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Faculty of Education and Social Work

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**Master's Thesis**

**Teacher's Empathy and Resilience:  
Why it matters in Special Needs Education**

**MA in special Education - Practical skills Transformative  
Learning**

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## ABSTRACT

Today, many teachers' professional identities are threatened due to high workloads, lack of time and violent behaviours. Pressure on scarce resources often becomes problematic and to protect the environments we inhabit requires stalwart strength, resilience and effective empathy. I would argue that today's educational system fundamentally serves the service economies, which stifles creativity and holds the person to ransom. When we become lost in the quest for survival we become less empathic and our resilience wanes. Therefore, I ask: Why is Teacher's empathy and resilience important in special needs education?

Precisely because education operates in the "transmission of knowledge," "the inculcation of values," and the development of "skills or competencies" (Hughes, 2017, P. 1-2) we need to ensure that our teachers are resilient in their wisdom, yet remain empathic to the dilemmas of the "Other". Unfortunately, the systems that should support teachers are often time poor, and economically and spiritually barren. The pervasive socio-economic environment affects all strata's of society but none more than those in special needs. In this *gemeinschaft*, the teacher is more prone to the insidious nature of the political economy. When notions of empathy are utilised for profit it questions our subjectivity and threatens our core identity (Biesta, 2013, P.64). This jeopardises our place in the world, changing our perception of the Other, diminishing interconnectivity and eroding our resilience (Biesta, 2013). The hidden agendas of political, socio-economics conceals the "nationalist narratives as the antithetical shadows of a stable decent society" (Hughes, 2017, P.17).

When "...the strong or knowledgeable person proceeds as though other person possessed a strength and knowledge equal to his own, thereby becoming an adviser, judge and instrument of redress" (Comte-Sponville, 2002, P.70) because "inequality of goods can never be absolutely just, for it dooms some to poverty or death, while others accumulate riches upon riches and pleasures to the point of disgust" (Comte-Sponville, 2002, P.68).

The economically successful are heralded as demigods who act judge and jury. The empathic and sympathetic are utilised to feed the economy whilst the privileged few orchestrate their knowledge to manipulate the masses through marketing and technological controls (Stiegler, 2014).

Shifting our attention can expose the hidden paradigms that compete for our attention and seeing the bigger picture can change how we perceive the world. In turn, this can help to preserve collective empathy and resilience allowing us "... to make sense of the uncertainty in our environments and give us the courage to work competently and ethically at the edge of order and chaos" (Finlay quoting Ghaye, 2008, P.1). Therefore, being empathic and resilient can be a practical skill that can help retain our sense of identity and help us to find a way "... we can exist "outside" of (existing social) orders" (Biesta, 2013, P. 129) yet maintain our place in the world.

This practice-based research illuminates the metaphorical language allowing the competing paradigms to become apparent through visualisation. Initially, the parameters divided into two parallel areas: the research method and the aesthetic design. Within the research three distinct narratives emerge; the personal, the Other, and the political, socio-economic whilst the aesthetic draws on multiple sources. Segregating competing paradigms re-grounded the research and from these structures different voices started to emerge and from historical "murmurings" a resounding crescendo arose.

Key Words: Empathy, Resilience, Justice, Courage, Metaphorical Language, Aesthetic, Paradigm, Deconstruction , Reconstruction, Voyage, Fabric, Threads

# **1. Teacher's Empathy and Resilience: Why it matters in Special Needs Education**

## **INTRODUCTION**

My studies into empathy and resilience began when trying to incorporate empathic teaching into my special needs working practice. This exposed the historical and cultural influences that nestle behind the social constructs and emphasised the intrinsic need for resilience.

At this point in time I was already struggling with heavy work burdens that ate into my time and space. I could no longer continue to fully support my students if I was to survive. Assimilating information became increasingly problematic. I constantly reassessed and reflected on my core beliefs but could not marry my personal values with the demands of the job. Neither could I balance my students needs with my workloads and this threatened to compromise me professionally and personally. As the enormity of the situation unfurled it became paramount to realign my core beliefs and identity as the world no longer made sense. It felt as though my world was unravelling and I was situated somewhere between destruction and construction. The only way forward was to jump into the void; the unknown and to trust my own judgement. I took a step back.

Stepping back revealed that a 'pandemic' was in the making. Statistical evidence and informal discussions demonstrated that many teachers were suffering and as I began to unravel the meanings behind this phenomenon the mist began to lift. I could begin to reconstruct my world. Current statistics, whilst not limited to the United Kingdom, indicated that high workloads, restricted curriculums and reduced budgets were manifesting into cycles of stress, anxiety and depression. Feelings of exhaustion, frustration and tension add to the sense of disconnect when experienced over long periods (Day, Edwards, Griffith and Gu, 2011, P.5). We know we are at odds with the world and feel it in our hands, and in our hearts and in our minds.

Reflecting on empathy and resilience has taken me on a voyage through familiar waters and unfamiliar territories but unlike the explorer, the expedition very rarely reveals anything new or groundbreaking. The journey twists and turns through the social, economic and political landscapes seeking confirmation, knowledge and wisdom. Using my moral compass as a guide, I ventured through the realms of the personal, the public and the Others. Constructing and deconstructing materials, I ventured pragmatically through the realms of the aesthetic where the materials act



synonymously with culture and history. Applying the ideas of empathy and resilience to the aesthetic unveils the social constructs, transforming the tensions visibly within the artefact demonstrating the tenuous nature of empathy and resilience.

Contextualising the research within the phenomenon of teachers well-being, the facts unveil what lurks in the shadows that destabilise our inherent beliefs. Searching for truth amongst the social architecture helps to destabilise “commonly held and media-reinforced positions and assumptions” (Hughes, 2017, P.17) allowing the narrative to appear. Each structure holds significance in its composition and architecture. It is where “the ‘visible’ from which an aesthetics, ethics and a politics of the real can emerge” (Schokstak and Shcostak, 2013 P.116) to shed light upon the “... forms of institutionalised prejudice that run through ... educational and nationalist narrative as the antithetical shadows of a stable, decent society” (Hughes, 2017, P.17). What else could demonstrate nationalist ideals more than the flag?

The adventure springs from reflective practice, evolves with the literature and is consolidated through interviews to generate a visualisation of the competing tensions which re-establishes itself back into the research to evolve the artefact. The deconstruction of historical and contemporary artefacts informs the practical-piece by forcing ideas to be reconstructed. The inherent vestiges of colour, material and symbolism generate additional insights through their application and composition, feeding back into the creation and design (Candy & Edmonds, 2018, P.65). The insights provide the grounds on which empathy is affected by the social construct which in turn affects the ability to be resilient. On the horizon two separate practices operate independently: the research and the practice. Together, they will enlighten and enhance the aesthetic design. (Candy & Edmonds, 2018)

## 2.Contextualising Empathy and Resilience

Empathy can be viewed as a virtue but cannot operate within a void any more than resilience can and is intrinsically relational to notions of morality and humanity. Empathy relies upon the judicial contract and resilience depends upon courage. The inequitable position that education has found itself in has been determined through the “hyper-industrial service society” and our willingness to adapt to the imperatives of the socio-economic environment (Steigler, 2014, P.72). Where, “Justice is the virtue of order and exchange - equitable order and honest exchange. A mutually advantageous exchange?” (Comte-Sponville, 2002, P.67) We have allowed this physical and psychological disenchantment to affect our connection with the Other as we are absorbed into the social, technological and political landscapes. How these social milieus affect us has become increasingly hidden and complex (Steigler, 2014, P.75). When the social balance is disturbed, empathy can fail because “it often works in a mutually intuitive way (Arnold, 2014, P.36) affecting the inter-personal and intra-personal environments.

The quality of empathy relies on the social contract and shared understanding. When enacted, empathy can push boundaries, penetrate guarded territories and help us to constructively engage with the Other (Arnold, 2005; Sennet, 2008). Our disconnect can make it psychologically impossible to operate an empathic position and continually acting in the face of adversity can affect even the most resilient teacher (Day, 2017). When sustained over long periods of time, intense pressure can result in the erosion of our core values creating “secondary trauma and compassion fatigue” (Grant & Kinman, 2015) affecting our mental agility and influencing our reactions to everyday pressures.

Without organisational support, bringing a passionate, competent and resilient self to teaching effectively every day of every week of every school terms and year can be stressful not only to the body but also to the heart and soul - for the processes of teaching and learning are rarely smooth, and the results are not always predictable (Day, 2012, P.2).

“When equality and legality are at odds, where is justice?” (Comte-Sponville, 2002, P.64)

Empathy has no fixed reference point and maintaining an empathic stance can be physically and emotionally draining. “At its most complex, empathic intelligence demands considerable psychic energy, focus, and relational ability” (Arnold, 2005, P.137).

To maintain your resilience it is necessary to see the horizon and have a sense of autonomy within your environment (Arnold, 2005, P.138-P.140). The shifting boundaries within education means that the distance to the shore on the horizon recedes. Boundaries are continually pushed to the extremes and controlling these environments becomes increasingly fragile. Therefore, knowing your limits becomes an abstract concept which has little room for negotiation. This disconnect between the demands of the job and the reality on the 'shop floor' continues to destabilise teachers.

From the myriad of definitions that exist I have selected the following as most appropriate:

“Resilience is an inner strength that can fortify the psyche and regulate emotions. It allows one to maintain one’s own authenticity and integrity yet maintain interdependent responsibility for self and other (Arnold, 2005, P.93 & P.131). “At the heart of resilience is a belief in oneself: yet also a belief in something larger than oneself (Walters, 2014).

However, when under intense pressure resilience can be disrupted or overwhelmed. Educational policies created centrally, create physical and psychological borders that have been intensified through what Stiegler terms as “the crisis of education” (Stiegler, 2014, P90). These boundaries are intensified by centralised quantitative accounting and do not take the human cost into the equation and can often “mislead, because real issues can be missed, having been pushed to the periphery” (Sennett, 2008, P230). Centrally focused policies often ignore the “difficult and ambiguous problems” that are done in the margins (Sennett, 2008, P.230) which is particularly pertinent in special needs education and therefore, increases pressures to perform.

The pressing concerns of the contemporary world continue to compete and undermine the role of the special needs teacher within an environment that is supercharged and unrelenting; abounding with prescriptive and controlling information, entrenched with “psychological shading” that interrupts wisdom and does not allow time for knowledge to be assimilated. Mitigating human interaction and interrelationships make resilience difficult to maintain because of its interdependent nature. Although,

“science or philosophy can sometimes drive away fears by dispelling their objects, but courage is not the absence of fear: it is the ability to confront, master, and overcome fear, which assumes that fear either exists or might reasonably exist. Scientific knowledge suffices in one instance, wisdom and faith in the other. But we need courage only in those instances when in fact they do not suffice .... Knowledge wisdom, and opinion can provide

fear with its objects or deprive it of them. They do not part courage but rather offer an opportunity to exercise it or do without it (Comte-Sponville, 2002, P.51).

“Empathy and moral reasoning are significant attributes for people whose role is to help vulnerable others (Arnold, 2005, P.139) and requires notions of mutual trust, respect, care and integrity for optimal operation. “Empathic intelligence is a way of using various intelligences and sensitivities to engage effectively with others: A complex system of functioning supported by culture and human responsiveness” (Arnold p.19 & p.21).

As Sennett quotes Dewey: “Only when an organism shares in the ordered reactions of its environment does it secure the stability essential to living” (Sennett, 2008, P.226). This disconnect reduces the ability to utilise effective empathy and empathy cannot survive without resilience. Both take their cue from the external environment and both require courage.

This kind of courage is not an absence of fear but the capacity to overcome it by a stronger and more generous will ... it is fortitude, moral strength in the face of danger. It is no longer a passion: it is a virtue, one that is the precondition of all the others. (Comte-Sponville, 2002, P.49)

Effective empathy is a gift that allows us to look beneath the words toward the essence of the person and the representation of the Other. It operates through feelings and emotional connectivity without which it cannot survive. The scientific and economic approach towards teaching isolates empathy by restricting time and space to engage emotionally with the Other, converting everything into statistical quantification. This logic of learning, as Biesta terms it, results in high levels of control that affect the teachers self-efficacy (2014). This rationalised view of education provides statistical evidence that all is well but the rise in children with special needs, increased violence, mental health and physiological problems all point towards a fractured system. Yet, paradoxically these truths are not sufficient evidence enough to suggest that our education system is breaking our teachers.

When scientific quantification and qualification prefers: “[F]acts rather than values” (Biesta, 2013, P.119) this can lead to disenchantment and reduces a person's ability to perform or transform. Disparate goals undermine the individual especially if the person cannot locate the areas of contention within the working practice, they instinctively feel they are missing a trick or a piece of the jigsaw. Not understanding the “Big Picture” excludes the person from the organisation and

undermines the working practice. Not being privy to the priorities of the industry or being made aware of the dominant culture or management can cause disconnection and isolation. This makes work frustrating, disempowering and excluding; enticing feelings of inadequacy which makes them feel stupid or foolish. When the: “[S]ource analogue does not correspond to the goals, situation and/or the emotions of the other person, or because a retrieved source does not correspond well” (Arnold, 2005, P.115 quoting Barnes & Thagard) empathy can fail. Therefore, any attempt to align empathy, either innately or extrinsically becomes a risk due to its relationship with overarching social order. The human psyche tries to identify and make sense of them but the constraining socialisation and economic agendas have ritualised the needs for quantification and qualification but does not address the underlying causation that compound these problems.

Considering how we operate within our social spheres can open a dialogue between the external and internal environments we inhabit and maintaining our “place in the world” depends upon how the message is received and translated. Creating harmony within the environment we inhabit entails creating a dialogue with the materials we use. They provide the building blocks on which to create new knowledge and therefore, how we reflect our commitment is central to ourselves and to our students. Making the invisible tangible can be transformed by our innate sense of self in relation to the Other and “courage enables us to “persist and endure, to withstand the tension within us, the agonising struggle between past and future, between memory and will, that is life itself and the effort of living things”. (Comte-Sponville, 2002, P.55)

Human socialisation depends upon our interactive nature but requires empathy to maintain “...a balanced appreciation of the human condition” (Hughes, 2017, P.108).

Its interactional nature means that it is important that we reflect our commitment to ourselves and our students, positively through our innate sense of self in relation to the Other. “To venture to write about the virtues is to subject one’s self-esteem to constant bruising, to be made acutely aware, again and again, of one’s own mediocrity” (Comete-Spoonville, 1996, P.5).

### 3. The Disconnect

As early as 1970, Schumacher's "Small is Beautiful" points towards the ecological crisis of the spirit, the degradation of culture and the loss in quality of life which is further exemplified in the writings of Biesta (2006 & 2013) and Stiegler (2008 & 2014, P.90). Schumacher already alludes to the debilitating effects of inhuman technology and suffocating organisational and political patterns and practices that were already shaping our futures (Schumacher, 1973). Schumacher's prediction of private enterprise has come to pass and no where more can the results be seen or felt than in the "Caring" professions. Yet, fifty years on these have become ingratiated into society encouraged by 'technologies of control' which have become the "principle actors of public life" created and sustained by hyper industrial societies and service enterprises (Stiegler, 2014, P.30). The "ruthless simplification" of business and the "phenomenal success of science continues to reduce "reality to one or the other of its many aspects, primarily the reduction of quality to quantity" (Schumacher, 1973, P.214). Exacerbated by:

exteriorisation and formalisation of forms of knowledge (les savours) in the automation and the algorithms leading to the generalisation of modes of employment to proletarianisation, and to loss of knowledge in general (savior-faire, Vivre, contemplation - arts of living and theorising) " (Stiegler, 2014, P.51).

This over quantification increasingly produces the loss of "... individuation at both the psyche, as well as collective levels (Stiegler, 2014, P.32) leading to a fatalism that has become an:

unprecedented social and moral regression, as well as to a veritable economic, political, and civilisational catastrophe: it denies any possibility of acting or wishing for a future, it makes injustice and chance the law or all things, and it is lived like an intolerable decadence that pushes the most fragile persons to terrifying and suicidal extremes (Stiegler, 2014, P.68).

Stiegler refers to this loss of spirit as the loss of knowledge which has lead to an empathy deficit where our resilience has been eroded along with the "Truth" as industries search for unending profits.

[C]onflict between two conceptions of value which are two relations to time. The becoming-producer of knowledge, its subjection to the imperatives of economic

development, which is performativity by which Lyotard characterised “post-modernity” would thus lead ‘to a ‘dangerous return to positive or positivist knowledge [that becomes a “know-how” (savoir-faire) and that] has a tendency to be a “how” (faire) without knowledge (savoir) (Steigler, 2014, P.78).

The person is marginalised, imposed with ideals of perfection sustained through marketing and advertising whilst the working environment is divided and reorganised. Decreased wages, longer hours, unhealthy and unfair competition not only changes collective thinking but directs the way society views the teacher who remains a passive player in an increasingly hostile environment.

However it is “respect and compassion that make the spirit. And the spirit is born of suffering, too - as courage, when the suffering is our own and as compassion when the suffering is that of others” (Comte-Sponville, 2002, P.115). Compassion, like empathy “holds a duty for us to nurture and feel it” (Comte-Sponville, 2002, P.115). As Biesta quotes Levinas “... it is an ethical relationship, a relationship of infinite responsibility of the other”. To move away from introspections opens the path to freedom and courage to think.

This is the “battle of intelligence,” and it is precisely that: a battle of a mind that claims in principle that the democratic (i.e. collective) majority is founded on an adulthood understood as “courage and will” resulting from individual knowledge (Stiegler, 2010, P. 20).

According to NUT (National Union of Teacher (2016): “Schools and teachers, especially in the UK and US, are going through a particularly punishing period of change in which commercial behaviour, strategy and practice are being modelled as exemplary”. (NUT, 2016). Whilst we should be consciously aware of our youth, we should also take care and be mindful of the well-being of those who we entrust to teach and inspire our youth; and “We” should all be mindful of the subliminal messages that we convey to our students.

The devastation wrought by stress is too great to be ignored and understanding how stress impacts upon the teaching profession as a whole and how this translates into special education is critical. Yet still, education is increasingly targeted towards qualification, quantification and economic realisation which coerces and controls the function of education and this “... culture of accountability has resulted in tight systems of inspection and control and ever more prescriptive educational protocols” (Biesta, p.19.2006).

Driven by “scales of economy” this politically charged industry treats teachers and students as commodities whose only value is seen in terms of input and output; dominated by the business of the curriculum and quantified through examinations. When education becomes juxtaposed with the aims of business and politics it creates a sense of disconnect between subject, student and teacher (Biesta, P.22, 2006). “The problems with education are merely reflections of the deepest problems of our age” (Schmacher, 1973, P.83).

Mounting pressures in accounting and accountability: compliance, monitoring and policing put unprecedented demands upon the teacher, leaving little time to support the student, colleagues or self. This lack of autonomy appears to have had a profound effect on the teachers and potentially has a detrimental effect on the students learning and development. The teaching environment has become fast paced, judgemental, prescriptive, unsupportive and non-directional which can be reflected innately back into the working environment.

The complexity of the situation requires a prehension and the liberalisation of the Voice (Schostak & Schostak 2013, p.20) and although there is a slow awakening, little is being done by Governments to counteract the devastation wrought amongst teachers. The cost of education is succinctly described by The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT).

Stress and professional burnout, driven by the policies of this Government, are having a massive impact on teachers’ and school leaders’ mental health and well-being, and contributing to the teacher recruitment and retention crisis. Ministers have created a culture across schools where any adverse impact on the health and wellbeing of the teacher is simply regarded as collateral damage. High-quality education for all children and young people cannot continue to be sustained by teachers whose physical and mental health is being broken and who have been robbed of their professional dignity. (09.10.17).

Within education, policies disconnect the cognitive emotions from the emotional drivers and the delicate balance is disrupted. The problem here is that our psyche has been hijacked by the service enterprises and we can no longer see beyond rhetoric.

The language entraps us and snares us its one dimensional, scientific and economic formulation which has been absorbed into the social stratosphere of education where:



Learnification” has become a “language of process, not a language of content and purpose” *but the*: “Facilitation of learning or the management of learning environments” (Biesta, 2013, p126) *where the adoption of the* “new language of learning” makes it increasingly difficult to ask questions (Biesta, 2013, P.126).

*This ... misconstrues both the role of the learner and the role of the educational professional in the educational relationship”* and partially because modernity, has reversed the social hierarchy (Biesta, quoting Ardent, 2006. P.22 & P.108).

*The “gramatisation process” of language then becomes:* social vehicles in the process of symbolising and dissociation, the care-less-ness endemic to the West as, for instance, the philosophy /sophistics conflict, a conflict at the heart of rational knowledge (Steigler, 2010, P.65) and therefore, threatens our personal and collective security.

We continually try to absorb more and more responsibility that is imposed on us without fully understanding its insidious nature and we pamper to our own “egos” creating pressure on Others lives. Human socialisation depends upon our interactive nature but it requires empathy to maintain “...a balanced appreciation of the human condition” which is ultimately emotional (Hughes, 2017, P.108). This sense of duality preys on the human condition which paradoxically, is a fragile balancing act in which we strive to make sense of our worlds through our interactions and experiences.

The rapid changes taking place in education compromises those in special education through restricted budgets and policy changes. SEN Assessment changes, funding allocation and “selection by stealth” (Tickel, 2017) heightens the students anxiety, adding further complexity to the learning process and damages our teachers and our youth. Time constraints infringe upon supportive-teacher-student relationships; destabilising the environment, generating spiralling negative behaviours and increased conflicts. (Day, 2012, Jennings, Frank, Snowbird, Coccia & Greenberg, 2013 & Milatz, Lüftenegger, & Schober, 2015) Unhealthy competition and “overwhelming time pressures and demands, as well as, limited or inadequate resources” compromises the teacher’s ability to sustain their authenticity and integrity (Haramati & Weissinger, 2015, P.5).

How we perceive these realities depends upon the social structures that surround us and because “... two people never communicate directly but always through the representation they have of one another in their minds” (Hughes, 2017, P.96) stereotypical behaviours and possible prejudices can

arise (Hughes, 2017, P.96). Social authority legitimises the mechanisms that feed the economy which have quantified and qualified spirituality, imagination and creativity (Stiegler, 2014, p90-91). Confusion and misinformation intensify trigger points within the internal and external environments often because hidden agendas, although innately felt, remain unseen, and understanding the multiplicity of what make up these hidden agendas is relevant to remaining resilience.

Deprived of the tools to form connections, these intractable constraints all conspire to undermine, isolate and destabilise the individual (Day, Edwards, Griffith and Gu, 2011, P.5). Especially when the essence of “vocational vitality ... springs from a practitioner’s core sense of self to inspire and energise others by modelling presence or deep engagement” (Yoo, quoting Intrator & Kunzman, Meijer, Lorthangen & Valsalos, Hargreaves, 2014, P.77). The rhetoric that plays out within special education where professional judgement is overruled, “... reducing the (teachers) ability ... to respond effectively and creatively to changes in the environment” (Biesta, 2013, P4 & P.123). This homogenisation of education started with the ‘curriculum’ ... as a knowing that progresses only by re-inventing or re-naming its past” (Schostak & Schostak, 2013, P.121) and is culminating in “... uniformity ... driven by fear, that is driven by a lack of courage to think and act differently and independently” (Biesta, 2013, P.123). As Spratling laments: “This beautiful profession has been transformed into a beast that is damaging mental health” (Spratling, 2017) When all these factors are added up they can become overwhelming; leading to adaptive isolation and problems arises when we act in isolation. (Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikahmadi, 2016, P.197).

Arnold explains that a “better understanding of the demands of empathic attunement on our psychological states is needed because there is sufficient anecdotal evidence to indicate a need for protective strategies” (Arnold, 2005, P.137 & P.138). Particularly, in small organisations where work and student demands outweigh the allocated time, colleagues have little time for themselves, let alone others. Affective empathy enables us to “get a good grasp of the feelings, beliefs, values and experience of people” which can provide a life-line to those who are struggling (Krznaric, 2014, P.72). What stifles empathy according to Krznaric is prejudice, authority, distance and denial (Krznaric, 2014, P.47) which dehumanises and excludes. What empathy requires to flourish is sensitivity, versatility and imagination. (Krznaric, 2014, P.68)

Empathy can help us to acknowledge differences and commonalities, discover shared territory and understand our differences, enabling us to act without prejudice or judgement. (Krznaric, 2014, P. 72) We need empathy and reason because they are “mutually” reinforcing ideals on which we can

build a more humane civilisation (Krznaric, 2014, P.186) and it is where moral courage is required to hear what is really be said. “The main string actually played is not as important as the sympathetic string, which sings its negative capability in a resonance of gold” (Griffiths, 2016).

Griffiths urges us to listen deeply to the metaphorical language if we are to understand the contentions of madness where the changing relationship with language and nature is beautifully described in “Madness, myth and metaphor” (2016). We cannot separate the image from the language and “considerable empirical evidence has been marshalled for the view that metaphor is grounded in embodied imagery and stimulated action (Sadoski & Paivio, 2013, P.64).

Language can embrace, mystify or threaten and whilst fear and suspicion are an inevitable form of our inherited, cognitive architecture, they are deeply entwined with prejudices. “Prejudice comes about because of the minds necessary categorisation of experience into information through language, thus simplifying and labelling phenomena to make the experience more easily manageable” (Hughes, 2017, p2) which social media willingly encourages. This protective behaviour threatens the very core of our being and translates into our environments. If we focus on our own dilemmas we cannot see or hear the inherent prejudices that marginalise ourselves and Others. In these instances empathy is compromised and threatens to destabilise positive emotional health which in turns affects our ability to be resilient.

Griffiths explores the relational aspects of nature, madness and spirituality through clever use of analogies. Language is qualified into “vertical (metaphorical) and horizontal (literal) words” to illuminate linguistic change and “for the person in crisis, these images are carrying a burden of significance which the listener needs to appreciate” (Griffiths, 2016). These metaphors also reflect how language has changed the social construct. “Just as language makes some ways of saying and doing possible, it makes other ways of saying and doing difficult and sometimes impossible” (Biesta, 2006, P.13). Where language is enshrined within the dialectical relationships between the real and the imagined, “the metaphor unites non-sensory matters with sensory ones” (Schostak & Schostak, quoting Arendt, 2013, P.123).

Amongst the conflicting dialogues, the “truth” awaits to be freed. Freed from the internal and external perceptions that are embedded within the social “reality”. The “truth” discharges its civic duties and situates itself positionally and locationally; historically and culturally. (Schostak & Schostak, 2013, P.30 & P.154)

Truth here is not logical truth but the truth of witnessing, of 'being there', of being in danger, of being in abjection. It requires an existential commitment to 'bring to appearance' an otherwise repressed or imperceptible voice to a public in a way that announces the existential conditions of its 'truth'... [I]t is a dis-placement, a transgression of comfort, to occupy a space of uncertainty, of potential danger with a return to occupy as a voice, a new space in a public constructed to receive the new(s) (Schostak & Schostak, 2013, P.123).

However, language remains within the limits of its creation and cannot fully explain the intricacies of the human condition without over-complication. Therefore, reorganising language into a pictorial representation can change its inherent meaning, directly or indirectly. The materials allow the mind to play differently with language and draws us away from our normal mode of thoughts (Schostak & Schostak, 2013, P.123)

## 4. THE RECONNECT

Physically contextualising “truths” enable us to reconstruct the perceived reality by permitting the mind to wander between different genres and times. By distorting the cultural and social meaning of language we can reconnect it to the senses to “re-present what is absent” because: “Language not only kills, but as a medium for manifestation it is at its limits” (Schostak & Schostak, 2013, P.123). Adopting the artefact encourages us to seek different interplays allowing the mind to manipulate meaning differently through the tactile representations of the materials (Impey, p.46, 2013).

As we play with different mediums, we constantly question the design of the aesthetics and the foundations on which our “truths” are built. Combining and contextualising these elements allow different perspectives to emerge into the shared reality and the “truths of the Other”. Thus, arranging and rearranging the colours, patterns, symbols and words involves constructing, reconstructing and deconstructing the materials until they hold the message we want to convey “beyond the conceptual space/time framework within which the narrative exists” (de Oliveir, Oxley, & Perry 1994, P.11) enticing us to review the past and look beyond the present. Just as we locate the array of information within the research, location of the artefact becomes another defining factor of the design process and execution. Using a “non-site”, transforms the process and frees the artefact simply because there is “no fixed point of view” (de Oliveir, Oxley, & Perry 1994, P.33).

The complex interplays of resilience and empathy are illustrated within the artefact but at the same time allude to the uncertain relationships. The message conveyed depends upon the environment and how that message is perceived and alters within in the changing landscape can also become part of our protective strategies that strengthen our sense of belonging. The inner co-ordinates represent both the formalised continuity of the social world and the mental involvement of the process. Reorganising these interrelationships provide an “insight, not a point of view” (de Oliveir, Oxley, & Perry 1994, P.28, P.33 & P.80) and reflects the tenacious interrelationships back to the viewer. With “no fixed point of view” the onlooker can then interpret the array of matter displayed which could transform the social experience due to uncertainty and fluidity of the matter. The transitory, yet stable environment feeds the human experience and allows “The narratives to be constructed, manipulated and codified for a purpose” (Schostak & Schostak, 2013, P.124).

## 5. SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSTRUCTS

The research indicates how manipulative systems can penetrate all levels of society, displacing reason. Fortunately the past does not present the future but can give us a better way of knowing (Shon, 1974). Health and well-being are extricably linked to politics and economics. Like any other business, education has to provide outcomes that are commiserate with the amount invested. These constraints and time constrictions deprive the teacher of the tools to impart wisdom and actively discourages interconnectivity. The restriction of curriculum (mostly) fails to meet the multi-faceted challenges that many special needs students face and can, in some instances, exacerbate their complexities. What is lacking, in this hyper-industrialised world is what Steigler refers to as the “loss of saviour-faire” and “saviour-vivre” which translates to the loss of the transcendental imagination and the ability to transform which is deeply connected to hyper-consumption and “technologies of control” (Steigler, 2014, P.33). Along the way, teachers and students have become casualties of the economic climate partially because this “functionalist view of education has changed the language of education which “sets the agenda”(Biesta, 2013, p126) and has been assimilated into the social psyche over the past few decades. This polarisation inevitably causes friction and restrictions. They disallow colours; and shade are no longer valued. Everything is lost in the monochrome of black and white.

New technologies silence wisdom and deny us the links to the past, on which we build our shared identities. This negated wisdom forms part of what Steigler, (2014) and Biesta ,(2013)term: “The crisis in education” where the spirit has been monopolised and the divisive nature of technology and marketing have changed the way we interact: “trans-forming the ... psychic and collective processes of individuation” (Steigler, 2014, P.30). Immediate gratification: be that of goods or knowledge and/or the lack of space and time to absorb deep meaning are precisely the catalysts that increases pressure on each participating individual and has seen the demise of the “Homecomer” (Schumacher, 1973).

Education for the teacher has become a battlefield where “troops” inevitably become caught in the siege. Lost on the battlefield, they retreat into the background or flee for this is human nature. Some mask their fear, become desensitised whilst others overcome the adversity through distraction or engagement. With casualties up nearly to 50% and over half wishing to desert any self-respecting general would have looked for a more responsible alternative strategy or retreated.

However, the battleground is littered with “cannon fodder,” with many more injured, waiting for help to come. Yet, onlookers, stand-by in the safety of the shadows, afraid they may also become injured in the fall-out or contaminated by the weak. Few Officers or subordinates offer assistance to those who can no longer stand the bombardment or the outright injustice of the system. The stakes are high! The strong stand-by as judge and jury, building bigger and higher walls to hide behind and construct new strategies to keep the “weak” subservient. In their strongholds, they condemn the weak, disconnect and justify their actions by transposing inadequacies onto the struggling teacher. Those struggling then become disconnected, isolated and feel helpless and may internalise the problem in line with current thinking. Those who do not sit in judgement, keep riding into the storm, absorbing more and more responsibility until either they breach the defence line (promotion) and create further problems for Others. If they stumble, only then do they begin to notice the injustice of it.

For the empathic teacher their duty towards their students is sacrosanct; they attend the wounded, the shell-shocked and go that extra-mile only to be exploited by the generals who wait in the wings, barely venturing onto the battlefield. They will win the war, whatever the cost because the political and economic stakes are high. For the proletarian, whatever the terrain will be exploited to the full, until all hope is lost and only then does the ground transform. Depending upon the vantage point, glimpses of the battlefield can be gained. But unlike the general, the day-to-day reality is to get the job done. Only when viewing all the tensions does the bigger picture emerge. With all the options visible, at the very least an informed course of action can be taken. Before despair sets in, generals would be wise to take heed of the crisis and impart empathy, for without empathy resilience is hard to sustain.

As just another cog in the supply chain the teacher is confined by the socio-political and economic agendas. Budgets are squeezed resulting in larger classes sizes that have to accommodate increasingly diverse educational needs and psychological comorbidity. As the re-industrialisation of education fully evolves, the collateral damage to teachers increases. The Education Industries quest to maximise “returns” is fuelled by highly competitive, results orientated programmes that means teachers are continually operating under sustained and substantial pressure.

“Attention control via cultural and cognitive technologies the ... malignant spirits haunting the adult minor as apparatuses for capturing, forming and deforming attention has become the very heart of hyper industrial society” (Stiegler, 2010, P.22). These continued and sustained threats to

professional identity is coerced through directives and restriction that seek to infantilise the teacher which attacks their self-identity, self-reliance and dignity (Stiegler, 2010, P20-35). Denying the individual the right to professional self-actualisation, denies them the opportunity to operate within the world which in turn limits the students possibilities and potentials. Never-ending paperwork reduces the time available for interaction, collaboration and innovation; and confuses or denies the transmission of knowledge; destabilises and isolates the teacher and/or student. It diverts what is “right in front of our eyes, the things that really matter and that require our attention, right here and right now” (Biesta, 2013, P.17). These sensory overloads can mean that the teacher “... struggles to meet new demands” which in turn can weaken the cognitive process (Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikahmadi, 2016, P197/8). When incessant demands persist over long periods of time, our ability to be empathic or resilient is compromised, especially when it conflicts with our own ideology. The shift towards a more “hegemonic discourse” not only compromises education but can according to Biesta, “monopolise thinking and talking ... erod(ing) the ability of a system to respond effectively and creatively to changes in the environment” (Biesta, 2013, P.123-124). In special needs education this is particularly concerning as in many cases just getting the student into the classroom can be problematic. When time restrictions and results orientation become the precursor of education it threatens the students ability to engage on any level, increasing pressure upon the teacher.

Teachers roles now encompass emotional, cognitive, social and ethical elements which requires a “co-responsibility for appropriate professional development and support (Arnold, 2005, P.113). A place where “...each is responsible for the actions of the group as a whole, and where the group has a responsibility to each individual” (Rogers, 1980, P.38).

Whilst the special needs teacher is inherently empathic and generally invested in the welfare of their students and sensitive to the students needs it is often to the detriment of themselves. The potential to exploit these emotions is always present because empathy relies on a “mutually responsive system of engagement” (Arnold, 2005, p116-117) which contrary to the aims of the service enterprise. Whilst we acknowledge that building empathic educational programmes for our students would be of benefit, very little empathy is extended towards the teacher and therefore: “Safeguards must be built into the empathic classroom or community... (and) educators need to be accorded a quality of empathic attainment from their colleagues and the systems in which they work in order for them to function empathically and constructively” (Arnold, 2005, P49).



## 6. THEORY

Empathy and resilience are vital practical skills that can help the teacher in special needs education maintain their well-being. A multi-disciplined approach permits the evidence to surface figuratively through the literature, the interviews and the aesthetic piece. These divergent perspectives, each bringing different narratives to the table but allow the framework to develop and reorganise. Multiple voices encourage the data to emerge and organise metaphorically, practically and linguistically. How “these are sensuously and conceptually sewn together, or sewn over” aids the construction and deconstruction. Critical analysis in both the practical and the literal, represent the tension within education. How the teacher “depicts their world returns the writer to the principle of thinking and ... its tropological process (Schostak & Schostak, 2013, P.160). De-framing the process facilitates the literature and the voice which becomes integral to making the teacher’s perspective “audible, visible and tangible” (Schostak & Schostak, 2013, P.119). Embodying the voice of the teacher supports the literature to demonstrate how societal norms “impacts on persons and individual freedoms and their effectiveness to engage their voices in public arenas” (Schostak & Schostak, 2013, P.119).

[T]he more complex the structure, whether a chemical or a human, the more energy it expends to maintain that complexity... As these fluctuations increase, they are amplified by the systems many connections, and thus drive the system ... into a new, altered state, more ordered and coherent than before” (Rogers, 1980, P.131)

Allowing divergent perspectives to be formed can increase the understanding of the different contentions that inhibit empathy and resilience from being activated. The different lenses can promote further understanding to reformulate our perspectives and identities (Wilson, 1998).

Re-establishing our identities, promotes our resilience that can help us to become more empathic. Therefore, changing the focus and questioning these foundations, disrupts our judgement which can alter the “normative curve” and hence the perspective. (Schostak & Schostak, P.36) Taking a fresh approach disturbs the order, allowing inherent prejudices to come to light and by challenging the rhetoric that frames education we can deconstruct the educational narrative. Whilst some may have difficulty perceiving the contentions that lie within the social construct, this can provide “food for thought”. What we do with this information can have a profound affect on the way we interact with the world.

Exploring the social construct through the aesthetic enables the deconstruction of the public and the re-orders the patterns and gives a new sense of meaning (Schostak & Schostak, P.175). “As speaking beings, we are born into a world of language, and thus conditioned by language as we learn to speak it, live in and of it” (Schostak & Schostak, 2013, P.27). Because language through history and time becomes culturally shrouded and embeds into our psychic being it is central to our identity. It offers opportunities to explore identities and cultures because it is “... intimate within one’s thoughts but also external since it is the shared resource of people” (Schostak & Schostak, 2013, P.55).

Language is caged by politics and legislation; constricted by economics and transformed through technology into the psyche through social construct. The reductionist policies of the curriculum form the “new language of learning” (Biesta, 2013, P.126) which restricts and incapacitates empathy, entrapping both the learner and the teacher. Through these interrelationships the language emerges to restrain and contain. It integrates into our spiritual, historical and psychological roots, complete with its own inherent defence mechanism (Hughes, 2017, P.16). Commonalities emerged from the various interplay and dialogues to form the “symploke”. The essence and meaning is captured in the divergent paradigms and the hidden subterfuge. (Schostak & Schostak, 2013, P.159). The social construct surfaces between these dynamics and the metaphorical language holds the “symbolic seeds” to transform our thinking.

Taking the metaphor and the simile and reforming them pictorially alters the meaning in its transposition. Similarly, the paradigm and ontologies reverberate with the past knowledge that pulls your thoughts in different directions. Only when you can distance yourself from the knowledge, can knowledge begin to inform and reform into wisdom. Before this catalyst occurs you have to be resilient throughout the storm, keeping your head down, searching for the truth amongst the debris and hope that you can arrive relatively unscathed on the other side. At some point, although counter-intuitive, there is a need for rest and recuperation to provide the space in which to assimilate new information. Within the void, the struggle looks for peace and meaning. In the stillness, time stands still and is neither in the present, the past or the future (Griffiths, 2016). It is here that deep learning takes place, in the stillness and quiet of our minds. Under stress the mind keeps going over the past and only seeks resolution into the future. Like forming a sentence, a particular word, idea or meaning remains long after you have written it, appearing and reappearing, throwing you off track and seeking to destroy all you have created if you cannot pull through the resistance.

Silenced by fear and held in the social construct of our world, we begin to act in isolation, comparing and contrasting our achievements with Others. This has become the malaise of hyper-industrialised societies which damages us individually and collectively. We measure our wealth by what we own. When we measure our actions and achievements in inanimate objects the measure becomes one of judging and judgement. A smile, a glance, a kind word does not cost anything but they have to be drawn from the heart and hold simple, responsive truths with no hidden agendas. “For every man there are things he can and things he cannot endure; whether or not he will encounter before he dies the thing that will break him depends as much on chance as on merit”(Comte-Sponville, 2002, P.59)

Blessed are those who do not stand the misfortunes of life, for they are given the time and space to heal, the structures to support them and the non-judgemental ear to listen. Yet, many judge, they manipulate the structures to keep their place in the world and use fear to coerce Others and in fear, the Other reflects their judgements to keep their place in the world. What we dislike in others is what we dislike about ourselves and this is reflected back to us and cause fear, distrust and protectionist behaviour. Like a disease, the fear of catching it is still innately built into our safety systems but should not deter us from enacting empathically. Empathy and resilience give courage, despite a lack hope. To help ourselves and our students we owe it to them to be balanced, wise and strong to impart our wisdom and knowledge to secure their futures.

The flag was chosen because it represents deep-rooted philosophical and social ideologies and holds subconscious messages that have been woven across time and embedded into the psyche. The flag holds collective and individual cultures, simplistically in its design and can be used to map the competing paradigms, demonstrating how empathy and resilience can be supported or destroyed. Reconfiguring the flag changes its initial conception but still signifies emblematic, historical and cultural meaning that is both ritualised and politicised. Its shape transcends time and holds embodied meaning in its function and form which depends upon the external culture and environment. Where, when and how the flag is displayed will change the message it sends, yet still retains its symbolic messages.

Hidden within their folds, textiles embrace diversity, show strength, and resilience in their application and manipulation. This can be an analogy to demonstrate the underlying feelings that need to be brought to the surface and highlight strategies that could be put in place to protect teachers well-being.

Constrained by social constructs and the hyper industrial economy, individuals are under increasing pressure to consistently perform and out-perform. There is no time for the past, present or future. The consequences of these competing demands can hold serious consequences to the empathic person. Resilience and empathy are constantly being eroded internally and externally from over prescriptive and demanding workloads. If we do not understand the constructs that keep us fully encapsulated in this world we stand a chance of losing our self-identity and our place in the world. Understanding these concepts can enable us to empathise more with the Other and together we can rebuild our resilience within ourselves and our external environments. The further these displacements become ingrained into the human psyche, the more damaging they become. They become embedded into our social and cultural histories and blur the lines between fact and fiction; true and false. When our identities are threatened protective strategies can be simplified within language making it easier to situate people, cultures or social groups quickly and efficiently (Hughes, 2017, P.2). When this occurs it becomes even harder to maintain a resilient and empathic stance. Embracing empathy's fragility can help us recognise how the external environment has changed our ability to be self-empathic and enable us to realign this virtue with empathy for the Other and together become more resilient.

Whilst there are no short-term answers to the crisis in education, teachers need to beware of the hidden agendas that are making their lives unbearable. If we understand what exists and how it controls us, we can preempt or even challenge that order. With this in mind the artefact is designed to evoke questions to develop new understanding.

## **7. DESIGN: DECONSTRUCTION & RECONSTRUCTION**

Tapestries and textiles hold significant societal meanings and have embraced hidden messages within their designs for centuries. Over the past fifty years, in line with changing social constructs textiles have come out of the shadows to “challenge the view that textiles are traditionally associated with decoration, domesticity and femininity” and have been used “to explore powerful and politically charged issues” (Impey, p.46, 2013). The inverse can be said for education where the teacher has to adapt continually to changing roles and responsibilities. Where textiles can now openly confront political and social issues, the teachers voice has been silenced and the status devalued.

Textiles generally represent “female work” and therefore traditionally hold a gender imbalance within the social strata and cultural structures in the West. Where both textiles and teaching have been predominately female occupations. OECD statistics for female teaching the UK showing 84.5% of primary staff were female and 58.8% in secondary education in 2015 (Costinot & Giovanni, 2017). The subtle resonance between textiles, the interrelation strands of education and society demonstrate the strength, diversity and resilience that both the teacher and the textiles require to maintain their form. The underlying feelings can be brought to the surface through the construction, application and manipulation of the materials. Reimagining and reconfiguring, and mediating between different strengths and weaknesses (Impey, p.46, 2013) demonstrates how the process, the material and the thread can become hidden or made visible.

The flag as an artefact displays deep historical and cultural significance. Corporeal in its positioning but fluid in movement, it shimmers and ripples in the wind changing the physical relationship between the component parts, bringing them together or separating and representing an ideal, an argument or a proposition. In its physical form it portrays a stable allegiance that is both a collective and an individual identity but holds a distinct message that has become embedded into the psyche. Through the positioning and colours, precise meanings transcends time and evoke nationalist sentiments based on a perceived ideals.

Evolving from a centralised position of wealth and power the flag extended protection to the community under heraldic and religious banners. This denoted a belonging, unity and solidarity

designed to be visible to demarcate territory and distinguish between friend and foe; and later to differentiate between warring factions on the battlefield or at sea (Carey, 2014).

The Triband which is used as the basis for the artefact originates in “1579 by William I of Orange-Nassau in the Eighty Years' War, establishing the independence of the Dutch Republic from the Spanish Empire”. Later it was “adopted during the French Revolution’ to symbolise “liberty, equality, fraternity” (Wikipedia, 2018) signifying the historical notions of freedom from tyranny, oppression and injustice.

In terms of labour and production, industrialisation and technological developments have reshaped the way materials are manufactured and used. Over the centuries, the design has been streamlined but the intrinsic meaning remains. Like education flags have been redesigned and reduced to their component parts. They embrace mechanistic models to maximise returns yet the representation is still concisely defined. The symbolic meaning of the flag is often transposed into the educational system where school emblems, badges and motifs still represent a collective identity and ideal.

The duality of the flag is at once a collective symbol but also a “call to arms” and embodies its true meaning within the fabric of time. Devised to be visible through its geometric design and use of bold colours, it is symbolic both in its application and positioning. (Tempest, S. 2014).,

Within the artefact the “blue black” represents the void where chaos looms, signifying a place for reflection and recollection. A space where deep meaning can transcend the psyche. The middle ground where time collides. Where stillness and quietness reach into the past, the future and the present and allow wisdom to be absorbed. In this location you can transcend towards heaven or hell. A dangerous place where difficult encounters and decisions are made; where destruction or creation are both possible (Fox, 2018). Above this space lies the pale blue representing infinity. Infinite possibilities; the mirroring of the sky and place where transformations can take place. (Fox, 2018) Below the “blue black” lies the white virtuous place where innocence and cleanliness symbolise enlightenment but hints at corruption, divide, control or conquer (Fox, 2018).

Transforming language into symbolic metaphors helps to simultaneously exemplify and simplify the message. The Runic symbols represent the impenetrability of language in its translation and the underlying message simply because language is inadequate and cannot hold the sheer volume of information. Runes were incorporated into the artefact due to their ambiguous nature which is enough to portray concepts and meaning beyond the limitations of language. What becomes lost in

translation, either linguistically or symbolically changes the understanding. Adapting to new translations without having access to the underlying structures can destabilise and trap you within ever decreasing circles.

To evoke thought, the runes are placed amongst the different colours to illuminate social constructs, virtues and vices. The Runes represent embodied meaning and condense human fragility, allowing complex information to be presented simultaneously yet simplistically; reflecting the potential outcomes depending upon the external factors.

The Elder Futhork (Europe 3rd & 12th Centuries) were generally culturally and contextually significant to a particular environment and were more likely to be commensurate with utilitarian use. The “earliest runic inscriptions are generally devoid of divine or mystical content” but may align with a “tacit hope in that the act of writing will somehow fix the intended outcome” (Krause, & Slocum, n.d). However, what still remains relevant today is the humanistic qualities that many runic poems allude to. Human virtues of conduct, friendship, wisdom, interrelationships and mutually beneficial actions all relate to common sense virtues (Krause, & Slocum, n.d). The Runes pick up these virtues by conveying symbolic meaning and appear to mimic medieval oral traditions alluding to a “divine and mystical powerful form of cognition” through “digesting and re-experiencing” (Sadoski & Paivio, 2013, P.14 & 15).

However, if we have lost our spirituality in light of capitalism then in this sense we have lost our drive and ability to make wise judgement. As Stiegler points out:

[C]apitalism becomes, literally; based upon drives, and absolutely barbarous, not only savage; denuded of all civility, which is also to say, of all spirit; and here one must understand “denuded of spirit” in the sense of having become intrinsically and mentally debilitated is the “destruction of the human .... induced by symbolic and spiritual misery (Stiegler, 2014, P.42-3). Wikipedia contributors, (Aug, 26 2018).

This embodiment affects the intra-personal and inter-personal relationships and every day interactions affecting how empathy is incorporated into every day practice, which in turn, impacts upon our “spirit”. If the spirit of empathy derives from being virtuous and an innate sense of belief in what constitutes goodness then for Beista (2013) and Stiegler (2014) reintroducing the spirit back into education can inspire and create alternative futures.

Integral to this research is the need to re-integrate the spirit of empathy back into education.

Empathy for oneself, ones colleagues and of course ones students. Using “mimis” was inspired by

Impey's description of Pet-Jacobs's quilt, *Eternal Enigma*' (2008) where she uses Aboriginal spirits to explore the "human predicament: making choices, growing and maturing, helplessness and isolation" and where the "viewer is not intended to read but to feel," to connect (2013, P30). This remembering, reconnected my past travels in Australia; a remembrance about the ancient rites and rituals that Aborigines have fought so hard to retain. They resonated with Biesta (2013), Steiglers (2014), and Schumacher's (1973) references to the loss of spirit; the "loss of saviour-faire" and the loss of "saviour-vivre".

"Dreaming is used to represent Aboriginal concepts of "time out of time," or "everywhen," during which the land was inhabited by ancestral figures ... which were revered" (Wikipedia Aug, 26 2018). They float across "blue black" space which can lead to "heaven or hell". Their feet, unfixed stretch below and their heads reach skyward hoping. Hoping that the spirit of empathy will reconnect the past, present and future. Whilst the eye reflects the soul, looking for wisdom; watching for honesty and truth. So that we may find the courage (compassion/empathy) to reflect honesty (justice) and truth (wisdom) to make wise judgements. Wise educational judgments " ... something that permeates and characterises the whole person - and we can take "characterise" here quite literally, as virtue is often also translated as "character" (Biesta, 2013, P.134) so that we can remain resilient and reflect this back into the environment.

Acknowledging and embracing the tensions within education can help transcend the anomalies by making it "beautiful" again. By beautifying the process it can transcend the tensions making the knowledge more accessible but beauty in this sense: "... is of an ethical, not aesthetic nature" but "for the beauty of the courageous action or for the love of good" (Comete-sponville 2002, P.57).

Deconstructing collective knowledge exposes the historical and contemporary issues that confine or limits our subjectivity and help free us from introspection. "It is the space at the edge where there are opportunities for new legitimacies and for new lines to be drawn" (Schostak & Schostak, 2013, P. 174). How we continue to function and remain resilient remains another question but understanding the competing tensions can help move us move towards a more secure future for ourselves and our students?



## 8. THE VOYAGE

Situated within the postmodernist paradigm, this multi-disciplined approach investigates the notions of empathy and resilience relating to the social, economic and political issues that surround education. From a qualitative perspective, critical theory delineates the ideals of empathy and resilience and allows them to become amalgamated with other research areas along with notions of Justice, Courage and Compassion. The metaphorical language releases its secrets and is amplified through the literature and is affirmed through the semi-structured interviews to reveal a new collective knowledge that informs the aesthetic. The aesthetic alters the viewpoint, giving way to new vantage points, disclosing the secret interrelationships that restrain empathy and resilience, reordering and reinterpreting the future allowing conclusions to be drawn.

The semi-biographical prologue opens the debate allowing "... several alternative paradigms to provide the basis for practical experimentation through the immersion of ones-self into several alternative paradigms (Guba, & Lincoln, 1994, P.108). Leaving the personal to unfold; the primary research draws experiences from the "Other" because the data from personal interviews will differ from governmental and non-governmental research. Because teachers generally have an affinity with their students this helps to ground the research and although restricted in the size and nature, this micro study gives insight into the discourse of the special needs teachers'. The abstract process derives its data inductively and becomes grounded by the participants views enabling inter-relational strands to become absorbed into the flag. (Ke & Wenglensky, 2010)

Based on theoretical constructs the data is collected using semi-structured interviews to attentively guide and probe the interviewee for emergent data which is then collated into meaningful categories so that the: "data emerges as something that can be perceived (mentally/physically) and made to count as having its place in the 'real'" (Schostak & Schostack, 2013, p. 40 & P.160, 2013).

The dominant paradigms build a picture that can independently, yet simultaneously inform the literal and the aesthetic design, but still allows the personal "voice" of the special needs teacher to be heard. As the research and the aesthetic are brought together they visually represent the competing tensions that disturb and effect empathy to provide a snapshot in time into how social constructs impact upon the teacher.

## Practicalities

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### Semi-Structured interview

Semi-structured interviews were used as apposed to other methods because they provide a more intimate perspective and allow emergent concepts to unfold which can be re-questioned during the process, confirmed or expanded upon. Questions were developed to understand how the notions of empathy and resilience are utilised in the workplace. The preliminary questionnaire was discarded as it was too structured and completely rearranged (see append 1) and after many re-writes a preliminary pilot study was completed (see append 2) with two teachers, external to this research. Questions were restructured and re-classified into two sections: Empathy and Resilience.

Definitions from Arnold, (2005), Krznaric, (2014), and Walters, (2013) (see append 3) were used as a precursor to delineate sections and improve the flow, allowing them to be re-aligned in the final question to conclude the interview (see append 3). Dividing the study into two concise areas provided an initial spring-board giving the respondents the freedom and space to speak freely about their experiences. Sub-questions were used ad-hoc to guide, prompt or gather further information and provided additional safeguards ensuring professional boundaries and time schedules were adhered to.

Demarcating the study areas assisted in the recording and analysis; which although hazardous enabled scribing and questioning to take place simultaneously. The template minimised steering and assisted in the transcriptions and collation of the data. Data was collated using a series of thematic approaches which were continually revised until common patterns, themes and/or anomalies emerged.

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### The Respondents

All teachers taught a variety of subjects to secondary students with emotional, social and educational challenges in varying groups; between five and eight pupils. Respondents were qualified to post-graduate level with over ten years teaching experience and are personal colleagues. This personal connection (albeit historical), enabled respondents to be selected from the diverse range of special educational establishments in the UK and the mutual understanding established a good rapport and helped to reduce any additional external influences. To ensure data was not compromised by either parties preemptive assumptions, careful phrasing of the questions and cross

referencing answers reduced the likelihood of interpretive activity and encouraged free and frank responses to increase the quality the data.

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## The Ethics

To reduce organisational bias and ensure confidentiality of the participant and the organisation, teachers were recruited from a range of different specialist organisations and all emails and any other data has been deleted on completion of this project. The main interviews were conducted face-to-face and all scribed in accordance with NSD specifications. An application to NSD confirmed no further notification was required. Using the NSD template the research was outlined and a “Request for participation in research project” document was produced (See append 4) and given to the respondents. After obtaining a verbal agreement interviews proceed with four special needs teachers during the school holidays. Due to the intimate nature of this research and the vulnerability of students and staff, all personal data has been anonymised and interviews were conducted away from the organisations to protect the organisations and the teachers identities.

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## The Teacher Interviews

Preliminary interviews were set-up, with two respondents but due to sickness neither attended the interview and I emailed the questions. Both responses provided insights but one respondent had obviously taken longer than the allocated time and the density of the information and links to websites suggested that these were not immediate thoughts compromising the data, highlighted the need for face-to-face interviews. Due to this anomaly I conducted an additional two interviews.

Respondents were asked if they agreed with the given definitions of “Resilience” and “Empathy” and depending upon the response, additional questions were asked. Questions were developed to tease out information rather than direct the interview, allowing space for the respondent to divulge their own insights.

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## Organisational Interview

To gain in-depth knowledge of how empathy and resilience are used organisationally, I contacted “The Well-being Project” where resilience training is at the heart of the companies ethos. I conducted a forty-five minute telephone interview using a loosely structured crib sheet which gave insight into how different organisations (including schools) incorporate resilience training into

working practice. The respondent was inspiring, insightful and knowledgeable and gave pertinent information into how empathy and resilience work synonymously.

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## Secondary Data

Whilst there is little specific data on teachers well-being in special needs education, pertinent statistical evidence in education suggest there is a deficit of empathy and resilience that is affecting the teacher physically and psychologically. Secondary data relating to teacher populations in the U.K. (United Kingdom) were used to evaluate the causes and effects of stress on health. The array of statistics found in secondary research evaded comparative analysis due to the differentiation between survey populations, surveys and questions asked. This meant that no coherent alignments were forthcoming and no graphics or charts could be produced.

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## The Aesthetic

The seeds of the aesthetic was firmly planted during my reflective practice in the work-based learning unit but did not fully evolve until after the original submission of the thesis plan. Starting with the historical deconstruction, research enabled the flags evolutionary past to be metaphorically and practically mapped onto competing paradigms. The fabrication of its message, its evolutionary narrative and the physical changes of material represent relationships within special education. Throughout its historical evolution, modifications altered the aesthetic quality of the flag but the overarching message remained the same. The analogies represent the changing environments, and new alignments with technology. Deconstructing the present (modern flag) returns us to the past through practical application and is redesigned and reconstruction to enable new information to be absorbed into the fabric. The evolutionary and experiential nature of the process, starts with a template and takes inspiration from historical and contemporary artefacts (see append 5) Its fabrication relies on reusing discarded materials whilst rich textured threads weave through the design mimicking the historical design of Colours (flags), Emblems and Banners.

The process plays with tensions; threads and material; man-made fibres and organic cloths. Natural and synthetic material are made to work symbiotically together and rely on an innate knowledge to select and cut the material and build individual parts. Separate parts were pinned and tacked together until the overall design emerged to be constructed and sewn and oversewn enabling the constituent parts to coalesce and form the finished product.

## 9. The Process

The experiential work embodies all the senses, immersing the hand, the heart and the mind into the design and construction process. The evolutionary nature invigorates dormant tacit knowledge inviting experimentation. As the process evolves, a natural rhythm emerges internally and externally sparking the imagination until they work synergistically. Trial and error fuse the experiential work to the literature and the literature to the aesthetic making it almost impossible to pinpoint where the process begins or ends.



**FIGURE 1**

Paper templates were constructed by reducing an original flag to half its size. From old, discarded fabrics, pieces were chosen; (Fig 1) large enough to fit the template, strong enough to carry extra weight but light enough to catch the breeze. These remnants became the foundation on which everything else would sit. Once chosen, the type of stitch, hand sewn or mechanised needed to be determined. Parts were sewn mechanically and other areas hand-stitched, each adding their own unique imprint.

Matching the tension with the delicacy of the fabric called for additional tools whilst the choice of organic or synthetic materials were limited to the resources available, requiring careful measurement and cutting. Mandatory strengthening added durability and helped to maintained shape. Layering, protecting, and embroidering, inevitably led to unpicking, restitching and reshaping. Each layer brought new problems, increased the complexity and changed the aesthetic design but whatever the choice; the overall design, the material used, the strength of the thread and the size and tension of the stitch will by-and-large dictate the overall outcome. Experimental studies into different configurations, colours and materials ensued. (Fig 2)

**FIGURE 5**

**FIGURE 4**



**FIGURE 2**



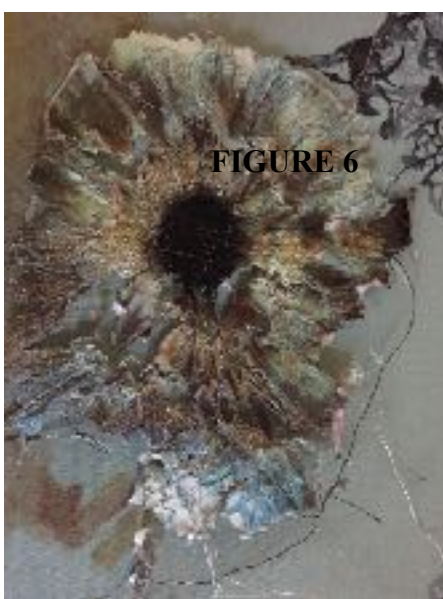
**FIGURE 3**

Testing and sampling unfolded new concepts and design challenges and as the aesthetic unfolded, materials were discarded; cut and sewn together and tested for suitability into the general design but tacking stitches allowed new ideas to be incorporated into the construction. (Figure 3)

Concepts evolved into cyclical patterns between the flag and the literature: literature and the flag.

Heraldic symbolism would be emblematic of the overarching design. To represent growth, development and maturity, the emblem began life as a seed designed to demonstrate the necessity of interconnectivity.

Human complexity would be displayed through embroidered icons and circles to represent life-cycles. Gold threads signified opulence, treasure and purity and the hanging threads demonstrated disconnect (Fig 4).



**FIGURE 6**

Parts became entangled,

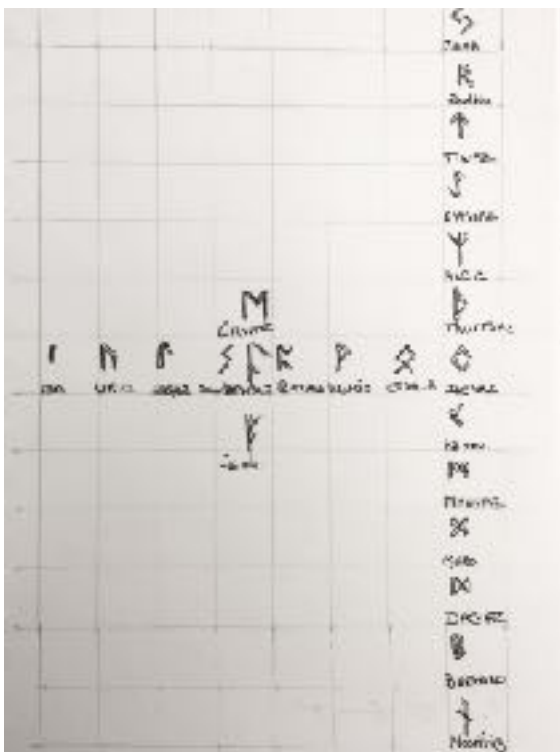
others

refused to be attached to the background and were subsequently discarded whilst the sheerness of the fabric opened up holes. Certain materials refused to be melded and remained unformed and others had fallen through the delicate fabric clinging desperately: trying to hide within the work hoping not to be seen. Others detached themselves from the fabric and would not be held fast and others became stiff and inflexible. Although appropriate these designs did not fully

convey the message and was discarded. To convey the message of honesty and openness I turned to

the eye because it is said to be the “reflection of the soul;” over-seeing and all-seeing and complimented foundational work. After embroidering an eye, (Figure 5) I played with the notions of painting the intricate patterns of tears but decided the work had become overcrowded, distracting from the meaning (Fisher, 2017).

The rich tapestry of the Runic symbols brings the aesthetic back to its historical past and embeds its meaning into the textiles and draws information from the interviews. The Runes are used to communicate concepts in time and while most have a darker side they allude to the changing nature of humanity. Depicted in figure 6 below is the layout of the runes on the flag adapted from Ager, (2018) See append 6 for more information from “Rune, Alphabet”.



Hagalaz, represents uncontrolled forces relating to the power of nature or the unconscious mind and remains outside of the flag due to its destructive force and the dangers inherent in unqualified knowledge. In the blue-black void inherent opportunities wait along potential destruction. Taking centre stage Ansuz indicates insight, communication; inspiration, truth and meaning which we allude to teaching in special needs. Above Ehwaz signifies movement and change: steady development and progress which is required for meaning to take place. Below Fehu signifies hope, foresight; creation but also destruction indicating the trust we place in technology.

**H**

To the left Sowilo speaks of endurance and enlightenment; strength reliability, dependability and trustworthiness in which we hope our interrelationship flourish. Ansuz reveals insight, vision and the power of words that help us reveal the truth. Uruz talks of speed and untamed potential which can disrupt the natural order of things but gives us, freedom courage and wisdom to search for justice and compassion whilst Isa seeks clarity but looks inwardly; whispering of psychological blockages, challenges and grievances which threaten to destroy us. (Runes, Alphabet of Mystery, n.d)

To the right Perthro talks of hidden meanings and mysteries that we are unaware of and by its side Wunjo seeks fellowship, harmony and prosperity to which we all aspire.. Othala displays what is truly important, of spiritual heritage of our past that anchors us in the present and the experience and fundamental values that keep us anchored. Ingwaz looks for common virtues, common sense and speaks of love caring and human warmth.and our need for justice and truth. Rising above Thurisaz destruction, defence and conflict await signifying the battle for truth

Ascending into the blue where opportunities lie ahead helps to ground us. Algiz speaks of how we can protect the self and others, restore our resilience that can reawaken the spirit of empathy. We are strengthened by Eihwaz and the dependability, reliability and trustworthiness of our colleagues . Tiwaz alludes to honour, justice and rationality that secures Raidho's rhythm, "the dance of life" and change culminating Jera's hopes and expectation of the others to help us break cycles so that we can seek peace, fruitfulness and happiness (Runes, Alphabet of Mystery, n.d)

Below Ingwaz lies Kenaz nestling in the blue black seeking revelation, knowledge, transformation and regeneration.

In the white Mannaz demonstrates the social order. Our connection to the self and others to bring about our collective enlightenment. Directly below Gebo seek gifts of self-sacrifice and generosity to rebalance the destruction of the hyper industrialised society and Dagaz re-awakening where we move from darkness into the light. Berkano heralds regeneration, new beginnings through physical and personal growth pausing with Nauthiz who helps to give us courage and strength to face fears and use innovative ways to remove the resistance that blocks are ability to be empathic and resilience and through our own endeavours makes us more self-reliant and patience. (Runes, Alphabet of Mystery, n.d)

Different ways to symbolise meaning played with paper; paper/embroidery/embroidery hand and machine-stitched till eventually a new solution presented itself using thicker materials and threads and different techniques to fasten the flag to the mask (Fig 7).



**FIGURE 7**



Whilst Locally sourced "twisted hazelnut" provides the staff on which the flag hangs. It resists the changes, holds onto its inner layers with strength and tenacity, revealing its history, one strip at a time. Outwardly strong, beneath its layers the narrative reveals times of stable growth and trauma. Stripped of its bark and removed from its growth source; it remains contorted and shows its deep scars where it has been forced to grow unnaturally.

Exploration and immersion into the world of textiles brought dormant knowledge back into existence by visually and spatially transforming ideas into realities. New ideas evolved only to be discarded or reformed and over its many transformations ideas were brought to life. Immersion into the process reconnects the mind to the hand and the heart, forcing language to take a secondary place, transforming ideas into realities; allowing the narratives to form into a new way of seeing. The conscious and unconscious minds draw together, extracting innate knowledge and transforming it into something tangible.

## 10. STITCHED UP

Teachers are generally aware of their “personal impact” and make “emotional investments” often “de-prioritising” their own needs which can affect the work balance relationship, affect natural cycle of resilience according to the “Well-being Project”. They emphasised how “long term stress causes under production; contributes to long term health issues and can lead to over-functioning (automata)” where the self and others become ignored. “Real-time demands, academic and legal protocols” all threaten interconnectivity and “wearing many hats” places heavy demands on the teacher making them susceptible to stress. Recharging “spiritually” and taking responsibility about your own sensible solutions and narrative can help but they also need to “correspond with the narrative in the wider world” (see append 7).

In the semi-structured interviews respondents clearly wanted to engage with their students but felt restricted by legislative policies which “closed down channels of support”. “Giving an “empathic hug” (rather than a physical one) “changed the nature of the relationship”. An essential part of teaching is being able to provide genuine, honest support that: “can help celebrate memories” but felt unable to give advice without “proper training” and “were unable to comfort someone in distress”. It was felt, training should be more practical to promote specialist skills rather than overarching, repetitive training that: “dumbs down” issues. Being empathic “increased disclosures” from staff and students which can be “overwhelming”. Especially when there is no training or protocol in place for staff. Working from your own experience can be beneficial but “empathy can be lost or gained from life experience”. Although, supporting colleagues was essential, there was already “too much pressure on teachers and not enough time available to complete essential tasks”. “Empathy on its own is a very emotional level” and “requires self-belief and “knowing where you are coming from”. It can “break down barriers and allow freedom of expression” but requires you to be “firm but fair” but “no matter how good a teacher is or how passionate they are about their subject, if they cannot connect with the student there is little or no hope of engagement”.

Teaching is a balancing act which requires you to feel into the situation rather than react to what is being seen or said. “Attitude is fundamental” especially when modelling behaviour. You “speak through your actions and life experience”. Being empathic can “flag-up” strengths and weakness and give you knowledge to “intuitively back-off or support” when necessary. It helps suspend judgement; enabling you to be flexible and strong. Through insight and understanding, empathy

gives you the “ability to listen without judgement irrelevant of what is being said” and should be extended to all in education.

One respondent felt that internally, there was a "lack of respect for 50+ women” and that this “translated into how the students treated you”. “Age can make you invisible and the interference from government, makes you feel cheated”. “Helping Others to feel good about themselves gives others courage to keep trying” and should be extended to all staff because students mirror behaviours. Without empathy resilience begins to wain and the quality of any relationship relies on showing genuine interest in others, promoting a symbiotic, healthy learning environment for all. Reciprocal trust and being valued is essential to maintaining empathic intelligence and resilience. “How much is nature or nurture is an on-going debatable but resilience without empathy, and empathy without resilience is the road to disaster (see append 8 & 9).

The sheer scale of teacher dissatisfaction and overburdenment was constantly demonstrated by the secondary statistical data. High percentages of teachers felt devalued and undermined professionally and financially. Many stated that they were not paid commensurately for the work they undertook; had no control over their workloads and were constantly being judge and evaluated affected interpersonal relationships with colleagues and management. Lack of respect for their knowledge, expertise and professional judgement coupled with management bullying and poor pupil behaviour disempowered teachers. This disconnect affects many teachers over the “holiday” periods where anxiety and stress concerning student performance and pending exam results, (68%), lack of autonomy and control over their role (65%). Financial worries (60%), health issues (54 %), concerns about positive professional relationships with colleagues (47%) and concerns over job security 946% (YouGov, 2017) In every category, high numbers of teachers felt excluded, exhausted and disrespected.

It is without doubt that the social construct is having a detrimental affect on the way we educate our students and on how we treat our teachers becomes mirrored back into society. As one respondent noted: “Authenticity help you remain resilient and being true to your nature and beliefs help you work through your problems and look for alternative routes” but without support, passion and beliefs are destroyed. Like remnants; pieces can be joined together, adjusted and reshaped to make the aesthetic pleasing, but behind the beauty of the object lies the hidden threads which reveal the real struggles that have taken place. Parts remain damaged, lying broken or twisted on the inside and it takes only a small slight of hand to break it completely. Others cannot see beyond the picture

or comprehend what is happening and remain stiff and rigid in their stance creating resistance for others. Many are coerced or forced to conform to social norms or separated by those who stand the most to gain and like all popular stories, they sell the dream that wisdom, generosity and compassion will eventually win over the day.

Superficial connectivity without insight or understanding is like knowledge without wisdom. If we cut short the fabric, it can never be recovered. Relentlessly pushing forward is not a solution to the demands of teaching and without empathy and resilience, there is no way forward. As I stitch, thoughts come in rapid succession; too fast to write down. Like my thoughts if I move too quickly across the fabric, they go off track and require additional attention. Materials misbehave, when they don't want to be stitched they slip and slide all over the place and require constant revision and adjustment to consolidate meaning. Because they don't comply with the demands of the design they are discarded or forced into place, always looking slightly out of place in the overall design. At times the materials react predictably with the other until one with exactly the same appearance behaves differently causing a chain reaction that can lead to clarity or destruction.

The same duty of care should be extended to all fabrics. The delicate and fragile materials require integrity and sometimes specialist care. Patience and time to reflect can offer new insights into how they can fit together without being left on the periphery or oversewn so they cannot move. If we act honestly with the materials they can become integrated into the whole. When some are hurriedly sewn, due to time constraints and overriding restraints the results can be disastrous. As the old saying goes "A stitch in time save nine" and taking time will mean that there is no need for resewing, unpicking which can further damage the material. The more you oversew, the more likely the fabric is to fray and become unstable or unyielding. Genuine care is required because the human psyche knows when it is being humoured and the problem comes back to haunt you.

The process of creating something physically breaches yet another barrier, changes thought patterns and opens new paths. The discovery awakens the spirit, freeing the mind, lifting barriers which become more fluid and accessible.

## 11. NEW HORIZONS

Anomalies and tensions appear differently in each process: the literature, the interviews and the aesthetic compliment one another and offer new ways of seeing and solving problems enabling us to reinterpret future outcomes. Drawing together the elements of the research the construction of the flag metaphorically represents the “battles” that abound within education. As with all things in life, constant evolution offers new challenges but once the foundations have been laid, the process becomes fully operational. The supporting text “illuminates the artefact” by drawing attention to the difficulties both in the realisation of the project and the reality that resides within the social construct. Change invites new opportunities, trials and tribulation.

Looking over the past from a different angle or through a new lens will offer different solutions and outcomes. At times, difficult and painful decisions need to be made but with insight and wisdom new patterns can emerge and new paths can be discovered. It is from sharing a collective understanding that we gain wisdom and knowledge. It is at once very personal, yet strangely apart.

Extending this notion into the realms of special needs it shows the strict and sometime limiting historical ideologies of education and the up-hill battle many students and teachers face. It takes courage not to cling to every word or detail and the aesthetic provides the catalyse and frees the mind. Some colours fade into the background, become hidden or lost in the deluge. Threads are caught or missed requiring reworking and in real life, as within needlework, going back over the same ground can strengthen the patterns for good or bad. When care and attention is given, the materials become more pliable and casting an empathic eye over problems can lead to resolutions.



Throughout the voyage critical theory navigated deep waters searching for affirmations of wisdom and truth. Fragmented “truths” surfaced, appeared and disappeared and reappeared in the swell but evaded capture. Checking the tidal currents, weather patterns, equipment and provisions, My journey mapped and planned. I set sail; the flag billowing in the wind.

On the horizon, stormy skies lurked. I felt I had ventured too far from the shore but turning back was not an option, the destination was firmly fixed. The storm broke and chaos loomed. My knowledge and wisdom vanished and I could no longer keep my navigational position. With no rest in sight, I moved forward looking for the anchor to stabilise the situation but it could not be found. Everywhere was deserted. I could not fathom what had happened. Clinging onto the deck, I braced for the storm. I felt that I could no longer trust my judgement and alone the challenges felt insurmountable. I pushed on regardless in anticipation of something new, relentlessly moving forward. On the periphery flotsam and jetsam passed and lights shone on the distant horizon, just out of reach and all I could do was trust that my moral compass would bring me safely back to land.

Once on shore, the reconstruction could begin. Searching for truths, introspectively and extrospectively, I sought council, explored other lives and experimented with alternative paradigms to understand the social, political, cultural and economic ontologies that shape and form the teachers' world and the special needs environment. Cross paradigms and philosophies threaten to disrupted my newly found knowledge and destabilise my inner world. What could I not see? What was it that lay beneath the surface that unrelentingly demanded all my attention and energy? What was so important that it could leave me broken, without a reference point and lead me so far away from my core beliefs? Even though the winds and the tides may change, the stars and the void are a constant, points of reference.

Constant reference points are built into the fabric of society yet parts remain hidden in the textiles of time. Many parts are invisible to the vast majority as their identities are assimilated and integrated into the social fabric. They mimic the dominant structures, superficially layering codified social norms that restrict and hold us in place whilst the inside crumbles against the technological onslaught. The metaphoric language teases the narrative out piece, by piece until the picture emerges reflecting the tensions contained within textiles; drawing a beautiful parallel with the tensions within special needs education where the materials symbolically represent the strengths and fragility.



Using old, discarded material is an analogy for those in special needs who act outside the norms of society and react the way some materials do in response to others. Acting outside of the confines of the work can produce the most beautiful and awe inspiring insights. Veering away from the “norm” can seriously jeopardise the work and stitching outside of the path can only be done incrementally without serious consequences to the overall design. Without specialist tools, the organic and non-organic materials react differently with one another and become entwined or entangled. Threads left hanging become caught up in the fabric with little or no chance of escape, to be destroyed at whim by unconscious thoughts and reactions that emanate from some preordained prejudice or “cultural norms”. They become enmeshed into the fibres, caught up in the internal wrangling with no reprieve.



Fortunately, materials, like the student and the teacher are not unforgiving. If empathically engaged they can become responsive and stalwart but it is only through ‘trial and error’ that these changes are made possible. Mistakes encourage us to correct our actions through research, re-design, alterations, unpicking and re-sewing until our view of the world is resolved. The artistic veneer holds the narrative to ransom transforming connectivity and threatening the tenuous nature of empathy and resilience.





Like the flag, empathy and resilience are dependant upon the environment. Weaving in and out of the different social sphere strong external forces reshapes and distorts the contours. They become battered and torn; tangled and divided. Motionless they become unresponsive; dejected and flaccid. They wait for the wind to transform the environment to facilitate change and restore balance. Although the silhouetted appears unchanged, when there is not time or space for recourse the internal imbalance causes spiritual disconnect which denies empathy its existence and impacts on how empathy is translated into our psyche.



The corporate ruthlessness deflects and ties us in knots with its interminable paperwork, policies and procedures whilst the social construct both linguistically binds and coerces, pushing far beyond the judicial boundaries of equality and democracy. It becomes shrouded in inherent defences; the norms; prejudicially situated, almost intangible, hidden from view in its wide-spread acceptability.

The metaphorical language frees the spirit, like the flag situated within a non-site. The framework relocates the narrative enabling it to exist independently, stimulating cognition, reigniting the senses enabling the “the mind to hear the echo aligned to the shadow rather than the object in peripheral vision”(Resurgence, issue 299, p.39). Dormant qualities emerge, corresponding with the materials that reflect the choices we make; what we leave in or leave out determines ours and others futures. The materials mimic the social construct where personal fragility is typified through the use of recycled materials which can often act or react in unexpected ways. Throughout the process we react intuitively and innately, operating on a barely conscious level, permitting the

mind to wander. When we inhabit this space the mind becomes free and encourages deeper thoughts to emerge which feed back into the writing.

Our views and personal judgements will determine the future integrity but the ultimate accolade is its acceptance by the Other. At times materials fray, pucker or break but can precipitate new understandings. These arise from correcting, reconnecting and (re)creation of something old into something new. However, if overworked, materials become hard and unpliable and increasingly resistant to change due to deep, and numerous, unmovable, layers.

Introspective cultures invades our lives, it is what makes us servile and dysfunctional. It is the knowledge without wisdom that Biesta (2013) and Steigler (2014) talk about and the first stage is to acknowledge the situation, 2nd is to gather forces and the 3rd is to enact action: action to resolve the injustice that is being done to our students and fellow teachers. To extend this research further the flag could be ‘Industrialised’ and meaning reduced to mere colours and symbols or the project could be introduced to other teachers for therapeutic aims to discover how practical applications can address political problems and move the debate forward within schools and governments.

Shrouded in mystery and legends, the flag symbolises possible futures. The banner has long been a sign of battle and protest to promote liberty, equality, and fraternity.

## 12. CONCLUSION

This study verified that I was not alone and many other teachers in the U.K. educational system were experiencing some degree of stress. Although small pockets of resistance challenge the status quo, education remains very much under the auspiciousness of the hyper-industrialised economies.

Decades of psychological control and marketing continues to hijack and control education, leaving many teachers vulnerable to the whims of the market economy where language has no recourse for redress. This loss of spirit, to which Biesta (2013) and Steigler (2014) refer, continues to infiltrate our classrooms, teachers and students.

The result of this study has culminated in an artefact that depicts the competing paradigms that interact within different environments to established the role of empathy and resilience in special needs education. Symbols highlight the elements within the social construct and show its interactive constituent parts. The artefact graphically demonstrates and establishes the interplay between empathy and resilience. Therefore, understanding the hidden narrative behind the structure requires specific knowledge of historical and contemporary issues but to access a deeper meaning requires the space and time to absorb new information. The positive and negative attributes allude to the fragile nature. When the equivalence is not in equilibrium, empathy and resilience degrade and can led to a poor educational experience. Inscribed language becomes increasingly complex but by symbolically linking it to the past, it simplifies the design, yet complicates the meaning if you do not speak the language. The agenda becomes hidden within the intricacies of language and hints towards finding the deeper meaning.

There is always a need for a reference point, a coordinate and preferably a route map. When we are grounded in our beliefs they anchor us to the current position with little room to manoeuvre.

Restrained by the necessities of life; the things that keep us alive are represented by the mast but alludes to the normative, stable social construct. Humanity integrates itself into the construct of the social, but our wires are crossed, the short circuit as Stiegler (2014) notes is becoming dangerously live and at any time it can burn us.

Art gives way to perceiving things differently both in design and application transforming the way we view the world. In reconstruction, the flags' form clings onto the historical and contemporary narratives but reinterprets the present through its experiential design. The evolutionary process absorbs the significance of the external and internal environments which are susceptible to change

from within and outside of the construction. Each fabric, each thread and each stitch hold distinct and individual properties but it is how it is brought together and how it is situated will reveals its true nature. New information is presented metaphorically and visually through the anomalies and tensions to change preconceptions. Some parts yield willingly, others resist the new demands whilst others meld with the general flow determining its placement, establishing future use and dictating which parts are to be integrated, discarded, or reused.

Within its new construction, the flag embodies the competing paradigms, metaphorically and visually. As a metaphor, the flag represents the balance required for empathy and resilience yet demonstrates its fragility, strength and versatility through the “old” discarded fabrics. Embedded into the structure, the flag signifies the delicate balance between the self and the other. It alludes to the courage we need to sustain for the battle to come. The “fight” to reconnect, to be treated as equals in the supercharged environments we inhabit and to be paid commensurately for what we do. It is about dignity and trust; to do what is right for ourselves and our students. We can no longer rely on authority to provide the security we need and we have to look for alternative ways to maintain our resilience. Only by the process of trial and error can we solve problems but with courage we can imagine alternative futures.

Precisely because teachers connect with people, they invest in their students outcomes. However, this is often in juxtaposition with the demands of the job. What we know to be intrinsically important and innately held in our belief systems is directly in opposition to the environment. Because of fear and compliance we become automated by being kept immeasurably busy. This overloads our sensory perceptions, affects our spirality and questions our sense of self. We can choose to ignore these difficulties at our peril, but like the flag, the tension depends upon the external environment. When shadows are cast and tensions are high the position is destabilised. When the forces of nature turn us in the wrong direction, we suffer and become erratic and irrational. Only when the soft breeze takes us back on course can we see the true reflection of our inner being and this is what we want to impart to our students. The hard-lines of education, and quantification become our anchor. They stifle the creative aspect of “seeking-and-finding” and the relentless wind blows, shaking us and stirring up apprehensions that seek to confine us, leaving no space or time in which to rest and reflect that will ultimately sees us ragged and torn.

Reconstructing these elements literally and visually helps to rebalance the internal and external environments which can transform how we view empathy and resilience, personally and

collectively. Although many viewpoints and voices add to the debate, the sheer scale of the problem can no longer be ignored.. The voyage has many perils along the way but by tuning in with nature, watching for cues, reading the signs and embracing what the world has to offer, can minimise the risk to ourselves and others. To practice what we teach despite internal and external pressure can activate empathy within our students and help them access a better education. Therefore, introducing empathic intelligence into the classroom could help teachers to remain positive and enable students to access and develop their own sense of self. Revisioning the teacher as a central part of the collaboration requires a new dialect and re-direction of social “norms” within teaching. The return of “Homecomer” as Schumacher (1973) notes, can help us reconnect to the land, to nature, to the self and to Others.

Viewing these paradigms, collectively as a big picture, enables the final pieces of the jigsaw to fall into place. With this knowledge, power can be restored, empathy reignited and resilience reconstructed. Creating visual representation at best, can give credence to empathy and at worst, evoke questions.

Currently, we are like puppets: our bodies and minds are pulled in different directions. When the disconnect is felt though our hands and in our hearts; we know we are at odds with the world. Through our minds confusion, the light reorders the chaos in its quest for Truth. Only when we meet the safety of the harbour, can we reflect on our journey. What we have hidden or embellished becomes reflected in our coordinates and it is only fair that the viewer will decide the fate of the construct based on their own set of coordinates. Parts will be true, exaggerated and even complete works of fiction but we leave it up to the audience to decipher what the message truly conveys.

This is replicated in the artefact and the end result is reflected by decision about the type of fabric, the stitch or thread utilised to realise the aesthetic. Manipulation of the materials and decisions about the type of stitch or thread demonstrates the human condition, its interconnectivity. Colour judgements and selection of materials; choice of aesthetic design and practical resolutions reflect how we choose our place in the world but simultaneously demonstrate that through these choices, “Other” lives are held in the balance.

Like the flag, the forms and functions can be disrupted by the elements causing them to merge and contract. The possibility of becoming dishevelled and less of our former self is a constant. Although the storm can destabilise our position and we can turn in the wrong direction, we should

not be afraid to adapt and adjust to reasonable changes. If we have the means to adjust our positions we should not be too wary of the things that anchor or push us in one direction. If we need to let go to adjust our position we can then shield ourselves from the storm. Even if we have been blown off-course we can still find a way.. At times we need to be counter-intuitive and drive against the currents but they will enable us to redirect our course. When overcast we should not lurk in the shadow or rigidly conform to the direction of the wind, we should find balance within the elements and tempering them in our favour. Using our intuition and knowledge we can then safely return to our “True North”.

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# Appendices

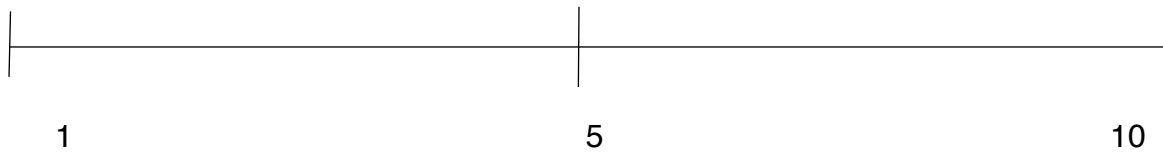
## Appendices 1 QUESTIONNAIRE

### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. In two sentences, what is your perception of Empathy?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. On a scale of 1-10, how would rate the need of using empathy whilst teaching?



3. Do you agree that empathy can be a useful tool in the classroom? Please mark in the appropriate box.

Agree strongly	Agree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly.

4. Do you think empathy should play a role in Special Education?  
(Please circle your answer)

Yes                      No

5. In your own words Please provide your thoughts, in two sentences or less, the reasons behind your answer to question 3.

.....  
.....

6. What characteristic do you think make a good Special Needs teacher? Please list in order of importance with 1 being the most important and 12 the least.



Empathy

Resilience

Discipline

structure

Perception

subject expertise

Life-experience

adaptive/flexible

sympathetic

Formal

efficient

clearly defined roles

7. Add an additional three words to describe your perception of a Special Needs teacher and where you would place them in question 6 above.

1. .... between

2. .... between

3. .... between

8. In your own working environment, what % out of 100 (1% being low) would you consider your environment to be empathic to both students and teachers?

.....%

9. How empathic do you consider yourself to be towards your students and fellow workers on a scale of a to e, with, a being high. (a,b,c,d,e)

Students.....

teacher .....

10. Over the course of your last working week, in your organisation, how resilient did you feel coping with challenging behaviour. Please mark on the chart below. (1 is low)



1

5

10

11. Over the course of your last working week, in your organisation, what challenging behaviours did the student exhibit. Please put a cross in the box that corresponds with your students.

Passive								Aggressive
Polite								Aggressive
Impersonal								Personal
Subjective								Objective
Conducive								Unconducive
Civilised								Primal
Fearfull								Fearless

12. Do you believe that an empathic person has the following characteristics. Please mark the chart below whether you strongly disagree or strongly agree following characteristic you think an empathic person has.

	strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree or disagree	agree	strongly agree
Intuitive					
approachable					
Vulnerable					
congenial					
sensitive					
trustworthy					
perceptive					
understanding					
insecure					

Are there any additional words that you feel should be used to describe empathic people. Please list below and give your reason.

.....

13. Do your students demonstrate empathy themselves? Please circle your answer.

Yes

No



Please comment on the reasons for your answer

.....

.....

.....

.....

14. Please jot down five words that describe your attitude towards “empathy”.

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

15. Which of the following statements do you agree with most fit with empathy. Please tick all that you think apply.

- a. Cooperation and reciprocity.
- b.A natural capacity for stepping into other people’s shoes.
- c.The ability to understand and share feelings of another.
- d.An understanding between people; a common feeling.
- e.Commiseration, pity, condolence, consolation, comfort, solace, support, encouragement.

I would like to thank you for your time and cooperation in completing this survey.

Details from this survey will only be used to inform the overarching aims of this study and any personal details, including organisations will be anonymised.

If you would like to receive the results from the survey, please email me at [belindajbourne@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:belindajbourne@yahoo.co.uk).

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## **Appendices 2 PILOT STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE**

Belinda Bourne:  
Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences:  
Lilliehammer  
Semi structured interviews

### **Teacher's Empathy and Resilience: Why it matters in Special Needs Education.**

#### **EMAPTHY**

“Empathy is the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives and using that understanding to guide your actions” (Krznaric, 2014, p.x quoting Baron-Cohen and Gordon).

“Empathic intelligence is a way of using various intelligences and sensitivities to engage effectively with others: ... A complex system of functioning supported by culture and human responsiveness” (Arnold p.19 & p.21).

#### **RESILIENCE**

Resilience is an inner strength that can fortify the psyche and regulate emotions. It allows one to maintain one's own authenticity and integrity yet maintain interdependent responsibility for self and others (Arnold, 2005. p.93 & p.131).

“At the heart of resilience is a belief in oneself: yet also a belief in something larger than oneself (Walters, 2014).

As part of my Master's Thesis, I am interested in how individuals incorporate empathy and resilience within special needs education. Firstly, I would like to explore empathy and secondly look at how resilience is utilised.

A. Look at the definition of empathy. Do you agree?

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED/OPEN ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE**

Q1. As a teacher, how would you define empathy in the classroom?

Q2. Can you give an example of when you used empathy within the classroom?

Q3. If you consider empathy as an important aspect in teaching could you explain more in depth why?

Q4. In your opinion how could empathy benefit yourself and your students?

Q5. How do you see the role of empathy as a special needs teacher?

Q6. What would enable you to implement empathy into your working practice?

Q7. Are there any other aspects or observations on empathy that you think is important that we haven't mentioned.

B. Look at the definition of empathy. Do you agree?

Q8. Moving on to consider resilience, what in your opinion makes a teacher resilient?

Q9. If you consider resilience as an important aspect in teaching could you explain more in depth why?

Q10. Could you explain how personal resilience helps, or would help you, when teaching?

Q11. How do you maintain resilience in your teaching practice and personal life?

Q12. Do you think teacher resilience is necessary in special needs education?

Q13. In your opinion how could resilience benefit yourself and your students?

Q14. How do you see the role of resilience as a special needs teacher?

Q15. What would enable you to implement resilience into your working practice?

Q16. Are there any other aspects or observations on resilience that you think is important that we haven't mentioned?

Q17. In your view is resilience and empathy symbiotic and if so how?

---

## Appendices 3 SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

Belinda Bourne:  
Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences:  
Lillehammer

### SEMI-STRUCTURED/OPEN ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

#### **Teacher's Empathy and Resilience: Why it matters in Special Needs Education.**

##### **EMAPTHY**

“Empathy is the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives and using that understanding to guide your actions” (Krznaric, 2014, p.x quoting Baron-Cohen and Gordon).

“Empathic intelligence is a way of using various intelligences and sensitivities to engage effectively with others: ... A complex system of functioning supported by culture and human responsiveness” (Arnold p.19 & p.21).

##### **RESILIENCE**

Resilience is an inner strength that can fortify the psyche and regulate emotions. It allows one to maintain one's own authenticity and integrity yet maintain interdependent responsibility for self and others (Arnold, 2005. p.93 & p.131).

“At the heart of resilience is a belief in oneself: yet also a belief in something larger than oneself (Walters, 2014).

As part of my Master's Thesis, I am interested in how individuals incorporate empathy and resilience within special needs education. Firstly, I would like to explore empathy and secondly look at how resilience is utilised.

A. Look at the definition of empathy. Do you agree?

Q1. As a teacher, how would you define empathy in the classroom?

Q2. Can you give an example of when you used empathy within the classroom?

Q3. If you consider empathy as an important aspect in teaching could you explain more in depth why?

Q4. In your opinion how could empathy benefit yourself and your students?

Q5. How do you see the role of empathy as a special needs teacher?

Q6. What would enable you to implement empathy into your working practice?

Q7. Are there any other aspects or observations on empathy that you think is important that we haven't mentioned.

B. Look at the definition of resilience. Do you agree?

Q8. Moving on to consider resilience, what in your opinion makes a teacher resilient?

Q9. If you consider resilience as an important aspect in teaching could you explain more in depth why?

Q10. Could you explain how personal resilience helps, or would help you, when teaching?

Q11. How do you maintain resilience in your teaching practice and personal life?

Q12. Do you think teacher resilience is necessary in special needs education?

Q13. In your opinion how could resilience benefit yourself and your students?

Q14. How do you see the role of resilience as a special needs teacher?

Q15. What would enable you to implement resilience into your working practice?

Q16. Are there any other aspects or observations on resilience that you think is important that we haven't mentioned?

Q17. In your view is resilience and empathy symbiotic and if so how?

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## Appendices 4 REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECT

### Request for participation in research project

#### “TEACHER’S EMPATHY AND RESILIENCE: WHY THEY MATTER IN SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION”

##### **Background and Purpose**

This research focuses on teachers resilience and empathy in special needs education as part submission of an independent Masters program in Transformative Education: Practical Skills: “Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Lilliehammer campus”. The research aims to understand the benefits and limitations of these skills and how they are transposed into working practice.

Each participant in the sample has been selected personally from working colleagues who work in similar environments and have a shared experience of working with young people with complex learning requirements often exacerbated by emotional, social and behavioural challenges.

##### **What does participation in the project imply?**

Information will be gathered through an informal, semi-structured interview and all responses will be anonymised to protect the identity of both the school and the participant. Selected participants will be from a range of schools and therefore unidentifiable. The venue will be arranged at a mutual convenience to both interviewee and interviewer, in a place where the interviewee feels comfortable. Questions are available on request but mainly seek personal responses regarding empathy and resilience.

##### **What will happen to the information about you?**

All personal data will be treated confidentially and only myself and supervisor will have access to the information. If you require, a transcript of the interview can be made available and I would welcome any comments regarding this. This can be conducted via email or through additional meetings. At all times the information will remain anonymous and under my personal control. The project is scheduled for completion by September, 2018 after which date all information will be destroyed.

##### **Voluntary participation**

It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, all your personal data will be made anonymous.

If you have any questions concerning the project, please contact Belinda Bourne +44 7814603254 or project supervisor Perdita Mosley via Esther Palfreyman (Administration Manager) 07805 304277 . **Esther Palfreyman, Administration Manager. Tel: 07805 304277**

The study has been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research, NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

##### **Consent for participation in the study**

I have received information about the project and am willing to participate

-----  
(Signed by participant, date)

(adapted from NSD website)

## Appendices 5 ART BACKGROUND RESEARCH (Overview)

Research into textiles included primary research visiting a range of Exhibitions. From the ancient to the modern, the use of symbolic meaning and the historical fluidity of the collective psyche.

Changes in social attitudes can be mapped by how society views them as craft or an Art form. From primitive mark-marking to Basquait's paintings and the tapestries of Grayson Perry bear witness to the social commentary of the times. How they are viewed by the "public" depends upon the social structure and cultural dimensions of the time and how they are displayed and viewed change our awareness of the object and how that message is conveyed. Different vantage points often add new dimensions to the work. New knowledge can be created from various techniques and mediums: whether that is from the discerning marks of the brush or palette knife; fine needlework and layered cloth; the welded joints of a sculpture or the definitions of finger prints in a sculpture can challenge our perceptions and values. Viewing Art in situ changes the way we interact and perceive the work. Whether from the viewpoint of the exhibitor, the position of the observer or our ability to immerse ourselves within an installation will challenge us. We will either connect or disconnect; reject or accept it purely on its aesthetic value or at a deeper level. When our viewpoint is changed, our perception is altered and how we interpret this can bring a deeper understanding that is relational to the work.

Cultural significance and symbolism are a fundamental aspect of the aesthetic design and relates to the past, present and future of the social constructs and the human psyche. Exploring "The British Library's" extensive exhibition of illuminations and religious artefacts emphasised the importance of how emblematic gestures are embedded in the iconography and transcribe to the human psyche. Traversing "The British Museum's" permanent collection offered a diverse range of artefacts including "The Rosetta Stone" and developments of early art, writing and reading whilst "Living with the gods" exhibition explored "man's" evolution and the increased prominence of ritualised arts to inspire and induce social control (2017-2018). The sheer diversity and complexity of the symbolic artefacts convey many hidden meanings that we still allude to today; maybe with little or no thought to their origins.



Basquait addresses hidden symbols within his work, modernising them to question politically charged societal issues. In many of his works he re-invents language and symbols to make deeply held beliefs visible.

At times his work simplifies the message for those outside of the social construct but complicates for those who operate within the social confines of society. (Basquiat,, 2017,-18, )

Additionally, Grayson Perry's displays ingenious social commentary that is both aesthetically pleasing and political. His designs allude to the past but convey hard hitting contemporary messages on economics and social construction. In "Animal Spirit" he reconstructs the past to convey the present through iconic symbols and language. (Perry, 2017-18)



Other contemporary textiles artist demonstrated how language and iconic symbols can represent an array of human conditions. Ellen Bell deconstructs language and rearranges words to play on the emotions. (Impey, 2013).



























Whilst Jennie Dutton's study on dementia suggest new ways to reconnect with self and the Other. She conveys the disconnect of her mothers dementia, sensitively through the use of surface tension bring the feelings to the surface. (Dutton, 2011)

Inspired by, but not limited to these Artists, the deconstruction and reconstruction of iconic symbols and use of textiles became an integral part of my understanding.



## Appendices 6 Runic Alphabet

RUNE MEANINGS (Runes, Alphabet of Mystery, n.d)							
							
Luck, Abundance, financial strength, hope plenty, success and happiness. energy, foresight	Physical strength & speed, untamed potential. Energy & health, Freedom, action, courage strength, tenacity, understanding & wisdom.	Reactive force, destruction, defence, conflict. Protection Change	Insight, communication, inspiration, enthusiasm, speech, true vision, power of words and naming. Health, harmony, truth and wisdom.	Travel, physical/life direction. journey, vacation, relocation, evolution, change of place setting. Larger perspective. right move for you\personal rhythm, world rhythm, dance of life Focused Energy  Right place/ right time	Vision, revelation, knowledge, creativity, inspiration, technical ability, harnessed power transformation regeneration power to create own reality strength energy power Knowledge Understanding	Gifts(Sacrifice & generosity) balance Connectivity Divinity  Gift Knowledge Connection	Joy, comfort, pleasure, fellowship, harmony, prosperity, spiritual reward, Balance Fellowship Commonality  Balance between thing in a chaotic world Friendship Common goals & well-being
							
Wrath of nature, destruction, uncontrolled forces, especially weather or within the unconscious. Tempering, testing, trial controlled iris. Change constructing	Delays restriction resistance leading to strength, innovation, self-reliance Power to break away	Challenge or frustration Psychological blocks to thought or activity. Grievances. Standstill, inward looking waiting, seeking clarity. Freeing restrictions Awaiting change	Reward for effort, peace, happiness fruitful. Hopes expectations peace, prosperity, success earned. Natural change Flow of nature Good Harvest Life cycle	Strength, reliability, dependability, trust worthiness, enlightenment, endurance, defines, protection. motivation, sense of purpose. Protector facilitator	Secret, mystery, hidden things, initiation, knowledge Foresight	Protection, shield, oneself & others, ward off evil, guardian, higher life, instinctive Power Defense	Success, goals achieved, honour. Life-force, health, positive change, victory, success, connect conscious and unconscious, wholeness, power, cleaning. Clear vision Sun Light emergence
							

## RUNE MEANINGS (Runes, Alphabet of Mystery, n.d)

Honour, justice, leadership, authority, analysis, rationality, Where one's true strengths lie. willingness, self-sacrifice.	Birth fertility, physical & mental growth, liberation, regenerative power renewal, growth Tree New Beginnings	Transportation, Movement, change for the better. Steady, gradual progress Harmony, teamwork, trust, loyalty Natural flow Good intentions	Shared experience Shared Humanity & responsibility Friends, enemies, social order, intelligence, creativity, skill, ability Achievement Fulfilment	Water, flow, fertility, healing, renewal, organic growth. mysteries, unknown.	Gestation, internal growth common virtues, common sense, simple strengths, family love, caring, human warmth, home.	Breakthrough, awakening, awareness, daylight clarity. Change (own will) Transformation	What is truly important to one. Wealth Family Friendship Heritage Sacred Enduring
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## Appendices 7 INTERVIEW: WELL BEING PROJECT

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### Subject:

#### - RESILIENCE IN PRACTICE

- Telephone interview with team member on 9 Jan 2018: 9.30am
- The Wellbeing Project
- Resilience in practice.
- Project ideas and developments
- Penn Resilience programme: Pennsylvania University study: tutors in college setting: improved morale/resilience.
- Linked-in: up-to-date developments relating to resilience.

The conversation lasted approximately 45 minutes where we discussed....

DA described some of the projects and companies she works with. (Schools Management teams, teachers and older school children) Focus for children 1-1 1/2 hours and adults whole day.

Teachers wearing multiple hats: pastoral care, teaching, (synergy teaching)

Key roles of: body language. Gravitas. Positive energy.

**3rd Sector:** charities, NHS: attracts committed workers; generally have an affinity with the profession due to personal connections/experience. suppress own needs. Try to develop a Script. Compassion industries tend to be more aware of:

1. Personal impact.
2. Aware of everything they do and how their actions impact on the bigger picture.

De-prioritise themselves. Put pressure on self: breaking cycles: Staff based: What extent validate each others stress: psychology of resilience of natural cycles: (working less)

Teachers connect with people: invested in their development (juxtaposition keeping distance: fear of litigation, accusation etc)

Knock confidence: emotional investments: When do you know when you are pouring from and empty cup.

Teachers continually accessing creative thinking, academic & legal protocols: lots of hats to wear during a day, let alone a week. "real time demands: admin, cover, no longer topic based.

**Education:** (Resilience/wellbeing training)

1. Let the narrative surface (values connection, committed, motivated, tipping over. What are the markers to notice when wobbling?)
2. Rituals: build into every day. steady supply of mental and emotional releases. build awareness of psychological, psychological triggers.

How do you inform or help those not coping?

Not personally: They only know if they are asked personally. Holistic approach towards organisation/team and only know if someone asks personally. Refer to other specialists. Deliver programmes to build awareness and direct to other services and resources available.

SCORING;

Collate: anonymous data is used to develop team and organisational strategies. Individual get own report (workshops can highlight problems and give solutions) build a sense of personal accountability and responsibility: what is right for them. Individual report may highlight low scores but it could be from personal trauma, such as bereavement, divorce, etc (moment in time) and validates what they already know. Know what is right for them.

Athletes & Military:

Sports build in healthier boundaries. (gradual exposure - decrease rather than stopping all together otherwise it evokes extremes of behaviour rather than changing it)

Use compulsory recovery: Performance of long term rather than short term. IN RECOVERY

**QUALITY NOT QUANTITY** (work) stress causes under production in the long term. Long term health issues :

Looking at sustainability of work balance relationship: Taking responsibility about your own sensible solutions and own narrative. : Narrative in the wider world.

Recharging spiritual levels: (working week 6 hours Sweden study?)

Changing perspective: using different approaches. Automaton: OVER-FUNCTIONING: (automata) end up ignoring the person/self)

Explain: Physiological levels/cognitive process/psychological process

## Appendices 8 EMPATHY ANALYSIS (Final phase)

Results from 2 Face-to-face interviews: 2 email (questionnaire)

**“Empathy is the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspective and using that understanding to guide your actions” (Kraznaric, 2014)**  
**“Empathic intelligence is a way of using various intelligences and sensitivities to engage effectively with other... A complex system of functioning supported by culture and human responsiveness” (Arnold, 201?)**

Agree			
Agreed		Prominent in the Arts Art is a more emotional subject Fits empathy Integrated learning Encourage dig deep think for yourself Uses body and brain	Great in Therapeutic environment if you are capable in the first place.
Agreed			
Agreed to some extent	essential for therapeutic work	Brought up more questions?	

### Analytical memo

What if that person does not have the time to respond, in that sense? Does the external environment affect how an empathically a person responds? What are the barrier to engaging this way? Does a persons biography/current situation affect their ability to respond?

Empathy is connecting to another person Guided actions Intelligences and sensitivities

Complex

### Analytical Memos

Breaks down barriers, personally and with learning

More about the personal connection without which you cannot engage the student.

### Analytical memos

The teachers clearly want to engage and help their students but are restricted by legislative ties.

These change the relationship, disallows proper relationships to be formed. When a student is upset they are limited by “Health & Safety” which changes the nature of what can be given or received.

There is strong support for be able to give support to the student but part of that is taken away.

Teaching is as much about the personal connection and the interpersonal relationship.

**EMPATHY**

**Q3. if you consider empathy as an important aspect in teaching could you explain more in depth why?**

Building relationships	helps them achieve	key part of teaching	Build trust/ respect	being human		
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**Analytical memos.**

Respondent one felt that this question was generally answered by Q1 & Q2. It was mainly about the interpersonal relationship and connection with the student. Without understanding and connection there was little or no point in teaching. However good a teacher is or however passionate about their subject, if they cannot connect with the student there was little hope in engaging the student.

Respondent two: Empathy enables the student to connect and breaks down barriers. Being empathic has resulted in “increased disclosures” not only from students but staff too. This can be overwhelming as not trained for this but uses life experience to inform their actions. (make sure that gender is not imparted in the write-up). There is protocol to follow with student disclosure but not for staff and very little support. (3 sessions a year) Mental health is a long term issues.

Art is **cathartic** and more aligned to empathy than most subjects. Deals with emotions, getting in touch with oneself, “digging deep”. Allows more interpretation and freedom of the subject.

Celebrating memory: **“GRIEVING SPACE NOT BREATHING SPACE”** how you respond to the student is what matters. Allowing them to explore and arrive at their own conclusions.

**“Directions not directives”.**

**EMPATHY**

**Q4. In your opinion how could empathy benefit yourself and your students?**

Self	Students		
Cathartic Understanding the student	Cathartic Help celebrate memories direct students for help Assist student to find a resolution in their work - help unburden them Art teaches them to push through More therapeutic way to work	helps them build relationships and empathise with others	“empathy is a healing Agent” (Rogers) Improve comfort zone in classroom Should be the “norm” not the exception

**EMPATHY****Q4. In your opinion how could empathy benefit yourself and your students?**

Build relationships knowing the students behaviour Being aware of their difficulties ability to change direction Ease support or add new supports	Build relationships demonstrate commitment know you'll "go the extra mile" connection to help learning Freedom to explore		Build understanding, self-knowledge & build awareness
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**Analytical notes**

Builds relationships, Gives the student freedom to explore. Adjust the learning to the student and provide more support. Forearmed is forewarned. knowing the students point of view, their aspirations and hopes can help to direct learning. **"Flag-up"** their interests to help direct learning. Help direct learning and understanding in-line with the students emotional needs. Support when necessary and back-off when required. Balancing act! Which ever way the wind blows. Feel into a situation rather than react on what is being seen or said. Art is a more therapeutic way to work: help push through the physical work and the emotional difficulties.

**EMPATHY****Q5. How do you see the role of empathy as a special needs teacher?**

Qualities	Gives you			
Nurturing supportive other staff and students understanding	makes you flexible to the situation Strong: not reacting to behaviour reliable: will listen and not judge	Understanding students needs and adapting for them	Demonstrates understanding and trust. Needs right tools and resources. support structures needed for teachers.	

**Analytical notes**

Both respondent answered this question throughout the interview. Non-judgemental, nurturing in a passive way. Supportive when asked. Understanding to their situation.

<b>EMPATHY</b>				
<b>Q6. What would enable you to implement empathy into your working practice?</b>				
Help	Hinders	More flexibility and an opportunity to get to know pupils away from the pressure of making them succeed	Training, resources, time, support structures, cultural change. More freedom of expression for students and teachers	
More support for staff to deal with own issues and when dealing with disclosures from students. Discourse routes for teacher able to comfort a student when needed. not just metaphorical: "Verbal hug" Look for more therapeutic ways to cope	No training to deal with disclosures. Focused training within the subject unable to comfort someone in distress	Demonstrate empathy and help them to be more empathic to self and others		
Autonomy: working in a small environment If everyone went the extra mile continuity of empathy Consistency	Large organisation continuity difficult			

### Analytical notes

Some really matters when being able to support student. Disclosures can be draining and there is no support for the teacher. Discourse needed for the teachers.

<b>EMPATHY</b>
<b>Q7. Are there any additional aspects or observations on empathy that you think is important that we haven't mentioned?</b>
Being empathic can be burdensome. Use therapeutic way to cope through own art work: darning and mending old things. Story and life merging: trying to mend it. Walking in nature. Promoting empathy to self and others. Check knowledge/ideas to prevent misunderstandings. Be aware of the other person knowledge and insight. Provide ways for others to find their own feelings.



**EMPATHY**

**Q7. Are there any additional aspects or observations on empathy that you think is important that we haven't mentioned?**

Feels reading previous history and taking it as "the truth" is judgemental.

When enrolling a new student the interviews in larger establishments depersonalise the student.

Give the student a sense of who you are as well as understanding the personal aspiration of the students: their hopes and dreams.

Form a relationship with parent/carer and student.

Direct contact reduces the chances of errors or misunderstanding.

Fundamentally how you treat the person What are their trigger points/stress/ambitions/hobbies

What went right before and what went wrong and what their perspective is on these matter.

Shared experiences (Perspective) Empathy is a gift. Words are not always enough! Entangled process within communication. Care and attention. Killed by "isolationist thinking" Women are naturally better at it. "Empathy has been ignored and marginalised by male-dominated discourse and marginalised trait and me, me, me" culture and power struggles and economic growth at all costs"

### **Analytical Memo**

Expressing feelings through "mending old things: darning story of life trying to mend things: In touch with nature. Perhaps this encourages nurture.

Depersonalisation of the student in the beginning and making pre-judgements are detrimental to the relationship between the student and the teacher. Stressed the point of making a personal connection. Give them a sense of who you are. Form good relationship with those involved with the student to minimise misunderstanding and suspended all judgement. Get to know the student. Ask them their opinion and show that you value what they are saying. (Flag is suspended)

## Appendices 9 Resilience Analysis (Final phase)

<b>B. RESILIENCE.</b> Resilience is an inner strength that can fortify the psyche and regulate emotions. It allows one to maintain one's own authenticity and integrity yet maintain interdependent responsibility for self and others (Arnold, 2005. p.93 & p.131). "At the heart of resilience is a belief in oneself: yet also a belief in something larger than oneself (Walters, 2014)			
Agree	Disagree	Additional comments	
Agree	Felt Arnold's "was a little aspirational" although agreed with first part. Sometime you have to face your fears "fake it till you make it". Brings up lots more questions.	Authenticity to help you work through problems Not giving up: looking for alternative routes Don't give up It's how you get to our end goal. Knowing what works. (Experience)	
Agreed		never give-in/up Go the extra mile	

### Analytical memo

Authenticity help you remain resilient. Helps you look for alternatives, push-through. Never giving-up/in. Don't give up. (notes and transcriptions should be more succinct: note when talking about student. Sheet relating to teacher or student would have been useful for transcribing and analysing)

Resilience is a fundamental need and the materials you use can make a difference to its durability and the ability to repair. However, even strong resistant fabrics can become worn if they are mistreated, overworked/burdened or too much is expected of them. Synonymous with teachers in today's world. Age is not necessarily a problem. (although can be seen in our consumer driven society) (see "Colours" form the 12th century in Salisbury Cathedral or the Bateaux tapestry) )  
Look up other historical fabrics. Yet these fabrics can be adapted to withstand a variety of pressures, through synthetic means or treatments. Does then that change the quality or the purpose of the artefact?

Everything falls from grace and favour, the way sewing was once a prized artefact it was turned into a labour intense, economic pursuit that lost its value. The value of fabric, sewing and craft are being to reappear and perhaps this is a metaphor for life to reconnect to nature, learn to create and appreciate the true value of workmanship, craftsmanship that enables an object to have a true value: Not just a scale of economy where producing large amounts of throw-away consumables hides the

nature of the true value. Where time will once again be given to create prized possessions that benefit the many, not the few. In turn, help to nurture our environment and begin to work with nature, rather than against it.

Knowing what works and adapting it to your purpose can be gained through experience and trial and error? Do we stop teachers and students achieving their full potential by indiscriminate policies and restraints because we are all scared of losing our jobs, our livelihoods? Playing safe is akin to flying a flag in a room where the elements cannot touch it. It neither resists, restrains, flaps uncontrollable in the wind. Left to the elements, generally (unless there is a storm/calm) the flag will always return to its position when the prevailing weather subsides and nature take control of the natural order of things.

<b>RESILENCE</b>						
<b>Q8. Moving on to consider resilience, what in your opinion makes a teacher resilient?</b>						
Connection	Environment	Understanding	Relationship	Modelling	Knowledge	Other
One-to-one	One-to-one	Self	good relationships quality of the engagement	Show you are still learning too.	Knowing what works Knowing yourself	The “Ego” is quite important Balance
“Being there for the student” Showing your human	Demonstrate equality in education. Adaptive to variety of circumstance.	Value their opinion Not being afraid to make mistakes take on board issues of their students and work with them and still achieve.	Recognising they have made a mistake and letting them know they can “re-do” this again.	Demonstrate this is not a failure. (Give examples of when you have struggled) Firm but fair. Self-belief Self-determination Personal drive Sense of humour Sense of perspective	Total passion for you subject	ways to de-stress Exercise, eating well, sleep, Isolating & lonely job

### **Analytical Memos**

Respect for the student and their issues. Listening to them and valuing what they say even if you disagree. Sensitive to their learning need.

Quality of the engagement enables dear to be drawn out. Without that connection there is little change of drawing out hidden talent. Balancing the needs and wants. Being open and honest.

<b>RESILIENCE</b> <b>Q9. If you consider resilience, what in your opinion make a teacher resilient?</b>
Quiet approach: strong, open
Not giving up/in Going the extra mile CONFIDENCE
“You need to build resilience so that your pupils don't see you as weak and feel they can hurt you” Show emotions at times and remember where they have come from and how you can help them.
Survive the barrage of tasks and duties Use creativity to build resilience (home)

### Analytical memos

Being strong and a quiet approach can draw out students. Going the extra mile. Pushing through.

### Analytical memos.

Personal resilience enables you to make good connections. Demonstrating these qualities can improve your confidence . Mirror images are sometimes used on flag

<b>RESILIENCE</b> <b>Q11. How do you maintain resilience in your teaching practice and personal life?</b>
Art & Hobbies exploration of “found’ things”old things”Darning, mending walking in nature trying to mend things
Ballet; Good physical health, energising. Being proud of achievements: helps wellbeing Craft: materials & Knitting. Producing (has to be perfect) and enjoys gifting the end product. Helps to unwind: done almost automatically whilst watching a film: Relaxing Walking
Calm attitude, remembering things aren't directed at me. “I do allow myself to be ‘weak’ but remain professional to help my pupils”
Artistic practice and practical skills at home. Being creative and imaginative.

### Analytical notes

Practical skills appear to be a good way to unwind although it was not mentioned that any of these activities took place during the working day unless part of the lesson. Walking and being a part of nature is also high on the list to destress and maintain resilience.

<b>RESILIENCE</b>	
<b>Q13. In your opinion how could resilience benefit yourself and your students?</b>	
Qualities	Gives you
<b>Self</b>	<b>Students</b>
Make you feel good	helps them to feel good about themselves
Self belief confidence in what you do.	bring the student out, help them dig deep, understand work through to the end
not completed	not completed
helps sustain your inner self Cope with situations as they arise with insight and ability Helps to manage work load Develops inner strengths	keeps the environment safe helps students cope with their pressures Develops their inner resources Helps them to learn without fear Helps them to manage their workloads

### Analytical notes

Resilience can benefit students by mirroring behaviours. When they achieve something it helps them to feel good about themselves and gives the courage to keep trying. They have to dig deep and work through to the end of something to get the true benefits. Helps them understand.

Setting a good example of how to explore different aspects and helping them through to the finished article. Having a strong sense of self and confidence in what you do is an essential part of resilience.

<b>RESILIENCE</b>
<b>Q14. How do you see the role of resilience as a special needs teacher?</b>
it is necessary need to feel good about yourself Kids pick up on any sign of weakness Preempting the child (stop them homing on insecurities) Need to remain strong when dealing with the behaviour of the student
Very much needed. <b>You need resilience to be empathic.</b> Emotional responsibility and you need to remain strong for them to demonstrate good practice and strength.
Helps you remain calm
You need a lot of it

**RESILIENCE**

**Q16. Are there any other aspects or observations on resilience that you think is important that we haven't mentioned?**

"Age can make you invisible" Lack of respect for 50+ women. This translates into how children treat you. Gender/age/politic. Cheated all the way down: Too much interference by government:

Supporting other teachers.

Its an internal quality: difficult to help other teachers.

Too much pressure on teachers: not enough time (works more in small units: continuity better

"Set the student up to fail if you are not firm/resilient. Ever-decreasing circles.

Good team interaction and support is necessary for all staff

Duty of care and respect to all staff

Malleable and needs to be nurtured.

Health can affect resilience and vice versa

### Analytical Memos

Helping others can help maintain your own resilience. A teacher, no matter how talented cannot operate without resilience. You are setting the students up to fail if you are not firm/resilient and then the environment becomes damaged. Knowing when to control certain elements and when not to and keeping an order where firm barriers can enable students to learn.

**RESILIENCE**

**Q17. In your view is resilience and empathy symbiotic and if so how?**

**"Need resilience to be empathic"**

Empathy on its own is a very emotional level. Requires self-belief: know where you are coming from:

Empathy can be lost or gained from life experience. OVER ARCHING QUESTION: Are you born with it?

Is it nature/nurture. **On-going debate!**

"Go hand-in-hand" Part and parcel to the whole ethos of SEN.

Resilience and empathy work together.

Closely linked. Increase self-esteem and personal value. Respect for their own health, well being and in turn value others. Resilience and empathy help you to be balanced and flexible. Reduce isolation, loneliness and help to emotionally connect with others. "We can limit ourselves rigidly to one single viewpoint or solution and this can often be because we actually feel quite vulnerable or have fear of change or seeing another way beyond our view of the situation despite that view being listed. Building empathy can help dissolve these feelings of fear because we can see that it is safe to see more than one viewpoint and in turn we can build grater resilience to changes generally".

### Analytical memos

Using one without the other is a road to disaster for the student and the teacher. Empathy alone will not win the day. How much is learnt from life experience is questionable and so the nature/nurture debate continue