how the phenomenological paradigm informed the specific qualitative design and methods of this study. I also demonstrate how I combined it with the complementary lenses of autoethnography, aesthetic-based research, and somatic education, to address the research questions which were at its heart.

I begin by reviewing these research questions again with a view to providing a deeper rationale for their specific construction, and in this effort I consider the nature and quality of the knowledge they had the potential to provoke. The remainder of the chapter is divided into two parts. In part one I engage in a deeper analysis of the particular qualitative philosophical orientation of the study, to include a consideration of each of the theoretical lenses which informed it. In part two I focus on the particular application of this orientation. In this regard I provide more information about the research participants, the module content they engaged with during the teaching and learning process, and the data collection methods I employed during the research process. In relation to the latter, I give particular attention to the rationale for and nature of the exploratory interview design that was critical to my approach. In the final sections of the chapter, I describe the thematic analysis approach that I used to develop my findings, and the ethical considerations that informed the overall process.

4.1 Research questions

As outlined in the previous chapters, this doctoral study explored the role of embodiment in the context of teacher education, which I have outlined as a relatively under-researched and valuable domain of study. Specifically, it focused on the ways in which the principles of the field of somatic education may support the professional development of student teachers in the context of a new arts education module at Dublin City University (DCU). As a drama education lecturer and a recently accredited practitioner in the field of somatic movement education and therapy, I also wished to extend my qualitative

understanding of the relationship between arts education, teacher education and somatic education through my specific engagement with student teachers.

The overarching research question for this study was therefore as follows:

What do the principles and practices of somatic education offer in the context of an arts education module in a teacher education programme?

In the first instance, the exploratory nature of this question was highly significant in that it invited an open consideration of a relatively unchartered meeting between three fields of enquiry. In this regard, I considered that the particular freshness and challenge of an exploratory inquiry was likely to offer fertile ground for gaining key revelatory insights into the meeting of the fields in question. With this in mind, I constructed two further sub-questions to bring a particularly experiential orientation to the enquiry. The first of these was,

What is the nature of the lived teaching and learning experience of a somatic based approach to an arts-based module within a teacher education context?

The phenomenological orientation of this question had much to offer in terms of honoring and attempting to capture the rich knowledge that may arise from the incremental and exploratory approach to pedagogical innovation that was implicit within the study. This was particularly relevant given my initial uncertainty about the potential goals that such a combination of pedagogical approaches might facilitate. In this regard, the prioritization of lived experience over predetermined targets and outcomes represented a significant feature of the enquiry, as did an inherent caution against pre-conceived understandings about the needs of the various participants involved (Finlay, 2009; Van Manen, 2016b). More attention will be given to the phenomenological nature of the design in the next section.

The second sub-question of the research was related to the above and asked,

- *What does this lived experience reveal about the relevance of somatic approaches in a teacher education context?*

This question acknowledged that this research involved a multi-layered enquiry. While in an immediate sense the enquiry pertained to the specific experience of participants in DCU, the undertaking also inevitably incorporated a more far-reaching attempt to situate this style of work and its learning outcomes in relation the broader goals of teacher education. With this in mind, one of the key purposes of this project was not only to attempt to understand something more about the nature and practice of somatic education itself as other studies have done, but more specifically to understand how it may be considered meaningful within a particular pre-service teacher education setting.

This question also acknowledged the significance of the social, cultural, and pedagogical context within which the study took place, which is of course an important feature of all qualitative research enquiry. In this regard, I was mindful of the cultural as well as pedagogical values which are contained within the somatic and education fields respectively, and indeed the potential overlaps, contradictions, and tensions which their meeting might elicit. Given that I have worked in the teacher education context for a considerable period, the auto-ethnographic lens, which I incorporated into this study was designed to further support my enquiry into such issues. This lens will be discussed further within the next section.

4.2 Part One: Research Philosophy and Theoretical Influences

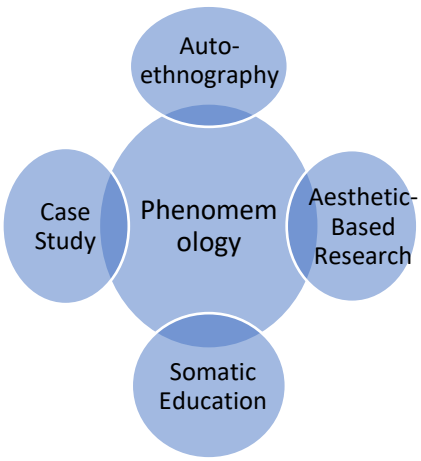
Before I go on to discuss the specific decisions that were made in relation to the data collection and analysis processes of the study, I here give more attention to the ontological and epistemological orientations alluded to in the above consideration of the research questions.

From an ontological perspective, this research study was predicated on a situated and dynamic understanding of the nature of reality. As such it was a qualitative study which took the post-positivist stance that knowledge cannot be interpreted independent of the social,

embodied, and relational context within which it exists (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Greene, 1994). Furthermore, from this perspective it is not considered to be a pre-packaged entity that can be 'transferred' into the disembodied 'brain' of the individual (Batson et al., 2012; Varela et al., 1991). In contrast with positivist approaches, which pursue absolute and generalizable truths through experimental means, the epistemological approach taken in qualitative research requires a sensitivity to the complex and dynamic nature of the social context within which it takes place, and increasingly to the complex and dynamic perceptual processes of the individual (Barone, 2006; Barone & Eisner, 2012a, 2012b; Bresler, 2019). This perspective also therefore recognizes that the claims which ensue from such research are necessarily multi-perspectival and more provisional than those of a quantitative nature. Their significant value however, is to be found in the contextualized and nuanced understanding of phenomena that they provide for the field (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Stake, 2005). In the following sections, I outline the theoretical principles of the research lenses that informed the specific design of this qualitative study and reflected the values above in very particular ways. These include case study, phenomenology, autoethnography, aesthetic based research, and somatic education itself.

Figure 2

Research Lenses



4.2.1 Case study

As a research methodology which facilitates "the epistemology of the particular" (Stake, 2005, p. 454), case study provided a particularly appropriate frame for the phenomenological and situated nature of this study. In the first instance case study suggests a clear boundary for the focus and scope of a study in relation to issues of time, context, and participant (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2005; Yazan, 2015). As explained in the introductory chapter, the case study for this research pertained to my somatically informed engagement with three specific cohorts of student teachers, over a two-year period. At this juncture, I consider some of the other salient features of the case study approach, in order to better understand its particular benefits to the design of this study.

Robert Stake, one of the leading figures in elucidating the nature and practice of case study research, describes it as "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (Stake, 1995, p. xi). Yin further explains it as "a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context" (Yin, 2002, as cited in Yazan, 2015, p. 138). It is this acknowledgement of the inevitable and multi-faceted relationship between phenomenon and context which case study research celebrates, which was particularly appealing in relation to the research questions for this study. As a study that focused on the potential inter-relationship between three fields, the implementation of a case study exploration within which they were all implicit, offered much in terms of accessing the depth and complexity of the dialogue in question.

It should be acknowledged however that criticisms levelled against the case study approach tend to pertain to its apparent limited capacity to produce generalizable knowledge. In such debates, the question of the very possibility and value of such a goal in qualitative

research arises. For example, Thomas posits that “any argument about the weakness of case study that rests on its lack of generalizability fails to recognise the limits of induction in social science generally” (Thomas, 2010, p. 577). As a contrast he offers the alternative perspective of Bourdieu who views the particular case as a “particular instance of the possible” (Bourdieu, 1992, as cited in Thomas, 2010, p. 580).

Research of this kind must nonetheless demonstrate at least its significance beyond the specific context within which it takes place. As Spatz explains, “Research is a balancing act, poised on an edge between the specific and the general, the concrete and the abstract, the repeatable and the unique’ (Spatz, 2017, p. 1). One of the ways in which Merriam addresses the issue of significance is by emphasising the role that a high quality literature review can play in foregrounding the relevance and need for the study in broader terms (Merriam, 1998; Yazan, 2015). This was an important feature of the approach taken within this study, and the literature is considered to play an important complementary role to the empirical elements in terms of addressing the research questions.

Other theorists emphasise the paradox that the greater the attention to contextual detail the more access to universality, particularly in the data collection and analysis stages of the research. In this regard many case study researchers implement the practice of ‘thick description’ in their writing as recommended by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (Geertz, 1973). As the reader will note, this represents an important feature of the references to participant and context presented within this chapter and in the introduction, and of the illustrative data that is presented in the later chapters. In this vein, I would argue that the delicate progression from thick description to theory generation represents a continuum which any progressive field of practice should interact fully with. In this vein, I would regard case study research, particularly research of an exploratory nature, as providing a critical preliminary step in the process of continuously progressing more universally relevant

questions, innovations and themes in a given field. In this regard, Flyvbierg also emphasises the particular contribution that detailed case study research can make to extending general expertise within a given profession, and he points to the rich tacit knowledge that a bank of good quality exemplars can offer (Flyvbjerg, 2006). While case study methodology was useful in terms of helping me to consider the boundaries of the study, and the relationship between the context and phenomenon in question, the particular manner in which the case study would be explored required further attention. It was in this regard that after considerable research I included influences from the fields of phenomenology, autoethnography, aesthetic-based research and somatic education. However, the predominant lens I drew upon was phenomenology, which will be discussed in the next section.

4.2.2 Phenomenological Research and Embodiment

As discussed in the previous chapter, the field of phenomenology is particularly concerned with the role of experience in knowledge acquisition and generation, and this understanding also reflects its quintessential contribution to the field of qualitative research. Of particular relevance in this regard is the previously discussed work of Merleau Ponty (1962) in terms of its concern with the nature of perception itself, and with the sensual body as principal locus for understanding. Indeed the continued interest in the significance of pre-reflective experience to perception in the work of a number of contemporary phenomenological researchers was of particular interest to this study (Csordas, 1993; Stolz, 2015; Todres, 2008; Van Manen, 2007, 2016b).

In light of the above, it is unsurprising that many somatic practitioners and theorists have tended to draw on the field of phenomenology to frame, articulate and explore the nature their work (Batson et al., 2012; Fraleigh, 2015; Johnson, 2004a; Sheets-Johnstone, 2019; Williamson, 2016). In particular, Fraleigh (2015) and Sheets-Johnstone (2019) have drawn extensively on its theoretical foundations for explicating research and practice within

the field. As Fraleigh explains “the outlook of phenomenology is useful in somatic enquiry, precisely because phenomenology has a somatic basis itself, especially in its trust of intuition and the lived body, and in valuing descriptive accounts of experience” (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 64).

Fraleigh also articulates the way in which phenomenological concerns with issues of self, subject-world relations, and indeed the nature of consciousness itself may be manifested and extended within the somatic field (Fraleigh, 2015). In this vein, some somatic theorists have sought to broaden the theoretical and practical foundations of phenomenology itself as a result of their persistent empirical engagement with the body in a range of epistemological pursuits. For example dance educator and phenomenologist Maxine Sheets-Johnstone critiques Ponty’s focus on the primacy of perception in this regard, because she maintains that it does not sufficiently acknowledge the primacy of *movement* and kinaesthesia in knowledge generation and acquisition (Sheets-Johnstone, 2019). From a research perspective I would posit that such theorizing by somatic writers holds significance for its implied invitation to expand and complicate the methods which we use to research and access lived experience, beyond those that tend to be exclusively cognitive in nature (Bacon, 2006, 2007, 2010; Green, 2015b; Johnson, 2014; Meehan, 2015). I would also propose that they invite us to grapple more subtly with concerns about the relationship between knowing, doing, and being as discussed in chapter two. In light of this proposal, it is interesting at this juncture to consider the challenges that some contemporary phenomenological researchers have articulated in relation to accessing lived experience.

4.2.3 The Challenge of Accessing Lived Experience in Phenomenological Research

While phenomenological approaches generally recommend a focus on the particular in order to ascertain tacit understanding (Finlay, 2009; Van Manen, 2016), relatively recent developments in some branches of the field have seen a significant move towards even more

specificity of focus in the pursuit of accessing lived as opposed to abstracted perceptions of experience (Bannon, Boden & Eatough, 2014; Brown et al., 2011; Heavy et al., 2010). As Boden and Eatough explain, "when it comes to understanding human experiences; we should seek to know them directly (not generally or objectively) through embodied engagement with the world" (Boden & Eatough, 2014, p. 161). In this regard, Bannon advises as much proximity to present-moment experience within the research process as possible. As she explains, "By affecting a more direct contact with the present experience, the essence of the experience as a multidimensional and multilayered phenomenon is emphasized" (Bannon, 2004, p. 3).

However, it is simultaneously acknowledged in the literature that the task of getting closer to the specificity of lived experience is considerably more complex than was perhaps once presumed (Finlay, 2009; Todres, 2008; Van Manen, 2016). This is because of a recognition that the expression of experience is often complicated by the inherent and often overlooked challenge of fully *knowing* one's own experience. It is now more keenly understood that this capacity is nuanced and impacted in a variety of ways by a range of unwieldly mediating factors, which pertain to issues of awareness, consciousness, perception, language, and memory (Heavey et al., 2010). Related to the challenges that these present for research, is the human tendency for the communication of pre-conceived and intellectual perceptions of phenomena over expressions of a more holistic or embodied nature (Bresler, 2019; Todres, 2008). As Brown et al argue, the latter can be incredibly elusive in the context of traditional research approaches and posit that "it seems that that which is closest and most pressing in our mundane lived experience is most remote and unyielding for method" (Brown et al., 2011, p. 499). In this regard, they propose that many research approaches, even within the phenomenological tradition, are "insufficiently phenomenological" for the task in question (p.499).

In this light, there has been a growing conviction within certain phenomenological circles that any attempt to capture, interpret or represent the fullness of one's experience must ultimately not only involve a focus on *specific* experience, but also a sensitive and multifaceted gathering or collection process (Boden & Eatough, 2014; Brown et al., 2011). This process requires the acknowledgement of both pre-reflective and reflective engagement, and an awareness of the complex role that language can play in terms of navigating or hindering the relationship between the two. In part two, I will examine some of the ways in which the aforementioned phenomenological researchers have attempted to address the challenges in question, and will outline the particular way in which these and my own somatic approach were combined within the interview approach in this study.

In summary, I have argued that the phenomenological paradigm compliments somatic inquiry in terms of the way in which it deeply interrogates and complicates questions of what constitutes knowledge, where it resides, and how it is accessed. Its particular concern for the wide-ranging nature of experience, and for the complex relationship between body, mind, and world, provides a rich and appropriate foundation for contemplating approaches to and outcomes of somatic research. In this regard I considered it important that the research approach for a study of this nature would reflect the epistemological and ontological basis of the practice to which it refers, and thereby appropriately reflect the nature of the knowledge which somatic practice has the potential to generate. However, I have also alluded in this section to the extent to which somatic practice may also support and extend phenomenological research methods, and I have foregrounded my own attempts in this regard.

4.2.4 Autoethnography

As alluded to earlier, I also drew on the complementary lens of autoethnography to address the research questions of this study, and to honour the broader ethnographic and

socio-cultural information which was likely to be of relevance. In chapter one, I described my former and more recent pedagogical and contextual influences and values, and my interest in how these might interact with the specific dynamics of this project. In this regard I recognized both the personal and cultural nuances of the task in question as the cultures of my own education as a student teacher, primary school teacher, teacher educator and artist met with the cultural nuances of the field of somatic education. As such, I sought to acknowledge the meeting of such influences within the research design itself, by including some of the principles of autoethnography into my phenomenological case study design.

As a relatively new research methodology autoethnography seeks to explore the relationship between the personal and cultural as illuminated within specific contexts and situations. Ellis describes it as "research, writing, and method that connects the autobiographical and personal to the cultural and social" and furthermore explains that 'this form usually features concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection (Ellis, 2004, as cited in Jones, 2005, p. p765). As implied the epistemological stance of this methodology is highly significant, not least in terms of the manner in which it diverges from traditional forms of ethnography, that tend to avoid acknowledgement of the key role of the researcher in framing and interpreting the inquiry (Beach, 2017). Autoethnography rather views the researcher as a key point of ethnographical interest in the research process (Hamilton et al., 2008; Jones, 2005; Kaktikar, 2016; Ngunjiri et al., 2010a; Wall, 2016; Zitierung et al., 2011). Many research approaches, even those at the qualitative end of the continuum, tend not to give significant attention to the researcher beyond the inclusion of their positionality and reflexivity in relation to the study (Wall, 2016). This fails to glean from the wider ethnographically rich material that the researcher's story and its interaction with the context can offer the study. As Zitierung et al explain "autoethnography is one of the approaches that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality,

and the re-searcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist" (Zitierung et al., 2011, p.274). As is evident in chapters four and five, considerable attention was given to my own reflective journals within this study, as well as those of the students, as the analysis process ensued (see Appendix D & E). In light of the features discussed above, I believe that this offered an important lens in terms of addressing the research questions pertaining to both experience and relevance within the study. Furthermore, I would suggest that the somatic approach to reflection that is illustrated within these journals supports a particularly embodied quality of reflexivity within this autoethnography.

Like other forms of case study, issues of rigour, reliability and generalisation come to the fore in critiques of autoethnographic research and generally arise in relation to the balance between autobiography and ethnography, or between aesthetics and analysis within the study (Wall, 2016). However, many auto-ethnographic researchers would argue that such terms are interpreted in a very specific way in the context of autoethnographic research. Generalisability for example is assessed in terms of the study's capacity to speak to the reader and to dialogue with other studies. In this regard Zitierung et al. would argue that its thick description, alongside its aesthetic quality facilitates a proximity to 'vicissitude' rather than truth, which represents a more realistic and evocative goal for qualitative research (Zitierung et al., 2011). Furthermore, most autoethnographic studies aim not only to present personal experience, but also to systematically analyse it in relation to the patterns which ensue from the range of artefacts within the study that pertain to its other participants and the cultural context itself.

One of the most resonant autoethnographic studies that I reviewed in relation to my own, was conducted by Aadya Kaktikar at the university of Shiv Nadar university in India (Kaktikar, 2016). As both a classical Indian dancer and teacher of dance at the university,

Kakitar similarly attempts to relocate her practice “from the studio of the guru to the studios of a School of Humanities and Social Sciences” (Kaktikar, 2016, p. 114). In so doing, she examines the tensions and opportunities this affords her students and the influence of the experience on her own pedagogical approach to teaching dance generally. In my study I have similarly aimed to ‘make visible the modus operendi’ (p117) of the emerging somatic education module design, my research approach, and my personal process, as my *Origins* experience dialogues with my specific teaching context and wider field of teacher education. I also recognize the explicit and tacit knowledge which this task entails, and the value of an in-depth engagement with and analysis of the research artefacts which relate to my own experience, as well as those of the student participants.

Finally, I was mindful of both the challenge and value of the personal vulnerability that is implicit within the autoethnographic approach. In this regard Chang purports that “The method not only enables researchers to access personally intimate data with ease but also to reach readers with their vulnerable openness” (Ngunjiri et al., 2010b, p. 9). According to a number of authors within the field, it is this aspect that provides potential for the broader impact of the piece, over more traditional approaches within social science, and affords it the possibility of creating social change. As Jones asserts “looking at the world from a specific, perspectival, and limited vantage point can tell, teach, and put people in motion” (Jones, 2011, p. 763). I propose that the data presented in the findings chapters of this report demonstrates the vulnerability of the autoethnographic approach. Interestingly, the experience of vulnerability was also referred to directly a number of times in both the student and lecturer journals within this study.

4.2.5 Aesthetic-Based Research

One of the emergent features of the research approach to this study was the extent to which the approach to data collection, particularly at the interview stage, might be considered

to incorporate and extend the principles of aesthetic-based research. In the first instance I will outline the origins and nature of aesthetic-based research as it evolved from the arts-based research tradition.

Credited with initiating a methodological turn towards exploring the potential role of aesthetics in qualitative research in education, Elliot Eisner purported that "Educational inquiry will be more complete and informative as humans increase the range of ways in which they describe, interpret and evaluate the educational world" (Eisner, 1991, as cited in Finley, 2005, p. 685). The evolution of arts-based research (ABR) in the early nineties, stemmed from a growing acknowledgement of the limitations within traditional scholarly forms of research. The limitations in question pertained to its almost exclusively conceptual, rational, and linguistic approach to both process and presentation (Barone, 2006; Barone & Eisner, 2012a, 2012b; Bresler, 2006a, 2006b, 2013; Cole & Knowles, 2008; Eisner, 1991). Proponents of arts-based research tend to take a view of art as "a visceral and personal experience that gives expression to affective ways of being and knowing" (Finley, 2005, p. 690), and that this more expansive approach to knowledge generation has the potential to offset the limitations outlined above.

It is important to note that distinctions have been made in the literature between ABR as a stand-alone methodology, and ABR as a set of artistic strategies or sensibilities that compliment other methodologies (Bresler, 2006b; Cole & Knowles, 2008). In this regard, a review of the literature would seem to suggest that while the arts often tend be used to represent and communicate the *findings* of a qualitative study in ABR, less common are detailed descriptions and analyses of the ways in which the arts are used to support the earlier data collection process. The potential of bringing a more aesthetic sensibility to this phase of the process was a particular interest of mine during this project.

In the context of her approach to teaching novice researchers about the nature of qualitative research, Bresler offers the term aesthetic-based research to the field (Bresler, 2006b), in order to acknowledge the subtle but important enhancement of the qualitative research process that an aesthetic sensibility can generate. In this regard, she interestingly maintains that while they overlap and complement each other in profoundly significant ways a "soft distinction" exists between the nature of arts practice and the nature of qualitative research practice (Bresler, 2006b, p53). She predominantly draws on the sensibilities inherent in the art appreciation process to augment the qualitative research process in this regard. Fundamentally Bresler emphasizes the importance of the cultivation of aesthetic "habits of mind" in all forms of high-quality qualitative research (Bresler, 2013). In her view such habits relate to an under-acknowledged and under-practiced skill set in much qualitative research to date, and she seeks to probe more deeply what a deeper engagement with aesthetic practices can offer to deepen the skill sets in question.

Ultimately, Bresler proposes that aesthetic-based research invites a deeper interrogation into the relationship between the affective, the cognitive and the embodied, and she encourages further attention to the way in which these interact in the relational and aesthetic dimensions of the data collection and interpretation process (Bresler, 2006a, 2006b, 2013). She argues that meaningful exploration on the part of the researcher in this context must involve a dialogue between knowing and unknowing, in order to avoid the human tendency towards manifesting pre-conceived understandings of a phenomenon (Bresler, 2019).

To this end a move towards the "intensification of perception" is at the heart of Bresler's pedagogy in this domain, and she draws on art historian John Armstrong's notion of 'a lingering caress' in the art appreciation process to illustrate and facilitate the parallel values and practices in question (Armstrong, 2000, as cited in Bresler, 2013). Ultimately her

approach involves a slowing down in the process of perception so that the experience of both connection and defamiliarization can be enhanced, and so that thought and experience can inform each other more authentically. Having personally experienced Bresler's approach to teaching qualitative research methodology at the 15th International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry at the University of Illinois in 2019, I can attest to the significant ways in which her related facilitated museum experience not only parallels but enhances understandings and practices within qualitative research. Indeed, her invitations to "linger" and invite wider investigation of experience beyond the cognitive have informed my own approach to qualitative research. In this study I wish to add to the evolving practices associated with aesthetic-based research, by further deepening the embodied dimension of the process, through an active engagement with the principles of somatic education.

4.3 Somatic Education and Qualitative Research

In this section, I review and discuss the recently emerging literature that seeks to acknowledge some of the ways in which somatic education may support the qualitative research process. This tends to pertain to the experience and disposition of both the researcher and the participant, although the latter would seem to be less well referenced in the literature. It also includes a consideration of the way in which somatic education may support an authentic bridge between embodied experience and language in the research process, which is a growing concern for phenomenological researchers as discussed in subsequent sections.

In chapter three, Eisner's concern with the fundamental relationship between somatic knowledge, aesthetics and perception was discussed in relation to its relevance for the field of arts education (Eisner, 2002b). Similarly, Eisner has bemoaned the absence of an adequate sensory dimension within contemporary approaches to qualitative research and thus articulated that:

> Humans are sentient creatures who live in a qualitative world. The sensory system that humans possess provides the means through which the qualities of the world are experienced . . . [and] out of experience, concepts are formed. (Eisner, 1996, as cited in Cole & Knowles, 2008, p. 60).

The significance of the relationship between sensory experience and conceptual thought, as referenced in Eisner's statement above, is also representative of a long-standing concern within the field of somatic education (Johnson, 2004; Meehan, 2015). As explained in chapter two, many somatic practices aim to practically address the dualisms in question through a skilful exploration of the relationship between somatic experience and language expression in the present moment. Indeed, from a somatic perspective, one's evolving capacity in this regard is considered to be one of the key contributing factors in accessing a deeper self-knowing, healing and expansion in the relational, social and ecological field (Bacon, 2010).

4.3.1 Somatic Education and the Researcher

From a qualitative research perspective, there is a small but growing body of literature, which considers the somatic educator or therapist's heightened capacity to both sense and verbally articulate bodily experience, as having significant value for the research process (Bacon, 2006; Green, 2015b; Johnson, 2014). In relation to the former, Green pays particular attention to the ways in which a somatic or 'felt sense' awareness enhances researcher reflexivity (Gendlin & Olsen, 1970; Green, 2015b). In this regard she demonstrates how somatic sensitivity can heighten awareness of resonance, dissonance, and bias, and thereby enhance approaches which seek to redefine notions of validity in the post-modern qualitative context:

> With the body as a major subject in the field, somatic sensitivity or a reflective body awareness may enable researchers to develop systems of reflexivity and "decenter" uncritical assumptions and perceived notions of a found and static

> reality…It embraces multiple positionality, diverse perspectives, and an inner physical struggle with emerging ideas and issues (Green, 2015b, p. 74).

Like Bresler, Green demonstrates her praxis by sharing examples of the way she educates her post-graduate students about how to engage with the complexity of qualitative research. For example, the relevance of a somatic sensitivity even at the literature review stage is evidenced in the following excerpt:

> Before understanding a text, I want them to become familiar with their bodily responses to the material in order to check their positions and biases. I ask questions such as How am I embodied in this text? Do I resonate with the text? If so, how? What is happening in my body to suggest that I respond to this text in this way? Is my body relaxed, released, and open? Where and how do I experience this resonance? (Green, 2015b, p. 74)

Indeed, I would contend that my own bodily responses similarly guided me in the sometimes overwhelming task of seeking relevant and pertinent material from a relatively new and wide-ranging literature.

One can easily infer that the questions above, which may register a sensory reaction of resistance at one end of the continuum or resonance at the other, have relevance for many other stages of the qualitative research process to include one's experience of collecting and analysing data. In this regard, it is pertinent to note that many somatic education accreditations, such as *Origins*, also include a therapeutic dimension (ISMETA - *International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association)*, and many somatic practitioners also branch out into related areas such as somatic psychology and somatic psychotherapy as I have done (Bacon, 2007, 2015; Hartley, 2004; Payne et al., 2015) Rae Johnson (2014) interestingly describes the common resonances, values, processes and skill-sets that exist within the fields of somatic psychotherapy and qualitative research. She

specifically references the alignments which exist between somatic psychotherapy and phenomenological, heuristic, organic and grounded theory research methods (Johnson, 2014, p. 84). These include the cultivation of an open curiosity in relation to human phenomena, a relational sensitivity in the inquiry process, and an avoidance of premature judgements, solutions, and interpretations. In this regard, Johnson points to the therapist's heightened awareness of their own power in the process, and their capacity to use the body to engage meaningfully while recognizing personal bias:

> We ask instead of tell, we resist the temptation to give advice and we actively solicit information that does not serve our own interests as therapists/ researchers. In the case of somatic psychotherapists, we also appreciate the degree to which our non-verbal communication might unconsciously replicate the asymmetrical interactions between individuals with unequal social or role status – an insight and skill set that critical researchers would benefit from learning.' (Johnson, 2014, p. 84).

With reference to the interview process of this study particularly, I can resonate with the similar ways in which I felt my somatic education supported me to prioritize and facilitate the participant experience in an open and exploratory manner. While such principles were familiar to me via my background in education, I felt that my enhanced body-mind awareness generated an even deeper sensitivity and attunement at an embodied level during the process. On one level this was so that I could discern my own distractions or biases in the moment as alluded to above, but also so that I could be sensitive to issues such as pace, tone of voice, body language and silence, all of which have a significant impact on the capacity of the interviewee to access their own experience in my view. This was in addition to the more intentional facilitation of an embodied response to the questions and invitations of the process, which will be considered in the next section.

4.3.2 Somatic Education and the Research Participant

Some theorists also suggest that the quality of participant engagement may be further enhanced by drawing on such a sensitivity, as Johnson intimates in the following:

> Research conducted in keeping with a somatic perspective will need to collect data from states of embodied self-awareness as well as from conceptual self-awareness (that is not just 'talking about' the issue under investigation).' (Johnson, 2014, p. 87).

In this regard, Bacon (2010, 2012) and Meehan (2015) in particular, elucidate the value of the somatic form of authentic movement in a practice-led or arts-based research context, in terms of the way it can support artists to speak "from" rather than "about" the body (Bacon, 2012 , p. 116). However my review of the literature would indicate that in research terms, this has not been a deeply interrogated area outside of the practice-led research frame to date. With this in mind I propose that a number of key questions present themselves for consideration in the context of a phenomenological study with more generalist participants such as my own. If we accept that an increased focus on perception, and indeed on the role of somatic awareness within perception, may significantly enhance phenomenological research,

- How can such states of 'embodied self-awareness' be achieved on the part of both researcher *and* participant within the phenomenological research process?
- Do they arise 'naturally' as many more general texts on phenomenological research approaches would seem to suggest, or would engagement with the principles of somatic education be supportive of the endeavour?
- How can engagement with the arts inform or support the somatic dimension of the research experience?

As my PhD process continued, and as I noticed my somatic training increasingly informing not only my approach to pedagogy, but also my approach to the research itself, these are the questions which began to pre-occupy my explorations. In relation to my own particular

inquiry, I speculated - How might my own recent somatic education experience inform my approach to qualitative and phenomenological research? And how might the somatic education of my students within this module inform their contributions to the same process?

As alluded to earlier, the somatic process not only focuses on one's capacity for accessing somatic sensation, it also focuses on the integration between sensation, movement, and language (Johnson, 2004). It seems apt at this point to note that a growing number of phenomenological studies recognize the significance of embodied perception and understanding in an attempt to honour the 'essence' of experience, but acknowledge the complexity and challenge of accessing, interpreting and representing such experience authentically (Bannon, 2004; Brown et al., 2011; Perry, 2011; Van Manen, 2007, 2016b). Brown's articulation below is representative of the challenges which many phenomenological researchers report:

> Despite its continual relevance, even despite its sometimes grinding presence, embodied experience remains too slippery, fluid, mobile, and variable to be contained comfortably and completely within any symbolic frame' (Brown et al., 2011, p. 496).

Maintaining an authentic relationship between experience and language is considered to be particularly elusive within the phenomenological field, and the fear of ultimately recording material that is divorced from the felt experience of the participant is a significant concern for a growing number of phenomenological researchers. Drawing on Walsh's writings on the unconscious in qualitative research, Bannon suggests that "the close scrutiny of words may not reveal a participant's experience, unless, as researchers, we are able to find ways to enter the realm the words reveal" (Bannon, 2004, p. 38). We similarly find somatic theorists coming at the same conundrum from the perspective of the body itself (Bacon, 2010; Johnson, 2004; Meehan, 2015). As Johnson contemplates:

> Crossing the thresholds from experiencing to speaking and writing presents a

> daunting challenge. What Julia Kristeva calls 'the passivity of the civilized sign' haunts academic literature, deadens the enthusiastic explorations of graduate students. How can our scholarly work do justice to "vigorous and expressive language of our muscles and desires?" (Johnson, 2004, p5)

It is in light of such questions that I drew on specific somatic education principles and practices in the research approach to this study. My intention here was threefold – to support my own embodied engagement and reflexivity within the process as a researcher, to facilitate an embodied response from the research participants, and to seek the potential for an authentic languaging of participant experience in this regard. In light of my prior experience of the *Origins* programme, I echoed Bacon (2012) and Meehan (2015) by drawing on the influential principles from the field of authentic movement to this end (see section 2.8.4).

While authentic movement in its original form was not employed within the phenomenological research context of this study, its core principles and related practices certainly informed many aspects of my emergent methodology. In the first instance, it is my view that the embodied quality of the student statements is likely to have been significantly informed by the weave between physicality, language and aesthetics within the many formative and summative opportunities provided for them to express and process their experience within the module. This was also reflected within the design and facilitation of the post-module interview process, during which I attempted to provide opportunities for the students to navigate between formative experience and summative reflection by integrating relational, embodied, and aesthetic modalities. This approach will be discussed in more detail in the interview section within part two of this chapter. In addition, it was my experience that the practice of witnessing was also influential in the relational dimension of the interview process. In this regard, I would suggest that our witnessing practice throughout the module

was likely to have influenced important qualities of trust, non-judgement, and openness in the ensuing interaction.

4.4 Part Two: Research Methods

In part one of this chapter, I discussed the theoretical lenses that informed the design of this study, to include phenomenology, autoethnography, aesthetic-based research, and finally somatic education itself. It is now incumbent upon me to outline the ways in which these lenses manifested in the specific methods and data collection processes used within the research process, as well as my approach to analysis. In the next sections I will begin by providing more information about the participants themselves, and the module design which formed the basis for the experiential content of the study.

4.5 The Student Perspective

Notwithstanding the autoethnographic significance of this project as discussed previously, the core research question acknowledges that the fundamental raison d'etre for the exploration was in service of the professional development of pre-service student teachers. While the literature, as we have seen in chapter three, offers a range of perspectives on the perceived needs of student teachers at this stage of their development, our phenomenological engagement with the voices of students themselves within a given context is also critical to our understanding of the field. The detailed experiences of the student participants in relation to the particular dynamics and offerings of this project was therefore considered to offer fundamental information in relation to its core research questions. This pertained to their lived experience of, and the relevance they perceived in relation to, the somatic process.

Significantly, the project focused on their experiences and needs at a particular moment in time as *not-yet* teachers, but as students of education who will become teachers in the future. As referenced in relation to the continuum of teacher education in chapter one,

while the requirements of student teachers and qualified teachers may overlap, it must be acknowledged that student teachers have specific needs in accordance with their developmental stage, their status as learners, and the particular knowledge base which informs pre-service teacher education (see section 1.2.1).

4.5.1 Student Participants

At this juncture I would like to provide further background information in relation to the student cohorts I worked with. As explained, over the first two years of the implementation and ongoing design of the module in question, I worked with three different pre-service cohorts. As illustrated in table one below, these included two consecutive cohorts from a newly designed major specialism in drama education within the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme, and one elective group from the Professional Masters in Education (PME). Table one provides further information with regard to the number of students in each group, their approximate age and the gender balance in question. It should be noted that all students from these groups opted to participate in this research project, while a smaller subset participated in the interview process.

Table 1
Student Participants

Academic Year	Cohort	Year	Number of students	Age group	Contact time	Gender
2018-2019	1. B. Ed3 Major Specialism module (First iteration)	3	19	19-20	One semester 9 x 2hr sessions	3 males 16 females
2019-2020	2. B. Ed3 Major specialism module (Second iteration)	3	21	19-20	One semester 10 x 2hr sessions	1 male 20 females
	3. PME elective module	1	7	21-30	One semester 8 x 2hr sessions	1 male 6 females

Note. Students were also engaged in additional sessions for independent tasks.

4.5.2 B. Ed3 Major Specialism Students

As explained in chapter one, the education-based specialism modules within the current programme at DCU have taken the place of the humanities options that were offered to them previously. This change took place in the context of the recommendations of the national literacy and numeracy strategy in 2011 (DES, 2011; Hyland, 2018). The introduction of the new major specialism in drama in 2018 thereby represented an exciting and challenging venture for the drama education team. In addition to the potential for a deeper exploration of content from the generalist modules, it also allowed a deeper exploration of areas linked with the expertise and interests of individual staff members. In this regard, the somatic based module in this study represented one of five major specialism modules to be facilitated over the four years of the programme. This module was specifically located within the third year of the programme.

It was my view that the special option components within both programmes offered a more extensive opportunity for exploration in relation to this project than those offered by the

generalist modules I facilitate for a number of reasons. In the first instance the scope and content of the generalist modules is largely determined by the national curriculum guidelines for drama education (NCCA, 1999). The special option modules therefore not only offered more leeway in terms of content, but I also felt that they offered the potential for working with students who may be a little more open to the unfamiliar yet potentially relevant material from the somatic field. In light of the pedagogical and research values of co-creation and dialogue which underpinned this study, I felt that it was important to harness the most conducive opportunity for meaningful exploration with student teachers that I had available to me. That said, I should qualify this by adding that as a former student and lecturer in education of twenty years, I was acutely conscious of the potentially unusual nature of such content and approach for pre-service students, even for students who choose to specialize in the arts.

While the major specialism in drama was still in its infancy, and had not yet been the focus of a formal research agenda at the time of this study, one can nonetheless draw on prior experience of engaging with students in shorter term elective modules to offer possible motivations for a preference to specialize in this area on the part of students. In my experience, these tend to include a desire to improve skills in the teaching of drama and the arts, and the influence of positive prior placement experiences in these areas. Anecdotally again, some students have also cited a recognition of broader factors in their decision, such as the holistic nature of this approach to teaching and its capacity to address a variety of learning styles in the classroom. For some students, their prior and extra-curricular drama-based experience has also been a significant factor. For others who may not come from such a background, confidence-building and personal development have been cited as significant priorities. In summary, it would be important to offer the clarification that the priority for such students in terms of a decision to focus on the arts, would be the role that they can

specifically play in an educational context, and their capacity as teachers to facilitate the same. In this regard the students in this module would differ significantly from those who would tend to typically be referred to in the somatic literature, whose priority would tend to be skill building in professional dance (see sections 2.8 & 2.9). I include such an observation to highlight the difference in motivation and movement background that was likely to be in question, which was an important factor to be aware of in my understanding and interpretation of the data.

I also draw attention to the age group and year group of the cohort in question. This is pertinent to the research to the extent that the third-year students in question already had a significant amount of the programme completed at the point of their participation in the study, which was likely to have had an influence on their perspective on salient issues of relevance and practice within teacher education and education generally. In addition, their prior experience also included a significant amount of school placement, a full semester of which was completed immediately in advance of this module. In this regard, their extended experience of attempting to develop their practice within the modern-day primary school was also considered pertinent in terms of their evolving perspective on education, and on the Irish education system.

Finally, I feel it important to emphasise the significance of the age group of these students, in terms of their developmental needs as young people as well as student teachers. In this regard, it is important to remember that they are moving out of the teenage phase and into early adulthood, which much research contends represents a vulnerable and delicate stage of development. As explained in previous chapters, somatic approaches involve a considerable focus on improvised movement and related personal reflection of a concentrated nature. They can therefore be challenging to students of this age group as Susan Bauer explains (Bauer, 2018). In spite of such challenges, which I also found daunting to engage

with in the early stages of teaching this module, I was also curious about the extent to which such approaches may also be beneficial to this age group.

4.5.3 Professional Masters in Education Students

In the second year of implementing and designing this module, I invited an elective group from the professional masters in education programme (PME) to participate in this study. The context for this participation was a shorter module which was informed by some of the key elements of the major specialism module as cited above, and my prior preliminary experience of exploring somatic approaches with PME elective students. While the PME students tend to choose the drama elective for similar reasons to the B.Ed. students, they tend to be slightly older, and to come from more diverse academic and social backgrounds (Heinz & Keane, 2018). Also, the PME students in this study had engaged with less placement experience and study of education at the time of the research. Significantly, their first teaching placement of the PME programme took place after the first two sessions of this module. The inclusion of this group therefore afforded the opportunity to engage with students at a different stage of familiarity with the education field and with the teacher education process. In summary, it was hoped that the freshness of their perspective, their varied backgrounds and their additional maturity would add another layer of insight to that already offered by the B.Ed. students.

4.6 Module description

The module that was at the centre of this research, and which continues to evolve to this day is entitled ‘Embodiment, the Arts and Education’. While there were obviously some evolutions of the content over the three cycles in question, it was broadly organised around four interrelated phases as outlined below.

- *Stage One - Somatic Education; Principles and Practice*

The first stage of the module involved an introduction to some of the basic principles of somatic education. Following an initial engagement with the student's prior understandings and experiences in relation to the theme of embodiment, students began the process of learning to listen more deeply to the body through engagement with some of the core somatic movement principles and development movement patterns. This was supported by an initial engagement with somewhat familiar mindfulness, yoga, and drama/theatre-based exercises through a somatic lens. I acknowledge the particular influence of practitioners such as Augusto Boal, Tara Brach, Donna Farhi, and indeed my own yoga teacher Cathy Addis, on my practice in these domains (Boal, 1992; Brach, 2004; Farhi, 2000). Ultimately, learning to witness and track the body-mind experience was a key feature of this phase, and continued to be emphasised throughout the module through individual, peer and group aesthetic and reflection processes. Many of these processes were supported by the principles of authentic movement (see section 2.8.4), albeit at a very beginner's level. This phase also involved the building of the relational field which is so central to somatic practice.

Figure 3

Stage One – Somatic Education; Principles and Practice



- *Stage Two - Somatic Education and Creativity*

During this phase, students were given the opportunity to engage more deeply with their body-mind experience through some of the principles and practices of body-mind centering (see section 2.7). These included an engagement with some of the body systems, namely the skeletal, muscle and fluid body. This phase offered a continued exploration of the impact of these explorations across the art forms, namely drama, visual art, music, and creative writing. It also included an introduction to somatic engagement in the outdoor environment.

Figure 4

Stage Two – Somatic Education and Creativity



- *Stage Three - Somatic Education and the Outdoor Environment*

  These sessions took place in the beautiful Botanical Gardens, which are located close to the university. They drew on the principles of eco-somatics (see section 2.8.5), and sought to extend the students experience of the module content to date in the context of the outdoor environment. In this regard, they also involved an introduction to the

site-specific performance process, which continued to evolve until the end of the module.

Figure 5

Stage Three - Somatic Education and the Outdoor Environment



- *Stage Four: Somatic Education and Presentation*

  Towards the end of the module the students collaborated to develop their own site-specific pieces in small groups and in locations of their choosing within the gardens. They drew on their learning throughout the module in this process. During the final session, they shared these pieces with their classmates, and reflected together on the process and performance experience from a somatic, arts-based, and pedagogical perspective. In cycles two and three, due to the pandemic, this took the form of an individual creative project in the outdoors, which was presented and reflected on via zoom.

Figure 6

Stage Four – Somatic Education and Presentation



A full module descriptor has been included in the appendix (see Appendix B). The module descriptor includes a more detailed description of the above content to include its learning outcomes and assessment procedures.

4.7 Data Collection Methods

In this section I will outline the nature of the data collected during the study, how it served to respond to the research questions, and how it related to the phenomenological, auto-ethnographic, aesthetic, and somatic principles underpinning the research design. The data in question included both naturally occurring data that arose from the pedagogical process, and data that was specifically generated for the enquiry. In summary, my analysis focused on four specific forms of data as outlined in table two below.

Table 2
Data Sources

Data sources	Number
Post-module questionnaires	47
Post-module interviews	14
Student journals	14
Lecturer journals	3 cycles

This content was considered to provide a balance and dialogue between the breadth and depth of experience in question, and to include engagement with both the teaching and learning experience involved. It also reflects a continuum from immediate reflection on specific somatic and aesthetic experience to a broader evaluation of the overall process and its impacts. The notion of a continuum in this regard not only assists in terms of linking data with specific research questions, it also reflects the very incremental nature of knowledge generation within a somatic approach to teaching and learning. and the significance of present moment experience in this regard.

It is worth noting that the data set which was prioritised for analysis in this study represented a subset of the overall data corpus. In this regard, the data pertaining to the interview participants was given some priority. The purpose of this was to maintain a quality of depth and nuance in the analysis, in light of the phenomenological orientation of the initial inquiry questions. While the creative artefacts were also a feature of the data collection process, the specific content of such sources was not given a discrete focus for analysis. In light of the pedagogical orientation of the research questions, these were considered to be more relevant for their particular capacity to evoke memory of and embodied response to the module during the interview process, than for their specific content.

4.7.1 Journal Reflections

As explained in chapter two, somatic education emphasises the development of present-moment awareness skills in the learning process. In this regard the student and lecturer journals offer a particular insight into this quality of awareness and reflection throughout the process (see Appendix D & E). As indicated previously, the guidelines that I generated for the student journals reflected a particularly somatic mode of reflection, in that they encouraged a very sensory engagement with personal experience in the first instance, and an awareness of any interactivity across the body-mind system that may accompany it

(see Appendix C). The fact that students were given in-class time to reflect in this way, meant that they had the opportunity to track the specificities of such experience as close to the related activity as possible. From a pedagogical point of view, it is important to note that such reflection was often informed by related peer reflection and/or aesthetic forms of reflection in advance of writing. The data offered by the student journals was considered significant not only in terms of emanating the student experience, but also of demonstrating their evolving awareness skills on a body-mind level, and their capacity to language such experience. Furthermore, it offered the potential to provide an insight into how the somatic approach may be impacting their arts-based experience in an immediate sense.

The rationale for the inclusion of and significance of my own journal extracts has already been outlined in the previous sections on autoethnography and in the introductory chapter. However, I would add here that they also provided the opportunity for a particular insight, not only into the impact of somatic education content on the teaching process, but also into the embodied nature of teaching itself.

4.7.2 Post-Module Questionnaires

The data chosen for analysis also sought to reflect the broader or more integrated reflections that gradually ensued both during and after the process. These often manifested in statements about the perceived relevance of this approach from a student perspective. The post-module questionnaires were particularly insightful in terms of the way in which they required students to distil their insights into shorter or more comprehensive statements than might be evident in their journals (see Appendix F). Such statements were particularly helpful in terms of supporting the thematic development of the analysis phase. They also contributed to the sometimes challenging task of interpreting the very detailed somatic descriptions that were offered within the interviews and the journals. It is also worth pointing out that they

offered a helpful indication of the breadth of experience encountered across the entire participant cohort.

4.8 The Research Interview

As extensive writers on the multi-faceted history and practice of the research interview, Masschelein and Roach acknowledge the complex aesthetic, personal and interpersonal dimensions of the form in the following excerpt:

> Instead of nonsense accumulations, we consider the interview as an encounter, as an assemblage of heterogeneous elements. It promises access to an interior but ultimately remains unruly: resisting interpretative truth, it reveals things other than what it may promise (Masschelein & Roach, 2018, p. 173).

The central description of the interview as 'encounter' above, is particularly apt in terms of pointing towards its quintessential value within this process. It was the live, relational, and embodied dimension that this method offered over other the data sources in the project, which provided the potential to facilitate the integration of an individual's understandings in a very particular way, and to honour the epistemological foundations of the study. Elucidating this quality further, Eatough & Smith explain that "the real time interaction with the participant gives major flexibility to the researcher in facilitating the participant in exploring their lived experience" (Eatough & Smith, 2017, p. 30).

The notion of the interview as providing a space for a deeper facilitation of the participant's lived experiences and understandings is core to the interview approach within this study. In this regard the reconfiguration of my interviewer role as 'enabler' rather than questioner, allowed for the space in which previous and fresh meanings could be explored. In addition, the notion that the participant's own interpretations are the first port of call for the researcher (Smith & Osborn, 2003, cited in Boden & Eatough, 2014), and that significant care must be taken in helping them to grapple with these interpretations, was fundamental. As

explained in part one of this chapter, the skills of a researcher with a somatic background are considered to be particularly conducive in this regard (Johnson, 2014).

As can be discerned from much of the discussion in this chapter to date, from both an epistemological and research perspective, the relationship between specific experience and broader evaluation, became a central point of interest in this research process. This was also of concern in the design of the interview. The following section unpacks the nature of this relationship as it has been grappled within the context of a number of phenomenological studies, and thereby foregrounds the value of the somatic nature of the interview approach of this study.

4.8.1 Accessing 'felt' experience in Phenomenological Interview Designs

In response to the challenges highlighted in part one regarding access to lived experience within phenomenological research, there is growing evidence in the literature of interview methods which tend to acknowledge the power of aesthetic and sensory processes in this pursuit. In this light, I sourced a number of illustrative studies that have been particularly helpful in terms of articulating the rationale behind specific aspects of the data collection process within my interview design. These include Boden & Eatough's (2014) study in which Schneier's 'Imagery in Movement' approach was adapted to explore the phenomenon of guilt, Fiona Bannon's (2004) study which drew on Peskin's introspective method of interviewing to explore student responses to dance performance, and Stephen Brown et al's (2011) study which drew on "memory work" to explore the embodied nature of varied phenomena.

While each of the researchers in question found their own entry points to the data collection process, a number of features were common in their approaches, and indeed chimed with my own endeavours. Firstly, the use of an aesthetic "trigger" or stimulus was instrumental in terms of enabling the participant to navigate between memory, feeling and

present-moment expression. For example, in relation to the use of a participant's prior artwork in an interview process, Boden and Eatough explain that the "kinesthetic aspect of viewing an image mirrors the kinesthetic aspect of making it, which in turn may reveal something of the experience being expressed" (Boden & Eatough, 2014, p. 163). As illustrated in this statement, such attempts were usually underpinned by a belief in bodily ways of knowing. In this regard, Gendlin's (1970) notion of working with the 'felt sense', was particularly noteworthy in the Boden & Eatough study.

While such researchers clearly drew creatively on the relationship which exists between felt- sense and aesthetic process in these studies, I feel that the growing interest in the implementation of Gendlin's principles that they illustrate, requires even more careful consideration. It is in this light that I seek to highlight the way in which aesthetic elements were combined with specific somatic education principles in the interview design of my own study, and posit that their combination may have much to offer in similar pursuits of 'felt' expressions of knowing within phenomenological research. I would suggest that this pertains both to the participant's capacity to respond somatically during the process, and to the somatic practitioner's ability to elicit such a response. In this regard, I acknowledge the particular influence of principles from the field of authentic movement on my approach in terms of its capacity to prioritize a subtle dwelling within a pre-reflective felt state in the first instance, and to incorporate an incremental and sensitive witnessing and languaging of this experience as the process unfolds (see section 2.8.4). I now focus on the way in which such somatic principles were combined with aesthetic approaches to inform the interview design of this study.

4.8.2 Interview Design for this Study

Ultimately, the interview within this study became a 'centre' for the meaning-making processes of both participants and researcher. It was designed as a space through which

specific experience might be drawn upon to inform broader reflections, and through which broader reflections could be checked against specific experiences. In this regard, stimuli from both categories were brought into relationship with each other, as a range of previously collected data was unpacked in creative ways within the live relational encounter.

In figure seven, I have highlighted the key stages which were involved in this semi-structured and multi-modal approach to the post-module interviews. In each case I have attempted to indicate a brief rationale for the stage in question, in light of the more substantial theoretical discussion in part one. I have also included photographs in this diagram for illustrative purposes, and to bring the reader into closer contact with 'the feel' of the approach in question (Jones, 2005; Todres, 2008; Zeitierung et al., 2011). As alluded to above, it is important to note that the students were familiar with the somatic nature of some of the approaches used within this interview, and had indeed been learning to reflect in this way throughout the module. I should also add at this juncture that it is impossible for such a diagram to fully capture the various ways in which the somatic sensibilities of both participant and interviewer informed the dynamic and relational process that unfolded uniquely within each interview. However, an excerpt from a more specific example of how one interview unfolded may offer some illustration and can be found in appendix G.

Figure 7

The Interview Process in Stages

The Interview Design



Note on place: Module workshop space

The interviews took place in the same room that many of the module teaching sessions took place. This was due to an awareness of how evocative 'place' can be in terms of evoking memory and felt sense. The full space was used to allow for movement and exploration of a range of artefacts, which were distributed around the room from the beginning of the process. Each interview was allocated fifty minutes to allow for the necessary time and space for somatic exploration, and indeed to allow for the valuable role of silence.

Stage 1 - Opening and settling

- ***Welcomes. Explanation of interview style***. Discussion of purpose and parameters of the interview. This included reference to flexibility in terms of the option for the participant to pass on any question/activity.

  Opening question– Can you tell me what aspects of this module were familiar for you, and what aspects felt new?

Stage Two - Connecting to the body/ 'felt-sense' and to specific experience

- ***Short embodied meditation*** – The participant was then invited to check in with present moment sensations/feelings /thoughts. She was also guided to relax various parts of the body through connection with breath and gravitational support.

- ***Somatic engagement with module artefacts*** –|The participant was then invited to wander around and between a range of artefacts related to specific session processes. Some were general artefacts that the whole group had engaged with during the teaching and learning process, and others included artistic creations developed by the individual herself or her small group. The participant was encouraged to notice bodily sensations/ feelings /thoughts as she moved. She was also welcome to pause at any artefact during the process. When she felt ready, she was then asked to stand in front of one artefact that she felt drawn to or would like to spend more time with.





- ***Somatic engagement with specific artefact*** – While standing close to the chosen artefact, the participant was asked to check in with any specific sensations, thoughts, feelings that were arising. Before speaking to these, she was asked if there were any impulses for gesture or movement that might be arising in the presence of this artefact, with the understanding that movement and sensation may not have an outward expression.





Stage Three; Transition to language; Reflection on specific experience

- At this point, the participant was invited to check whether any words or phrases were arising in relation to this gesture or felt experience. (Interviewer takes notes).
- The interviewer and participant then reviewed the words/phrases that emerged within the above exploration, and the participant was invited to consider resonances or dissonances between these phrases and her experience of the specific session in question, and then in relation to the module overall.

Stage four - Connecting to broader experience and reflections; Engagement with other data sources

- With the above experience in mind, there was then a return to other data sources which the participant had contributed to throughout the module. These included reflections on both specific and broader experience which evolved from session journals, assignments, questionnaires, artwork etc. In this regard the interviewer invited further exploration of particular contributions of interest, which might provide further insight.
- The process was completed by asking the participant if there were any other comments, observations, or reflections that they wished to add

Note: For ease of communication, the pronoun 'she' has been used to refer to the interview participant. Also, it should be noted this process was adapted for the on-line context in 2020 due to the constraints of the pandemic.

4.8.3 Interview Sampling

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, and a preference for information-rich cases over representation or generalizability, a non-probabilistic approach was taken to the choice of student for interview (Merriam, 1998). In all, fourteen interviews were conducted with students from the three cohort groups in question. Five B. Ed3 students were interviewed from cycle one and six from cycle two. Three PME students were interviewed from cycle three.

My initial intention was to conduct a theoretical sampling approach, in that I envisaged that the evolving experience from year one would be used to determine the most appropriate sampling approach for the following year. In this light, I began with a purposive

approach based on a number of criteria in year one (Reflective journal 29/4/'19). These included a preference for a variety of perspectives, based loosely on the evolving teaching and learning data from the module (Creswell, 2007). For example, I intentionally invited a student who felt challenged by the experience. I also followed the advice of Rae Johnson in relation to somatic research, who recommends engagement with participants who have a capacity to articulate from a body-mind perspective (Johnson, 2014). I furthermore included a male student and attempted to engage with one student from each of the creative project groups. In year two, influenced by the unexpected Covid 19 lock-down and an urgent move to on-line communication towards the end of the module, it felt most pragmatic to gather a convenience sample, and to thereby offer an open invitation to all students who may have an interest in participating in the interview process. Six students and three PME students put themselves forward for interview at this time.

In summary, the sample of students interviewed during this study offers the potential for an illustrative rather than representative interpretation of the experience of this module. That said, it includes students from the three cohorts in question, and includes a range of students from both the undergraduate and post graduate pre-service programmes. It was also felt that fourteen fifty-minute interviews might offer a sufficient balance between variation and depth in terms of student response.

4.9 Data Analysis

In the previous section the phenomenological approach to the data collection process was discussed in some detail, in terms of the goal of acquiring data which was meaningfully grounded and informed by the embodied and situated experiences of the module participants, and indeed by the somatic principles which underpinned its pedagogical orientation. Due to the exploratory nature of the study however, and its concerns with both phenomenon and context, I was also interested in any patterns that may be detected across the overall

participant experience and data set. The analysis approach in question therefore needed to be sensitive to both the particular and general dimensions of the research data, and indeed to the relationship between the two.

With all of this in mind a thematic analysis (TA) approach was chosen for the examination and interpretation of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012, 2019, 2020; Braun et al., 2019). In the first instance Braun & Clarke explain that,

> TA approaches typically acknowledge the potential for inductive (data-driven) and deductive (theory-driven) orientations to coding, capturing semantic (explicit or overt) and latent (implicit, underlying; not necessarily unconscious) meanings, processes of coding and theme development, and the potential for some flexibility around the theory that frames the research.' (Braun & Clarke, 2020, P3)

Due to the implicit flexibility of this approach in relation to a range of research paradigms, it was considered to be an appropriate match for acknowledging both the phenomenological and ethnographical dimensions of this study. After much consideration, it was chosen over other specifically phenomenologically friendly approaches such as interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), which one might more traditionally associate with experiential studies of this nature. In this regard, while the idiographic experience of individuals was obviously centrally important to this study, it was evidently not the exclusive focus, as might be in the case for more psychological or therapeutic oriented explorations. Furthermore, I would add that thematic analysis is considered to offer a complementary integrity to projects of an autoethnographic nature, which are sometimes critiqued for lack of rigour in terms of the relationship between analytic and aesthetic content (Wall, 2016). In this regard the incorporation of TA in a study of this nature addresses Wall's conviction regarding "the power of the personal perspective with the value of analysis and theory, so that

sociological understanding is advanced in ways it might never have otherwise been" (Wall, 2016, p. 6).

The specific thematic analysis approach used within the study involved an adaptation of Braun & Clarke's more recent recommendations in relation to the form, to bring a greater emphasis to the reflexivity of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2012, 2019, 2020). In light of what they perceive to be a positivistic misinterpretation of their approach among some researchers in recent times, they emphasise the importance of a clear qualitative orientation in relation to the analysis. In addition to their concerns about theoretical orientation and reflexivity, they also draw on their own research studies to emphasise that the stages in question are not as discrete as they may appear in terms of how the process evolves in practice (Braun et al., 2019). While this was certainly reflected my own experience, they did however help to distinguish a particular orientation at various points in the analysis process and to assist in the authenticity of the final interpretations.

4.9.1 Stages of Analysis

While I have included an excerpt from my analysis diary in the appendices (see Appendix H), which reflects the specific stages that evolved in my own analysis process, this section provides an overview of the rationale for each stage. It is important to note that these stages overlapped significantly in practice, and there was much spiralling between them in the overall process.

The first stage of the analysis involved a detailed transcription[1] of the student interviews, a thorough familiarisation with the overall data set, and initial notetaking in relation to related observations and areas of interest. The data set was then coded using an open-coding approach (Appendix I). The purpose of this was to stay as close to the

[1] I used the software 'Transcribe by Wreally' to support me in the first stages of the transcription process. https://transcribe.wreally.com/. While it offered a very helpful first draft of each interview, I subsequently needed to further edit the content line by line while listening to the audio recordings.

expressions of participants as possible in the first instance. In this regard a predominantly inductive orientation was taken to the early stages of the process, which of course fits well with the phenomenological orientation of the project. While it is acknowledged that a certain level of interpretation was inevitably already taking place at this stage, a dedicated coding column of this nature aims to ensure that the voice of the participant is prioritised in the mindset of the researcher in this phase, and that their voice is less likely to get lost in the overall interpretation process.

The second stage involved the iterative process of generating more systematic codes. This included more attention to the latent elements which were being detected within the data. In this regard it obviously included a more significant interpretive dimension in on my part, which was informed by a number of influences. These included the research questions, the literature review, the theoretical underpinnings of the project and my professional experience as a teacher educator and developing somatic practitioner. At this stage, I found it helpful to engage in some constructive writing in relation to individual data items. In this regard I gave particular attention to four interviews, one lecturer journal extract and the preliminary open coding of the post-questionnaires. The meaning-making that such writing entailed was particularly helpful not only in terms of my engagement with individual experience, it also gave me a better sense of how the initial open codes might relate to each other and ultimately may be grouped into larger codes, or eventually themes. As the appendix example of my constructive writing about the interview with Mary illustrates, the emergent paragraphing in this process was particularly helpful to this end (see Appendix J).

The third stage involved a process of moving toward the systematic coding of the wider data set. This phase involved moving between the initial open codes, my constructive writing in relation to individual items, and the post-questionnaires from the wider group, to begin to create a systematic coding grid. This grid continued to evolve over four iterations as

I engaged in an interpretive dialogue between the particularity of individual expression and the breath of perspective available through the post-questionnaires. An example of one of the later iterations of this grid has been included in the appendices for illustrative purposes (see Appendix K). This process inevitably involved further refinements of the structure until a consistent approach became relatively settled. This made subsequent analysis more manageable to integrate at a broader level, while also being well-grounded in the original data. In this regard I began to colour code the entire data set, to now also include the student and remaining lecturer journal extracts (Appendix L). In this process I found it helpful to print off my data and create files that I could work with manually (Appendix M).

The next stage of the analysis process involved the identification of overarching themes, which were derived from a combination of recognising the integrity of some previously created codes as themes, and collapsing other coded content into clearer categories of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012). Again, the practice of beginning to write about the nature of each code and evolving theme was helpful in this process. Braun and Clarke recommend that when the complex refinement process of confirming the integrity of the thematic structure has reached a reasonable level of completion, the researcher should return to the collated data extracts, and sometimes to the raw data to verify the integrity of the overall interpretation process (Braun & Clarke, 2012). During this process data extracts were transferred to specific digital files pertaining to each theme (see Appendix N). These were then used to identify further patterns and areas of interest within a given theme, which I continued to write about as the ongoing meaning-making process evolved.

At a certain point in the above process, I began to write about each of the themes in question in a more narrative form. This was accompanied by the identification of specific excerpts from the digital files, many of which were used within the finding's chapters. These were chosen for both their illustrative qualities, and their particular qualities of insight. They

were labelled within the final text in line with the system outlined in table three. Such writing, and many drafts of the same, continued to inform adaptations of the thematic structure, and progressively informed the content that is currently presented in chapters five and six.

Table 3
Labelling of Data Excerpts

Source	Reference explanation	Reference in text
Student journal (SJ)	Person. Data source. Session number	ST4.SJ.S3 (Student 4. Student journal. Session 3)
Individual interview (II)	Person. Data source. Page no.	ST4.II.p3 (Student4. Individual Interview. Page 3)
Post-module questionnaire (PQ)	Person. Data source. Question number.	ST4.PQ.Q3 (Student 4. Post Questionnaire. Question 3)
Assignment[d] (AS)	Person. Data source. Page no.	ST4.AS.p3 (Student 4. Assignment. Page 3)
Lecturer journal (LJ)	Source. Cycle number. Session number	LJ.C2.S3 (Lecturer journal. Cycle 2. Session 3)

Note. Due to the number of students in question, and the need for anonymity, all students were allocated a number in relation to the referencing of their data.

[a]The fourteen students who participated in extended interviews were also given a pseudonym for ease of reference within the text.

[b]The student numbers relate to particular cycles as follows:

- Students 1-19: Cycle 1 (B.Ed3 Major specialism)
- Students 20-42: Cycle 2 (B.Ed3 Major specialism)
- Students 43-49: Cycle 3 (PME Elective)

[c]Students 28 and 29 were on an Erasmus placement abroad. This explains the fact that the numbers above reach 49 rather than 47.

[d]While the student assignments were not included in the targeted analysis, I did consult the assignments of the fourteen interviewees as part of my preparation for their interviews. As related excerpts became part of the research to this extent, some references to interviewee assignments have been included in chapters five and six.

4.9.2 Trustworthiness

The approach to trustworthiness in relation to the findings of this study is consistent with its qualitative nature and with the ontological and epistemological assumptions that have been outlined thus far. In this regard, it does not seek to find, reflect, or confirm a fixed reality in relation to the phenomenon or research questions under study, but to gain a deeper and multi-perspectival understanding in relation to the same (Merriman, 1998). While quantitative approaches were therefore considered to be less appropriate to this study, it was nonetheless important that I make every effort to ensure that the findings in question were derived from a rigorous process that is genuinely exploratory and clearly contextualized, so that it can ultimately be considered meaningful and valuable to the reader and to the research community more broadly.

In this regard I sought to address issues of validity and reliability through processes that are consistent with the qualitative tradition to include researcher positionality and reflexivity, thick description, prolonged engagement, a clear audit trail and triangulation.

- *Researcher positionality and reflexivity* – As explained earlier in relation to the autoethnographic nature of this study, my own perspective as researcher and teacher was central to the meaning making process that was involved. It was therefore critically important that I provide a clear description of my background and values in the introductory chapter, so that the reader was given a clear indication of how these were likely to have influenced my overall approach and interpretations. Throughout the process, it was also central to the research approach that I remain open to the learning process that it entailed, and to being challenged by the process in relation to my prior understandings and perspectives. I propose that such an approach is evident in the quality of reflexivity that is evident in my engagement with my journals (see Appendix E), endnote records and critical reading forms (see Appendix Q). As I have

already proposed, I feel that such reflexivity was also supported by my somatic education background itself, in terms of the way it supported consciousness of both responsivity and bias at a body-mind level throughout (Green, 2015b). I feel that such reflexivity was also supported by my ongoing engagement with the somatic education, arts education, teacher education and qualitative research fields throughout the process, and by the dialogue that the presentation of my research at related conferences afforded (see Appendix A). I would furthermore suggest that my ongoing engagement with the somatic community in Ireland via monthly peer group meetings, bi-annual practice-based meetings and a more recently begun engagement with a community of practice in the field, was also particularly important in this regard (see Appendix A).

- *Thick description* – As discussed previously, the use of thick description can play a significant role in enhancing the validity and impact of a research study (Geertz, 1973; Ziterung et al., 2011). In addition to the detail provided about my own background and values, I also sought to provide detailed contextual information in both the introductory chapter and in this chapter in relation to the profile of the student participants I engaged with, and the pedagogical and political teacher educational culture within which we were working. I would also suggest that the extent of detail offered in the data illustrations within the findings chapters supports the reader to engage more directly with the data, and to be able to engage with their own interpretations of such material as well as my own (Merriam, 1998).
- *Prolonged engagement* – The prolonged engagement of a researcher with a phenomenon at a particular research cite is considered to offer another important contribution to the issue of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 2011, Bresler, 2019). As explained previously this study involved my engagement

with three cohorts of students over a two-year period. In light of the significant number of participants involved, the study therefore offered an engagement with a range of student perspectives, in the context of a range of group dynamics over the course of the project. Also, such a design element involved a considerable time period to allow for my own capacity to witness the somatic process in the context of a range of influencing variables, and my own evolution of understanding in relation to the same.

- *Audit trail* – According to Lincoln and Guba, a clear audit trail can offer confidence to the reader in terms of how processes were conducted and conclusions reached, and hence add credibility to the overall study (Lincoln & Guba, 2011; Merriman, 2009). As evidenced in the previous section and in the appendices of this report, I have provided clear evidence with regard to my data collection and analysis processes. This includes evidence of the incremental evolution of the themes and interpretations that are shared in chapters five, six and seven.
- *Triangulation* - Stake describes triangulation as 'a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation' (Stake, 2005, p. 454). Indeed, Stake would seem to focus more closely on triangulation than on any other aspects of the data collection and analysis process in deference to his concern for the internal integrity of the case. In his view all findings must continue to dialogue with the particularity of the case, in order to avoid what he would regard as ineffectual "abstract categorisations". This study draws on a range of data sources which were compiled at various points within the research process in an attempt to access a multifaceted and holistic perspective of the case in question. Throughout the analysis process there was an ongoing attempt to facilitate a

dialogue between the content of these sources, and to allow my interpretation of each data item to be informed by the others.

In spite of the efforts above, there is no doubt that the design and potential consequence of this study was limited to some extent by issues that tend to be a challenge within all qualitative studies. These include issues pertaining to scale, generalizability, and transferability, which while more pertinent to studies of a positivistic nature, need to be present in the consciousness of the qualitative researcher to some degree. These limitations are further explored in the chapter seven, as are recommendations for future research in relation to the same.

5.0 Ethical Considerations

As this research was qualitative in nature and was conducted in an educational context, the research process inevitably involved the sharing of material that included personal perspectives and opinions. Therefore, a number of ethical considerations were important to the methodological approach taken. In this light two ethical approval processes were engaged with and completed in advance of my engagement with the participants in the study. These included an approval process with both the social research ethics committee (SCREC) at University College Cork, and the research ethics committee (REC) at Dublin City University where the fieldwork was conducted (see Appendix P).

Two of the key concerns which I addressed in these applications pertained to the process of initiation into the research project, and the potential power dynamic that can ensue when a researcher takes on the dual role of researcher and teacher. The fundamental aspiration here was that students would be afforded as much freedom as possible in their decision to participate in the project and in the content of what they shared. The issue of anonymity, which is integral to these aspirations, was also an important consideration from an ethical perspective.

While the detail of the UCC and DCU applications is included in appendices, the key ways in which these issues were addressed are outlined as follows:

- Initiation process – Prior to the commencement of the module the rationale, commitments and boundaries of the research were explained to the students in the context of a hard copy plain language statement (see Appendix R). The option to participate in the research or not was explained in the context of procedures which would ensure the equal treatment of all students. Students were also given the opportunity to ask any questions about the research during this phase. Finally, students who wished to participate in the study were given an informed consent form to complete (see Appendix S). In order to give students as much freedom as possible in relation to their decision, the above was facilitated in my absence by a colleague from another subject area within the university. During this process, the students were provided with the name and contact details of another colleague within the School of Arts Education and Movement, if there were any further concerns related to their participation in the research that they wished to discuss. They were also given the option to withdraw from the research process within two weeks of their initial decision to participate.
- Freedom of expression – As explained to the students in advance, all research activity which was additional to the inherent teaching and learning activity of the course, took place when the module assessment process was complete. This included the individual interview sessions, as well as the review of the post-questionnaires. Furthermore, the assignments were moderated by another colleague from the school who was unaware of the identity of students who were participating in the project.
- Anonymity – As was also explained, the names of students would be coded in all reporting of this research, and their anonymity would be protected within legal

limitations. While it was explained that photographs would be taken during the process, the identity of an individual would not be attached to their image in the report.

- Data handling – Most of the data was stored electronically throughout the process and access was protected by an encrypted password in accordance with the data handling guidelines at both DCU and UCC. Any data that was not collected electronically was stored in a locked press in my university office. Furthermore, it was communicated that all raw data will be destroyed within ten years of initial collection.

In conclusion, the complexity of the ethical issues that are inherent to such research is widely recognised, and while these were addressed as vigilantly as possible, it was also understood that they cannot be erased completely. A heightened sense of reflexivity on my part as researcher in relation to such issues was therefore critical to the ethical dimension of the process.

6.0 Conclusion

In part one of this chapter, I outlined the fundamental ontological and epistemological orientation of the research approach to this study. In light of a more detailed examination of the research questions, I then illustrated how the values and principles of the phenomenological paradigm, informed its specific design and methods. I also outlined how these were combined with the complementary values and principles of autoethnography, aesthetic-based research and somatic education to offer a comprehensive response to both the experiential and ethnographic nature of the research questions.

In part two, I outlined the particular ways in which these lenses manifested in the research methods, data collection processes, and analysis process undertaken within the study. I began by providing further information about the profile of the student participants with a view to offering more context for their participation and contributions. I also provided

a rationale for each of the specific forms of data that were collected, with a particular emphasis on the exploratory nature of the interview design. In this regard, I wished to emulate and extend Bresler's notion of aesthetic-based research, which seeks to bring aesthetic 'habits of mind' to all stages of the research process (Bresler, 2006b, 2013, 2019). I also wished to engage with some of challenges outlined by researchers from the phenomenological research tradition in terms of both accessing and bringing language to lived experience during the data collection phase. With this in mind, I drew on somatic principles, particularly from the field of authentic movement, to attempt to more deeply acknowledge and access the embodied knowledge of the participants during the research interview. I also acknowledged the role of the broader somatic modalities we had been engaging with throughout the module in terms of their likely influence on issues of embodied awareness and relational attunement during the encounter.

In the final sections of the chapter, I explained my particular implementation of Braun & Clarke's reflexive approach to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012, 2019), which I regarded as a particularly appropriate approach for an exploratory study of this nature. I also outlined the ways in which I addressed the issue of trustworthiness in relation to my findings, and the ethical issues that needed to be considered throughout the implementation of the study. In the next two chapters, I proceed to outline the findings that were developed during the course of this process.

CHAPTER FIVE: EXPLORING AND EXPANDING IDENTITIES

> And so it is myself I want to turn in that direction
> not as toward a place, but it was a tilting
> within myself,
>
> as one turns a mirror to flash the light to where
> it isn't -- I was blinded like that -- and swam
> in what shone at me
>
> *Annunciation* by Marie Howe (Howe, 2009)

The next two chapters present the findings of the data analysis process for this study. In doing so, they seek to respond to the core research question which is at the heart of the project.

What do the principles and practices of somatic education offer in the context of an arts education module in a teacher education programme?

They also seek to respond to the sub-questions of the study:

- *What is the nature of the lived teaching and learning experience of a somatic based approach to an arts education module within a teacher education programme?*
- *What does this experience reveal about the potential relevance of somatic approaches in the teacher education context?*

The themes outlined in these chapters arise out of the student and lecturer experience of the process, and thereby provide an insight into the nature of both the teaching and learning experience in question, and to its perceived effect on all participants. Due to the nature of somatic practice, which encourages participants to explore its influence beyond the teaching situation itself, references tend to be made to experiences that took place both within and outside of the module. They also tend to include participants' reflections on prior

experiences, and expectations and intentions for the future in light of their somatic engagement.

In general terms, the data seems to suggest a shift in *orientation* arising from the experience of the module for many students. This shift tends to relate to issues of both disposition and understanding at a personal and professional level. It is interesting to note that many of the orientations in question are also echoed in the lecturer experience, albeit with a somewhat different lens due to the different roles and levels of experience in question. Both sets of data also offer insight into the pedagogical process of introducing such principles into this context, and thereby provide varied phenomenological material with which to reflect on the issues of relevance, distinction, and complementarity at the heart of the research.

In summary, eight core themes were identified and developed during my engagement with the analysis process. These are outlined in table four below.

Table 4
Themes Identified and Developed during the Analysis Process

Chapter	Title	Themes
Five	Exploring and Expanding Identities	● Self-awareness and identity ● Somatic sensitivity and responsivity ● Evidence and nature of developmental learning process in somatic education ● Relational connection and attunement ● Connection and attunement with the natural environment
Six	Expression and Regulation in Aesthetic and Pedagogical Process	● Somatic awareness and aesthetic engagement ● Self-regulation ● Empowerment

As indicated within this table, the treatment of these themes has been divided into two chapters for ease of understanding. Chapter five, the current chapter, is entitled 'Exploring and Expanding Identities' and focuses on the themes of self-awareness and identity, somatic sensitivity and responsivity, and relational connection and attunement. This will also include evidence of the developmental process that took place for students, to include the challenges they experienced in relation to the same. The extent to which the outdoor environment influenced and supported the somatic process will also be addressed in this chapter. As the title of the chapter suggests, these themes have been grouped together as they tended to share a common link with issues of identity and self-knowledge.

Chapter six is entitled 'Expression and Regulation in Aesthetic and Pedagogical Process' and will examine the three further dominant themes which focus on the relationship between somatic awareness and creative expression on the one hand, and somatic awareness and regulation on the other. This chapter concludes with a focus on the theme of empowerment, which became more evident towards the end of the analysis process in terms of the way it spanned the entire thematic range in various ways. It is important to point out that an inevitable overlap and dialogue existed between all of these themes in my experience, and while they have been categorised as above for ease of understanding, they should not be considered in isolation from each other.

5.1 Self-awareness and Identity

In light of the literature on identity in teacher education as discussed in chapter three, it is striking to note that one of the most recurring observations coming out of the student experience of the module pertained to an enhanced quality of self-awareness, and by implication, self-knowledge. As an illustrative statement, Claire referred to the overall experience as a journey of self-discovery. In this regard, she concluded that "I have definitely developed more of a sense of myself since beginning this course." (ST19.SJ.S2), and

furthermore, “It has awakened a part of me that has been asleep for a very long time (ST19.AS.p3). Another student referred to the experience as “Becoming more aware of myself, my own body, my thoughts and how I speak to myself. I feel that I can apply this awareness now to other parts of my life” (ST33.PQ.Q3). As exemplified in this statement the multi-dimensional nature of the self-awareness in question was a common observation of many students, as was the feeling that it could be beneficial in a range of contexts. In her post questionnaire for example, another student commented on her heightened connection with her emotions as a result of the process, and again referred to the potential relevance of this awareness in other parts of her life. She referred in particular to its potential application for her future role as a teacher:

> I feel I know myself better after completing this module. The idea of being able to connect with your own emotions and feelings is so crucial for me as a teacher because I have to be able to connect and relate with myself if I am to develop positive relationships with the children in my class. (ST37.PQ.Q3)

It is interesting to note that for the above student, ‘knowing herself’ extends beyond the external facts of her identity, or indeed the beliefs which she holds, but focuses on how she is experiencing in a given moment and how she relates to that experience. Furthermore, the awareness the students referred to tended not only to pertain to an enhanced variety of aspects of personal awareness as alluded to above – physical, emotional, intellectual - but in a number of cases they also point to an understanding of how these aspects interact across the body-mind system. In her post questionnaire one student surmised that “somatic movement education seeks to encourage people to become more aware of their bodies on a deeper level, and to understand how this affects our emotions etc” (ST11.PQ.Q4). Referring to her own experience of this interconnection, May explained that “I'm much more in tune with my thoughts and feelings, and how they manifest physically” (ST39.II.p9).

This awareness and understanding of interactivity across the body-mind system will be expanded upon in more detail in the section on self-regulation. However, as a general observation, the particular tendency to pay more attention to the *body* to gain a more holistic knowledge of self seemed to represent a new and important orientation for many students. In her interview Mary thus explained that:

> I think I found more of appreciation towards my body in a sense. Like if I was tense or sore and I would listen to it more, kind of more of an open conversation, like an open awareness almost to the body. (ST39.II.p2)

Similarly, another student remarked in her post questionnaire that "I have also discovered the importance of listening and recognising what your body is trying to say and how it feels in certain moments" (ST26.PQ.Q5). The process and impact of gaining such increased access to bodily experience will also be given more specific attention across all of the following sections.

In learning to bring a more refined and holistic quality of attention to the experience of the body-mind system, some students began to recognise the absence of such consciousness in their lives to date, and the possible impact of this. For example, in her journal Keela noted of her typical tendencies, "I feel that I don't pay enough attention to how my body feels and why it may be feeling that way, or I don't seem to think enough of how can I help this feeling" (ST12.SJ.S7). Similarly in her assignment, Linda observed that "I rarely check in with myself, which if I'm being honest has at times negatively impacted my health and my creative energy" (ST44.AS.p1). Siobhan further noted in her interview that:

> …most of the days, you kind of go through a day you don't even wonder how you're feeling or somebody else might be feeling? So, I think this module has kind of definitely just taught me that you know, it's so important to be aware of how you feel and how you're engaging with something. (ST42.II.p19).

As alluded to at the opening of this section, the prevalence of statements pertaining to self-awareness in the data is particularly noteworthy in the context of the increasing significance being given to issues of identity and self-knowledge in the teacher education process. As illustrated in chapter three, a growing literature in this field suggests that such issues, and more particularly the student teacher's consciousness in relation to the same, are often at least as pertinent to their evolving practice as their theoretical or curricular knowledge (see section 3.4.1). Furthermore, in light of the increasing acknowledgement of the tacit and embodied nature of teacher identity, the student statements demonstrating the capacity to access varied and more embodied forms of self-awareness are of particular interest. Korthagen's recommendation of a more holistic approach to engagement with issues of identity as they arise in a given moment is evoked in this regard (Korthagen, 2004,2014, 2017), particularly in light of the further significance he and others have begun to attach to the teacher's quality of presence and 'state of consciousness' in a given teaching moment (see section 3.4.4).

The illustrative student statements pertaining to self-awareness above, also corroborate with the experience of many practitioners within the field of somatic education. As explained in chapter two, for many practitioners the broader benefits at the level of identity have become at least as significant in the evolution of the field, as the earlier priorities pertaining to movement proficiency or to the healing of injuries (see section 2.8). Fraleigh, as we have seen, describes the fundamental purpose of somatic education as one of assisting people in "experiencing and transforming the self through awareness relative to the living world, the environment and others" (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 5). The reference here to both experiencing and transforming identity evokes the psychophysical impacts that are described by many somatic practitioners. Furthermore, the expanded understanding of self that is evident within the student statements is also evocative of Fraleigh's assertion that we are

inclined to meet ‘more’ of ourselves in the somatic process, and indeed that we might further encounter “the discovery of possible selves” (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 34).

References to the particular personal and professional patterns which students began to recognise during the process, along with the expansion that some alluded to in this regard, will be examined in more detail in the following sections. For example, the experienced continuum between maintaining control and letting go is given particular attention within the sections on aesthetic experience and on the challenges encountered during the process. For now, it is worth noting the value that the students themselves seemed to attach to the emphasis on self-awareness and identity that was evoked through the somatic process. In this regard, a number of students contrasted the approach taken during this module with one that tended to focus predominantly on curricular content and specific teaching methodologies. Clare, for example, made the observation that “…in the university, it's like here's what you need for the workplace, it's not here's what you need to be the best you can be kind of....” (ST19.II.p22). Linda similarly observed that, “it's more of an overarching thing as a supposed to, you know, 'at the end of this module you'll have …five science experiments you can do with kids or six geography lessons or three circle time.” (ST44.II.p21). Margaret, while she found the personal orientation that she experienced in the module challenging, nonetheless appreciated the emphasis on ‘being’ a teacher that she encountered during the process:

> A group of us talked about this recently how there definitely should be more modules on just being a teacher [*slowed down for these three words]*….there's a lot of like content knowledge and planning and you know what I mean, putting it all out there, but it's like there's not a lot of personal [*emphasis*] development…(ST14.II.p20)

Brian took some time during his interview to consider the particular value of such an emphasis on ‘being’ within the teacher education process:

> …if you're going to be someone who's like, maybe not so much an *effective t*eacher, but someone who is like, I don't know...[*searching for words]* a teacher that is being like a *role* model that's like, you know, that you're representing the values that you *want* to represent kind of thing [r*aised pitch*]. That definitely requires like a presence of *mind* I think. You know working out of yourself of like, if I want to be a teacher, *why* do I want to be a teacher, and what, apart from just like the curriculum and things, what do I want to *embody* and what *values* do I want to impart? (ST48.II.p14)

He continued to point to the significance of what a teacher embodies, and the level of personal awareness and reflection that is required to engage with such content within oneself. As he explains, this cannot just be imparted to students within teacher education. The student must be involved in significant personal engagement with the embodied nature of such personal content:

> And you've got to be sort of *aware* of how you're doing that, not just *explicitly,* but also in just the way you interact and things, you know, the way you run your classroom. So I think that definitely requires a bit of introspection, *I'd* have thought, and can't be all *taught* to you know, you know, there's all these different ways we can look at like *research* about things and different methodologies, but there's definitely a certain part of it that comes from comes from *you* as well. (ST48.II.p14)

In light of the above, it is interesting to note the tension I also experienced as a lecturer in education between the slow embodied and identity-based nature of the somatic approach I was engaging in with the students, and the more general pressure to generate 'transferable' content and pedagogical practice in my work with students:

> I also sense the challenge and internal debates which this raises in me, who in spite of my own experiential work in somatic education, has worked in a context for twenty years where demonstration of 'knowledge', and capacity for application and transfer

> in an immediate teaching context are considered a key priority. What about knowledge that is sensed? That cannot be fully explained? That is continuously in process? That may not yield 'outcomes' or 'usefulness' for some time, and is contingent on the pace, readiness, and intelligence of the body. (LJ.C2.S3)

In acknowledgement of such tensions, I would regard the observations about the somatic process from the students above, and indeed within my own journals, to reflect the more person-centered goal within the educational process that is promoted within the work of philosophers such as Dewey and Eisner. Furthermore, they reflect the proposals within more recent teacher identity theory that identity is often most accurately reflected in one's disposition or way of being, than in what one explicitly 'knows' (see section 3.4). Also, the role of reflection and awareness, a cornerstone of somatic practice and indeed identity-based practice within teacher education, is clearly highlighted as being critical to one's engagement with issues of personal identity. In the next section, I give more attention to the embodied nature of the reflection that took place, and its significance.

5.2 Somatic Sensitivity and Responsivity

Apart from what the students' stated in a summative way about their enhanced quality of awareness, the data demonstrated significant evidence of a particular somatic sensitivity and responsivity in their present moment interactions as the module progressed. Such evidence was particularly striking in their journal entries, in their interaction with the artefacts during the post module interview, and in their engagement with their creative projects. In the first instance, their evolving somatic sensitivity was not only referenced in terms of the five senses traditionally associated with experiencing the external environment (extero-reception), but also in terms of the generally the less familiar experience of noticing the proprioceptive and kinaesthetic experience of the internal body (intero-reception) (Eddy, 2017). In her interview, Eleanor was particularly struck by the newness of this internal

quality of awareness. In her reference to her experience of our first session at the Botanic Gardens, she explained that:

> … so obviously, you know sight, smell that kind of thing, that's grand….but the whole sense of actually *feeling* your *weight* in your footsteps and things, I...that really struck a chord with me, like even going from the hard ground to soft ground….there's actually such a deeper connection to it, because you're *feeling yourself moving along*.... something that I thought was so simple was really kind of *fresh* and interesting... (ST38.II.p1)

Another student illustrated the experience of being able to locate even more subtle sensations in different parts of her body in a later session. Here, Mary was struck by the internal physical sensations that arose for her in the context of a sound exploration:

> …that was one where it *really* engaged my *body*. And it was quite profound in a way. I felt like tingling or when you [*reference to lecturer*] were walking around like you could hear the noise down from this side to the other side [*pointing at her head*]....and yeah just listening and how it made my body feel,....if the sound was further away it might have affected my *feet* more or something [*unclear piece here*] It was like right by my ears, so it affected the upper body more. (ST39.II.p14)

I would consider such illustrations to be particularly significant in light of the concerns expressed in the both the educational and somatic literature regarding the numbing of the senses, which can ensue from a range of cultural and technological influences in modern world. As we have seen, from a somatic education perspective, the capacity to feel the body from the inside is the basis from which many of its perceived benefits tend to derive, to include those pertaining to a more dynamic and continuously evolving sense of identity and artistry (see section 2.8).

As I reflect on the regular student references to the newness of their awareness in this regard, I am also mindful of the persistent Cartesian influence within the field of education, and the limitations which can ensue from a pervasive cognitive and dualistic orientation within the field as discussed in chapter three. As O'Loughlin laments, "it [the body] may be lapsing into silence, a mere surface upon which history and culture write themselves" (O'Loughlin, 2006, p. 16). In this regard, it is interesting to note the distinct calls for a more embodied sensitivity in certain aspects of the literature within the field of education, particularly from the fields of embodied cognition and arts education. This is albeit noting that the means that have been identified for accessing it within these fields are generally less clear in my view. Further to Dewey's conviction in relation to the inherently rich knowledge of the body, I would propose that it is impossible for a learner to access and extend such knowledge if they cannot *feel* the aliveness of the body in the first instance. This is particularly in the context of Dewey's conviction that such a capacity is central to authentic educational experience. For him, it is central to one's critical need for continuity and motivation in learning in this regard, and to the generation of what he refers to as 'flexible habits' (Dewey, 1938). For Eisner, it is critical to one's necessary capacity for improvisation in aesthetic process, and indeed to generating this capacity in the teaching and learning process more generally (Eisner, 2003). Evidence of such impacts will be returned to in more detail in later sections.

During the interview process, the students' interaction with the module artefacts offered further evidence and insight into the nature and impact of the somatic sensitivity which was evolving for them. In light of the above references to aliveness, it is interesting to note that for some students, their somatic response to the artefacts not only involved an awareness of internal sensation but an impulse for more demonstrative movement in the

body. When relating to an artefact from the fluid body session, May observed her response as an impulse for movement:

> Yeah, a kind of an impulse to actually like lift it and move it from side to side….kind of like *energized [raised pitch, sense of exploring]* not a restless way. Like it doesn't feel like I *have* to move it but, em so yeah that's the kind of feeling. (ST47.II.p8)

Her observation that she doesn't feel she *has* to move it, would offer a suggestion to me of an awareness of such an aliveness in the body, and even of the potential to be led in some way by the physical sensation. An example from one of Eleanor's journal extracts also illustrates the relationship between body awareness and a sensitive responsivity that was emerging in the context of practical explorations during the module:

> As I brought my hand closer to the water, I felt my movements begin to slow down, and become more gentle. I could feel the heat of the water and again the instinct to dunk my hand returned. I allowed my hand to gently sit on the water's edge for a moment before completely submerging. This moment of breaking the seal of the water, between warm and cold, wet, and dry, was extremely pivotal for me. (ST38. SJ.S5)

The aesthetic quality of her experience with the water in this statement is particularly striking for me. Overall, these examples would seem to resonate with another student's attempt to articulate his understanding of somatic education, and the shift in orientation he was noticing in the process. In this regard, he proposes that "Somatic education for me is about exploring the whole body by empowering the body itself and taking that responsibility away from the mind" (ST33.PQ.Q4).

From a learning and indeed research perspective, I would suggest that the students' multifaceted engagement with sensation during the interview process, serves to affirm the fluid communication which can take place across the body-mind system during somatic

practice. The subtle interconnection between stimulus, sensation, memory, language, and responsivity during this process, was particularly striking. It is interesting to note, for example, that while they were engaging with and choosing artefacts, a number of students reported the evocation of present moment sensations in relation to past experience. Examples of such sensations included feelings of tightness, ease, tingling and impulses for movement in specific parts of the body. Linda, for example described the present moment sensations she felt in her wrist and arm when she engaged with an artefact that was connected with her previous painting experience during the fluid body session. She here noted that "I can still nearly feel that cause like a lot of that would come from like my wrist, my hand so I can kind of feel it up across here {*pointing to upper arm?]*. It's kind of nearly tingling" (ST44.II.p6). In a similar vein, Rachel noted a shift in the quality of her breathing as she engaged with an artefact related to her previous outdoor experience:

> Yeah, my *breathing* just got deeper cuz I was kind of half imagining myself doing the movement, and that definitely happened to me in the Botanic gardens as well, my breathing got really deep. (ST25.II.p8)

While access to such capacities have understandably become particularly relevant to the growing field of somatic therapy in terms of accessing an authentic relationship between past and present experience, I would argue that they also have much to offer in the research process as was discovered during this study.

In light of the somatic goal of generating a more conscious reintegration between body and mind, I was struck by the students' growing capacity to language their somatic experience in a qualitative way as evidenced in the above statements. Indeed, the students' progress in this regard was something I made note of a number of times during the process. After the group reflection mid-way through the first cycle, I noted 'the fact that they are beginning to track sensation as their journals demonstrate, and engage in the longer physical

process towards creativity, is big progress" (LJ.C1.S6). This tracking and languaging of experience is also noted during the second cycle. After one session I observed that "they seemed to be utilising sensation words more explicitly here than up to now" (LJ.C2.S2), another developmental milestone in the process of body-mind integration. During the interview process, their care and pace in identifying such language as they attended to their physical response to the artefacts was a feature I noted a number of times. These achievements, which I attribute in no small part to the influence of the discipline of authentic movement on our approach, can serve to maintain an aliveness and authenticity in language, and in the ongoing aesthetic, academic and relational. From the perspective of identity such sensitive languaging is also considered to represent an important basis for meaningful repatterning and change (Adler,2002; Bacon, 2010). Finally, in light of the challenges which have been identified in terms of gaining authentic descriptive data in the phenomenological research process (see sections 4.2.3 & 4.8.1), I would consider the subtle transition between sensation and language that the somatic approaches offered during the research interviews, to represent an important outcome of the research process.

5.3 Evidence and Nature of Developmental Learning Process in Somatic Education

This section demonstrates the developmental nature of the learning that can take place during a somatic education process. As such, it offers a basis for proposing that somatic intelligence can indeed be taught and deepened, which I would argue from both my experience and review of the literature, is not a comprehensively examined phenomenon within the field of education. In this regard, this section will thereby examine the challenges experienced by students during the process, the incremental progress that was observed as the process ensued, and some of the pedagogical features of somatic education that were considered significant by participants that have not been addressed elsewhere in these chapters.

5.3.1 Challenges of Engagement with Somatic Processes

While the benefits the students experienced on a range of levels are outlined within the various sections of these chapters, the somatic approach was not something that a number of them found easy, particularly in the early stages of the module. In this section, I will draw on the data to give further attention to recognising the nature of such challenges, and reference some of the ways in which such experiences also seemed to contribute to engagement with issues of identity.

The significance of the mindful movement explorations has been highlighted in a subsequent section in terms of the way in which they facilitated enhanced somatic sensitivity and responsivity. However, students also encountered challenges in this domain. Some referred to the unfamiliarity with the form in this regard, and to the vulnerability and self-consciousness that some of the more improvised and sensory movement processes generated in the early stages. Some students tended to encounter their own inhibitions in the context of such experience. One student referred to her experience of shyness, and the awkwardness that the sensory dimension of the movement seemed to generate in the presence of her peers:

> The challenges of this process for me was that it was very different from any module I have ever done. I can be quite shy around people my own age, and there were times where I was very conscious of what I was doing during the different sensory activities. This was probably the biggest challenge for me, being quite 'out there' in front of my peers as I can get easily embarrassed. (ST23.PQ.Q4)

Siobhan also noted the vulnerability she felt in the first session in terms of the body-based nature of the work, “”I felt very vulnerable through this class as our bodies were the focus of the lesson” (ST42.SJ.S1). In the context of these observations, it is interesting to note the students’ growing awareness of the inhibiting role of their own internal and imagined external judgements during the process, the awareness of which represents an important

feature of the overall learning process within somatic education. In relation to the former, one student described the challenge of "letting myself move beyond the discomfort and self-doubt" (ST1.PQ.Q3), while another recollects that "at first, the 'judge' was constantly in my head, and I was full of self-doubt I was conscious of what others thought of me at times" (ST13.PQ.Q3).

For some, this doubt came from a fear of getting it wrong, or that there was indeed some 'right' way of doing it. One student noted that in the early stages of the process, "I was worried that I was not someone who would be grounded enough to engage in this type of activity" (ST43.PQ.5a). In her interview, Saoirse similarly explained that in the early stages "I did feel kind of, you know, I felt a bit *doubtful* of, would I be able to do this *properly* (ST27.II.p19). Like others, the intrusion of distracting thoughts during the more meditative practices was also a factor in this concern.

> at the very start I was thinking, you know, of everything else in the world that you know, I couldn't switch *off* and then I was thinking [*Talking to self*] doing it *wrong*, and you know and I felt a bit anxious then as I lay there with my eyes closed, is anyone else thinking that they can turn off their brain, you know what I mean like [talking to self] I can't switch off for that 10 minutes to just *relax.* (ST27.II.p19)

For others, the challenge was experienced in the context of an inner tension that they gradually became conscious of, between maintaining control and letting go. Avril, for example, made a reference to the challenge of letting go in the early stages, and for her this was observed even in the unfamiliar experience of 'lying down' on the ground during college sessions:

> In the first week, I possibly felt more uncomfortable lying down as it wouldn't be something I'd usually do in college, and I feel that there is a loss of control or a vulnerability in doing this. (ST7.SJ.S2)

Another student also identified the challenge of giving up control during the improvised experiences, and of allowing his body to take the lead in such processes:

> One challenge in this process was the movement aspect and allowing my body to take control of the movements. At times I found it hard to give up the control of how my body was moving during the movement sessions. (ST33.PQ.Q3)

This issue will be returned to within the section on somatics and aesthetic process, where the counter-experience not only of gradually letting go, but of 'flow' for many students will be explored.

For Margaret, who felt both challenged and somewhat uncertain about the process all the way through, the slow and mindful approach to movement represented a particular challenge, but for different reasons to those expressed above. For her it was not a dis-ease with physicality or with the views of other students that was a concern, but the particular nature of the movement explorations themselves. As a student who has had significant experience in dance outside of college, she was more familiar with a structured, directed, and fast-paced approach to movement. In her interview, she described her more typical experience in this regard:

> when I think of like using my body and like *moving* it will be like a really, you know, maybe intense dance where I'm thinking every *second*. I'm thinking about what I'm going to do next and…like making straight lines, and having straight arms, and pointing your feet. (ST14.II.p26)

She also commented on the appeal of having specific accompanying rhythms in this regard. The contrast between this and the slower and more internally reflective nature of some of the mindful movement approaches presented quite a challenge as she further explained:

> but it's when it's just, when it's just the thinking, and like using your mind, and thinking about how you're breathing and everything, that I found it a bit like airy fairy kind of. (ST14.II.p2)

In light of all of the above, it is worth noting that the challenges and resistances that participants can experience in relation to somatic practice has been given some attention in the literature on embodied and somatic pedagogy. While research in relation to somatic practice outside the context of somatic dance and somatic therapy is still in its early stages in this regard, the literature nonetheless makes reference to the challenges encountered by less experienced participants and by younger people in relation to engagement with the body (Bauer, 2018; Green, 2002a; Gustafson, 1998). Susan Bauer's recent pioneering publication entitled "*The Embodied Teen"* is therefore a welcome addition to the field in terms of the particular attention she gives to the process of engaging in somatic education practices with teenagers. In it she outlines the particular challenges experienced by students of this age group which pertain not only to the progressive nature of the pedagogy, but also to related issues of body consciousness, attention span, and concerns with peer approval (Bauer, 2018). In relation to the latter, she explains that "Adolescents are particularly sensitive to the opinions of their peers…so getting them to relax and enjoy these activities in a group of their peers takes skilful facilitation" (Bauer, 2018, p. 30). Bauer offers many helpful ways of working with such challenges, a number of which affirm some of my own discoveries. These include a keen awareness of the need for a very incremental engagement with the somatic process for such a cohort, and an awareness of the need for an energetic balance within sessions in light of the challenge that the slower pace and more internal somatic process may present for young people. The incremental engagement with the principles and practices of body-mind centering in her approach are particularly striking in this regard. However, Bauer also reminds us that individual and collaborative acknowledgement and engagement with

such discomfort, is an integral part of all somatic education processes (Bauer, 2018, p. 70). I would also add at this juncture that in my own experience, awkwardness, and discomfort around working with the body is not confined to young people, and is likely to also be in part due to the dualistic nature of many cultural norms within Western societies and the challenge of confronting related social conditioning in this domain.

The literature that focuses on the incorporation of a somatic education lens into the field of professional dance, would also suggest that the challenges in question can be rooted in issues of pedagogical style. While dancers may enjoy the added motivation for somatic engagement in terms of its potential to facilitate more easeful and flexible movement, the internal and student led nature of the process can nonetheless be quite unfamiliar in light of the traditional pedagogical orientation of the professional dance world, alongside its emphasis on performative product (see sections 2.8.1 & 2.9.2). The faster pace, director led and motor orientated nature of the more familiar 'demonstrate and do' approach may on the surface seem more accessible and more relevant than the slower paced inner process of connecting with sensation and following the lead of the body. In light of her background in dance, Margaret's observations above may to some extent be reflecting such frustrations, but the concerns about 'getting it wrong' or doing it *properly*, from some of the other students may also be linked with issues of pedagogy. In this regard, Burnidge draws on Smith (1988) to emphasise the "difficulties in establishing a truly liberatory dance environment when teacher, student, and art form are complicit in enacting historically authoritarian practices" (Smith, 1988 as cited in Burnidge, 2012, p. 46).

5.3.2 Evidence of Developmental Learning Process in Somatic Education

The incremental process towards greater ease with this work was referenced by a number of students in various forms. For some, there was a specific moment that signalled a shift in the quality of their experience and understanding, which was oftentimes linked with

the achievement of a deeper experiential engagement with the body in a given moment. Eleanor for example, referenced the significant impact of the connection with the ground she experienced during a child's pose exploration in the first session. This seemed to represent a key moment in terms of getting a better sense of the potential value of such practice:

> I think it was then that I kind of realised what it was, that you know, it wasn't going to be a real airy-fairy thing, it's actually a real genuine connection, and the fact that I felt it, I wouldn't say it was now *groundbreaking* the first week, but the more I kind of *did,* the more…I did realise....you know, I can do this. This is something that I *should* be doing. (ST38.II.p13)

After the fifth session Avril similarly noted such progress in her journal, albeit still with intermittent experiences of self-consciousness:

> I noticed that I was able to move and shift my weight a lot without being afraid of falling. It was as though I began to trust my own body more. Personally, I think that this could be due with becoming more present and in tune with my body since the beginning of this module through meditation. (ST7.SJ.S5)

For others, the shift in question was explained in the context of continued engagement and practice. Edward speaks more of a general 'click' that arose from his ongoing engagement with the process,

> And it feels weird at the start, and you're not sure. You're very....well I was *really* not sure, and then it worked [*higher pitch*], it kind of was like clicked almost. And then it was like, yeah that's *working* [*assured tone*] So, I'll keep it. (ST2.II.p16)

For Saoirse, like others, it was when she compared her engagement in the later sessions with the earlier ones, that she recognised the important changes that had taken place.

> but I feel that in comparison, you know looking at now in comparison to the first day, how much I've come with turning, switching off and really connecting….You know, I

> wouldn't have really believed it. And I think people who haven't experienced it will have, not some trouble understanding, but would bit apprehensive to the fact that, what can happen and what can come out of it. (ST27.II.p19)

For a number of students their growing capacity to witness the continuum they were experiencing between maintaining control and letting go represented an important awareness in the process towards greater freedom of expression. Supported by the overall somatic approach, it seems that their conscious engagement with this dynamic also presented an opportunity for greater self-enquiry, self-knowledge and self-empowerment, the significance of which was alluded to in the identity section of this chapter. For example, one student reflected a number of student statements pertaining to a growing recognition of a tendency for perfectionism and self-criticism in the learning or creative process. Here, she further communicates her intention for continued inquiry into this pattern of engagement:

> As I am a perfectionist, I have a very self-critical and negative inner voice so learning to notice and acknowledge these thoughts and to be more self-accepting was a challenge for me that I am still working with (ST20.PQ.Q3)

Another student similarly pondered the possible impact of her own need for control and structure in her creativity in the context of her challenges with the process:

> Upon reflection, I struggled with using somatic practices to influence my creativity. I'm unsure if this is because I am a very controlled person and prefer routine and structure in my creativity. If the course was maybe a year long, I think I would notice more of an influence on creativity (ST26.PQ.Q3)

Eleanor interestingly communicated a broader intention to let go more in life, in the context of the impact of the experience of ‘release’ that she encountered during various exercises within the module.

> I need to let myself let *go* a bit more, that kind of release. I need to do *that* more. And I really do feel from my engagement with this module I *have* done that more....like compared to September, I feel I've changed an *awful* lot in the way I look at things I and the way I would *react* to things (ST38.II.p14)

The broader psycho-physical impacts of the somatic process that are referenced by Eleanor in this statement are also referenced in my own journal observations on another occasion:

> As I negotiate foreground, background, purpose, and relevance on this course, I notice that such experience of really freeing up the body to move without self-consciousness seems to be an important element of freeing up the person in all sorts of ways. I think of the freeing up of 'spirit' that is important in the somatic process, and of my own liberating experiences in this regard. I know from my own experience, and from witnessing students, that this certainly impacts on communication and creativity in the immediate aftermath, and perhaps in a longer-term neurological sense, if such work is practised/explored on a more regular basis (LJ.S5.19.p6)

In light of the sense of agency, which is evoked in Eleanor's statement, Keela interestingly referred to the impact of the self-regulatory dimension of somatic practice in terms of her growing capacity to address such challenges herself. Referring to a moment of potential challenge in the later stages of the module, she explained:

> To be honest, this significant moment was during one of the later lectures in the module and as a result I had come to an understanding about how to relax my body and mind, so I did not have any challenges. However, if we had participated in this activity at the beginning of the module I know that I would have felt a certain stiffness and reluctance. (ST12.PQ.Q1b)

This sense of agency was also reflected in many statements of advice for future students in the post questionnaires, which are illustrated here by one student who advised:

> whatever you put in is what you get out of the module. The more you practice the somatic practices the more benefit you will receive from the module. It is an amazing experience, so forget what other people are thinking and do it for yourself! (ST40.PQ.Q7)

The issue of agency will be returned to again in chapter six in more detail under the theme of 'empowerment in teacher education'.

As alluded to in the student statements above, there are likely to have been a range of factors involved in the shifts in question, which also paradoxically involved increased engagement with the specific principles and practices of somatic education. As referenced in more detail in subsequent sections, they included the enhanced scaffolding of embodied experience that somatic education processes offer, its inherent emphasis on the relational field, an evolving capacity for somatic self-regulation, and engagement with eco-somatics. They also included various adaptations of somatic practice in response to the needs of this context such as the particular integration with aesthetic frameworks and methodologies in this module, and the adaptations made for younger and less experienced participants. As also referenced elsewhere, my own evolving skills and comfort with the approach as facilitator, is also likely to have been a contributing factor in the above progression, particularly during the second and third cycles. Ultimately, finding a way to support students to work effectively between safety and experiment was a key priority in all such attempts, with a view to experiencing the potential benefits at the other side.

5.3.3 Influence of Specific Somatic Practices and Principles

The goal and challenge of supporting the development of somatic sensitivity and responsivity in students is referred to regularly in my own journal extracts. Indeed, this analysis process has served to make me evermore conscious that such a sensibility takes significantly more guided expertise, time, and practice to cultivate, than I might previously

have understood to be the case. My recognition of the challenges involved, and the need for enhanced support of a somatic nature for students in this context, is evident from my reflections on the early sessions of the module and from my longer-term experience of working in drama and teacher education more generally. In one journal extract I reflected:

> Over the years, I have worked with many students with whom I sensed a lack of physical freedom in their natural interaction, a sense of holding back, a sense of not fully inhabiting their bodies in their communication/artistic process…and I have become clearer in recent years about the challenges this is likely to bring in their teaching and in other parts of their lives. (LJ.C3.S2)

In relation to my more specific experience of working with student teachers in drama education, I also reflected in one of my journal extracts that:

> I have often had the sense in both this and drama work that for some students, they find it difficult to come at things in a full-bodied way. Words are dissociated from body, self-consciousness takes over….I sense little sense of yielding weight to the floor which I feel underlies many of these issues (LJ.C2.S3)

In this extract I can see the way in which my relatively newfound somatic knowledge is helping me to both recognise and interpret the challenges students may be experiencing at an embodied level. My reference to yielding and indirectly to gravity in this statement, and my implied understanding of their relationship to one's capacity for whole bodied engagement, indicate subtleties of awareness and observation, which I do not feel would have been part of my knowledge base in advance of the Origins programme. The journals continue to demonstrate this recognition of the complexity of generating a greater ease of engagement with the body, in order to access the sensitivity and responsivity referred to previously. After the first session of the first cycle, it is evident that I became more acutely aware of the

learning curve involved in this process, and the need for more layers and incremental steps than I had first anticipated:

> Basically, I had been expecting students to move with relative ease from a place of sensation and impulse from an early stage in the course. In short I had assumed that one's awareness of their physical presence in the moment would facilitate this, in the way it seemed to for my colleagues on the Origins course. (LJ.C1.S1)

Such sentiments are echoed in my reflections after the first session of the third cycle, when I noted that "I think on many previous occasions, there wasn't enough 'scaffolding' in this regard, and I just assumed the capacity for free individual movement too quickly" (LJ.C3.S2). Such observations and questions in the early stages, initiated a recurring interest in the nature of the somatic scaffolding, which might support students in this context, and were of particular interest in light of the broader question coming from the arts education tradition of whether it is possible to 'instruct people to feel' (see section 3.3.3).

The intermittent references in the journals to the incremental progress the students were making as the module progressed, also attest to my growing realisation and understanding of the developmental nature of the process in question. In the early stages of the second cycle, I remarked on the subtle shifts that I was beginning to notice in their capacity for resting into the body, and pondered on the various pedagogical factors that may have been involved:

> From the beginning, I noticed changes in the students generally, even in the 'lying down' – more ankles, feet and arms falling out to the side, less holding. Is this to do with increasing familiarity with the content, feeling safer in the environment, the interim practice? (LJ.C2.S2)

In another extract, I noted the importance of being able to recognise such progress in this work, particularly in terms of the very incremental ways in which it reveals itself in relative beginners.

> I am beginning to get a clearer sense of the incremental process involved and feel I can recognise their incremental ease into this work as they shuffle delicately between self-consciousness and presence. In summary I recognise and feel joy in tiny shifts. This seems very important for me to be able to do this as a facilitator of this work in the context I am working in (not dancers). (LJ.C1.S3)

Referring to my observations of students in the early stages of the second and third cycle, when incidentally I feel my knowledge and facilitation of somatic practices was deepening and expanding, I noted that:

> it was very gratifying to see them stretching and pushing against the floor to respond to their own personal need for specific stretches and different relationships with gravity. I sensed a listening in the room as opposed to a controlling or making it happen. (LJ.C3.S2)

The reference to an increased tendency to listen to the body for direction as opposed to controlling it is noteworthy here, in light of the previous student observations about the challenge, process and value of letting go.

While it is not possible to refer to all the steps and layers that were identified within the scaffolding process, it is clear that there were certain principles which I drew upon and adapted from various disciplines within the somatic field, in order to access and support the sensibility in question. These generally tended to involve various forms of engagement with the underlying somatic movement principles as summarised by Brodie & Lobel (Brodie & Lobel, 2004, 2014). More specifically, they tended to draw on some of the principles and

practices from the fields of Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement, both of which I had initially encountered on the Origins programme (see sections 2.7 & 2.8.4).

Looking back to the early stages of each cycle, I note that I gradually became more sensitive to the developmental requirements of engagement with the somatic field for relative beginners. In the first instance, my notes demonstrate that I began to slow down the progression towards freer improvised movement explorations by drawing on the perhaps more familiar practices of yoga and mindful meditation in order to begin to explore some basic somatic principles. This incidentally echoes elements of the approach taken at the Shin Somatics Institute in California, where eastern and Western approaches to body-mind consciousness tend to be integrated in the learning process (Fraleigh, 2015). My intention here was also to support students to feel and experience a more expanded range of 'textures' and possibilities in stillness and in movement in a safe and unthreatening way. In this regard, I noted in my journal that:

> If a student has little experience of movement and they are totally reliant on their current movement 'repertoire' in life, they might never get to experience these possibilities. This work can then support the improvisation, listening to the body and self-expression that comes later in a subtle way. (LJ.C1.S1)

In the third cycle, I similarly observed:

> I think all of this, what might be termed a form of 'imitation' at this point, is helping them to experience new 'options' in their own bodies, and I think this will serve them when we move towards increasingly freer explorations as the overall process unfolds. (LJ.C3.S1)

As I continue to review these excerpts, I am reminded that somatic education is not only concerned with experiencing one's body-mind state in the present moment, it is also

concerned with using such awareness to gently open up possibilities for expansion and repatterning in various ways (Batson et al., 2012; Eddy, 2017; Fraleigh, 2015).

As the module progressed, I can observe in the data the value that both the students and I attached to our engagement with principles and practices from the field of Body-mind centering, albeit at an introductory level. Enlightening in this regard were the references to the way in which they seemed to support a deeper quality of feeling in the body. In particular, the data demonstrates that our discrete engagement with some of the body systems (the fluid body, the skeletal body etc.) seemed to add an important dimension to the process. This is illustrated here for example in my reflections on the benefits of encouraging beginners to work with the skeletal body:

> in terms of the body systems, bone is an easy place to begin in terms of what can be sensed by a beginner. It also represents support and structure, which may be helpful at this early stage. It can also help in terms of engagement with gravity – resting in and pushing away from... (LJ.C2.S2)

Many students also highlighted the significance of working with these systems in relation to the impact on their quality of somatic awareness. Alice for example notes the heightened attention they brought to the less familiar dimensions of her physical experience:

> I really enjoyed the exploring of our different bodies and the different experiences that can be felt and created, as a result, it brought my attention to aspects of my body that I would rarely notice from day to day e.g. skeletal body and my weight. (ST21.PQ.Q1)

My sense of my own progress, in terms of learning to facilitate elements of the body-mind centering approach in this context, became more evident in the second and third cycles as the following extract illustrates:

> I feel I am finally managing to translate/include the overall principle of differentiation within the BMC approach more clearly in the developmental process. As I have noted in different ways before, I feel these students need this level of detail and guidance in terms of not only accessing sensation more clearly in their bodies, and also in terms of their capacity to begin to improvise more freely and perhaps less self-consciously in a physical way. (LJ.C3.S2.)

My growing understanding of the relationship between such somatic processes and the student's capacity for improvisation is worth noting in the latter part of this statement. In this regard, it is important to note that many students also made explicit links between their exploration of the BMC systems and their evolving experience of and approach to creativity. This and the role of the complex reciprocal relationship between somatic practice and aesthetic frame in the further generation of somatic sensitivity and responsivity will be discussed in more detail in chapter six.

While we did not explore Authentic movement in its pure form during the module, its dual emphasis on following one's internal impulse in aesthetic exploration, and on witnessing one's own and others' evolving experience with curiosity and compassion, represented ongoing values and orientations that continue to be alluded to throughout the data (see section 2.8.4). Indeed, the influence of these and other pedagogical and aesthetic values that might be considered to be inherent to all somatic practices will continue to be referenced within the following sections (see section 2.9.2). These not only include the internal somatic orientation as discussed thus far, but also the distinctively student led, reflective and relational nature of the somatic education process as experienced by lecturer and students. The following sections also demonstrate what the student and lecturer data reveal about the relevance of their evolving somatic sensibility to various aspects of their education as teachers. In this light the

next section begins with an exploration of the theme of relational connection and attunement as it was evidenced within the data.

5.4 Relational Connection and Attunement

While the students' self-awareness and relationship with self was previously reported as a strong feature of their experience, equally strong was a feeling of enhanced relationship with their external environment. This included the relational environment with other students, the physical environment of the classroom, and the natural environment. It is interesting to note that this was most often referred to by the students as an enhanced experience of 'connection' or 'attunement'. I would contend that such references are worthy of further attention at this juncture in the context of the considerable literature which is continuing to evolve in relation to the significance of the relational dimension of teaching, particularly in terms of the need for an appropriate and sensitive quality of responsivity within pedagogical encounters (Bresler, 2006; Todres, 2008; Van Manen, 2016a). Furthermore, I would contend that its relevance is heightened in the context of the growing acknowledgement of the tacit or embodied nature of this relationship, and the need for a deeper consciousness of and engagement with such issues on the part of the teacher (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2009b; Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006; Van Manen, 2016a). Following some initial illustrations of the quality of connection experienced during this process, this section also provides two further subsections to include 'awareness of factors contributing to relational attunement', and 'experiences of relational attunement in communication and in teaching'.

While many students referred to the experience of relational connection and attunement in various forms, a smaller number delved into the challenging task of putting language on the particular quality of that experience and demonstrated an awareness of its possible contributory factors. In the first instance, Saoirse's recognition of and attempt to describe the quality of connection that she experienced within the group during the module,

offers an illustrative example of the nature of the experience in question. Speaking initially of her experience during the movement session with the music and masks, and then to the module as a whole, she explained:

> So it just got stronger in this session, but the whole way through it was a different, you know, I say vibe, but I mean, it was a different feeling of connection, you know, in comparison to every other class group that I am with. (ST27.II.p12)

When she attempted to unpack the quality of this connection further, it was the embodied and non-verbal nature of her experience, that was particularly striking:

> I nearly felt the electricity of it go through *my* body. You know from, it was like we were *bouncing off* each other you know with *emotion* rather than actually touching each other. It was, it was a good experience to feel. (ST27.II.p12)

When Avril attempted to describe the quality of connection she experienced within the group during the module, she echoed others by explaining it in terms of an experience of attunement. In her post questionnaire, she observed that "we became very in tune with ourselves and with each other" (ST7.PQ.Q1).

5.4.1 Awareness of Factors Contributing to Relational Connection and Attunement

When analysing the data, I found the capacity that some students demonstrated to articulate what they would consider to be the nature, sources, and significance of such attunement to be quite striking. This was particularly so in light of the subtlety of such issues in practice, and the challenge that I have experienced in terms of raising consciousness about such issues in a visceral way within the teacher education process generally. In the first instance, some students drew explicit attention to the significance of one's own somatic awareness to one's experience of connection and attunement, and demonstrated a sensitive understanding in relation to the same. Alice offered a particularly cogent example in this regard:

> Personally, I think somatic education promotes connectivity in all aspects of our lives. Beginning with the body and re-connect our mind to the different soma parts, we can relearn how to connect with other people, new experiences, and our surrounding environments. (ST21.PQ.Q4)

Linda also emphasised the centrality of body consciousness in terms of one's capacity for connection to other. In her understanding of somatic education, she surmised that, "It's a type of education that explores connecting with both yourself through the body and then also connecting with your external environment through the body" (ST44.PQ.Q4).

In light of the above, the data interestingly demonstrates that the shared mindful movement explorations seemed to represent a key context for bringing some of the students into deeper connection with others in an embodied way. During these carefully scaffolded improvisations, students were encouraged to be mindful not only of their own movement impulses and sensations, but also the delicately evolving dynamic with their movement partners. With regard to the increased opportunities for such exploration of the relational in a non-verbal way that I included within the second cycle, I recorded the following rationale:

> I have brought more of this into the module this time in light of previous intentions to include more exploration 'in relationship'. It seems to be supportive to them to have someone to explore these things with…Movement expression seemed to extend in many cases. (LJ.C2.S5)

In particular I included more opportunities within the second cycle for the students to take the lead in facilitating and supporting their partner's movement processes in a non-verbal way, thus potentially reflecting the teaching and learning relationship more generally. In this regard I noted that:

> Not only does this seem to enhance one's own subsequent experiential engagement with the body, but it also provides a very focused practice in relation to facilitating

> others in such a process. I noticed the sense of 'listening' and presence in the students today again when they were taking on this role. (LJ.C2.S5)

In this vein, Eleanor observed the attunement and reciprocity she felt with her partner as she took the role of facilitator during one such exploration:

> Her movements were actually guiding where I was going to push, or if she was moving *this* way, I was going to push back....and the two of us felt *so connected* to each *other* and to our *movements*. So again that *so* dissolved of any boundaries, knowing, I'd love....I thought it was absolutely amazing. (ST38.II.p22)

Interestingly Siobhan noted that the particular quality of improvisation that these experiences generated represented a key way in which the somatic processes complimented her longer-term experience of dance outside college:

> well the main similarity would be to see if you can build a response to somebody through your body movement without ever talking to them and explain what you're going to do. So like are you able to improvise well with someone else? (ST42.II.p15)

It strikes me that in light of their future roles as teachers, such improvisational exercises at a somatic and aesthetic level would seem to offer an important visceral engagement with some of the key elements of attuned and relational teaching that are so aspired to in the work of Van Manen and Eisner. Van Manen's proposal that 'pedagogical tact' in a teaching context, has its ultimate roots in embodied experience and awareness, and that we need to find some way to teach teachers in relation to these issues, is particularly evoked for me in these statements (Van Manen, 2016a).

While not always explicitly stated in terms of cause and effect, the data pertaining to the student experience certainly offers many allusions to other pedagogical factors of a somatic nature, which may have contributed to the experience of embodied connection. These

include the non-judgemental atmosphere that was generated within the somatic education environment, and the value attached to the sharing of body-mind experience.

The non-judgemental atmosphere, and its impact on the students' capacity to engage with embodied practice, was a particular feature of the somatic process that was referred to regularly. Following a group processing session towards the end of the module, Keela noted in her journal:

> I feel at ease with everyone in our class and I think we all have bonded through the different aspects of this module that has pushed our boundaries and out of our comfort zones. I felt I could speak my mind in the group without fear or judgement of others and I think that's been thanks to the module and the atmosphere it has built in our classes." (ST12.SJ.S7)

In her interview, Clare also noted the impact of such an atmosphere on one's overall confidence. She noted that "everyone could just be themselves, like they're not going to get judged or anything, which does kind of build your confidence I think" (ST19.II.p11). In this regard, Saoirse noted the supportive impact of the non-judgemental atmosphere in the context of her early challenges with the process:

> those challenges of feeling a bit giggly, a bit nervous, a bit anxious about what you're doing. It makes it easier when…you feel that you have no judgment or, not even no judgment but *support.* ***(***ST27.II.p22)

While the need for a safe environment is a key feature of the NCCA arts education curricula (NCCA, 1999), it is interesting to note in the data the possible distinctive features that somatic practice can offer in this regard. As explained in chapter two, the somatic process contains a highly intentional development of a compassionate witness consciousness which pertains not only to one's relationship with self, but also to the wider field within which the group is working (Bacon, 2015; Adler, 2002; Collinson, 2015). Furthermore, such

a consciousness is considered not only to facilitate a freer expression of individuals during somatic and aesthetic process, but to allow many aspects of self to emerge in the process, including those that are more complex, vulnerable, or challenging. The practice of generating a field wherein such issues can be sensitively explored and acknowledged in the context of relationship represents an important feature of the somatic process in my experience.

My own journals regularly demonstrate the attention and priority that was given to the careful development of such a field throughout the process. For example, in light of an early activity with this intention, I reflected on "the high level of safety one needs to feel within the group for this particular kind of work" and the way in which the activity in question "also begins to support the building of 'the field', which I felt needed more scaffolding the last time" (LJ.C1.S1). In light of this statement, it is noteworthy that my attention to what I would refer to as "the holding field", a term borrowed from Franklyn Sills (Ref), within somatic practice was clearly increasing with each cycle. After the second session of the second cycle for example, I noted that "I am drawing more attention to 'the field' this time around and to the notion that we only learn about self in communication" (LJ.C2.S2). I was clearly heartened by the shifts I observed in the students in this regard as the process unfolded. In recognition of the quality of sharing about the challenges that some students were experiencing during the first cycle, I recorded "I should recognise…the safety they must feel in the group to be able to be so open" (LJ.C1.S6). Towards the end of the second cycle, I contrasted this openness with my more general teacher education experience with students and pondered, "Have I ever experienced students being so open, and sharing their vulnerability so much?" (LJ.C2.S11).

It is clear that a number of students also placed considerable value on the collaborative sharing of body-mind experience throughout the module. In this regard, there were regular references to the dedicated time given to sharing such material with one's

'buddy', within group reflection sessions, and within the on-line student forum. Saoirse noted the quality of curiosity that the group seemed to be bringing to bear on these sharing sessions, which is considered to be an important mindset to bring to such reflection in my experience. She explained that "there was that whole sense of curiosity in all of us, you know, and we were sharing that with each other" (ST27.II.p12). Mary also noted the vulnerability students tended to engage with during such processes and its contribution to the evolving quality of care that she noticed in their subsequent on-line communications:

> I think in a sense if we didn't have to be necessarily that vulnerable, we might have just kind of used it to talk about assignments or a class time and change whereas now we all genuinely *care* how we're all getting on… it's made us care *more* about each other and our wellbeing. (ST39.II.p12)

In light of all of the above, it is interesting to note Rachel's choice of the word 'openness', arising from her somatic engagement with her chosen artefact during her interview. She further elaborated that "like I opened... I opened myself to the people in the class" (ST25.II.p10). Brian also echoed this experience of opening up to others during the module, and the somewhat unfamiliar nature of it. He concluded that "definitely that sort of opening up to a group of people who are *relatively* new, was challenging at some points, but was definitely, definitely rewarding" (ST48.II.p13). In this regard, he pondered further on the potential cultural influences of such communication challenges for Irish people:

> I don't know if this is a generalization, but I feel like Irish people in *general* aren't very good at letting out personal things, and especially if it's related to something you've *created* or something you…that might be perceived as you putting yourself *out* there a bit, you know? (ST48.II.p13)

While the safety of the environment was clearly an important factor in the above, I would posit that the particularly holistic quality of the sharing that took place, is also likely to have

contributed both to the vulnerability the students alluded to, and its capacity to generate connection and care. Furthermore, from a somatic perspective, engagement with one's own vulnerability in a shared context can also represent the basis for change.

5.4.2 Experiences of Relational Attunement in Communication and in Teaching

In light of the various contributory factors discussed above, it is worth noting at this juncture the shifts of a relational nature that the students were beginning to discern in their interactions with the world more broadly as the module progressed. As may be detected from the analysis to date, these included reports of enhanced presence, attunement, responsivity, and flexibility. For a number of students, these qualities seem to be reflected particularly in a shift in their approach listening to others. Rachel for example observed that:

> One aspect of the approach which has come into play in my daily life is the way in which I listen to others. I have started to listen more closely to what they are saying, and not just relating it back to my own life all the time - something I used to always do (ST25.PQ.Q1)

Mary also echoes the change in the quality of her listening to others and considers it in the context of being more generally present. In her assignment, she explains:

> The more sessions I attended, the more I found somatic practices in my everyday life. I became a more active listener, more conscious of allowing the person to speak, and truly listening to their words. Being present as one of my huge takeaways (ST39.AS.p2)

During her interview she further unpacked the nature of her evolving approach to listening, by drawing on the words that evolved from her engagement with a photograph that she chose from the module artefacts. In this photo, she explained that she perceived both movement and stillness in the relationship between two students who were exploring the locomotive forces

together, and drew parallels between this and the process of becoming more attuned in one's listening:

> You kind of have to be still and like you're reminded to listen to the people's words. And so it's not just necessarily like being still within your body but also like a stillness in your mind also, and not like you're not thinking of anything, but you're *allowing [emphasis]* the thoughts that somebody else is having to sink in.. (ST39.II.p9)

For me, her reference to a movement practice in this statement, illustrates another example of the way in which the exploration of the movement principles within somatic practice can not only generate helpful metaphors for more attuned communication, they can also offer opportunities for meaningful practice in this regard.

While the majority of the students did not have the opportunity to explore these impacts on a placement experience during the module period, they do make references to what they would consider to be the relevance of such attunement in the classroom, and their future intentions in relation to the same. These are considered further in chapter six. For now it is worth noting that my own journal reflections on the module experience, from the perspective of teacher, offer many examples of the way in which a conscious connection with body seemed to impact on my capacity for connection, attunement, and responsivity within specific pedagogical situations. Reflecting on my facilitation of the fluid body session in cycle one for example, I noted the impact of my own quality of embodiment on my capacity to sense what was required to support students more deeply in the teaching moment:

> I am now becoming more conscious of the skill and principles involved in the facilitation of others, and the way in which this involves a consistent moving between my own body sense of what is involved in an exercise and an increasing consciousness of the pace and questions that might facilitate a deepening of experience for another (LJ.C1.S4)

This observation is illustrated in a more particular way in my reflection on another session during which my capacity to sense into my own body supported me in identifying the subtlety that was required to deepen the experience of bone for students:

> …the reminder of it as focus, really only came to me when I lay down myself and felt my own skeleton lying on the ground. I then began to guide them into the awareness of bone, through feeling my own experience…the questions came. (LJ.C2.S2)

It is interesting to note a similar reference to the link between my capacity to be present to my own embodied experience, and 'the arrival' of appropriate facilitator prompts and questions to support the student experience:

> I feel the importance of my own presence in each moment as I negotiate the planned and unplanned steps of this session, my own impressions, my own sensations, my own aliveness. I am devising this process, but I am also a witness to it, as the students are. (LJ.C1.S5)

In the last line of this statement, I am struck by the acknowledgement of a third entity within the relational realm of the teaching process that the somatic lens may have generated. This may be considered akin to Buber's notion of 'the space between' in pedagogical/relational process (Buber, 1956). In this regard, I perceive in the statement my own sense of the unknown within the interaction and indeed the aliveness of such a space. In spite of all the planning that may have preceded its existence, I clearly regarded both the students and I as being witnesses to such moments.

The significance of the quality of my own embodied presence as teacher was also something that was also observed by some of the students in terms of relational impact. In the following observation, the student seemed conscious of the way in which it could serve to provide a model for her own future practice as a teacher:

> The idea of 'presence' was particularly significant to me. I noticed a sense of openness in Paula's presence in the classroom and this influenced my idea of 'being'. I'm now more aware of my own presence and thus what this presence communicates to the people around me particularly the children in my future classroom (ST37.PQ.Q1)

We see here a recognition that one's quality of presence or way of 'being' with a group is as significant in the teaching process as what one relates verbally. As alluded to previously, I would regard such a presence to other to have its roots in the teacher's capacity to connect with their own embodied experience in the first instance:

> The experience of the practitioner/teacher is as central to the experience of the group, and considerations of the practice itself. The practice itself cannot be considered as an objective 'practice' outside of the moment, the relational. (LJ.C1.S2)

While any effective teacher can attest to the effectiveness of sharing one's relevant personal experience with a group of young children, it is one's *embodied* presence that is being referred to in these statements. This is less tangible of course, but it is nonetheless felt and experienced by students in both its presence and its absence. In this regard, I reflect during cycle two that "teachers are living, breathing, feeling human beings and that this is central to the 'life' (or the 'energy' or the 'vibe') that students feel in educational experiences" (LJ.C2.S8). It is in this light of the above statements that I am also reminded that many somatic practitioners recommend the facilitator's preparation on a *somatic* level as well as a content level in advance of a session, so that they can be available to the continued somatic cues that may be critical to the evolving process (Collinson, 2015; Tufnell & Crickmay, 2004).

Our reflections on the lockdown situation and particularly on our unexpected shift to online learning during cycles two and three, provided a particularly rich opportunity for both students and lecturer to make even more conscious the significance of the relational in

teaching and learning, and to the inherently embodied nature of that dimension. Pondering on what she felt was both retained and lost in her general experience of on-line learning during this period, Linda observed, "I suppose you keep the *information* at the very base, but what you lose is I suppose, it's nearly a *connection*" (ST44.II.p18). In this regard, the situation seemed to provoke her to consider the significance of and similarity between the somewhat invisible relational dimensions of a live theatre context and that of the classroom. As she explained:

> if you're sitting in a theatre, you're watching people on stage, but they're feeding off you and you're feeding off them. And it's it's not a *spoken* thing, like the only way I can describe it is a connection, but it's the same in a classroom in a small group. (ST44.II.p19)

In my own journals, I also took this visceral opportunity to reflect on what I felt was missing when teaching and learning did not take place in a shared embodied space. After our first on-line session I noted that:

> I felt that the challenge of 'attunement' was very present for me during the session - attunement to each other, and to that sense of 'group-mind' which we managed to achieve in special moments of presence and creativity during previous sessions…. I recognise here that the biggest 'absence', whatever way we manage this, will be our present moment embodied connection to each other. (LJ.C2.S8)

In such statements I am reminded of the inescapable fact that as humans, we are social beings, and this fact must be critical to any meaningful understanding of the Education process, as Vygotsky and the social-cultural theorists so clearly recognised. The on-line experiences within this module ultimately made the need for such sensibilities within teaching more acute in my observations, and made more urgent the questions posed by Van Manen, Eisner and Siegesmund about how they might be enhanced. As I noted:

> When the significance of the 'invisible' dimensions of our teaching come into direct focus in this way, perhaps the question of how these dimensions might be enhanced also comes into clearer focus (LJ.C2.S8)

In summary, the observations from both the student and lecturer data in this section not only serve to underscore the relational dimension of the teaching and learning process generally, they also reflect the growing significance attributed to the embodied nature of this dimension within the field of education (Andrews, 2016; Eisner, 2002a, 2003; Siegesmund, 2004; Van Manen, 2016). The significance such authors attribute to one's somatic intelligence in the context of the improvisational quality of one's teaching and to the quality of one's responsivity, is also evoked. However, even more significantly, from a somatic education perspective, I would contend that the data discussed in this section demonstrates the further influence that intentional somatic education approaches can offer to this aspect of the teaching and learning process, particularly from the perspective of self-awareness and responsivity. In this light, it is worth revisiting Collinson's explanation of the process by which somatic practice can achieve such relational impacts (Collinson, 2015). She draws on the work of Siegel (2007) and Sills (2009) to explain that the capacity to drop into body awareness tends to bring one into a 'being' rather than 'doing' state, and it is in this being state that a capacity for 'inter-being' and relational responsivity is made possible.

> Being 'open' and listening in this way awakens each of us to our embodied subjectivity, and intersubjective experience of the living moment as it manifests and expresses itself. Such receptivity widens our quality of attention and our experience becomes knowable, not conceptually, but experientially and imaginatively. (Collinson, 2015, p. 230)

5.5 Connection and Attunement with the Natural Environment

Many students also referred to an enhanced connection with the natural environment arising out of the module experience, and thus to an increased tendency and intention to engage with it more deeply in their personal and professional lives. Furthermore, the particular role of the somatic approach in enhancing this experience of connection was a significant feature of the feedback from a number of students. As an illustrative statement, one student explained in her post questionnaire that:

> The most significant moment for me was exploring how somatic practices can be used in other aspects of our lives, such as in nature or in the classroom. I really enjoyed our trip to the National Botanic Gardens because it re-enforced a sense of connectivity between ourselves and the natural environment (ST26.PQ.Q2)

Another similarly noted that "I enjoyed the sessions spent in Botanic gardens as I felt at one with nature and felt incredibly present in somatic awareness during this time" (ST4.PQ.Q1b). For a more phenomenological insight into the somatic quality of connection that began to manifest for students, their journal reflections tended to offer an even more a more qualitative insight into the experience. Following our first session in the outdoors, one student thus noticed her quality of attention on a sensory level after the experience:

> By the end of the session, I felt much more aware and appreciative of my surroundings. Even as I walked towards my bus after, I was noticing sounds around me; the leaves rustling, the strong wind, people chatting and the noise of traffic on the road. I even noticed things like sign posts and adverts and what they said, which I normally wouldn't notice when out walking. I was much more observant of what was around me. (ST23.SJ.S4)

Furthermore, the impact of some students' internal kinaesthetic and proprioceptive awareness of the experience of connection, was also evidenced in statements such as the following:

> During this walk, I recorded myself speaking...I felt the spikiness and softness of the trees and plants in my garden. I could feel my weight changing as I walked along the grass, shifting from side to side, yielding to the ground below me. (ST35.SJ.S9)

5.5.1 Role of the Natural Environment in Deepening Somatic Awareness

While the above extracts suggest the significance of the role of the somatic approach in the students' enhanced connection with nature, just as noteworthy was the sense in which the beneficial influence of this relationship was reciprocal. In this regard the natural environment also seemed to be highly significant in supporting an enhanced experience of self and body in the students, the initial challenge of which has been alluded to previously. Indeed, the outdoor sessions seemed to represent a turning point for a number of students in terms of their engagement with and appreciation of their own physicality. As one student put it, "It was here I truly began to feel the effects of experiencing the body from within, while also experiencing nature in a new way" (ST31.PQ.Q2). In this vein, another drew on such sentiments to articulate her overall understanding of somatic education by describing it as "The whole body (externally and internally) engaging with its surroundings and coming into awareness of your senses" (ST4.PQ.Q4).

In light of the above, some students were able to pinpoint a difference in their quality of somatic engagement when we first began to move the process from the indoor to the outdoor environment. As one explained:

> In the beginning I found it difficult getting into the moment and being fully present. I feel that the room was maybe holding me back. Once we ventured outside I feel I really got into the moment a lot quicker and easier. (ST3.PQ.Q3)

Saoirse also echoed the significance of this shift to the outdoor environment. For her, it initiated an enhanced freedom to experiment in a more somatic way:

> I felt more...when we were doing the movement meditation in the *room* in the college, I felt a bit more curious and a bit giggly, and a bit more nervous to try it. But when we were outside, I felt more open to it.…I don't know what that was but I felt more *free* in doing it, and experimenting in it....(ST27.II.p2)

My own journals also reflect the way in which the outdoor environment seemed to support the students to feel their own physicality more acutely. In the early stages of the first cycle the possibility of drawing on such rich external stimuli to enhance internal awareness became more evident to me as an evocative 'way in' to the somatic process:

> I have been considering beginning, or at least combining, responses to rich external stimuli as 'a way in' to the work for the students – stories, paintings etc. and it occurred to me that the environment is another such stimulus. The more dramatic context of the Botanic Gardens seemed to provide more possibilities for response and for recognising key themes of somatic awareness in the context of the natural world. (LJ.C1.S3)

After the first session in the outdoors, the value of this decision seemed to be affirmed and I recorded that:

> …I am beginning to recognise its power over and above other forms of stimulus. There was something of the recognition of self/body in nature, the mirroring of that, alongside the power of nature to effect sensation, emotion, calm in the body that began to become clear to me during and in the days following the session (LJ.C1.S3)

Indeed, on a number of occasions within my journals, I referred to a recognition of nature as being the ultimate teacher in our process, and to the notion that "the natural environment provides a holding field that is greater than me and the students" (LJ.C1.S3). The notion of nature as teacher would be consistent with the evolving work of outdoor educators from the field of education such as Sean Blenkinsop, who I had the pleasure of

participating in a workshop with this year (Morse et al., 2021). Within his approach, he encouraged us to 'allow place to invite you in', and asked us to consider 'how might I co-teach with this place'? While it was not stated explicitly, I was struck by the embodied nature of his approach and by the potential complementarity of eco-somatics to this approach to engagement with the environment. Furthermore, it is worth noting at this juncture that many eco-somatic practitioners would similarly tend to take a post-humanist approach to their engagement with the environment, which I feel also chimes with this non-hierarchical perspective. While the students in this study did not seem to refer to it explicitly, one of the agreed outcomes of an ecosomatic approach within the literature in the longer term tends to be an embodied appreciation of one's own human existence as being a part of the natural environment rather than separate from it (Enghauser, 2007; Bauer, 2008). It strikes me that perhaps it was this reality that may have been contributing to a deeper experience of body in the students at an unconscious level during the process, in addition to the heightened aesthetic and sensory stimulation that the natural environment inevitably provides.

5.5.2 Somatic Education, the Natural Environment and Creativity

The relationship between the arts and somatics as experienced within this project will be discussed in more detail in chapter six. However, it is worth noting here that there was considerable evidence in the student data of the rich reciprocity between the somatic approach, the outdoor environment and the student's impulse for creative expression. As an illustrative statement from one student in the post questionnaires:

> The Botanic Garden session was significant to me because it showed me how we can come to use nature and our senses in nature to explore our creativity, and the impact of somatics on this creativity. (ST36.PQ.Q2)

It seems that the evocative quality of the natural environment, combined with the students' growing capacity for enhanced presence, provided a particularly stimulating cocktail for

creative endeavour. This is illustrated in one student's experience of creative writing following our initial explorations in the Botanic Gardens.

> As I sat in silence with the plant, this quiet sense of peace took over my body, allowing my mind to feel free of the worries I had before this session. With my mind clear, I found I wanted to stay and write for as long as I could, as though the presence of nature allowed me to connect with my creative side in a real way for the first time in a long time (ST31.SJ.S4)

Another student referred to her experience of developing her individual project in nature, and illustrates the complementarity of the three elements in question even further:

> It felt really therapeutic and relaxing to focus on nature and allow my senses and feelings to take over and guide my creation. It gave my mind a chance to slow down and not have to think about what I was doing or creating. I felt drawn to certain items that I had gathered. There was no particular reason for this interest and something that I would have thought to be quite ordinary suddenly stood out from everything else. (ST36.SJ.S9)

Further to previous observations, we see here further evidence of the influence of somatics on the students' capacity for embodied responsivity, and the particular way in which the rich stimulation from the outdoors seems to support such a response. This student's observation of allowing her senses and feelings to take over from her more cognitive tendencies in the process, is also echoed by another student who seems conscious of a shift in her approach to such activity. In her case, she contrasts an intention to make a 'nice' piece with waiting for objects that 'drew' her in,

> As I breathed in and out, I walked around the church yard looking for objects that drew me in. I was conscious of not looking for objects that would simply make a nice photo. Instead, I waited to see if anything sparked my interest. (ST45.SJ.S4)

The notion of nature as teacher is again evoked in the context of such statements pertaining to the relationship between somatic and creative exploration. I feel this is well summed up by the following excerpt, which I have taken the liberty of including from a non-interviewee assignment:

> I yielded to the hard stone slab beneath me, fully appreciating my interaction with both the ground and sky, like we experienced when observing the baby learning to walk, and the dancers engaging with the floor through push and pull. I again 'forest bathed' , really drinking in my surroundings - the sounds of the birds, the feel of the sun hot on my neck, the slight breeze in my hair and the cold, hard ground beneath me - and through adopting somatic approaches I had become accustomed to, creativity found me (ST22.AS.P2)

Returning to these statements again after engaging in a number of iterations of this chapter, I have since begun to recognise a sense of what might be referred to as the transpersonal or spiritual in the above statements. For me, these statements seem to acknowledge a sense of mystery in the student experience, in terms of the way in which they seem to feel drawn into creative engagement by a force beyond their own individuality or by a visceral aliveness in their relational connection with the environment. The sense of slipping into a non-cognitive state as evoked in a number of these statements is interesting to note in this regard. Such observations are obviously challenging to put into words, but they do chime with experiences I have also had during eco-somatic practice, and with the growing literature that is evolving in relation to the potential for transpersonal or spiritual experience within somatic practice (se section 2.8.3). In light of the above, I would suggest that somatic engagement in the natural environment offers rich potential for contact with such experience.

5.5.3 Reconsidering Pedagogical Issues in relation to Environmental Education

In terms of the impact of such experience on the student's understanding of pedagogy more widely, a number of the students contrasted their experience with previous educational experiences in the outdoors. For one student, she contrasted it with an approach which offers facts and figures about the content of the external environment, to one that offers an experience of wonder.

> I think it's more just here some facts, heres' some figures, let's go outside kind of...which does build appreciation in its own way, but I don't think it actually kind of causes like that sense of…wonder, kind of, oh my Gosh isn't it incredible that we're here...(ST19.II.p13)

Eleanor similarly recognised the difference between an approach to the outdoors that is information oriented and one which is somatic in orientation. In relation to her experience of the former, she explains that:

> the focus is an awful lot on *external* things….Whereas with the somatisation, the focus I felt was internal, it was *me* as a whole, it was my *body*, it was my *mind* and it made me realize you know, *you* are your own kind of *resource.* There doesn't always have to be a huge list of things that you're going to build into a lesson., when have you all here in you know, mind-body.. (ST38.II.p16)

Saoirse, explained that for her there was a significant compliment between this module and another college module which took place in the outdoors, particularly in terms of how this module influenced her motivation for deeper and continued engagement,

> we had x as a module, and we were doing gardening….and at first I didn't get as much into it, but after my experience with the outdoors [*in this module?*] and with how it made me feel, I felt *really* into it and really strongly about getting the children outdoors and moving in their learning and you know, I feel like they'd get a different,

> like a different *experience* from their learning if they're moving and they're in it into it in a way that's not sitting in a chair, you know (ST27.II.p27)

She further went on to clarify that "I think that my experience of movement in *this* module reflected then on my feelings for *that* module" (ST27.II.p27).

The student statements pertaining to the outdoor environment above reflect many of the benefits outlined by somatic practitioners who tend to adopt an eco-somatic approach within their pedagogy (see section 2.8.5). These include an enhanced experience of connection with the natural world, an enhanced experience of the reciprocity which exists between human beings and their environment, and the encouragement of a relational rather than hierarchical or dualistic ontological perspective on learning about this domain. In the first instance, I would consider such understandings on an embodied level to have obvious relevance for the education of primary school teachers in terms of their approach to curriculum. For example, to value an experience of wonder in the natural environment over the collection of related objective information would seem to represent significant progress in understanding in my view, not least in terms of the attitude of care and potential activism it may generate in the longer term.

However, it is equally important to note the deeper impact of the natural environment on one's embodiment process and experience of self as experienced by the students. From the perspective of working with relative beginners in this field, and the reported challenges that they tend to experience in this regard, the data suggests that this represented an important element of the pedagogical process. Enghauser's understanding of the value of an eco-somatic approach is evoked here, wherein she highlights the necessary sensitization and flexibility that such engagement brings to the education of dancers, both as artists and as global citizens. (Enghauser, 2007). She asserts that:

> an ecosomatic approach to training the dancing body has the potential to yield a more sensitive, and thus a more capable and versatile dance artist who is prepared to contribute positively to the art form of dance and, ultimately, to the world at large. (Enghauser, 2007, p. 89)

Such benefits are also echoed by educational philosopher Christine Doddington, who regards body consciousness as representing one of the most significant and overlooked benefits of children working in the outdoors from an educational perspective (Doddington, 2018). She explains that "Being outside can become naturally distinctive for urging the body into conscious awareness" (Doddington, 2018, p. 5), and that such awareness is central to meaningful aesthetic and educational engagement from the Deweyan perspective of continued motivation and expanding habits of perception. In light of her reflections on Shusterman's somaesthetic theory, she argues for a further appreciation of benefits of outdoor education from an embodiment perspective for children's overall education (Doddington, 2014, 2018).

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed experiences of personal and relational identity as they were evoked, challenged, and extended in the context of the participants' engagement with somatic education principles and practice. This discussion was supported by my engagement with literature from the fields of somatic education and teacher education, which underscored the particular capacity of somatic practice for engagement with such issues, and for potentially addressing related concerns within the teacher education process.

Notwithstanding the evident challenges involved for both students and lecturer in this context, the data and related discussion in the earlier sections pointed to the value of drawing on somatic practices to engage with the embodied self, in order to experience one's personal and professional dispositions and understandings more holistically. In this regard, the

discussion acknowledged the necessary challenge and achievement of accessing one's somatic sensitivity and responsivity in the first instance, particularly in light of the dominant cognitive orientation of Western systems of culture and education. The challenges experienced by younger people and those of a more generalist non-dance background were also acknowledged in this regard. The achievement of being able to sensitively witness and language such experience was also given some attention, with a view to a more conscious engagement with one's experience, and thereby with the potential for expansion and change.

One pattern of interest, which seemed to become more conscious through engagement with the challenges of this work, and through engagement with the aesthetic processes of this module, was the continuum between maintaining control and letting go. The potential significance of such an awareness in oneself will be addressed more explicitly in the next chapter in the context of its relevance for teaching and for facilitating others. However, for now it is worth noting the way in which sensory engagement accompanied by a compassionate witnessing of experience, seemed to be particularly supportive in allowing such an awareness to come to the surface. Indeed, the chapter highlighted a number of distinctive features of somatic practice which seemed to be supportive in relation to all of the emerging capacities referred to in these chapters. The role of engagement with sensory and movement principles through the modalities of somatic yoga, mindful meditation and body-mind centering was highlighted in terms of their capacity to scaffold more differentiated feeling and consciousness within the body. Principles from the field of authentic movement were also drawn upon in terms of supporting one's capacity to listen to and language embodied experience. Significantly this chapter provided evidence of the developmental process which took place for participants in relation to the somatic learning process in question. I would consider such evidence to be particularly insightful in light of questions

which have been posed within the education literature regarding whether somatic intelligence is indeed a capacity that can be taught and learned.

I would suggest that the data and related discussion pertaining to the significance of the relational dimension of the somatic education process also affirms the assertions in recent somatic literature that while access to it is subjective, one's deeper experience of the body is essentially relational in nature. This is demonstrated in the considerable data which offers evidence of a deeper experience of connection arising from somatic experience. In many cases the experience of connection in question extended to a feeling of greater attunement and responsivity with others and with the external environment, the specific relevance of which for teaching was particularly illustrated in the context of my own experiences as teacher during this process. In addition to such experiential references to the relational dimension of the process, the students' broader capacity to reflect on the subtlety, relevance, and contributory factors in relation to such experience at a conscious level was very striking in my view. Given the long-standing and still increasing attention to the relational dimension of teaching and learning in the literature, and the challenge of addressing such subtleties meaningfully within the teacher education process, I regard this as important progress.

The final section of this chapter acknowledged the way in which the natural environment offered a particularly rich context for somatic practice, and supported and enhanced the capacities discussed thus far. In this regard, the participant experiences seemed to reflect many of the benefits outlined by somatic practitioners who tend to adopt an eco-somatic approach within their pedagogy. These included an enhanced experience of connection with the natural world, an enhanced experience of the reciprocity which exists between human beings and their environment, and the encouragement of a relational rather than hierarchical or dualistic ontological perspective on learning within this domain. Of particular note in this regard was the way in which the natural environment seemed to

generate a deeper experience of the body, and also the way in which the eco-somatic approach seemed to provide greater access to creativity. Many of the above elements were reflected in the students' observations about the style of pedagogy that they had experienced in this context, and in their awareness of a contrast with prior experiences in this regard.

In the next chapter, I continue to engage with the research questions pertaining to the lived experience of engaging with somatic education principles in this context, and ultimately with exploring its potential relevance in the formation of student teachers. To this end, I explore more deeply the ways in which the issues of identity and attunement which were experienced through the soma at a subjective and relational level, were also reflected in and influenced by the aesthetic and creative processes of the module. The ways in which such knowledge became more explicit for the students in terms of its relevance for pedagogical practice will also be addressed.

CHAPTER SIX: EXPRESSION AND REGULATION IN AESTHETIC AND PEDAGOGICAL PROCESS

> You do not have to be good.
> You do not have to walk on your knees
> For a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
> You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves.
>
> *The Wild Geese* by Mary Oliver (Oliver, 2004)

In this chapter I continue to present and discuss the findings of this study. The first part of the chapter considers the extent to which the arts offered a particularly conducive site for somatic engagement within the teacher education context. It also considers the extent to which their combination with somatics seems to have been critical to the various benefits to understanding and disposition that have been outlined within these chapters. I open the chapter by firstly examining the experience and impact of the distinct somatic emphasis within the aesthetic processes of the module. I give particular attention to the relationship between somatics, flow, and by implication artistry, as it seems to have been experienced and observed in various forms throughout the process. The particular role of enhanced body consciousness within such experience, which was highlighted within both the lecturer and student data, is also given particular attention in this regard. I then go on to consider evidence of broader shifts in understanding and disposition that were discerned in relation to both the arts and teaching, arising from such engagement. Throughout the chapter I consider these experiences and emerging theoretical connections in light of relevant literature from the somatic, arts and teacher education traditions, and their inherent values as outlined within chapters two and three.

While the first part of the chapter explores the relationship between somatic education and creative *expression* as it was experienced during the module, the second part explores the

significance of the *regulatory* impact that the somatic education emphasis was also demonstrated to have had within aesthetic and pedagogical experience. In this regard I firstly draw attention to the nature of such regulatory experience as observed by participants, and then to the related understandings of the nature of the body-mind which seemed to have ensued from this experience. I also draw attention to the intentional strategies of a body-mind nature, which participants gradually learned to call upon as the module progressed, and finally to the demonstrated relevance of such understandings and practices for teaching and learning.

While the self-regulation section of the chapter, among other benefits, illustrates the significance of such learning for the agency of the teacher, the final section explores the more overarching theme of empowerment as it was evidenced across many of the themes of this study. In this regard, I consider the demonstrated significance of both the sensory and pedagogical elements of somatic education processes in relation to the theme of empowerment. I also consider the relevance of such an impact for a student teacher's development at this particular moment in their education, and for their future roles as teachers.

6.1 Somatic Education and Aesthetic Engagement

6.1.1 Shifting Experiences of Aesthetic Process: Possibilities of Artistry

While some students indicated that they had some prior experience with mindfulness or yoga from a well-being perspective, the new dimension for many was the linking of mindful activity with arts-based practice. Like others, Brian commented on the newness of this relationship, and attempted to expand on the nature of the combined experience in question:

> So I suppose…I've done art in the past and did it in school and things, but never quite in that *way*, like trying to engage so much with the fluid body one that we did, like

> sort of tying *together* your body and then trying to create something with the sort of *mindset* that you create with the water and things. (ST48.II.p2)

As hinted at within this statement, many students observed a shift in the quality of their aesthetic experience arising from the somatic influence. As Linda concluded, it "was like looking at it from a new angle" (ST44.II.p2). In the first instance, many observed an enhanced experience of "fluidity" or "flow" within their creative process. In their post-questionnaire, one thus commented that "I was in flow during the painting and artistic movement pieces" (ST2.PQ.Q1b), and another that "I enjoyed discovering my own creative flow and want to further explore this" (ST18.PQ.Q5). In her interview, Rachel contrasted this fluid quality of engagement with her previous experiences:

> It just brings fluidity into my creativity like everything just *flows* rather than kind of really *good*, and then just getting a *block*, and then being able to do it, and getting a *block*. Everything *flows* a bit more. (ST25.II.p16)

It is interesting to note the more nuanced observations from some students about the particular nature of the experiences of flow that they had encountered. For example, Keela observed that the body and senses seemed to have been taking a more central role, which seemed to have been significant to the more fluid and process-oriented nature of her aesthetic experience. Commenting on the session on 'the fluid body', which clearly represented a pivotal experience for many in relation to this theme, she recollected that:

> A very significant moment for me was as I closed my eyes to paint my picture, not knowing what the process would entail or what the product was to be. Instead I allowed the senses of my body to take over and I trusted my own body to create it's own piece of art. (ST12.PQ.1b)

Furthermore, in spite of the challenges of self-consciousness noted in the previous chapter, the gradual sense of freedom that was experienced within the body during such artistic

processes was also commented on and considered significant by a number of students. In this regard, one student noted experiencing the "courage to bring attention to body movements and move in a way that is free and comfortable for me" (ST43.PQ.Q1b). In her interview, Rachel referred to the significance of a similar freedom in the body in more detail.

> we were partners in that seaweed dance activity and I really let myself go in that, and that was....I think maybe that could have been the first time that I really let myself go. And I really just, like I loved that so much...because all I was thinking about was kind of the seaweed or whatever, I don't know, but I wasn't thinking about my body or how I looked or I wasn't paranoid, I didn't care if anyone was looking at me. (ST25.II.p11)

A freedom from restriction in the body, and a related tendency to allow the impulses of the body to lead in the process, was also reflected in another student's attempt to articulate their overall understanding of the nature and value of somatic education. In this regard, this student reflected:

> It's really about giving the body what it wants. In terms of stretching, in terms of art or even in terms of drama. It allows the body to become much more free and self-aware. (ST34.PQ.Q4)

Some students interestingly emphasised the expression of self that can ensue from being able to listen to and respond from the body in this manner. Saoirse for example described somatic education as "Expressing yourself creatively from the experiences you feel in your body" (ST27.PQ.Q4). Brian, offered a similar understanding when he described somatic education as:

> forging a clearer stream of communication with your body and allowing that to guide you to a certain extent. It is something which can be applied to all aspects of life to make you a more expressive version of yourself. (ST48.PQ.Q4)

Such statements are interesting to me in the context of much literature within arts-based practice, that contends that a sense of the artist's 'voice' or expression of individuality represents one of the key factors that distinguishes a heightened quality of artistry within a piece of work (see section 2.9.2). As a somatic practitioner, I would consider the relationship between a freedom of bodily expression and access to one's artistic voice to represent an important insight.

Overall, the students' references to experiences of flow in their creative process, and their description of the nature of that experience, do indeed echo many of the characteristics of Csikszentmihalyi's pioneering research into this phenomenon (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). They chime with what he refers to as 'optimal experience', which includes features such as absorption in present moment experience, the merging of action and awareness, deep concentration, and the absence of self-consciousness. While much of his research focuses on the significance of such states for the practice of living, Csikszentmihalyi was also interested, as others have continued to be, in their relevance for the creative process (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). With this in mind, it is interesting to note that the student and lecturer references in the next section offer evidence of being in a particularly conducive 'state' for creative endeavour arising from the somatic influence.

The above participant statements are also noteworthy in the context of an increased concern within the arts education literature to distinguish aesthetic discipline from a fundamental quality of 'artistry', which may or may not exist beneath it. Artistry, as we have seen, is defined by a particular capacity to be responsive to the emergent, exploratory, and sensory nature of aesthetic process in the absence of 'rule' (Batson et al., 2012; Dunn, 2016; Eisner, 2002a; Lutzker, 2012). As the students do not explicitly use the term 'artistry' in their references, but were more likely to refer to being in a state of fluidity or flow, I would draw

attention to what I would consider to be the overlap between the nature of flow and artistry as it is described within such literature.

As also discussed in chapter three, a lack of acknowledgement of the role of the body in one's capacity for artistry is a significant concern for a number of authors in the arts education field, as are the adverse effects of dualistic theoretical frameworks for understanding and implementation within this field (see section 3.3.2). I would consider the nuance of the students' allusions to the embodied nature of their experiences of flow in aesthetic process to be quite striking this this regard. Bowman and Powell conclude, like Dewey, that the more dominant cognitivist and dualistic approach is more likely to generate a two-stage model whereby the essence of product is conceived in *advance* of bodily engagement. It thereby reproduces conventional outcomes and misses the nuance and originality of individual and collaborative expression (Bowman & Powell, 2007).

As reflected in chapter two, concerns about the limitations of such a two-stage model, have also represented a preoccupation within the somatic dance field. In this context such a teacher-led 'demonstrate and do' approach is also considered to obstruct the 'artistry' that can derive from a more internally driven sensory orientation in the present moment (Dragon, 2015). In the somatic education literature, artistry is considered to fundamentally derive from the way in which such an orientation facilitates the emerging 'voice' and individuality of the student, as reflected in Saoirse and Brian's understandings above (see section 2.9.2). In summary the student descriptions above suggest that the somatic emphasis offered them a striking alternative to the aforementioned dualistic approaches to the arts, and that they perhaps thereby encountered moments of artistry therein.

6.1.2 Understanding the Influence of Somatic Principles and Practices on Experiences of Artistry

I found it interesting to note in number of student statements, not only an awareness of the embodied nature of artistry and flow as illustrated above, but a conscious awareness and understanding of how to *intentionally* access such experiences through explicit engagement with somatic principles and practices. Such a conscious shift in approach is reflected in Mary's observation that "I can be quite fussy and particular so I tried to leave that part go and just tried to feel what to do instead of what I should do" (ST39.SJ.S8). It was also reflected in Keela's statement quoted previously that, "Instead I allowed the senses of my body to take over and I trusted my own body to create it's own piece of art" (ST12.PQ.1b). As another student expressed it:

> I found the exploration of the somatic principles and our bodies really significant to me. I felt that once I had experienced these through meditation and movement, I was able to further explore them through creative processes such as the painting and music creation. (ST36.PQ.Q1)

Linda offered a more specific elucidation of her understanding of the role of preparatory somatic explorations in supporting the heightened quality of her aesthetic experiences during the module. In the first instance, they seemed to offer her a more agentic and effective way to access her creative 'spark'. As a post-graduate student, she had had some prior theatre and creative writing experience before commencing the course. In light of this experience, she explained that she had previously assumed that creativity ensued from a process of waiting for a spark,

> I'd always think that creativity is kind of like, it's a *spark*….like I'd always kind of be waiting for something to happen. Em, whereas I suppose this kind of challenged that a bit. (ST44.II.p13)

In her assignment she further unpacked the particular way in which her engagement with such preparation affected her experience:

> I found when I connected with myself and made that space, that it was a lot easier to create something as opposed to what I was doing before which was effectively waiting for a burst of inspiration. This experience led me to a better flow in terms of my writing. I really felt like I was writing from my whole self. (ST44.AS.p3)

We see here again allusions to experiences of flow and holistic expression, and the significance she attaches to her intentional connection with the body in this regard. It is interesting to note the similar significance attributed to a preparatory movement exploration for another student during the fluid body session:

> Transitioning from moving along with seaweed to painting was one of the most significant moments for me because I fully understood the term 'fluidity' when my hand moved across the page, seemingly with a life of its own. (ST45.PQ.Q1b)

We also see in this statement a recognition of the capacity for the movement explorations to evoke a more embodied response within a range of art forms, and the students' continued tendency to remark on this as a new or qualitatively different 'way in' to aesthetic experience.

It is worth stating at this juncture that some students went into more depth than others in terms of attempting to unpack the particular qualities that the distinctive somatic approach seemed to offer their creative process, and to understand the particular significance of the physical dimension in this regard. Making specific reference to his exploration with water prior to working with paint, Edward observed that:

> It brought me to different *physical* state. I suppose you could say the mental state, but physical as well, because it was *from* the physical body that the mental state *came*… So that's what *I* think it is, I think it comes from the body *initially*. (ST2.II.p27)

As we can see here, he was particularly curious about the impact of initial contact with the body in terms of the way it seemed generate access to a wider holistic engagement during the creative process. In his description of his experience of writing poetry in the Botanic gardens, he further reflected on the centrality of such physical engagement in terms of its impact on the emotional and linguistic quality of the work that ensued for him:

> it *really* came from the physical body, rather than...rather than kind of thinking - alright, I'm going to put this adjective in here, and then I'm going to structure it this way, it was much more from how you *felt* at the time rather than how you were *thinking*. It was more of an emotional connection...(ST2.II.p12)

For me, it would seem that this statement is not only hinting at the more cognitive orientation of his prior tendencies, but also more subtly at the orientation of the system that he was educated in. It also acknowledges a strong relationship between physicality and emotion, which is a core premise of many somatic approaches, particularly those of a therapeutic nature.

Brian also acknowledged related discoveries in terms of access to his own creativity during this process, particularly in terms of the impact of freshness and originality that he discovered within this approach. In this respect, he noted a difference in effect when he initiated the process from a place of feeling rather than effort:

> I think there's something very...unique about something that's just what you…like what you feel in the moment and sort of fresh, and like whether it's drawing or whatever it is, music even I think some people can sometimes come up with something sort of more on the spot, and not so over-worked, and it can have a certain quality to it, which is quite different. (ST48.II.p17)

As he reflected on in his own tendencies further in this regard, he noted the way in which the somatic approach seemed to be helping him to ultimately focus more on process than product. This represented an inclination that was quite new for him:

> So it was good to try and yeah, I think in some of the things we did, it was kind of trying to let go, and actually just focus on process rather than the product, which is not something I usually do. (ST48.II.p17)

In light of the discussion on identity in chapter five, it is interesting to note that for him, like others, the module experience seemed to have provoked a recognition of a personal tendency for perfectionism within the creative process. This recognition of a relationship between somatics, process and the challenge of perfectionism, was also echoed by another student when reflecting on the significance of the fluid body session.

> The painting session was definitely significant for me as I realised it was not all about the end product either. I really started to appreciate the creative process here. I think if I hadn't done this module, and be asked to paint like we did, I would have got very frustrated and annoyed that my work didn't come out 'perfect' or like someone elses. (ST23.PQ.1b)

The content of my own journals also resonates with the students' observations that the creative process was significantly influenced by the inclusion of somatic education principles and practices in various ways. It is interesting to note my own echoing of Edward's observation that somatic engagement encourages a particularly conducive 'state' for creative endeavour in this regard. After one of the unexpected environmental disruptions to the sessions in the Botanic gardens for example, I observed that:

> I am becoming more conscious of how delicate and layered the somatic process is in terms of moving into a 'state' that I have found to be particularly conducive to

> creativity. Interruptions of the 'flow', or significant gaps in the scaffolding process seem to effect things significantly. (LJ.C2.S4)

The allusion in the latter part of this excerpt to the nuanced impact of somatic scaffolding within the creative process, is echoed elsewhere in my journals. For example, I noted the impact of such scaffolding on the quality of the student's engagement with masks in another session. I here contrasted my more recent somatic approach with previous attempts at facilitating such drama-based activity with students, whereby:

> I had felt it needed more scaffolding. The breaking it down into stages, each one encouraging a deeper connection with the mask through also engaging with one's own body seemed to support the process much more today. (LJ.C1.S5)

I ultimately noticed in my facilitation of this and other drama-based processes both within and outside of this module the impact of an increased "attention to the internal" (LJ.C1.S5). Reflecting on the enhanced quality of my teacher questions during another session, I noted their somatic nature and the impact they had on the potential for a deeper embodied experience for students.

> The focus of such a question I think helps with deeper personal engagement and exploration in a given moment… the challenge of it, the potential for exploration in it, the visceral nature of it, the specificity of it….all contrasting with more general invitations to 'come in to your body' which can be very vague for a beginner. (LJ.C2.S2)

My experience as an arts educator in this context is that while students may enjoy the outcomes described above in the context of a facilitated college workshop, they may not always be conscious of the factors that influence the quality of such experience, and do not always know how to generate the relevant conditions independently. In the student and lecturer reflections above, I would suggest that we see a very conscious engagement not only

with the influence of somatic principles and practices on aesthetic activity, but also with the fundamental nature of embodiment itself and its role in teaching and learning. Edward and Brian's recognition of the significant impact of initiating aesthetic activity from the physical body on the overall body-mind system, is quite sophisticated for their stage of development in my view. I would suggest that it reflects the embodied nature of mind as understood within embodied cognition theory, and from the field of cognitive neuroscience (see section 3.2). For students whose overarching focus is on understanding and appreciating the fundamental nature and nuance of teaching and learning, I would suggest that such understandings of embodiment represent a significant achievement for undergraduate students.

Also quite striking was the way in which such principles and practices seemed to draw these students into a more conscious engagement with some of the core continua and qualities at the heart of the concept of 'artistry' within arts education. The distinctions they make between a process and product orientation, and indeed their allusions to the role of the body in this regard, are noteworthy. Engagement with such questions and understandings at an experiential level is central to the related importance that the arts education field attaches to one's ability to take an improvisatory approach to aesthetic process, and indeed to the facilitation of it (Powell & Lajevic, 2011; Sawyer, 2000, 2008). However, while such nuance of understanding and approach would be considered essential to the education of arts educators (NCCA, 1999), these tend to represent challenging areas of understanding at a tacit level for many student teachers in my experience.

Such understandings, derived as they were from personal experience, affirm the conviction at the heart of Shusterman's somaesthetics, that a dedicated somatic emphasis is likely to significantly enhance one's quality of aesthetic experience (Shusterman, 2004, 2009, 2020). Furthermore, the data discussed above would seem to reflect two of the key goals of somaesthetic practice in Shusterman's view, "to make the quality of one's

somatic experience more aesthetically rich and pleasing, and to make one's awareness of that experience more acutely perceptive and insightfully enlightening" (Shusterman, 2020, p. 249). The considerable evidence of the latter in the student statements, bodes well for their continued evolution as both artists and teachers in my view. As we have seen in chapter three, somaesthetic theory is gaining significant attention among a number of arts educators, and educators more generally, in recent years (Bowman & Powell, 2007; Doddington, 2014, 2018; Paparo, 2016; Powell, 2010). I propose that the findings of this study offer insightful phenomenological evidence to affirm the relevance of such theory in this particular context.

6.1.3 Revisiting Understandings and Beliefs about the Teaching of the Arts in Education

Mindful of the qualitative shifts the students recognised in their own creative process during the module, it is interesting to note that the experience seems to have also generated some critical analysis of their prior experiences of the arts in primary and secondary school. In addition, it seems to have had some influence on their aspirations for their future practice as arts educators. Such statements are particularly interesting in view of the literature about the significance of student beliefs on the quality of their practice, and the oftentimes intransigent nature of such beliefs, rooted as they are in personal experience (Beijaard et al., 2004; Beijaard & Meijer, 2017; Bullough, 1997; Korthagen, 2004).

Keela illustrates such critique in her reference to the overly structured approach she felt she had encountered at second level:

> like I did art for leaving cert, and my leaving cert teacher used to hate the way I did art because I never would want to sketch it out first, or plan the writing, or get a ruler out, like that just didn't make sense to me, I just wanted to paint..and she could never understand that because she was the opposite end, where she would plan every single bit and have every bit calculated, and I would always prefer to do everything free hand. (ST12.II.P7)

Like others, she seemed to regard the approach taken during the module as offering an alternative to such a strong product orientation in the early stages of a creative process. This was articulated by a number of students in statements such as the following,

> I think when there is a finished product for the children to reproduce, despite best efforts, this takes away the element of creativity for the children. From now on, when I start a lesson I will be asking myself how can I allow for the children's creativity in this lesson? (ST20.PQ.Q5b)

Furthermore, some students seemed to link the internal and process orientation of the somatic approach with a deeper acknowledgement of the individuality of the participant. In her interview, Keela went on to explain:

> so I would prefer to allow children to have that kind of creative spin and you know not get them to do all template art, and having it looking….more whatever is good to them, or whatever they feel. (ST12.II.p7)

In the same thread, she goes on to consider the negative impact of the way in which she feels art tends to be interpreted by both teachers and children in schools,

> oh that's good or that's bad art, I feel like I think that happens in the classroom a lot, like the children will say oh I'm bad at art, like I don't think you can be bad at art, like everyone is so different. (ST12.II.p7)

The question of whether one can be good or bad at art raised above, and indeed whether and how the arts should be assessed, became a particular area of concern for a number of other students. In her own personal experience, Claire reflected on the negative impact of perceiving herself as not being good at the arts in school:

> …I really do enjoy like painting or writing or whatever, but I kind of stopped because I'm not that good at it...but it kind of hit me that I don't really *care* if I'm not good at it, like it's about whether you enjoy it or not. (ST19.II.p25)

When asked to expand further on these thoughts, she explained that as a result of the module she questioned:

> why would I not do something because I'm not good at it, like if I enjoy doing it, I should do it anyway...so long as it not damaging me or someone else, I should just do it anyway... (ST19.II.p25)

While I am aware that there are a variety of views on assessment of the arts in education generally, it is clear that many of the views expressed by the students above are aligned with an understanding of the arts fundamentally as a form of self-expression, and thereby challenging and possibly counter-productive to assess. In Eleanor's view for example, "it *really* kind of shows people's *own* sense of purpose and identity" and in this regard, she ponders how teachers might most effectively respond to or assess such work (S38.II.p11). Another student expresses this concern more strongly by stating that "Children need to be able to express themselves in their own way and they cannot be assessed on this creativity" (ST35.PQ.Q5b). In the context of the outcomes orientation of the current educational climate, it strikes me that these less conventional views on assessment may have arisen from the various ways in which students were encouraged and facilitated to lead and interpret their own creative processes throughout the module. In this regard they are likely to reflect the internal and student led orientation of somatic pedagogy as highlighted in chapter two (see section 2.9.2). They perhaps also reflect considerable care on my part to reduce their reliance on my opinion, and to augment their own stewardship and evaluation of their own process.

In terms of summative statements about the influence of this process on their future roles as arts educators, one student concluded that the experience caused her to consider and question more deeply her overall approach to the arts:

> Before this I had never really thought much about my approach, so it has definitely helped me to question myself in many ways and how I would go about teaching the arts. (ST41.PQ.Q5b)

More particularly, a number of students felt the experience led them to consider a more embodied and holistic approach to this area of the curriculum, and while it was not always stated explicitly, seemed to consider this feature to be important to many of its positive benefits. Such statements are particularly interesting, in light of the calls from the arts education field discussed earlier, for a more embodied understanding of the arts, and furthermore that the body should be foregrounded in arts education practice (see section 3.3.2). For example, one student questioned her time allocation for the arts in this regard:

> the module definitely had me asking myself do I allocate enough time for creativity in the classroom, and if I should include more activities in relation to embodiment during the Arts lessons. (ST23.PQ.Q5b)

In a similar vein, Brian also envisaged "using movement practice as part of the arts" (ST48.PQ.Q5a). Another student anticipated the potential impact of her intention for a more embodied approach to the arts in terms of its potential to generate more freedom in the children's creative expression:

> It will also help to inform my teaching of the arts as I think many of the activities we engaged in (movement etc.) may help to allow the children to engage more freely with creative exercises. (ST31.PQ.Q5a)

In this light it is interesting to note that May specified the value of movement and the senses in children's learning more generally, in terms of her intentions for future practice:

> It is relevant to teaching in many ways. First, I have an appreciation for the importance of movement and the senses in learning, and will therefore aim to incorporate that into my planning and teaching… (ST47.PQ.5a)

In light of the principles of teacher identity theory and practice discussed in chapter three, I would consider it particularly promising, that such critical engagement with the role and nature of the arts in education, seems to be arising predominantly from embodied personal experience rather than theoretical treatise (see section 3.4.3). The echoing of content between this section and the content from chapter five on their own personal experience of the module, would certainly suggest a relationship in this regard. Furthermore, I would consider the translation of such critical engagement with their own beliefs about the arts, into clear intentions for future pedagogical practice, to be highly significant.

6.1.4 Dynamic Relationship between Somatics, Aesthetics, and Teacher Disposition

While the early sections of this chapter focused on the influence of somatic principles and practices on the students' aesthetic experience, my own journals suggest that the relationship between both of these elements within the module seemed to be very dynamic and reciprocal in terms of effect. As an illustration of this growing awareness, while I previously noted the deepening influence of somatic practice on my approach to facilitating the mask session in cycle one, I also made the further observation of the same session that:

> I feel that I am perhaps accessing a more concrete example of the potential role of drama/fiction in supporting somatic movement awareness and the role of somatic movement awareness in supporting drama practice. This is an example of something I have more intuited than been able to articulate to date. (LJ.C1.S5)

This interrelationship was particularly interesting to observe in light of Eisner's assertions about the significance of the role of aesthetic practice itself in generating somatic intelligence (Eisner, 2002a, 2002b, 2003). In the following paragraphs I attempt to unpack in more detail the nature and value of the relationship in question as it evolved within the development of the module.

In my journal reflections on the creative projects in all three cycles, I regularly noted the influence of the aesthetic frame on the students' quality of engagement with somatic education. I noted during cycle one for example, that the initiation of the site-specific performance process seemed to give the students a clearer focus and motivation for somatic engagement. Here, I reflected:

> I am also getting more enthusiastic about the frame that is emerging within this course for engaging with: somatic principles. I can see that they are engaged by the idea of developing a creative piece and sharing it. It seems to respond to concerns I have had in relation to issues of relevance from their perspective. (LJ.C1.S7)

In light of such statements, I would suggest that the aesthetic frame provided a clearer short-term motivation for somatic engagement in this context, due to the increasingly evident complementarity between the two genres, and thereby the relevance for their own aesthetic practice and their preparation as arts educators. As I noted in the same extract, "The importance of having a specific practical context of immediate relevance in order to facilitate an understanding of broader relevance is becoming more apparent" (LJ.C1.S7).

The data also suggests that the dynamic between aesthetic frame and somatic education, particularly within the site-specific performance project, offered a rich context for engaging with issues of teacher disposition. The multifaceted value of a student teacher's engagement with theatrical form is one that I have long considered important, particularly in light of its inherent parallels with the teaching and learning context. However, its relevance seemed to be even more persuasive in light of the somatic lens which was brought to this process. In the first instance, I became significantly more conscious of the inherent sensory requirements of theatrical form, and its implicit pedagogical objective of generating sensory and holistic engagement in others.

> The parallel between the theatre/audience relationship and the teacher/student relationship is in the background here, as is the necessary sensory awareness which goes into devising a theatre piece. The appropriateness of devised theatre as a preparatory step for teaching is becoming ever clearer to me in light of the above. (LJ.C2.S5)

Reflecting on such a statement further at this juncture, I feel that my heightened awareness of the somatic nature of theatrical form, and the parallels between good theatre and good teaching in this particular regard, certainly served to affirm the value of the somatic-aesthetic relationship within this module.

While the relationship clearly had relevance for their development as arts educators, the other pervasive thread in my reflections focused on its relevance for their education as teachers more generally. Indeed, the significance of the development of a somatic sensibility in the broader education of a primary school teacher represented a core underlying priority of the emerging aesthetic trajectory of the module. In this light, the extent to which I regarded the creative frame as providing a rich and engaging pretext for embodiment, is illustrated in the following reflection on the students' engagement with the site-specific performance process:

> The need for attunement and somatic awareness is inherent in the task. They are given a practical situation within which to try out these approaches independent of me. This, and their necessary consideration of the audience's deeper engagement with the environment, also moves them gently into the role of facilitators of this work…..facilitators of greater presence and sensory engagement of others, and it allows them to experience the outcome of that. Somehow this seems to weave the emphasis on their personal development in this area with their future roles as teachers. (LJ.C1.S7)

As the last line of the above observation indicates, the development of somatic sensibilities in the person of the student teacher became a fundamental tenet upon which all other potential educational and aesthetic benefits of the module rested. The creative lens clearly offered a rich and provocative frame through which this could take place. Indeed, there was always an eye in my facilitation, not only to the artistic process itself, but also to the way in which it could contribute to the underlying embodiment process of the student teacher. Towards the end of the first cycle, I concluded that:

> The devised theatre/site specific performance frame seems like a helpful way to develop a sensibility in this area, which I think is one of the best aspirations I can have for this course (LJ.C1.S7)

These evolving understandings clearly resonate with Eisner's contention that the preparation of a teacher would be significantly enhanced by considering it in a similar light to the preparation of an artist, particularly in light of the significant qualitative intelligence that he considers essential to both professions (Eisner, 2002a). The above observations more particularly reflect the proposal from him and others that such qualitative intelligence requires a distinctively embodied sensibility in order to nurture the relational, and improvisatory dimensions of a teacher's craft (Andrews, 2018; Eisner, 2002a; Van Manen, 2016a). However, it would seem that not only did the arts provide a conducive frame for engagement with such issues at an embodied level, but that the somatic education principles practices helped me as teacher educator to acknowledge and foreground the role of the body more intentionally within the aesthetic process. It also helped me to both understand and augment the value of the somatic-aesthetic relationship in the teacher education process more generally. I would consider these observations to be significant in light of the dearth of attention to the body within arts education as referenced previously (see section 3.3.2). I would also consider them to be significant in light of the broader need to acknowledge the

centrality of the arts to the teacher education process at a time of an increased focus on accountability and instrumentalism.

6.1.5 Observing Emerging Dispositional Orientations in Aesthetic Practice

In light of the above, my observations of the students' engagement with the 'audience' on the presentation days would seem to affirm the impact of the somatic education focus on the aesthetic, pedagogical and relational quality of their work with others. After the site-specific presentations in cycle one for example, I was particularly struck by "the way in which the students experimented with the meaning and facilitation of the notion of 'audience'" (LJ.C1.S9).

> They wove fabric between audience members, and floated it above them, in some cases allowing the touch of the fabric to be part of the process. They invited the audience into movement with them. They moved the audience into different relationship with the aspect of the environment in question. (LJ.C1.S9)

As a further illustration, I noted the particular way in which one group facilitated the audience into a more embodied relationship with place, using distinct sensory and somatic guidance:

> They brought us into awareness of our breath, weight, and sound. After a period where they asked us to close our eyes and raise our chins upward, they invited us to open our eyes, providing the vista of cherry blossom branches against the blue sky. I was struck by the aesthetic and sensory sensitivity which such work demonstrated, in addition to the obvious care for the experience of the audience. It excites me to consider how such a sensibility may translate in their facilitation of children in the classroom? (LJ.C1.S9)

In cycle two the aesthetic and pedagogical quality of their individual creative projects seemed to also to be significantly influenced by the earlier somatic explorations in the natural

environment. Here I noted that "The impact of the students' somatic engagement with the natural world came out very strongly, in the content and quality of their pieces, and in their discussion afterwards" (LJ.C2.S11). These students had the additional challenge of generating an embodied aesthetic experience in an on-line context, and yet:

> In terms of the way the students approached the content and sharing of the creative pieces themselves, I noticed that many of them paid a lot of attention to the process of bringing us into the experience with them, and to helping us to have a more embodied connection to a place/context/experience, a place that we are not currently in….(LJ.C2.S11)

Furthermore, in the same session I observed that:

> They seemed to be explicitly and implicitly using their somatic knowledge and their awareness of the significance of it to do this. They used video, sound collage, language, and music in this regard, and this interacted with their own direct communication with us. I noticed an awareness of pace and voice in this respect in a very particular way. (LJ.C2.S11)

It is worth noting that the qualities noted in these excerpts again exemplify many of those that are aspired to within the concept of 'teacher artistry' in the literature (Dunn, 2016; Eisner, 2002a; Hadjipanteli, 2020; Lutzker, 2012). These include a qualitative sensitivity to the sensory dimensions that are likely to impact the experience of others, a motivation for continued exploration, and a felt responsiveness to the emergent needs of an aesthetic exploration as they arise. They would also seem to affirm the understanding referred to in the previous section that not only should teaching be considered to be an art in itself, but that arts represent a particularly conducive site within teacher education, for developing many of the aesthetic qualities that are inherent to all good teaching (Eisner, 2002a; Lutzker, 2012; Toivanen & Kaasinen, 2016).

The additional proposal coming out of the data within this project is that somatic principles and practices, not only augment the student experience and understanding of artistry within aesthetic practice as discussed previously, but that they may also influence their capacity to achieve artistry at the level of teacher disposition. While such dispositions were referred to in the context of my own observations as lecturer above, we will continue to consider this proposal further in the context of students' reflections and intentions for future practice in the following section.

6.1.6 Anticipated Dispositional Shifts in the Practice of Teaching

A number of students focused on the way the outcomes of the experiences discussed thus far were likely to influence their dispositional orientation in the teaching of the arts, and in teaching more generally. For example, one student named "the importance of being flexible in our approach to the arts" (ST45.PQ.5b), and reflected the conclusions of many students by further observing that:

> I have found that somatic education has allowed me to become more aware of my fluid body and allowing children to engage in art or drama that is not rigid but improvised by nature. (ST45.PQ.5a)

Mary similarly makes a link between the development of her own quality of openness and flexibility within the module, and her capacity to allow children to engage in the same:

> From this module I have learnt to allow children to explore, and the openness you as an educator need to allow the children to do that. I have found this module has lead me to have more of a sense of letting go which I would like to bring into the classroom. (ST30.PQ.5a)

Here we can interestingly hear an echo of the many references to 'letting go' as discussed in relation to the students' personal experience of engaging with somatic and aesthetic

experience within the module. Mary further expanded on the potential impact of this shift in relation to the classroom context:

> Cause even in teaching you can have the tendency to over-explain things. D'ya know the way?....and I do it all the time as well, I like explain things to make sure they *completely* understand, rather....they can work together if they don't *fully* understand something, and there's kind of a beauty in that as well…and even for their *cognitive* development as well, like figuring things out…I think it's quite beneficial to sometimes take a step back and leave them at it... (ST30.II.p17)

In addition to my own observations of the impact that the combination of somatic and aesthetic practice seemed to be having on their aesthetic sensibility as arts educators during the creative project, it is interesting to note in these and further statements that many students also felt it was likely to impact their practice as teachers more generally. In light of the particular understandings of teacher artistry from the fields of arts education and teacher education (Andrews, 2016; Dunn, 2016; Eisner, 2002a; Hadjipanteli, 2020), the student references to presence, adaptability and flexibility were especially striking in this regard. Brian for example talked about the importance of "the being *present* in the classroom.... Like, that is a thing that you need to sort of grow *into* I think" (ST48.II.p25). He expanded on this statement further in the context of his own previous placement experience.

> when I was in placement, anyway, I knew I was quite focused on. okay, what was the next stage of my lesson, and I'd say I wasn't *that adaptable [slightly raised pitch]* kind of, to what was actually going *on* in the class, which I know it's very early stages, but that's something I definitely need to *work* on a bit.(ST48.II.p25)

He went on to explain:

> I think, to try and have that balance between thinking *ahead* and having your *plan* which, you know you need to get through all these certain things, but also interacting

> *well* and really like listening to the class and not just what they're *saying*, but also to their attitude *towards* what you're *teaching*, to see whether they're you know engaged with you and fully like *along*, or whether there's some part of it which you need spent more *time* at, that kind of thing…. (ST48.II.p25)

In addition to the qualities associated with teacher artistry, such comments would also resonate with those lauded by theorists who highlight the importance of teacher presence and its associated benefits in the craft of teaching (see section 3.4.4). As Rodgers and Raider Roth would argue, the teacher's presence to their own experience and that of the students in a given moment supports them to discern and feel a best 'next step'(Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 265).

It is worth noting at this juncture that further student comments of this nature have been included in the sections on application to teaching within the relational attunement and self-regulation sections. It is also worth drawing attention again to the continuum between control, letting go and the capacity for responsivity that is consistently referenced across all of the findings. The potential for one's dispositional advancements within one's aesthetic practice to inform one's teaching orientation would seem to be quite evident in this regard. As I conclude my discussion of this theme, it would seem that the somatic education approach serves to inform a greater awareness of this continuum in both aesthetic and broader teaching contexts, and a greater potential for embodied transformation in relation to the same.

6.2 Self-Regulation in Teacher Education

As well as offering the experience of a newfound freedom, flow and aliveness in the body as discussed in the previous section, the students' somatic sensitivity also served to alert them to experiences of constriction, tension, holding and mental distraction within the body-mind. Over the course of the module, many students began to observe patterns in terms of situations and internal behaviours that were likely to be linked with such responses, and to

draw on a variety of somatic strategies to address them. The situations in question often included situations of potential pressure or stress in their lives as students, to include school placement, college presentations, and the completion of academic and creative projects. As it turned out, for the students in the second and third cycle, they also included the unexpected arrival of a global pandemic.

As discussed in chapter one, one of the key discoveries of somatic practice from its earliest conceptions, was the potential it held for self-regulation, self-healing, and repatterning (Behnke, 1995; Burnidge, 2012; Collinson, 2015; Eddy, 2017; Hanna, 1988; Mangione, 1993; Payne et al., 2015). This has continued to remain an important feature of practice in the various evolutions of the field to this day, from somatic dance to somatic therapy. The data in this section is reviewed in light of this literature, as well as the emerging literature from the fields of cognitive neuroscience and arts education, which call for greater recognition at a pedagogical level of the significant role of emotion in the acts of cognition and creative practice (Damasio, 2021; Goswami, 2008; Immordino-Yang & Gotlieb, 2017; Siegel, 2007, 2016).

6.2.1 Witnessing

Both the developing capacity to track the physical manifestation of emotional content, and the resulting understanding of the integrated nature of the body-mind system, became key elements of the self- regulation approach discovered by many students during the module. As one student explained, “My understanding is that somatic movement education seeks to encourage people to become more aware of their bodies on a deeper level, and to understand how this affects our emotions” (ST11.PQ.Q4). Keela illustrates such a discovery in the context of an early workshop experience:

> I quite enjoyed this process as it made me more aware of my body and things that I might not notice. For instance, I would not have connected my physical body to my

> emotions, such as I'm feeling a bit anxious therefore there is tension in my back and neck, or I'm not feeling great today, therefore I'm carrying my body differently" (ST12.SJ.S2)

From a teacher education perspective, such statements are particularly interesting in light of the recommendation from Korthagen and Vasalos that teacher identity reflection must also include an awareness of the "inner obstacles to the actualisation of personal qualities" (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2009b, p. 7). Furthermore, Korthagen would argue that such awareness needs to include engagement with emotional and motivational content to be effective (Korthagen, 2014). Less referenced in their work, as observed in chapter three, is the role of body awareness in this activity. This of course represents an important premise of many somatic education approaches.

In this light, it is interesting to note that such a quality of awareness in many student reflections, was also accompanied by the discovery of a number of practical strategies for self-regulation that incorporated the body-mind. In the first instance, some students observed that the practice of simply bringing an acceptance to these sensations offered an opportunity for ease and release. Alice's observation in this regard is illustrative of such a developing orientation:

> I have learned to become more present and accepting of my feelings. Often I would notice my body's physical response to anxiety, with a very tight and closed feeling in my chest. However, by bringing awareness to this tightness and just accepting that it is there has acted as a form of self-regulation for me. (ST21.PQ.2)

Some students made explicit reference to the particular *quality* of acceptance that is required in the context of such physical or mental constriction. Using the term 'witnessing' from the practice of Authentic movement, one student observed that a key benefit of the module was "noticing my body's response to certain events/emotions and attempting to employ witness

consciousness as a way of adopting a more positive mindset" (ST31.PQ.Q2). It is worth noting that through the intentional cultivation of the internal witness, many also became more aware of the critical nature of their internal dialogue heretofore. One student echoed the observations of a number of others when she remarked that "I definitely take more notice of how I criticise myself, and try to reduce it" (ST23.PQ.Q2). Saoirse also noticed her enhanced skill in this regard and observed that, "I just feel able now to *talk* to myself a bit more….and take *in* what I'm saying to myself a bit more as well" (ST.27.11.p15).

The students are here illustrating their learning in relation to two key dimensions of the practice of witnessing as recommended within many traditions of meditation, and within the somatic tradition of authentic movement. These include the capacity to sense and track body-mind experience in the first instance, however challenging it may be, and to then allow the natural regulatory processes of the body to unfold or ease the experience in its own way (see section 2.4 & 2.5). In the last chapter, we saw that the students made considerable reference to the significance of the non-judgemental relational field they had experienced in terms of their capacity for a deeper quality of embodiment. However, the above extracts also confirm the important understanding within the somatic education field, and more recently within the field of neuroscience, that their evolving relationship with self is equally significant in this process (Siegel, 2007). The student statements also echo the practice of 'matching' as described by Behnke (Behnke, 1995). For Behnke, the second stage of the matching process, the practice of being with and allowing the reality of one's experience, is integral to the potential for "gently 'possibilizing' healthier, more creative, or more effortless alternatives" (Behnke, 1995, p. 325).

6.2.2 Physical Awareness Strategies

In addition to the development of a more accepting and compassionate witness consciousness, a number of students referred to their discovery of physical awareness

strategies, that they had learned to intentionally cultivate in order to regulate the overall nervous system. While witnessing strategies tend to be based on the premise that the quality of one's thoughts can influence feeling in the physical body, physical awareness strategies are based on the premise that the reverse is also true. For some, such strategies included engaging in a deeper awareness of and connection with the external environment to support regulation. For example, in her interview Eleanor shared her first experience of discovering the impact of yielding her weight to the ground, in terms of both recognising and regulating her current state:

> I kind of began to realize that whole sense of you know, feeling your body weight again, I just felt the connection to the floor, that I was so *full* of thoughts, and everything racing around my head, and that ick that I described, I didn't know how else to say, like I felt *weird* and uncomfortable - it just kind of *left* because I felt this overall connection between...first my head to the ground, and actually the ground back to my legs. It was all....that strength kind of *solid* feeling comes up again there.. (ST38.II.p13)

Other students cultivated an intentional connection with breath in order to regulate the system. For Eleanor, this also represented a key moment of discovery during the first session, the outcome of which generated a new experience of body-mind integration and presence:

> When I started to refocus on my breathing, I could feel the central focus of my thoughts shift to the sensation of my rising and falling chest. I felt that for the first time that day, my body and mind were finally in the same place. I felt truly present in what I was doing. (ST38.SJ.S1.)

From an aesthetic perspective, it is interesting to note that for Keela, the reconnection with breath during a movement exploration, helped to relieve her self-consciousness and bring more ease to her creative process:

> I started bringing that focus back to my breath and body and when my eyes were closed I felt the movement come easier to my body as I focus on my painting. (ST12.SJ.S7)

As the somatic literature suggests, connection with the natural subtleties of movement within the nervous system can have a very regulatory effect (Eddy, 2017; Payne et al., 2015b). These are often linked with the restorative processes of the parasympathetic nervous system. The impact, as we can see from the student statements above, is to return the system to homeostasis so that balance of the body-mind can be restored, and thereby a state of calm, focus and presence recovered.

Avril interestingly highlighted that for her, awareness of breath was less effective than focusing on touch and felt sensation. This illustrated the importance of my more general encouragement of students to explore and discern the most effective regulatory approaches for them as individuals. In this regard, Avril observed:

> One part of today's session, which looking back on it I realise might have made me more comfortable, was that there seemed to be less of a focus on breath and more of a focus on feeling e.g. touching the water or a paintbrush in my hand. I think that for me, this might work better with helping me to tune into my body rather than focusing on breath! (ST7.SJ.S5)

Her own understanding of the individual nature of one's embodied patterns and needs as they interact with the world is also quite striking here.

As discussed in chapter three, and as suggested by the statements above, emotion clearly plays a significant role in cognition and human functioning and is linked with visceral effects in the body (see section 3.2.1). Both Siegel and Shusterman not only call for a greater recognition of this reality, but suggest that related understandings and strategies should become an integral part of teaching and learning in Education (Shusterman, 2020; Siegel,

2007). In this light, I would suggest that the overall evidence of conscious engagement with the regulatory approaches above, and their described impact, offers valuable phenomenological support for the role of somatic education in this regard. In the next sections, I review some of the ways in which the capacity for self-regulation practices of a somatic nature became relevant to teaching and learning for both student and lecturer.

6.2.3 Self-regulation in Context: Teaching and Learning

Many students referred to the significance of their developing self-regulatory skills in the context of their future roles as teachers. Their reflections on their dispositional patterns during previous placements and their intentions in relation to future placements demonstrate the relevance that they perceived in this regard. Mary, for example, explained that:

> …I think it *would* have a huge benefit to my teaching because...When you're nervous now, with the information I know, I can almost like lean into my body and kind of like [*talking to self*] okay, I know this...I can feel the weight of my feet…and slow it down...Because that was one of the things I got on my report [*School placement*} is, when I'm nervous I just talk really quickly, and I'll try to just brush through everything and get it done really quickly. (ST39.II.p23)

We can see here her recognition of her general tendencies and challenges on previous placements through a particularly somatic lens, and the possible relationship between her emotional state and her pace of delivery. We also see the way in which she envisages using physical awareness strategies to down-regulate her experience during future placements. In this regard, Eleanor interestingly highlights the value of firstly recognising her nervousness in specific physical ways, rather than in broad or general terms.

> I now know what I'm looking for when I check in with myself, I know what kind of sensations will arise, whereas beforehand on placement I would have said Oh my God I'm so nervous, or Oh my God I'm dreading this inspection, whereas now I can say

> [*Talking to self]* Ok, my feet are fidgety, or you know, my fingers can't sit still, and I would connect those to it rather than just going in broad terms… (ST38.II.p20)

When asked to expand more on the implications of this, she explained:

> I think *finding* the little parts, pinpointing it, zoning in on it and altering what it is, and that's given me the sense of, again, *control* over it, and I can just check in with myself and just calm myself (ST38.II.p21)

Saoirse on the other hand would be more likely to focus on the quality of her self-talk during placement experiences, in the knowledge of the wider effects of its impact. Referring to the stress she tends to feel during meetings with visiting tutors, she explains:

> after the meeting with the cigire [*Irish word for inspector*], I would say, [*talking to self*] what did I even say, I can't even remember, you know, because I was *so* hyped up and my *heart* was racing and you know, and I think *now*… I think I would be able to control that a bit more and say [t*alking to self]* this is 10 minutes, it's going to be done and you know it hasn't gotten that bad the last time….I just feel able now to *talk* to myself a bit more. (ST.27.II.p15)

For her, this capacity for more positive self-talk seems to have generated a more agentic outlook on her placement experience:

> what *I* took from that was being able to look at something in a different perspective….I think like in a classroom setting nearly looking at you know, how things can change. You know, for example, like a lesson plan, you know, if a lesson plan doesn't go to plan, you *have* to look at it in the perspective of okay. It's not the end of the world here, and it can be changed. (ST27.II.p15)

In light of the discussion on attunement in chapter five (see section 5.4), it is interesting to note the connection that some students made between their capacity for self-regulation and their resulting quality of presence in the classroom. As Rachel explained:

> I realised that when I am teaching, I am sometimes on autopilot and my head is rushing. I will certainly bring the strategies I have learned throughout this module for grounding myself into the classroom with me to calm myself and to bring my awareness to the present moment. (ST.PQ.Q5a)

In a similar vein, Mary envisaged that such an outcome would influence the quality of her more general communication with children. In relation to the regulation of her pace as discussed above, she noted that:

> Whereas with this now, I know to be present, and I know to listen and to listen to the kids what they're truly saying and you know, like I think sometimes you can only just be looking for the right answer in a classroom, whereas actually this will, well I'm hoping, this will allow…like listen to what the kids are saying and feed off [*emphasis*] of what they're doing, rather than just getting the right answer. (ST39.II.p23)

In light of a substitute teaching experience, which he engaged in during the same period as the module, Edward similarly spoke at some length about a shift he was noticing in relation to his prior tendency to want to 'stick to the plan' while teaching:

> So before, I it would have been more a case of sticking to a plan, very much so, and if it doesn't go right, I wouldn't say panic [*emphasis*], but I'd be uneasy about it. I'd be kind of going. This isn't in the plan. What am I going to do? (ST2.II.p30)

He went on to consider that this 'panic' in relation to plans changing may also be found in more experienced teachers, and may be linked with a longer-term resistance to change:

> And I think *most* teachers are like that, even *qualified* teachers that have been teaching for years. They're kind of.... They don't like anything that's kind of *changing* [00:29:59] or any, that kind of panics them I think, it puts them off. (ST2.II.p30)

On this point, Edward recognised his own dispositional change, in the context of an unexpected approach the children in his class took to a building activity he had set up for them:

> but yeah, just when things go wrong now, it doesn't affect me the same way….I kind of take it for what it is and just sort of go, all right this *happened* How do you move...Either, you kind of take it [*higher pitch*] and you go, Alright, we can go that direction or we can go another direction…and actually they're probably, they're doing the same thing, they're just achieving it different way. (ST2.II.p33)

Overall, I would suggest that these statements illustrate an appreciation of the relationship between one's body-mind state and one's capacity for facilitating the democratic and responsive style of teaching that students are generally encouraged to implement in classrooms. The wider resonance for me here is that learning about these approaches on a philosophical level, or even in relation to curriculum methodologies, may not be enough to adequately serve our students. In my view, didactic teaching approaches are not just about the manifestation of a limited *understanding* of the nature of progressive forms of Education. They can also be linked with emotional content, such as an understandable fear and anxiety in the face of new experience, innovation, or indeed the complex relational and improvisatory dimension that teaching entails. In this light I would suggest that strategies that help students to recognise the manifestation of such emotion across the body-mind, and to regulate it in the present moment, to be an essential part of learning to be a teacher.

The access to self-awareness and self-regulation that a somatic education can offer, is also evident in my own experience as facilitator of this module, and thereby offers even more insight into its relevance within the practice of teaching itself. In the first instance, I would posit that my journals illustrate the depth of self-reflection that a somatic approach entails, and in this regard contain many references to my own physical, emotional, and intellectual

experiences as the module unfolded. In doing so they tend to reflect the inevitable vulnerability and emotional challenge of engaging with innovative and relatively unfamiliar content in a teaching context, the necessity of which is essential to ongoing professional growth and expansion over the course of a career. Indeed, the analysis of this aspect of the data, has made me significantly more aware of the role of emotion and vulnerability in teaching generally, and the need to acknowledge it, share it and regulate it where necessary. The growing literature on the significance of the well-being and resilience of a teacher would also likely attest to this proposal (Gu & Day, 2007).

As an illustrative example, in the following extract we can observe that in spite of much background preparation for our first visit to the Botanic gardens in cycle one, I was quite taken aback by the high volume of machinery noise at the site of our first exploration. Faced with the unexpected, my journal reflection offers a description of my experiential response to the situation:

> I could feel myself beginning to get thrown, and coming out of my body as I perhaps did last week. I could hear the internal voices of fear, and my uncertainly about what to do next. I continued with the plan of going in to the shintaido movement sequence with them. This seemed to settle all of us, as perhaps [*did*] my acknowledgement of the noise and the example it provided of things not 'going to plan' for a teacher. (LJ.C1.S3)

Here we see the present moment awareness of both my internal physical response to the situation, as well as the feelings and thoughts it provoked. The witnessing in question also includes a capacity to accept and include such experience, and a modelling of that for the students. We also see the regulatory and settling impact of the movement experience in this context. In deeper recognition of my initial tendencies during such moments and the

regulatory impact of my physical awareness strategies on the nervous system, I recorded in the early stages of the second cycle that:

> I have been working on my capacity to 'hold' whatever arises in the sessions through my present moment connection with my own body while teaching – my breath, my weight going into the sit bones, my alertness in the eyes. (LJ.S2.20.p2)

Towards the end of the second cycle, I reflected back on my earlier reactions of fear and uncertainty in this regard:

> I recognise that I sometimes allowed this feeling to overwhelm or to override my ability to engage for the remainder of the session. I think the capacity to tune into the sensory aspect of the 'felt sense' and to also use sensory strategies to 're-set' and to 'un-fix'/bring less certainty into the perception, can free me up to consistently re-engage and re-establish a 'base-line' for each new stage of a session. (LJ.S8.20.p9)

Overall, there is ample evidence in my journals of my awareness of the potentially inhibiting impact of both my thoughts and emotions during certain moments of challenge and uncertainty during the module. However, over time we can see a recognition of the relationship between my own evolving capacity to witness and 'hold' my own vulnerabilities and challenges in awareness, in order to allow the students to hold and express theirs.

> I think I am more intentional about and able to hold whatever energy arises in the group this semester. I think this is related to a stronger sense of the witness in myself this semester, arising out of challenges I reflected on last time around. I am trying to just stay with each moment as it arises, rather than over thinking about or reacting negatively internally to elements I observe in the moment. (LJ.C3.S1)

This example also illustrates the self-knowledge that can take place over time as a result of such present-moment awareness, and the gentle move towards a broader repatterning of approach. In light of Korthagen's proposal that teacher reflection requires more attention to

emotional experience, I feel that these extracts demonstrate ample evidence of the same. However, as alluded to previously, it is the demonstrated inclusion of embodied content in such reflection that represents one of the key contributions of somatic education to a teacher's reflective practice in my view. Furthermore, I would suggest that it is central to the potential for repatterning at a dispositional level.

6.2.3 Self-regulation in context: Teaching and Learning during the Pandemic

The unexpected arrival of the pandemic towards the end of the module obviously generated significant concern, not least because of the sudden isolation and fear of the unknown that both the students and I were experiencing generally at the time. In terms of teaching and learning, we were also faced with a sudden shift to on-line learning which, from my own perspective, generated considerable concern in light of my hitherto inexperience of this medium. This was alongside the obvious necessity to significantly rethink the approach to the final site-specific performance project, while attempting to hold to the principles of somatic education in an on-line context. After the first on-line session, I reflected on my own experience and the support of somatic education practices during that period.

> I have moved from fear, to despair, to surrender…..and back to hope again, tentatively back to hope again. All of this has of course manifested in my body-mind in various ways, and I have drawn on my own somatic education strategies to support me – meditation, somatic yoga, authentic movement, on-line support from Origins friends. (LJ.C2.S8)

Various decisions were made during this period to try to maintain the integrity of the overall process, and indeed to gradually recognise the challenge in question as a potentially unique learning opportunity in relation to the theme of embodiment in education. In one of my journal extracts from that period, I recorded that:

> As the days rolled on it became clear to me that of course our human experience and response to this crisis takes place on a deeply somatic level. In addition the field of somatic education may offer a very apt resource to my students in terms of firstly coping with the experience on a personal level, and secondly providing a lens with which to process what is going on, and thirdly considering the issues the situation raises in relation to education and creativity. (LJ.C2.S8)

In the context of the theme of somatic regulation, the tendency to both accept and include the challenges of the pandemic situation in our learning process was certainly in evidence within the data. In this regard, "I began to recognise that to leave it out of the content would have been both counterintuitive and counterproductive. The avoidance itself would have gotten in the way" (LJ.C2.S10). As discussed in the last chapter, this approach led to a range of interesting opportunities for reflection on our theme of embodiment, including a number of on-line discussions about what we felt was retained and lost when working in this environment.

It was interesting to note in the post questionnaires, that many of the students drew on the techniques of the module more widely during the lockdown. In this regard, the principles and strategies seemed to support their mental and physical health during that period, as well as their capacity for learning. As one student put it, "It helped me to see this as an opportunity for growth rather than a complete life-shaking incident. [pandemic}" (ST45.PQ.6a). At the end of the module May was able to reflect back on the particular significance of her enhanced somatic sensibility during that time:

> Because I was making an effort to be aware of my body, and also keeping a journal, I can compare how I was feeling from the beginning of the lockdown to now. I have become significantly less anxious, which is probably largely due to somatic practices.

> Also the fact that I notice this is down to engaging in somatic awareness. (STX.PQ.Q1b)

Mary similarly observed the impact of engaging with the witness consciousness at this time and the employment of physical regulation techniques.

> I didn't fight my emotions if I was having a particularly bad day. I took from my principles of somatic education and I knew it would pass. I also began to listen to my body if it felt tight or sore I found myself leaning toward somatic yoga to clear my mind but also to loosen my body" (ST39.PQ.Q6a).

The early research which has been emerging since the pandemic, suggests that not only did the lockdown experience have obvious impacts on teaching and learning practices within education, but the wider impacts of the experience also served to underscore the relevance of mental health and well-being in relation to one's capacity to learn (Reimers, 2022). In this light, it is interesting to observe how the somatic education approaches and principles served both teacher and student, not only in terms of well-being, but also in terms of a fundamental capacity for flexibility and adaptability in the face of unexpected change. Given the somewhat precarious state of our world at present, as illustrated by the current refugee, energy, homelessness, and climate crises – Hill et al would argue that such skills are essential to the skill set and disposition of an effective teacher (Hill et al., 2020). As the challenge of change is of course inevitable to human flourishing, this has been a long-held contention for many theorists in the field of education (Dewey, 1938; Eisner, 2002b; Greene, 1995).

6.3 Empowerment in Teacher Education

As we come to the final stages of this chapter, it is worth noting that a number of students framed the ultimate outcome of their enhanced capacity for self-awareness, self-expression and self-regulation in terms of an overall sense of agency and empowerment in

their personal and professional lives. In relation to the longer-term role of self-awareness and self-regulation in this outcome, one student summarised that:

> This process really helped me to make some self-improvements in a really healthy and positive way. I find that I am still quite critical of myself but I can accept and handle it better and make changes. (ST24.PQ.Q3)

Rachel similarly emphasised the ongoing and incremental process of change that she feels this work facilitates, and emphasised her own role in this process as she moves forward. She highlighted the key role of her self-awareness in this regard.

> At this stage of the process. I'm merely becoming aware of my actions, reactions, my thoughts, the way I speak to myself. I'm proud of myself for reaching this stage in the process and I want to continue on this journey to find ways of changing some of these actions, reactions Etc in a way that I would like to change them myself. I'm already beginning to create a view of how I would like them to act in my own body. (ST25.PQ.Q2)

I would suggest that we can detect here not only the sense of self-awareness but also the sense of mission that Korthagen suggests is so important for the ongoing evolution of teacher identity (Korthagen, 2004, 2014). In both student statements above, I was also particularly struck by the sense of personal ownership and responsibility that was evoked, as well as the sense of choice that they felt they had available to them in relation to their future orientations. The core principle of student led reflection and learning within somatic pedagogy is clearly in evidence here, as is its translation into future intentions and motivations (see section 2.9.3).

A number of students summarised that they felt an enhanced sense of personal confidence arising from the module experience. Mary reflected that “this process also helped me to get back in touch with sides of myself that I had drifted from and it has really helped my self-confidence” (ST24.PQ.Q3). For the student below, it was the particular

empowerment of the senses and body she experienced in the process that was central to this outcome:

> I think it also made me more confident. One of the reasons I chose Drama as my specialism was to make me more confident, and I think something like embodiment, where you appreciate and empower your senses and body, definitely makes you more confident in yourself (ST23.PQ.5a)

Another student echoed this understanding in her reflection that one of the key purposes of somatic education is to "To allow people to become more in touch with their body and all the systems in it to reach their fullest learning potential" (ST40.PQ.Q4). Like the first student above, the connection or re-connection with more sides of oneself would seem to have represented a significant dimension of the growth in self-confidence reported, and echoes Fraleigh's contention that we meet more of ourselves in somatic practice (Fraleigh, 2015). The particular significance of a deeper connection with the body, even in the short term, is also evident for Edward who recorded at the end of one of the movement explorations that, "I feel as though I am capable of taking on any challenge that may appear to me…" (ST2.SJ.S2). Such feelings were also echoed in the one-word responses from students that I recorded the end of another specific mindful movement exploration, "calm, energised, empowered, liberated, relaxed, peaceful, at ease, grounded, free" (LJ.C2.S2).

Based on the student statements above and the data illustrated in the findings chapters more generally, it would seem that the student experience of empowerment arose from a combination of the embodied and aesthetic explorations, the relational field, the regulation practices, and the enhanced understanding of the body-mind system that ensued. As alluded to in chapter two, literature from the somatic field similarly suggests that the empowerment in question is considered to arise from both the movement components and the wider pedagogical values of the somatic process (Batson & Eliot Schwartz, 2007).

In relation to the latter, one student interestingly emphasised the value she discovered in attending to one's own needs and progress at a body-mind level, in order to facilitate the needs of others:

> This module has taught me that it is so important to look after my own body and mind before attending to the needs of others. As a teacher we are so focused on everyone elses needs, but in actual fact we cannot perform to the best of our ability if we do not listen to what our bodies and minds desire. (ST49.PQ.5a)

For me, this would tend to contrast with the dominant cultural and religious messaging to the contrary which, while changing, has tended to hold sway in an Irish context. I would also suggest that such messaging continues to have a significant hold within the cultures of caring professions such as teaching, wherein care for the other is considered a first priority. In contrast this student alludes to the complex relationship that can exist between the attention to self and other that is implicit within many somatic approaches (see section 2.8.6). The criticality the statement entails, which has been demonstrated more widely thus far, also points to one's ensuing capacity for various forms of activism in the world arising from an apparent self-orientation, not least activism within the field of education.

In light of the above, a number of students interestingly perceived the potential benefits of somatic principles and practices for children in terms of various forms of empowerment. For the following student, an enhanced self-understanding at a body-mind level, along with the learning of related self-regulation strategies, would be central to such an impact.

> This module has significant relevance for me as I believe many of the practices and exercises we explored may be of use in my future classrooms, encouraging the children to take more time for themselves and notice how certain emotions/events

> may impact their minds and bodies and how they may employ certain strategies to improve this response. (ST31.PQ.Q5a)

Another similarly emphasised the particular quality of self-knowledge that can be gleaned from somatic education, as being core to its longer-term benefits for children. For her, "somatic education must be facilitated in order for the children to gain a deep understanding of themselves and their body" (ST32.PQ.Q5a). Rachel more explicitly linked her own experience of the creative projects with the potential experience of children, and considered both the challenge and freedom of personal ownership as integral to its potential benefits:

> …I felt I had *such* an ownership over what we were going to do, and I think that like children would *really* enjoy that. I know *sometimes* myself, like I *do* like to be told, Okay…there is a form, you need to go along with that, like that kind of regulation, but to *break* that kind of reputation as well, to have complete control of however you want, I think is really beneficial for, even the holistic development, to build your own sense of identity and stuff, knowing *this* how I want to do something…(ST38.II.p22)

I am reminded here of the somatic literature which describes the evolution from a focus on injury prevention and movement efficiency to a recognition of the more fundamental principles of empowerment and artistry that are considered to underpin and motivate somatic practice (Burnidge, 2012; Dragon, 2015; Fortin, 2017; Schupp, 2017). In this light, it is interesting to note the students' identification of a potential tension between a content focus in education and a person/being focus as alluded to in various sections of the last two chapters. Their inclination towards prioritising the latter in the above statements is again noteworthy, and I am curious about the apparent influence of their somatic experience in this regard. Ultimately such expressions echo the essential contentions of emancipatory educational theorists such as Eisner, Dewey, Greene, and Freire who regard the person, and

their development and empowerment, to be at the heart of the project of education (Dewey, 1938; Eisner, 2002b; Freire, 2013; Greene, 1995).

In conclusion, I would posit that the proposal from the somatic field that somatic inquiry not only aligns with emancipatory, critical, and feminist pedagogical theories, but that it offers the potential to embody them (Burnidge, 2012), is worthy of considerable merit in light of the data presented in these chapters. This possibility may be even more persuasive in the context of the growing challenge that neoliberal forces are currently presenting within the field (see section 1.2.1). It would seem that for the sake of our ever more complex and vulnerable world, we need now more than ever to be identifying and expanding the processes by which we can educate for such empowerment, rather than narrowing them. As somatic practitioner Kelly Ferris Lester reminds us, "If we nurture the whole person, self-learning will happen and choices will be made from empowered and embodied lives' (Lester, 2015, p107).

6.4 Conclusion

Overall, I would propose that the significance that has been drawn to the value of the distinctive somatic emphasis within this module affirms the view held within Shusterman's somaesthetic framework, that a dedicated somatic emphasis is likely to significantly enhance both the quality of one's aesthetic experience and also one's aesthetic quality of living (Shusterman, 2004, 2009, 2020). In this vein, the findings of this chapter suggest that the dedicated somatic emphasis elicited a qualitative shift in the students' expressive and regulatory capacities in relation to aesthetic and pedagogical experience. They further point to the impact of these shifts in the context of their future roles as teachers, in terms of both pedagogical understanding and dispositional orientation.

In the first instance, many students reported enhanced states of flow and responsiveness in their aesthetic process, which were often associated with an enhanced

inclusion of and freedom of the body. It was observed that such descriptions were notably aligned with the phenomenon of artistry as defined within both the somatic dance and arts education literatures. Of further interest was the observation that both the students and I demonstrated an appreciation of the specific influence of the somatic education principles and practices in this regard, and thus exhibited a sense of agency in terms of understanding how such conducive aesthetic states might be accessed into the future. In light of the concerns expressed within the arts education field about the relative dearth of attention to the body in its literature and practice, I suggest that it is significant that the somatic lens helped us to acknowledge and extend the role of the body more consciously within the aesthetic process.

At the level of understanding, the findings demonstrate that such evolving appreciations contributed to the students' pedagogical knowledge base in a number of significant ways. In the first instance, the module experiences generated considerable engagement with the complex nature of human embodiment for some students, which while generally challenging to engage with at undergraduate level in my view, is integral to any meaningful understanding of the nature of teaching and learning. Finding ways to bring such considerations from the theoretical musings of academics to the concerns of young students of education in a meaningful way, should represent an important priority of pre-service education in my view. Arising from such considerations was also a deepened tacit and philosophical engagement with the subtlety of fundamental aesthetic and pedagogical elements such as process, improvisation, and holism. This also seemed to lead to a more critical analysis of how such issues tend to be addressed within the school system in their experience.

The additional proposal coming out of the data within this project is that somatic principles and practices, not only augment the student experience and understanding of artistry within aesthetic practice as discussed previously, but that they may also influence

their capacity to achieve such a quality at the level of teacher disposition. This was evident in my own observations of the students' evolving aesthetic practice in a performative context within the module, as well as in their own reflections on past and future engagements with the practice of teaching. It is important to point out in this regard, that the arts were considered to represent a particularly conducive site for engagement with somatic education principles in the teacher education context. In the first instance, the aesthetic frame seemed to provide students with a clearer short-term motivation for somatic engagement, due to the complementarity between the two genres. Furthermore, from a teacher educator perspective, the aesthetic frame clearly provided a rich and accessible lens for practical engagement with issues of embodiment within the wider teacher education process. However, I would propose that the somatic lens helped to further acknowledge and foreground the role of the body more intentionally within this process. As illustrated in other sections of these chapters, this additional emphasis was considered to be a key factor in the dispositional reorientation of students alluded to above. The dedicated somatic emphasis in this context was thereby considered to affirm and extend Eisner's theoretical proposals in relation to the significant somatic dimension of teacher artistry.

In the second part of the chapter, the findings elucidated a newfound capacity, as reported by many students, for self-regulation in aesthetic and pedagogical contexts. In the first instance, this allowed them to recognise inhibiting states within the body-mind in the form of physical sensation or negative self-talk, and indeed to recognise the relationship between the two. Over the course of the module, the findings show that they began to draw on somatic self-regulation strategies to intentionally regulate and rebalance the system when necessary. In terms of relevance, they also emphasised the ways in which both lecturer and student implemented these strategies within the aesthetic and pedagogical contexts of the module. Finally, they illustrated how the students drew on these experiences to reflect on previous

experiences of teaching, and to develop expanded intentions for future practice. The significance of vulnerability and emotion in the practice of teaching was elucidated in this regard, as was the potential relationship between regulatory practices and democratic teaching approaches. In light of all of the above, I would contend that related emerging discoveries from the fields of neuroscience and embodied cognition, were also being made more accessible for students at the level of tacit embodied engagement and reflection. The particular significance that is being increasingly attached to the role of emotion and holism in the reflective practices of teachers was brought into direct focus in this regard, as were related body-mind strategies to engage with the same.

In the final section of the chapter, data was reviewed that pertained to the overarching theme of empowerment, a theme that became strikingly evident as the analysis process evolved. Overall, it was noted that an enhanced sense of confidence, agency and choice was reported by many students during the course of the module and in its aftermath. There were evidently various factors that contributed to the sense of empowerment in question. The significance of both the movement and pedagogical style of the somatic education approach was given particular acknowledgement in this regard. Of particular note was the capacity of somatic techniques to give full feeling and aesthetic expression to the body-mind, while also offering a way of rebalancing the system in the context of arising inhibitions and self-doubt. Clearly, the related self-awareness and self-knowledge that was discussed over both chapters played a central role in this regard, as did the relational and environmental support and attunement that the somatic process facilitated. As illustrated in the context of a number of other outcomes of this process, the impact of this empowered sense of self, was also extended to the students' overall pedagogical understanding and to consideration of the needs of the children they will teach in the future. From a literature perspective, the significance of this

finding was contextualised in relation to the considerable value that has been attached to the goal of empowerment within emancipatory and democratic pedagogical theory.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter marks the final phase of this exploratory research study, whereby I draw together its key discoveries and contributions to the field, and the invitations it provokes for future research. I will begin the chapter with a review of the particular contextual background and research questions that motivated and provided a focus for the study. I will then refer to the key insights gained from the early chapters, which helped to contextualise these questions from the perspective of relevant literature from the three fields in question – somatic education, arts education, and teacher education. Following a subsequent revisiting of the research approach and methodologies used, I will then go on to summarise the key findings of the study and to outline what I would regard to be its fundamental contribution to research and practice in the field. The chapter will conclude with a consideration of the limitations of the study, and will suggest recommendations for future research that could serve to further deepen understandings and practice in this promising domain.

7.1 Research focus

In the introductory chapter, I provided an overview of the contextual background and research focus of the project. As explained here, one of the key impulses for this study derived from my relatively recent participation in the *Origins* programme led by pioneering dance artist and psychotherapist Joan Davis, and from my related accreditation in *Somatic Movement Education and Therapy* (ISMETA approved). I subsequently wished to explore more deeply the noticeable effects of this process on my work as a teacher educator and arts educator at Dublin City University. In this light, the particular context for this PhD exploration took place in light of the advancement of a new module, which I was developing as part of an arts-based specialism within the B.Ed. programme at Dublin City University. Through my engagement with students over the first three cycles of this module, I wished to gain a deeper insight into the experience and relevance of somatic processes and principles in

this context. This was with a view not only to improving and understanding the potential nature and purpose of my own emerging somatic practice within this convergence of disciplines, but also to a wider consideration of the role of embodied practices within the field of teacher education more broadly. With this in mind the overarching research question for the project was:

> *What do the principles and practices of somatic education offer in the context of an arts education module in a teacher education programme?*

This question generated two further sub-questions, through which I sought to clarify more precisely the focus of the exploration:

> *What is the nature of the lived teaching and learning experience of a somatic based approach to an arts education module within a teacher education context?*

And,

> *What does this experience reveal about the potential relevance of somatic approaches in the teacher education context?*

In recognition of the exploratory nature of the study, these questions were purposefully qualitative and experiential in nature, and were situated within a broadly phenomenological research design, with influences from the fields of autoethnography, aesthetic-based research and somatic education.

7.2 Findings from the Literature

It is important to emphasise that the literature chapters of this study offered an important contribution to the enquiry in the first instance, particularly in terms of foregrounding and deepening an understanding of potential areas of complementarity between the areas of somatic education, arts education, and teacher education. I will hereby summarise the key insights gained from this aspect of the research process.

7.2.1 Introduction to Somatic Education

Chapter two provided a definitional and historical overview of the arguably lesser-known field of somatic education within the field of teacher education. It thereby contributed to a task which is ongoing at the current time within the somatic field itself, as it begins to seek and gain more recognition within mainstream academia. As the emphases of the somatic field were demonstrated to move from physical ailment to dance to self-actualisation over the last century, its various phases of development were outlined in this chapter in an effort to simultaneously clarify its core principles and practices across a range of disciplinary contexts. In this regard, the particular ways in which its various evolutions support ever more nuanced awareness of feeling within the body, while simultaneously encouraging a deeper integration of the thinking and feeling self, were of particular interest.

From an education perspective, I noted the self-directed pedagogical orientation of somatic practice from the outset, and its reported consistency with emancipatory and democratic principles of education by a number of authors (Barbour, 2016; Burnidge, 2012; Lester, 2015). In this regard, I also identified a number of potentially enlightening interfaces between somatic practice and the areas of arts education, identity formation and well-being. The nuanced and wide-ranging concern with the significance, nature, and attainment of artistry within the somatic dance field, was also considered to be of particular interest given parallel concerns within the field of education. As a field that distinguishes itself in terms of its quintessentially practice-based orientation to the phenomenon of embodiment, I closed this chapter by proposing that its recognised and well-honed capacity for both expanding and repatterning behaviour and consciousness should merit more serious attention within the field of education.

7.2.2 Embodiment and the Field of Education

Chapter three demonstrated the extent to which issues of embodiment have become a more significant area of concern within the field of education in recent years. Significant shifts in the understanding of the nature of cognition and learning, arising initially from the field of philosophy, and more recently from research in cognitive science and neuroscience, were shown to have fuelled an even more robust critique of the persistent dualistic conceptions of mind that have characterised much educational theory and practice within the Western world. With this in mind, the literature proposed that the arts can offer a valuable alternative to such an approach to education, due to their inherent recognition of the intelligence of the body. However, even in this context a critique of the persistent Cartesian influence and an inadequate theorising about the role of the body was shown to prevail.

My own curiosities in relation to the above lay not only with the now arguably well-rehearsed understandings of such deficits at a theoretical level within education, but with what such provocations might entail for the enhancement of practice. Thus, while some authors recognise the need for and significance of a developmental learning process in relation to enhancing somatic intelligence, this often coincides with an uncertainty about whether one can in fact be instructed to feel (Eisner, 2002b; Siegesmund, 2004). My own deliberations on such debates within this chapter, fuelled the question of whether the nature of aesthetic engagement alone is sufficient to address such needs, as would seem to be the perceived wisdom for many who share in these concerns within the field. I was particularly mindful in this regard of the conditioning and silencing of the body that tends to remain relatively unconscious for individuals in the Western world, due to long standing cultural and educational practices. ‘Unlearning’ may be as significant as ‘learning’ in this respect. Key elements of this study may thereby be understood to respond to the recommendations coming from Stinson (2004, 2016), Bresler (2004) and others, that a more intentional focus on the

internal experience of the body is required, not only in dance education, but across all the disciplines of the arts education field.

In light of this discussion, the final section of this chapter looked more specifically at significant perspectival shifts that have taken place within teacher education in recent years, pertaining to the developmental process of becoming a teacher. In this regard I noted the shifts in emphasis from teacher training to teacher education, from transmission of curricular content to the development of teacher identity, and from competency to disposition, as key areas of interest in light of the potential merits of somatic education to the field. In particular, Eisner's (2002a) proposal that the aim of cultivating a particular quality of 'artistry' within a teacher may offer a productive lens through which such shifts may be contemplated and addressed, was also revisited. It was in this light, and in light of the parallel concerns with artistry within the somatic dance field, that this chapter closed by contemplating the question of how somatic education may be combined with arts education practices to support the personal, artistic and professional development of the student teacher.

7.2.3 Research Gap

In spite of the relevance that was ascertained within these chapters in relation to the focus and questions of this study, it was established that an important gap still remains in relation to phenomenological research on the convergence of the fields in question. Furthermore, it was determined that related research, where it exists, is still in a very exploratory phase. Nonetheless, I would suggest that my identification of and reflection upon a number of exploratory PhD studies from the Canadian context, which focused on the engagement of practicing teachers with somatic practice, did serve to underscore the potential significance of my study and to offer support to its findings (Emond, 2022; Rosehart, 2013). Of further interest in this regard, were the suggestions at the end of these studies of a dearth of research and practice that pertains to the experience and relevance of somatic education at

pre-service level. Moreover, the findings from the literature chapters of this thesis suggest that the location of such a focus within the arts education dimension of a teacher education programme, was likely to add another potentially rich layer to the inquiry.

In light of all of the above, I suggested that the still evolving and consolidating field of somaesthetics offered a valuable contribution to the theoretical framework that was being presented within these chapters (Shusterman, 2004, 2009, 2020). In this regard, it was emphasised that somaesthetics notably includes but goes beyond the more dominant sociological orientation of research pertaining to embodiment in education at the current time. Its focus on the significance, nature, and experience of *practices* of a somatic nature, was deemed to offer a particularly appropriate lens for supporting the focus and interpretation of the study. Indeed, Shusterman's recent calls for increased phenomenological investigation of somatic practice across a more diverse range of fields, to include education, provided a further provocation for the implementation of this research (Shusterman, 2020).

7.3 Methodological Approach and Contribution to the Field

In chapter four I outlined the ontological and epistemological orientation of the research approach to the study. More particularly, I illustrated how the situated, relational, contextual, and embodied values and principles of the phenomenological paradigm, informed its specific design and methods. I also outlined how they were combined with the complementary values and principles of autoethnography, and aesthetic-based research to offer a comprehensive response to the particular nature of the research questions. In terms of data collection, the chapter offered a rationale for the specific data collected, and more particularly for the exploratory approach to the interview design, which was at the heart of the approach.

As explained in this chapter, my analysis focused on the material generated from post-module questionnaires completed by all students from the three cycles in question, fourteen

hour-long post-module interviews with a subset of these students, the respective journals of this subset, and my own reflective journal throughout the overall process. Overall, this content was considered to provide a balance and dialogue between the breadth and depth of experience in question, and to include engagement with both the teaching and learning experience involved. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, the dearth of other studies of this nature, and the significant amount of varied data collected, a thematic analysis was considered to be the most appropriate analytical framework for the interpretation of the data at this time. In this regard, it was considered to offer the potential for a more comprehensive indication of the potential scope of somatic practices within this context, and thereby to assist future pedagogical practice and research in this area of various kinds.

7.3.1 The Somatic Influence on Interview Design

Of potentially more significant interest from a methodological perspective, this chapter included a rationale for the exploratory interview design of this study, which I considered to be critical to the aesthetic quality of the process in question, and thereby to the depth and impact potential of the emergent data. In this regard, I wished to emulate and indeed extend Bresler's (2006b, 2013, 2019) notion of aesthetic-based research, which seeks to bring aesthetic 'habits of mind' to *all* stages of the research process. With this in mind, I drew on somatic principles and practices to attempt to more deeply acknowledge and access the embodied knowledge of the participants during the data collection phase. Ultimately, I suggest that the somatic intervention tended to slow down the recollection process, and informed a particularly nuanced relationship between aesthetic trigger, sensation, and language within the present moment response. I ultimately propose that such an approach may help to address the concerns among many phenomenological and aesthetic-based researchers about the prevalence of pre-conceived and pre-packaged responses in qualitative

research, and the need for more engagement with pre-reflective zones of understanding in this domain.

7.4 Summary and Conclusions of Findings from Data Analysis

In this section I will address the themes that were elucidated in chapters five and six, using the research questions as a way of bringing further clarity to the key findings. With these in mind, I will firstly summarise the qualitative *experience* of participants in relation to the confluence of fields in question. I will then outline the perceived *relevance* of such experience from the perspective of participants themselves, and in consultation with the literature. Overall, the data analysis identified a significant shift in orientation within participants arising from the deepened somatic pedagogical focus of the module and its particular application within aesthetic process. This shift tended to relate to issues of both disposition and understanding at a personal and professional level.

7.4.1 Self-awareness and Identity

One of the most widely reported experiences of the module was of a heightened sense of self-awareness and self-knowledge arising from the process. In the present moment, this tended be reflected in a continuum between an embodied sense of constriction and holding back on the one hand, and of freedom and flow on the other. In the longer term, the resulting self-identification of psychophysical patterns of perfectionism, and the particular challenge of relinquishing control, were particularly enlightening in my view, as was the incremental experience of release from such constriction into a more expanded flow of communication and connection. As a teacher educator, I consider these to be particularly relevant in the context of the emancipatory and democratic pedagogies that are generally promoted within teacher education, and the sensitive and responsive skill set that these require. From a student perspective, many indicated a particular appreciation for the less familiar focus on self in the teacher education context that was implicit within somatic processes. In particular, there was

a value expressed for the 'being' orientation that they seemed to generate, and a recognition of the relevance of this for various aspects of their personal and professional lives.

While experiences of enhanced self-awareness and self-knowledge were shown to be affirmed within the somatic tradition and its literatures, the relevance of these effects was demonstrated to be particularly pertinent in light of the increasing importance that has been attached to issues of identity in the teacher education process (see sections 3.4.1&3.4.2). Their relevance was further heightened in light of a growing recognition of the dispositional nature of teacher identity, and the recent debates about how best to engage with such issues more holistically in the reflection process (Bullough, 1997; Clandinin & Schaefer, 2019; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1994; Korthagen, 2004, 2014, 2017; Palmer, 1998). In this regard, I would consider the embodied approach to reflection, as illustrated by the journal guidelines and interview design within this research (see section 4.8.2 & Appendix C), to offer another valuable contribution to the recent expansion of theory and practice in this domain.

7.4.2 Somatic Sensitivity and Responsivity

In light of the increasing acknowledgement of the tacit and embodied nature of teacher identity (see section 3.4.3), it was the particularly embodied nature of the students' awareness of self in a given moment that was considered to be especially significant during this pedagogical process. In particular, many students demonstrated a distinctive capacity to both notice and language subtle qualities of sensation in response to present moment interaction as the module progressed. In light of the challenges to both feeling and including the intelligence of the body in personal and professional activity as highlighted within in this study, and as highlighted within both the somatic and educational literature (Bauer, 2018; Burnidge, 2012; Gustafson, 1998; O'Loughlin, 2006), such capacities were considered to be particularly beneficial.

From a somatic education perspective the embodied nature of such awareness would represent the basis for what might be considered second level capacities such as present moment responsivity & attunement, and artistry in aesthetic practice. Furthermore, the heightened quality of consciousness that the languaging of such sensation brings, would also be considered to contribute to the capacity for potential repatterning and change in relation to these skills (Batson et al., 2012; Behnke, 1995; Hanna, 1988). In the teacher education literature, a holistic quality of awareness has also more recently been proposed as the basis for meaningful professional growth and dispositional change (Korthagen, 2004, 2014, 2017; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2009; Van Manen, 2016a). However, while the significance of discerning the subtleties of emotion and related motivation have been recognised in this regard (Korthagen, 2004, 2014, 2017; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2009), the connection between emotion, memory and body has not been adequately theorised within this field in my view, nor has the nature of an adequate pedagogical process to cultivate the body-mind sensitivity in question.

7.4.3 Evidence of Developmental Learning Process in Somatic Education

An important finding of this study was the demonstration of a developmental learning process within the somatic education experience in this context. This was firstly contextualised to some degree in relation to my own recognition of the challenges of an embodied nature that I have encountered among student teachers previously. During the module itself the developmental process was made evident via my analysis of both the challenges experienced with the somatic process, and the incremental progress of a body-mind nature that was observed as it unfolded. Furthermore, the role of some of the disciplines of somatic education and their accompanying pedagogical features was considered to be significant in terms of such progress. Of particular note in relation to the former were some of the principles and practices from the fields of body-mind centering and authentic movement,

which seemed to support participants to feel the body more sensitively, and to appreciate its interconnected nature. The incorporation of a number of eastern practices with a somatic lens such as yoga and embodied meditation, was also significant in this regard particularly in the early stages.

More broadly, as demonstrated elsewhere, the somatic education emphasis on the relational field, an evolving capacity for somatic self-regulation, and engagement with eco-somatics, were all shown to have played a significant role in the developmental learning process that ensued. Moreover, the particular integration between somatic education and arts education in this module was considered to be particularly instrumental in this regard. In summary, I suggest that the data from this research offers a worthy basis for proposing that somatic intelligence can indeed be taught and deepened within this context, which I have argued is not a well-recognised phenomenon within the field of education. The increasing inclusion of somatic education modules to this end within the fields of professional dance and theatre offers a further testament to this proposal, as does the fledging research into its potential within the field teacher education to which this study now contributes.

7.4.4 Relational Connection and Attunement

The data and discussion pertaining to the relational features of the somatic education process and its impacts, represented an important dimension of the findings of this study. While the students' relationship with self was reported as a strong element of their pedagogical experience, equally strong was a feeling of enhanced 'connection' and 'attunement' with their external environment. This pertained to the relational environment with other students, the physical environment of the classroom, and the natural environment. On a dispositional level this seemed to transfer to experiences of enhanced personal presence, attunement, responsivity, and flexibility in life more broadly, and it was most directly noticed in their improvisational engagement with others during aesthetic practice, their reciprocal

relationship with the natural world, and their enhanced quality of listening. Furthermore, the data also suggested the students' awareness of a number of quintessential features of somatic practice that were considered to have had an impact in this regard, to include its non-judgemental, improvisational, and ecological orientations.

In relation to the craft of teaching, some of the more specific ways in which a somatic education orientation is relevant to and can generate such dispositions in a teaching context, were illustrated by detailed examples from my own experiences as facilitator of the module. Illustrations of the way in which I drew on my embodied awareness to attempt to respond to the relational and pedagogical needs of a given moment were given particular attention in this regard. While the students themselves did not have a placement experience during this period, their similar recognition of and engagement with such issues was evident in their reflections on our student-teacher interaction during the module, and in their nuanced observations of the challenges of working in an on-line context towards the end of cycle two and three. It was also evident in their insightful reflections on their dispositional tendencies during previous placements, and their identification of associated intentions for future practice.

From the perspective of the literature, the above experience and quality of reflection was considered to be particularly relevant in the context of the growing acknowledgement of the tacit and embodied nature of the relational dimension of teaching, and the need for a deeper consciousness of and engagement with such issues on the part of the teacher (see section 3.4). In my experience, I would suggest that it is challenging to generate an appreciation of the significance of an embodied relational pedagogical orientation at an *experiential* level with student teachers. So also is identifying a process for the cultivation of related skills in this sphere. Arising from this research, it is my suggestion that the specific features of somatic education practice can offer an effective scaffold in this regard.

7.4.5 Connection and Attunement with the Natural Environment

In light of the above, the findings also emphasise the significance of the ecosomatic dimension of this module to the experiences, understandings and dispositions that ensued during the process. In this regard, the participant experiences seemed to reflect many of the benefits outlined by somatic practitioners who tend to adopt an eco-somatic approach within their pedagogy (Bauer, 2008; Enghauser, 2007; Olsen, 2002; Reeve, 2013). These included an enhanced experience of connection with the natural world, an enhanced experience of the reciprocity which exists between human beings and their environment, and the encouragement of a relational rather than hierarchical or dualistic ontological perspective on learning within this domain. Many of these elements seemed to be reflected within some of the students' observations of the style of pedagogy that they had experienced in this context, and in their awareness of a contrast with their prior experiences in this regard. In light of the challenges experienced by some in the early stages of the module, the natural environment seemed to be particularly significant in supporting an enhanced experience of body in the first instance, and in supporting aesthetic and creative experience.

The above observations also chime with literature from the education sector, which uses a somaesthetic lens to emphasise the valuable role of the natural environment in enhancing body consciousness within students (Doddington, 2018). According to Doddington, this less prevalent rationale for working in the outdoors within the education sector, is considered not only to lead to an enhanced experience of interconnectedness with the natural environment, but to create the Deweyan conditions for continued motivation and flourishing in the learning process. I would suggest that such qualities of engagement are obviously highly relevant, not only to more meaningful and effective models of environmental education at this time, but to more embodied approaches to education generally.

7.4.6 Somatic Awareness and Aesthetic Engagement

As intimated within many if the other findings of this study, a strong message of this research is that the arts represent a particularly conducive site for engagement with somatic education processes in a teacher education context. In the first instance, they were shown to provide an immediate relevance and motivation for somatic engagement due to their inherent sensorial requirements. Furthermore, the confluence of these disciplines was considered to be critical to the particular quality of the aesthetic experience that ensued, and to the wider dispositional and perceptual shifts that it seemed to elicit.

In the first instance, one of the most critical consequences of the dedicated somatic emphasis of the module was the qualitative shift it elicited in the students' aesthetic experience, and in their subsequent orientation towards the same. Most significant in this regard was the enhanced state of flow and responsivity that was felt within such experience as the module progressed. This was associated with an enhanced feeling and freedom in the body, and with a related expansiveness of expression. From an arts education perspective, it was significant that both the students and I also demonstrated an appreciation for the specific influence of the somatic education principles and practices in this regard, and thus exhibited a sense of agency in terms of appreciating how such conducive aesthetic states might be accessed and generated into the future. For some students, this coincided with a deepened engagement with and understanding of the nature of body-mind interactivity within aesthetic processes, and the impact of initiation from the body in this regard. Such qualitative shifts in experience and understanding were considered to be particularly significant in light of the oftentimes under-acknowledged and neglected role of the body within the arts education tradition, and the inadequate theorising in relation to the same (see section 3.3.2).

From a dispositional perspective, my own observations of the students in an interactive performative context towards the end of the module, as well as their subsequent

reflections and intentions as future arts education facilitators, suggested that these shifts in orientation were already being integrated into their 'ways of being'. This was considered to be particularly pertinent in light of the role that the arts are considered to play in the overall teacher education process, particularly in terms of their capacity to generate a particular quality of 'artistry' in a teacher's craft (Andrews, 2018; Dunn, 2016; Eisner, 2002a; Greene, 2001; Hadjipanteli, 2020; Lutzker, 2012). Moreover, given Eisner's (2002a) contention that it is the quality of one's somatic intelligence that is the key determining factor in one's capacity for artistry in teaching, this research demonstrates that a dedicated somatic focus within the arts education strand of their education, may more effectively orientate student teachers towards this end.

7.4.7 Self-regulation in Teacher Education

The capacity for increased freedom and flow in the student's expressive orientation as elucidated above, was also supported by a newfound capacity for self-regulation in the face of activation and inhibition. In the first instance, this involved an ability to recognise restrictive states within the body-mind system, and to recognise related interactivity between cognitive, emotional, and physical experience in this regard. Over the course of the module, the findings show that students began to draw on self-regulation strategies from the somatic field to intentionally regulate and rebalance the system. This pertained to challenges experienced within aesthetic and pedagogical situations, and to those experienced during the pandemic period. Such strategies included a combination of compassionate witnessing of present-moment states, and engagement with physical awareness strategies that drew on the support of the physical environment.

From a teaching perspective, the findings show that the students also drew on these experiences to reflect on their dispositional orientations on previous placement experiences, and to develop intentions for a more agentic approach in future practice. My own experiences

as teacher of this module also offered examples of how embodied self-regulatory approaches can be specifically drawn upon in a teaching and learning context. The significance of vulnerability and emotion in the practice of teaching was elucidated in many of these accounts, as was the positive relationship discovered between regulatory practices and one's capacity for a democratic teaching approach.

These findings affirm the particularly embodied orientation to self-regulation that somatic practices have offered from the earliest conception of the field, and the generation of agency in relation to the same (see sections 2.4 & 2.5). In an education context, they offer phenomenological support to the need identified within the field of cognitive neuroscience for greater recognition of the significant role that emotion plays in the acts of cognition and human functioning, and the need for a more targeted education of students in this regard (see section 3.2.1). From a teacher education perspective particularly, they offer practical support in the face of the inevitable vulnerability and stress that teaching can entail, not least for those who are being initiated into the field. This is thereby likely to contribute to enhanced professional well-being and resilience in the longer term, which is a growing concern within the profession as the literature illustrates (Gu & Day, 2007; Keltchermans, 2009).

7.4.8 Empowerment in Teacher Education

The final and perhaps most overarching theme to emerge from the analysis process pertained to the overall sense of empowerment that seemed to be experienced by participants arising from this process. In this regard the analysis gave recognition to the enhanced sense of confidence, agency and choice that was reported by many students during the course of the module and in its aftermath. The overall sense of self-awareness and self-knowledge that was reflected across both the student and lecturer experience seemed to play a pivotal role in this regard, as did a newfound agency in relation to working with the interactive nature of the body-mind system.

Moreover, the embodied and democratic pedagogical style of the somatic education approach was considered to offer a distinctive contribution to such experiences. In relation to the former, recognition was given to the capacity of somatic techniques to give full feeling and aesthetic expression to the body-mind, while also offering a way of rebalancing the system in the context of arising inhibitions and self-doubt. From a broader pedagogical perspective, the sense of student ownership that was experienced as implicit to the approach was also considered to be a key factor, as was relational and environmental support that the somatic process offered.

From a somatic education perspective, the above conclusions are consistent with the fundamental principles of empowerment that are considered to have underpinned the various evolutions of somatic practice from its earliest conceptions (Burnidge, 2012; Dragon, 2015; Fortin, 2017; Schupp, 2017). Furthermore, they reflect assertions from the field that the empowerment in question is considered to arise from both the movement and pedagogical components that are inherent to the somatic process (see sections 2.9.1 & 2.9.2). As students of education, I would further suggest that the embodied nature of such engagement seems to have enlivened, or perhaps even generated, a particular passion for critical, emancipatory, and holistic pedagogical approaches. This is reflected in a prioritisation of the goal of self-actualisation in education over the consummation of curricular content, and a prioritisation of being over knowing in terms of epistemological orientation. I would regard the criticality and vision that is evident in such statements to also reflect the sense of social activism that can come from the initial personal orientation of somatic practice (see section 2.8.6).

Such views are of course also reflected in the work of many of critical and aesthetic pedagogical theorists who regard the humanisation and empowerment of the person to be critical to the ultimate project of education and to the related goal of a just society (Dewey, 1938; Eisner, 2002b; Freire, 2013; Greene, 1995). However, I would suggest that this

research offers rich phenomenological evidence to support the view that somatic inquiry not only aligns with emancipatory, critical, and feminist pedagogical theories, but that it offers the potential to embody them (see section 2.9.5).

7.5 Contribution to the Field

As the title of this study is '*Embodiment in Teacher Education: Widening the Field'*[2], in this section I will summarise the key contributions that I believe it has made, and elaborate on the extent to which it can indeed be considered to offer a widening of the field in teacher education. Notwithstanding the potential significance of the methodological contribution that was discussed previously, the overarching contribution of this study is that it has foregrounded the scope and impact of a relatively new confluence between the three fields of somatic education, arts education, and teacher education in theoretical and practical terms. While Rosehart (2013) and Emond's (2020) doctoral research has also initiated some helpful groundwork in this regard, the particular focus in this study on pre-service education is considered to offer a distinctly novel and valuable contribution to understanding the potential of the meeting in question. Furthermore, I would argue that, arising from the encounter between these fields, the research has in fact contributed to the expansion of research and practice *within* each of the fields in question in the distinctive ways outlined below.

- *Somatic Education* - In the first instance, this research has responded to the calls from the somatic education community, and indeed the field of somaesthetics, for more phenomenological research into how a somatic approach may be experienced beyond its more familiar homes in dance, injury prevention and therapy. The definitional and historical content of the literature chapter on somatic education also contributes to the

[2] I wish to acknowledge the inspiration I received from the title of Tufnell & Crickmay's (2004) publication in relation to the second part of this title.

growing impetus to have its knowledge base more explicitly recognised and extended within mainstream academia, and thereby to open its potential to a wider audience.

- *Arts Education* - The second significant contribution of this research is to the extension of theory and practice within the field of arts education. Not only does it corroborate with perspectives that seek to give significantly more recognition to the role of the body within this field in theoretical terms, it also offers practical ways of recognising and extending the potential of that role, and offers phenomenological evidence pertaining to the same. In this regard, it affirms Eisner's (2002a, 2010) proposal that the somatic intelligence of the individual is one of the most significant factors in the development of *artistry* within one's aesthetic approach, to include one's critical capacity for responsive and sensitive improvisation in in this realm. However, in response to the questions also posed by both Siegesmund (2017) and Eisner (2002b), the findings of this study take this premise a step further, in that they affirm that it is indeed possible 'teach' someone to feel more deeply through a more dedicated somatic focus, and to receive its consequent benefits. In summary, the study demonstrates that the qualitative shifts students experienced in this context, arose not only through engagement with the arts, as has generally been the perceived wisdom within the arts education field, but through an enhanced education in body-mind experience in this context.
- *Teacher Education* - This research was ultimately shown to bring an overarching contribution to theory and practice in the broader field of teacher education in a number of significant ways, many of which were shown to be rooted in the relationship between somatics and the arts discussed above. The most overarching influence in this regard pertained to an affirmation of the significance of teacher identity in teacher development, and a proposed expansion of understanding and

practice in relation to the same. In this regard the data suggests that the somatic education influence on the students' aesthetic and general life experience generated a more embodied engagement with the critical areas of student reflection, disposition, and pedagogical understanding. It thereby affirmed and encouraged the further extension of the emerging theory and practice within this field, which is calling for a more holistic approach in these domains.

In addition, I would consider that the overall sense of empowerment that seems to have arisen from such experience to be highly significant in two key respects. Firstly, the notion that somatic practice has the potential to support the embodiment of democratic and emancipatory pedagogical theory, presents an important prospect for the quality of pedagogical understanding within the field. Secondly, in the context of a profession that demands an increased responsibility and agency on the part of the teacher due to its ever-increasing complexity, processes that may enhance one's sense of empowerment at a holistic level should also merit serious consideration.

Overall, the significance that was elucidated in relation to the value of the distinctive somatic emphasis within this context would seem to affirm the view held within Shusterman's (2002, 2009, 2020) somaesthetic framework, that a dedicated somatic emphasis is likely to significantly enhance both the quality of one's aesthetic experience and also one's aesthetic quality of living. Moreover, this study demonstrates that this premise has significant relevance for the field of teacher education, and its specific duty to the effective development of student teachers.

7.6 Limitations and Recommendations

At this juncture, it is important to outline what I would consider to be the limitations of this study, and to review the broad efforts made to reduce their impact. I will also include some recommendations for future research and practice in light of the need to further extend

and deepen what I would consider to be this promising field of enquiry. This effort has involved an engagement with some of what I would consider to be the deeper implications of this research for the field.

- *Considerations of scale* - As explained previously, given the dearth of literature in this particular area, this study was exploratory in nature. To this end, and because of the subtle nature of somatic education and its associated outcomes, an in-depth phenomenological approach was considered to be the most appropriate frame for gaining a deeper insight into the scope and nature of its potential application in this context at this time. This initial foray is therefore small-scale in nature, and its findings could obviously not be considered to be generalisable to all teacher education contexts. Recommendations for future research would thus pertain to the inclusion of a somatic emphasis in similar teacher education contexts at a national and international level. The resulting overlaps and distinctions which may ensue, could thereby offer rich ground for affirming, extending, or adding further complexity, to the findings of this study.
- *Considerations of perspective* - The second limitation pertains to the fact that the perspectives offered in this study are generally confined to those who participated in the project itself, to include the students from the three cycles in question, and myself as both researcher and teacher. This decision was partly influenced by the qualitative and autoethnographic nature of the design, which celebrates the natural setting, and the perspectives of those it includes. It was also influenced by the particular nature of somatic education practice, which requires the development of an intimate and consistent relational field to meet the challenges of initial engagement with body-mind practice, and to make a more liberated embodied response more accessible as the module progressed.

That said, as explained in the methodology chapter, I took a number of steps to counter the potential limitation in question, to include my own ongoing professional participation in and consultation with the broader somatic field (see Appendix A). I also devised a range of ethical procedures that were implemented and shared with students to offset any undue influence that may have existed in terms of power (see section 5.0). Notwithstanding these modifications, it is possible that a future iteration of this study may benefit from the inclusion of a research assistant or co-facilitator with a somatic background in the overall pedagogical process. This may add another interesting layer to the reflection process, and be particularly helpful in the context of an even deeper focus on issues of practice. It must be acknowledged however, that such a proposal would involve considerable additional funding and resource implications.

- *Considerations of expertise* - The third and somewhat related limitation I wish to address in this conclusion pertains to the specialised nature of the expertise in somatic education that underpinned my facilitation of this module, which may thus somewhat limit the potential for transfer to other contexts. Like some of the other limitations discussed in this section, this may of course also be considered a strength. Indeed, one of the implications I would draw from this study is the considerable value there is to be gained from the continued professional development of teacher educators in terms of the expansion of practice that is continuously needed within the field. Furthermore, given the particular nature of the study in question, it is important to note that my own quality of embodiment as facilitator, was shown to be a key factor in demonstrating the application and relevance of the embodied pedagogy in question. This was no doubt linked with depth of the tuition I received from my initial *Origins* and accreditation

experience, and my continued professional development in the interim. This is notwithstanding what I would consider to be my continued 'learner' status in the field, and the influence that this may also have had on the quality of the student experience. While the combined influences of my background in drama education, somatic education and somatic therapy are likely to have been beneficial to this process, I am conscious of the benefits that additional expertise in the area of somatic dance may offer my practice, particularly from the perspective of the somatic movement principles. I welcome the growing impact of my continuing professional development in this regard.

In light of the wide-ranging findings of this study, one further possibility for consideration arising from this research is that other body-mind based practices may also have a positive influence in this context, to include perhaps some more familiar eastern practices that incorporate similar principles. Such a broadening of the research focus may thus serve to extend the relevance of the findings of this study and to include a wider field of expertise in the discussion frame. Whatever the body-mind discipline in question however, I would concur with the literature that the depth of embodied commitment and expertise of the practitioner will always represent a key component in embodied pedagogical practice, and that its influence on the qualitative experience of participants cannot be underestimated (Collinson, 2015; Davis, 2018). Furthermore, I would suggest that the practices in question would need to include attention to the full body-mind continuum and relational orientation, that was critical to the outcomes of the somatic approach used within this study in my view.

- *Considerations of application* - The final limitation I wish to discuss here pertains to the fact that the basis for student reflection in this research is confined to their

experiences during and shortly after their engagement with this module. Apart from their substitute teaching experiences during this timeframe, and the influence the module experience evidently had on their reflections on past and future dispositional orientations, the research does not explore the implications of the module experience during a particular placement period, or in relation to their longer-term practice within the teaching profession. In this regard, a longitudinal study with a smaller cohort of students would be worth pursuing as a follow up to this study, as would the implications of a similar module for experienced teachers within the Irish context.

Regardless of the potential limitation outlined in the paragraph above, I feel it important to complete this section by emphasising that one of the most important implications of this research in my view is that education in this domain is slow and incremental in nature, as are the emergence of its associated benefits. This research may thus serve to remind those of us in the field that there are more steps to the teacher education process than we may have conceived of as a profession, and that the general rush to a focus on classroom technique and curriculum content in our programmes, as critiqued by a number of the students in this study, may be short sighted and counterproductive in the longer term. As I would see it, one of the key messages of this study is that we must give more attention to the personal development and identity formation of teachers themselves, what Korthagen refers to as the "inconvenient truth" of meaningful professional development in this field (Korthagen, 2017). More particularly, we must give more attention to their embodied engagement in this domain. In this process we may more effectively communicate some of the core pedagogical concepts that underpin the emancipatory and democratic pedagogies that many of us aspire to. With this in mind, I would consider that finding ways to slow down the pedagogical process within teacher education to be a key priority, while still aiming to ensure a perceived relevance from

the student perspective. In this regard the research shows that exploration of such issues in the context of arts based aesthetic experience, provides a relevant motivation and pedagogical context for such engagement, while maintaining a holistic focus on the student teacher's development in the shorter term.

Such an orientation may of course present a challenge to the growing neoliberal inclinations of the contemporary university, in that teacher education programmes within this context would need to buy into the values and resourcing that such a slow pedagogy entails. This would include the small group size it requires for example, and the less obvious correlation with standard professional outcomes in the shorter term. It should be noted in this regard that such conditions were facilitated within this study in the context of a 'major specialism' which, while it currently represents a significant element of the B.Ed. degree at DCU, is not a teaching council requirement in the Irish context more broadly. As those of us who have worked in teacher education for a long period will appreciate, enhanced quality in such domains requires both professional and financial investment. With this in mind, this research suggests that investment in the meaningful embodiment process of student teachers within the current climate, may also require a recommitment to, or perhaps indeed a re-evaluation of, core pedagogical values and principles within the field.

7.7 Final Remarks

As I bring this phase of my ongoing exploration in this domain to a close, I acknowledge that my education in the area of somatic education, and in the related dialogue between the fields of this study, will involve a life-long process. Each stage in the journey will inevitably bring new questions and new possibilities to the fore for consideration. Nonetheless, I hope that what I have discovered and shared in this process will be beneficial to the research and practice community within these fields, and that it has opened up some new avenues for discussion and exploration.

Since the commencement of my PhD process in 2018, I could not have foreseen the substantial upheavals that have been experienced across the world in the interim, to include a global pandemic, a war in Europe and the Middle East, a refugee crisis, a housing crisis, and a deepening climate crisis. All of these continue to impact the field of education in unforeseen ways, and have raised considerable philosophical debate about what a contemporary education should fundamentally entail. More specifically such debate has asked what the modern child essentially needs in order to be adequately equipped to participate and flourish within the uncertain, challenging and nonetheless exiting future ahead. Such contemplation has unsurprisingly pertained to content and outcome in pedagogical process, but has more significantly focused on the interrelated issues of process and disposition in recent times.

The most recent of the crises alluded to above, the advent of the most sophisticated artificial intelligence technologies to date, has led to the impassioned resurfacing of age-old ontological and epistemological debates about the nature of meaningful knowledge and how it is acquired. These have extended to existential contemplation across all sectors of society about what it indeed means to ‘be’ and ‘know’ as a living, breathing, relational human being. In this light, and in light of the many complexities of our time, I would suggest that we have now reached a crisis point that requires us to more directly tackle the similarly age-old dualisms that have thwarted our systems of education since the enlightenment. In my view, the theoretical progress that has been made in recent times in terms of acknowledging both the sources and damaging effects of such dualisms, needs to be matched with a more concerted effort to address such deficits at the level of practice. This is with a view to the extraordinary potential to be gained from such efforts, as I hope this study has affirmed.

I would suggest that one of the most significant places that we need to bring increased attention to in light of the above is the education of our teachers, so that our system can be led

from its roots by those who would embody the holism that we might so wish for in the children that we teach. It is my hope that the meeting that has been explored between somatic education, teacher education and arts education within this this pre-service context, may contribute in some way to such a longer-term ideal. As I come to the end of this process, I am reminded that change is never easy, and this of course extends to the inter-related realms of personal, professional, and societal experience as this study suggests. During this experience, I echo the students, by asserting that I was also nudged and extended out of my comfort zone, in challenging, exiting, and unexpected ways, for which I now feel all the richer. It is perhaps possible, that this study may in turn also serve to stretch the boundaries of the system within which we exist in some incremental or unexpected way. However, for now, it behoves me to bring to a close this enlightening and fulfilling process, with deep gratitude to the inspiring students I learned from throughout, and to my own wonderful teachers who have continued to inspire my embodied education long past our precious encounters.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

Conference Participation and Additional Professional Development in Somatic Education

Conference Presentations

Murphy, P. (2019, May 15-18). *The soma in teacher education; Focusing the lens* [Conference presentation]. International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, University of Illinois, USA.

Murphy, P. (2022. June 26-30). *Ecosomatics and teacher education; Ways in to somatic engagement* [Conference presentation]. Sentient Performativities; thinking alongside the human, Dartington Hall, Devon, UK.

Academic Awards

President's Award for *Distinctive Approaches to Teaching and Learning* at Dublin City University (Received May, 2019)

Additional Professional Development in Somatic Education

- Batson, G. (2018, April 4-25). *Alexander Technique in Motion*. Dance House Ireland, Dublin.
- Davis, J. & Gambos, J. (2018, April 21-22) *Authentic Movement with Joan Davis and Julia Gombos.* Gorse Hill Centre, Greystones.
- O'Gorman R. (May 3-4). *Somatic Salon; A Soaking in Possibilities and Practices.* University College Cork.
- Black, D. & Hallett, A. (May, 21-25) *Embodying the Line: Writing, Movement and Radical Presence.* Hosted by Art Earth, Dartington Hall, Devon, UK.
- Mythan, S. (2018, June 17). *Movement Expression.* Lir Academy, Dublin.
- Davis, J. (2018, July 8-15). *Origins; An Introduction*. Earthsong Camps, Cahir, Co. Cork
- Eddy, M., Gintis B., Herbert, M. Payne, P. (2018, Sept 4). *Cultivating Neuroplasticity through Interoception in Somatic Movement Practices: Evolving Research Method.* On-line seminar hosted by ISMETA (International Somatic Education and Therapy Association)
- Johnson, R. (2019, January 17). *Embodied Research: A Practitioners Guide'*. On-line seminar hosted by ISMETA (International Somatic Education and Therapy Association)
- Body IQ Somatics Festival. (2019, November 15-17) *On being human in a world begging for our passion, compassion and action.* Somatics Academy, Berlin

- ISMETA International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association Conference. (2021, 3-7 March) *Engaging Embodiment Conference.* On-line conference.

- Body IQ Somatics Festival (2021, November 19-21). *Bodies of cultures, communities and places*. Somatics Academy Berlin. On-line engagement.

- ISMETA International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association Conference. (2022, April-29-May 1). *Professional Pathways in Somatic Movement; Building Knowledge, Skills and Practices.* On-line conference

- Art Earth Conference (2022. June 26-30). *Sentient Performativities; Thinking alongside the Human*, Dartington Hall, Devon, UK.

Ongoing Communities of Practice

- Origins monthly on-line peer group meeting – Continued meeting with peer group from Origins training (3 people).

- Origins Community Gatherings – Bi-annual weekend gatherings in various locations throughout Ireland wherein we gather to practice together. This includes engaging in authentic movement in the natural environment.

- Somatic Movement Practitioners Community of Practice – Newly formed group in the Irish context. Began monthly on-line meetings in May 2023. Focus and mission evolving.

- ISMETA Somatic Café. A regular virtual gathering organised ISMETA to reflect on practice and issues of somatic relevance.

APPENDIX B

Module Descriptor for Students

Note: This document was updated in light of the experiences from module one. It has continued to be updated in the iterations of the module since 2019-2020.

AP303 - *Embodiment, Education, and the Arts*
2019-2020



Lecturer: Paula Murphy

Overview:
This module will focus on the relationship between embodiment, education, and the arts. It will do so within the specific context of teacher education.

The strategies and methodologies used will focus predominantly on developing an embodied and holistic awareness in the person of the student *teacher*, which will have implications not only for approaches to curriculum, but also for his/her quality of presence, relationship, and communication in the classroom. Drawing on the field of somatic movement education the sessions will initially focus on mindful explorations in movement, voice, and the senses. As the weeks progress, participants will observe the impact of these explorations in improvised and performative artistic and educational contexts.

Reading/ Research:

Articles and websites as uploaded on loop or provided by lecturer

Loop: AP303

Facilitator: Paula Murphy – paula.m.murphy@dcu.ie (Office F227)

Image of lecturer

Lecturer:
Paula Murphy has worked as a lecturer in Education (Drama) in St. Patrick's College since 1999. She currently lectures on undergraduate, postgraduate and in-service programmes in Drama and Education. She previously worked as a primary school teacher and as Education Officer for TEAM Educational Theatre Company. She is co-author of *Discovering Drama: Theory and Practice for the Primary School* (Gill & MacMillan, 2006) and was one of the founding members of ADEI (Association for Drama in Education in Ireland). Since 2012 Paula has been studying with Joan Davis of the Gorse Hill centre in Greystones in the area of Somatic Movement Education and Therapy (ISMETA), and is currently exploring the relationship between somatic movement education, drama and teacher education.

Learning Outcomes:

That the student will be enabled to:

- Engage with his/her experience of the body-mind continuum through the principles and practices of somatic education.
- Identify somatic principles of particular relevance to creativity and arts education.
- Reflect on the process of becoming a teacher in the context of the principles of somatic education.
- Explore the role of the outdoors in the somatic education process.
- Reference his/her experience and understanding in the context of recommended literature in the field

Course Layout
Stage 1; Somatic Education; Principles and practice
(Sessions 1-3)
Stage 2; Somatic Education and Creativity
(Sessions 4-7)
Stage 3; Somatic Education and the outdoor environment
(Sessions 8-9)
Stage 3; Somatic Education and Presentation
(Sessions 10-11)

*More detailed session breakdown to be provided during semester

ASSESSMENT

Part One: Reflection and participation (20%)

During this module, your ongoing participation and reflection will be acknowledged. The two elements of part one (A & B) are ungraded and awarded 10% each upon completion.

A. Ongoing Reflection (10%)

After every three weeks, you should have submitted one contribution to loop reflect and one contribution to the group glossary.

- ***Loop Reflect -*** *One journal excerpt based on a college session of your choice (Journal Guidelines on loop – approx. 250/300 words)*
- ***Group glossary –*** *This includes a* ***personal contribution*** *(one paragraph), and a* ***response*** *to your buddy's contribution (Few sentences) based on aspects of the module loop page.*
  Your own contribution can be based on your response to a reading/website/you tube clip/podcast on the loop page, your experience of follow-up homework, or the development of an artistic piece that is inspired by somatic principles. Your response to your buddy can refer to an aspect of his/her contribution that you resonate with on an experiential level or that raises interesting questions for you.

One contribution to *each* by ***Friday 14th February.***
One contribution to *each* by ***Friday 6th March***
One contribution to *each* by ***Friday 3rd April***

B. Individual creative project(10%)

This refers to the sharing of your personal creative project at the end of the module. (Details to follow)

Part Two: Reflective Essay (80%)

'The role of somatic education in my experience of this module, with specific reference to my experience of creative process and presentation.' (1600 words)

In preparation for your essay you should consult

- Your journal extracts (College sessions)
- At least four of the recommended readings (See reading list)
- At least two websites (See loop)
- At least two you-tube clips/podcasts (See loop)

Submission date: **Friday 1st May** (Loop submission – AP303)

Embodiment, Education, and the Arts

Reading List 2020

Please read at least <u>one item from each section</u> below.

Each section includes items that are linked with the theme and practice of embodiment as it relates to this module. Items with an * will be provided on loop. Other items are in the library.

1. Somatic Education/ Embodiment

Eddy, M. (2009). A brief history of somatic practices and dance: Historical development of the field of somatic education and its relationship to dance. *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*, *1*(1), 5–27. https://doi.org/doi: 10.1386/jdsp.1.1.5/1*

Fogel, A. (2013). *Body sense: The science and practice of embodied self-awareness*. New York: WW Norton. (Handout)

Mullan, K. J. (2014). Somatics: Investigating the common ground of Western body–mind disciplines. *Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy*, *9*(4), 253–265. https://doi.org/10.1080/17432979.2014.946092*

2. Arts Education/Creativity

Boal, A. (2005). *Games for actors and non-actors*. Routledge. (Section 3)

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). Creativity, flow and the psychology of discovery and invention. New York: Collins. (Chapter 5)*

Eddy, M. (2010). The Role of the Arts & Embodiment in Community Building: a post 9/11 review. *Currents, Northampton, Body-Mind Centering Association*, *13*(1), 1–10.*

Hermans, C., & Bremmer, M. (2015). *Embodiment in Arts Education*. 1–28.*

3. Somatic Education and the Outdoors

Doddington, C. (2018). Education in the Open: The Somaesthetic Value of Being Outside. *Dewey and Education in the 21st Century*, *3*(1), 119–138. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78743-625-120181014 *

Olsen, A. (2002). *Body and earth: An experiential guide*. Middlebury College Press. (Section – Art and the Environment pp 208-215) (Handout)

Bauer, S. (2008). Body and earth as one: Strengthening our connection to the natural source with ecosomatics. *Conscious Dancer*, 8–9.

4. Teacher Education

Sameshima, P. (2008). Letters to a new teacher: A curriculum of embodied aesthetic awareness. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *35*(2), 29-44.*

Eisner, E. W. (1984). The art and craft of teaching. *DOCUMENT RESUME SP 028 307 Reinhartz, Judy, Ed. Perspectives on Effective Teaching and the Cooperative Classroom. Analysis and Action Series.*, 21.*

5. Education

Buono, A. (2019). Interweaving a mindfully somatic pedagogy into an early childhood classroom. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, *14*(2), 150–168. (Digital copy available)*

Lawrence, R. L. (2012). Intuitive knowing and embodied consciousness. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *134*, 5–13.*

Mahmoudi, S., Jafari, E., Nasrabadi, H. A., & Liaghatdar, M. J. (2012). Holistic education: An approach for 21 century. *International Education Studies*, *5*(2), 178–186.*

APPENDIX C

Journal Guidelines for Students

Reflective Journal Guidelines

(Approx. 250-300 words)



'Approach all of this with warm hearted curiosity'

<u>Possibilities</u> for exploration

- Overall feelings/sensations/thoughts at the <u>*start*</u> of the session.

- Overall feelings/sensations/thoughts at the <u>*end*</u> of the session

- One key Moment for Reflection <u>during</u> the session –(See Grey box – page 2)

- Wider curiosities – aspects you may be learning about yourself, creativity, the arts, education, teacher education through this process. (From session 3 onwards)



One Key Moment for Reflection – possible areas to consider

These are just prompts to get you started – one bullet below may be all you need to get started on a given week! This detailed reflection helps to increase somatic awareness in the body generally.

- ***Context for this moment..***

- ***Describe your physical movement – nuts and bolts..***

('My hand was reaching into the air, and my weight was falling into my left knee…You may need to refer to others, depending on the moment, but do not use their names. Refer to them as 'another mover')

- ***Describe your internal experience – sensations, emotions, thoughts..***

(You may find the sensation words doc on loop helpful here – e.g. tense, light, heavy, tingly etc.)

- ***Aspects of this experience that were either familiar or new for you..***

- ***Aspects of this experience that felt pleasant/unpleasant***

(What aspect of your physical experience told you this?)

- ***New curiosities about your experience***

- ***New discoveries***

APPENDIX D

Student Journal Sample – Avril (Cycle one)

Week 5

I really enjoyed today's session. I found that I was much better at not thinking so much or letting my mind wander. I was much more focussed on the meditation and what Paula was saying during the water activity. I found working with the water quite exhilarating – the hand that had been in water felt much more alive than the other and I thought that this was really interesting.

One key moment for me today took place during the activity where we were standing and imagining ourselves as water. I noticed that I was able to move and shift my weight a lot without being afraid of falling. It was as though I began to trust my own body more. Personally, I think that this could be due with becoming more present and in tune with my body since the beginning of this module through meditation. However, one thing I did notice coming into my head a few times was the paranoia of how I looked during this activity, despite knowing that everyone had their eyes closed. Although I feel I have developed more trust in my body over the last few weeks, I think that this shows how I might sometimes still feel a bit uncomfortable in it.

I loved the painting activity. I started off by just letting the brush flow across the page and being inspired by water but I found that from this, other ideas grew. For example, I began picturing the sun hitting off the water and tried to create this illusion through painting. I noticed that I was thinking about the sea a lot.
Several times, memories of being in the sea came into my head but this was better than letting my mind completely wander.

One part of today's session, which looking back on it I realise might have made me more comfortable, was that there seemed to be less of a focus on breath and more of a focus on feeling e.g. touching the water or a paintbrush in my hand. I think that for me, this might work better with helping me to tune in to my body rather than focussing on breath.

Week 8

In this session we went to the botanic gardens for a second time. I have chosen to journal about this session as I feel that I can compare and contrast it to our last session in the botanic gardens.

Personally, I found that there were many differences in my own feelings and responses to the experience, which makes me feel that I am making progress in this work. I found walking in silence through the gardens much easier than the last time and I was more able to acknowledge my thoughts but then let them go. I felt it was much easier to be present and engage in the meditation aspect as well. I think that this is because I now have a better idea of what works for me personally, rather than just going with the stereotypical images of meditation that may have existed in my mind before this module. I used to picture meditation as something where you had to lie down and focus on your breathing, but I now see that there are other ways to become more present and that these only work for some. This time, I opted to sit rather than lie down and I focussed more so on the feeling of the ground beneath me rather than on my breathing. I found that these worked much better for me and helped me to become more in touch with my body and my surroundings.

I really enjoyed the groupwork section of this session and felt that the group worked really well together. This was interesting for me as I often find that it is stressful to work in groups, but today I felt that it was really beneficial. I wonder if meditating before engaging in groupwork can affect how we work together. I think that it could potentially, as we are all more relaxed and mindful by the time we worked together.

When we were working with placing our prop on the tree, I felt that we were working together to create an abstract art piece and all of our ideas seemed to fit perfectly together so I found that this was a key moment for me. Personally, I think it showed me how being more present can have a positive impact on both my social interactions and my ability to be creative and this was a new key learning of the process for me.

APPENDIX E

Lecturer Journal Sample and Other Forms of Reflective Writing

A) Lecturer Journal Sample

Session 3 – Cycle 2 (2019-2020)

I really enjoyed this session, which represented a completely new session this year. In many ways it seemed to respond to the need I sensed last year to bring them more into their bodies earlier in the process, and to set up a deeper foundational base for embodied engagement. I have often had the sense in both this and drama work that for some students, they find it difficult to come at things in a full-bodied way. Words are dissociated from body, self-consciousness takes over….I sense little sense of yielding weight to the floor which I feel underlies many of these issues. I felt that the experiential benefit of the Boal exercises around compression and counterbalance in the first instance, was beneficial in relation to the above. During this process, they had to work in a relational way – with each other and in relation to the ground – and the experience inevitably was very visceral. I have become aware of the aliveness that this brings in to the body and the deeper sense of one's relationship with gravity, both of which I sensed as I observed them. The sense of experiment with another in this and the following exercises, seemed to bring in a number of key elements which I may have been missing in the earlier sessions last year – a very significant sense of play and improvisation, a necessity to bring body awareness and the languaging of that into the relational space with others. I have sensed an awkwardness around this languaging piece in the past, which seems to be an important part of the process of incorporating a more embodied approach. One student commented on the tactile nature of working with props in movement and how she found this easier and more effective than trying to sense the body in stillness. (Note my comments about energy of the sessions on previous occasions.) Also words from the Origins process are coming in here as I consider this – tensegrity, dynamic reciprocal tension, the energy, grounding and sense of self that is manifested through all of this, which represented an important part of my own process. In general I sensed an aliveness, playfulness and energy in the room throughout this section of the process, which provided a helpful contrast with the quieter, mindful nature of the earlier stages of the process. The significance of energy and the potential to influence it as a teacher comes to mind here. I wonder if they are sensing the ways in which some of our work raises energy and some of it calms it in relation to all of the above. I may need to ask about this (Link to self-regulation?)

The use of experimentation around the locomotive forces seemed to be very effective in relation to all of the above (yielding, pushing, reaching, pulling, resting). It seemed to be helpful in providing the 'scaffolding' I have been looking for in relation to the developmental process of learning to sense the body, while still including the element of improvisation and sensation. The reference to babies (images, video of baby crawling – particularly the image of my own niece) seemed to provide an effective 'way – in' in relation to all of the above. In particular, the images of Ciara in both 'sitting' against and yielding, seemed to have a visceral impact and ignited a more engaged response to the material at the early stages of the session.

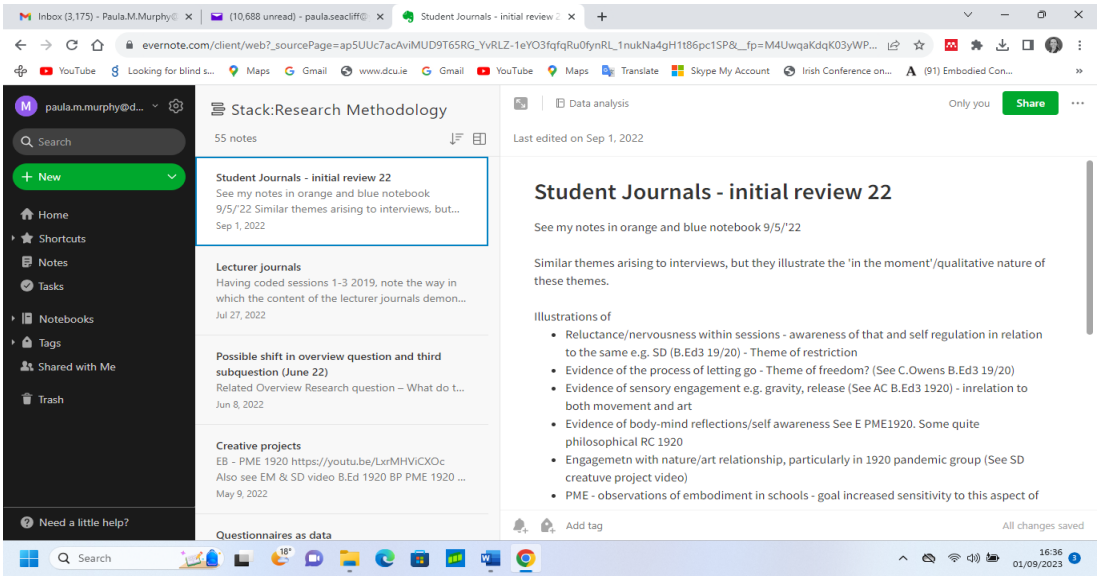
The theoretical piece at the start I found to be trickier and I think they did too. I think I often find challenging the balance, and sometimes tension, between learning *about* the significance and nature of body awareness, and

learning *through* the body about these things. My sense is that the most important learning takes place through the latter, and this is what I need to prioritise. However, it is very slow and incremental in process. However, I also feel some responsibility in terms of helping them to recognise a context/relevance for this experience in terms of teaching/life in case this is not apparent in the shorter time span of a specific session. I have also tried to start to bring in some of the science around what can happen within somatic processes. In term of these last two pieces, I feel that I am also learning with the students, which represents some of the challenge. In any case, with this group in any case, I feel that some of this theoretical set up can almost 'get in the way' and that the session really comes alive when we start engaging with our own experience. My own increased confidence in relation facilitating a developmentally appropriate experiential process could be relevant here in comparison with the last cycle, and perhaps this group are quite happy to trust in the process itself, and worry about relevance and science later? In any case, the more focused reading texts I have identified for earlier in the process this year, alongside the group forum will also provide a good support in this regard. All of this, is part of the ongoing question of clarifying the various ways in which somatic work is relevant in this teacher education context, and what the priorities might be in this regard in light context of a ten/eleven session course.

As I witness students, who on the first week lay on the ground with feet together and arms and hands held towards the body….now allowing all of the above to yield to the floor….now beginning to let go, to bring more of their bodies into their dance and their play….I feel the significance of their own developing body awareness, aliveness and presence as the most important priority of my work with them, and the need to trust that all else will evolve from there. I also sense the challenge and internal debates which this raises in me, who in spite of my own experiential work in somatic education, has worked in a context for twenty years where demonstration of 'knowledge', and capacity for application and transfer in an immediate teaching context are considered a key priority. What about knowledge that is sensed? That cannot be fully explained? That is continuously in process? That may not yield 'outcomes' or 'usefulness' for some time, and is contingent on the pace readiness and intelligence of the body.

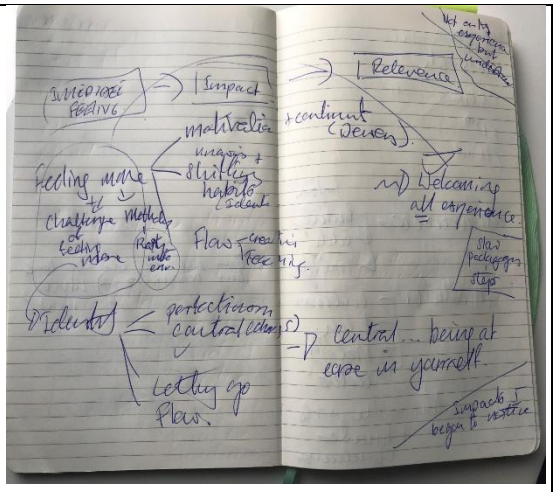
Other forms of Reflective Writing (Researcher)

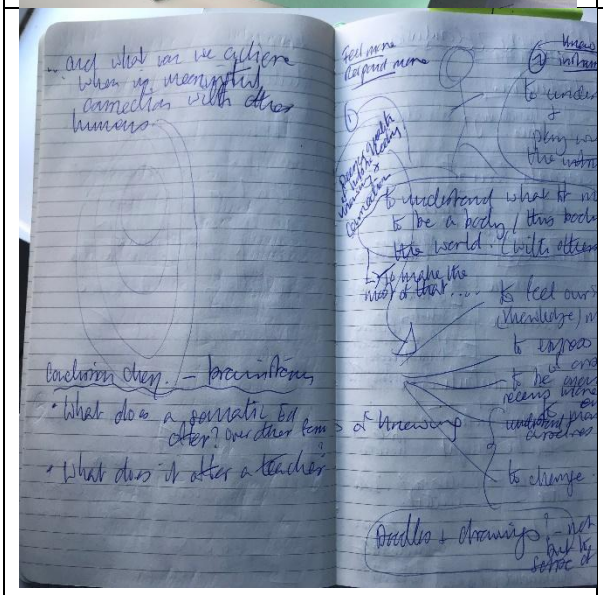
B) Use of Evernote Software

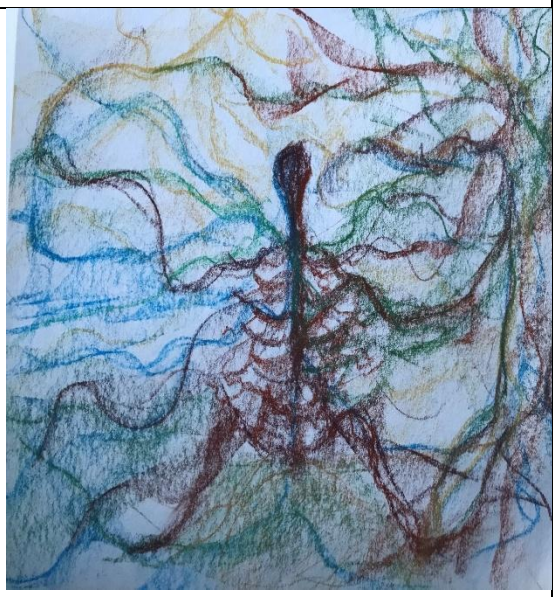


C) Handwritten Notes, diagrams, and drawings









D) Use of Critical Reading Forms for Reflecting on Literature

Critical Reading Form
(Adapted from the framework of Daniel Soule - www.grammatology.co.uk)

1. **Authors, title, date, publication title, place of publication, [vol/issue: pp. if a journal paper], type of copy I have (e.g. paper, PDF, notes)**
   Kieft, E. (2014). Dance as a moving spirituality: A case study of Movement Medicine. *Dance, Movement & Spiritualities*, *1*(1), 21-41.

2. **What is this work about? (Brief summary)**
   This article proposes dance, and the form of *Movement Medicine* in particular, as a both a means of accessing spiritual experience and as a spiritual practice in itself. The basis of this proposal is that she presents dance as a medium for integrating the 'body-mind-heart-spirit continuum' (p27) and thereby providing a visceral gateway for transcendent experience that is grounded in and transformative of human life experience. In this regard, she emphasises the enhanced relationship with self and with 'other' (various interpretations of other), that is facilitated by the dance experience. She also underscores the interdependent relationship between these two (relationship with self/ relationship with other).
   2020 – In the last section she outlines four characteristics of dance practice that align it with both spiritual practice and spiritual experience

- Grounded in the human body – the deeper you go in the wider you go (all my words)
- Provides access to a range of states of consciousness and therefore types of knowledge that are generally inaccessible to the 'computational brain'
- All of our experiences are inter-subjective – 'The dialogue between the person, context and environment becomes very tangible on the dance floor, including personal, social, environmental and cosmological dimensions' p35
- 'Finally, dance as a spiritual practice emphasizes the practitioner as an actor and a creator. Being in touch with life forces and vitality generates strength to manifest insights into action' mp35
  Note – the understanding of spirituality that is implicit in the above. (She compares spirituality with and distinguishes it from religion in the earlier part of the text) (Compare the above with Williamson – more in common than different I guess).

Movement medicine is presented as a non-choreographed or stylised form of dance, and is similar to the forms of authentic movement and body-mind centering in terms of many of its purposes and outcomes – and the interrelationship between various aspects of the self and relationship to environment alluded to above. (p27)

She uses a combination of hermeneutic and ethnographic methodologies to explore the above. She gathered data through participant observation, interviews, analysis of articles.
2020
Physical, temporal, spacial engagement supports engagement with spiritual and oneness

3. What are the main findings of this work? (Bullet points)
She illustrates and theorizes the various ways in which participants engage with and experience the *spiritual* in dance medicine**.**

4. How is this work relevant to your research question? Does it help you to refine the question in any way?

(Notes in Evernote – July 2020)

This work relates to my research in the following ways

- The focus/interest in participant experience
- The connection between '**whole-body knowing' (p26) and relationality**. The broad emphasis on relationship, which I am gradually recognising as central to the key intention/unifying thread of my practice for the next round.
- The focus on the commonalities of the broad emphases of these more open movement approaches generally as opposed to the intricacies of teaching one particular practice (BMC). Various practices of 'freeing up the body' so that it can intuit its own wisdom could my emphasis here drawing on a range of practices.
- The understanding of a continuum of one's experience/knowledge of 'relationship' from the physical to the interpersonal to the metaphysical (e.g. beginning with breath)
- July 2020 – it makes me consider the issue of 'intention' more carefully in relation to one's experience of spirituality in dance (while she acknowledges that it also 'happens' in the experience without intention. I wonder if this is also true of relationality (in the context of a short module). Consider the ways in which I did and did not bring such intention into the work, and in what ways I might wish to increase that further (Consider Botanic Gardens framing with 2020 group).
- It relates to my project in the context of ontological framing.

Note: In many cases these forms also included my reflection on the gaps that I noticed within the article in question.

APPENDIX F

Post Questionnaire – List of Questions

Note: Question 6 was added in cycle two and three.

1. a. What aspects of the approach taken during this course were most significant for you?

   b. Can you name significant moments/sessions/principles in this regard?

2. What were the benefits of this process for you?

3. What were the challenges of this process for you?

4. What is your understanding of somatic movement education at the end of this course?

5. a. In what way did this module have relevance for your professional development as a teacher/arts educator?

   b. Did it raise any new questions/themes for you in relation to your approach to or understanding of teaching/curriculum/arts education?

6. a. Did the content of this module have any relevance for you during the Coronavirus crisis? If so, in what way?

   b. If you have any other comments to make about your engagement with this module during the Coronavirus outbreak, please include it here.

7. Would you have any advice for students who are participating in this module in the future?

8. Would you have any further recommendations for this process?

APPENDIX G

Student Interview – Alice (Cycle 2)

Note: Planned and emergent questions are outlined in bold. Also this interview is from cycle two, and therefore involved an adaptation of the interview design description on page 142.

PM
Okay, so A on the 19th of May and then I'll just put press record here. Okay, and then I'm just going to go to the beginning of my notes for you. Yeah. Okay, so **the first thing is whether you had any prior experience that related to either the content or the approach we took during the module?**

A
Am I *thought* [*emphasis*] I did when I started because I had done, like listened to guided meditations and and stuff, but what I have learned since..I don't really think that I was would you say doing them *properly [emphasis]* or if they were really beneficial to me, because I was more using them as like distractions and stuff, and rather than actually like becoming really aware my body and stuff, so I'd say that's probably my only experience.

PM
Mmm. Okay, and so so in your prior experience, what would you say when you came to the module, what was familiar if anything, and what was new for you?

A
Probably having someone guide so I'd listen as I said to my guided meditations so listening to you and following what you would said and the movements and breathing and stuff, I had done stuff like that before.

PM
Mmm.

A
Em and probably what was different would be mainly the creative part afterwards. I know we did that later on in the module. That would kind of be the difference.

PM
Okay, and I'm also well, maybe we can come back to it later, but I **remember you describing yourself as a dancer in the module, and and and I think halfway through you made some reference when we were in the group discussion around ways that that was similar or different.**

A
Em yeah. Well in terms
[00:02:00]
of the moments when we did like *movement* [*emphasis*] stuff, its *really [emphasis]* different to everything I've ever trained before ever. Like I've always been a very like, you know, I've never been, like I've never been the choreographer or the one who is in charge of the movement. It's always like you know, you follow the teacher, you know, that's always been my role as a dancer.

PM
Okay

A
..so to kind of do things like...I remember the mirroring activity, and the session with the water and learning about the fluid body and stuff and kind of do movement in that way, where I kind of listened to my *own [emphasis]* body that my *own* [*emphasis*] body move. Em yeah, that was really different than what I've always trained as.

PM
Hmm. And, would it make you think about dance any differently or

A
Yeah, that was actually one of the things I've written down was that em, I think the creative process was something I learned a lot about out in this module, em and it's not something I'd ever really thought about I always thought about performance.

PM
Hmm,

A
and even if I *was [emphasis]* choreographing or making up a dance, I'd always, oh well how is the *audience [emphasis]* going to see or how does it look for the audience? It was always about *performance [emphasis]*- whereas this, you know I got to experience the... that not just the dance but obviously with other art forms or whatever, but eh the *process [emphasis]* of actually *making* [*emphasis*] something, you know,

PM
Mmm. Okay. Okay A. Well look, what I'm gonna do now is is **show you some image**s and these are remember on the last day I showed you images of different stages in the module. So some of those are there, but I've also put in some that are particular to you that I took from your journal, or that last three or whatever, and the idea here really is to you know, to bring the body in a bit more to your reflection, because we could talk about things but just see what happens when we bring artifacts and images welcome. He's back. And and so what I'm going to suggest that we do before that in order to to kind of respond in a kind
[00:04:00] of fuller way is maybe to just do just a few minutes of like a guided process where you come into the body of it more just a few minutes. It would be a bit like what we did before the creative presentations just a few minutes like that and I would guide it and I do it myself. Does that sound? Okay, okay. So if you want to just get comfortable there in your chair. And feel the connection between your body and the chair. perhaps between your feet and the ground the connection between your hands and wherever they are lying. It's letting your weight fall into the support of the chair or the ground a little more. Beginning now to become more aware of your breath how that is this morning. Just following the natural movement of the breath as it comes in and out. Where's the silence? And the sounds around you.
[00:06:13]
It's checking in with different parts of the body. Just checking for sensations. Checking in with the hands. what your is saying there may be little vibrations or pulsations or Maybe not today. Noticing how the shoulders are, the face, the throat, the chest, belly the limbs. and just observing if there's any holding now. That you're noticing in different places. I'm just see if you can soften in that place. release a little perhaps helping by letting your overall weight sink a little more. to the chair perhaps releasing with your out-breath. And just really letting go of all the distractions if you can, and really bring yourself into this particular moment right now.
[00:08:26]
And then bringing some very gentle movement into your fingers. your toes your wrists and your ankles Maybe rolling the shoulders backwards. and forwards giving the neck a little stretch whatever way it wants to. And if there's any other stretches or movements, maybe your arms want to reach or stretch let them to do that. Breathing more deeply releasing more deeply on the out-breath. And then slowly opening your eyes, really gently. And just kind of looking gently at the area in front of you. And just noticing the quality of your attention right now in your presence. Seeing if you can still stay connected with your inner body.
And now I'm going to share my screen with you now and have a look at some images hopefully that's going to share it....so I'm going to go really slowly through these images and I'd like you to try and you know, let go of any expectation of how you're going to feel or anything like that. And as you see each one and just notice
[00:10:26]
what arises if anything, it may be associations or memories or feelings, but see as best you can If you can stay in touch with the physical body and see do any sensations arise, well, they may be little tightenings or loosenings or vibrations. They'll be subtle things if they come at all and no worries if they don't. okay, and you don't have to say anything at each one at the very end. We might start chatting. Let's see what happens. Okay?And also you may notice little impulses for movement or gesture and just if they come, notice that too.
[00:13:30]
So I if you like I can go back through them a little more quickly, or **you may already have noticed things happening as we went through those.**

A
Yeah, I did notice a few things as we went through them.

PM
Okay. Okay. Well we might go back to them. You probably noticed aswell with the last image that it's not actually if you're creative project because I couldn't get that on. So I found a river and trees, So yeah, so, let's see. What kind of things did you notice happening as you went back?

A
I know for the first few images I really felt like a heaviness, like weighted into the ground, and even like lookin, there was one image I think was Clodagh Mae and Eadaoin, when they were like learning away from from each other, I felt kind of I wanted to do the same kind of motion to lean away

PM
Mmm-hmm. Em, Yeah weighted and happiness. Then I think when I saw my photo, the photo off the little end piece I made, I actually got really nervous. Kinda like I like that feeling in your stomach when you're like going over a hill? I got that in my stomach when I saw that

A
hmm. Yeah, and then I felt really like light and happy when I saw the photos of the masks and stuff, cos that was a good session

PM

PM
Okay, so if there was any of them that you might be curious about going back to now to do a little bit more work with it, which one might that be? It may be one that you had a bit more of a response to one way or another.

A
Em probably the photo of my work.

PM
Hmm. Okay, so let's let's go back to that again. So are you talking about the shared arrangement the second last one?

A

Yeah, that one, yeah.

PM
Oh, yeah. Okay.
Speaker 2: Okay, just one second for this thing to come back [*sorting technical issues here*]
Okay. So so just stay with this one now for another little bit and just stay with this for a few moments, and see as you look at it. I mean what what sensations or gestures or impulses from movement, or anything at all, or associations are coming, and they might shift and change the longer you look at it. So just see what happens and you let me know when you're ready to talk, we've loads of time.

[long silence]

A
[sound]

PM
Hmm

A
Yeah,

PM
Go ahead..

A
Yeah, I got that same feeling of going over the hill in my stomach again when it first came up, em...but then I kinda tried, I was just looking at it, I was looking at like...my eyes were following like the *sticks [emphasis]* as it went around, I felt my felt my body kind of followin the same *movement [emphasis]* and the same with the rocks as I looked at the rocks I felt my body wanting to go *with [emphasis]* it as I was looking through it. Yeah, I started to feel calm though afterwards..that feeling in the stomach went away, you know

PM
So that feeling in the stomach. What, how would you describe it? Like is it excitement or nervousness

A
A jump. Yeah. Yeah feels exactly like the feeling when you're in a car going really quick over a hill. That was exactly what I had in my stomach.

PM
Okay.

A
Yeah. It just felt like a jump..

PM
Ok, and when you're, when you're looking at this
[00:17:30]
and feeling what you feel and so on, are there any words coming at all?

A
Em, At the start, vulnerable....nervous, but I as I started to look more at it. I'm kind of remembering the time that I actually was there, and I feel calm, still and peaceful.

PM
Okay. Okay. So let's just take those words - vulnerable, nervous, calm, still and peaceful. And I'm wondering do those, would those words reflect, would they relate to your experience of the module overall our are they particular to this experience do you think?

A
Yeah, to be honest. I think the you know starting off you like, you would feel really a bit on edge, because its just really new. It's not something I'd fully *explored [emphasis]* before.

PM
Hmm

A
..and I think as well, as you move to the creative process side of things I did feel a bit like nervous and vulnerable doing them because they were very new to me.

PM
Hmm.

A
But again, like through stuff like, you know, the class was being so, working so well together and it being such a safe space, and I was really interested in it as well. So I really wanted to like *try [emphasis]* and stuff. Like the calm and the peacefulness of the ease of it kind of came as we worked through it you know that kind of way
PM
hmm, okay. Lovely, and then, that's leading us nicely to just some of t**he interesting things you said in the questionnaire. So in terms of the benefits,** you said 'I found Tuesday afternoons where my most productive time in college. I would go straight to the library after each session and I would get much more work done than I would any other parts of the week, I was engaged and
[00:19:30]
present which therefore helped my productivity in my work'. Em, do you want to say anything more about that, and how you how or why that what we did on a Tuesday created that effect, do you think?

A
Yeah, I think it's just as a person, I can be very like in my head and not very aware of what's going on around me, particularly if I'm like stressed or nervous or whatever is going on..

PM
I found the, whatever we did in the session always rooted me and I was very present in the moment. You know, I was very like, I was *in* the class. I was there.

PM
Hmm

A
and then my mind would kind of go and it would continue on *after [emphasis]* the session where I felt energized, I felt productive, I felt ready to do work, because I was present and I was there, you know that kind of way.

PM
Hmm. So there's a an impact on that kind of rational side as well.

A
Mmm

PM
Hmm and Yeah, the let me see. Yeah, **the fluid body session seems to have had quite an impact on you, just looking at different..**

A
Yea, I forgot to mention, even when we were looking at the photo, even seeing the photo of the seaweed, I felt myself wanting to go again like.

PM
Yeah

A
It really stood out to me, that session
PM
Okay. and then **the challenge**s then, you were saying that at the moment it's trying to hold on to it during the pandemic. Let me see how you put it. Yeah, 'I find it more difficult now to engage with somatic practices since we are in this situation of pandemic. I find it hard to be present. And when I do attempt to use some of the principles, it feels forced, and I don't achieve the same sensations that I achieved before all of this, which leaves me frustrated. So do you want to say a bit more about that?

A
Yeah. I just I don't really know how to explain it, but I just
[00:21:30]
doesn't feel the same now when I do some things, like even just if I'm just sitting and to feel my weight, it doesn't feel the same now as it when we were in *college* and stuff....or when we were first practicing it, or even when I was doing it myself at home *before [emphasis]* all this happened.

PM
Yeah

A
I suppose it probably is just like an outside *stress [emphasis]* or whatever that's going on that is effecting it, but I find it harder to concentrate on it to be really present in it.

PM
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And do you think there's anything that could help with that at all? I wonder, or..

A
I think it's something that I just have to work on you know, I kinda have to push through it and do it *more [emphasis]* for it to be effective.

PM
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Okay...Ok and then in your essay or glossary, was there anything else? I think you've mentioned this already weight seemed to be the most significant thing for you as a way into being present.

A
Yeah, it definitely was. I found, and even now aswell, even though I find it harder to do the different somatic exercises or whatever, em weight would still be the one that makes me just feel like like I'm here and I'm connected and I'm present.

PM
Hmm. And that was quite new for you *that* [emphasis] awareness.

A
Yeah. Yeah, it's not something I really noticed before, not to the *extent* to which I've noticed it now.

PM
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, and then in the presentation, just something you said in your essay, that it wasn't what you had hoped it would be, but you still learned a lot anyway, something like that.

A
Yeah, I don't know if you remember, I said after I presented, I felt like I like blocked out like [*unclear words]* .

PM
Yeah, right...

A
Yeah, I don't know, its just *me* [*emphasis*] And again, I'm really in my head and really like, I can be very easily not present, and I feel like I've worked *through* that, and I've learned different things to help me be present
[00:23:30]
and be in the moment and it didn't really, they didn't come, they just didn't *work [emphasis]* when I did them, you know in the session, in that session and it just didn't really *happen* [*emphasis*] in that session, em, but again that's like.....I know now that I can keep working *through [emphasis]* it and you know, maybe keep learning from it, and bring it forward with me.

PM
Yeah. Yeah. I mean it is a good learning to know that, I guess, that's just *one [emphasis]* guess that you know, it could have been the pressure of it, the vulnerability of it, there's a number of different things that can come, and and what *can [emphasis]* happen, you know, I think being *aware [emphasis]* of that and sort of *ready [emphasis]* for it, you know for *when* [*emphasis*] you're in situations like that can can possibly help.

A
yeah definitely

PM
, **and yeah, an interesting thing that you wrote somewhere, I think it was in your glossary, em, that you've had back pain which affects your left side of your body as far as I remember?**

A
Yeah

PM
..and you felt a shift there certainly in *one* [*emphasis*] of the sessions during the child's pose, and I'm just curious to know how that was throughout the module, or how it was in that *moment [emphasis]* first of all, and then we can see if anything else occurred..

A
So I have a bad back that I have had for like years, and I kind of, when it gets bad like I get a *knot [emphasis]* in my left side of my lower back and it would effect the whole left side my back

PM
okay.

A
Em, and I had been teaching classes all the weekend, and I remember I came into college on the Monday and Tuesday at the start of the week, and I felt so stilff and I was like ah sure that's just my back and that's how I always am, it's fine. Em, and we went, and we started stretching and moving and I felt, in the child's pose, I felt the tension, and the *compactness [emphasis]* is the only word I can think of how it felt. I felt it just kind of *release [emphasis]*.

PM
Hmm

A
and I've noticed a connection between the release *physically [emphasis]* and the release of my mind as well as I never really connected the
[00:25:30]
two, I never realized how like a strain in my body would affect my *head [emphasis]* at times as well at l. Like, you know I felt like I've a muscle that is my brain released aswell at the same time.

PM
Mmm

A
So yeah, I've noticed that feeling a few times throughout doing different stuff in class. I haven't [?] noticed at home obviously, but I have noticed it when we've done different physical stuff in class..

PM
..that kind of release..

PM
..that kind of release..hmm and and physically and mentally sort of at the same time. Yeah, there's there's I mean, I'm just I'm curious about it because...something like that happened for at least two other people in the class, and just to let you know that that is you know....it's kind of where some of the Western forms of somatics began, with people having injuries that and that science couldn't sort out or that operations couldn't sort out and so on, and people worked on their own body-mind connection and bringing more awareness to those places and began. Self heal as they call it. So just for yourself, it might be it might be something that could support you. If you're interested in following it up, you know, you might see things on the ISMETA site or whatever. So yeah, I find that interesting and then and yeah, the the next question I have is and you actually said it yourself - that you thought this module was different to other modules, you had that somewhere in your questionnaire. **So I'm curious to know in what way was it similar to or different from other modules and the B.Ed.? For you?**

A
Different anyways, just because it's active and you're constantly doing things. It's not sitting down taking notes. It's really, you know where all these told, Use Active Learning and then we're not really shown it, but like that's a perfect example of it, you know, we're learning as we move. Em...and then aswell the nature aspect as well. I suppose that would be similar to another module we had aswell which is local studies, where we have to go out into nature and use our local area and stuff, so would be similarity, but again that would be different to everything else because we're never really outside in any other modules really.

PM
hmm.

A
Yeah, I think aswell the assessment form of it was very different which I liked. I know it was an essay at the end, but it was a very *reflective* [*emphasis*] essay, It wasn't really, it didn't feel very like strongly *academic* [*emphasis*] or difficult to write really, it was very reflective, and then the constant reflection throughout as well helped towards it so much. It felt very like continuous, it felt like everything that we're doing connected all the way through, and it all kind of came together at the end.

PM
Hmm. Okay. Yeah and thank you and the....just going back to the similarities there, the the local studies one and one, and in what way were *they [emphasis]* similar or different?

A
Just actually just being out in nature and being encouraged to get outdoors and to be outside was the main thing really. Cause obviously local studies is focusing on SESE and stuff and looking at it from the basic teaching about your local area and getting the children to go outdoors. And in this module, we actually got to go and doors and to be outdoors and obviously it was more a creative sense that you were looking to use in the outdoors, but it was still actually being outside in nature, appreciating it.

PM
Mmm, which was a significant thing for you. From different things that you said, and and how how would you say the the approach taken during this module? **How would that be similar or different to we'll say approaches to education you have experienced at primary or secondary level?**

A
Em, again, just the active learning, it's really physical, like you're..... I suppose it makes sense for what the module is, but like
[00:29:30]
you're learning through your own body, and like you're learning through your own feelings in your body...and that's what you're learning. It's not sitting and taking notes or whatever. My secondary school experience was very, just sit take notes, write from the whiteboard, answer questions...moreso physically {*unclear word*] active I suppose in primary school. But yeah, I think that would be the main differencel, you were really learning through your body rather than just your mind.

PM
Mmm...good...and the the emphasis then, just that's it links with what you said, so that you were learning through your own body, your own feelings your own experience. And that was, the emphasis of the module *was [emphasis]* on *you [emphasis]* and your experience and that was the foreground. Obviously education, Arts education, teaching and all of that was present, but it was a little bit more kind of in the context or the background, and I'm wondering do you see or have you found relationships between your experience in the module and your understanding of Education, or Arts education or your approach to teaching generally?

PM
I think, I mean like like I said in the presentation stage, that whole feeling of the blackout, I would get that *every time [emphasis]* that I get inspected, when I'm on placement, without fail. So definitely I can take those practices into placement with me, and hopefully make me really present, no matter who's in the classroom looking at me..

A
Em and aswell. I think the benefits of nature. Like I've said, you know is that I *love [emphasis]* being out in nature and working outdoors. I would be mad for doing that in the classroom and for like, you know, I think benefits and just *being [emphasis]* outside no matter what you're learning about is so, its so beneficial for anyone especially for children as well. So it's definitely something as I go forward in my career. I'd want to be outdoors as much as possible and [*unclear words]*

PM
Hmm...and would you have always been conscious of that in terms of your teaching, or do you think that's something that's been enhanced this
[00:31:30]
year?

A
No, I've always been like, if you asked me last year to be like, [*change of voice*] oh, let's do like something outside and take the class outside. I'd be like, oh my God, no like somethin horrible is going to happen out there. Someone's going to go missing...I would have been more scared of it than, I would have been [*unclear words*], but now I think that's shifted like I'd be like my next placement, I'd love to just get the kids outside to do something active.

PM
Yeah. Okay lovely. So is there anything else then A, a**ny other observations you'd make as a learner in this module about the teaching and learning style or the environment or you've mentioned the assessment, anything else that you haven't had a chance to say?**

A
Em I don't think so. No, I was really happy with how everything was laid out, and I feel like it was very like smooth the way we went through everything, that we kind of build up towards everything and stuff and I feel like that suited me very much.

PM
Hmm. Okay. Okay lovely. Well, I think I that's everything...Yeah. Well, yeah, if in terms of your let's say you're, you know what you actually *do [emphasis]* with children in the future, in arts education or teaching generally, **do you think it might influence the way you approach curriculum in any way?**

A
Yeah, I think there's things to be learned like from like, even the lesson where used the, again that lesson of the fluid body and stuff, and how that translated and we used that same feeling in our body to create art.

PM
Hmm.

A
You know, that's a great st....I think it could be used as a great stimulus... a lot of the stuff to create stuff, so even of being outdoors and writing creatively or drawing or using you know, being really aware of your body to paint or whatever. You know, I think it would be a great stimulus for learning..

PM
..that the body connection would be a great stimulus?

A
Yeah, and movement.

PM
[00:33:32]
Yeah. Very interesting. Okay. Okay. Well look, It's a pleasure talking to you. It has been really helpful to get your specific experience. And and also I mean, I'm going to be still at this for a few years. So hopefully if and when you get back out there on placement again, if anything strikes you along the way...Oh that's interesting that connects or I've just done this, it connects with that module I think, or or that's made me question something in

relation to the module or whatever - if any of that strikes you I'd be really interested in hearing about it either through an email or pop into the office or give me a call or whatever....particularly with people I've interviewed I'd be a curious to know how you're getting on so

A
Yeah, that sounds great. Yeah, absolutely..

[00:45:14]

APPENDIX H

Excerpt from Analysis Diary: Stages of Analysis Process

Note: This document includes my ongoing notes about the stages of the analysis process that I engaged in. It was a live document throughout and continued to change in line with new decisions. The style is written as notes to myself.

Phase	Focus	Observations/questions	Date
1Familiarising	● Reading ● Transcription ● Open coding/notes line by line (not systematic…flow)	Couldn't get to systematic codes from here – needed better understanding of potential relationships/needed to blend with more holistic approach	Summer 2021
2 Generating initial codes	● Systematic coding Process- moving between detailed and summative forms of data (e.g. interview to questionnaire) o Reviewed open codes *Analysis of detailed content* ● Constructive writing (1&2) about specific interview (MNC) *26/4/'22 – 6/5/'22* and specific lecturer journal extract (Session 3 '20) 10/5/'22 ● Standing back – identifying systematic codes from piece of writing on one interview combined with familiarisation with overall data set and open coding experience Codes Draft 1 – 13.5.22 -16.5.22 *Analysis of summative content* ● Returned to literature review and research questions to clarify understanding of the somatic field and relationship with context/ core concepts and relationships at theoretical level. *(See notes on hard copy of Codes draft 1 created 19.5.22)* ● Checking the above codes against summative/semantic statements in questionnaire (benefits) – helpful in categorising, clarifying systematic codes. – Updated coding system Draft 2 (Hard copy)10.6.22 ● Constructive writing (3) about benefits stated in questionnaire	Exploring how open codes might relate to each other in the context of a specific piece/writing about the open codes in context – Helpful in beginning to identify connections/ challenge of paragraphing, everything relating to everything else. Example of early construction of meaning *A sense they may be seeing educational principles in a fresh/new way or in more depth….or seeing the relevance/subtleties of….Consider the way in which the notion of 'active learning', a common educational term/piece of jargon, is explored in the above and given a curious attention through the somatic lens, and more specifically through the lens of her own experience with somatics.* - Became aware of possible overarching theme in 3 interviews – 'Shifting habits'. Added it to the codes - Became aware of further differentiations within codes e.g. Challenges – personal dispositional challenges v challenges with engaging with SE Noticed that interviews offered meaning in the context of the overall narrative/conversation rather than in bite sized semantic statements 17/6/22 - What does this constructive writing do for the analysis process? – it helps to organise the data meaningfully in a way that attempts to answer the research questions. The attempt to paragraph the discussion helps to identify and confirm cohesive codes and to locate how different aspects of the interview may relate to a particular code. Doing this in relation to one student experience helps me to understand potential relationships between different aspects	May/June 2022

	Analysis of detailed content ● Reviewed 2 further student interviews (EM & AC) using updated draft 2 coding system. ● Updated codes again, included further description of each code – Draft 3 - 15.6.22 ● Reviewed 1 further interview (RC) with updated draft 3 coding – ● Constructive writing (4) – attempted summary of this interview. Returned to this on 20/6/22 to review order of paragraphs. This helped with coding and with getting a sense of the story. ● Attempted to try to move coded abstracts from RC interview to specific files for each code. Challenge of multiple codes linking with each extract. Reviewed key extracts carefully to identify predominant codes (reduced to link with one to three codes and allocated them accordingly). ● Recognised distinction between semantic and latent codes within the data…e.g. self-regulation and empowerment ● the recognition of possible latent themes arising from a combination of codes e.g. potential overlap between personal challenges, shifting habits, self-knowledge ● Decision to stay close to the data for the first full round of systematic coding, and to just take notes of possible connections to wider latent codes for later. ● Updated coding system again. More clarity on pedagogical codes. Renamed a few codes for more accuracy – Draft 4 20.6.22. ● Amended allocation of some codes in RC interview. Returned to files for	of the data set better, and offers a deeper insight into the significant processual dimensions of the module as well as their impacts. 21/6/22 – Reviewing constructive writing on RC interview. Key question – which comes first – the dispositional challenges, the processual experiences/understandings or the impacts? Possible change in order 1. Enhanced access to body response 2. Access to/awareness of dispositional challenges 3. Distinctive features/experiences of pedagogy that cause the above 4. Wider impacts.	

	codes to rename in some cases and to reallocate some of the content of the RC interview in this light ● Recoding of other interviews in light of draft 4 codes – allocation of content to coding files.		
3. Systematic coding	July 2022 ● Once coding system was relatively settled, I began to apply it to all of the interviews conducted in 2020 (9 interviews – 6 B.Ed./1 PME), and to the Post questionnaires for B.Ed3 2019 and 2020. ● Printed off transcripts and open coding – colour codes and made notes on hard copy. Created files. Physicality of this helpful. ● Applied some extracts to a number of codes, as I was not yet completely clear which code they would most clearly apply to.		
4 From Codes to Themes:	Dialogue between writing and coding End July ● Needed to stand back from the detail and attempt to synthesise what I was learning about each code. Wrote a paragraph summary for each code, which I intended to use as a basis from which I could expand, narrow, or drop categories and the writing in relation to these categories. ● Began to identify pertinent pieces of data in relation to this content. ● Continued to code other data sources e.g. lecturer journals. Noted that while a number of dispositional impacts were mirrored here to various extents, these journals were particularly valuable in terms of issues of pedagogy. ● This helped to break down the two wide ranging codes on distinctive features of somatic pedagogy (PED1) and influence on general pedagogical understanding (PED2). I began to	● It started to become clear that many of these codes may end up as themes, and some of them may get subsumed under other codes/themes. ● Some codes overlapped with others considerably e.g. self knowledge, relationship with self, shifts in habit. ● Some of the above did not have sufficient specific data references to merit being considered a specific code, but may still become an overarching theme.	

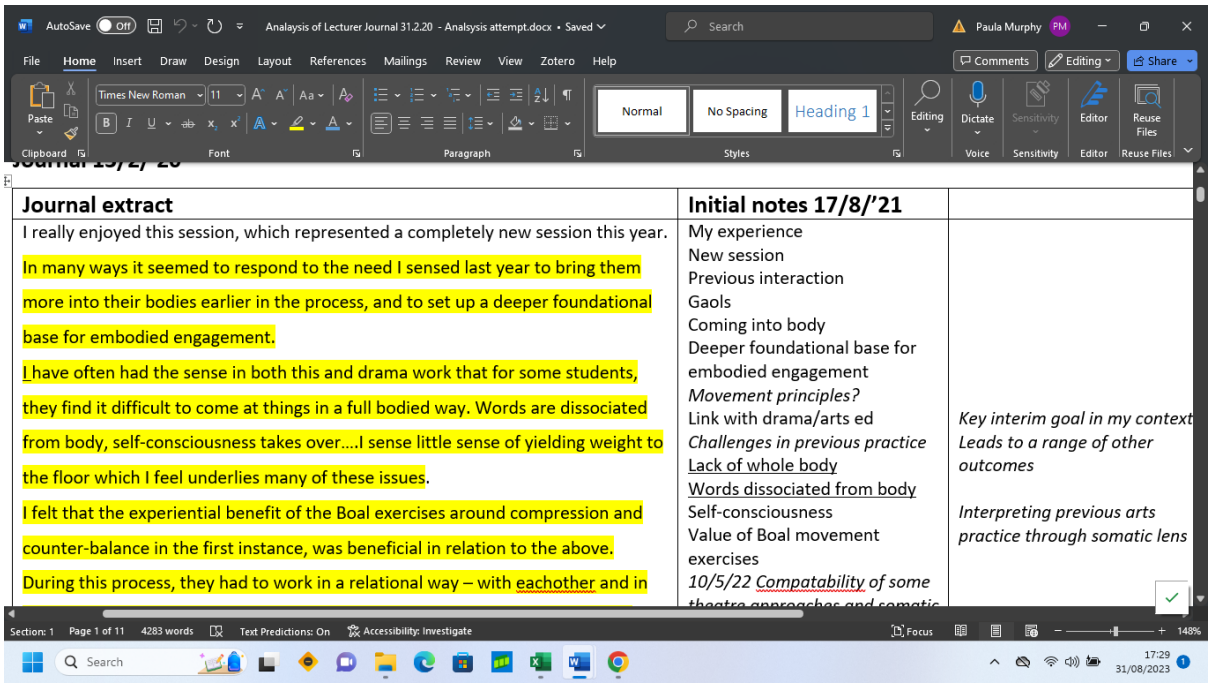
	notice that the items in this section may also be categorised using other codes, many of which referred to disposition. There is a possibility that I could include a piece on relevant pedagogical observations under each of these rather than having a separate section on pedagogy. ● I also began to notice the overlap between Ped1 and Ped 2. I changed the colour coding for the journals to link it with other codes. I also decided to confine o PEd1 to issues related to movement principles and…? o PEd2 – tensions/questions about current Ed system/previous experience o All other material linked with remaining codes. o Light Yellow became – presence of the teacher/teacher's embodiment as there were less direct statements on presence to date. Or perhaps this could be put into somatic sensitivity.		
5. From reviewing themes to text	● Before writing about each code/theme, I tried to discern the key elements that were available to be discussed within this theme. I labelled each statement in red according to each of these elements. I then (?) highlighted potential quotations in blue, and finally identified the most appropriate quotations for the point in question. ● While these elements were usually well represented within the data, I was also concerned to draw on both representative statements, and more subtly expressed data, often from individuals in interviews, in order to represent the scope of the potential of this work as comprehensively as I could.	Note how dispositional pieces/shifts in habit started to perhaps feel more appropriate n the relational section. Continue to see if this works.	

	● Due to the scale of the data set and the usefulness of certain data items in terms of meaningful triangulation, I (initially) constructed a narrative on each of the key codes/themes based on - The in-depth interviews - The post questionnaires - The lecturer journals The balance in terms of breath of perspective and depth of response seemed to dialogue well here in terms of moving between representation and idiosyncrasy.		

APPENDIX I

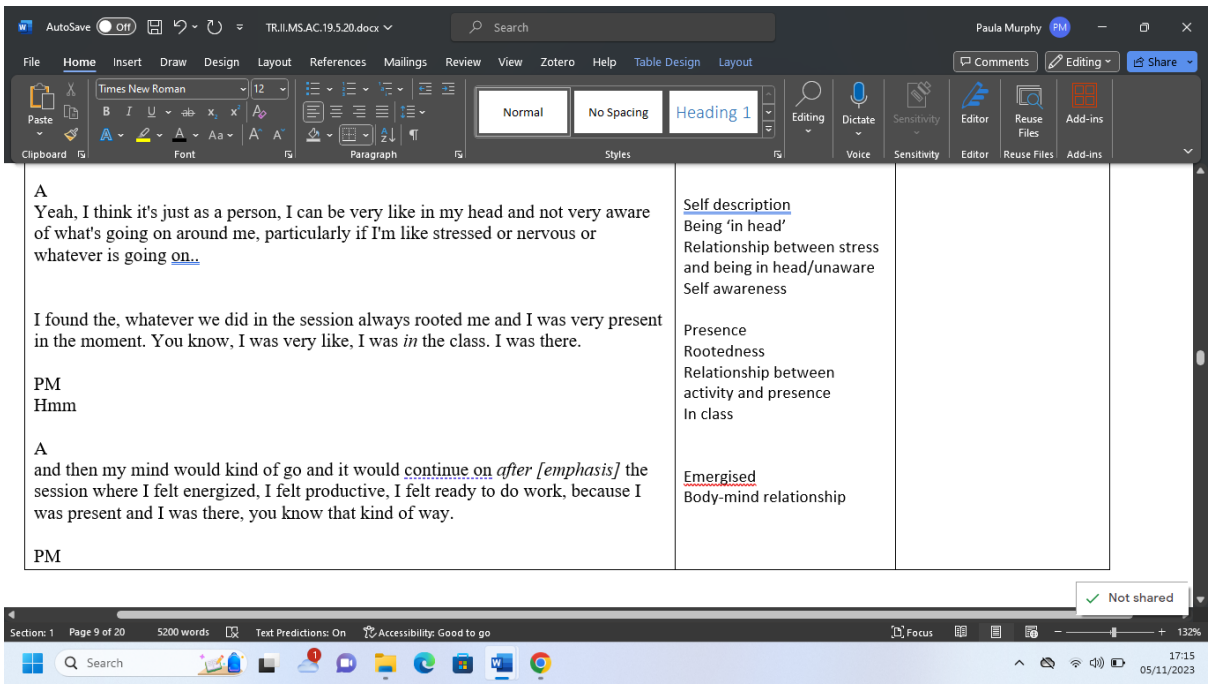
Analysis Process (1) – Open Coding Examples

Excerpt from Open coding of Lecturer Journal Extract in appendix E



Journal extract	Initial notes 17/8/'21	
I really enjoyed this session, which represented a completely new session this year. In many ways it seemed to respond to the need I sensed last year to bring them more into their bodies earlier in the process, and to set up a deeper foundational base for embodied engagement. I have often had the sense in both this and drama work that for some students, they find it difficult to come at things in a full bodied way. Words are dissociated from body, self-consciousness takes over....I sense little sense of yielding weight to the floor which I feel underlies many of these issues. I felt that the experiential benefit of the Boal exercises around compression and counter-balance in the first instance, was beneficial in relation to the above. During this process, they had to work in a relational way – with eachother and in	My experience New session Previous interaction Gaols Coming into body Deeper foundational base for embodied engagement *Movement principles?* Link with drama/arts ed *Challenges in previous practice* Lack of whole body Words dissociated from body Self-consciousness Value of Boal movement exercises *10/5/22 Compatability of some*	*Key interim goal in my context* *Leads to a range of other outcomes* *Interpreting previous arts practice through somatic lens*

Excerpt from Open coding of Interview extract in Appendix G



A Yeah, I think it's just as a person, I can be very like in my head and not very aware of what's going on around me, particularly if I'm like stressed or nervous or whatever is going on.. I found the, whatever we did in the session always rooted me and I was very present in the moment. You know, I was very like, I was *in* the class. I was there. PM Hmm A and then my mind would kind of go and it would continue on *after [emphasis]* the session where I felt energized, I felt productive, I felt ready to do work, because I was present and I was there, you know that kind of way. PM	Self description Being 'in head' Relationship between stress and being in head/unaware Self awareness Presence Rootedness Relationship between activity and presence In class Emergised Body-mind relationship	

APPENDIX J

Analysis Process (2) – Constructive Writing Example

Student Interview - Mary

Deeper analysis *- 26/4/'22 – 6/5/'22*

As I read this piece again, my overall sense is that this student seems to be expressing a shift in *orientation* arising from her experience of the module. Overall, I would surmise that this shift seems to relate to issues of disposition, understanding and quality of reflection. On the level of disposition, one of the first things that strikes me, apart from what the student states about her learning, is the evidence of a developing sensitivity and responsivity on a sensory, somatic level. This is particularly evident as she engages with stimuli which provoke memories from the module. Such stimuli, which include photographs of module activities and personal creative artefacts, clearly evoke present moment sensations of tingling, nervousness, or ease which she is able to both feel and articulate (p4). In her discussion of the sound exploration in one of the sessions, she is also able to locate these sensations in different parts of her body e.g. head, feet, right side, left side (p13/14). *As a facilitator of and participant in somatic work, I am conscious that such sensitivity takes time and practice to cultivate. The capacity to feel the body is not something that can be taken for granted in light of a range of contextual and cultural factors within the field of education and in contemporary society, as explained in chapter two,*

It worth noting my observation that there is a change of quality during this experiential phase of the interview, 'more ease' as we slow down and approach the reflection process in a more multidimensional way (p7 – Initial notes 19/6/'20). Having chosen an artefact to which she felt most drawn, and identified her sensory responses to the same, the next stage of the interview process tracks the student's process of bringing language to this experience. She is asked for any words that are arising for her as she continues to sit with this image and the sensations it provokes. While she takes her time with them, the words that seem to arise quite clearly are movement, fluidity and stillness (p7). *I see her capacity to begin to language movement in a qualitative way here, and to recognise subtleties in movement quality in this regard. For example, she recognises the polarity/layers that can exist within a somatic experience, in that she recognises both fluidity and stillness in her response (p8). I would regard her capacity to feel and articulate what I would refer to as a 'dynamic stillness' here, to demonstrate a significant subtlety of response at this stage of her engagement with somatic work.* She also explains that she senses a simultaneous pulling towards and against in the movement of the students in the photograph. Furthermore, it is worth noting that she seems to feel this in the form of a responsivity in her body as she looks at the image, in the form of a desire to move, or to 'do it' now (p6). *For me, the subtle interconnection between stimulus, sensation, memory, language, and responsivity in this section of the interview reflects a significant feature of an evolving somatic practice, and signals an increased integration and communication between different aspects of the body-mind system. In this regard, I am interested in the relationship between the student's learning process within the module and her capacity to access, articulate and continue to evolve her engagement with her experience in this way. Furthermore, I am interested in what it offers her reflection skills generally, an important feature of teacher education as we have seen. I am mindful of the expressed need for increased depth in relation to reflection on present moment experience within teacher education (Van Manen & Korthagen).*

We subsequently used the outcomes of the above experience/exercise as a platform from which to consider the wider experience and impacts of the module. Here, we also drew on her other context-based contributions at various points in the module (journal reflections, assignment etc.) During this stage of the discussion, it is evident that there are a number of areas pertaining to the student's evolving disposition that she has become both conscious of and able to articulate. She makes particular reference to her evolving relationship with her body in this regard, and to the influence of this on her capacity in the areas of presence (to both herself and others) and creativity. As a summative statement early in the interview, she mentions her increased awareness and appreciation of her body, and the 'open conversation' she now tends to have with her body (p2). For her, this seems to be fundamentally linked to her evolving quality of presence, the value of which she describes in her assignment in terms of perception and depth of engagement,

> Yeah [from assignment] 'being present allows you to take in your surroundings, listen to the people and engage more deeply in the activity you're doing. After a session, my brain would be more focused, aware and engaged in active listening. The more sessions I attended, the more I found somatic practices in my everyday life. I became a more active listener, more conscious of allowing the person to speak, and truly listening to their words (p13).

From the perspective of the approach to reflection within this interview, it is interesting to note that the student's first reference to an improved listening capacity came out of her observation of both fluidity and stillness within the photograph she chose to focus on (See image above). In this regard, she makes a link between a stillness 'of both mind and body' and a receptivity to others during the listening process. In an attempt to unpack this quality of listening further, she explains that its 'not like you're not thinking of anything, but you're *allowing [emphasis]* the thoughts that somebody else is having to sink in' (p8). She subsequently notes that she feels that she is now less likely to react quickly in the listening process, and notes the relationship between one's capacity to 'fully listen' in this way with one's capacity for empathy (p9). She later returns to the relevance of this quality of listening in the classroom and links it with one's capacity to 'feed off' the children a little more (p23). *For me, there is a relationship between a holistic receptivity and a responsivity underlying the content of these reflections, which interestingly mirrors the student's multi-dimensional response to the image above. At this juncture I am reminded of the expressed need for a qualitative sensitivity and responsivity within both the arts and in teaching as expressed in some of the literature from chapter two (Eisner, Van Manen). The student's quality of self-awareness in these sections is also striking in light of the agreed centrality of issues of identity within the teacher education process (Bullough, Palmer).*

The student gives considerable attention to the area of creativity within the interview, at the level of both disposition and understanding. In the early stages she states that while she had experience of mindful meditation from school, what was new for her was the linking of mindfulness with creativity (p2). In this regard, she seems to link her capacity to listen to her body a little more with a 'newfound love of creativity' which she felt she had not explored previously (p1/2). In this regard, she explains that she would not consider herself to be creative in the 'stereotypical' sense, like her friends who study art. However, it seems that her understanding of creativity has expanded over the course of the module, and this is revealed in her reflections on 'the way it affects your real life' (p10). For example, she links it with a shift in her capacity to come up with new dishes in the context of a food development project in the restaurant where she works (p10). When asked what she felt the somatic work had to do with that, she explained that it allowed her to get into her creativity more 'and to kind of

draw [her emphasis] on things, like to draw on my learnings and to bring it into practice" (p10). I would interpret from this and similar statements that she seems to be expressing not only a value for such 'real life' application of her studies, but also the extent to which somatic practices can have a role in the creative embodiment of theoretical material. She also felt that the module helped her to be more aware of the nature (or 'scope' in her words) of creativity (p25). The fact that she explored creativity across a range of art forms seems to have been significant in this regard, in terms of understanding the underlying nature of creativity a little more, and exploring the scope and diversity of her own creativity (p25). *I am reminded here of educational theory around subject competence as I read this, and the need for engagement with a deeper understanding of the essential nature of a subject in order to be able to improvise and be appropriately adaptive and responsive in a teaching context.*

The student's reflections on creativity above are among a number of examples of expressions which reflect not just a shift in disposition but a broadening of understanding. The understandings in question oftentimes take the form of questions, musings or curiosities, both on the nature of somatic practice itself and on the nature of learning more generally. In relation to the latter, at times I get the sense that the somatic lens may be throwing new light on familiar educational themes for her. One such example, which she returns to in different ways, includes the potential impact of embodiment on the learning process, which one could argue reflects a deepening of understanding in relation to the familiar theme of 'active learning'. When she identifies another module on the programme that had a similar focus on the person of the teacher, she makes an attempt to identify the fundamental ways in which the two modules were different for her. She seems to recognise that while there may have been overlaps in content/gaol, the expectation and reality of a more involved form of engagement was significant within this module. She further identifies the movement element has having had particular significance in this regard. She distinguishes an approach which is based on speaking and expressing your *opinions [*Her emphasis*],* from one which is *actively* involved (p17). Based on her own experience, she goes on to ponder what it may be about a movement-based approach that has, what she recognises as, a qualitative impact on one's thinking.

> I think it's almost like it *links*....I don't know if it's like neurological or something but it nearly links your thinking more, because your....Maybe I'm a tactile learner, but it, through movement, it's nearly like the thoughts sink in a little bit deeper. Whereas I found with [*name of module*] it almost [00:30:31]
>
> seemed...not to insult the college, but it kind of seemed like a tick the box kind of module, where they're like, we know we have to do this, but we don't really care what you get out of it. Whereas this was like, the... I really felt like I *had* to *engage* [*emphasis*] with the module, and there's that sense of through the movement your thoughts can kind of sink in, and kind of develop as well...(p17)

Here and elsewhere (p24), she ponders on the possible neurological effect of movement, *and in this regard begins to more clearly reflect an integrated body-mind perspective in my view.* She twice returns to the notion that "the thoughts seem to sink in a little bit deeper" and interestingly she adds that they "kind of develop as well". This statement also includes indirect references to motivation and care, which come up at other points in the interview, and which I will return to. *For now, I would like to surmise that her curiosity in relation to the relationship between physicality, cognitive activity and motivation indicate a quality of reflection that I would consider to be quite advanced for a student at this level, particularly as they are evidently arising from her*

personal experience. Furthermore, there seems to be a "freshness" or an "enquiring" quality to her musings on such issues. I am enjoying their aliveness, incompleteness…the finding of her own language to describe her thoughts and experience in contrast with the jargon/theory that can oftentimes seem ungrounded in a student's experience in my view.

At various points during the interview the student reflects on the process from the perspective of a teacher, and demonstrates her evolving understanding of and sensitivity to the pedagogical principles of somatic education, and to pedagogy more broadly. In the first instance such observations arise out of the teaching and learning context of this module. In this regard, she demonstrates a particular sensitivity to the personal and relational dimensions and conditions which she feels are important for engagement with this form. She does so particularly in light of the challenges it can pose in terms of initial engagement. She explains that it took her about two to three weeks to be fully comfortable in the sessions (p11). She alludes to concerns about people potentially looking at her during the process, about whether people were really closing their eyes [*during somatic movement explorations*], and ultimately the trust and safety that is needed within the group "just to kind of go along with the ride rather than fight it a little bit" (p11). She also refers to the vulnerability that is inherent in the process, but recognises this as a positive element, which she links with the relationship of care that has continued within the group since the module (p12)

> Yeah, like we have things like the specialism group chat that we have on Facebook kind of thing, that is *still* [*emphasis*] going and we're still all chatting and stuff like that, and I think in a sense if we didn't have to be necessarily that vulnerable, we might have just kind of used it to talk about assignments or a class time and change whereas now we all genuinely *care [emphasis]* how we're all getting on (p12).

She further summarises that "it's made us care *more [emphasis]* about each other and our wellbeing" (p12). In spite of the above challenges, the personal focus of this practice is something that seems to be appreciated and valued by the student (p24/26). She would consider such an approach to be unusual in relation to the B.Ed. programme more generally (p17). While she values the more typical focus on children and the nature of their learning, she links the personal dimension of this module with the development of her own presence in the classroom, which she feels is less commonly addressed. She also links it with her capacity for criticality in her own learning process (p23), particularly in relation to the depth of her responses to theoretical readings, and her capacity to bring her own perspective to what she is reading. She also recognises that this form of engagement takes practice, which she is now engaging in on a regular basis, and that it can be relevant at any stage of one's life. In terms of motivation for her own future learning, her interest in returning to these themes in fourth year with a view to working with content for children, is worth noting. (Dewey and motivation).

The student also recognises a number of ways the inherent principles of somatic practice may transfer to the immediate practice of teaching in the primary classroom. These tend to take the form of projected outcomes as she recognises that she has not had an opportunity to explore the implications of this work in a placement context yet due to the pandemic. One aspect she refers to a number of times is to her emerging capacity to self-regulate [*my phrase*] in relation to strong sensations or emotions which may be arising during the teaching process (p2 & p22)

> When you're nervous now, with the information I know, I can almost like lean into my body and kind of like [*talking to self*] okay, I know this...I can feel the weight of my feet and, d'ya know that kind of thing, and slow it down..Because that was one of the things I got on my [*school placement*] report is,

> when I'm nervous I just talk really quickly, and I'll try to just brush through everything to get it done really quickly (p22).

In the same vein, she seems to link her capacity for self-regulation with her capacity to be present to the children, and her capacity for more flexibility in relation to the possible outcomes of the process.

> Whereas with this now, I know to be present, and I know to listen and to listen to the kids what they're truly saying and you know, like I think sometimes you can only just be looking for the right answer in a classroom, whereas actually this will, well I'm hoping, this will allow each like listen to what the kids are saying and feed *off [emphasis]* of what they're doing, rather than just getting the right answer (p22/23).

She also asserts that she feels this work would be helpful when working with young children in terms of focusing their energy (p20), and with older children in terms of their development as people, and with helping them to connect with body in that regard.

> I think it would help them a lot, because they're going through like stages in their life, and I think it would help them in *developing [emphasis]* as well, and just like, you know, learning and connecting with their body and stuff like that.

The student's reflections on the conditions for creativity from a pedagogical perspective are also interesting in light of what the somatic lens may have offered her. In relation to the independent exercise in the natural environment towards the end of the module, she refers to her struggles with the creative process in the early stages. In the first instance she recognises the significance of her state of mind as she approached the exercise, in that she felt she was "trying too hard" (p16). She also recognises the delicate balance between structure and flow in terms of how the provided guidelines are engaged with.

> I didn't find it very....I think I was *trying* [emphasis] too hard almost. I didn't let it naturally happen. It was something I had to do, em, so I kind of just went out, and it was too...I think the steps like, yeah they're great in order to you know, have some sort of structure to that piece, but it also kind of like stopped me a little bit from getting into a creative flow (p16).

She goes on to suggest that if she had read the steps in advance and held them more loosely [*my phrase*] in the *back* [her emphasis] of her mind, she would have found it "easier to get into the creative flow, and "would have been less apprehensive to do stuff" (p16). She then goes on to reflect on how this principle applies to the activity of teaching generally, and she again engages in some self-reflection in this regard.

> Cause even in teaching you can have the tendency to over-explain things. D'ya know the way? it's just kind of go *at* [emphasis] it, and like *start* [emphasis] the work, whereas....and I do it all the time as well, I like explain things to make sure they *completely* [emphasis] understand, rather....they can work together if they don't *fully* [emphasis] understand something and there's kind of a beauty in that as well bring things out, and even for their *cognitive* [emphasis] development as well as like figuring things out and doing that. I think it's quite beneficial to sometimes take a step back and leave them at it... (p16)

I feel that her value of, and efforts to achieve creative flow within her own creative process, and in her reflections on her teaching approach, are significant here. As we have seen in chapter one, such a value for improvisation over technique represents a core outcome arising out of the influence of somatics in the professional dance field, as is a less didactic approach from the facilitator (Burnidge, Fortin, & others). These are also valued dispositions within the areas of arts education and teaching generally as we have seen in

chapter two. However, the literature and my own experience within arts education and school placement, confirms that these are not easy orientations to facilitate in beginning teachers for various reasons (Van Manen, Eisner, Siegesmund). My own inclination as I reflect on data such as the above, and on my own journal extracts, is that these are subtleties student teachers need to engage with on an embodied level as learners in the first instance, and the somatic emphasis within arts education seems to offer them such opportunity.

In light of the student's reference to criticality, I feel that the ways in which the somatic experience seems to have influenced her reflections on pedagogical issues in the context of the system more broadly are worth noting. These seem to come to the fore most clearly in her reflections on her own experience of coming through the system. Some of her critical reflection on the teacher education process have already been alluded to above, but she also offers some interesting insights in relation to her first and second level experience from a somatic perspective. The contrast between the two is worth noting in this regard. She remembers that in primary school there was more 'getting up' and doing projects, whereas in secondary school, "it was more like *lecture* [emphasis] style classes, like it was the teacher gives you all the information, you sit down, prepared for that one big exam and then that would be it.."(p19). Interestingly, while her secondary school seems to have organised a course on mindfulness for leaning certificate students, the student now reflects on the disconnect between the messages of this programme and the way they were taught generally.

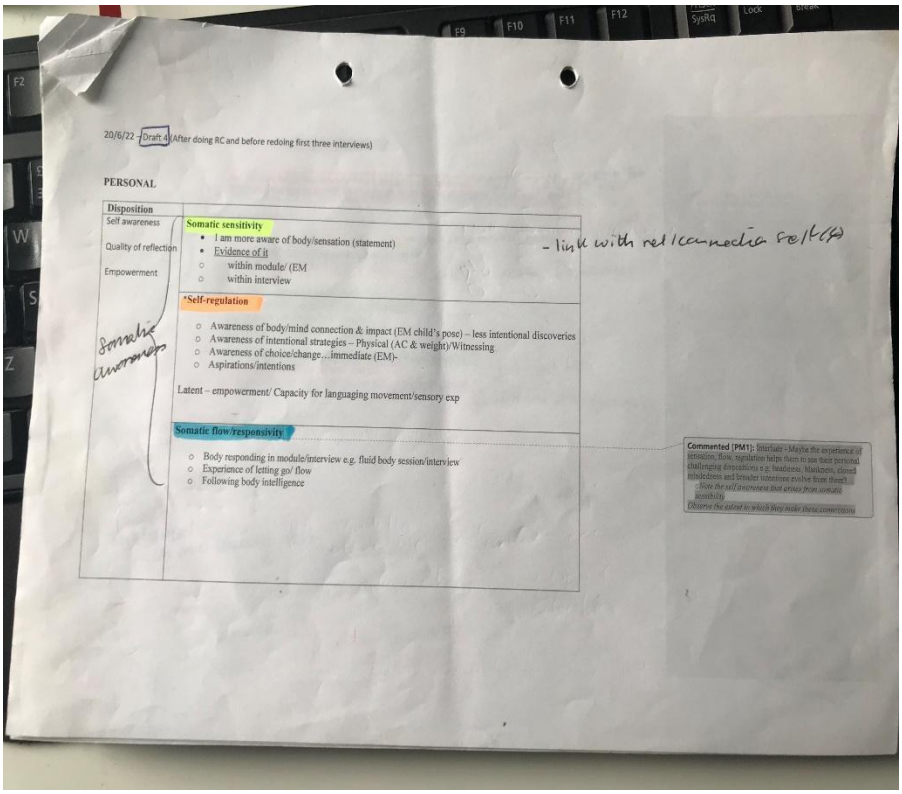
> [*laugh*] Amusing in like in a way like that they did, they do look at mindfulness, but then [00:32:31] there's no connection. It's the same kind of lecture, I think...I'll *tell* [*emphasis*] you about it, but then they don't really *do* [*emphasis*] much about it. (p19)

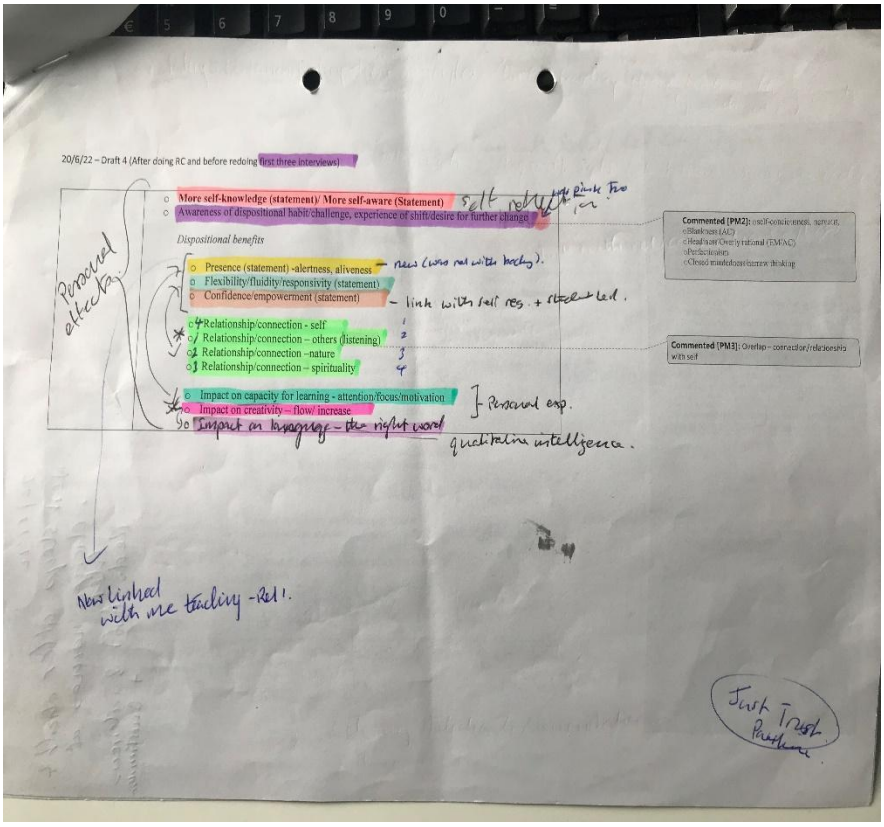
She seems to be recognising here that mindfulness has the potential to impact teaching and learning styles more broadly than the current focus on well being may be harnessing. This is an important insight in light of the way mindfulness tends to be approached in many schools in my experience. Also the somatic approach seems to offer an alternative to what the student on a number of occasions refers to as the 'tick box' approach, which she links with issues of both content and pace. As an alternative to the stress that such a *content* oriented approach implies for both teachers and children, she advocates for an approach that is less about covering content than it is about the pace at which children need to move to satisfy their own engagement. As she explains "I think kids should have their *own* time to kind of delve into their work, and see…like go by *their* [emphasis] pace rather than the pace of the structure of 45 minuses to do a *subject [emphasis]" (*P22). *The distinction between the needs of the child and the needs of the subject being made here echoes the emphasis of the older child-centered curriculum of 1970 in my view. Also, as I read this, I am cognisant of the 'slowing down' that is entailed in somatic work, and the shift in pace and approach to content, which I have noticed within in my own teaching since I have begun to work in this way (Reference to my journals). I am also cognisant of the outcomes oriented culture that has resurfaced our schools and colleges in recent times, and wonder if this experience has caused the student to become more aware of such an orientation and its qualitative implications at the level of process.*

APPENDIX K

Analysis Process (3) Development and Colour Coding of Thematic Grid

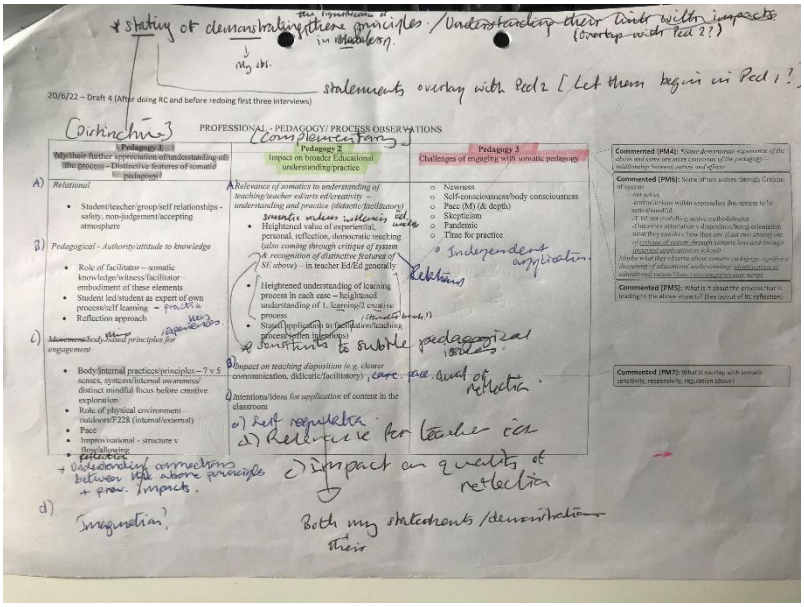
Page 1





Page 2

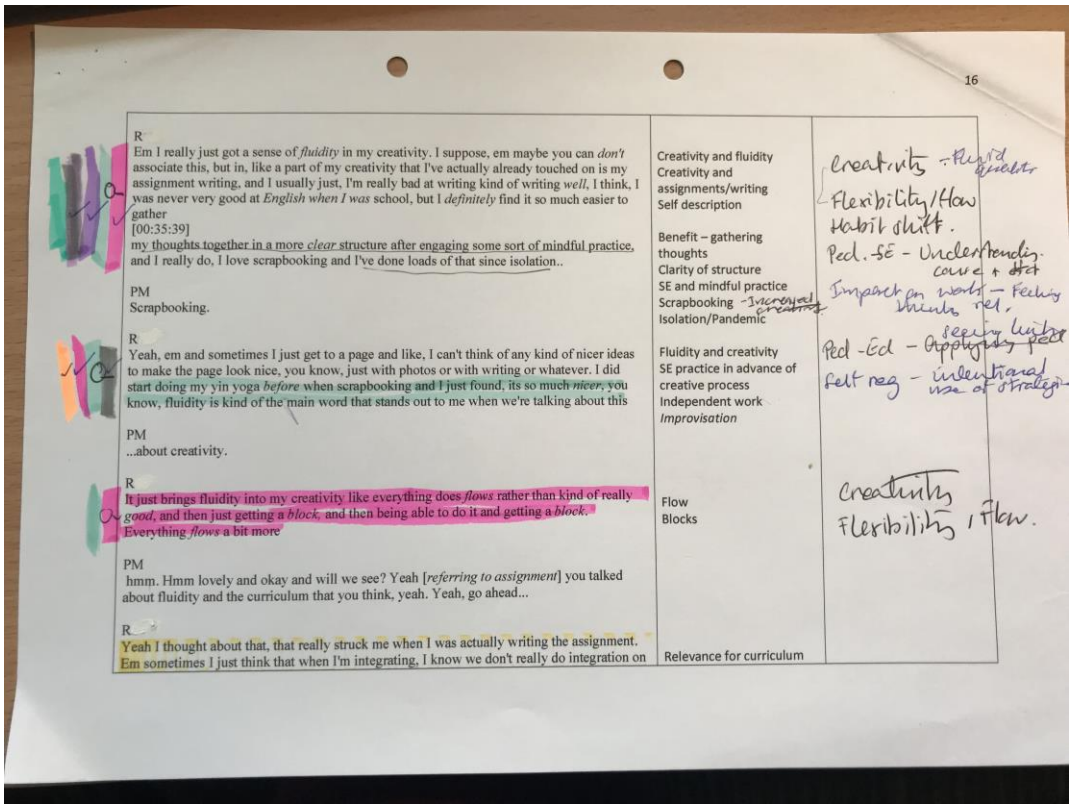
Page 3


20/6/22 – Draft 4 (After doing RC and before redoing first three interviews)
PROFESSIONAL - PEDAGOGY/ PROCESS OBSERVATIONS
Pedagogy 1
Pedagogy 2
Impact on broader Educational understanding/practice
Pedagogy 3
Challenges of engaging with somatic pedagogy
A) Relational
Student/teacher/group/self relationships - safety, non-judgement/accepting atmosphere
B) Pedagogical - Authority/attitude to knowledge
Role of facilitator – somatic knowledge/witness/facilitator embodiment of these elements
Student led/student as expert of own process/self learning
Reflection approach
C) Body/internal practices/principles – 7 v S senses, systems/internal awareness/ distinct mindful focus before creative exploration
Role of physical environment – outdoors/F228 (internal/external)
Pace
Improvisational - structure v flow/allowing
Newness
Self-consciousness/body consciousness
Pace (M) (& depth)
Skepticism
Pandemic
Time for practice
Commented (PM4):
Commented (PM6):
Commented (PM5):
Commented (PM7):

APPENDIX L

Analysis Process (3) Colour Coding of Specific Data Items

Example: Colour Coding of Student Interview



16

R
Em I really just got a sense of *fluidity* in my creativity. I suppose, em maybe you can *don't* associate this, but in, like a part of my creativity that I've actually already touched on is my assignment writing, and I usually just, I'm really bad at writing kind of writing *well*, I think, I was never very good at *English when I was* school, but I *definitely* find it so much easier to gather
[00:35:39]
my thoughts together in a more *clear* structure after engaging some sort of mindful practice, and I really do, I love scrapbooking and I've done loads of that since isolation..

Creativity and fluidity
Creativity and assignments/writing
Self description

Benefit – gathering thoughts
Clarity of structure
SE and mindful practice
Scrapbooking
Isolation/Pandemic

PM
Scrapbooking.

R
Yeah, em and sometimes I just get to a page and like, I can't think of any kind of nicer ideas to make the page look nice, you know, just with photos or with writing or whatever. I did start doing my yin yoga *before* when scrapbooking and I just found, its so much *nicer*, you know, fluidity is kind of the main word that stands out to me when we're talking about this

Fluidity and creativity
SE practice in advance of creative process
Independent work
Improvisation

PM
...about creativity.

R
It just brings fluidity into my creativity like everything does *flows* rather than kind of really *good*, and then just getting a *block*, and then being able to do it and getting a *block*. Everything *flows* a bit more

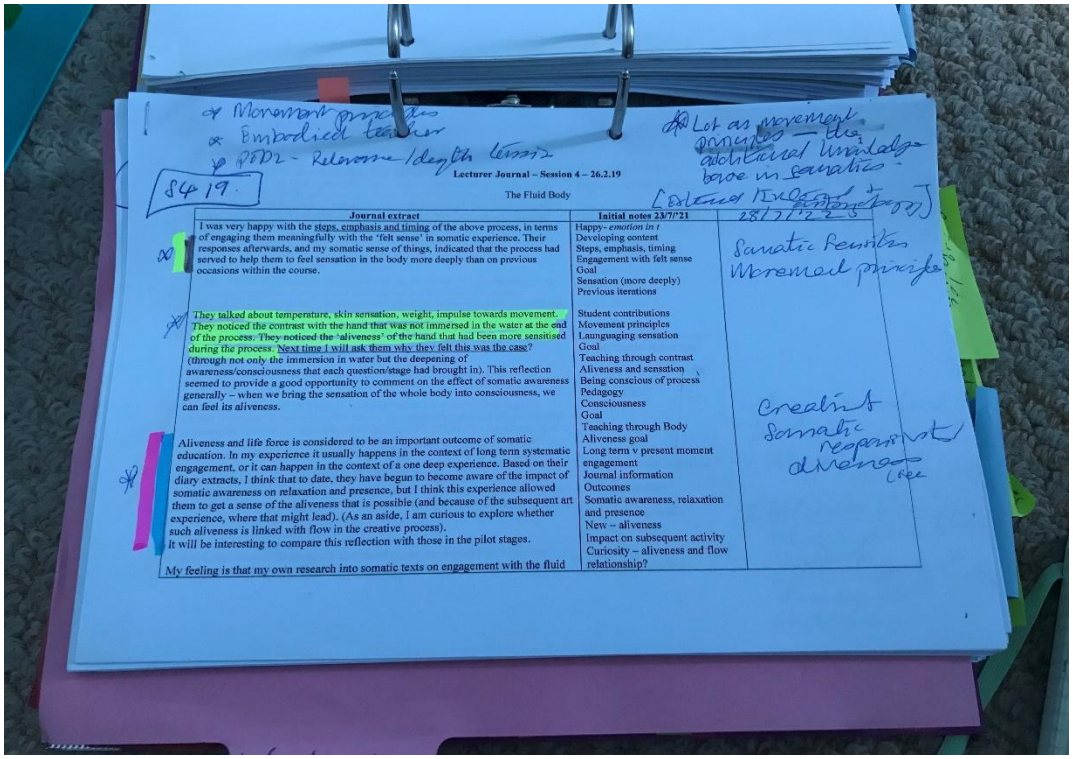
Flow
Blocks

PM
hmm. Hmm lovely and okay and will we see? Yeah [*referring to assignment*] you talked about fluidity and the curriculum that you think, yeah. Yeah, go ahead...

R
Yeah I thought about that, that really struck me when I was actually writing the assignment. Em sometimes I just think that when I'm integrating, I know we don't really do integration on

Relevance for curriculum

Example: Colour Coding of Lecturer Journal

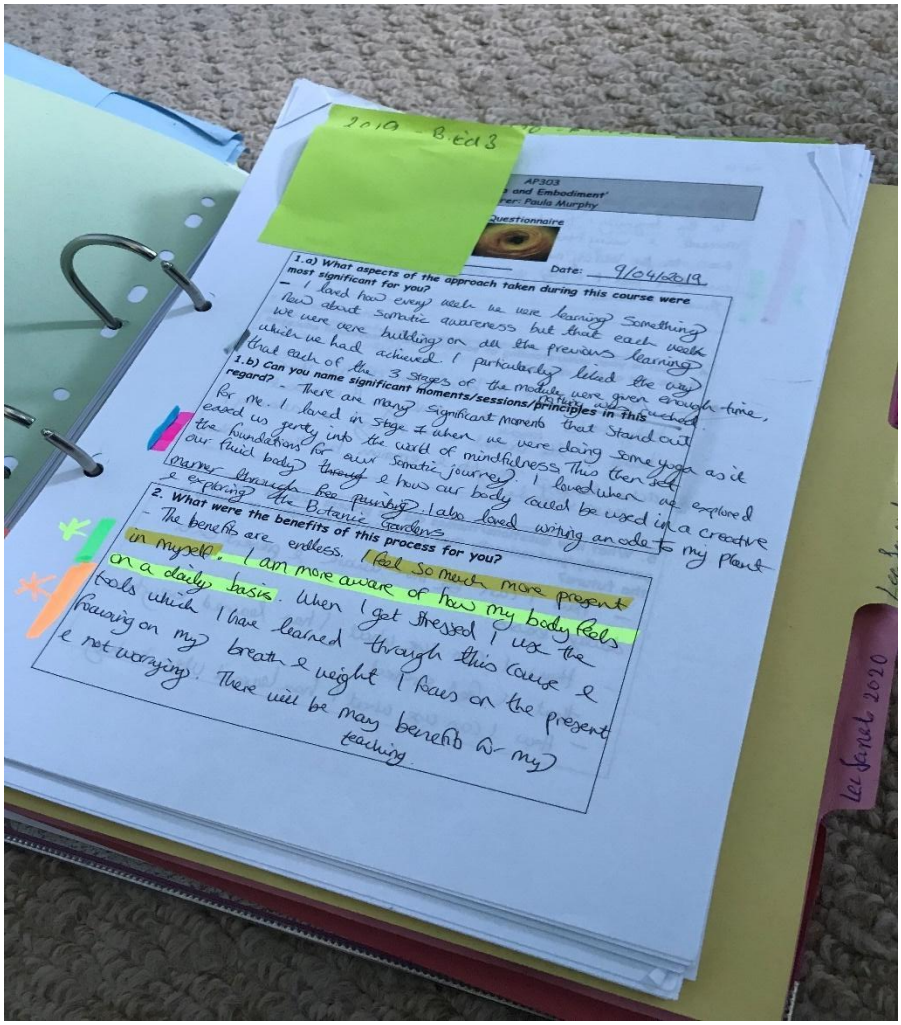


Lecturer Journal – Session 4 – 26.2.19

The Fluid Body

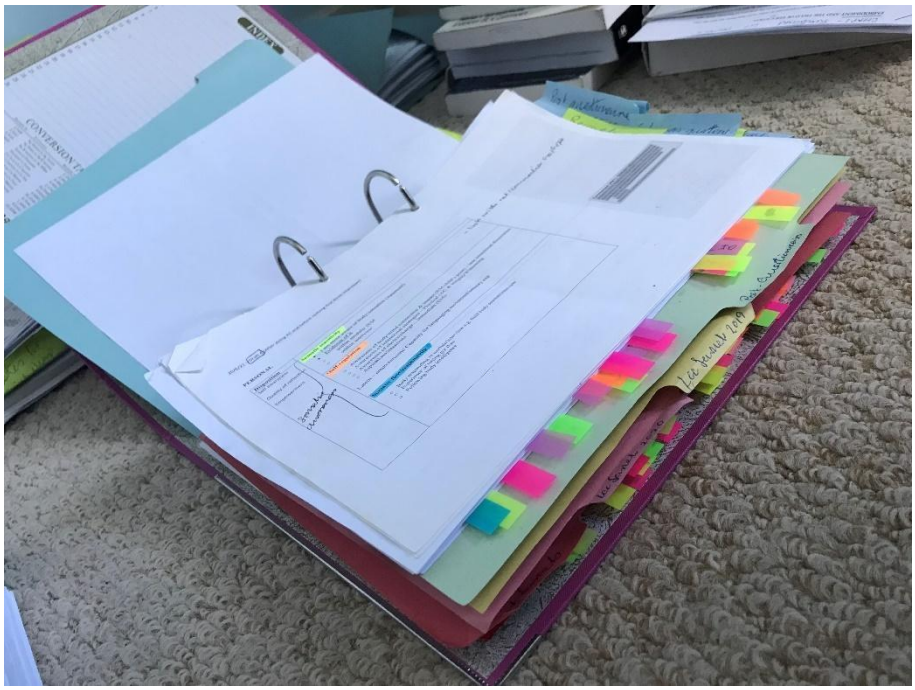
Journal extract	Initial notes 23/7/'21
I was very happy with the steps, emphasis and timing of the above process, in terms of engaging them meaningfully with the 'felt sense' in somatic experience. Their responses afterwards, and my somatic sense of things, indicated that the process had served to help them to feel sensation in the body more deeply than on previous occasions within the course.	Happy- *emotion in t* Developing content Steps, emphasis, timing Engagement with felt sense Goal Sensation (more deeply) Previous iterations
They talked about temperature, skin sensation, weight, impulse towards movement. They noticed the contrast with the hand that was not immersed in the water at the end of the process. They noticed the 'aliveness' of the hand that had been more sensitised during the process. Next time I will ask them why they felt this was the case? (through not only the immersion in water but the deepening of awareness/consciousness that each question/stage had brought in). This reflection seemed to provide a good opportunity to comment on the effect of somatic awareness generally – when we bring the sensation of the whole body into consciousness, we can feel its aliveness.	Student contributions Movement principles Languaging sensation Goal Teaching through contrast Aliveness and sensation Being conscious of process Pedagogy Consciousness Goal Teaching through Body Aliveness goal Long term v present moment engagement Journal information Outcomes Somatic awareness, relaxation and presence New – aliveness Impact on subsequent activity Curiosity – aliveness and flow relationship?
Aliveness and life force is considered to be an important outcome of somatic education. In my experience it usually happens in the context of long term systematic engagement, or it can happen in the context of a one deep experience. Based on their diary extracts, I think that to date, they have begun to become aware of the impact of somatic awareness on relaxation and presence, but I think this experience allowed them to get a sense of the aliveness that is possible (and because of the subsequent art experience, where that might lead). (As an aside, I am curious to explore whether such aliveness is linked with flow in the creative process). It will be interesting to compare this reflection with those in the pilot stages.	
My feeling is that my own research into somatic texts on engagement with the fluid	

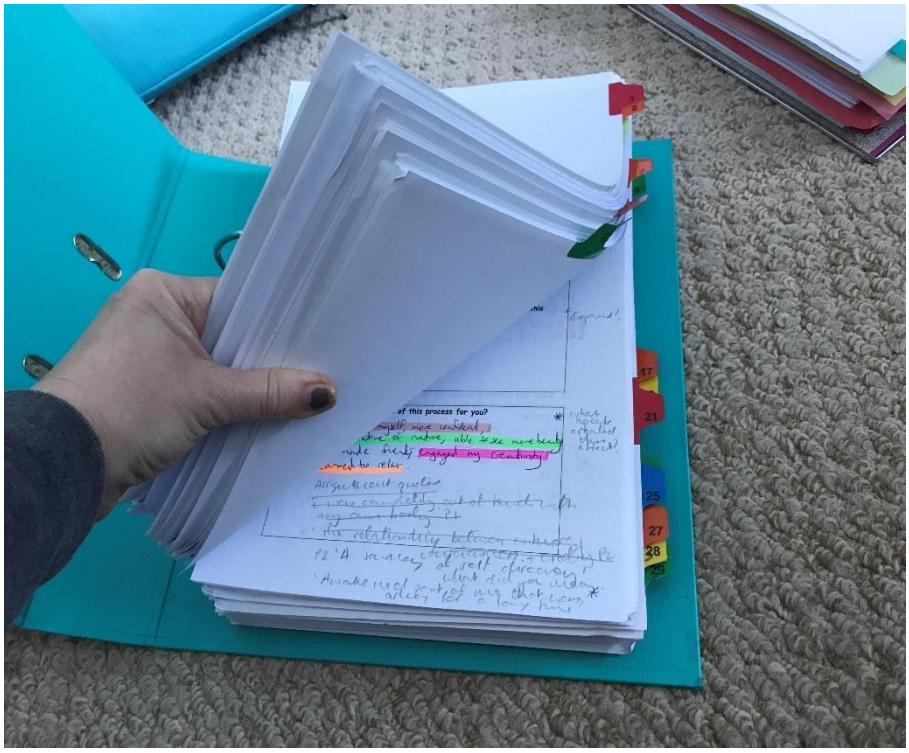
Example: Colour Coding Post Questionnaire



APPENDIX M

Analysis Process (4) Colour Coding of Entire Data Set

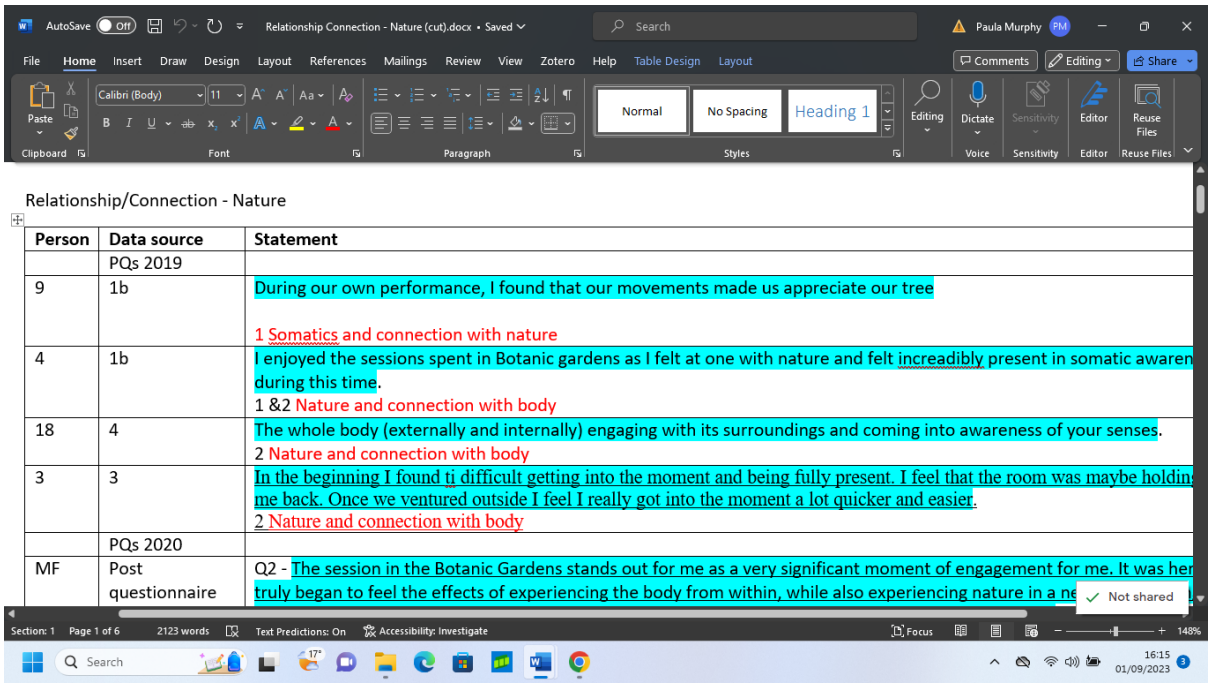




APPENDIX N

Analysis Process (4) Transfer of Excerpts to Thematic Files

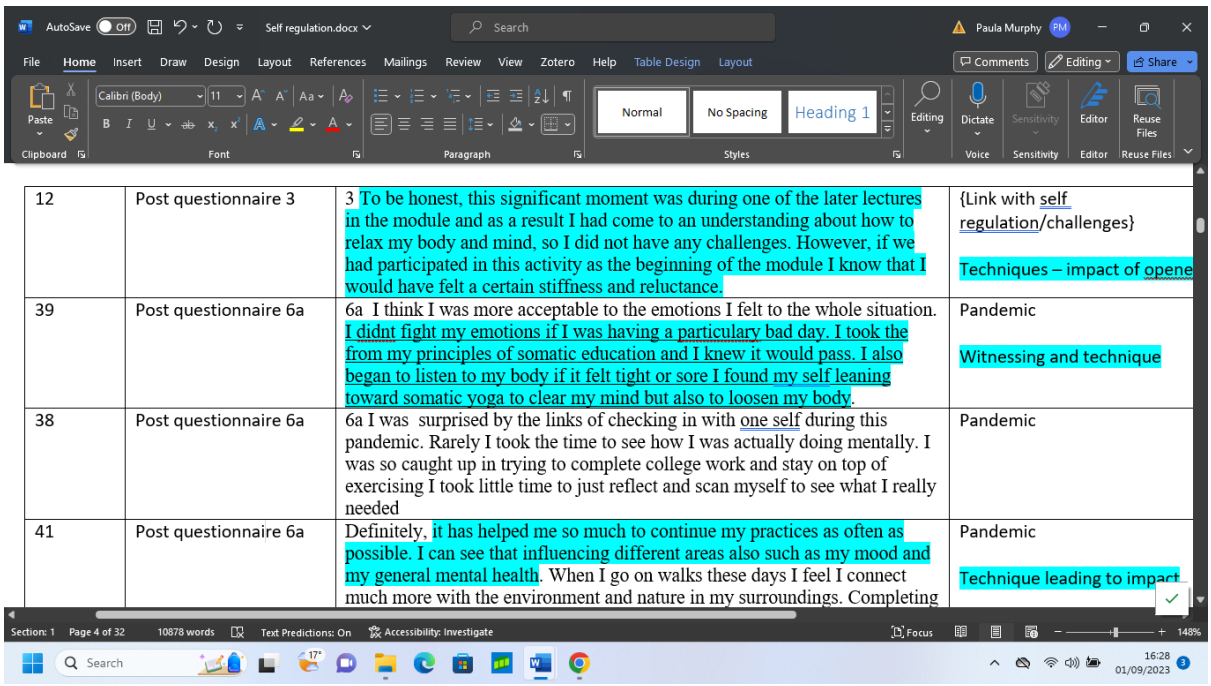
Excerpt from File on Natural Environment



Relationship/Connection - Nature

Person	Data source	Statement
	PQs 2019	
9	1b	During our own performance, I found that our movements made us appreciate our tree 1 Somatics and connection with nature
4	1b	I enjoyed the sessions spent in Botanic gardens as I felt at one with nature and felt increadibly present in somatic awaren during this time. 1 &2 Nature and connection with body
18	4	The whole body (externally and internally) engaging with its surroundings and coming into awareness of your senses. 2 Nature and connection with body
3	3	In the beginning I found ti difficult getting into the moment and being fully present. I feel that the room was maybe holdin me back. Once we ventured outside I feel I really got into the moment a lot quicker and easier. 2 Nature and connection with body
	PQs 2020	
MF	Post questionnaire	Q2 - The session in the Botanic Gardens stands out for me as a very significant moment of engagement for me. It was her truly began to feel the effects of experiencing the body from within, while also experiencing nature in a ne

Excerpt from file on Self-Regulation



12	Post questionnaire 3	3 To be honest, this significant moment was during one of the later lectures in the module and as a result I had come to an understanding about how to relax my body and mind, so I did not have any challenges. However, if we had participated in this activity as the beginning of the module I know that I would have felt a certain stiffness and reluctance.	{Link with self regulation/challenges} Techniques – impact of opene
39	Post questionnaire 6a	6a I think I was more acceptable to the emotions I felt to the whole situation. I didnt fight my emotions if I was having a particulary bad day. I took the from my principles of somatic education and I knew it would pass. I also began to listen to my body if it felt tight or sore I found my self leaning toward somatic yoga to clear my mind but also to loosen my body.	Pandemic Witnessing and technique
38	Post questionnaire 6a	6a I was surprised by the links of checking in with one self during this pandemic. Rarely I took the time to see how I was actually doing mentally. I was so caught up in trying to complete college work and stay on top of exercising I took little time to just reflect and scan myself to see what I really needed	Pandemic
41	Post questionnaire 6a	Definitely, it has helped me so much to continue my practices as often as possible. I can see that influencing different areas also such as my mood and my general mental health. When I go on walks these days I feel I connect much more with the environment and nature in my surroundings. Completing	Pandemic Technique leading to impact

APPENDIX O

Plain Language Statement

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

Plain Language Statement

Introduction to the Research Study

Title: 'Widening the Field; Embodiment in Teacher Education'

School: School of Arts Education and Movement, Dublin City University

Principal investigator: Paula Murphy

Contact details: Email – paula.m.murphy@dcu.ie Tel: 01-8842077

Supervised by: School of Education, University College Cork

This study will take place in the context of my doctoral research which explores the role of embodiment in the context of teacher education. It will focus on the development of new modules on embodiment which I will be designing as part of the major specialism in Drama Education (B.Ed.) and the Professional Masters in Education (PME) elective programmes in Dublin City University. Between 2012 and 2016 I engaged in a programme of study entitled '*Origins'* which led to my recent accreditation in *Somatic Movement Education and Therapy* (ISMETA approved). [3] Somatic Movement Education facilitates participants to experience the body from the inside (Hartley, 2004) and supports them to explore the impact on their communication, health, and creativity. Through this research I wish to explore the relevance and impact of somatic processes on the student teacher experience, and how that influences my practice as a teacher educator.

Details of what participant involvement in the Research Study will require

Student involvement in this research will involve the additional tasks of

- The completion of a post study questionnaire (15 mins)
- Participation in a post study focus group discussion (1 hour) – sample of students
- Participation in a post study semi-structured interview (50 mins) – sample of students
- Permission to review material submitted by the student that is inherent to the general teaching and learning activities of the course and which all students will complete e.g. journal extracts, artwork, assignment

Personal data

No additional personal data will be collected from participants involved in this research.

Benefits

The benefits of somatic education are well documented in the growing range of literature and research in the field. Martha Eddy (2017) summarises the benefits in terms of four key areas:

' *1.Somatic awareness* enhances any movement practice and reduces injuries.

[3] ISMETA – International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association

2 A somatic approach to mindfulness underlies self-empowerment and critical thinking.
3 Engagement in somatic movement can be useful in activism.
4 Mindfulness that includes somatic awareness opens the gateway to various types of 'connectedness' within a person, between people, and with the mysterious or unknown, and does so through neurological pathways often related to aesthetics.' (Eddy, 2017, P6)

In addition the students who participate in this research will be given first-hand experience of the operation of a research project from a participant's perspective. Not only is this likely to enhance the quality of their personal and professional reflection, but it is also likely to provide helpful background for conducting their own action research projects. These which is an important feature of the fourth year of the new B.Ed. programme, and of teacher professional development generally (The Teaching Council, 2011, 2016),

Confidentiality

The identity of students will be protected in all reporting of this research within the limitations of law (Freedom of Information, 2014) Each student involved will be provided with a code name and will be referenced as such throughout. In group discussions others may hear what you have said, but your identity will still be protected in reporting. While photographs may be taken during the process, your identity will not be attached to your image.

Voluntary participation

Your participation in this research is voluntary and you may withdraw from the research at any time.

Other relevant information

Your involvement (or not) in this research will not affect your ongoing engagement with the teaching and learning activities of this course, including assessment. The assessment of assignments in this course will be moderated by another member of staff within the school of arts education and movement, who will be unaware of the identity of students who are participating in the research.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

References

Eddy, M. (2017). *Mindful movement; the evolution of the somatic arts and conscious action*. Bristol: Intellect Ltd.

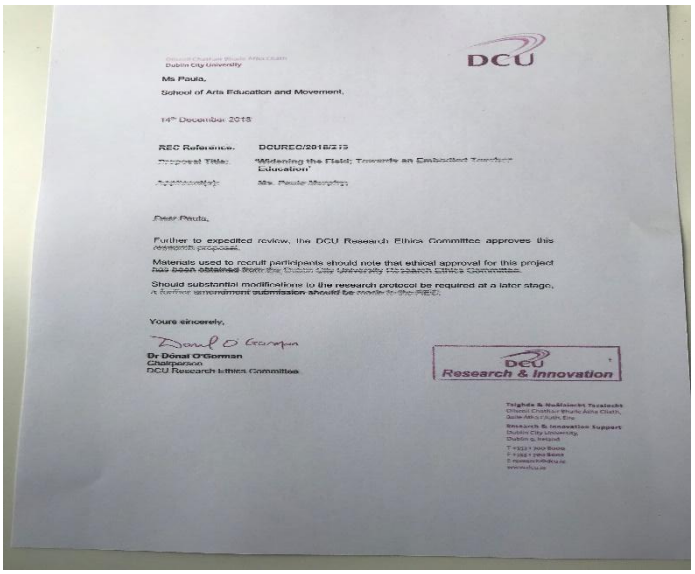
The Teaching Council (2011). *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education*. The Teaching Council. Dublin

The Teaching Council (2016). *Cosan; Framework for Teacher's Learning*. The Teaching Council. Dublin

APPENDIX P

Letters of Approval from Ethics Committees

Letter of Approval from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) at Dublin City University (DCU)



Dublin City University

Ms Paula,
School of Arts Education and Movement,

14th December 2018

REC Reference: DCUREC/2018/213
Proposal Title: 'Widening the Field; Towards an Embodied Teacher Education'
Applicant(s): Ms. Paula Murphy

Dear Paula,

Further to expedited review, the DCU Research Ethics Committee approves this research proposal.

Materials used to recruit participants should note that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee.

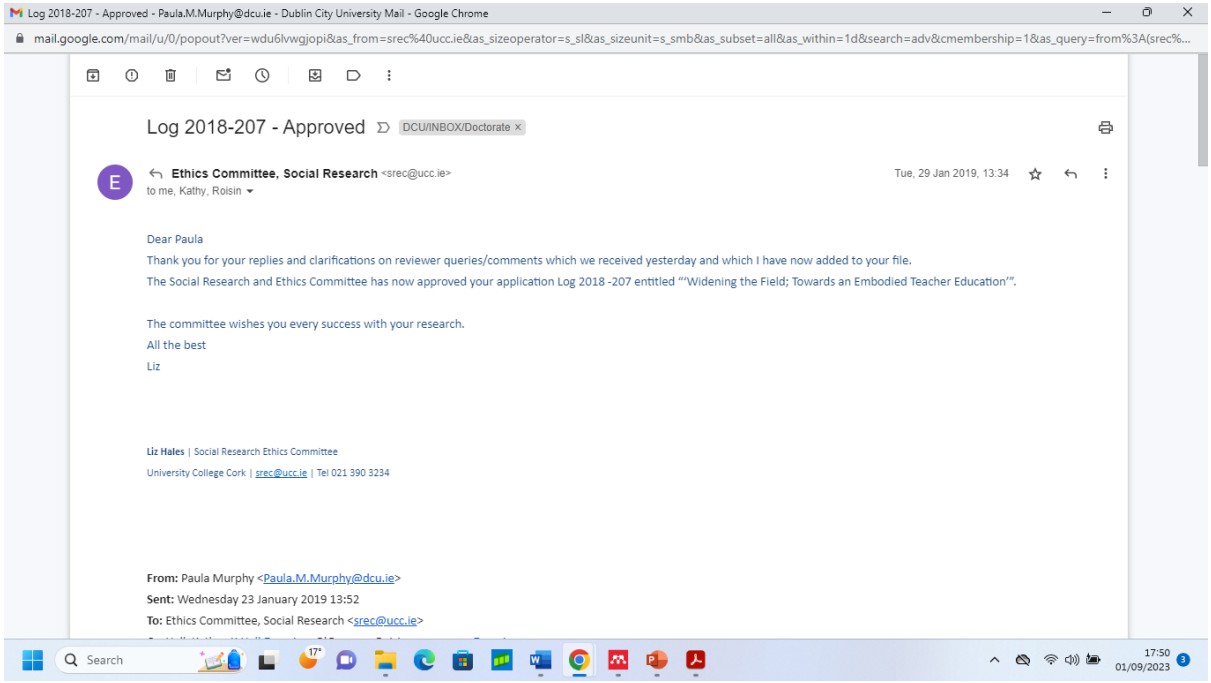
Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further amendment submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Dónal O'Gorman
Chairperson
DCU Research Ethics Committee

DCU Research & Innovation

Email of Approval from the Social Research Ethics Committee (SREC) at University College Cork (UCC)



Log 2018-207 - Approved - Paula.M.Murphy@dcu.ie - Dublin City University Mail - Google Chrome

mail.google.com/mail/u/0/popout?ver=wdu6lvwgjopi&as_from=srec%40ucc.ie&as_sizeoperator=s_sl&as_sizeunit=s_smb&as_subset=all&as_within=1d&search=adv&cmembership=1&as_query=from%3A(srec%...

Log 2018-207 - Approved DCU/INBOX/Doctorate ×

E **Ethics Committee, Social Research** <srec@ucc.ie> Tue, 29 Jan 2019, 13:34
to me, Kathy, Roisin

Dear Paula
Thank you for your replies and clarifications on reviewer queries/comments which we received yesterday and which I have now added to your file.
The Social Research and Ethics Committee has now approved your application Log 2018 -207 entitled "'Widening the Field; Towards an Embodied Teacher Education'".

The committee wishes you every success with your research.
All the best
Liz

Liz Hales | Social Research Ethics Committee
University College Cork | srec@ucc.ie | Tel 021 390 3234

From: Paula Murphy <Paula.M.Murphy@dcu.ie>
Sent: Wednesday 23 January 2019 13:52
To: Ethics Committee, Social Research <srec@ucc.ie>

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