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1 Introduction

Assessment is an established, persuasive and even a defining feature of formal education systems. In modern times children in education in the UK are among the most assessed that state systems have ever produced (Gipps and Stobart 1993). This should be no surprise as to some extent education will always be a reflection of society and in the same way assessment may be viewed as a practice whose function and purpose are always defined within particular socio-political structures (Delandshere 2001). Since the educational reform act 1988 the waves of reform that followed have tended to be predicated on the notion that summative assessment information is a reliable indicator of ‘standards’ in schools. Of course the difficulty when talking about standards is that like defining ‘truth’, ‘goodness’ or ‘beauty’ which they may be seen incontestably ‘good’ they are impossible to define without considerable philosophical elaboration (Pring 1992).

Personal theories are thought to be formed as people experience their lives and are said to serve to help them organise their world. These beliefs, personal theories or meaning systems as Dweck (2000) refers to them are thought to form schemas that allow people to ascribe meanings to their world which enables them to organize and interpret information about the world. This form of personal sense making has a long history in various disciplines (e.g. Whitehead, 1929, 1938; Pepper 1942; Kelly 1955 and Langer 1996) and forms the basis of much research. People may hold their personal theories consciously or they may exist at the edges of consciousness in which case they said to exist at an implicit level or in the sub conscious. This presents a challenge to the research method as before implicit theories can be examined or subjected to any scrutiny they have to be made visible. This type of research does not make the epistemological assumption that the external world determines people’s perceptions of it but that what matters is how people experience situations or events, “We must not; therefore, wonder whether we really perceive the world, we must instead say the world is what we perceive.” (Merleau-Ponty1962, p. xvi). In other words that it belongs to a relativist ontological view of the world where there are no positivist truths but that the subjectivities of how people experience their worlds is assumed to be of interest.
This paper is an in-depth focus on 7 PE teachers in a PE department in a specialist sports college in the South East of England and is part of a wider study into the teachers’ implicit theories of learning. The data was generated through three interviews over a period of 18 months between June 2008 and April 2009 and the analysis was carried out using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

2. Background

It may be argued that no educational encounter, or any educational system is neutral (Bruner 1987) and so assessment practices may be seen as indicators for the kinds of values that underpin particular educational contexts. “If we wish to discover the truth about an educational system, we must look into its assessment procedures.” (Rowntree 1987: 1). This idea can be developed further in that it may be argued that in the same way that teaching is essentially a moral activity then inevitably there will be a moral dimension to assessment. “Assessment is a moral activity. What we choose to assess and how shows starkly what we value” (Knight 1998: 13).

Issues related to assessment have come under particular scrutiny in recent times because it has come to be seen to be associated with ‘high stakes’ measures of school effectiveness and since the 1990s there have been concerted attempts to develop a more symbiotic relationship between assessment and teaching through the development of assessment for learning (AFL) (Black and Wiliam 1998; Black et.al. 2002). A key idea of AFL is that assessment information should be used to inform teaching and they sought to draw a clear distinction between assessment of learning and assessment for learning. From the learners’ perspective there was an emphasis on ensuring that the success criteria are clear and that they understood the processes they need to follow in order to enable them to demonstrate progressive mastery of the content under consideration. Central to this was the notion that summative processes could be used in formative ways.

Policy researchers have noted the process of policy encoding to policy implementation as a form of trajectory where inevitably the key messages are subject to some distortion (Trowler 2003). It is inevitable that the ‘message’ of AFL will be subjected to different interpretations by teachers. In a survey of 83 teachers Hargreaves (2005) looked at their conceptions of assessment implicit in their definitions of assessment for learning and found that teachers held very different conceptions of the nature and purpose of assessment which varied from assessment as monitoring pupil’s performance against targets to using assessment as a learning event.

2.1 ‘Assessing to learn- Learning to assess’- a policy analysis.

Before considering the teachers theories about assessment it is necessary to consider the policy context in more detail. As has been established at the time of starting the field work in June 2007 ‘Southview’ School was in the early stages of implementing what the participants consistently referred
to as ‘The Kent Assessment framework’ (KAF) although interestingly the term ‘Kent Assessment framework’ does not appear in any of the documentation. In fact some 3 weeks prior to the initial fieldwork the consultant primarily responsible for the policy had been in the school to run a workshop with the teachers in the PE department. Nathan, one of the participants in this study was an AST with responsibility for leading CPD across the county in order to enable other PE departments to be able to implement this assessment regime.

This policy comes with the heading ‘Assessing to learn- learning to assess: removing the barriers to achievement in Physical Education.’ It sets out the aims and the rationale for implementation. One of the key features is the development of generic learning objectives for each level descriptor.

“Having stripped the National Curriculum (PE) level descriptors to the bone and identified ‘key words’ for each level, clear progressions in learning have been revealed.”

(Advisory Service Kent, 2007: 5)

In Tables 1 and 2 the levels of attainment 4 and 5 in the current national curriculum are set alongside the generic learning objectives in the KAF.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Key words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupils link skills, techniques and ideas and apply them accurately and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appropriately.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When performing, they show precision, control and fluency.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They show that they understand tactics and composition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They compare and comment on skills, techniques and ideas used in their</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>own and others’ work and use this understanding to improve their</td>
<td>Link fluently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance.</td>
<td>Compare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They explain and apply basic safety principles when preparing for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exercise. They describe how exercise affects their bodies and why</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regular exercise is good for their health and well being.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They work with others to plan and lead simple practices and activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for themselves and others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Relationship between level descriptor for level 4 and the generic learning objectives
### Level 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupils select and combine skills, techniques and ideas and apply them accurately and appropriately in different physical activities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When performing in different physical activities they consistently show precision, control and fluency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They show that they can draw on what they know about strategy, tactics and composition to produce effective outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They modify and refine skills and techniques to improve their performance and adapt their actions in response to changing circumstances. They analyse and comment on skills, techniques and ideas and how these can be applied in their own and others’ work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They explain how the body reacts during different types of activity, and why physical activity is an essential component in a healthy lifestyle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They plan, organise and lead practices and activities safely, helping others’ to improve their performance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2** Relationship between level descriptor for level 5 and the generic learning objectives.

So in ‘stripping the NC levels to the bone’ and in summarising them into 2 generic learning objectives (GLO) NC level 4 becomes ‘link fluently’ and ‘compare’ (table 8.1) and level 5 becomes ‘combinations’ and ‘analyse’ (table 8.2).

An additional resource is that the generic learning objectives are then represented on laminated cards which the teacher can have with them in the lesson. An example of the card for level 4 is given in table 8.3. For each generic learning objective there are key questions and success criteria.

### Level 4

#### Key questions

**Generic learning objective 1 – link fluently**

- Having tried linking action A to B and A to C....
- Which order of actions gives you the smoothest transition?
- Why is it easier to link action A to B?
- Can you think of any other actions that can be performed before action B to give a smooth transition?
- Would this be the same if the actions followed action B?
- What did you do to ensure that your actions were fluent?
- Using the same skills, how could you make the fluency easier/more difficult to achieve?

**Generic learning objective 2 – Compare**
- What are the different factors that you need to consider to achieve a successful performance?
- How do changes in strategies/compositional elements affect performance?
- Can you compare the two performances in terms of A actions used? B order of actions? C compositional elements/strategies used?
- Which performance more accurately achieved the success criteria?
- What changes would you make in each performance to make it more effective/more challenging?

**Level 4**

**Success criteria**

**Generic learning objective 1 - Pupils are successful when they:**
- Quality and flow is maintained within and between actions.
- Can say which actions are easier to link fluently and which are more difficult.
- Can say what they would do on another occasion to still achieve fluency but make the task more challenging.
- Can say why the order of actions can affect degree of difficulty.

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Generic learning objective 2 - Pupils are successful when they:

- Can exchange opinions.
- Can identify a range of differences/similarities in terms of quality.
- Say what compositional elements/strategies make it more difficult/easier to achieve an effective performance.
- Can identify how a performance might be enhanced.
- Can make a judgement about a performance in relation to their own work against a number of given criteria.

Table 3 Generic learning objective and the accompanying success criteria.

The presentation of this material raises a number of questions. While this may be seen as ‘efficient’ is it sufficient to enable teachers to make good decisions which can inform their teaching? Do the GLOs adequately capture the meanings of the NC levels descriptors? To what extent do level descriptors accurately represent what is worth learning in PE? This applies both to:

a. the NC levels

b. the GLO as identified in the KAF.

Related to the above by ‘pitching’ lessons to a level the assessment criteria become the objectives of the subject. This assumes that the projects of what is worth learning in PE and the meanings represented by the assessment criteria are congruent or at least have sufficient congruency to make the projects truly integrated.

While the development of generic objectives may help with efficiency the question needs to be asked as to the extent to which the project of learning to ‘outwit opponents’ in various games is equivalent? This seems to be contrary to the notion of learning as an activity that is always about learning something and is part of the context in which it is learnt (Claxton 1984; Bloomer 2001).

It has been argued that in tight coupled systems then it is possible to ‘know’ what is happening with greater certainty than in systems which are more loosely coupled and complex (Knight 2002). So does the reduction of the assessment focus through the development of GLO enable greater accuracy at the expense of acknowledging the richness inherent in the complexity of learning?

The tone of the criterion seems to privilege the notion of assessment as a kind of technology rather than practice (Delandshere 2001). By implication this focus on assessment as ‘technology’ defines
learning in a similar manner. This forms a stark contrast to the perspectives of learning as an activity that requires motivation and a love of the content to be learnt (Winch 1998).

It is not the primary purpose of this research to address these issues although they are questions that may be used to inform the analysis of the research findings.

3. Method

3.1 Researching implicit theories

Personal theories may be described as: “The residual schemata, or unconscious belief systems, left behind in the mind by previous experiences.” Claxton (1996: 45). Because they may be said to exist at the ‘periphery of consciousness’ they need to be discovered rather than invented because they already exist even though participants may not be aware of them themselves (Sternberg 1990). So a method that seeks to understand the participants’ life world or attempts to ‘stand in their shoes’ is required.

3.2 Phenomenological psychology

Phenomenology is a philosophy developed by Husserl that is concerned with understanding human experience. When applying phenomenological philosophy to psychology, the aim is to focus on people’s perceptions of the world in which they live and what this means to them, in other words a focus on the lived experience (Langdridge 2007). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) requires the researcher to attend to the participant’s life world and then develop interpretations which help to explain what it is like to be that person in a particular context. As such it is ideographic in nature as it is concerned with specific cases in contrast to most psychological research which is concerned with making claims about wider populations and so is said to be ‘nomothetic’ (Smith et.al 2009). Because implicit theories are not readily available even to the participants themselves the data in this study has to be ‘generated’ in the interviews and so the researcher’s role is clearly significant. The researcher needs to be able to attend carefully to what the participant is saying and also develop an awareness of their own preconceptions, which is referred to as reflexivity (Gough 2003, Findlay 2003). This involves what Findlay (2008) refers to as the ‘dance’ between reduction (bracketing out the researchers preconceptions) and reflexivity where the researcher is building
interpretations and at this stage of the process must acknowledge their own perceptions, always going back to the participants’ words to ensure that the interpretations are grounded in the participant’s life world or the ‘return to the thing itself’ (Husserl).

In this study where the participant’s implicit theories are sought then there might be said to be a treble hermeneutic. The participant interpreting the questions asked by the researcher who then interprets their response in order to try and understand their life world, in this instance focussing on their conceptions about learning, and then that interpretation needs to be further interpreted in order to make inferences about the participants’ implicit theories of learning.

3.3 Reduction / reflexivity

‘Reflexivity is often mentioned as being crucial in qualitative research but rarely taken very seriously (Langdridge 2007, 58). Within a research paradigm where the researcher needs to understand the participants’ life world and with an interview situation then the data in the form of the transcriptions can be said to be actively generated. In such research the researcher is central to the process and reflexivity at the interview stage, as the questions that are asked will be fundamental to the data generating process “Answers are always shaped by the question’s content.” (Dahlberg et.al. 2008, 142). Reflexivity is also important at the interpretation of data stage as what is seen as ‘significant’ and how it is employed will be central to the interpretations that are made. Reflexivity then may be seen as both a problem and solution (Findlay 2003).

The relationship of reduction and reflexivity should not be seen as a vector. That is to say we ‘add’ the reductive interpretation and the reflexive one and then get a ‘resultant’ interpretation. Rather that the reader is able to follow the lines of analysis that the research has followed and also that the researcher is obliged to try and make their own personal theories explicit and in the process may uncover additional perceptions about the understanding of the issues, in this way the process may be seen as one of transparency. “As a general rule reflexivity implies rendering explicit hidden agendas and half-formed intentions, but not just at the start of the research process- this should be a continuous endeavour.” (Gough 2003, 25). In this research it may be seen that not only is the researcher seeking to reveal the participants implicit theories of learning but through the reflexive
process needs to acknowledge their explicit theories and also uncover their own implicit theories about all aspects related to the research.

Central to this process within a phenomenological paradigm is the hermeneutic circle (see figure 1).

In this the researcher must try and get as close to the participants’ life word as possible through attending to their words (top arrow). This is done by the researcher trying to listen carefully and being empathetic at the interview stage and so moving as close to the participant as possible. Then as the interpretations are made the researcher brings the focus back to themselves (bottom arrow) and the literature always checking with the participant’s view as far as possible through staying close to the transcription and continually going back to check their words. Of course the participant cannot be there but in the in the diagram they are represented by the little ‘p’ in the form of their words in the transcription.
3.4 Doing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

IPA may be seen as an approach that draws upon phenomenology and hermeneutics (Smith et al. 2009). Phenomenology as we have seen is a philosophical study of experience while hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation. The hermeneutic circle has been described in section 3.2 and is an idea central to IPA which is essentially concerned with the relationship between the part and the whole (Smith et al. 2009). When analysing the transcriptions: "...it is imperative that each part is understood in terms of the whole, but also that the whole is understood in terms of its parts." (Dahlberg et al. 2008, 236).

In this study the interviews were transcribed and notes taken as the transcription progressed as to points of interest (see table 1). The first step was to copy sections of the transcript that were felt to be significant into the spreadsheet in column 4. In a phenomenological study where the participants’ life world is to be established it is important to stay as close to them as possible and a way to do this is to keep their exact words in mind as much as possible. The second step was to interpret the section of transcription. A useful device can be to start the sentence with “what they are saying is ...". This serves to try and remind the researcher to move as close to the participant as possible. For some sections vignettes were written up, for more detail see section 3.6. The third step was to identify an emerging theme which was used to head up the column 1. As the analysis proceeded and the corpus of data became larger then column 2 was used to subdivide the main emerging theme in column 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emerging theme</td>
<td>Subtheme</td>
<td>Initial interpretation: what they are saying is</td>
<td>Section of transcription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How learning is conceptualised</td>
<td>Mind/ body separation</td>
<td>He is saying that the mind and the body can develop at different rates.</td>
<td>“really they had not developed their mind at the same time as they were developing their body because I was trying to target them at too high a level ... so then I decided to bring them down ... just ..probably..” (Interview 1, 18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition as part of the process of analyse vignettes were developed line with the hermeneutic circle and an example is given in table 2. In this the process was to select a fragment of the transcription that was felt to be especially significant and then develop a more in depth interpretation. It must be noted that a single fragment may be significant for several reasons and so in relation to the themes identified in the main analysis several lines of thought might be developed. The next step was to start to uncover my own implicit theories through writing a reflexive response. Finally implicit theories of learning might be inferred. It is important to see this as an iterative process as the process of coming back and reconsidering the analysis reveals new insights both in terms of making inferences about implicit theories and also developing deeper awareness of the researcher’s fore-understandings.

**Table 1 – Illustrating IPA process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcription extract</th>
<th>Chris</th>
<th>Nathan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Right….In your mind are the projects of helping….children go up levels....if you like  ...and for example learn through P.E. ...are you happy that they are congruent?”</td>
<td>**Right….In your mind are the projects of helping….children go up levels....if you like  ...and for example learn through P.E. ...are you happy that they are congruent?”</td>
<td>“I feel that they work together brilliantly… I have one fear about it (Kent assessment)… and that is moving between activity areas within a year plan every 6 weeks am I not going to be just knocking back children from the level that they had achieved within the previous 6 weeks as they move on to the next 6 weeks... will they be returning back…. to the stage that’s they were at…..I feel that because… of the way that I am teaching in order to try and develop an understanding of the evaluating and improving aspect ....I think that they should be able to take that no matter what and apply it to the next activity area….then what they will fall back on possibly is their performance ...acquiring and developing....selecting and applying certainly…..so in terms of developing learning ........and then with PE...I feel that it does move forward .......but I wonder what will happen when it gets to that point at the end of the 6 weeks....that is something I will need to find out what will happen. <strong>(Interview 1, lines 33-34)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| First interpretation -applying the reduction.  | **“What he is saying is ....”**  | **“What he is saying is ....”**  |
| ...that in effect the 'level' they can qualify for is related to the activity although that is not the principle enshrined in the assessment framework  | **...is that he is assuming that there is a causal link between teaching and learning.**  | **...that his teaching will allow children to be 'developing' understanding of evaluating and improving.**  |
| Reflexive response | This seem so obvious to me. I believe that learning is related and dependent on context. It has to be about learning  | This seems so obvious to me. I believe that learning is related and dependent on context. It has to be about learning  |
| | This strikes me as almost naive although I am not surprised. It seems that within a policy landscape as it is  | **This strikes me as almost naive although I am not surprised. It seems that within a policy landscape as it is**  |
| | **It seems to me that all knowledge will be idiosyncratic and even though we may share similar understandings so he is assuming a**  | **It seems to me that all knowledge will be idiosyncratic and even though we may share similar understandings so he is assuming a**  |
| | **I see the transfer of competence as highly problematic. My feeling is that learning is very closely linked to context.**  | **I see the transfer of competence as highly problematic. My feeling is that learning is very closely linked to context.**  |

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**Table 2 – Vignette illustrating the application of reduction and reflexivity.**

| Inferring implicit theories | My feeling is that he is determined to make the KAF work. Implicitly he is saying that learning can be generic and that the transfer of competence is unproblematic? | Based on his comments I think he assumes he has control over the learning outcomes. Implicitly he assumes that there is a causal link between what he does and what the children learn. | Not clear in this section how he envisages this understanding developing. It may be that he has a tacit understanding that is aligned with a positivist perspective. There is knowledge and the children have to ‘grab’ it. | Implicitly he sees transfer of competence as straightforward and is surprised when the children ‘don’t get it’ whereas I would see this as a predictable consequence of such an approach. |

4. Analysis of fieldwork- emerging themes

In seeking the participants’ implicit theories of learning it was evident that their theories of assessment were a significant element of their ‘teaching world’. The acquisition of the assessment ‘levels’ by the children was viewed as an incontestably ‘good thing’. There was also an implicit assumption that children would be motivated by this kind of ritualised progress through harvesting the progressively higher numbers that represent the levels. It could be argued that the subdivision of levels carried out by some PE departments is a way to increase the ‘sensitivity’ of the assessment instrument but may also be a way to enable the capital afforded to the children by gaining the levels to be subjected to higher levels of control and gate keeping. Bourdieu’s (2003) notions of ‘cultural capital’, ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ can be used to throw light on socio-cultural dimensions in learners’ motivation and their dispositions to learning within the strictures of assessment regimes. The proposal is that children bring a range of dispositions to the field of educational assessment. These interact with the structure of the systems themselves and the interpersonal dynamics that arise when teachers and pupils put all forms of assessment into practice. This dialectic between structure, processes and effects shapes both children’s identity and assessment activities themselves (Torrance and Pryor, 1998; Reay and Wiliam, 1999; Pryor and Torrance, 2000).

4.1 The Assessment levels define the curriculum

A central idea in the Kent assessment framework is that assessment is embedded in the teaching. “There are five simple steps to using this framework to plan effectively for assessment for learning.” (Advisory Service Kent 2007: 25).
1. Identifying a clear pitch for the lesson

2. Setting learning objectives and using pitched generic learning objectives

3. Set clear pitched success criteria

4. Use appropriate and pitched activities

5. Plan pitched questions

It has been said that one person’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter, and in the same way it may be that the use of the ‘pitched’ assessment criteria to inform the lesson objectives might be seen as representing coherence and integration or as a form of colonisation and control. Such congruence may be viewed as ‘efficient’, consistent and even logical. However it seems that this is only acceptable if the project of what there is that is worth learning in PE, and the project of learning in PE as described in the assessment criteria, are highly congruent. This posits the question of who decides what it is that is worth learning and the extent to which class teacher has professional autonomy over this. What was clear was that the participants tended to see that the KAF and learning in PE were similar projects and so in effect the assessment ‘became’ the PE programme. Typical of the perspectives were those of Nathan (extracts 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nathan</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>now I always target lessons to a level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I tried a level 5 lesson.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extract 1

When asked about strategies he uses when considering planning for learning Nathan says that he always ‘targets lessons to a level’ (extract 4a). Then in the second interview when asked to describe a lesson where he felt that the children had learned effectively, Nathan chose to speak about a badminton lesson where he spoke in terms of trying a ‘level 5’ lesson (extract 4b) which indicates that implicitly he sees the 2 projects as highly congruent. While describing the exemplary lesson Nathan also talks about how ‘he remained at that level’. This suggests that he sees the concepts represented in the level descriptor as defining even dictating his teaching as much as being an assessment tool.

There was also a perspective that the teachers were learning to enact the KAF themselves and so were finding it easier to provide for some levels than others (see Jon extract 2).

| Jon      | 3 | 188 | ... there was one level in particular where it was very easy to set your lesson ..I think it was ....compare and link or describe differences or something |

Extract 2

Building on this notion Tom talks about how he felt that in the early stages that the teachers tended to focus on the lower levels first (extract 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tom</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>70</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt that when it was first put into this school everyone seemed to be focussing on the lower levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Extract 3**

The idea of the KAF defining the curriculum also emerged in more when the participants were considering the detail. In extract 4 Jan talks about how the KAF is based upon ‘evaluating and improving’ and then goes onto say that this has been influential in determining her classroom practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>28</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>new assessment framework that I have been using more recently is heavily based on evaluating and improving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Extract 4**

It may be seen that learning is always about learning something. In this way it may be argued that learning has a specific and a general dimension (Marton et.al. 2004). The general aspect being to do with the particular capability that is being developed which might be capabilities such as remembering, discerning, interpreting, grasping or viewing. The specific aspect being the thing or the subject on which these acts are carried out, such as learning to play an arpeggio or why the Corn Laws needed to be repealed. In suggesting that the KAF is focussed upon ‘evaluating’ and ‘improving’ in may be interpreted that Jan sees the acts of ‘evaluating’ and ‘improving’ are worthwhile in their own right and do not necessarily need to be applied to learning something specific.

In considering the extent to which the KAF defined the curriculum Tom describes a lesson where the motivation is for the children to show they can ‘harvest’ particular levels and in the interview he inhabits his teacher identity to describe what he says (extract 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tom</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>36</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Who would like to try and get a 4B? Yeah, yeah, yeah, me..me..me..” so off their previous assessment grade you could say right you got a 4C …would you like to try and get a 4B. “Yeah.. yeah.. yeah” so then they try and aspire to that particular grade.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Extract 5**

Sophie is asked about mapping lesson intentions onto the KAF criteria in particular using level 5 which is about ‘combining and analysing’. She talks about the demands of the level 6 as being ‘hard’ which if the levels are truly incremental should not be a problem as presumably the children would have secured level 4 and so this would be the next challenge. In this it may be seen that implicitly she is making judgements about what is ‘difficult’ and so in effect the KAF in her mind is defining progression and is imposed on her.

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In reflecting on the issue of teaching a ‘level 5’ lesson Nathan talks about realising that the children did not have the ‘verbal ability’ required and so he decided that they need to adapt their teaching. In this it is clear that he is changing his teaching to meet the demands of the assessment framework and so in effect the KAF is ‘giving’ him the basis for his classroom practice (extract 7).

The question of the extent to which he is allowing the KAF to colonise his practice or at some level the KAF is so aligned with his own values is open to interpretation. All the participants were asked at some stage what they felt about the congruency of the projects of learning in PE as describe by the KAF and the project of learning in and through particular activities. The responses indicated that in general they did not see any great dilemma, that they were able or prepared to disclose. The most enthusiastic defence came from Nathan (Extract 8). His immediate reaction is that ‘they work together brilliantly’ although he then outlines a caveat which is he feels that when the children move between activity areas it may cause the grades to be lower. So in essence he is saying that while he sees the value in generic learning objectives he then sees there may be a problem with context, although it seems as if he does not have the language about learning to be able to articulate this. When seeking implicit theories it may be inferred that explicitly he espouses the position that there is congruency between the projects yet then expresses a concern about grades that are allocated in different activity areas saying, “..... I feel that because… of the way that I am teaching in order to try and develop an understanding of the evaluating and improving aspect …I think that they should be able to take that no matter what and apply it to the next activity area...” (Nathan 1, 34). In this he says that “they should be able to take that on..” which may be an example of him resolving cognitive dissonance as in effect he is aware of the inconsistency. We may infer that his personal theory of learning is that learning is not necessarily ‘situated’ or ‘contextual’. This section also highlights another possibility which is that he is either unwilling or does not have the necessary cognitive tools to be able to stand back and analyse it. It is not surprising that he was reluctant to be critical of the KAF as implicitly he might see being critical as synonymous with being negative and also as he had clearly invested so much in the KAF it is

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understandable that he would not be able to look closely at it. The second point is that to be able to analyse such a strategy in terms of how it might define learning he would need a deep understanding of learning which he may not possess.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CC</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>33</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>....In your mind are the projects of helping....children go up levels....if you like ....and for example learn through P.E. ..are you happy that they are congruent?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nathan</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that they work together brilliantly....I have one fear about it (Kent assessment)....and that is moving between activity areas within a year plan every 6 weeks am I not going to be just knocking back children from the level that they had achieved within the previous 6 weeks as they move on to the next 6 weeks....will they be returning back....to the stage that’s they were at.....I feel that because....of the way that I am teaching in order to try and develop an understanding of the evaluating and improving aspect ....I think that they should be able to take that no matter what and apply it to the next activity area....then what they will fall back on possibly is their performance ....acquiring and developing....selecting and applying certainly.....so in terms of developing learning .......and then with PE..I feel that it does move forward ......but I wonder what will happen when it gets to that point at the end of the 6 weeks...that is something I will need to find out what will happen.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extract 8

In a similar vein Jan is asked if she feels that the KAF is insufficient in any way (extract 9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CC</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>83</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there things that you would like the key stage 3 children to learn that kind of....don’t appear in that Kent assessment framework?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>84</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...........umm not really because it is quite open .open framework you can put whatever you like.....into the learning objectives it’s just ..it’s just the key words are quite handy because they just...the kids can pick up on the key words and so .... I don’t think there’s .. you can put whatever you like in ..into those areas there’s not any restrictions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extract 9

Interestingly she says that it is open and that ‘you can put what you like in the learning objectives’. It may be significant that she says this rather you ‘can decide what you want them to learn’. She then goes on to say that the ‘key words’ are useful for the children. It seems possible that she is not aware of the relationship of the KAF to the current NC orders from which it has been distilled.

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A final thought on this idea of the KAF providing the curriculum can be seen in a response by Liz in extract 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CC</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>29</th>
<th>Oh yeah. At the moment what would you see as the essence of the assessment for learning?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liz</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>...what do you mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Like the key elements of it? ......If you were explaining it to a student what points would you emphasise?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>...the process ... I mean why are we doing it? I would say to them so that you know where you are going next and how you can improve next so you understand where you are at ....because we got to the stage where we said to children ‘What level are you?’ and they did not know, they knew what level they were in maths but they did not know anything in PE at all .. and now we have focussed so much on the key words you can ask kids randomly and they know whether they are a 4 or 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extract 10

Here she is saying that she uses the levels as an index of the children’s progress from which it may be inferred that she sees that the 2 projects are congruent and so implicitly she is saying that the assessment is about the child harvesting a level and that this is relatively unproblematic. There is also an argument to say that implicitly assessment for learning has become ‘assessment for grading’.

4.2 Assessment levels act as a glass ceiling?

The idea of pitching lessons to a level may seem logical as then teachers avoid the criticism that the child did not have the chance to get a level x as the lesson did not allow them to demonstrate their ‘x ness’. However it may also be that this may also act as a ceiling on children’s achievement in terms of their potential to attain higher grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CC</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>OK and you mentioned the kent assessment framework a number of times …what are the things that you particulary like about that?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ahmmm ..... Well ...I am working a lot at the moment through levels 3, 4 and 5 ...Ahmm ..I like them because I am comfortable in that area at the moment ...it has got me really thinking about my teaching ..which I like ...it has got me thinking about how I can deliver things ..how I can give challenges ..as opposed to set tasks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extract 11
One of the emerging themes was the possibility that implicitly the use of the levels might become a barrier to achievement in terms of the levels. In interview 2 Jon (extract 8) is asked about his feelings about the KAF. He talks about ‘working through levels 3, 4 and 5. Implicitly he is saying that the summative assessment framework serves to define his teaching rather than as a means with which he is going to make judgements about pupils’ competence. Of course it has been argued that for a child to be able to demonstrate that they have can be awarded a particular grade then they must have the opportunity to demonstrate that they have met the criteria but equally it seems possible that the use of particular levels to focus lessons may cause teachers to work at levels they feel most able to provide for so placing barriers to achievement.

4.3 Assessment as revealing competence to assign grades.

There was a strong emerging theme that was about assessment as concerned with ‘revealing’ competence which at first sight might be seen as logical and consistent with generally acknowledged aims of assessment. However what is more significant here is the value that the participants’ saw in this assessment information. A key dimension of AFL is that learning intentions are informed by assessment and so in effect teaching starts with assessment so that the learners can be fore grounded in the classroom interactions. What emerged in this study was that the teachers tended see assessment principally as a means of revealing competence but with the aim of allocating grades. There was much talk of assessment informing future teaching but this tended to be in terms of how to secure the next level. Again the point needs to be made that this is logical as long as what is deemed to be worth learning in PE is adequately represented in the assessment criteria.

In extract 12 Liz is reflecting on the use of questions are indicates that the principle idea is to ‘get’ information out of the child and did not see that a question might enable the child to actively build knowledge.

| Liz  | 1  | 46 | so it is getting that out of the individuals so you know...you know.. what level they are |

Extract 12

In considering the need to use assessment to ‘reveal’ it is important to consider what is being revealed, or what it was the teachers tended to focus their assessment radar upon. If learning is seen as a process of individual sense making then the need to be able to make judgements about children’s construing will be crucial in assessment activities. In this respect it is helpful to draw a distinction between establishing ‘whether’ children know, an essentially divergent perspective, as opposed to working within a more constructivist frame and trying to establish ‘what’ they know (Torrance and Pryor 1998). In seeking to make inferences about the participants’ implicit theories of assessment in this study there is evidence that they tended to see assessment as a process of ‘revealing’ not necessarily as a means to access the children’s construing but as a means to allocate levels to the

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children and in terms of using that information to inform the next actions then this seemed to be limited to deciding where to pitch the next lesson in relation to the assessment levels.

There was also a tacit assumption that children demonstrate their understanding through verbalisation rather than demonstrating it in a practical context, an idea that will be developed in more depth in the following section.

4.4 Tacit understandings

There is a weight of opinion that there can be a dimension of knowledge that is beyond articulation, or is tacit (Polayani 1967) which may be referred to as a form of unconscious competence. The emphasis on verbalisation through description and analysis in the assessment levels may be seen as highly inclusive as it rewards forms of competence other than physical performance. Indeed it may also be seen as acknowledging the potential of the cognitive in PE, however, it may be argued that a possible weakness of the KAF is that there is little recognition of such tacit knowledge and worse in a subject such as PE recognition of tacit competence in a physical milieu. So through being ‘on message’ with the KAF there is an implicit assumption that such knowledge either does not exist or as it is automatically downgraded by the assessment criteria.

In extract 13 Jan is asked to consider issues around the assessment criteria and suggest that within the NC and GCSE greater credit is given for performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CC</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>143</th>
<th>Do you think it is also possible that some children are quite actually ...very competent and make good decisions but it happens quite intuitively for them .. so they can’t articulate it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pete</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>No that’s right yeah there are some definitely who can do it and perform it but they can’t necessarily ..talk about how they done it which is ..which is the thing that I am concerned about with this current approach based on understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extract 13

Extract 13 serves to highlight some issues related to implicit theories at work. In this extract Pete says he is concerned about the current approach based on ‘understanding’, it is not clear whether he does not feel that ‘understanding’ was in some way irrelevant or that understanding is hard to make judgements about. It seems likely that he sees demonstrating understanding as synonymous with the children being able to articulate their understanding rather than demonstrate it in a practical performance context. In a sense if he is saying he is concerned about understanding does that mean he sees the capacity to perform as essentially one of tacit knowledge, or a situation where decisions are like reflexes?

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This primacy of verbalisation was a strong feature in the corpus of data. In reflecting on the issue of understanding Nathan talks about deeper understandings that ‘only comes’ with questioning (extract 14). There are 2 significant aspects to this extract. First that he sees understanding as synonymous with verbalisation and secondly that he talks about ‘getting it out of them’ which presumably means he sees that the knowledge existing in the child and has to be ‘extracted’ rather that the child building or creating knowledge through addressing the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nathan</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>72</th>
<th>the deeper understanding that only comes with getting it out of them from questioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Extract 14

In considering extract 15 it may be inferred that Sophie sees attributes of ‘performing’ and being able to ‘do’ understanding and other roles as something of a binary. In this she clearly sees the key issue as the ‘handing out’ of the capital represented by the grades.

4.5 Use of questions

From the outset of AFL the role of questions in learning has been a key strategy, and in the last section on assessment as ‘revealing’ it was seen by the participants to play a key role in teacher assessment strategy. Of course teachers may ask questions for many reasons. A key principle within AFL is the idea that in considering higher order questions the learner is actively building knowledge and that it is not just a matter of making public what is in their mind. A principle understood by Socrates over 2,000 years ago. The KAF makes questioning a central strategy.

“...have been created to draw attention to the importance of the use of questioning to engage pupils in the process of thinking about what they are doing and why at a level that is appropriate to their stage of learning.”

(Advisory Service Kent, 2007, 22)

The KAF seems to be suggesting that a key idea in learning is that the children need to know what they are doing and also why the level is appropriate to their stage of learning. In a sense this privileges the level rather than the stage of learning. There is also an element of reification here as learning has become the point rather than the mastery of something.

When seeking to infer implicit theories from the participants’ reflections about teacher questioning there are considerable levels of heterogeneity and so a number of responses by different participants will be considered individually.
In extracts 14 and 15 we can infer that the participants are using questions to actively seek the pupils construing, or seeking to find ‘what’ they know. It is worth considering Jan’s response in (1, 96) in more detail. In the first part of the response she talks about, ‘finding out what they actually know.’ This would indicate the use of a divergent lens but then she says that, ‘they come out with all sorts of thing...that I would never think of’. The question here why she would find that so remarkable as within a constructivist paradigm the point of the exercise would be to establish just that and we cannot know how someone experiences the world ‘surprise’ in this context may be seen a shorthand for ‘they see the world very differently to me’. There may be some anxiety as if the child comes up with construing that is so unexpected the teacher may feel unsettled, whereas it might be seen the point of the exercise is to be able to genuinely get an understanding of how the learners see the world.

In extract 16 Liz she speaks in terms of ‘students knowing what they are talking about’ but not feeling they will speak out’. So it may be inferred that what she values is children ‘knowing’ things rather than using questions as a means to find out ‘what’ they know.
it is about the way you question them as well...definitely with the Kent assessment...definitely now we are really thinking about the way I question

Yeah ...I mean .... it does help to gauge the level of their understanding...although I may have said this to you before that I do find that sometimes ....sometimes it may actually confirm that they haven’t understood a thing .. or that their actual/ the level of their understanding is incredibly low ...you ask them a question to try and get and try and get some more thoughts given to it and the most basic answer will come out, you know, ......I can’t think of an example but you get a one word answer from ...them which is correct ..technically..technically correct but doesn’t actually show any understanding at all

In the extracts 17 it can see that an interpretation of the participants’ responses is that they are seeking to reveal what the children know generally through asking questions.

There is an implicit assumption that tacit knowledge is not sought. The revealing might be seen in 2 ways. Assessment can be used for screening, diagnosis, record keeping, feedback on performance, certification selection (Gipps and Stobart 1996).

Because more people within our department would be comfortable in teaching that as a start off and really getting them to teach in an assessment for learning way ... but then rethinking about it 3 of us ... all thought that maybe it would be best for the students to learn about accurate replication first of all ...and I suppose in a way it has become more hierarchical

In extract 18 ‘Nathan’ talks about staff teaching is an ‘assessment for learning way.’ So implicitly he is saying that the assessment leads the teaching rather than the focus is on learning the content of PE and the implication is that he sees this as a ‘good thing’.

It would seem from the evidence in this study that in the minds of the participants in this study that implicitly the assessment for learning agenda has been hijacked and might more accurately be described as assessment for grading.

5. Discussion

5.1 The assessment landscape
In considering the participants’ theories of assessment it is important to do so in relation to the policy imperatives that are acting to shape the teachers’ professional lives. In a study based within a phenomenological paradigm, the policy initiatives inevitably form a significant role in shaping the participants’ life world and given that the national curriculum is an assessment driven curriculum (Gipps and Stobart 1996) theories of assessment will be significant and central to shaping their theories. In addition teachers’ may well feel that a defining dimension of their professionalism may well be that the capacity to enact policy and so given the privilege afforded to assessment their capacity to enact assessment will be seen as revealing. Any policy is subject to ‘noise’ or interference and it may be that assessment has become viewed as a homogenous manner. In a study with 83 teachers and head teachers to ascertain how teachers understand the term ‘assessment for learning’ Hargreaves (2005) concluded that the teachers in her study held 5 conceptions which included; assessment as monitoring pupils’ performance against targets or objectives; assessment used to inform the next steps in learning; assessment for learning means teachers giving feedback for improvement; assessment as learning about children’s learning; assessment where the children take control of their own learning and assessment and where assessment is turned into a learning event.

In seeking to reveal the participants’ implicit theories about assessment in general, assessment within the NC and the KAF in particular it must be borne in mind that teachers have to negotiate any tensions within and between policies. For example the current national curriculum advises teachers to use the ‘range and content’ to underpin their lessons. So for example ‘outwitting’ opponents, as in games activities would be seen as the key point in games. In addition to this they are expected to ‘pitch’ their lesson to levels so there is potential for much uncertainty. It needs to be remembered that ‘Southview’ is a specialist sports college and there was clearly a feeling among the staff that they were expected to be at the cutting edge of initiatives.

The genesis of the AFL was the idea that teacher assessment is used to inform teaching and that there has to be degrees of transparency about what success in learning is.

“An assessment activity can help learning if it provides information to be used as feedback by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves each other, to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged.”

(Black et.al. 2003: 2)

What the participants in this study are articulating is that they see assessment as a means to inform teaching but that this is tightly framed by the structures of the assessment levels.

The idea that AFL is ‘intrinsically worthwhile’ and will enhance learning has become a virtually unchallenged axiom (Torrance and Pryor 1998). A strong emerging theme in this study is that while the participants spoke about ‘assessment for learning’ that there is a case to say that as it stands the original AFL agenda at South View School had been hijacked and that now it might be more
accurately be described as ‘assessment for grading’ as the embedding of the assessment criteria into lesson was in order to facilitate the allocation of grades. There is therefore a tacit assumption that what is seen to be worth learning is congruent with the aims as expressed in the assessment criteria. This was a question that was directly posed to most of the participants in this study and appeared to cause them little if any concern.

5.2 What can assessment tell us?

In considering implicit theories of assessment it can be argued that within current policy frameworks and measures of school accountability that assessment has come to be seen as technology rather than practice (Delandshere 2001).

“Fundamental to this growing domination has been the development of a discourse rooted in a rationalist vocabulary of scientific measurement - of standards and scales; of objective judgements and comparisons.”

Broadfoot (2003, 203)

In other words that assessment is seen as a means of measuring rather than a central aspect of practice. This can be seen to be problematic as the paradigm of assessment as measurement is quantitative and there is an assumption of linearity.

There is a deeper sense in which assessment practices may not be good for quality monitoring systems. Assessment is ultimately about judgement, not measurement. Measurement is exact, assessment is not.”

Knight (2002: 113)

An extension of Knight’s point is that there is a case to consider the subjective nature of these judgements. In thinking about the aims of assessment Rowntree (1987) suggests that the term ‘goals’ of assessment is too purposeful and should be replaced with the term ‘construct.’

“Once we get used to seeing ‘construct’ used as a noun, it does have the virtue of reminding us that ‘what we see’ in students is to some extent a fabrication of the mind of the beholder- a figment of his imagination.”

(Rowntree 1987, 84)

There was nothing in the participants’ responses that suggested they saw assessment as subjective or even struggling to work with the chaotic nature of lessons but rather that this assessment framework would impose some order on aspects of classroom life.
The transactions that occur within educational contexts are complex and much is hidden and uncertain (Radford 2006). The capacity to embrace uncertainty and complexity is such loose coupled systems might be seen as a key quality for teachers. However within current policies milieus what is valued is certainty and so it may be no surprise that the participants’ were ‘persuaded’ by the simple logical appearances of the KAF and that they displayed no disposition to acknowledge and even embrace complexity. This is not to imply any criticism as it is easy to see how in the need to complete many pressing tasks that being able to do assessment in an ‘efficient’ manner and move onto the next task has obvious appeal. It seems possible that the capacity to be comfortable with complexity is an important quality for teachers.

5.3 Assessment as access to capital

A central purpose of education may be seen as the chance for the learner to gain capital. There is potential for this capital to take many forms and to be represented in different ways but it seems that the focus on grades automatically signifies the ‘harvesting’ or ‘collecting’ of levels as the high stakes and high status measures of capital which can allow access to opportunities to gain additional capital in the form of higher level qualifications and access to post school opportunities such as employment and access to further education.

While it is evident that early on in the data gathering process some participants expressed some misgivings there is some argument to suggest that the participants may not have had the time, impulse or the cognitive architecture to be able to analyse the process. The whole tone of the discussions around the assessment frameworks inevitably means that to some extent the purpose of engagement with the content is to harvest a high number.

“Cultural capital in its institutionalised state provides academic credentials and qualifications which create a, ‘certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to power.”

(Bourdieu and Passeron1990, 244)

The ‘achieving’ of levels then become the credentials awarded through the process of education. In previous sections the argument that the assessment had become synonymous with the curriculum. It therefore follows that levels will have a symbolic significance that mark the ritual of progress as marked by harvesting progressively higher levels. Implicit in this is that the teachers took the conferring of levels as important and as a mark of their own power and status as teachers. There was also an implicit assumption that children would be motivated by this ritual harvesting of levels. In developing a philosophy of human learning Winch (1998) suggests that a key aspect of learning is that the learner has a love of what is to be learned suggesting that only possession of such a disposition will explain how great talent can achieve excellence in a chosen field. There is a possibility
therefore that a love of learning about a subject has been, or needs to be replaced by a love of grades!

5.4 Divergence in assessment

Based on multiple observations of assessment incidents in primary classrooms Torrance and Pryor (1998) concluded that two conceptually distinct approaches could be identified. Assessment that was essentially convergent and which sought to establish whether the child, knows, understand and can do which is characterised by tick lists of competences, closed or pseudo open questions and tasks and there is an underlying assumption that there is an intention to teach the ‘next’ thing is a relatively linear manner. Divergent assessment on the other hand seeks to establish what the child knows and involves flexible planning, open questions and tasks and there is a focus on miscues.

The evidence in the data generated in this study points to the participants holding essentially convergent theories about assessment. However running alongside this was a discourse more in line with a more open constructivist paradigm which is particularly evident in the participants’ responses to the aims of questioning.

5.5 Assessment as a form of pupil performitivity?

In the current policy landscape much has been made of ‘performitivity’ as a form of policy technology (Ball 2003). Ball defines performitivity as a culture that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions. What seems evident is that in the current policy milieu teachers are subjected to levels of performitivity where their work is externally defined and strictly policed and monitored this may be seen to have been passed on to the children who in order to justify teachers practice they need to themselves be performitive in terms of being able to demonstrate they are worthy of attaining the assessment levels.

6. Conclusions

This paper represents a small element of a wider research project into teachers’ implicit theories of learning. What was clear in the main project was that in order to make any sound judgements about their implicit theories of learning it was crucial to attend to the ways that they spoke about learning and also to consider how they spoke about other aspects of their professional lives such as children, how they constructed their teacher identities, the metaphors they used to describe learning as well as assessment. There seems no doubt that assessment has become a defining feature of education in contemporary times. While teachers’ professional lives are involved in ‘doing it’ in a study based within a phenomenological paradigm their perceptions are of considerable interest. This study would suggest that assessment has become the curriculum and in a sense has become a reality definer for the participants in this study.
There is also a sense that implicitly the participants saw assessment existing as a technical entity and without a moral dimension about what should be learned or even any regard to theories of how it is that children learn. In particular the KAF tends to be set out in a linear and logically incremental manner and so there is an underlying assumption that learning is correspondingly linear and incremental. Borrowing a metaphor from physics an assumption that learning is a scalar quantity, in other words that it has volume and direction whereas it seems likely that it is more of a scalar quantity. In other words that it has volume but no particular direction. The suggestion being that in order to understand assessment teachers need to develop deeper understandings of how it is that humans learn. Indeed this might enable them to offer a stronger critique of such an assessment package as the KAF.
Bibliography


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