The Cut and Paste Nature of Photography Education

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Yellow Sticker

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For Tilda:
You can achieve anything you want to,

(just keep asking questions!)

Declaration

I, the author, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (**www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means**). This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

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Abstract

This doctoral project explores the impact of teacher disciplinary backgrounds, pedagogy, curriculum and learning environment on photography education and in turn how learning environment can affect pedagogical choice making. It examines what photography education could look like in the future. It takes a broadly poststructuralist approach, drawing on ethnographic and arts-based research, to address a significant gap in the literature. This gap is in part due to the position of photography education in schools, as it is often taught by non-specialists. The research contributes to understanding through the development of evidence-informed playful pedagogical resources for teachers of varied disciplinary backgrounds and learning environments.

Visual ethnographic and arts-based methods were foregrounded through an a/r/tographic approach and were applied in the form of collage and photography in data generation, reflection, conceptualisation and interpretation of pedagogy, curriculum and the learning environment. Autoethnographic vignettes highlighted observations and the lived experience of the research journey through creative writing, and how the three key areas of teacher disciplinary background, pedagogy/curriculum and learning environment were interlinked. The research sets out four key areas for photography education: Creativity and Expression, Collaboration and Community, Adaptation and Response, Identity and Belonging. These provide a foundational underpinning, foregrounding teacher and student participant voices on photography education, contributing to methodological innovation around participant voices. The research illuminates the impact that liminal spaces and experiences that exist between the three key research areas have on photography education, setting out considerations for the discipline in the future.

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Glossary of Terms

Key Stage 3 (years 7-9): (KS3)	Compulsory education in the UK between the ages of 11-14
Key Stage 4 (years 10-11): (KS4)	Compulsory education in the UK between the ages of 14-16
Key Stage 5 (years 12-13): (KS5)	Compulsory education in the UK between the ages of 16-19
GCSE	General Certification of Secondary Education. The most widely taken examinations in English secondary schools. These are usually studied over a one- or two-year period, at key stage 4, or between the ages of 14-16.
A Level or GCE	Advanced Level or General Certificate of Education. These are qualifications studied between the ages of 16-19.
BTEC	A vocational qualification studied at level 2 (equivalent to key stage 4, 14-16) or level 3, (key stage 5, 16-19).
Secondary education	Education between the ages of 11-16, usually encompassing years 7-11
Sixth form education	Education between the ages of 16-19, usually encompassing years 12-13
Further education	Education between the ages 16-19
Independent school	An independently run school that does not receive funding from the government. Students pay a tuition fee to attend.
State school:	A government funded, or academy school. Students do not pay a tuition fee to attend.

Teacher disciplinary background	Teacher disciplinary background as defined in this research, comprises the educational background of teaching staff and whether they were trained in photography, art and design or other discipline. Teacher identity, or disciplinary background also encompasses their own experiences to date.
Pedagogy	the 'conversations, learning, environments, rules, norms and cultures within the wider social context' (Thomson and Hall, 2014, p.1). Examining the identity of the institution will also take into account further factors such as timetable hours dedicated to photography teaching, governmental policy or environmental factors have also impacted on photography education.
Learning environment	The environment in which students and teachers perform teaching and learning activities. These are both tangible (teacher, student, frameworks, classroom, writing, furniture) and intangible aspects (beliefs, values, experience, speech, understanding, socio-political events, time of day, other activities occurring around the space, emotional and physical wellbeing).

Photography Education	For this research, photography education will be defined as the education in a standalone subject that exists in secondary and further education, in England. I am discussing photography being taught in a conventional manner, and not in that of adult education, workshops, online learning or any other guise.
Assemblage blocks	To reintroduce the research focus, three main areas of photographic education - teacher background, pedagogies/curriculum, environment. These three areas will be referred to at times collectively as the blocks, or *assemblage blocks.*

Prologue

I present this doctoral thesis as a combination of academic and creative writing, alongside visual collages and photographs. This choice of presentation has been conceived from my choice to broadly frame the work through a post-structuralist lens (Lather and St. Pierre, 2013) with rhizomatic (growing from many, interconnected points instead of a singular or traceable point) rather than linear thinking underpinning its entirety (Deleuze and Guattari, 1976). My inclusion of an interdisciplinary presentation is a learned force of habit from being a teacher, and possessing a learned, now engrained, internal knowledge that text and understanding cannot be received by everyone in the same way. To consider the individual and differentiate between these individuals should be common practice, just as we cannot expect education all to fit neatly into institutionally or socio-politically motivated structures.

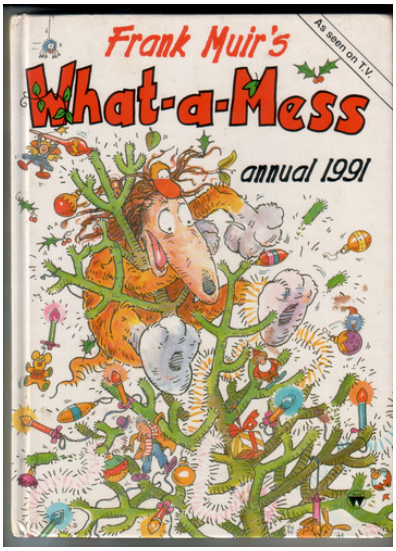
Linearity

Over the course of doctoral study, I have come to realise that I struggle intensely with linearity. My mind works in tangents, in interconnectivity, in 'what ifs', in questions and the joining together of aspects that perhaps are not destined to be joined together. I act on impulse and try to find fun and playfulness in the everyday. I think out loud; I write in continuous prose. I move between formal and informal language during periods of hyperfocus to get my ideas onto paper, a practice which stems from a fear of losing them. I think much more visually than perhaps a conventional linear academic text allows (a recipe of chapters and instructional methods as St. Pierre (2024) describes it. This could be described as the 'messiness' that is attributed to the research process (Mellor, 2001), and the creative process, respectively (Vohs et al, 2013). The combination of these aspects in my own thinking have led me to this point, and to the choice to present work in a rhizomatic fashion. The project can be approached in different ways: through the reading of the conventional academic chapters only, the reading of the autoethnographic vignettes that pinpoint the journey through personal narrative, or through the collage and photographs that appear throughout. These tracings of the research can be combined to demonstrate a mapping of sorts (Baldus et al., 2024) and present the spaces, corners and journeys that have been experienced and then accumulated into this single document. The messiness of the research allows for multiple audiences to access it, in a way that is suitable to their individual needs and mirrors the shift between my roles in the research as an artist, teacher and researcher, or a/r/tographer (Irwin et al., 2006) (discussed further in section 5.4).

Curiosity and distractions

In common with Mellor (2001), I have spent a lot of time during doctoral study existentially considering *what I am doing* here in research, losing and gaining confidence simultaneously, and becoming frustrated about why my mind would not easily fit the conventional needs of an academic study. My curiosity about and fascination with the research focus of photography education, teacher disciplinary background, learning environment, pedagogy and curriculum is wildly entangled in my work life (I am a photography teacher), my personal interests (I am an practising artist using photography and collage), my life outside of academia (I am a mother, a wife, a friend, a colleague, a woman, amongst other day-to-day changing variables), causing another aspect of messiness. Whilst trying to communicate my tangent-led thinking, the research and academic reading into messiness led me to a distracted nostalgic trip to the television version of Frank Muir's book *What-a-Mess* (Internet Movie Database [IMDB], n.d), a story about an Afghan hound puppy, so disordered and messy that he ends up disowned. I spent so long watching *What-a-Mess* as a child, alongside *Stoppit and TidyUp,* another early 1990s children's television favourite of mine, and inexplicably linked with an underlying theme of messiness (IMDB, n.d). It has taken me until this point in my educational journey to accept my tangents, curiosity and distractions as positives rather than flaws, that being able to articulate them succinctly adds to the research I have conducted and allows the space for the open mindedness and creativity that research such as this requires. Personal honest narrative of the research process such as this may not be the norm in research (Pollard, 2009), as discussed further in section 5.3 of this thesis, but Günel and Watanabe (2024) suggests that keeping the 'patchwork seams' visible in research allows the reader to more closely understand the research process, and the researcher's personality and multifaceted roles. *What-a-Mess* and *Stoppit and TidyUp* exist here as a visual metaphor for my thinking, and my journey in becoming a researcher, the identification of which is a practice that Boulton et al., (2017) suggest can assist improving reflexivity in such a complex process.

So, to my younger self, watching the 1990s classics whilst trying to Sellotape useful objects to the inside of my school cardigan, ignoring the idea that gravity and physics will soon dash those very dreams, and to the curious child who constantly asked questions and wondered about the 'what ifs' - the presentation is for you, and for every learner that does not fit inside the confines of an educational structure.



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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1: Research Overview

Education 'begins in such diversity' (St. Pierre, 2016, p.7) as practitioners specialise in different disciplines, train at different institutions, and bring their own experiences and values to their profession of educating young people (St. Pierre, 2016). Institutions such as schools, and professional bodies such as examination boards, then in turn make attempts to regulate education and learning through the implementation of teacher training, frameworks, inspection criteria and curriculum guidelines. Interpretation of these devised structures can differ from conception, interpretation and in realistic application in learning environments, due to differences in teacher background and their own experiences. This diverse, interdisciplinary range of combinations has an impact on pedagogy and curriculum decision-making in photography education, in which it is acknowledged that there is no subject specific initial teacher training route (Department of Education, 2024), meaning the subject is often taught in schools and sixth forms by non-specialists. The environment in which students and teachers perform teaching and learning activities affects the pedagogical and curriculum choices in teaching photography, and the way in which the teaching and learning activities are designed, delivered and received.

Assemblage

The rich chain of both tangible (teacher, student, frameworks, classroom, writing) and intangible aspects (beliefs, values, experience, speech, understanding) become an assemblage of interchangeable, intertwined blocks with no set path of predictability, with no set start or end, and could be described as *rhizomatic* (see the glossary for definition, and section 3.3 for conceptual unpacking) rather than linear (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). It is useful to understand the relationships between the assemblage blocks to develop suggestions for photography education now, and in the future, as subject specific photography education is a significantly under researched area.

Existing studies

Existing, yet dated, theoretical work such as that by Newbury (1996) (discussed further in section 2.6) discusses the need for change in photography education in England and the need for a subject specific, or signature, pedagogy (Thomson et al., 2012) to be developed for photography education. However, these arguments are rarely (if ever, in contemporary work) supported by empirical research, often lacking suggestions for, or evidence of, undertaking research in photography classrooms to move forward with evidencing this need. Newbury (2009) refers to this as 'fragments' (p.118) of photographic education research, stating that there are 'no substantial sources to which one can turn' (p.118). Existing literature addresses this gap, either consciously or subconsciously through language in titles or introductions, such as 'towards photographic education' (Rubinstein, 2009, p.255) or 'the field of photographic education'

(Newbury, 1997), introducing the suggestion that the current model is either defunct or unfit for purpose in some way.

The research

This doctoral study responds to the lack of empirical research through the exploration of the impact of teacher disciplinary backgrounds, pedagogy, curriculum and learning environment on photography education. It takes a broadly poststructuralist approach, drawing on ethnographic and arts-based research, providing a foundational underpinning, foregrounding teacher and student participant voices on contemporary photography education in England, and contributing to methodological innovation around participant voice. The research illuminates the impact that liminal spaces and experiences that exist between the three key research areas have on photography education through development of pedagogical resources and accompanying discussion, contributing to the discourse of photography in a contemporary educational landscape. The research took place in a large independent school in the North of England with three teacher participants, and seven student participants who were teaching or studying photography at the school between 2021-2024.

Interim Conclusion

In the remainder of *Chapter One*, the context of the research topics is established through a discussion around the underrepresentation of photography education in academia and how the subject lacks specific teacher training in England, despite the widespread prevalence of photography as a medium in other societal, curriculum and research areas. After context and rationale are established here, the research questions are introduced. The following section outlines the ethnographic and arts-based methods and the broadly poststructural theoretical approaches adopted, before introducing the research positionality. The full thesis structure can be found at the conclusion of this chapter.

1.2: Photography in schools

Photography is not taught in every educational institution in England, as it not a mandatory subject in the English National Curriculum (NC, a set of national standards and subjects ensuring students receive the same education in England, Department for Education, 2024a), which states that art and design must be taught at Key Stage 3 (KS3) (see Glossary for definitions) and then at Key Stage 4 (KS4) one option of the arts must be offered (Department for Education, 2024a). Often when photography is included it is under the umbrella of art, craft and design, largely due to the examination boards demonstrating this structure and therefore schools following suit. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate this point, with screenshots taken of both AQA and Pearson Edexcel websites (taken in July 2023) showing the GCSE Art and Design specification and photography being considered a strand rather than a standalone subject (see figures 13 and 14 below). This inconsistency across schools and colleges may suggest the paucity of research, in addition to a rationale for

borrowing from art and design research, just as pedagogy, curriculum and assessment are borrowed from art and design structures as shown here.

This leads to what is a common ongoing question in creative teaching communities, and education more widely (Tambling and Bacon, 2023), of photography's value as a subject in education, which in turn may impact on the assemblage blocks outlined in this research. As Barton (General Secretary of the union and professional organisation, Association of School and College Leaders in the United Kingdom - UK) (2018) supports in a Cultural Learning Alliance Briefing Paper that photography and the arts are often seen as extra-curricular subjects and become victims when curricula are reduced through institutional and political influence or funding loss. The Cultural Learning Alliance is the UK's leading cross-arts learning policy, and for every child to have access to the arts (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2024).

The contemporary model of photographic education in England is relatively new in comparison to other subjects, despite it being present in the education system since as early as 1878 (Pritchard, 2020). Its current mixed curriculum and pedagogy combination of theory, practice and skill are influenced by changes brought about by an Arts Council England (ACE, a governmental development agency for creativity and culture in England) push on photographic teaching in schools which emerged in the early 1990s (Isherwood and Stanley, 1994). Before this, it was largely a vocational and technical skill, a craft to be learned and perfected, more akin to a technology craft than a creative subject, and often pursued in a photographic darkroom (McWilliams, 2020). These are relatively recent changes, leaving less time for research in the area to be developed, critiqued and studied on a large scale, thus leaving it as a niche field in research.

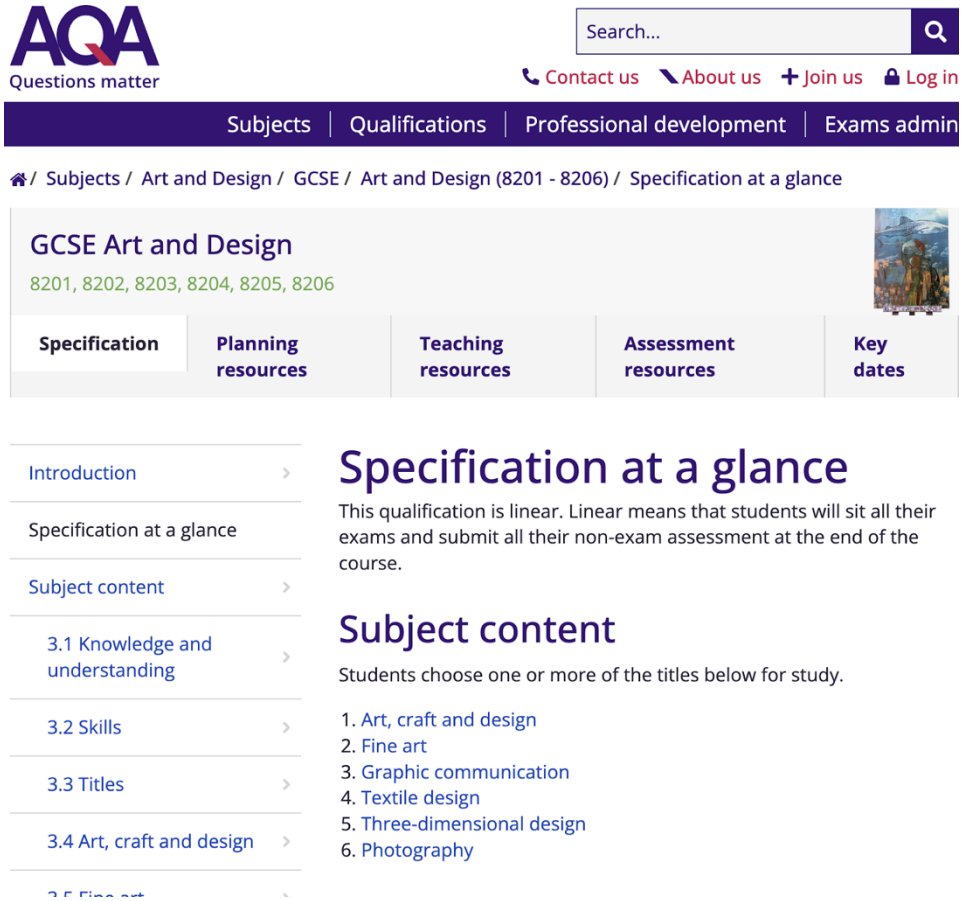


Figure 1: AQA Specification at a glance, 2023, AQA. Used under a UK Copyright Exception

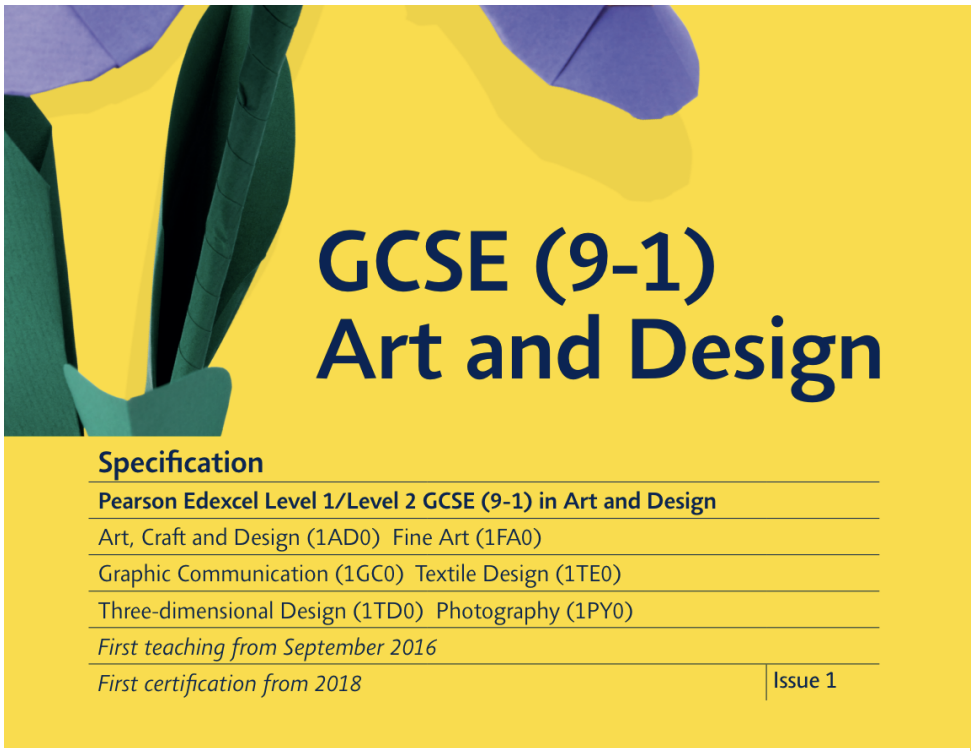


Figure 2: Pearson Edexcel Specification, 2023, Pearson used under a UK Copyright Exception

1.3: On photography, and photography education

Empirical research using photography as a visual method is plentiful given its ability to provide rich information and understand more about social phenomena (Tsang and Besley, 2020). It is commonplace to find studies across most disciplines within social sciences, anthropology, education, and health that employ visual methodologies in their data collection, familiarisation or dissemination, and useful guides are available to guide researchers on adopting and adapting the medium (Mitchell, 2016; Thomson, 2008). However, research that addresses photography education directly is scarce. As aforementioned, there are currently no subject specific teacher training courses for photography in England, only art and design (Department for Education, 2024a). This 'umbrella effect' is mirrored in the subject itself, being presented as a subtopic, or offshoot of art and design by English examination boards such as Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA, 2024) and Pearson Edexcel (Pearson, 2016), who are two of the largest examination providers in England for General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and Advanced Level (A Level) photography courses. The recruitment and retention of art and design teachers was at an all-time low in 2023, according to the 2020-2023 *Art Now Inquiry* (All-Party Parliamentary Group for Art, Craft and Design Education, 2023).

Towards photography education

The research aims to open further and richer dialogue about photographic education in English educational institutions and wider academia, contributing understanding to the teaching of an under-researched subject in a contemporary educational landscape. It examines what photography education could look like in the future. It takes a broadly poststructuralist approach, drawing on ethnographic and arts-based research, to address a significant gap in the literature. This gap is in part due to the position of photography education in schools, as it is often taught by non-specialists. The research contributes to understanding through the development of evidence-informed playful pedagogical resources for teachers of varied disciplinary backgrounds and learning environments. The preceding discussion and rationale led to the formulation of two research questions:

1. What is the impact of disciplinary understandings of teachers and their chosen pedagogies on photography education?
2. How does the learning environment affect teaching and learning in photography?

1.4: Methods and approaches

Arts based

Visual ethnographic and arts-based methods were foregrounded through an a/r/tographic approach and were applied in the form of collage and photography in data generation, reflection, conceptualisation and interpretation of pedagogy, curriculum and the learning environment.

Visual methods can assist in making sense of information that language cannot (Moss and Pini, 2016). Supporting this notion, Eisner states, 'knowledge or understanding is not always reducible to language… Thus, not only does knowledge come in different forms, but the forms of its creation differ' (2008, p.8). I was drawn to Rifeser and Ros I Solé's (2024) definition of language as 'lived intensity and energy, a constant flow of affect that connects us to things' (p.222). The interconnection of creative processes with other communicative methods has brought into question language's abilities in 'communicating, knowing and being' (Harvey, et al., 2022, p.102). Arts-based research 'beyond and besides language' (Harvey et al., 2022, p.102) disrupts what are thought of as disciplinary borders, and instead acknowledges the deep intertwining of identities (artist-researcher) that may come together in the 'power of the collective' (Harvey et al., 2022, p.103).

Image 3: Research Approach Planning Collage, author's own, 2023

Writing as method

Using writing as a method allows for the formation of new knowledge around the people, places and thoughts that occurred during the research (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2008). Rather than solely existing as the tool for communicating research, writing is to be considered an integral part of the creative meaning making process (St. Pierre, 2015). The work is interjected by selected quotations from autoethnographic

vignettes, which are presented in boxes throughout the thesis, and the full context of which can be found in section 6.4 Autoethnographic vignettes highlighted observations and the lived experience of the research journey through creative writing, and the way that the three key areas of teacher disciplinary background, pedagogy/curriculum and learning environment were interlinked. The vignettes can be viewed as a thread, sewing a narrative through the liminal spaces of the research journey. At times, this narrative is personal, sometimes creatively written, and at other times as elements of academic style writing punctuated with musings. When imagined as threads, the bringing together of the vignettes can be seen to create their own surface (Ingold, 2010), in a similar way that the bringing together of paper ephemera and materials can become pieces of collage.

Rhizomatic thinking suggests that ideas can be interwoven and tangled, rather than growing from a single origin (Deleuze and Guattari, 1976). If the vignettes presented here were read separately from the academic text that accompanies them, the reader would still be able to gain an understanding of the research process. However, doing so would present a more abstract or creative interpretation, just as if the reader were to view only the photographs or collages.

Vignettes are clearly marked with a date, and a box and can be found in the following sections (1.5, 1.8, 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 5.1, 5.3, 6.1, 6.3, 8.1, 10.2). They are placed chronologically in the thesis and can aid a deeper understanding of the research. The wider discussion, rationale and theoretical reasoning for using writing as a method in this way, can be found in section 6.4.

Poststructuralist Thinking

The research takes a broadly poststructural approach. I chose poststructuralism as it affords questioning and reordering of photography education's existing structures (see section 3.1). Through this poststructural disassembling, the notion that photography education is not restricted to planning, delivery and assessment of pre-determined content but rather is shaped, moulded and frequently broken down by the wider, tangible and intangible experiences brought to, in, or by a photography classroom.

Philosophical understandings of poststructuralism, including destabilising meaning and language through deconstruction of preconceived concepts (Derrida, 1976), allowed me to explore the meaning of language and terms used in photography education, and to unpick the details of what aspects make up a photography teacher, the learning environment and overall model of education. In addition, key aspects of poststructural thinking have a close relationship with that is considered 'creative thinking', or 'creativity' which for this research, broadly encompasses the definition of pedagogical activities of teaching and learning in photography education. Deleuze and Guattari are considered poststructural in their open ended, non-hierarchical rhizomatic approach, which is like the open-ended approach that is encouraged with the creative

process (Hallward, 2006). Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) emphasises the use of multiplicities, the active questioning of what we consider fixed meaning, both concepts that equally could be descriptions of the creative process. Poststructural thinking has further framed this inquiry in relation to aspects beyond the theoretical underpinnings - assemblage theory (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) is used as a method of visualising photography education, both now and as a future concept (outlined in 3.4, 8.1). Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari's rhizoanalysis (1987) (outlined in section 3.3) and Irwin's a/r/tographic notion of *becoming* (2013) (outlined in section 5.4) are used as analytical tools for interpreting the data, and both tools encourage the examination of the liminal spaces between concepts and guide us to 'look in between' the assemblage blocks of photography education (Brooke et al., 2024, p.4).

A/r/tography (Irwin, 2013) is employed to theorise my role as artist, researcher and teacher (artist/researcher/teacher making up the a/r/t in a/r/tography), and can be considered poststructural, given the multi-faceted changing role that it embodies. The a/r/tographer's changing identities work side by side rather than in a hierarchical fashion, and this can also be thought of as rhizomatic, bringing the frame of reference to Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomes (1987). An a/r/tographic approach encourages utilising arts-based methods for the researcher to think through inquiry using a similar approach to that of creative endeavour (Heaton, 2018; Irwin, 2013). A/r/tography presents a way of applying the skills learned in creative education and practise to social sciences, and by doing so, allows thinking, process and inquiry to be completed in a creative manner through the employment of creative methods (Springgay et al., 2005). As an artist who uses collage, photography and visual thinking to understand, navigate and visualise the everyday, it was appropriate to utilise these methods of data collection, reflection, conceptualisation and interpretation to provide understanding that previously may have only been 'passively comprehended' (Butler-Kisber and Poldma, 2010, p.3) (outlined further in section 5.5 and 6.5).

1.5: Research Positionality

Cutting and pasting

St. Pierre (2024) comments that when doctoral students come to begin their research, they are already equipped with expertise which they can harness to delve deeply into their chosen field. She says, 'they have already begun their studies - they have been 'doing' for some time' (2024, p.20). For me, that 'doing' has been happening since 2012 (when I began my initial teacher training - section 1.5) as I have been interacting closely with the learning environment of photography education, working with fellow colleagues, with students, with curriculum, with pedagogy, with teaching and learning - as a teacher of photography. Alongside this role, I have developed as a practising artist working mainly with collage, photography and writing. The roles of photography teacher and artist have often been intertwined, given the close relationship between disciplinary specialism and my personal creative interests. My creative work deals with themes of the banal and the mundane and interprets everyday situations as pieces of work that intend to cast a

Image 4: Fake Trees in Arcades (2020) Author's own. Self-published book.

Image 5: Fake Trees in Arcades, Photograph of Tree (2020) Author's own.

different light on accepted perceived meaning, or to disrupt learned knowledge of an area of life perhaps overlooked or taken as a tacit and therefore fixed structure, being rarely questioned. I have made handmade books about houseplants and how we interact with them (Garden Book Club, 2014, fig.3), made collages about the banalities of the Covid-19 lockdown into newspapers (*One Day Closer to Normal*, 2020, fig.7), and have invited others to write their diaries as part of a wider collaboration. I have made books on the use of fake trees in seaside amusement arcades (*Fake Trees in Arcades*, 2020; see images 4-6) and to understand more about how people deal with bereavement through inheritance of seemingly very unextraordinary objects (*Foreign Stamps*, n.d, fig.5). I have often written essays to accompany the works, on a wide range of subject matter including the phenomenon of mourning fictional television characters such as Pat Butcher from Eastenders (BBC, 2024), on how people move aside for emergency vehicles without question, on the lack of personal space when getting eye tests, and one on when a male stranger sat next to me in an otherwise entirely empty cinema. I like to push creative boundaries in ordinary ways, to look at things that are already there through a different lens.

Image 6: Fake Trees in Arcades. Photograph of carpet. (2020) Author's own

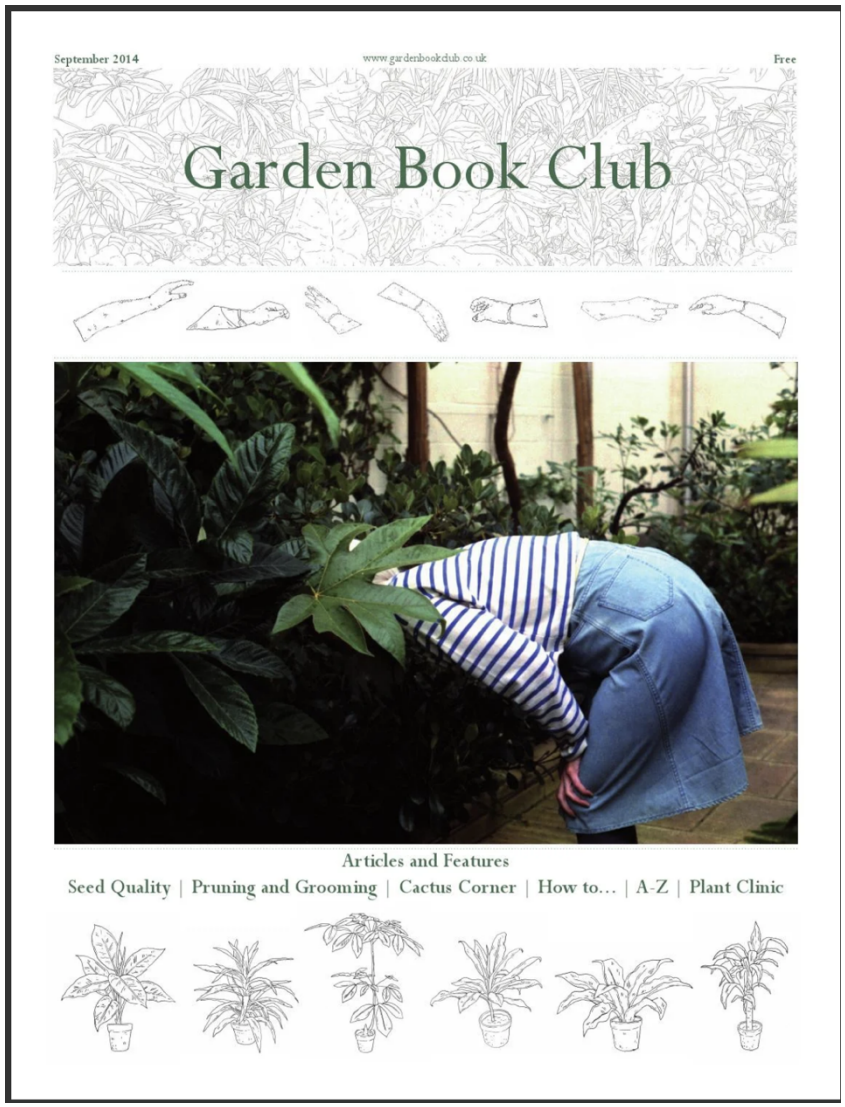


Figure 3: Garden Book Club Newspaper. (2013). Meg Wellington-Barratt & Jamie Mills

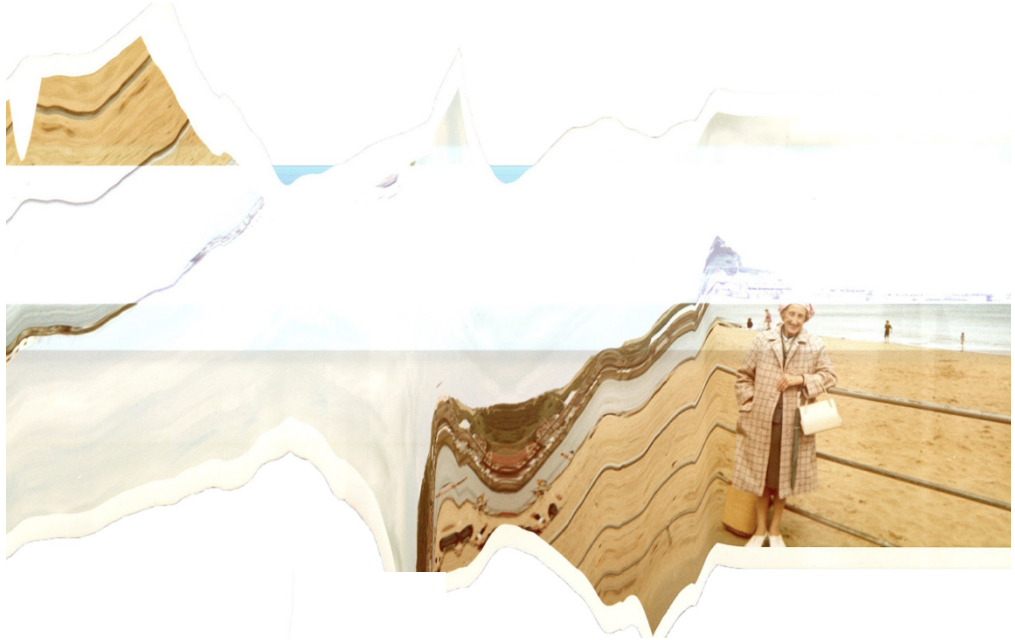


Figure 4: Scan from A change is as good as rest (2021). Author's own

Figure 5: Scans from Foreign Stamps (n.d, unpublished works). Author's own

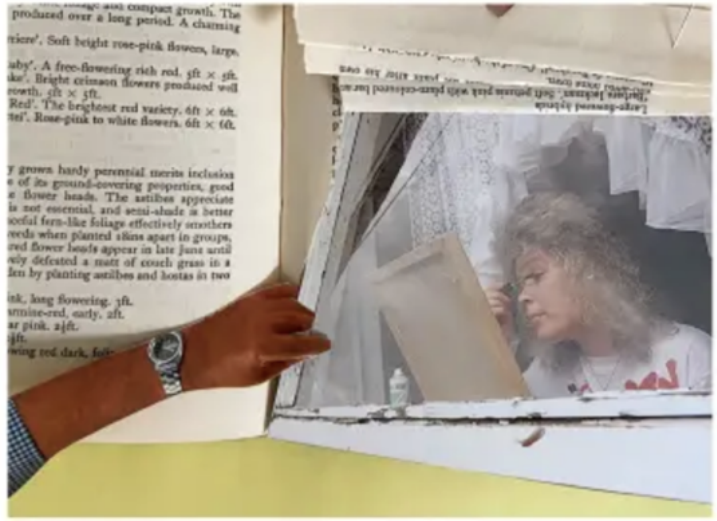


Figure 6: Collection of collages (2020-24) Author's own

Figure 7: One Day Closer to Normal Newspaper cover and internal spreads. (2020). Author's own

Shifting roles

Undertaking this study presented me with a new role of researcher within the aforementioned learning environment of photography education, to try and understand these social phenomena of the assemblage blocks. In conversation with Wilkinson, Irwin (2024) states that an a/r/tography approach allows the interchangeable creative mindset to view structures in different ways, and to look at significance, meaning and understanding surrounding photography education. When taking on the role of an a/r/tographer, the perceptions of space (pedagogical, physical and metaphorical) shift and fragment. Adopting the role of an artist, teacher and researcher means that roles are undertaken in a shifting power play- moving from facilitation to collaborator, to observer and creative contributor - all within the same community (Irwin et al., 2006). This resonates with me - I see myself as a creative contributor - I produce resources, lessons, and hold a learning environment in which I reflect my enthusiasm for the content students are learning in doing so. I see myself as a creative collaborator - working (and learning) alongside students to engage in their ideas and projects to ensure they are motivated in the topics and themes they choose. I understand my role is fluid as an a/r/tographer, and my positionality as an artist, researcher and teacher is that learning should not be bound by geographical space or time. Drawing together Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) idea of interpretation of meaning constantly flowing and changing, and the a/r/tographic framing of the research design Irwin (2013) allows for exploration between, beside and beyond the meaning of the assemblage and roles adopted in the research, developing understand when these spaces are 'open and vulnerable, where meanings and understandings are interrogated and ruptured' (Irwin and Springgay, 2008, p.106).

Vignette One: January 2023 (Appendix B): Straddling the gaps- how did I get here?

I realised throughout my career that photography was mainly being taught by non-specialists, and in my experience, by teachers trained in art and design, or design technology. This distinction was quite obvious to me as a photography specialist through my observations of chosen pedagogies offered and subsequent student output.

Working across art and photography, I realised that the pedagogy and curricula was almost identical in both areas despite being different media.

Thinking rhizomatically

Rhizoanalysis acknowledges that the breaking down of a system (photography education) into assemblage blocks causes ruptures but does not break or weaken the system, but rather creates new connections between the outcomes, or tracings. In the framing of this research, the tracings appear between the research focus areas of teacher disciplinary background, pedagogy, and learning environment. Being able to work in a

non-linear manner can offer an opportunity to move into a new 'evolving space of possibility' (Irwin and O'Donoghue, 2012, p.100). Problems, questions and the construction of concepts arise through rhizoanalysis, as Masny (2016) finds. Problemising data in this manner allows for the future of photography education discourse to be considered, rather than producing a finite and structured outcome without fluidity. It also allowed space to disrupt the vignette nature of borrowed ethnographic practices, introducing a messiness that is needed for new connections and tracings to emerge as part of the assemblage (Masny, 2013). Rhizoanalysis is used to interpret data in section 6.7.

1.7: Research aims

Addressing the gap of underrepresentation in literature aims to provide a basis to lead to further research into photography education with the hope of progressing the discourse of the area, and as a result, assist teachers of photography in their own confidence when approaching a subject that may be unfamiliar. Assisting teachers in the field to generate their own pedagogies whilst playing to their own individual interdisciplinary strengths and learning environments can contribute to wider collaborations within the photography teaching community and in rhizomatic curriculum building. This allows sharing in the subject and perhaps aspirationally, moving beyond the confines of the subject to aid in interdisciplinary skill building across wider educational reform. Introduction of resources and new understanding at the level of teaching and learning in turn has the potential to influence and strengthen teaching training models to meet the needs of photography education, as well as meeting the needs of students choosing to undertake it.

The research contributes partly to these aims through the creation of pedagogical resources that can be used and adapted by those involved in photography education, both teachers and students. The production of these resources has been conceived through an exploration of how a photography classroom can be viewed as an assemblage made up of blocks, and therefore deconstructed, rearranged or looked at differently to understand more about the impact of both the tangible and intangible aspects that make up its entirety. To accompany the novel way of approaching research into an underrepresented area, the research presents new visual interpretations of photography education through collage and rhizomatic drawings.

1.8: Structure of thesis

On the conclusion of the introduction, *Chapter Two: Photography Education* will provide the context of photography education in England and discuss the potential reasons for it being an underrepresented area in research, whilst outlining the key studies that have been undertaken in the field. It presents existing studies in the field. and the challenges that occur when looking for them. It outlines the value of photography education more widely, looking at the value of creative subjects at a governmental level in England. The chapter continues by outlining the context of photography in English schools through a brief history and timeline, to contextualise the research. *Chapter Three: Theoretical Underpinnings* focuses on poststructuralist theories of assemblage theory, rhizomatic thinking (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), then

introduces the a/r/tographic (Irwin, 2013) approach used in the research. *Chapter Four: Related literature* introduces research that addresses disciplinary understandings of teachers, pedagogical choices and learning environment. *Chapter Five: Research Design* begins with the introduction of collage as a tool for understanding, and a research design table stating the aims and objectives. It continues with a discussion on the choosing of ethnography, a more in-depth look at a/r/tography (Irwin, 2013) before introducing the research setting and participants. *Chapter Six: Methods* is split into two parts, the first discussing the use of informal discussions and thematic analysis to generate foregrounding knowledge of the research areas, the second presenting creative meaning making through visual ethnography, writing and collage. Chapter Six concludes with a rhizoanalytical discussion and the ethical considerations of the study. The findings of the research are introduced in three parts in *Chapter Seven,* starting with four themes that were revealed through the initial analysis. The second part addresses the ethnographic unfoldings, followed by the third part that considers visual ethnography and journaling. the poststructuralist and ethnographic approach to conducting the study. The second section explores the research setting and participants, and the third presents data generation, ethical considerations and analytical approaches. Discussion of the findings is introduced in *Chapter Eight: Discussion*, where the findings are synthesised into the two research focus areas. *Chapter Nine: Outcomes* presents the subsequent outcomes of the thesis as a result of the findings, whilst *Chapter Ten: Contributions and Conclusions* concludes the research through methodological, knowledge and practice contributions.

Vignette Two: March 2023, (Appendix C): The meaning of education

Disrupting education for positive reform requires the questioning of what we consider is socially learned through repetition of exposure. In this sense, at what stage would words associated with a more modern education such as ‘creativity’ ‘curiosity’ ‘growth’ and ‘play’ be introduced to these dictionary suggestions for similar terms? At what point do we flick that switch from the Victorian vision to one more aligned with forest schools, with free play, with creative pedagogies?

Chapter Two: The Structure of Photography Education

Chapter Introduction

This chapter begins by outlining the problems that have occurred when conducting searches for academic research in the field of photography education in England. The following section provides a timeline of key points in the history of English photography education and an overview of its situation more generally in arts education. This discussion assists in conceptualising the structure of photography education in England today. Specific empirical studies in the area are scarce, section 2.1 then goes into some detail about the few texts that make up the research landscape in the field. For ease of understanding, these are displayed in a table at the beginning of section 2.5. Before concluding, the chapter presents an in-depth discussion on one author, Newbury, who has contributed the largest research project in English photography education to date. The chapter concludes with a section outlining what is understood to be the structure of photography education; what it is, and what it is not (Peters and Burbules, 2004). Identifying the structure in this way allows the space for unpicking, assembling, reimagining, or decentring the model in a poststructural fashion (Derrida, 1976), utilising assemblage theory and rhizomatic thinking to do so (see section 3.1, 3.2) (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

2.1: Existing studies in photography education

In 2009, the lack of academic discourse about photographic education was highlighted (Newbury, 2009), and since then there have been few contributions to what is arguably, a rich and interesting area of education. Photography has been widely used as a research method in anthropology and wider social sciences since the early 21st century (Hanna, 2020). Its uses in research differ broadly, given its overall flexibility as a medium. Research employs photography as a participatory method, inviting new photographs to be taken to understand social phenomena, as elicitation to spark conversation and thinking amongst participants on a particular topic, to give an alternative expression of participant 'voice', or in conjunction with other methods to provide further depth. For example, a 'phrase search' on University of Sheffield's library website (Starplus) for 'Photography Education' yields in 138 results, many of which are outdated, or irrelevant to the specific subject of photography education (University of Sheffield, 2024). Of these 138 results, studies were included from the fields of dentistry (Kohli and Bhatia, 2023), medicine (Sentetac, 2022), science (Lewandowsky and Whitmarsh, 2018) and visual literacy more generally (McLeod, 2018).

Removal of the specific phrase search for 'photography education' on Starplus (2024) produces 31, 064 results at the time of writing (University of Sheffield-TUoS, 2024). The prevalence of photography in research, as demonstrated through this superficial search, may superficially suggest that research is being conducted into the field, meaning that specific research that wholly focusses on photography education may not immediately appear as an underrepresented area. In conjunction with this, educational research is also far

reaching, with studies examining all aspects of educational structures and models, both contemporary and historical, in a vast number of subject areas, and interrogating all that exists within. The flexibility and breadth of the two subjects combined make the area feel saturated, and often hard to navigate. The significant gap in literature demonstrates a requirement for focused research in the area, and subsequently, further discourse and understanding to be developed.

Challenges with searching

The rich and diverse use of photography within a wide range of research fields presented issues for a concise, targeted literature review. My own learned experience of photography as mostly taught by non-experts, 'umbrella-ed' under an arts education structure, is what partly led me to undertake this research (see section 1.5). Visually, I imagine photography education as scraps of other curricula, pulled in and patchworked to become the model to which I am accustomed. Researching the topic seems to be of a similar nature to this visual, where the subject specific material is scarce. To pull together a comprehensive and thorough literature review I had to cut, borrow and paste together elements from other disciplines. A thorough and rigorous review can be difficult to navigate and my approach drew on exploratory and 'look up' methods, following Gusenbauer and Haddaway (2020). I have included the search terms I used across the TUoS journal database, Starplus, and more widely Google Scholar, to first understand the landscape of research into photography research. This is a common search method for early career researchers, according to Nicholas et al (2017). The following list shows the search terms I used. It is worth noting that I am using a strict lens for this section, only including studies that are solely focussed on photography education. To borrow from studies that use photography as a tool rather than education specifically would make my research seem very fragmented and without a clear end.

Table 1: Search Terms for Photography Education

Search Terms			
Secondary photography	Photographic education	Photography classroom	Photography A Level
Level 3 photography	Education in photography	Photography in schools	Photographic pedagogy(ies)
What do photography students photograph?	Photography curriculum	What do students photograph?	

2.2: Background and Context of Photography Education in England

Once known as a technical, vocational skill to learn and practise, photography education has moved through many states since its early rise in popularity in the 1960s/70s (McWilliams, 2020). Regular wobbles in an already shaky existence can be attributed to a century-long debate on photography as a documentation tool or art form. Baudelaire demonstrates a common perception of photography in 1859 (in Frascina, 1988) in his work *Mirror of Art*:

> As the photographic industry was the refuge of every would-be painter, every painter too ill-endowed or too lazy to complete his studies, this universal infatuation bore not only the mark of a blindness, an imbecility, but had also the air of a vengeance (1988, p.19)

The last 30 years has seen the rise of digital technology and the introduction of the biggest image sharing network, the internet. The ease of sharing, prevalence and repetition of imagery on the internet still has some alignment with the debates Baudelaire and his counterparts were having nearly a century ago. Photography is a multiplicious tool, and as a result, its value as an educational area (along with the other creative arts subjects) can sometimes be brought into question through actions by governmental and educational stakeholders (Tubbs, 2013).

Changing Images (1996) aimed to embed photographic technology and learning into the general English curriculum to enhance and encourage the teaching of lens-based skills to keep up with a rapidly changing digital environment. Given its prevalence as a medium to record and document, the 'proper use' of photography in education (as a standalone subject) has been described as weak (Thistlewood, 1996). In contrast, Thistlewood (1996) states that a strong presence of 'passive participation [in education]' existed in a 'photography dependent culture'. This is not dissimilar to the current educational model, in which photographs are heavily saturating most aspects of our media consumption each day through media, advertising, social media and the internet. It is this multi-pronged approach to photography as a learning tool and as a subject in its own right, which makes pinpointing its true educational value challenging for those inside and outside the field. Its overall purpose as a standalone subject can be seen as messy, seeming to lack a true clear-cut identity.

Governmental support

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK Government was criticised for releasing a controversial advertising campaign suggesting those with creative careers may consider retraining to a digital, or cybersecurity field (see image 7 below), implying that creative careers were not as valued in the economy. Recent guidance for UK higher education funding set out by the Education Secretary has seen a focus on science, technology,

mathematics, and engineering degrees and a freeze on arts-based subjects (Office for Students, 2024), which was a further blow to the sector following 2021's 50% funding cuts to the arts (Office for Students, 2021). As a result, schools began to reduce hours for creative subjects in their curricula, prioritising in line with government focus (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2021).

A governmental NC and assessment review was taking place in England at the time of writing, with the general public being encouraged to respond (Department for Education, 2025). The current landscape of the arts in English schools was succinctly summarised by Thomson in an online plea for people to respond to the review and support the arts; 'Arts provision is at best patchy. Enrolments in secondary arts subjects are falling; specialist arts teachers are leaving the profession' (2024).

Image 7 :UK Government Rethink, Reskill, Reboot Campaign, (2020) The Guardian., used under a UK Copyright Exception

2.3: Photography in schools

Photographic education in English secondary schools largely follows a traditional thematic arts-based structure with space for both practical work and theoretical study. Assessment requirements of GCSE and A Level qualification providers such as Pearson Edexcel and AQA largely define these underpinnings of photography education structure in both KS4 and KS5. I now introduce the style of learning commonly adopted by schools following a GCSE/A Level photography education model. A narrow academic model means a measurable learning 'product' at exam level photography (GCSE, A Level, BA and MA), but the holistic benefits and learning that it often provides for students fall outside formal measurement (this is discussed further in reference to Bernstein's (2000) competence and performance pedagogies in 4.3).

A holistic and openly creative style of learning is not the framework applied at GCSE and A Level: institutional restrictions and expectations of meeting examination criteria clash with offering regular, open experimentation with no preconceived endpoint, creating an element of time pressure, with formal guidelines and institutional needs placed upon the student. Some of these expectations may be subconsciously placed on the student by their teacher or through the 'house style' of the institution, and may influence their practical outcomes in a manner which aligns with Rubinstein (2018, p.256): 'take them away [analogue photography] and who can tell the difference between photography and multimedia?' This is knowledge I have understood from working in and in collaboration with schools, and as part of the council for NSEAD (National Society for Art and Design Education), an organisation which regularly discusses and observes curricula choice making across the UK.

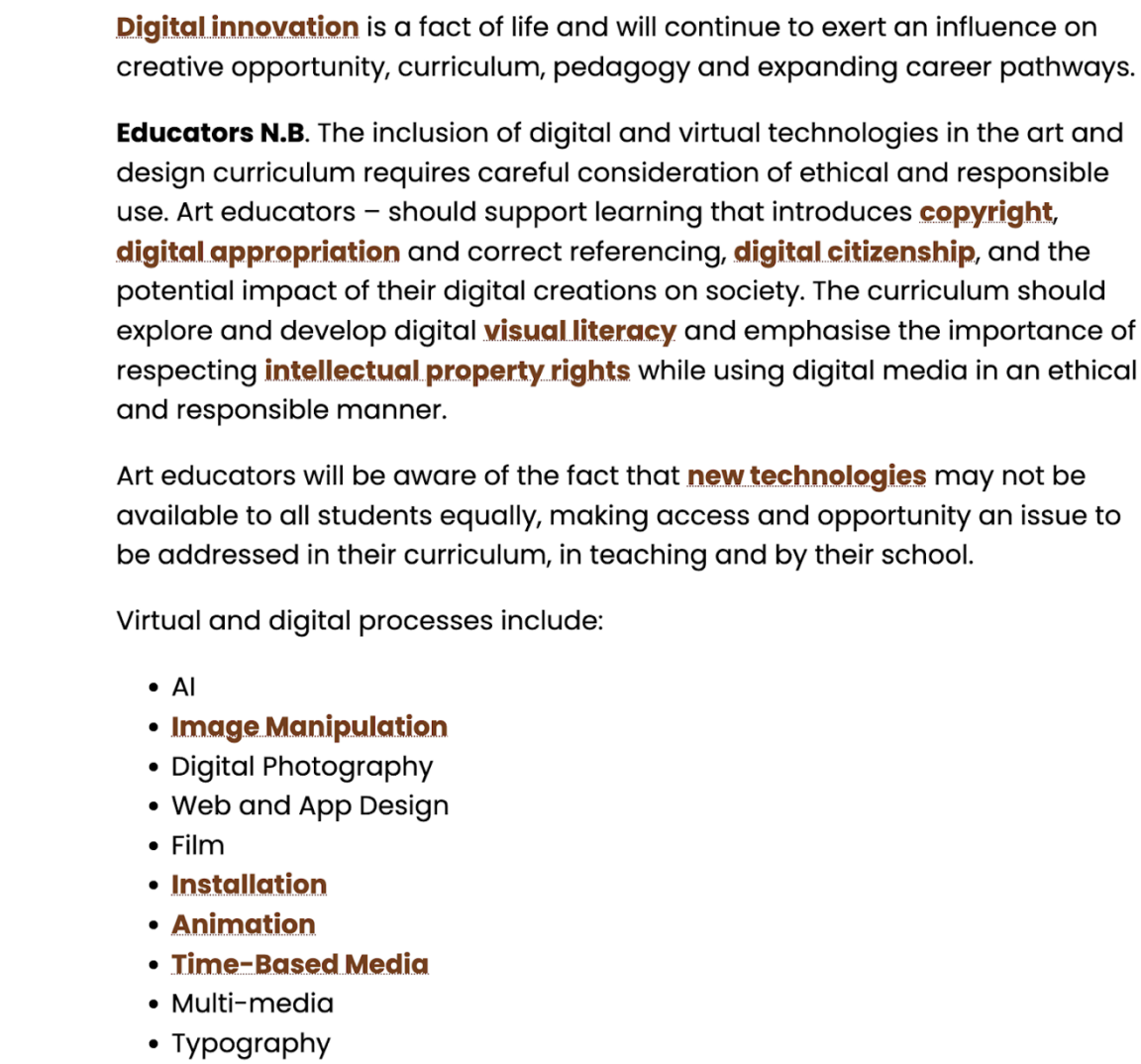
Interplay with pedagogies in art

In 2023, NSEAD created 'The Big Landscape', a thorough learner-centred curriculum toolkit for the arts which included photography as part of its digital skills, made 'by art educators, for art educators from all phases, all sectors, all nations.' (NSEAD, 2024). Here, the theory and practice model, alongside the examination criteria, are broadly used to suggest activities, skills, and balance of curriculum to reflect the practice/theory split.

However, photography is mentioned as a process of art and design teaching within the Big Landscape, not necessarily retaining focus on teaching it as a standalone subject, instead referring to it as part of digital innovation. This is demonstrated in the screenshot (taken in October 2024, NSEAD in figure 8 below, of the *Big Landscape* website (2024)). The accompanying text acknowledges that it is not a fixed curriculum map, and accepts that it will change, merge and be adapted through personal interpretation and changes in innovation (NSEAD, 2024). In this doctoral thesis I adopt and value collaboration between educators, and therefore the multiplicities that occur as a result of interpretation of such resources are only to be encouraged, shared, critiqued and developed. To contrast this interconnectedness with art education, Brake (1996) describes photography as being trapped within it, and these boundaries as not being sufficient for the educational potential of photography as a medium.

It has been suggested that the failings of photography education are associated with its inability to realise its consistent educational value and its known potential within the school environment (Brake, 1996). It was hypothesised that photography education would gain its own value by sharing good practice, whether it be in a school-based environment or smaller creative initiatives (Brake 1996). He says of photographic education; 'Photography crosses all subject boundaries and key stages of percipient development. What more genuinely educational medium could there possibly be?' (Brake, 1996, p.8). In contrast to the consistent interconnection with art education, Smith (2016) suggests photography cannot be taught in a

similar way to other subjects in educational institutions, noting the borrowing of pedagogy from art teaching as a direct result.



Digital innovation is a fact of life and will continue to exert an influence on creative opportunity, curriculum, pedagogy and expanding career pathways.

Educators N.B. The inclusion of digital and virtual technologies in the art and design curriculum requires careful consideration of ethical and responsible use. Art educators – should support learning that introduces **copyright**, **digital appropriation** and correct referencing, **digital citizenship**, and the potential impact of their digital creations on society. The curriculum should explore and develop digital **visual literacy** and emphasise the importance of respecting **intellectual property rights** while using digital media in an ethical and responsible manner.

Art educators will be aware of the fact that **new technologies** may not be available to all students equally, making access and opportunity an issue to be addressed in their curriculum, in teaching and by their school.

Virtual and digital processes include:

- AI
- **Image Manipulation**
- Digital Photography
- Web and App Design
- Film
- **Installation**
- **Animation**
- **Time-Based Media**
- Multi-media
- Typography

Figure 8: The Big Landscape, Screenshot from NSEAD website, (October, 2024) used under a UK Copyright Exception

Wider challenges and obstacles

Examination board requirements such as those outlined above subsequently dictate when or how institutions may consider change in photography education. Limited changes to photography education are also due to educators feeling alienated or disconnected from contemporary practices in their subjects because of to increasing workloads, administrative tasks or bureaucratic 'red tape' preventing them from maintaining professional autonomy, as found by a survey of 8000 National Education Union (NEU) members, in 2024 (National Education Union, 2024). Despite this, educators are expected to deliver the most up to date and exciting work available, remain passionate and invigorating, and therefore maintain internal accountability measures that cause them undue stress (NEU, 2024). Continued repetition and community regimes, such as school performance, can further amplify the pressure teachers feel to maintain the

momentum through their own performance (Rådesjö, 2018). Issues in recruitment and retention of teachers have led to fewer photography specialists available, leading to an over reliance on arts-trained staff (Douglas-Gardner and Callender, 2023). This issue could be systemic; a pervasive characteristic in that there are no dedicated photography specialist pathways in initial teacher education in England at the time of writing. The lack of specific teacher training in photography teaching and its lack of assigned value in the curriculum is a repeated narrative (Newbury 1995; Brake 1996).

Multiplicities in teaching

There is understandably little wriggle room for overthrowing and changing photographic education under such circumstances. Borrowing from an art-based structure means that those teaching it are often art specialists themselves. A lack of finance, recruitment to, or value of the subject in the educational institution means that one educator may be expected to teach several creative subjects, such as art, design technology, photography amongst others Douglas-Gardner and Callender, 2023). Although this is sometimes apparent in other areas of the curriculum, it is less prevalent than in creative subjects which are often seen as strands of art and design rather than subjects in their own right - something left over from recent past educational reform and the current lack of value in arts-based subjects (NSEAD, 2024). In a special Issue of the journal *photographies*, it is suggested that this convergence into other subjects in the future could either be a positive for photographic education or leave it in the background if other subjects offer a more relevant teaching in contemporary image usage (Newbury, 2009).

Studying beyond school

Despite the limited academic discourse, there is no shortage of students wishing to, or currently studying, photography in the UK higher education system. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is used by students to apply for higher education courses in Great Britain. I conducted a search on their website which demonstrated that there are over 400 variations of undergraduate courses in photography available for the coming academic year (UCAS, 2024). The HESA (Higher Education Statistics Association) recorded over 25,000 students studying 'cinematics and photography' in 2017/18 but have moved to a more general classification tool of 'design, creative and performing arts' in 2024, listing over 188,000 students in total. This is a small number in comparison to the 500k+ students studying subjects relating to business, but a considerable cohort all the same (HESA 2019, 2024). Socio-political influences and wider factors may affect photography education, as Smith (2016) comments on, such as the number of jobs available in the industry, the lack of value and funding by controlling bodies, and the dwindling number of facilities available in the field. These statistics do not consider the other non-accountable educational models either, such as adult learning courses, independently run workshops, summer schools, and unaccredited courses where similar content may be offered, but which are not of specific interest in terms of this research.

2.4: Fluidity in photography education

The photography educational models referred to in wider research are those that question or push the confinement of regular or more traditional models. Bard College (a liberal arts college for higher education) in New York has its own unique take on learning photographic language, maintaining the photograph as an object, and promoting seeing the world photographically, or through the eye of a lens (British Journal of Photography, 2018). In these stripped back cases, the focus is on visual language learning models which foreground self-practice and the tools to help uncover photographic voice, a notion that is largely overlooked in secondary school models given the time restraints and accountability measures. This contrasts with the unique hybrid model developed for the self-proclaimed prestigious photography MA programmes at the Royal College of Art (RCA) in London, whose courses are described as 'an expanded and interdisciplinary art practice with no fixed identity' whilst the foundational theoretical underpinning remains as contemporary art. (Royal College of Art, 2024). Despite students being encouraged to study the medium in its entirety, the interdisciplinary nature of photography is foregrounded, with tutorials from areas such as painting and sculpture in which imagery is treated as an object, an equal artform (Richon, 2018, p. 64). This embraces the interdisciplinary nature, rather than the 'discipline siloing' prevalent in school timetables (Brooke et al., 2024; Van Nostrand, 2016).

Traditional vs interdisciplinary

Photography has traditionally used genres developed in art and design to categorise work such as landscape, portrait, and documentary, amongst others. In a contemporary interdisciplinary culture, traditional categories and genres may confuse or bewilder younger students who have been raised to see photography as a fluid tool, potentially opening their work to direct criticism (Alexander, 2020). The Royal College MA firmly places itself in the 'fine arts' and does not draw on media or documentary studies (RCA, 2024). They believe in allowing students to gain a 'specificity of a medium', for example, being able to understand media individually to select what will best signify the meaning that is intended to be communicated (Richon, 2018, p.64). This reflects conflictingly on the fluidity of photographic use in the 21st century. One example of such use is 'passive' use, or using the medium as a tool, without planned artistic, photographic meaning, but rather as a means of communication, such as social media, or sending a family photograph to a loved one. Students are used to photography in every facet of their lives in this passive manner, with digital image sharing as part of the everyday. Yet in the RCA photography programme, they can select and specify media for artistic use, without categorisation, or movement into a more passive use of photography as a tool. By doing this, the RCA model still applies institutional guidelines and style by the active elimination of these elements into an encouraging interdisciplinary nature, albeit done in a more exciting manner (RCA, 2024). Encouraging interdisciplinary practice at the RCA may suggest that the differentiation between passive and active uses of photography are closer than perhaps preconceived, but it is the context and environment in which they are conducted or introduced that may have more impact on how photography is approached.

Photographers Broomberg and Chanarin argue for photography's interconnectedness: 'photography never functions in isolation' (Broomberg and Chanarin, 2018, p.66). They go on to state that 'To engage with photography you have to engage with politics, aesthetics, technology, economics and morality' (Broomberg and Chanarin, 2018, p.66), aligning with the reality that photography learning penetrates industry, education, media, and social lives. This fluidity is echoed in the technical equipment available to photography. From my own observations as a photography teacher, students do not feel restricted to digital SLRS (single-lens-reflex) and film cameras but have the confidence to include other technology such as smartphones, editing software, video, and process models such as collage, book work and installation as sub-categories of photography.

Having explored two styles of learning in photography education, the first being a subject specific performance model adopted by schools following GCSE/A Level examination criteria, the second being the RCA experimental model in which students are actively encouraged to work in an interdisciplinary manner, blurring the boundaries between the ideas of active and passive photography, I suggest that context and environment play pivotal roles. I now outline the history of photography education research, to provide contextual understanding and further substantiation for the significant gap in the literature.

2.5: A Brief History of Photography Education Research

Photography education in its infancy was considered much more scientific, with the 1881 City and Guilds qualification examination being based on optics, cameras and chemistry (Smith, 2016). It was not until the 1960s when photography was considered part of the art curriculum, that a diploma in the National Art Examinations was introduced. This could be regarded as the start of the photography and art education blend (Smith, 2016).

There are three notable periods in the history of UK photographic education research. The first was the 1970s. Photographer Andrew Dewdney was key to the formation of photography and media studies as part of Cockpit Arts in the 1970s. The Photography Workshop was formed by Terry Dennett and Jo Spence in 1974, and Arts Council England recognised photography as an area of funding in 1973 (Grosvenor and MacNab, 2015). The contemporary model of photographic education emerged into the mainstream education structure and, as a result, interest was taken in this area of teaching (Smith and Lefley, 2015). Photography education reform was spurred on by accusations by the so-called 'new photography theorists', Victor Burgin, Simon Watney and Jo Spence (Smith and Lefley, 2015, p.219) that it was 'uncritical and unintellectual' (Smith and Lefley, 2015 p.219). The 1970s also saw a rise in community photography and 'putting cameras in the hands of the people' (Grosvenor and McNab, 2015, p.119) which in turn increased interest in the medium and its importance in society and education. Prior to this, photographic education,

which had existed since the late 1800s, held its place in chemistry labs or technological teaching, and for a time embodied the guild style of master and apprentice passing on skills. Burgin (1982) and the Polytechnic of London were writing about and providing a new model of photographic teaching in higher education. Olivier Richon, head of photography at the RCA, was taught by Burgin (RCA, 2024), interconnecting two innovative thinkers through influence on photography education. This new model of 1970s photographic education, away from the technical and professional and more into the vocational model we know today, was influenced by deschooling arguments derived from Friere and Illich (1972, 1978), which introduced more holistic and skill alternatives into mainstream education (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2020).

Arts Council England has been key in encouraging photography in formal education, especially in the 1980s and 1990s (Brake, 1996). This push led to the publication of *Creating Vision: Photography and the National Curriculum* (Isherwood and Stanley, 1994), which coincided with the reform of the NC (2024a) and a renewed interest in image-based education and visual literacy, aligning with the movements of the digital revolution. Moving forward, the next key works can be found to emerge in the mid to late 2000s, when the rise of accessible digital photography use, camera technology, online image sharing, and mass image consumption was embedding itself into most people's everyday lives, putting a spotlight on how young people were being educated in this area.

Having provided a brief historical overview of photography education to contextualise the research moving forward, I now acknowledge the important, wider relationship between photography and visual literacy in education. To ease understanding of the following discussion, I have included a timeline of key texts and moments that appear in the history of photography education.

Table 2: Summary of key publications in photography education

Late 1800s	Photographic education existed in chemistry labs or technological teaching, often in a master-apprentice model (Hartog and Regouin, 1989).
1973	Arts Council England (ACE) recognised photography as an area of funding.
1974	The Business and Technicians Education Council (BTEC) was established.
1984	Victor Burgin contributed to a new model of photographic teaching in higher education.
1986	ACE commissioned research that would lead to *Creating Vision*
1987	*Photography in Education*, a consultation paper, was published to motivate changes in teaching photography in schools.
1992	Art education reforms incorporated photography into the National Curriculum (NC) and art education

1992-1995	Newbury undertook the *Styles and Sites of Photographic Education* research project, funded by ACE, assessing photography education across secondary, further, and higher education institutions (Newbury, 1995).
1994	*Creating Vision* was published
1995	Newbury's PhD dissertation, *Towards a New Practice in Photographic Education*, was published, examining existing models of photographic education (Newbury, 1995).
1996	Newbury contributed to the *Changing Images* project, focusing on photography's role in education (Brake, 1996).
1997	The first camera phones were introduced, marking the rise of digital photography (Hjorth and Hendry, 2015).
1997	Newbury published *Talking about Practice*
2009	Newbury revisited his earlier work in *Image, Theory, Practice*
2009	Rubinstein, in a symposium on photographic education, argued for a shift in teaching practices to engage students in the processes of image production, interpretation, and distribution (Rubinstein, 2009).
2009	A special issue of *Photographies* examined photographic education and included contributions from Newbury and Rubinstein, highlighting key debates in the field.
2015	Golding argued for the need for new pedagogies in photography education to keep pace with technological advances and changes in media usage (Golding, 2015).

Photography and visual literacy

Creating Vision: Photography and the National Curriculum was the result of a 1986 commission looking at ACE's participation in photography work in education (Isherwood and Stanley, 1994). This commission, plus *Photography in Education*, a consultation paper published in 1987, aimed to motivate change in teaching the use of photography in schools and enable understanding of how the medium could be applied across all curriculum subjects. From this important research, ACE were able to influence the inclusion of photography as an important subject area in the NC in 1988 and the subsequent reforms and art education orders in 1992 (Isherwood and Stanley, 1994). *Creating Vision* acted both as an instruction manual for teachers approaching photography for the first time, and also, retrospectively as an important text in seeing the initial hope and intention for how photography would be employed in the classroom more widely to encourage and develop visual literacy skills. The text is made up of example photography lesson case studies to outline potential models of practice for teachers. These examples form a framework in mapping out a potential 'ideal' framework for how those working on the project thought photography should look. The text also contains

student outcomes across both secondary and further education, unpicking how students could approach work and how it could be realised.

Turning now to my own previous writing, I introduce key research points in the field Visual literacy was not a new educational concept in schools in the 1980s and 1990s, yet it was added to the new NC (in 1988). This meant an increased interest in the area. (Wellington-Barratt, 2019). For example, Messaris (1994) introduced the idea that understanding meaning in film and imagery was not based on interconnections between the visual and language but being able to interpret visual communication even with no prior exposure to the medium (Plantinga, 1995). The meaning and usefulness of visual literacy in the art curriculum was debated by Raney (1999) who suggested that using words such as 'literacy' to describe the understanding of images may imply there are underlying 'codes to be cracked' (p.41) placing a barrier of elitism between, those who could access it, and those who could not (Raney, 1999).

The *Journal of Visual Verbal Languaging* (Taylor & Francis, 1981-1988) became the *Journal of Visual Literacy* in 1989, in line with visual and technological changes in multiple subject areas including education and the increasing prevalence of visual literacy as a common term (*Journal of Visual Literacy*, 2024). Digital photographic technology was still developing at this point. Despite this, ACE was in support of photography across the NC as a useful tool to enhance learning. The future potential of the subject was being recognised in *Creative Vision*, even at a time where image sharing was a fraction of what it is it today's society. The authors discuss the need for the student to be a: 'sophisticated consumer and a maker of images' (p.22), arguing that education mostly focussed on written and verbal skill building.

To summarise *Creative Vision*'s suggestions, three key areas could be illuminated: society, conventions and self (Isherwood and Stanley, 1999). *Creative Vision* mainly incorporates photography to aid understanding and documentation:

> …so whilst millions of people take photographs, very few of the countless billions of images they produce are widely circulated…at the same time millions of people consume countless images daily in print and broadcast form, yet these images are made by a very small group of individuals (Isherwood and Stanley, 1999, p.32).

Application and critique

It could be argued that the research presented in *Creative Vision* provided the outline for a subject specific pedagogy (or Hall and Thomson's signature pedagogies - 4.3) in photography, but there are some limitations to this argument. Two main criticisms are its age and its purpose. Although many of *Creative Vision's* suggestions are very much applicable to today's photographic education, the fact that it is from a 34-year-

old commission (at the time of writing) cannot be ignored when aligning it with the current research focus, which has aimed to situate photography education in a contemporary lens. Both photography and education have undergone many changes in the period between its commission and today, with digital photography, media and online provision becoming a constant and prominent feature of everyday life. In *Creating Vision*, computers are a 'new technology' to explore photography in 'multimedia programmes which allow collections of images together with text…where the user can take prepared routes through large bodies of visual and textual information' (Dewdney, 1994, p.69). The comparison between this description and the digital world we live in today demonstrates the space and distance between this publication and contemporary photography education.

The second criticism is the overall aim of the publication. *Creative Vision* aimed to inform teachers and educational professionals that photography could be and should be utilised across all the NC subjects. Although the research took place in the photography classroom and the outcomes are of photographic projects, the research aimed to make photographic skills transferable elsewhere, with a visual literacy framing. Their focus was not on pedagogies, learning environments or teacher disciplinary backgrounds, but unpicking how photography could be translated into other subjects. It is useful to the current research to see a documented photographic pedagogy as an outcome of research, as this is scarce in the field (see 2.2). *Creative Vision* offers suggestions as to where current photographic pedagogies may have originated, and how and where they may have changed due to changes in educational guidance and trends in wider society and culture. This is useful if any of these practices were to be recognised in the observations generated through the data for this doctoral project. It is also of use to identify unmovable practices in the photographic classroom, and the place of these in contemporary photography education.

Further ACE research

1996 saw another investment from ACE funding to promote the use of photography in English school curricula, in a project titled *Changing Images* (Brake 1996). The publication does not attempt to provide a comprehensive teaching guide but to 'inform and inspire' (p.14) teachers who have already committed, and to convince those who have not of the importance of photography in schools. In contrast to *Creating Vision*, *Changing Images* aims to develop skills of teachers in creative subjects, and to promote the use of photography in a cross-curricular manner. Out of the four case studies of *Changing Images*, all but one take place in art departments (the other is part of the media studies syllabus) and contain detail on pedagogy, creative outcomes and student/teacher reflections. There are relevant points in this text that relate to the framework of how photography was being taught in schools, and the outcomes that were a result of such teaching. The main criticism of the work here will again be the age of the research and the distance that now exists between the current photographic pedagogies (Brake 1996). It will however contribute to a framework for the current research to draw comparisons with, or to provide a foundational knowledge on which any

new discourse or discussion can build upon. It is key to note that *Changing Images*, *Creating Vision* and Newbury (1995) all originate from the same ACE investment in promoting photographic education. This may have influenced the aims and purpose of the research, and although this strengthens them somewhat as a complete body of work, it means they cannot be directly compared with one another from different points of view.

2.6: Towards a new practice in photography education

I now turn to an in depth look at Newbury, who undertook what can be considered the largest research project in photography education to date. The work that Newbury conducted in English photography classrooms has not been matched in size or scope by anyone in the field.

From 1992-1995, Newbury assessed photography education in secondary, further and higher education institutions. This project was initially funded by ACE and named *Styles and Sites of Photographic Education* (1997). Newbury developed this research into his own PhD submission, *Towards a new practice in photographic education* (1995), which examines the models of photographic education that existed at the time of research, concentrating on the professional and vocational. He examines the place of photographic theory in the teaching of photography, before exploring marginal photographic educational practices that exist outside of traditional educational institutions. Focusing on three case studies of photographic education, he explores the pedagogy and student experience of photographic education. Newbury's project aims were to assess the current photographic education models, examine the educational value of photography, and to put forward a theory of photographic education that intertwined theory and practice. Newbury's work provides a framework for this doctoral research project in placing contemporary photographic teaching into a wider context.

It has been observed that teachers who find themselves teaching photography can lack formal photographic training (Newbury, 1995). The impact of this on subsequent pedagogy and curriculum in the subject can restrict the uses of photography, often reducing it to that of the art and design elements (Newbury, 1995). These observations were made thirty years prior to this research, and yet similar scenarios remain, as aforementioned in the rationale for this study in section 1.5. The juxtaposition of contemporary vocational and traditional technical models of vocational photography is highlighted in Newbury's (1995) findings, in which students felt they did not understand what they were meant to be gaining from the conflicting exercises. The reliance on art and design elements in photography education has been considered restrictive for the subject, disallowing the space for it to connect the different areas of technological, aesthetic, social and cultural knowledge (Newbury, 1995).

Throughout, Newbury refers to the generation of photography as a school subject as something to engage students who were absent from school, disengaged in other subjects, or even to target groups of students who were particularly underachieving (Newbury, 1995).

When examining Newbury's work to critique its usefulness to the current research, the first standout point, like *Creative Vision*, is its age. It could be argued that photography education models and teaching have not altered extensively, and that the identified themes in his work remain today. Although Newbury draws comparisons between educational models in photography by examining the different case studies, it is key to note that his purpose for doing so is to evaluate the overall usefulness of that model. The critique on the pedagogies is useful in that it draws together the educational elements that, in Newbury's argument, make up a productive photographic pedagogy and ones that do not. This is important for the current doctoral research as it provides a basic framework against which contemporary pedagogies can be placed as point of reference. Many of the issues that are pertinent in Newbury's (1995) work are still relevant today. The consideration of the value of photography in a curriculum was considered in section 2.2, and the way such a rich yet far-reaching medium is taught is interwoven into the fabric of the research focus, rationale and overall questions.

Recent or contemporary perspectives

The future of photography education could involve embracing the digital turn away from photographs as a work of art and from the problems of authorship, and towards its path into 'economies of reproduction' in humanities and the sciences (Rubinstein, 2009, p.141). The digital turn suggested by Rubinstein (2009) may involve a change in how it is taught, and that learning in the subject should move to engaging 'producers and users of images in dialogue about the ways in which images are being manufactured, interpreted, distributed and stored' (p.141). The arguments Rubinstein, in his theoretical case, and Newbury, in his empirical case, make here provide a marker of what photographic education could be, and are pivotal to this doctoral research. If the 80s/90s ACE body of research forms the marker of what photographic education was in the past, and the current research forms the marker of what exists in education today, it could mean there is progression in the documentation of photographic education, and this helps to predict future trends based on empirical research rather than theoretical research alone. This in turn would align with the current research aims in helping to shape and map the future of photography education.

As part of the journal *photographies* Golding (2015) argues, as the researched texts on photographic education do, that new pedagogies are needed in the subject, and that this is in part to keep up with new media and advances in technology. Learning analogue processes in photography education is somewhat unique to the subject, yet is not consistently offered, or required in the subject. Students demonstrated an equal preference to learning analogue and digital processes in a study conducted by Macdonald (2012), illustrating a concern if new pedagogies were to favour new technology over those considered traditional. In

terms of support of this notion, there is no resolve or suggestion of how this could be actioned. Golding (2015) summarises a photography lesson in higher education but retains the focus on the student behaviour and reactions to the camera as a social practice rather than pedagogy itself. The final chapter focusing on education discusses whether photography is in the post-photographic era, and the uses of digital media in the subject. The authors refer to a London South Bank symposium on education in photography held in 2009, as well as raising somewhat trite practical points on the closing of darkrooms, lack of employment and tuition fees.

Key themes across the literature are the exploration of usage of the medium in education and the fight for its value, as seen in writing by Isherwood and Stanley (1994), Brake (1996) and Newbury (1995), or they represent an attempt to discuss its merit and place in the training of young people (Harton and Regouin, 1989). Working to the very narrowest of edges that only exists in photography education specifically: few empirical studies look at the relationship between teacher identity, pedagogy, curriculum and environment for photography in secondary and further education. Thus, research in photographic education exists in a type of limbo, in which scholars understand the need for research, but either little research is being conducted, or it is not reported on widely when it is conducted. When studies do exist, they tend to be higher education (such as Grove-White, 2003) or that of informal education settings rather than in schools. The age of key research projects means that the findings may not be relatable given significant changes in technology, photographic trends, and education itself.

The foundations of photography education have been built around the attempts to uncover its structure through the disassembling of technical education and the subsequent reattaching of art and design pedagogy and curricula. However, this was happening at a time where education more generally was beginning to adopt a more poststructural approach to meaning, as suggested by Raney (1999). More often, creative subjects were moving away from what can be considered a traditional educational model that focussed on repetition of key skills. Raney (1999) discusses the repeated life drawing of a cheese plant in the corner of a classroom, as one example. Instead, fluidity in how different media were used and how pieces of creative work were interpreted became more commonplace. Here, the focus of creative work shifted towards being seen as *texts*, with the ability to be read or interpreted rather than being seen as *objects* or finished pieces of *work* (Barthes, 1986). Earlier research (Isherwood and Stanley, 1999; Brake 1999; Newbury 1995) demonstrated an urgent need to provide students with tools to decode and understand a quickly evolving digital world through photography education. By outlining key texts in photography education literature, I have outlined contemporary contributions to the field that demonstrate the need for new approaches to understanding context and to rethink photography education.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the complexities and challenges that are apparent in photography education in England. Tracing its historical development and contextual positioning, the review of sparse academic discourse has highlighted a critical gap in the field. This gap emphasises the need for research that builds understanding of photography education in England in a contemporary educational landscape. Fragmented pedagogical approaches and lack of specialist teacher training come because of the consistent alignment with arts education. Specific research that does exist in the area was introduced here, with an in depth look at documents that emerged from a particular period of ACE funding, and research conducted by Newbury (1996). An examination of the contrast between traditional academic approaches, exam-based requirements and interdisciplinary models, such as Bard and the RCA, demonstrated the potential to harness and embrace the fluid nature of the medium.

Overall, this chapter has identified what could be considered the structure of photography education and has subsequently foregrounded understanding to aid the poststructural framing moving forward. Using assemblage theory and rhizomatic thinking, the following chapter explores how this structure can be decentred or reassembled.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Underpinnings

My motivation as a researcher is to be able to rethink the way we see and experience photography education and choosing a poststructural approach allows the space to 'imagine and accomplish' this aim (Lather and St. Pierre, 2013, p.635). Educators can hold a poststructural role by asking questions to produce different outcomes, and because of these outcomes, develop 'different ways of living in the world' (St. Pierre and Pillow, 1999, p.1). To observe and rethink photography education, the existing model needs to be identified, questioned, broken down and then subsequently reimagined. Adopting poststructural thinking through assemblage theory and rhizoanalysis (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), allows this research to look in the liminal, around and through familiar structures, and help view them not as complete and finite discourse, but discourse with a level of disruption.

3.1: Poststructuralist thinking

These well-trodden models can be reconstructed, reconsidered, or in Derrida's terms, 'reinterpreted, re-stored, reinscribed' (1995, p.256). To determine what photography education is, or how it comes to exist, a poststructuralist framework enables natural shifts in methodological thinking. The use of poststructural lenses allows the freedom to shift and mould to the needs of the research as it develops, for it to be adaptive and ensure that I am not to be 'frozen by uncertainty' when the research takes any unexpected turn (McWilliam, 1997, p.2). The freedom and adaptability allow the opportunity for the ideas and interpretations that result from the research to defy categorisation or potentially disrupt what we as researchers have been trained to understand as conventional research.

Research that takes an interdisciplinary methodological approach can 'allow methods and approaches to emerge and evolve responsively (Harvey et al., 2022, p.105). This is an argument that Sheurich (1997) raises about the most progressive researchers still relying on conventional research methods due to the training that is imposed or expected in research. Taking a poststructural approach to research could be likened to adaptive and progressive pedagogies (see section 4.3) in teaching that centre the student's needs in the flexibility and choice of teaching, often favoured by arts-rich schools (Thomson et al., 2019). My own teaching experience has largely been built on the preference of adaptive and progressive pedagogies, something that I feel was gained during my non-subject specific teacher training, and because of photography seeming to borrow from other subject models. Initial teacher training is not available specifically in photography education, so a rigid framework cannot even be sought at the stage of pre-service teachers in the subject. Photography education lacks specific formal framing in pedagogy or curriculum but instead borrows from a model mostly based around 'process-based experiences' in art and design (NSEAD, 2014).

Meaning

Poststructural thinking attempts to consider and disrupt to understand what Derrida (1973) described as an overcoded world. Education (more widely) and photography education (specifically) share the struggle of proving value as a 'legitimate discipline' (St. Pierre and Pillow, 1991, p8) and can be complex to explain to those outside of the field, despite of this overcoding and ongoing attempts to structure and maintain educational systems. Homogenisation has meant that labels such as 'teacher' are attached to a person who imparts education, but that image of a teacher is different in every individual's mind and may evoke very different emotional responses. Using the idea of a classroom in this sense, is a label applied to rooms, usually in schools equipped with tables, chairs, a space for a teacher, and books. But Derrida's (1973) idea of overcoding means that the label unknowingly restricts the environment in which learning is intended to take place. If a space (such as outside in the forest, or on a beach) does not fit with the things that are recognised as a 'classroom' does it mean it cannot be used as such? Before a human being takes on the role of a teacher, they are simply a human being. A human being who takes a job as a teacher, or trains to be a teacher, or carries out the recognised actions of what we understand to be a 'teacher', then assigns new values and hierarchies that are socially linked with the understood meaning of a teacher (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). A space in a forest that exists as 'just' a forest could be another example. If a teacher takes a class there and undertakes the act of teaching and learning, it becomes a learning space, assigning new values and hierarchies to it; teachers then having to perform risk assessments, pre-visits, applying the ritual and rules to a new environment, simply due to the new implied meaning. Uprooting meaning in this way shifts and changes what we understand the structure of education to be and helps recognise a model of photography education. Considering the roles in a poststructuralist way more generally allows for creative freedom in pedagogical and curricular choice making, as it allows meaning to shift and alter (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980).

Making, breaking

Unfamiliar words or the invention of altogether new vocabulary, may be associated with new areas in poststructuralist work. To disrupt, the conventional meaning that is attached to certain concepts first needs to be established, and in the case of this research, that is the meaning of photography education and its associated terms (Belsey, 2002). Poststructuralism can be defined as a reordering of conceived thought, or perceived structure, by examining and analysing binaries, or the makeup of the structure in theory and practice (Dillet, 2017). Education is a structure around learning where 'nothing is ever the same; nothing ever exists' (St. Pierre, 2016, p.8). The very act of imposing disciplines in education self-perpetuates the invention of systems and codes to maintain a structure, or a consistency in any one area (St. Pierre, 2016). Imposition of systems and codes leads to a state of not knowing where to turn when interdisciplinary practices come to the fore and gives the idea of breaking boundaries that did not exist in the first place. The learned conventions and codes around educational subjects leave a sense of fear when control and rigidity is not

apparent. Being able to establish and recognise new approaches to photography education through poststructural assemblage theory and rhizomatic thinking may produce 'an education-to-come we might desire' (St. Pierre, 2016, p.9).

Vignette Three: May 2023, (Appendix D) Thoughts on Derrida's text speech and writing- language, lexicon and meaning

The application of meaning and interpretation is laced in the reader's personal experience, or their standpoint, or their upbringing, or their background, or any particular value or belief that they knowingly or unknowingly place onto the written word, or as Bojesen (2021) comments 'writing and teaching may reach destinations for which they were not explicitly intended' (p.118).

3.2: Assemblage Theory

Assemblage theory (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980) gives agency to 'wholes and parts' (Walker, 2015, p.195) and the complex heterogeneous processes of photography education that are constantly in flux. Assemblage theory is central to this study, as education, and what happens within educational spaces, is not and cannot be predetermined. There is an emphasis that power, relationships, space and objects are in fact part of systems that are not fully stable but are consistently being shaped and reshaped (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). An assemblage is not merely a collection of randomly thrown together objects, things or concepts, but rather an arrangement of 'two or more semi-autonomous formations' (Buchanan, 2021). Continuing the definition following Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the assemblage of formations should be subject to changing and moveable organisational structure, or a hierarchy. Thus, with the fluctuation of power within the assemblage, the overall outcome changes. The outcome is what subsequently defines the combination as an assemblage, not the combination itself (Webb, 2013). In the case of this research, the assemblage blocks of teacher background, learning environment and pedagogy move and shift from day to day.

Teacher disciplinary background may not be subject to change overnight, but how the teacher chooses to apply their training and own experiences on photography education will differ depending on mood, and elements of the day such as time, weather, small seemingly insignificant events such as traffic, or an important memorable date. The pedagogy that is chosen may be affected by these micro changes to the day, or perhaps because of the content being taught, or the number of students in that class, or the time of year when it is being taught. Learning environment may seem static, but facilities change; the temperature of the room, the seating, positioning of peers with one another, and the directed activity within the space. All these elements may change and shape which block of the assemblage is more powerful at any given time, shifting dependencies on one another. Without the organisational structure, the assemblage may become seen as

'an ever-growing heap of fragments' without any interconnectedness or reason for remaining together (Buchanan, 2021, p.119).

The idea of assemblage has been likened to art education models (Walker, 2015) through the combining of creative materials with unintended or unpredictable outcomes. The materials, whether they are cameras and photographs, paints and easels or thread and fabric, are used in different ways to produce different creative pieces (or in the case of this research, collage). There is a small warning in Buchanan's work however, that it is easy to state that the formations within an assemblage are interconnected, without stating how they are interconnected. Without doing so, it can mean that the assemblage returns to its original state of a randomly thrown together group of things.

Desire

Desire, in the theory of Deleuze and Guattari (1980) is not the wanting of something but rather can be seen as a productive force that helps build and construct everyday realities. Desire, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1980), is the element that separates the idea of assemblage from being simply seen as a system. The students who pursue an education in photography, as well as society's need for conceptual, technical and visual understanding of photography, provide purpose and a need for the assemblage of photography education to exist. Synthesising or arranging desire is a subconscious process. Motivation for education, whether it be for the student, the teacher, the institution, and whether this is holistic or led by outcome and assessment, is the productive force behind the shaping of photography education (Bernstein, 2000). Conscious synthesising affects and changes the assemblage, and the assemblage itself is useless without the desire. Assemblage theory relies on the content and expression to work rhizomatically, rather than in a hierarchical fashion, with each part having equal or at least changeable influence or importance at any one time.

Content and expression

Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory (1987) comprises a dual process; content and expression. Content is defined as the aspects that the assemblage is made up of (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980) and in my research, these are the blocks of photographic education (teacher disciplinary background, pedagogy/curriculum, learning environment). Expression is the way the content is organised, expressed and arranged. In my research, expression is the teaching and learning, environmental influence (such as the weather, or time of day), the institutional opportunities and obstacles, and on a wider level, any socio-political influence on education as a whole expression (teaching/learning of photography). Removing, increasing, decreasing or inputting blocks changes how the assemblage functions, or what retains importance at that particular point in time. Questions arise from the movement of assemblage blocks, such as *how does the time of day affect photography education, what about the placement of the classroom in the wider building? Does the term*

affect how it is taught and the content learned? Combining the content, expression and desire of the photography education assemblage blocks would, in Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) view, change the outcome each time.

Relative invariance means that the assemblage of the content and expression produces hugely varied outcomes. There is an intention of the content within education, which could be described through Bernstein's pedagogic theory model as either intending for *competence* in student knowledge, or *performance* in assessment and examination outcome (2000). Expression, dependent on the key variables (teacher identity, pedagogy and environment) does not dictate a predictable outcome, however stringent or strict the content model may be. Education, when considered here as content, does not and is unable to produce itself, therefore the content that makes up the educational model can be considered assemblage, and given that photographic education, and the arts subjects more generally, are often not defined by its individual components or skills, but rather by its outcomes, examination results and value or place in the school curriculum. Assemblages are also often miscommunicated as interlinking ideas, when they do not necessarily need to be interconnected to have a relationship with, or impact on, one another. This is like a rhizomatic structure (DeLanda, 2016), discussed in the next section.

3.3: Education and Rhizomes

This section introduces how photography education can be understood using Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic theory. The use of rhizomes and rhizoanalysis is discussed methodologically in section 6.7. Deleuze and Guattari describe rhizomes using the metaphor of grass, which 'connects any point to any other point' (1987, p.21). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) highlight the lack of beginnings or endings, and the way that rhizomes can be entered (and departed from) at many points, whilst remaining interconnected. I define a rhizome in previous writing as the following. This is supported by a definition by O'Sullivan, who describes it as an 'anti-system' (2002, p.12).

> 'A rhizome in philosophical terms is a process of existence that does not come from a singular point of origin, growing from everywhere. Often, a tree is used to illustrate knowledge in diagrams. This is exactly the opposite of a rhizome, because once the tree is cut it no longer exists. A rhizome can be disrupted in some places yet thrive in others'. (Wellington-Barratt, 2019, para.5).

Maps, tracings and multiplicities

Maps, assemblages and rhizomes are considered effective in demonstrating, or developing insight into, areas that deal with temporality, change and complexity; in the case of this research, photography education (and creativity, and creative education more generally). I understand English mainstream (state and independent schools who broadly follow the NC) schooling systems would not typically be viewed as rhizomatic, given

their reliance on hierarchical management structures, procedures and routines. These aspects of education can be described as 'molar' in Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) terms, or the larger, more visible and prominent aspects of the assemblage. Despite intending to contain educational activities, these structures do alter and change and remain part of the photography education assemblage.

Rhizomatic education cannot be drawn and attempts to do so are futile according to Wilson (2003). To do so in a vast visual culture such as photography education would demonstrate the lack of boundaries, beginnings and endings of the possible content, pedagogy and curricula differing from teacher to teacher and school to school. Being able to draw a comprehensive rhizomatic diagram of an educational model only proves it is not a rhizome at all, Wilson (2003) goes on to argue, as it would highlight the limited connectivity between structures and subjects, and the contrast of distinct boundaries (lesson timings, policy and procedure to maintain order and control) thus supporting photography education to be imagined as a rhizome. New connections, multiplicities, and possibilities through new productions of creative work from students, and constructed through the choice of curriculum and pedagogy, are realised as part of the interconnected rhizomatic structure, or lie unrealised until/or unless the connection is made (O'Sullivan, 2006).

An example of a rhizomatic system would be the English primary education. Primary education learns topics across multiple subjects at the same time, with the idea that the repetition and exposure to the topic in different ways will embed learning in many different guises. Although teachers may suggest a starting point for the core learning to have taken place, this may not be the case for each child. If one member of the group is more interested in history than English, then their understanding of writing may be embedded in the former lessons rather than the latter. This style of interconnected learning is often left behind at secondary level in the UK, as subjects are then taught in different environments with topics rarely overlapping, unless an active choice is made by the curriculum design in the school. Often, the language of rhizomatic learning moves over to 'cross curricular' learning and is referred to when topics can straddle standalone subjects at the same time.

Rhizomes and collaboration

Being involved in a creative process has been said to be freeing, as it is not linear, and the encouraged processes of 'reworking, revisiting, embracing, and allowing change' (Brooke et al., 2024) are often seen to contrast with what could be described as restrictive, or prescriptive subjects, that are content-led and exam driven. When researching general primary teachers, Jao and McDougall (2015) found that those involved in regular visual art making were more likely to adopt and use pedagogical tools in their own teaching practices. Teachers of creative subjects have been united through the collaborative sharing of resources that they have both produced and subsequently participated in (Rådesjö, 2018), such as *PhotoPedagogy* (2024), a website dedicated to the sharing of contemporary photography education resources, and NSEAD communities online.

These types of collaboration could be described as 'rippling patterns of knowing created together' (Barad, 2007, p.388), emphasising the likenesses of interconnection, and constantly evolving processes that make up the fluidity of creativity in developing and undertaking photography education.

Photography education is constantly changing through constant image making, leading to the potential contextual references in the subject growing exponentially every single day; over 51,000 per second, according to digital imaging research (Rise Above Research, 2024). A rhizome of such a culture would be unwieldy, and impossible to maintain or navigate. Looking at the aspects within photography education blocks, students could themselves be considered rhizomes, having multiple influences from multiple areas of discipline whether consciously or subconsciously, and being nurtured and allowed space to grow or change direction. A map with a singular route (such as a curriculum map) does not allow the exploration of altering, reversing, and modifying, across time and space that O'Sullivan (2006, p.35) suggests. Creativity in photography education seems to map its own terrain by allowing the flexible space for these elements to occur.

Multiplicities

Multiplicities, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1987) are not predetermined and are neither 'subject nor object' (p.8) and (along with rhizomes) are never overcoded (p.9). Multiplicities are the indirect, in between results, or *becomings* of a specific aim or route (Webb, 2013). An example to demonstrate a multiplicity in educational terms is Honan 's (2004) example of curriculum policy being implemented in a school to create more effective teachers, but as a result producing a multiplicity of becomings (or processes) of that teacher *becoming i*ndependent, *becoming* inadequate, and *becoming* in denial. Thus, creating a mapping of multiplicities between two relatively transparent aims. Multiplicities and becomings are 'embedded in the perplexity of the situation…establishing the plurality of unpredictable connections' (Semetsky, 2006, p.73). According to Deleuze and Guattari (1980), 'a becoming is always in the middle; one can only get it by the middle' (p. 294), which bears a relationship with the undetermined start and end of a rhizome and the interwoven connectivity of photography education outlined in the previous section.

3.4: On photography education as a rhizome

To consider photography education as rhizomatic, it must adhere to six considerations set out by Deleuze and Guattari in their 1980 work, *A Thousand Plateaus*. The first consideration is the ability to make connections, in a similar fashion to the way rhizomatic root systems spread within the soil and connect with other rhizomatic systems. This is true of photography education, as it can be seen to connect to other subjects in a cross-curricular way. It can be seen to cross over with the origins and intentions of both contemporary and historical art and design education. If the assumption is that wider learning in a world setting, or lived experience of students, could be another rhizome, then the connection of photography education

intertwines with this through the use of photography in everyday life; social media, the internet, books, magazines, advertising, and for personal use.

The second is that photography education is heterogeneous, or that it is made up of elements or parts (the assemblage). This research is based on the premise that photography education is made up of wider governmental, institutional and examination policy and guidance, the teachers of photography and their interdisciplinary background, students who study the subject, the chosen pedagogy and curriculum, and the learning environment in which it takes place.

The third asks that the rhizome can have multiple identities that may resolve themselves into different intensities. This can be true of photography education. Students who study the subject may continue the subject into further and higher education, or perhaps further still into employment related to their photography studies. Students may take the subject in year nine, at GCSE or A Level, and leave it at any of these three exit points. Similarly, students may not interact at all with photography education and therefore lack any intensity. People may move into the industry of photography without a formal education in the subject, revealing another intensity that can be linked, yet not traced directly back to the photography education model. Rhizoanalysis explores the interconnectivity between the established ideas and themes, whilst rhizomatic thinking values interactions and different types of information (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988). There is not a structure where these connections may occur, and multiplicity of entry and exit points establish further thinking and knowledge making.

The fourth consideration set out by Deleuze and Guattari (1980) is that the rhizome is incapable of resolving itself, or that no part stands in for itself. As photography education as a rhizomatic assemblage is made up of the aforementioned parts (wider governmental, institutional and examination policy and guidance, the teachers of photography and their interdisciplinary background, students who study the subject, the chosen pedagogy and curriculum, and the learning environment), it cannot be repeated. Aspects of the assemblage change continually at different points. For example, students studying photography change with each academic year, and teachers may be employed elsewhere or undertake training that impacts on their own interdisciplinary learnings and therefore influences their chosen pedagogy and curriculum choices. Governmental guidance or examination changes may also impact pedagogy and curriculum choice making.

Leading on from this idea, the fifth consideration is that the rhizome is only able to be mapped out, rather than directly traced from point to point. As the explanation of assemblage alterations demonstrated for the fourth consideration, photography education can only be mapped rather than directly traced, as the teaching/learning cannot be determined by any one factor of the assemblage, or to any part of the rhizome.

The interconnectivity exists within the model, and can depend on 'discrete subjects, priorities and capabilities (Brooke et al., 2024, p.1) which cannot be accurately traced.

Lastly, Deleuze and Guattari (1980) suggest that the sixth consideration through which something can be deemed rhizomatic is that it is transferable and able to move elsewhere, not restricted to itself. The model of photography education as it is currently known is largely based on an art and design framework. Pedagogical techniques used in the subject are taught through non-specialist teacher training, so are therefore transferable to other models of education rather than being restricted to photography education.

Vignette Four: May 2023, (Appendix E), Maps, traces, Derrida and Deleuze

Thinking in a Deleuzian way and through the lens of assemblage theory I think of everything as tiles, interchangeable in sequence, order and hierarchy, depending on the need. But whilst looking at it singularly, students are themselves rhizomes, whilst the education model itself does trace things that came before, and often in too rigid of a sense.

3.5: On authenticity and authorship

The rich archive culture available to those teaching photography and art may suggest that art educators rely on a wealth of past images (Sweeny, 2005). I am conscious that making collage is a reliance on found images and reproduction, a practice that Benjamin (1968) would describe as challenging the authorship and authenticity of 'aura' (the unique aesthetic presence that an authentic artwork, or photograph, possesses). In poststructuralist thinking, it could be argued that the role of the author is no longer relevant, or as Barthes (1977) describes it, *bankrupt,* and that contemporary challenges of image making contest the conceptual distance between past images and new work. Barthes also discussed the 'aura' around a photograph, which can only be considered when the work is site specific in that very moment, rather than replicated, or reproduced mass imagery (Barthes 1977).

With the rising popularity and exponential growth of image making by artificial intelligence, responsible photography educators will have to consider the 'perpetual deconstruction and reconstruction' (Sweeny, 2005, p.49) even if authorship has not featured in their pedagogies and curriculum thus far. The importance of imagery or 'crisis of representation' in a consistently growing 'information-saturated' society (Lather and Kitchens, 2017, p.3) remains critical in photography education given the shifting meanings and 'uncertain and competing knowledges'. Seminal work by Walter Benjamin - *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical*

Reproduction (1935) is a text that is drawn on theoretically in the study of photography, to question authorship and authenticity of photography. Benjamin was a nomadic individual, both in physical geographical terms as well as academic engagements, and often would work with 'needed incompatibilities [that are] brought together to see against the grain' (Lather and Kitchens, 2017, p.3). Benjamin would use this unfixed nomadic platform to impact social transformation through 'emergent, multiple and unstable meanings of culture' (p.3). When considering the art of reproducing photographer work in the teaching of photography, Benjamin's thought can be used to recall that being able to replicate something is not the same as being able to produce the very thing itself (Benjamin, 1935). The interpretation has changed between the production and replication, in a similar way to the space Derrida (1982) spoke of, coming between the writing of educational guideline and text, and the delivery through speech of the teacher, where 'acts of transcriptions have taken place' (Lather and Kitchens (2017, p.6). Benjamin (2000) said: 'such lines of inquiry, especially if developed from the questions that students raise, would relate the curriculum to the lived experiences of the students and thus prevent the degeneration of study into the heaping up of information (Benjamin, 2000, p.43).

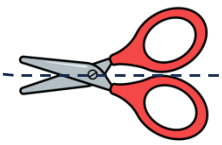
Authorship and creativity

St. Pierre (2023) tells her research students to experiment and create, and asks 'why would you want your work [your career] to simply repeat that of your professors?' (p.21). Pivoting this into the frame of the research focus, replace professors in this question with teachers, or photographers, and it opens a line of discussion regarding the objectives of a photography curriculum where 'artist copies can become the norm for student outcomes and teacher chosen pedagogies. Drawing a comparison between default pedagogies, resource making and the act of collage, it is interesting to think of elements of collage being temporary until stuck down with glue. Similarly with resources, they have a permanence to them, given they are saved on files digitally or on sheets of paper where images have been combined with words and compressed into a singular page. Butler- Kisber (2018) comments on collage, 'once stuck, images cannot easily be altered' (p.5), and states that creating and changing teaching resources that are 'done' may present hesitance to introduce further iterations. Brooke et al. (2024) explored art making practices in generalised disciplinary background primary school teachers in Australia, and found that those who engaged in art-making practices were more likely to include new pedagogies, or encourage 'intra-activity' (or, collaboration between the predetermined forces, in this case, teachers) when making them (p.11). The act of collage involves the ripping and tearing of other creative materials, that were/are pieces of work with an author, an owner who may be equally keen for them to remain intact. Drawing back to the idea of authorship in such works, the pieces are removed from their original context and therefore the meaning or intent may be lost or changed. Photographs (and in this case, collage) are defined by how the consumer responds to them, according to Edwards (1992) rather than their content alone. Similarly, the genre in which the work sits can also be decided by the viewer, as the photograph no longer exists in the moment in which it was taken (Becker, 1995). The act of capturing a

composition can be a deliberate message from the photographer to state that 'I was there' (Barthes, 1993) attaching an air of authenticity to the visual presented.

Vignette Five: June 2023, (Appendix F) thoughts on interconnectedness, collage and authorship

For me, the joining of information happens in the making of visual work. In order to make sense of what is happening, I need to pull things apart and put them together. I realise that positioning collage and assemblage in a relationship is risky, given the easily misconceived notion of assemblage being the putting together of things. There is a beginning and an end to the way I collage. I start with nothing, I gather materials, I arrange, I rearrange, I stick, and then often, I do not revisit them. The idea of adding to collage works is not something I would do personally, but I would be happy to collaborate on a collage if that were the intention from the start, moving the piece back and forth, choosing, sticking, carefully considering what would add to the overall value of the piece.



Chapter Conclusion

The role of a broad poststructural theoretical framework has been introduced in this chapter. Poststructuralism allows space for disrupting, questioning photography education whilst encouraging adaptability and creative freedom. As part of this framework, assemblage theory allows for the demonstration of interaction of the three key areas: teacher background, pedagogy and learning environment. The assemblage is shaped by the students, teachers, institutional contexts, and broader societal influences that interact within its assemblage, and the unpredictability of the subsequent combinations.

The rhizome's principles of multiplicity, heterogeneity, non-linear characteristics and adaptability were discussed in relation to photography education, and the way in which its application to the principles allow for the assemblage to be questioned and disrupted. Boundaries of formal education are challenged using rhizomatic thinking which recognises that photography education is in constant flux.

The relationship between authenticity and authorship is one that appears in multiple areas of the research. Tensions of originality, teachers relying on reproduced work, or work without authors were all highlighted, and illuminated further in the pedagogy/curriculum resourcing sharing networks that are now commonplace. The borrowing of pedagogy develops questions around originality and intentionality in photography education. The growth of artificial intelligence complicates the making of imagery further and asks for new

abilities of both students and teachers to be able to deconstruct visual narratives. The following chapter explores key literature in relation to the three overarching areas of research focus, teacher disciplinary background, pedagogy and learning environment.

Chapter Four: Related literature

Chapter Introduction

The following chapter is split into three sections, each focusing on a part of the photography education assemblage outlined in teacher disciplinary background, learning environment, and pedagogy. Exploring the complexities and 'whole person' of a teacher (Ball and Freedman, 2004) starts the first section. Then, a consideration of the education that the teacher received during their own schooling, before moving to the multiplicious role of being a teacher. Following this discussion, the impact of institutional power and accountability measures is considered. Finally, a section on teachers and the training they undertake is outlined. In the second section focused on the learning environment considers the physical, digital, tangible and intangible aspects and their associated potential impact on photography education. Finally, a section on pedagogies introduces traditional and progressive pedagogies and the barriers that teachers and institutions may face when implementing them.

4.1: The becoming-self of teachers

In a post-structural framing, the ever shifting and dynamic role of a teacher, made up of experiences, learnings and values (Bullough, 2005) could be seen as a constant state of becoming-self, with each new experience, or event, fragmenting what came before into new rhizomatic multiplicities (Deleuze, 1990). Simply speaking, the teacher could be influenced or moulded through co-constructions with student interactions, new pedagogical influence, further training, personal circumstances, institutional influence or wider governmental/policy intervention (Hoffman-Kipp, 2008). These co-constructions could happen to the teacher either consciously or subconsciously, moving away from the question of how teachers teach, and questioning more how and why teachers choose to teach the way they do, as the shifting identity is constantly folding, unfolding and refolding (Strom and Martin, 2017).

Teacher as student

Teacher knowledge can be regarded as 'absent' (Webb, 2009, p.7) as there are few measures of consistency across their thinking or prior teacher training, which further suggests that teachers' ideas of teaching and learning are constructed whilst the teacher is a student at school themselves (Morrissey, 2014). The influence of this embedded experience on pedagogical choices, curriculum planning and value in teacher practice is difficult to pinpoint or recognise unless explicitly looked for and explored in educational research. Bakhtin discusses the ideological environment being essential to how an individual's worldview and perspectives are shaped and moulded (Bakhtin, 1981, p.14). Teachers have been found by Dempsey et al. (2021) to put more power and interest into developing relationships with their peers than channel the energy into educational/curricular/school purposes. A strength in teacher confidence was found in those who can

maintain colleague collaborative networks (Noblit et al. 1991). However, in contrast to this, there is a suggestion that teachers share a trait in 'solving' institutional and curriculum policy problems, as this increases their enjoyment at work and helps restore power (Zembylas, 2007).

Teacher as artist

The artist/teacher/researcher moved between roles that 'create encounters that test their understandings of ways of being' (MacDonald et al., 2015, p.447). Teachers have been taught themselves and bring their own 'educational biography' (Irwin and O'Donoghue, 2012, p.106) with them to the profession. The formation of teaching knowledge cannot ignore the potential for their individual biographies to 'shape, extend, confirm, problematise, undo or make uncertain the knowledge that one has' (p.106). Adapting the role of both artist and researcher has been suggested by Biggs and Büchler (2012) to introduce too many pluralities to an industry that strives for accountability and consistency across teacher standards and curriculum areas. The unstable nature of allowing autonomy of multiple roles provides too many possible interpretations of what photography education should look like. However, if artist-teacher-researchers were discouraged from introducing further pluralities, then it may limit the potential of what teachers could offer to an education that needs constant review and reflexivity. The hierarchical process seen in Webb's figure of micro and macro environments (see section 3.5) disallows for the 'plurality of interpretations' (Biggs and Büchler, 2012). Being able to 'give the reader a sense of being there in the scene' (Erickson, 1986, p.150) is the ability to allow for authenticity in the research, and for the reader to immerse themselves in the process, rather than committing solely to a third person academic voice.

Not all photography teachers, especially if they are non-specialists, may see themselves as artists, as suggested by Ruopp and Unrath (2019). The role of artist may feel uncomfortable to them, and therefore they may be unable to pedagogically shift, either at all, or without guidance and resources to build confidence in doing so. The unfamiliarity with the role of artist may be due to their disciplinary background not being of a similar nature, or perhaps if they have lost touch with a once established creative practice, due to personal circumstances or lack of time to maintain it outside of their work and set of social circumstances.

Teachers, power and accountability

Schools are places where power, purpose and intention can be imbalanced through inbuilt hierarchies, societal pressure and schemes of accountability (Webb, 2009). These imbalances and accountability scheme pressures can discourage teachers from self-representing, or from bringing key strengths to their own chosen pedagogies. The 'professional identity' discourse around teachers has been decreased over the late twentieth century (Webb, 2009, p.2) with the intention of education moving further towards economic, political and labour requirements of the government at that time. An example of this can be found in the

development of the English Baccalaureate in 2010 (House of Commons briefing, 2010), or at time of writing, in 2023, current Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's suggestion of the 'advanced academic British standard' with no mention of creative subjects (House of Commons briefing, 2024). This has meant what could be considered neoliberal-managed-education (Darling and Mahon, 2024) has become much more product driven (or performance led in Bernstein's pedagogic model), and therefore teaching has become a more imbalanced profession because of aforementioned pressures and wider societal themes (Hellman and Lind, 2017). Revisiting the idea of teachers' corporeal identity, Webb says there exists a type of teacher schizophrenia, existing as the desire to teach, the love and passion for one's subject that finds its way into individual pedagogies and curricula, but only when the institutional and needs of management, government and society are metaphorically put aside.

Pressure and accountability measures, curricular or examination policy can cause conflict with teaching and learning motivations. The intended content of the curriculum may not be in line with the purpose the teacher wants to communicate in their classroom. This in turn may risk a lack of enjoyment in their role (Frondozo et al., 2022). Power play between the institutional direction and teacher expertise can become an issue when the teacher takes on the role of a messenger, being asked to deliver a pre prepared package of knowledge to the student with the help of 'toolkits', prewritten curricula or exemplar material (Chapman et al., 2019). Such practices may lead to teachers becoming a nomad in their own teaching territory, wandering within their own restraints or going against the grain of what is expected of them on a wider institutional level (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Some teachers may resist such nomadic thoughts which in turn then further affirms the lack of consistency across teacher pedagogical choices. The contrast between the nomadic reaction and the compliant reaction shows the conflict that may arise from the challenges of accountability tools on teachers (Wilkins, 2015). He suggests it may impact on the 'social purpose' motivation of so many would-be teachers (p.1150) and undermine the balance between personal values and those of the 'professional community' (p.1150).

Disciplinary approaches to education could lead to the belief that this is the best method of learning, given our continued exposure to it. However, a culture reliant on qualification and examination-based performance models of pedagogy would not be seen to advance more holistic skills of the student, such as creativity, critical thinking and sitting with discomfort, as Ingalls Vanada (2017) asserts. However, introduction to transdisciplinary processes and views in education shares closer relationships with some of the skills targeted in creatively led subjects, such as 'meaning-making, critical curiosity and resilience' (Ingalls Vanada, 2017, p. 111). Being able to sit with discomfort or ambiguity is a notion that is not often approached in an examination focused curriculum, as students are taught to look for the right answer or recall learned information. Lacking imagination, novelty or being able to find the solution after making mistakes, so-called failures, mistakes or mishaps leads students to 'find themselves ill-equipped to deal with problems with global warming, terrorism

and pandemics…' (Winner and Hetland, 2008, p.1) but those studying the arts 'are the ones likely to come up with the novel answers needed most for the future' (p.1).

Teachers and training

In the case of this doctoral research, teacher disciplinary background is the first heterogeneous part of the photography education assemblage. When combined with differing elements of environment, institutional need, accountability measures, emphasis on student success, availability or lack of facilities and so on, the outcome can be impossible to predict. Teacher specialisation is common in secondary education in England. Day to day, teachers undertake a wide range of responsibilities outside of their labelled job title, leading to aversion to the ongoing practice of specialisation (Morrissey, 2014).

Shulman (1986) produced a wealth of literature on teacher knowledge and identity, establishing that the tacit and explicit knowledge that teachers possess differs widely (Shulman, 1986). He suggests that the knowledge required of teachers could be summarised as the following areas: content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, knowledge of educational ends, and purposes and values. This knowledge is developed over the course of a teacher's experiences and background and is unique to each individual. Should one wish to measure the knowledge possessed by teachers in any formal matter, the quest would be impossible. Possessing knowledge in these areas makes for optimum confidence and ability in the classroom, Shulman (1986) determines, but can be built upon with the input of further training, learning communities and continual professional development (2004). Downing and colleagues (2007) support this notion, concluding that teachers need first-hand experience of the creative process to foster creativity in students themselves. Howard-Jones et al., (2008) conducted a study observing 16 trainee teachers who explored their own creativity through workshops, discussions and seminars, with findings demonstrating that this type of introduction and exploration into creativity by teachers may in turn help develop pedagogical models that foster creativity more confidently in their own classrooms. The materiality of Howard-Jones et al., (2008) findings are echoed by Irwin and O'Donoghue (2012) who comment that a practical approach could attempt to address a gap in teacher education where the focus is primarily on learning to learn.

Knowledge and policy

As well as traditional teacher training skills, Shulman (1986) stated that teachers should understand their discipline before attempting teaching, and a grasp on the differences in interpretation that students may interrogate in the classroom. He later said that teachers who ignore the product element of the 'process/product' and concentrate wholly on the 'learning experience' are doing a disservice to students and the aim of their education at that time. Shulman (1986) found that when the English teacher in his study

lacked confidence in the subject matter, she changed her pedagogical choices for more straightforward or predictable pedagogies, demonstrating the impact on pedagogy from teacher identity.

Given that photography is commonly taught by non-specialists, there could be a suggestion that safer pedagogical choices are relied upon, to avoid any uncertainty or unpredictability when it comes to higher level subject knowledge thinking. Being able to disseminate content is one aspect but being able to navigate conversations that may require field expertise, is another. There is an ongoing line of discourse in education that these alienated relationships have been exacerbated by remote policymakers who prescribe strategies for improvement in ways that do not always afford teachers professionalism, thereby reducing their agency as well as their morale (Angrist and Dercon, 2024; Ball 2002). *Curricular policy* is in place to maintain some regulation in schools, and in turn, regulation of what knowledge is being imparted to students by teachers, and how teachers frame their own values that may or may not be attached to such teachings (Apple, 2019). Webb (2009, p.12) suggests that curricular policy was put in place to remedy the inconsistencies in teacher education. However, independent schools in the UK have no prerequisites for following curriculum policy set out by the UK government (Department for Education, 2019). In the research setting, there is a commitment to follow the examination syllabus and the NC, which in turn may lessen the need for policy resistance in teachers in independent schooling.

4.2: Learning environment layers

Davies et al. (2014) conducted a systematic literature review of 210 studies exploring examples of teachers actively promoting creative learning in students, with a view to providing evidence for how teachers could be developed further to promote creative learning in the future. They found only 17 of the studies contained evidence of teachers actively promoting creative learning, and only 18 that offered further development ideas to improve this. In this review, Davies et al. (2014) identified several constraints in and out of the classroom that could be preventing or limiting creativity. It should be noted that this review was looking at creativity being fostered across all subjects, with no specific focus on arts-based subjects. When offering a development idea, Davies et al. (2014) suggest arts-based approaches, which indicates perhaps a higher level of creativity being fostered within arts-based subjects. This could be seen to demonstrate evidence indicating creative constraints are not as prevalent in teaching photography, given the arts-based approaches presumed to be used in creative subjects. However, this is not explored in the research conducted by Davies et al. (2014), but rather by a conclusion about arts-based pedagogies in theory. The study by Davies (et al. 2014) is a large-scale review and although this point in contradictory to my last, could indicate the lack of teachers in photography actively promoting creative learning, in favour perhaps for time pressured examination tasks, or behaviour management, as suggested in other literature (Wyse and Spendlove, 2007).

Collaboration

Cochrane and Cockett (2007) discuss a change in the balance between structured lesson planning and offering students freedom in activities, allowing the time for creative responses to take place unaided. Flexibility in organised learning has been shown to produce more creative results, and this is supported in studies looking at informal education in photography. Teachers who collaborate with their students on activities have been shown to generate more creative responses in students, as demonstrated in a study by Gkolia et al. (2009). This notion of collaboration is supported by Burke (2020) who suggests the repetition of collaboration of teacher/student in the creative arts maintains teacher confidence in allowing independent creative choice making to take place. The notion of repetition in teaching which only offers hierarchical pedagogies is unlikely to generate open minded Deleuzian style rhizomatic thinking, in comparison to practitioners who work alongside their students, as Semetsky argues (2004).

The physical

Addison et al. (2010) discuss the physical environment in which creative subjects are taught, describing the combination of social, pedagogic and physical environment factors that can increase or decrease the creativity potential of students. They discuss the idea that this control is, in part, in the hands of the individual who is constructing the physical environment in which they teach. The most suitable environment for creative thinking to take place is one that allows immersion, but also ensures 'concentrated, sustained and extended work' (p.65). Addison et al. (2010) go on to suggest this could be best achieved in environments that are unfamiliar to the student. This suggests the classroom as a familiar environment could be viewed as a creative constraint in photography education. The use of and access to digital technologies is mentioned as part of the creative environment. Ignoring them in a teaching environment in a digital dominated world may be perceived as a constraint placed on students by the teacher or the school they are learning in. Addison stresses that it is necessary to design a learning environment that 'both provides opportunities and encourages students to think and behave differently to the ways they have done before' (p.49). The school environment with its social opportunity and collectivism, he suggests, is a good environment for creative thinking to take place, as activity fostering stimulus, curiosity, immersion and dissemination of creative thinking, can be constructed. An interesting comparison is drawn by examining the difference between the world view of an isolated artist, working as a singular person in a studio, and the social community of a school classroom in a creative subject. Addison et al. (2010) suggest this is a supportive environment for creative subjects, as it provides opportunity for dialogue that questions social identities and shares cultural ideas.

Digital spaces

In a study exploring the rise of e-learning in teacher training, Burke (2020) explores the constraints and innovations on online creative art teacher educators. Burke found that even those teachers with experience were 'pedagogically unprepared' to tackle different types of teaching, such as delivering their curriculum online (p.1). Baker et al. (2016) state that in person, active arts experiences are an essential element for pre-service teachers who require real life student interaction to develop and remain confident in offering 'innovative and imaginative' (p.2) approaches to teaching for creativity.

Structure and routine

The overall framing of lesson structure - the length (one hour), order or general sequencing (starter task, content delivery, task, plenary task) and expectation (students to learn, recall or understand subject specific content) has been recognised as a default pedagogy (Thomson et al., 2009). Default pedagogies such as this example could be seen to come into conflict with the creative pedagogies that photography education may require, and that creative practitioners may attempt to implement. In line with the role of an a/r/tographer, disrupting the default pedagogy model could allow students and teachers to collaborative alongside one another, sharing a new educational space where learning and thinking could take on the interdisciplinary nature which Garoian suggests for the development of creative subjects (2006). It is suggested that the formal, routine-led structure of a secondary school can be seen as an opposing environment to the freedom required to engage in educational playfulness (Huizinga, 2014).

Creative spaces

Thomson and Hall (2021) discuss the notion of art classrooms having a different feel to them, leaving students feeling more relaxed and less stressed, except for assessment periods such as when GCSE exams were taking place. Thomson and Hall (2021) observed that the art rooms were also busy during non-lesson times such as break times and lunchtimes, demonstrating that the classrooms were valued outside of their normal educational purpose. Students in the study described the space as a 'sanctuary' and somewhere 'they could be themselves' (p.2). Art and creative subjects' classrooms tend to be curated differently to traditional classrooms, and this is something that Thomson and Hall suggest could contribute to the difference in atmosphere when inhabiting them. Often, these spaces are differently experienced through the senses, with work in progress being on show or available to touch, and smells of chemicals, paints and other materials. There may be less order and structure than a traditional classroom, as Vohs et al., (2013) found, with brighter colours, clutter and objects. The expectation of what can be considered a signature text or pedagogy in creative subjects can be sought in the learning environment, Shulman found (2005). Students quickly understand the rhythm of what creative lessons usually encompass, and this can be structured around their own creative projects, Thomson and Hall suggest. On entering the room, students feel safe in knowing they can log onto a computer, continue with existing work, or seek comfort in the materials and work provided.

Creative spaces have also been found to perhaps be more inclusive of all students, given that they break the traditional norms, structures and boundaries that traditional classrooms possess (Penketh, 2017).

The data in Thomson and Hall's study of an art room evoking a different atmosphere (2021) may be due to the encouragement of the creativity flows that Czikszentmihalyi describes, and the reason for feeling different could be due to the binary tension caused by photography education being 'both traditional and conservative and at the same time rebellious and iconoclastic' (1997, p.71). So much liminal space is created in education due to these fractious binaries at play from day to day, or as Morrissey (2014) calls them, 'broken paradoxes'

4.3: Pedagogies and Curriculum

Traditional and Progressive Pedagogies

Practical and culturally rich creative subjects, such as photography, require pedagogical approaches that consider the needs of the content, wider application, student, and teacher. Traditional teaching can be described as face-to-face classroom teaching, with an emphasis on instruction and the instrumental knowledge exchange dimension of education (Wang, 2022). This traditional model often sees teachers select pedagogical methods that transmit information to students, and the students feed in very little to the learning process. The outcome of traditional teaching is often summative assessment in the form of a test or an assessment, or recalled knowledge (Sarkar Arani et al., 2019). A traditional model of teaching does not often allow room for the holistic and collaborative aspects of education to be considered in the learning process, nor is wider learning or enjoyment encouraged, as described by Watkins (2005). This model of teaching was developed and introduced by British educators around the world in the 18th century (Lawson and Silver, 2013). The traditional model was suitable for education when teaching in a way that benefited the economy or political stance was the goal of schooling. This stance is still prevalent in many countries today (Hargreaves et al., 2019). Fast forward to the 1960s, and the educational landscape was undergoing a huge shift. Instead of control being the goal, the idea of developing young people to contribute to wider society then came into focus, an idea popularised by Freire (first published in 1968, 2018), and subsequently Giroux (1983). This in turn saw a rise in critical and progressive pedagogies that focus more on students and their needs, the holistic function of education, and presented multidimensional pedagogical choice for teachers.

Progressive pedagogies provide opportunity for collaborative work, peer learning, student centred approaches, integrated formative assessment and real-world focussed curricula that are shaped around students learning by doing. In the teaching of creative disciplines, progressive pedagogies are favoured given their alignment with the overall subjective character of the subjects (Eisner, 2002). Traditional teaching and

pedagogy do not allow for the space that allows critical and creative thinking to take place, but the obstacles and wider societal barriers often can become exacerbated and limit opportunity for teachers to undertake the progressive pedagogical practice they wish to. Breaking the association of a linear narrative by introducing progressive and creative pedagogies such as this in photography education may encourage and unlock areas of critical thinking in students. This notion is shared by Ellsworth, who states that breaking such associations would allow for 'analytic dialogue' rather than simply 'communicative dialogue' (1997, p.115).

Issues with teaching progressively

Progressive pedagogies require confidence and understanding from teachers and educational institutions. Understanding of progressive pedagogies could have been developed while teachers are of school age, and they may remember a teacher who taught 'differently' or in a way that was student-centric (Hirsh and Segolsson, 2020). Introduction to progressive pedagogical practices may be introduced or reinforced on Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in England. However, given that there is not a subject specific ITT for photography, any secondary subject specialists will take an art and design route. ITT also risks not having an abundance of subject specialist tutors and mentors, which may in turn hinder the amount of subject specialist teaching that is communicated between tutor and student and therefore lessen the specialist pedagogies that may be required for photography education. This notion is supported by Davies et al. (2016) who comment that the snowball effect of quality of teaching in schools, colleges, and higher education is directly impacted by the quality of ITT. Many of the ITT programmes on a PGCE route have a wide focus over a single academic year, which do not provide the time required to provide in depth engagement with subject specific pedagogical practice. Course focus has shifted to ensure recruitment and retention of trainee teachers, to ensure that knowledgeable teachers are able to improve education models as a whole and ensure that standards of education remain high (Douglas-Gardner and Callender, 2023). This shift away from pedagogical focus is something that Swennen and Bates (2010) comments on in his critique of teacher education. Bates notes the shift towards assessment and accountability measures, away from holistic and progressive methods, due to the economical and societal need of teachers. He goes on to comment on the difficulties of teaching teachers to teach progressively in a world that is ever changing, especially from a technological perspective. This is particularly pertinent with photography education, given the millions of images that are entering the digital sphere every single day. Discussing the differences between traditional and progressive pedagogies, Taylor (1989) argues that creativity and personal values are constructed as both individual and through social interaction, and therefore traditional teaching methods may hinder or limit creative subjects such as photography, yet not enough time is being spent on nurturing progressive or creative specific pedagogies on ITT.

Culture and teaching progressively

It can be intimidating to remain open and prepared for continued learning as a teacher, when there is an unspoken expectation, perhaps societal, to be the most knowledgeable in the room and the one turned to for the information and answers. It is these values and the environment in which one teaches/learns that in turn can motivate you to learn further without limit or restriction (Gardner, 2007). Thus, regardless of disciplinary background, it is the impact of the culture and environment in which the teacher and student interact that may have more influence on how the photography education is delivered. The influence of culture can be demonstrated through the comments in discussion in sections 7.1-4. However, the interconnecting classrooms also promote community, through the playful whiteboards and sharing of activities between teachers. The interconnection between disciplines, and disciplinary backgrounds of teachers, when nurtured in the correct culture and environment, can produce a 'synthesising mind' (Gardner, 2007, p.45). Creative spaces encourage side-by-side working, and artmaking practices are rarely found to be undertaken in total isolation, or for entirely individual purposes, according to MacDonald et al., (2015), encouraging a shared experience in times of joy, excitement or perhaps confusion.

Safe spaces

When a photography education learning environment has been demonstrated in the findings to become more learner centred, trust amongst the community has been fostered, which is key when considering building a safe creative space (Ingalls Vanada, 2017). With trust, familiarity and independence develop and provides evidence why creative classrooms may feel different, as found by Thomson and Hall (2021), and why students use the rooms as a sanctuary. The difference in the environment is key when considering Ingalls Vanada's findings when studying learner centred approaches through a/r/tography, and her students stating that 'traditional educational systems have not prepared them for creative action' (2017, p.117). Competence pedagogies have similarities with the progressive model, in that they are student centric, creative, and provide learners with more autonomy over their learning (Bernstein, 2000). Performance models are described as more hierarchical between teacher and student, and emphasis is placed on what is missing from the learner's production of work, rather than what the student achieved.

Core values

Morrissey (2014) uses writing to attempt to harness her core values as a teacher educator, and states that she was 'writing herself into spaces I would not otherwise have occupied'. Teaching practices that are considered 'safe' are relied on by Morrissey, and she describes those she deemed experimental, as 'perceived to be a risk' and 'outside [her] my own comfort zone' (p.838) and pairs these descriptions of unsafe teaching with personal anxieties such as 'wracked by all kinds of doubts and insecurities' and 'I feared failing as a teacher…most of all I feared being perceived a failure by those teachers'. The paradoxical example by Morrissey illustrates the 'tension of opposites' that holding multiple roles in photography education has on

'safety/risk, reflection/action, solitude/community, silence/speech and the personal/professional' (Palmer, 1998, p.83). The example of unsafe teaching Morrissey gave was a success, but she goes on to describe sessions that were not, demonstrating the potential of risk taking. The flow of creativity in a classroom is mirrored in the experiences of both teacher and student, but the liminal space created between the expectation of the role of the teacher and the realities of everyday classroom scenarios can provide new ruptures and disruption. This links back to Czikszentmihalyi's (1996) description of the flow of creativity involves 'risk, novelty, challenge and enjoyment which in turn can help create a 'highly focussed state of consciousness'.

Default pedagogies

The definition of pedagogy employed by this research focuses on the space around the taught content, the social and disciplinary aspects that affect the teaching of photography. It recognises that pedagogy is not simplified to the act of teaching, delivering and assessment (Leach and Moon, 2008). Signature pedagogies can be defined as pedagogies that are common across subjects that focus on the transfer of knowledge, or skill in particular areas (Thomson et al., 2012). Photography education has been developed as a disciplinary offshoot of art and design education and therefore shares signature pedagogies with the visual arts more generally. These practices are described by Thomson et al. (2012) as being able to teach 'habits of mind' for students (p.10), so they can position themselves in the conventions of the subject being studied, i.e. doing, being and thinking about photography. When considering these signature pedagogies for KS4 and KS5 in my own experience, I am immediately drawn to the examination criteria. Photography at this level can be crudely broken down into four categories: looking at the work of others, making new work themselves, reflecting and developing this work through experimentation and technical skill application, and finally commenting on and analysing this process and the work of others. Figure 9 visualises micro and macro environments that impact education. It is interesting to me to view Webb's (2009) representation as tiles, as although they grow larger in size, they appear movable or fluid. This representation of the environmental influences on the culture and climate of education is stark, and a clear way of viewing the different elements, standpoints and barriers that teachers and students may have to deal with, before even considering the pedagogy or curriculum choices within a photography classroom.

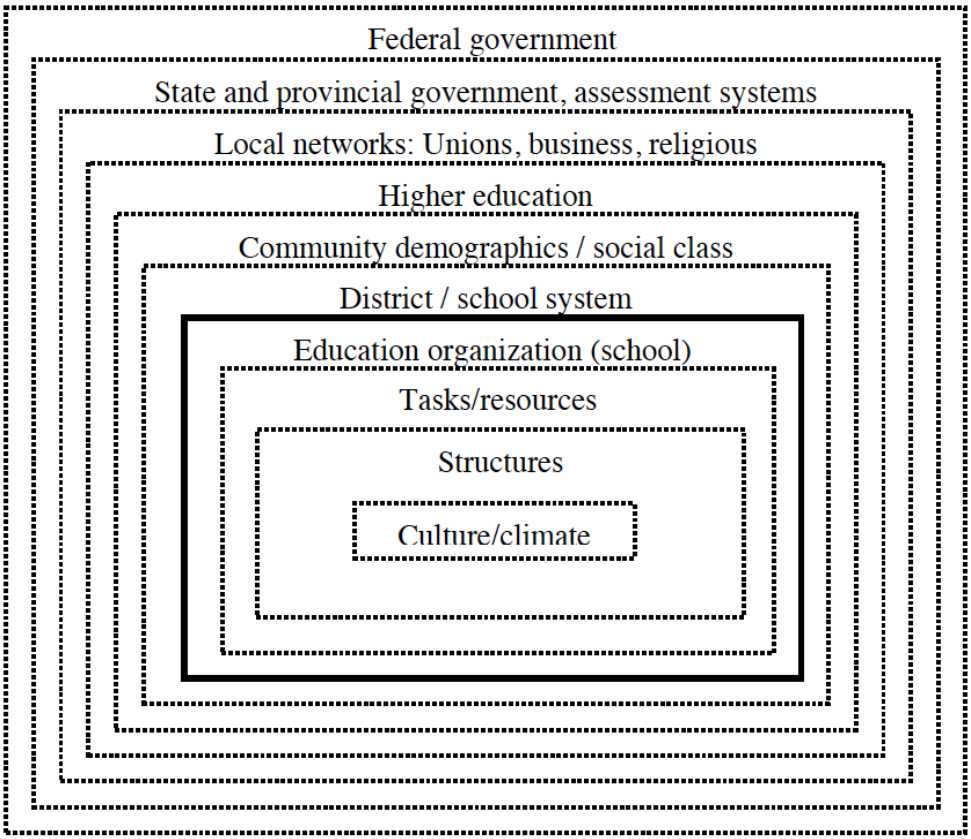


Figure 9: Micro and macro environments (Webb, 2009, p.42). Used under a UK copyright exception

Chapter Conclusion

The section discussing pedagogy helps situate the choices that photography teachers make when choosing their pedagogical model, and the influences that may impact on the overall scope of photography education. This in turn provides context for the type of pedagogy that has been considered suitable for the needs of the subject, and which pedagogical models the research questions are focussed on. Hall et al. (2014) suggest in their study of artist pedagogies in schools that performance pedagogies are unsurprisingly found in schools that are focussed on academic performance and outcomes, or where a 'product' of education is expected. They discuss the idea that accountability measures on teachers can have a huge impact on their pedagogical choices, an observation that Webb (2009) shares. Positioning this discussion on pedagogy in an a/r/tography lens, it is key to mention that the confidence of the teacher taking on competence or performance pedagogical models may impact choice making. Hall and Thomson (2021) comment on how the artist who teaches portraiture may rely heavily on a segmented and carefully sequenced lesson, suggesting a lack of confidence in the teacher role, having held only the artist role previously. It could be argued as a pedagogical strength if a teacher holds both the researcher and artist role, as they are able to confidently and efficiently apply different pedagogies and techniques depending on the student and content of the photography

classroom. Social class can be a factor in how teachers choose their pedagogy. Moss (2002) comments on Bernstein's competence model being available to middle classes as they have more freedom and fewer limitations in essential education. This is relevant and applicable to the notion that the research setting is a tuition fee paying independent school, which would be regarded as having fewer of the pressures of maintaining a basic education than a state funded school with a largely working-class background (Nightingale, 2019). Returning to the focus of the research and the identification of photography being largely taught by non-specialists, it could be suggested that the transfer of photographic 'pedagogic knowledge' is an aspect that could develop non-specialists in the teaching of specialist photographic skills (Hall et al., p616).

Chapter Five: Research Design

Chapter introduction

The chapter begins with a vignette that address wider thinking around the process of writing this part of the thesis. It continues with three collages which aimed to organise the tangling of methodology during the periods of unknowing, and then the resulting research design table. The choice of an ethnographic research space is discussed, and the way that my existing role as a teacher in the space then had to be combined with the role of a researcher, making what was familiar to me, strange (Geertz, 1973). My role in the research and subsequent choice of methods is framed and influenced by a/r/tography (Irwin, 2006). At this stage, I illustrate the rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) and tangled nature of the methodology in a diagram to aid with sense making. Afterwards, a contextual section is presented that outlines to the reader, the choice of research setting and participants of the study to situate the research moving forward. The enquiry is split into two sections. The first was the undertaking of informal discussions (recorded audio) and an online questionnaire to help gain focus and foreground partial knowledge of the research setting. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022) was chosen to analyse this part of the data, so a section discusses the process and themes that were developed. The second methods section then introduces visual ethnography (photographs, sketchbook. collages, teaching resources) and autoethnographic writing as method (journal, vignettes) before discussing the use of rhizoanalysis and collage as tools of interpretation.

Vignette Six: February 2025 (Appendix G) Some notes on using 'on'

Using the title 'on' a subject alludes to expertise in an area, making comment on a subject of interest. I see it more as an indication of musings and thought processes on a subject, rather than the finiteness of being an expert. 'On' poses a suggestion of caution, and conjures a visual of balancing, on an edge, on a shape, on an idea, visiting and passing through, rather than remaining still for a period.

5.1: Research design

On the tidal shifts of methodology and methods- becoming unstuck

> 'It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it' (Berger, 1972, p.7).

The methodology chapter is one that hung around me for a long time like a lurking shadow. The amounts of engagement I offered differed, depending on my confidence to tackle it at any given time. I feel I have felt every single emotion towards the methodology. I did not enjoy this process; it felt as if I was working with a difficult unknown language that existed without rules, that everyone seemed to understand except me. The threads of research were woven in the interim of 'doing' the research through the form of my own writing practice. A conscious attempt to untangle the many strands gave me more than a few headaches. The movement between the 'doing' and the 'undoing' felt like tidal shifts lapping at the beach, each removing grains, and depositing ideas here and there. More often, it felt as if the waves were taking more than I was putting back. Grappling with methodology is a process Conteh (2005) describes as 'deep play' (p.72), a description that I resonated with. The ideas were being moved around, the blocks were being shifted, but it was right to describe it in such a way that emulated an uninhabited space, somewhere deep in the ocean of the brain where complex processes and forgotten memories are dealt with only occasionally. At times, the pieces of the methodology felt settled and my mind rested. The feeling did not last long, when the tide shifted, and the pieces became unstuck.

I have included the quote by Berger (1972) as the starting point because of its eloquence in being able to describe the methodological process I ultimately undertook. The choice of ethnography was a simple one, given that the research setting is very much my everyday 'surrounding world' (1972, p.7), and I was trying to articulate this explanation through words, while the surrounding world carried on around me. The overlap of doing research, being in research, working, thinking, writing, doing (and not doing) was difficult to navigate at times due to my integration in the research focus, topic and setting, but ultimately, for me it came down to words, photography and collage to be able to make sense of it.

The more I read ethnographic studies, the more confident I became that this was a common feeling in research that allowed for flexibility to examine the intricate folding and unfolding of everyday life (O'Reilly, 2012). The tidal shifts that I was experiencing began to be reimagined in my mind as times of standing back from the ethnographic settings and objectively seeing what was really happening. From these points, I was able to begin to visualise the research through collages that helped understand the skeleton of what needed to be done at the beginning. These collages are discussed in the following section.

Understanding research design

The research design table in table 3 highlights what data has been generated, how it has been interpreted, and how it in turn contributed to the understanding and insights of the research questions. To understand the structure of the research design myself, I started with a mapping exercise (see figures 10-12), an act that Lasczik Cutcher and Irwin (2017) describe as travelling through an idea employing the medium of writing or collage to do so.

Making collages in this way to conceptualise or understand the process of research was not intended to play as big a part of the project as they ended up doing. Without the mapping collages, I found it hard to grasp the space in which I was taking on the role of researcher. I simply could not see it. I had an awareness that students were experiencing digital consumption of photographs in an entirely different way to what I did as a student, and I was becoming more aware of the 'overlapping visual worlds' that Pink (2021, p.90) discusses. Yet despite this knowledge, I had no idea how to start to articulate what photography education looked like to the people it affected or impacted the most, including myself. Allowing myself to explore the potential structure of the research through collages, I was able to visually familiarise myself with concepts that were sometimes hidden or difficult to navigate (for me, anecdotally) through increasingly growing word-processed thesis drafts. Or to follow Pink (2021), allowing for the room to view what otherwise would be invisible to me. These first collages grew to become the visual plan that I was able to reformulate, add to or explore sections of; an idea that De Landa (2016) suggests is key when using multiple visual methods in research. Ethnographers analyse from the first minute they conduct their research according to Fetterman (2010), or even as the idea emerges for research, but as this process was new and entangled in a space that was familiar, it was difficult to make those first steps in choosing how to approach the research. Unknowingly, I had already started the ethnographic research process, as these first collages demonstrate my understanding of photography education and the research at the time, an unavoidable connection of research planning with 'personal experience, memory and imagination' (Pink, 2021, p.151). The following section outlines the choice of ethnographic study after these initial thoughts.

Initial collages- reflections on making

I discuss collage as a research method further in section 6.5 but introduce the idea of using the medium in my own thinking processes here. Collage is quietly prevalent in the current image-saturated world, appearing largely in the digital guise of memes, stickers and photo montage, which may potentially lessen its academic rigour when used in research, according to Lucero (2016). Collage, however, remains one of the most accessible art forms, requiring few supplies that are easily obtained, and needs little instruction or training (Barron, 2023). Being able to translate my ideas and thoughts into a familiar artistic flow helps make sense of the familiar research environment in which I was immersed most days. This constant immersion in an

environment has been likened by Csikszentmihalyi and Halton (1981) to the flow of creativity whereby creativity, ideas and imagination can culminate.

One question Guyas and Keys (2009) asked of the use of creative research methods was how much formal writing is needed to bridge the gap between creativity and the scholarship needed in a doctoral thesis. I have shared similar queries in this doctoral research, often moving back and forth in my level of confidence in terms of knowing how much creativity too much creativity is or whether the balance needs to be tipped in favour of formal writing (sections 6.1, 6.4). Bringing together the ideas of Lucero (2016) and Guyas and Keys (2009), it has been important for the thinking and research processes to be presented authentically and with intention, demonstrating how I have been able to understand and make sense of data using collage methods. Doing so in turn bridges the gap that Guyas and Keys (2009) report as allowing confidence to develop. By doing this, I can discuss the collages I have made in a succinct and knowledgeable manner; a huge step forward in my own self-efficacy and strengthening the rigour that Lucero (2016) discusses as being threatened by using collage in academic research. Such a development meant that searching for meaning in multiple research areas felt natural and could be likened to the flow that Csikszentmihayli and Halton (1981) describe. In common with the visual collage processes of bringing paper ephemera and *found materials* together, ideas of theory, data and research began to interweave more seamlessly rather than existing simply as unconnected gestures (Lucero, 2016). The following section reflects on the choice-making of the initial research collages in more depth and how they represent my own understanding and insights of photography education at these early stages of research.

Property of a distinguished private German collector (Christies, 2011)/torn up for rhizomes

Figure 10 (below) shows the first collage that I created to try and make sense of how the research looked. The collages were made in the 'studio' space I have at home, in the loft. I do not specifically choose materials beforehand but rather work through the ideas as they come to me, enjoying the process of looking and finding a piece that articulates my thinking enough to be included. With this method, postcards from past exhibitions became markers for rhizomes and me (figure 10). John Stezaker and Andreas Gursky are two photographers who have travelled through my own photography education and are regularly included in the photography curriculum I now teach. The photograph by Gursky, Rhein II (1999) is torn and used to illustrate rhizomes in figure 10. Rhein II is one of the most expensive artworks to be sold at auction (for over $4,000,000 (Christies, 2011)) but is not a traditional photograph. The image is a digitally manipulated series of photographs, with Gursky editing out buildings and people that disrupted his desired landscape (Rugoff, 2018).

My treatment of a replica of such an expensive artwork draws a parallel with the changing value of photography education that I discuss in sections 2.2 and 2.5. The movement of meaning between image and

viewer was theorised by Barthes as *punctum* (1981) and demonstrates how the inbetween*ness and* value of photography can be understood as fragile. My use of *Rhein II* illustrates this fragility here. To the buyer of *Rhein II* at the auction in 2011, the work is precious and highly collectable. However, to me in the moment of needing an image to represent rhizomes, it is something else entirely. Its meaning is disrupted in the space in-between the making of *Rhein II*, the exhibition *Redefining Photography* (Hayward Gallery, 2018), the buying of the postcard, the seven years it spent as a decoration on my studio space wall, and now to its new partial representation of rhizomes within my own research.

Mask XXXV (2007)/I am not an actress

The photograph chosen to represent *me* in figure 10 is not a photograph, but a collage combining a Hollywood actress and a postcard of a landscape (Stezaker, 2007). I am drawn to the idea of anonymity here with the identity of both the actress in the image, and myself as the researcher hidden from view. Considering the choice of the image through an a/r/tographic lens, it demonstrates several different meanings. Artistically, Stezaker has been an inspiration to me since my own A Level study. My creative work draws likenesses to his (figure 7). As a researcher, I have undergone several conflicting thought processes about how the research will be presented, and how the authentic autoethnographic elements will be perceived. The mask, illustrating a new role of *becoming*-researcher, may have been a subconscious decision when choosing the Stezaker image. As a *t*eacher, I use Stezaker's work as an example when teaching manipulation skills or collage to GCSE or A Level students. The change in learning environment during the research (section 7.9) meant a reliance on skills such as collage, as digital facilities were unavailable.

To represent pedagogies and curriculum, I have chosen to use a photocopied examination criterion, suggesting that this what I may most (subconsciously) associate with the curriculum I teach. The first reflection I had on the use of the criteria here was that it was at home, in my studio space rather than at school, in the working environment where it is used. When reflecting, I went back into the studio space. I realised here that I had multiple copies of these exam criteria, wedged between my own creative work and doctoral research collages. The blurring of domestic and work environments demonstrated the tangled nature of teaching, and of the roles I hold in the research setting. The criteria are photocopied, suggesting an intended distribution to students, and that the document holds important information for their progress or measured successes when being taught GCSE or A Level photography. The second collage (figure 11) also contains photocopied pieces, but rather than exam criteria, shows photocopied teaching resources (my own). The teaching resources are masking tape bound packs of photography terminology such as r*ule of thirds* or *balancing elements.* The use of such concepts is intertwined with the history and structure of photography education and perhaps an overhang from it being a technical qualification before moving into a vocational one (see section 2.5) but holds a continued place in the curriculum for teaching students about composition in photographs.

The first and third collages (figures 10 and 12) draws lines between the different elements, or *tracings.* Along these lines, further lines of enquiry could occur, branching off in new combinations or multiplicities (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). The third collage contains very few found materials that are linked directly to the research environment but instead include torn out images from books and magazines, a process described in section 5.5 and 6.5. It could be noted that the first two collages (figures 10-11) are more formal in their presentation, attempting to maintain a structure and understanding of research. The third in comparison is more creative in its presentation, with more attention paid to the torn parts of coloured paper and the visual choice making of images than to the content itself. I made this collage last out of three and can remember a sense of the *messiness* of research returning after the initial period of brief untangling (Masny, 2013). The following section introduces the research design in a table, presenting the aims and objectives of the research and how they were addressed in the study.

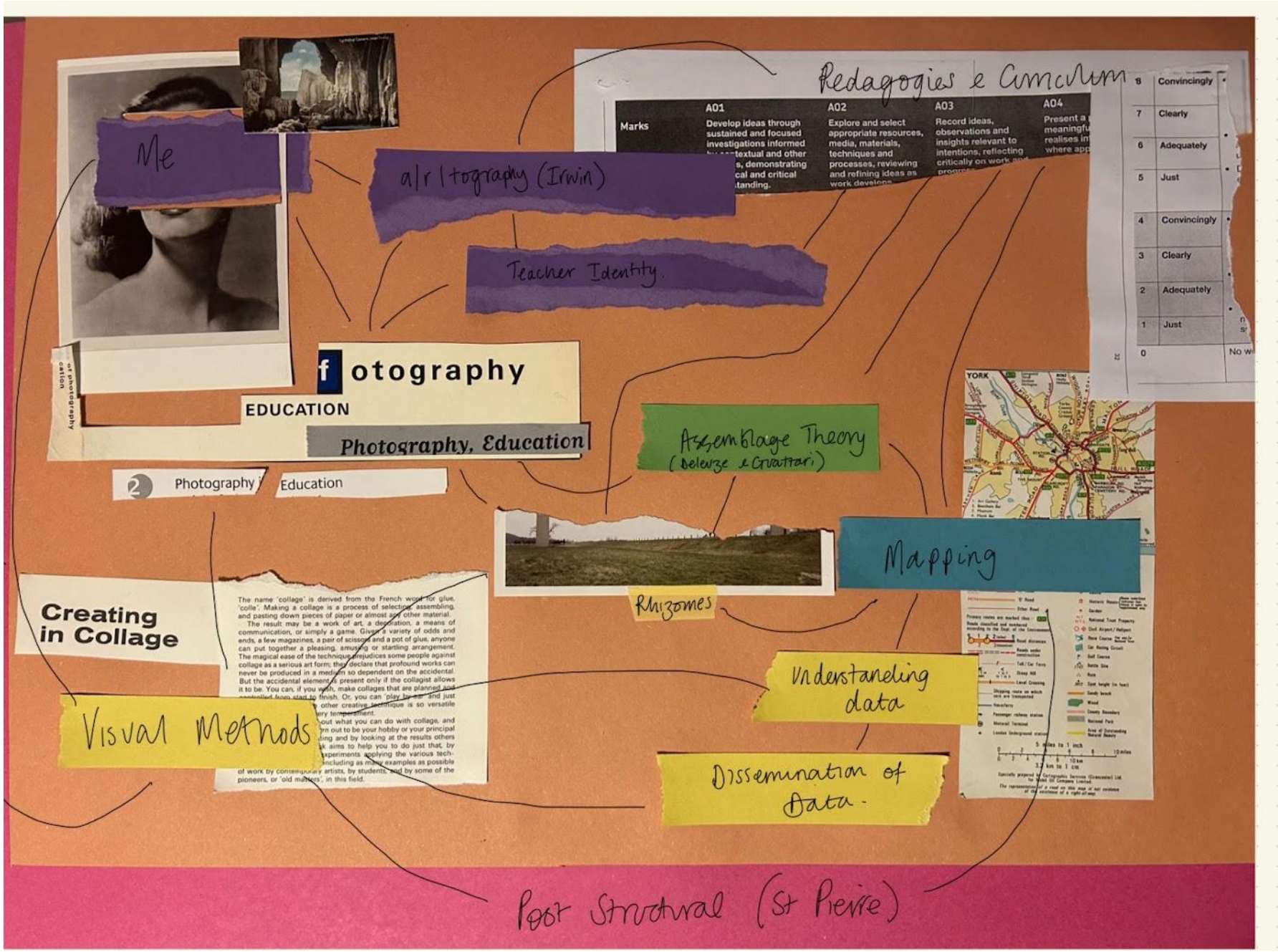


Figure 10: Property of a distinguished private German collector (Christies, 2011)/torn up for rhizomes. Author's own

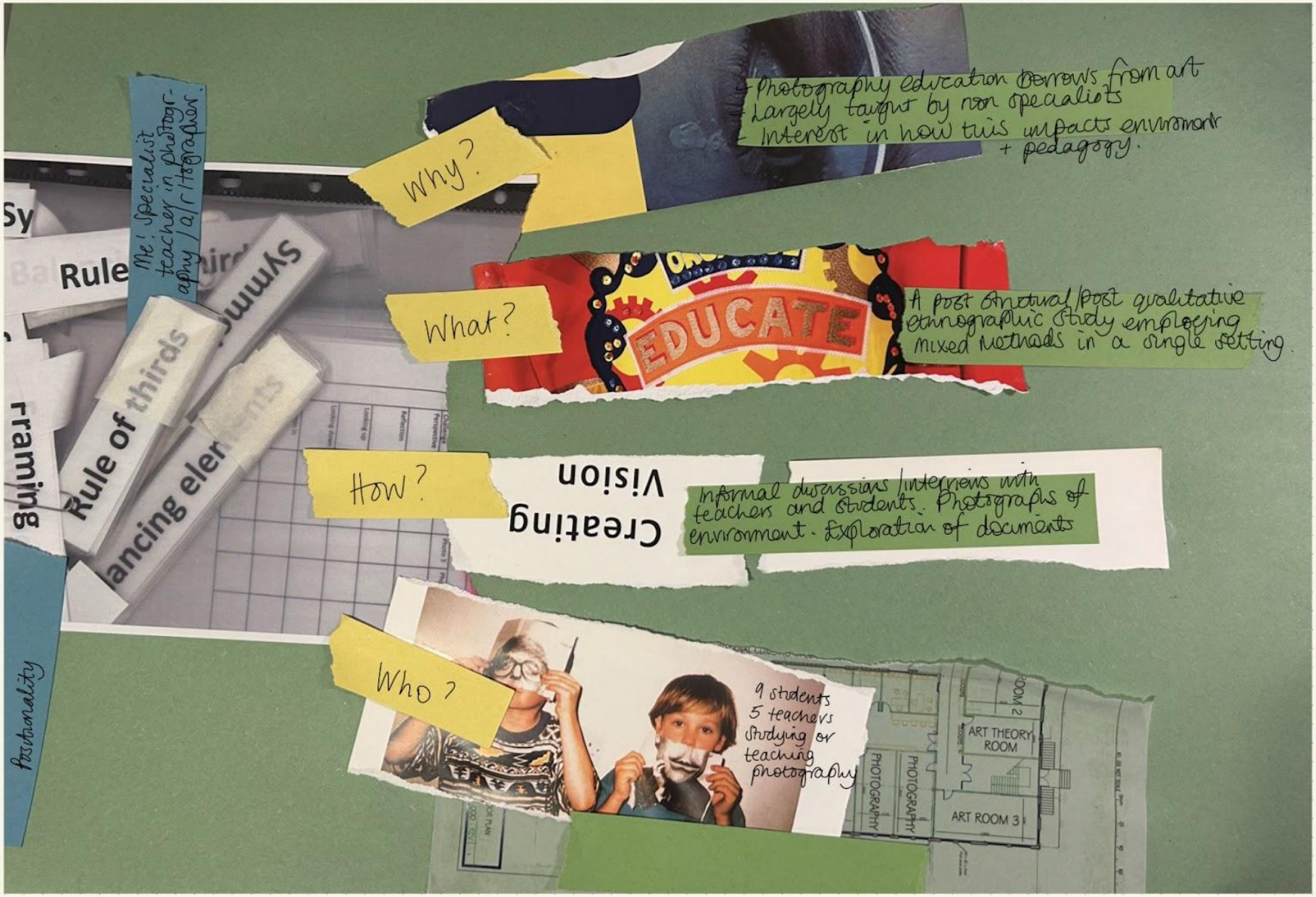


Figure 11: Torn up for rhizomes II (2024) Author's own

Figure 12: Torn up for rhizomes III (2024) Author's own

5.2: Research Design Table

The research design (table 3, below) has since been formulated into a table to make the aims, objectives, method and subsequent data generation concise. The combination of the two methods (collage and subsequent dissemination) have introduced a clarity in thought and understanding processes and offers the bridge between creative method and academic scholarship that Lucero (2016) suggests will strengthen the rigour of research. The section following the research design table discusses the choice of using ethnography, and how this looked in the research space.

Table 3: Research design

Aims/ Objectives	Research Paradigm/ Framing	Methods/ Tools	Structure of Method	Data Generation	Participants	Analytical Tool
To illuminate foundational knowledge surrounding the voice of both student and teacher participants on all three focus areas	Ethnography	Informal Discussions/Conversations	Individually organised discussions without time limit or pre determined questions	3.3 hours of discussion (section 7.1)	3 teacher participants and 2 student participants	Thematic Analysis
To develop understanding of the photography environment in motion (How does the learning environment impact pedagogy and curriculum choices in teaching photography?)	Ethnography	Observations	Individually organised observations with the teacher, 1 hour long	Photographs, journal notes (7.10-7.11)	1 teacher participant	Rhizoanalysis

Aims/ Objectives	Research Paradigm/ Framing	Methods/ Tools	Structure of Method	Data Generation	Participants	Analytical Tool
To provide an option for participation in the study when time did not allow for informal discussion to take place	Ethnography	Online questionnaire	Microsoft Forms Survey of 12 questions	Six responses (section 7.1, 8.1, appendix N)	Six students	Thematic Analysis
To employ visual methods to illuminate understanding of the setting, and to record the research process (How does the learning environment impact pedagogy and curriculum choices in teaching photography?)	Visual Ethnography	Photographs	Photographs of lesson observations. Photographs of the learning environments. Photographs of research process	Section 7.10	Researcher	Rhizoanalysis

Aims/ Objectives	Research Paradigm/ Framing	Methods/ Tools	Structure of Method	Data Generation	Participants	Analytical Tool
To explore processes surrounding chosen curriculum and pedagogies during the research time frame (What is the impact of disciplinary understandings of teachers and chosen pedagogies on photography education?)	Visual Ethnography	Teaching resources	Scans of teaching resources (authors own)	Section 7.9	Researcher	Rhizoanalysis
To record rich insights through thoughts, feelings and musings throughout the research process, in relation to the a/r/tographer role (all focus areas)	a/r/tography/ Autoethnography	Writing as method/vignette	Handwritten and digital notes to record thoughts, feelings and musings throughout the research process to make sense of	Sections 1.5, 1.8, 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 5.1, 5.3, 6.1, 6.3, 8.1, 10.2	Researcher	Autoethnographic vignettes, reflective writing, collage

Aims/ Objectives	Research Paradigm/ Framing	Methods/ Tools	Structure of Method	Data Generation	Participants	Analytical Tool
			choice making and relevance			
To record rich insight through thoughts, feelings and musings throughout the research process, in relation to the a/r/tographer role (all focus areas)	a/r/tography/visual ethnography	Sketchbook	Printed photographs, notes, stories, creative writing	Section 7.11	Researcher	Rhizoanalysis/collage
To interpret, make sure of, or conceptualise understandings, and development of understandings in relation to the research focus areas (what could, or should photography	a/r/tography/visual ethnography	Collage	Visual methods	Section 8.3, 9.2, 9.4	Researcher	Visual methods

Aims/ Objectives	Research Paradigm/ Framing	Methods/ Tools	Structure of Method	Data Generation	Participants	Analytical Tool
education look like moving forward?)						

5.3: Ethnography

On choosing ethnography

Ethnography, by definition, is the unfolding of everyday events in a context that is not changed by the research taking place (Conteh, 2005). It is the learning, knowing and understanding of a culture through continued interaction (Peters and Burboles, 2004). Approaching the research as ethnography allowed for the space to explore photography education, and how its everyday context is constructed, whilst accepting that doing so is only a partial knowledge. An ethnographic approach allows for a gentle yet continuous dialogue, considering entanglements and knowledge rather than rigidly investigating a standalone problem (St. Pierre, 2021), allowing space for new insights to develop surrounding the blocks of photography education (Wellington, 2015). The choice of ethnography was a straightforward one. I was intrigued by the unknowing of research, the possibilities and the unpredictability of the outcomes. This sentence could be repeated, but with the word *ethnography* replacing *teaching*, and the word *research* replaced with *learning* (see below). Similarly, it could be repeated but replaced with *collage* and *creativity*. This small moment caused a realisation of the similarities between the three main roles I held within the research - artist, researcher and teacher:

> The choice of *ethnography* was a straightforward one. I was intrigued by the unknowing of *research*, the possibilities and the unpredictability of the outcomes.
>
> The choice of *teaching* was a straightforward one. I was intrigued by the unknowing of *learning*, the possibilities and the unpredictability of the outcomes.
>
> The choice of *collage* was a straightforward one. I was intrigued by the unknowing of *creativity*, the possibilities and the unpredictability of the outcomes.

Becoming flexible and adaptive

Research that takes an interdisciplinary methodological approach can 'allow methods and approaches to emerge and evolve responsively' (Harvey et al., 2022, p.105). This is an argument that Sheurich (1997) raises about the most progressive researchers still relying on conventional research methods due to the training that is imposed or expected in research. Taking a flexible approach to research could be likened to adaptive pedagogies in teaching that centre the students' needs through the flexibility and choice of teaching, often favoured by arts-rich schools, and by myself as a preferred method of education (Thomson et al., 2019).

The choice of a single setting made the research small in scale, and conducting research in and around the daily school routine meant everyday contexts were considered. The research required a flexible approach

that reflected the context of the ever-changing school day, a complex social phenomenon to grapple with. Teaching requires reflexive and reactive thinking to adapt to different scenarios when and if they occur. This might be anything from absent students impacting group work sizes, to friendship issues meaning your seating plan must change quickly and quietly, right through to unwritten or unproven anecdotal observations like casual clothing day or the wind affecting the mood and attitude of students. On several occasions, I have planned lessons so meticulously only to be let down by technology at the last minute and having to return to teaching without prior thought or resources. It also developed over time, from the one plan of informal discussions that took place in 2021, not knowing what is then going to inform the research moving forward (Fetterman, 2010). Connecting with the wider post structural framing of the research, Lather (2013) describes such utilisation of multiple methods as 'Deleuzian in (non)design - 'a thousand tiny little methodologies' (p.634), echoing the immediate vision of a school day, ever-changing and adaptive - despite the aspects of routine, timetable and repetition that institutions try to maintain. Methods were fluid, changeable and adaptive. The multiplicity of methods (Geertz, 2000) refuses a one-dimensional perspective of research and can be likened to the active modes and methods employed in education to engage learners in different ways.

(Micro) Vignette Seven: (Appendix H) January 2025

I liked a loose plan in pencil, I liked having the solid skeleton of knowing that the work was going to be framed by assemblage theory, rhizomatic thinking and my role as an a/r/tographer. The rest of the research did not have a plan.

Unpredictability and patchwork

Being able to adapt to the unpredictability of working within an educational setting was a key factor when deciding on the methodology for this research, a notion shared by Hayden (2024, p.6). Using a 'patchwork' of ethnographic methods allows the willingness and preparedness to adapt and change should it need to. There is potential for any disrupted methods to be criticised in research spheres for being lesser or being seen as some 'pragmatic fumbling' (p.7). I felt this issue as a researcher choosing to work with a patchwork of methods. My immediate reaction was to overcompensate, to throw every rigorous multimodal technique I had ever been taught or researched into the mix, to triangulate until my point was proven that the research was not lesser - just different. My confidence has grown to take ownership over the gaps that are created because of post-structural frameworks and borrowing 'a thousand little methodologies' (Lather, 2013) for what suited the needs of the research. This notion of 'patchwork' is supported by Günel et al. (2020), whose work demonstrates the understanding of the need to work with the gaps as presentations of partial knowledge and potential opportunities, rather than highlight them simply as issues.

Fitting such complexities that I already associated with teaching into what felt like 'static fabric' of research language furthered my decision to allow the research to unfold within the ethnographic space (Biggs and Büchler, 2012). By choosing an ethnographic study, I was able to bring my own autoethnographic contribution to the insights. The next section introduces how this worked within a space that I was already familiar with.

Autoethnographic contributions

I am writing my work as a native of this particular environment - it is my culture, and I have a hand in creating it, as well as observing and interacting within it, which may subsequently change how it is read and interpreted (Geertz, 1993). The research questions (What is the impact of disciplinary understandings of teachers and chosen pedagogies on photography education? How does the learning environment affect teaching and learning in photography?) were generated as a direct response to my learned experience and observations from teaching in the setting. The existing familiarity with the space strengthened my choice to use it, but did pose some challenges in being able to 'make the familiar strange' (Mannay, 2010) and in ensuring that introducing a new role of researcher did not impact on the day-to-day teaching and learning.

Ethnographic enquiry allowed a more in-depth exploration into the singular setting and from multiple aspects, suiting both the research focus, the researcher and the researched. Given the openness of ethnographic opportunity, I was able to observe the unfolding of events over many months, and informally as well as formally. This decision making coincided with the outbreak of Covid-19, further cementing the single setting choice to ensure new guidelines were adhered to. When proposing the research, transmission of Covid-19 was a consideration. The University of Sheffield asked postgraduate research students to consider whether research could be done remotely rather than face-to-face in their 2021 *Policy for research requiring face-to-face contact with participants*. Given the familiarity I had with the research setting, there was an element of having to 'make the familiar strange' which will be discussed in the next section (Conteh, 2005).

Making the familiar strange, power play

Ethnography is not far removed from the skills we use to make sense of our surroundings, as the social world being studied is in its natural state, and the research methods are sensitive to the setting. Britzman (1995) describes ethnography as both a 'process and a product' (p.27), a representation of the research setting, standing as both the understanding during, and the understanding after. I observed this community, and I have had to treat the situation as 'anthropologically strange' so that I can determine and address presuppositions I will hold as a member of the school culture (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2019, p.10). The role of becoming an outsider has called for consistent reflexivity as a trusted adult to the student participants,

and to ensure that I consistently review the research and the roles of insider/outsider that I hold (Naveed et al., 2017).

Being and becoming an outsider

The research has enabled me to see the everyday environment from the perspective of an outsider, allowing room for questioning the visual cues that become invisible when immersed. To assist with reflexivity, using photographs as data has allowed the space to move from textual data and analysis to visual ethnographic methods, being able to view what I believed as findings through different methods (Mannay. 2010). This allowed the space to establish new patterns or support for previously noted ideas (Allan, 2018). This space as an outsider felt reassuring, in the sense that I was not constructing a narrative on what I already believed I knew, but on the discovery of new connections and patterns within the research focus, a notion that Pink describes as 'getting under the surface' (2021, p.84). In addition to this, writing in an autoethnographic manner increases the engagement I have had with the study as the researcher, a strategy that ensures the comment on new connections (Delamont and Atkinson, 2021). Delamont and Atkinson (2021) suggest that after fieldwork is completed the researcher can leave the field in a way that is not abrupt or sudden, given the proximity of the familiar and strange in the setting. For me, the gentle leaving of the field was serendipitous, as the academic year following the data collection, I no longer taught photography in the research setting. I discuss my multifaceted role as an a/r/tographer and the subsequent choices of using arts-based methods and outcomes (collage) as part of this research.

5.4: A/r/tography

The name a/r/tography refers to taking on the role of artist, researcher and teacher (a/r/t) within an arts-based enquiry and educational setting. The a/r/tographic approach also frames the research methodologically, through the application of a creative process and meaning making. The a/r/tographic approach allows for using media that suit smaller parts of the enquiry and responding through arts-based methods. Also, a/r/tography occupies a close relationship with the rhizomatic nature of assemblage theory (Irwin et al., 2006) and possesses a poststructural lens through which it seeks to explore phenomena of an educational aspect with no hierarchical thinking or predetermined outcome (Irwin et al., 2006).

A/r/tography has been described as a 'necessarily fluid' and 'non-prescriptive' practice (Baldus et al, 2024, p.3) whilst having the ability to 'invite meaning-making from the liminal spaces of artmaking/researching/teaching' (Brooke et al, 2024, p.4). A/r/tographic enquiry considers the multiplicities of perceived importance, acknowledging that research can challenge meaning and offer differing interpretations through its rich rhizomatic avenues (MacDonald and Moss, 2015; Deleuze and Guattari, 1988). The approach maintains that it is not the practice of education, or the pedagogy, but the bits that are considered liminal, the *unfolding* of events, or following La Jevic and Springgay (2008) 'premised on

openness, listening and being responsive and receptive' (p.70). It has been utilised in this research to explore liminal space between researcher roles, assemblage blocks and multiplicities of photography education, as well as encompassing the choice making around the inclusion of arts-based methods, interpretation and outcomes.

The positioning of the roles is not fixed, and no role holds authority in the research over the other, Irwin (2006) states. The movement between the roles is fluid, dependent on the needs of the research at any one time, and in turn, the role of the a/r/tographer becomes part of the overall assemblage of the photography education. The role is not fixed to me as a researcher either; other learners or teachers can take on these roles both knowingly and unknowingly. The collaborative nature of a/r/tography aligns with the collaborative and creative nature of the research and my own positionality as a teacher. My role in the research is multi-faceted. Irwin goes on to refer to teachers in her study not teaching together, but instead employing a 'community engaged learning' approach, which similarly describes how I work, in a collaborative and interconnected department where teachers and students move freely, a living enquiry (Springgay et al., 2005). The shift from what we expect of a stereotypical teacher - an all knowing expert - to a fluid learner can be summarised succinctly in Deleuze's discussion on teaching being 'like a research laboratory: you give courses on what you're investigating, not on what you know' (Deleuze 1995, p.139), suggesting that the teacher's role could be viewed as collaborating learning, of fluid authority and movable (Holt, 1984). Springgay (2005) argues that a/r/tography should be seen as a methodology in its own right, rather than an extension of qualitative research, whilst Irwin and O'Donoghue (2012) suggest that a/r/tography can assist in the way pedagogy is thought about, both in practice and in how pedagogical language is formed and understood.

On the spaces in between

The unfolding of dualisms allows for recognisable spaces to be explored differently, for known meaning to be viewed and assessed in a different scope, and for familiar roles to be hypothetically disassembled and looked at in close detail (Springgay et al., 2005). The constant curiosity and questioning that draws me to research can be found in these folds, just as the interrogation into the assemblage of photography education may also begin to make way for enquiry, or 'openings' as described by Springgay (2005, p.9). Irwin (2006) says that in past educational research projects less emphasis has been placed on student knowledge and more on things like heightened participation, higher self-esteem, excitement for learning, or in Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) assemblage terms, the expression or desire.

The research texts (photographs, writing, teaching resources) that were being analysed were signifying the much larger complex environment that was 'behind' them. This concept made me think of photographer Stephen Gill's series *Billboards* (2004). In this series, Gill photographs the environments that exist behind

large advertising billboards, drawing the audience's attention to things that are 'so familiar and obvious they fall below the usual threshold of people's attention' (Gill, 2004, p.209).

Three key themes of a/r/tography are gathering, becoming and knowing. *Gathering* describes the coming together of identities, the choice of collaboration and my own role in the research as a/r/t. *Becoming* can be described as a process, the fluidity of movement between the roles, the messiness, thinking and curiosity. *Knowing*, although finite in meaning, can embody the observation and detail found within the untangled threads, the understanding that may occur from becoming, the curiosity that continues to build, the art, text and questions that occur from such a living enquiry. Relating to the research structure, a/r/tography enquiry encourages the use of practice-based outcomes and writing, in a poststructural fashion, to articulate ideas and findings (Irwin et al., 2017).

Becoming

The term *becoming* can be used to understand such liminal space between elements or phenomena (Deleuze, 1995) or spaces between artist, researcher and teacher roles (MacDonald and Moss, 2015). *Becoming* is a state in flux, that can be shaped through continual engagement with the world around us, or can be theorised as *ideological becoming* (Bakhtin, 1981). States of *becoming*, in both Deleuze and Bakhtin's understanding, consider the effect that exposure to differing opinions and perspectives will have on how an individual's worldview is formed. An example in photography education could be the exposure to a photograph widely distributed on social media forming one opinion in a student's mind, whereas the same photograph presented in a classroom environment with an accompanying discussion on context and background may serve to alter the student's view on the same image. It is important to note that the forward slashes in a/r/tography are understood as clear cut distinctions between the roles (Baldus et al., 2024). I understand them as markers of liminal space, like the space that exists in other common binaries, such as teaching/learning, or student/teacher. The binary may be viewed as a *becoming,* indicating movement or travel between the roles, whether this be physically from work to home, or from idea to conception. Methodologically, having the ability to explore the liminal spaces between the concepts/things allows for movement to look 'both forwards and backwards' (Baldus et al., 2024, p.2) creating space between the observed and the observer, or as Midgley (2011, p.34) describes, 'me looking at you looking at me looking at you' through the sustained reflexivity gained when moving between roles such as artist, teacher and researcher. A/r/tography's invitation is for its theoretical ideas to act as a 'compass' (Baldus et al., p.3, 2024) to navigate the mappings between binaries, but also to allow the space and opportunity to move between meaning of 'persons, nonhumans, and things (objects, phenomena, materials, sensations)' (Baldus et al., 2024, p.3).

Binaries as an indicator of space between, of becomings

The use of a binary may suggest that one of the pairs is 'positioned as being more appropriate' according to Midgley et al (2011, p.1). This can lead the less dominant of the pair to be 'constructed as the deficient, disadvantaged' they continue to say (2011, p.1), and to the lead term becoming 'primary or master' (Gibson-Graham, 2002, p.29). Derrida (1976) discusses the understanding of the power when using binaries, in the work *On Grammatology*. To understand the liminal space that exists, either purposely or unconsciously, between these terms and binaries, Derrida encouraged the questioning of the stability and meaning of the learned concept (1976). In an a/r/tographical framing, the questioning of the use of binaries and their meaning critically engages with ideas of professional teaching identities to be kept separate from the day-to-day personality, or perhaps how that person would act at home, with friends, or with strangers. Binaries in education could be teaching/learning, work/life balance, student/teacher, academic/creative, and more widely, success/failure. There is a parallel drawn with Derrida's (1976) idea of questioning the meaning of binaries, with Irwin's (2006) a/r/tography approach, the looking between Deleuzian rhizomatic lines (date) and the use of collage. Butler-Kisber (2018) describes collage's ability to maintain a structure of representation of individual elements within it, providing an opportunity to look between those elements and understand the relationship beyond and besides (Harvey et al., 2022) their intended or perceived meaning. Lines between binaries are not necessarily equally weighted, depending on their perceived importance, or indicated distance (MacDonald and Moss, 2015). A binary between artist/teacher/researcher can be a thought process switch, whereas a binary between two geographical places may mean crossing a sea, or the world to encounter the other side of the binary. To someone who regularly travels, this metaphorical geographical journey would be considered simple and easy. But, if that same individual did not consider themselves creative, or had never taught, the abstract role of moving between the roles of artist/researcher/teacher may feel like a much bigger crossing.

Ruptures

Allowing for newness and *ruptures* whilst exploring liminal spaces created by the use of arts-based methods and poststructural thinking could be described in Deleuze and Guattari's terms as 'experimentation in contact with the real' (1980, p.12). It is the space, movement and tangled occurrences between assemblage blocks, the binaries associated with photography education, the moments between research and interpretation, and the rich unspoken insights of ethnographic study, that have influenced the methodological choice making of this research. The following quotation describes the bringing together of the inbetweenness: 'If you know where you will end up when you begin, nothing has happened in the meantime' (Massumi, 2002, p.18). The next collage synthesises the methodology to aid sensemaking of how the research was conducted and understood. A short reflective section follows on how the collage was made.

5.5: Piecing it together: methodology collage reflections

The methodology collages in figure 13 shows the progression of research understanding and how it has evolved. Figure 13 below comprises the following elements: A3 graph paper, a cut out photograph of watercress soup from a book rehomed from a staff room clear-out, and a photograph taken as part of the research (discussed in section 7.10). I chose the photograph of my feet in the research setting as the starter as I knew it held compositional likenesses to the idea; I had in my mind about separating the two main sections of methods clearly. It was serendipitous with the perspective of my legs leading to the floor, as the three methods then aesthetically led away from the foregrounding knowledge. The repetition of natural elements is common in my work, as is the use of circles. Another moment of serendipity was the placement of the floor markings almost halving the circle, creating place makers for rhizoanalysis and collage conceptualisation. Being able to grasp serendipitous moments or expecting the unexpected in research could be evidence of a transdisciplinary skill from making collage, described as 'craft attitude' by Sanscartier (2018). The unfoldings of qualitative research has been compared to the process of collage, as both processes can be described as initiating and uncovering unknown *encounters* (Cran, 2017). I then added the text digitally (see below for before and after the additions of text).

Unusually, I gathered the materials for this collage whilst at work and brought them home to make. I would normally make work in the place where the materials were found, so taking these out of context was unusual. Instead of using my studio loft space, I made the collage on the dining room table, with my daughter present; a decision made through the impact of time pressure and other responsibilities outside of my role as a/r/tographer. The collage has torn edges from being removed from its original graph paper sketchbook, left in subconsciously as the requirement of aesthetic neatness is not something I desire, but rather acting as clues and understanding for the viewer that the work was made by hand, and in turn, how the pieces of narrative do not just neatly fit together in either collage, or the overall research (de Rijke, 2023).

The previous sections have outlined the research design and the overall methodological framework of ethnography and a/r/tography. The choosing of the framework came from a need for adaptability and flexibility to suit the ever-changing need and predictability of the school environment. Then, in line with ethnographic research, the study adapted the changing environment and movement of student participants, therefore moving its focus towards visual ethnography and autoethnographic contributions. Key elements of a/r/tography were discussed through introductions to concepts of liminal space and *becoming,* both of which link back to the assemblage theory of always being in flux rather than a static representation. The following section contextualised the research setting and the participants, before moving to sections on the methods used.

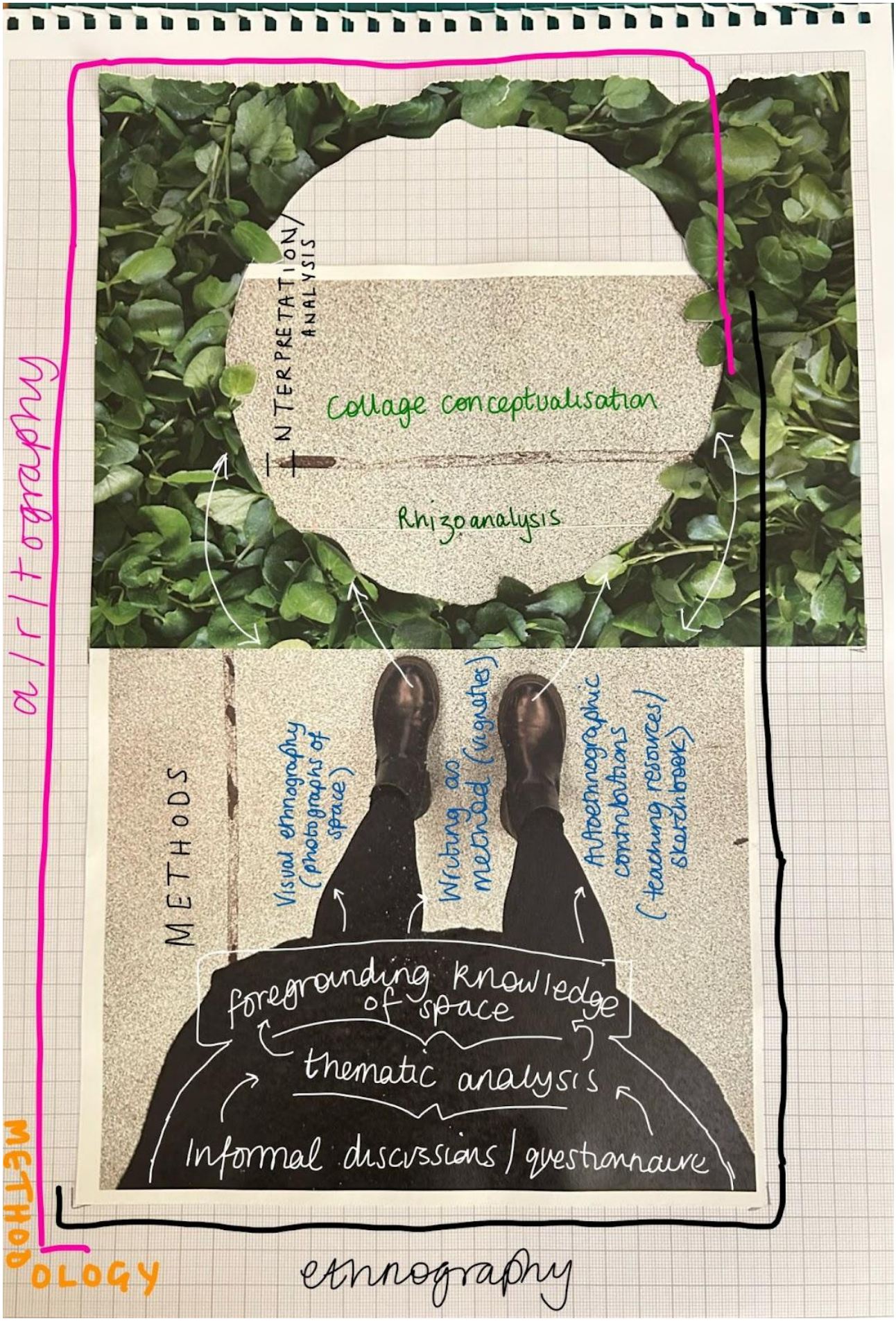


Figure 13: From where I stand: Research untangling (2025). Author's own

5.6: People and places

The research setting

The setting is an independent school in the North of England, catering for students aged from 3-18, in four separate schools comprising a primary school (Early Years Foundation Stage-year 5, ages 4-9), a middle school (years 6-9, ages 10-13) and two senior schools (years 10-13, ages 14-19). The student body is diverse, with students from over 47 nationalities. It offers residential boarding during term time and day student provision. The first senior school (referred to as 'Wren School' as a pseudonym from now on) primarily offers an academic pathway option with GCSE and A Level subjects catering for more 'traditional' academic options such as maths, English, sciences, and languages. The division of the school took place in 2006, due to growing numbers of students with differing educational needs (personal communication, 24th October 2022). The pathway in Wren School is like the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc) and was brought into effect between 2010-2012 when the Ebacc performance measure was brought in by the then coalition government (House of Commons Library, 2019). Despite there being no obligation to bring it in, the school management team at the time were conscious it was a new measure of performance in schools nationally (personal communication, October 21, 2022). The second senior school (referred to as 'Starling School' from now on) is more vocational, with both level 2 (14-16 years old) and level 3 BTECs (16–18-year-olds), and GCSEs in both practical and core academic subjects. This option offers a wider range of English as an additional language (EAL) tuition. The schools are non-selective in nature, in that there is not a specific school entrance exam, but they do require a minimum achievement in GCSE examinations to gain entrance to the sixth form.

Issues with timetabling

This division is important to the research because Wren School has higher entry requirements and offers GCSE choices (photography being one example) to be completed in a year, instead of a two-year course. Anecdotally, there is an expectation from teachers of pupils having a stronger work ethic to produce the work needed in the allocated shorter time. This in turn may have an impact on how they are taught, and their experience overall. Timetabling for the two schools differs too, which can have an impact on the students who choose photography as an option. The school uses an option block system, for which students choose a subject from columns. Similar methods in three English schools were found to be restrictive (Abrahams, 2018) as they meant students had to choose from an almost arbitrary hierarchy of disciplines (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), often not being able to take a subject as it clashed with another choice. This coincides with my own experience of timetabling in this way, as often it can push students to study photography in unconventional ways (such as in non-photography lessons), or leave photography as the only option, thus affecting motivation in engagement from the outset.

Photography as part of the wider school

Photography is part of the Creative Arts department at the school, which is made up of art and design, design technology, media studies, performing arts and music. Photography is defined under the art and design umbrella (see figure 14), having existed in some form since the school was founded in 1995. Since I arrived as a photography specialist in 2014, a further two qualifications have been offered, bringing the total to four photography-based subjects (year 9, 1 year GCSE, 2-year GCSE, A Level Photography). A non-assessed 'super curricular' option of photography for years 8 and 9 takes the form of an enrichment lesson for students to expand their curriculum knowledge or learn about another area. I taught this session, and the focus was on practical, hands-on skills, for example in pinhole photography, physical editing and image manipulation.

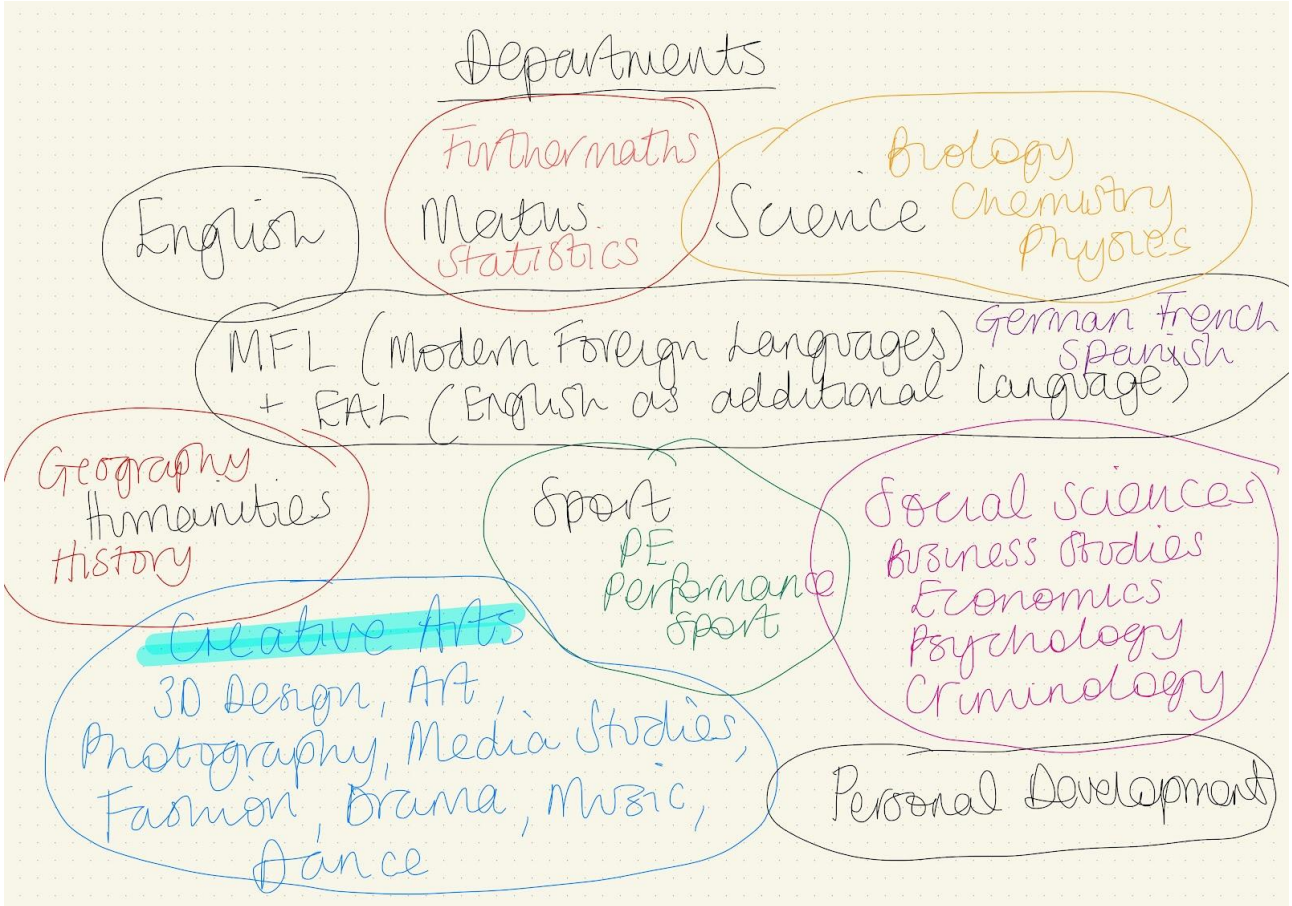


Figure 14: Departments in the research setting (2024). Author's own

This research focuses on photography courses as follows:

Table 4: Lists of photography courses in Wren and Starling Schools

Wren	Starling
Year 9 Photography (13-14)	2-year GCSE Photography (14-16)
1 year GCSE (14-16)	2-year A Level Photography (16-19)
2 year A Level Photography (16-19)	2-year BTEC Art and Design (16-19)

Context of learning environment

The photography classrooms are part of the larger art and design department, consisting of two IT suites each with 16 computers (see figures 15-16 below). The school has an up-to-date licence for Adobe Creative Cloud which allows access to software such as Adobe Photoshop, enabling students to digitally manipulate photographs.

Figure 15: Drawing of room position in building (2024) Author's own

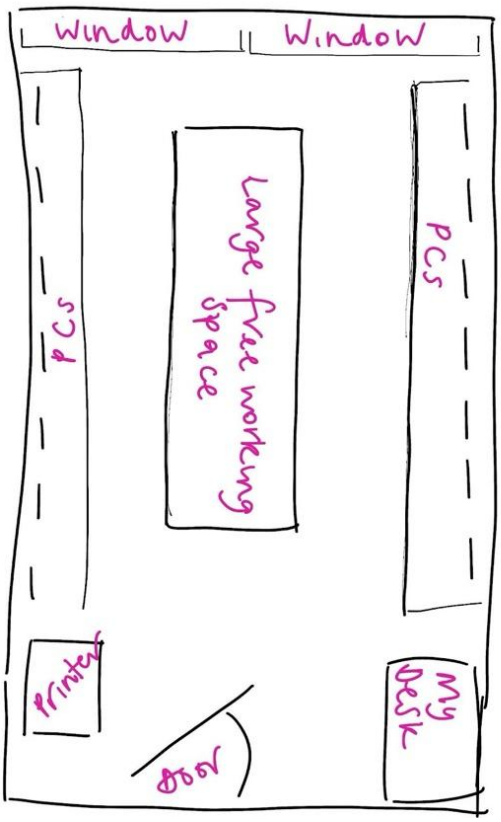


Figure 16: Drawing of main photography room (2024) Author's own

This is considered desirable in lens-based subjects such as photography, and this facility would potentially be a selling point to students and parents. The examination board that is used for photography, AQA, seeks evidence in both digital and analogue processes, however the facility of Adobe Creative Cloud is not specifically required for them to pass the qualification. There is a large table in the middle of each of these classrooms to allow students the freedom to complete non-digital work. These tables were added to the classroom three years ago as the rooms were originally restricted to digital work only, hindering what could be taught and undertaken by students. Students can access art classrooms if needed, and these are adjacent to the photography classrooms. There is a photographic darkroom and a photographic studio, which is also used as a photography classroom and houses another 16 computers.

The darkroom and studio are both new facilities, and both were requested, planned and implemented by me as a photography specialist. These were vital areas to develop and focus improvement of student work to meet areas of weakness in projects, and these facilities are highlighted in the GCSE examination criteria:

> …use media and materials, as appropriate to students' personal intentions, for example:
>
> - film
> - photographic papers
> - chemicals appropriate to darkroom practices
> - digital media, programs and related technologies
> - graphic media for purposes such as storyboarding, planning and constructing shoots.
>
> AQA, (2022), para 3.9 Photography.

Student participants

The standalone year 9 photography class consists of students aged 13-14. These students select photography as an option subject, rather than it being pre-determined on their timetable. They have the choice between art and photography as the creative options but is it not mandatory to take either.

Table 5: Participants

Year group (2021-2022)	Participants (with consent)	No of Lessons per week	Notes
(KS3) Year 9	4	2 x 1 hour	
(KS4) 10 Starling School	0	3 x 1 hour	
(KS4) 11 Starling School (2 year course)	3	3 x 1 hour	
(KS4) 1 year (Wren School)	1	5 x 1 hour	
(KS5) Year 12 (Wren School	2	5 x 1 hour	1 x student completing qualification outside of 'normal' classes due to timetable clash
(KS5) Year 13 (Wren School)	0	5 x 1 hour	

The sample size chosen for the research is in line with studies concerned with similar a/r/tographic enquiries or research that contains rich narratives of a single research setting (Brooke et al. 2024; MacDonald; 2014, and LeBlanc et al. 2015). I chose to include year 9 students in my cohort as they are the only group not undertaking a formal qualification, but their work is loosely structured around the four AQA GCSE photography criteria. Year 9 photography gives students time and space to explore the subject in a much more informal manner, whilst building skills to develop them for their future study if they chose to continue. Although creative subjects are included in the NC for KS3, there is no formal inclusion beyond this for KS4 and KS5 when examination subjects are introduced (Department for Education, 2022). In a study looking at creativity in schools, the Durham Commission Report (2019) found that where examination based creative subjects are taught, there is little room for interdisciplinary exploration or freedoms, given the time and outcome pressures put upon institutions, staff and students (James et al., 2019).

Year 12 A Level Wren School (aged 16-17) participants studied GCSE photography on the one-year course before moving to A Level. One of these student participants is timetabled in a group with the year 13 Wren School cohort, given the small class size. The second is taught independently, as the timetable block for photography does not fit with her other subjects. This student received the highest grade at GCSE in the previous year's cohort. All A Level students have five one hour lessons a week and are expected to complete work outside of lesson time independently.

Teacher participants

The three teacher participants were selected after discussing the research with colleagues teaching photography. All three teacher participants were given the research information sheet and consent form and were reassured that their involvement, or lack thereof, had no impact on the research if they wished to opt out. The following short table (4) outlines their roles as pen portraits; a quick analytical tool used to demonstrate data in a condensed manner (Blundell and Oakley, 2023).

Pen Portraits (pseudonyms used)

Table 6: Pen Portraits of teacher participants

Tabitha	Fred	Duncan
Creative arts teacher who has worked at the school for 15 years. Fashion specialist with extensive experience teaching art and photography during her time working at the school. She works part-time, three days a week. She is involved in a wider school role in teaching and learning. She taught the Y9 and Y11 cohort.	Trained design and technology teacher, qualified in art and design. New to permanent employment in the setting but has held long term supply roles in the department previously. He works full time and taught the Y10 and the 1-year cohorts of photography	Joined the school after the research had commenced. Non-traditional route into teaching, having left school early, returning to further and higher education in photography after the age of 21, moving into the photography industry before training as a design and technology teacher.

Chapter Conclusion

This contextual section has introduced the research setting and participants to aid sensemaking of the following methods sections. Turning now to methods I present part I of the research, the process of foregrounding knowledge for the enquiry. This begins with the rationale for conducting the research in this manner, and the resulting outcomes. The choice making and process of thematic analysis and resulting themes are outlined, before moving to the second part of the enquiry.

Chapter Six: Methods

6.1: Part I: Foregrounding knowledge through thematic analysis

The table below shows the data that were generated for the first part of the enquiry, and is further contextualised in the subsequent sections, beginning with a reflexive paragraph on how the research unfolded into two distinct parts - informal discussions and thematic analysis to gain understanding and foregrounding knowledge of the ethnographic space, followed by a section of enquiry that employed visual and written ethnographic methods, and rhizoanalytical interpretation (section 6.3).

Table 7: Data

Data	Participant	Duration	Word Count	Analysis
Interview transcript	Student 1	8:33	1665	Thematic analysis
	Student 2	16:00	2893	Thematic analysis
	Group	13:00	1927	Thematic analysis
Interview transcript	Teacher 1	12:42	2428	Thematic analysis
	Teacher 2	22:09	3526	Thematic analysis
	Teacher 3a	54:00		Thematic analysis
	Teacher 3b	36:00		Thematic analysis
Discussion transcript	Teacher 3c	35:00		Thematic analysis
Online questionnaire	Student x 7	-		Thematic analysis

The first unfoldings

In the previous sections, I have discussed my inability to articulate a firm understanding of photography education. After creating the initial mapping collages, I knew I had to have a conventional and structured method to generate an understanding of the topic, to be able to confidently continue and ground the research. It had surprised me that when I tried to articulate what photography education looked like in the setting, I was unable to do so with confidence. It was pertinent for me to step back and learn the language

of photography education in the setting, what it looked like, and how it was perceived by those in and around it (O'Reilly, 2012).

The various data sources in use have developed over the course of the research progressing. I do not think, teach or make collage in a linear fashion. Just as a collage is made of several or more pieces from as many sources, and the assemblage of photography education is made up of multiple blocks, this research employs several methods to 'provide broader, deeper understandings into the questions of meaning' (Sameshima, 2009, p.48). When approaching ethnographic research, according to Fetterman (2010), it is important to be able to return to the field several times; an opportunity that my proximity to the research setting allowed for almost daily. The returning and rereturning allowed space for objectivity as mentioned in the opening paragraph of this chapter.

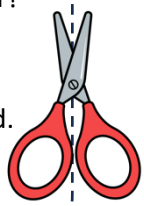
Vignette Eight: November 2024 (Appendix I) Dwelling and falling in the cracks of ethnography

Life really, really, monumentally got in the way of research. Sometimes that was a blessing, sometimes that was a curse. I got in the way of my research through procrastination and sometimes, blatant denial. Other times, it was the disbelief it would ever get finished. The process of collecting data seemed simple enough. But I work in the setting. Moving between the roles of researcher and teacher seemed treacherous, I imagined it like having one foot on a wobbly rope bridge, and the other on a cliff, pulling myself up with every single bit of strength I could muster. Sometimes, the looks I got from students and teachers made me question who in fact they were looking at. Were they looking at me, the teacher, or me the researcher? Could they see the wobbly rope bridge?

The bell went for lesson change, and I looked down at my (very official and professional looking) clipboard.

Was this clipboard a prop, a costume, a disguise?

A marker to scream out, hang on, I'm researching, not teaching! It didn't work.



Informal discussions and an unexpected questionnaire

I started with informal discussions with students. I knew this would generate conversation around the research focus, allow me to ask questions that would not usually be of interest or topical in lessons, and subsequently provide in depth data for me to look at and review. The choosing of informal discussions over interviews is important. Interviews felt too structured and gave me a strange feeling that I was acting in a role that was not my own (Mor-Summerfield, 2005). The choice of informal discussions forming part of the enquiry was a decision that suited the needs of the data generation- gathering opinions, thoughts and general

foundational learnings of photography education. In a poststructural framing, it was key to also choose methods that challenged the formal aspect of a qualitative interview (Lather, 2007) whilst maintaining opportunities for multiplicities to emerge (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980) and remaining flexible (St. Pierre, 2011). Similarly, I did not have a theory, hypothesis or focus of the conversations to organise questions around. I wanted the discussions to guide and help me understand photography education. If I was to structure them formally, I would not be allowing this to happen. Collecting this groundwork data for the understanding of photography education was vital to gain perspective on what was really happening, so it was not led in any way solely by the preconceptions and beliefs I had collected within my own teaching career in the setting and in the subject itself. Doing so provided me an opportunity to collect data in context, rather than removing the data from the context (Malinowski, 1922).

Options for participants

Informal discussions (without predetermined questions) were conducted with a selection of students away from their normal lessons, to avoid disruption to their timetabled schooling, and allow them the chance to speak away from their peers. This opportunity for taking part was offered to all participants. I had not planned to include an online questionnaire, but finding a time to meet with the KS5 student participants was difficult given the time of year (approaching examination time) and the demands of schoolwork. To include their participation without causing unnecessary stress or disruption, I reminded them there was no requirement for them to complete it, and that we could always organise a further discussion if they wished to, or if their timetable allowed. An example of the data is included below in figure 17 (all responses are included in Appendix N). These data were then included in the data set used for thematic analysis. This questionnaire was formulated through Microsoft Teams, the trusted student communication tool used in the research setting. Students also were offered the chance to take part in the discussions as members of groups rather than individually, and this option may have been chosen as students may have felt more comfortable in providing answers (Sharples et al., 2003). Only the year 9 participants chose this option of group discussion. Whether students took part or not generally depended on time restraints and workload. I did not use a predetermined set of questions, but used standard opening questions to begin the conversations, focusing on information about their experiences in photography education and relationships with teachers. This direction was not structured, and the conversation was driven by response.

Discussions outside of lesson times gave students and teachers a chance to reflect on the lessons taking place and their wider relationship to photography education. Interviews were also conducted with teachers in a similar manner to students, but with a different focus. Teacher interviews/discussions focused on teacher training, experiences with photography education, pedagogy and curriculum, and their own education specialisms. The aim was not to criticise chosen pedagogies and teaching, but rather to explore current phenomena and their impact on photography education. The informal discussions were a starting point in

the research, to allow room for the inquiry to evolve and to provide some thematic substantiation of the blocks, experiences and occurrences in photography education. Throughout data generation, I was confronted with difficult preconceptions of data needing to be 'linear, fixed and stable' instead, reminding myself to 'think differently about data as messy, shifting and unsteady' (Hofess and Sonenberg, 2013, p.299).

What part does pho	Do you think photog	What do you think y	For what reason did	If you were writing a	How do you think yo	D
Creative outlet/started as a hobby	they're interested in rather than them having to just jump in at gcse	that photographers change images or use them (in projects, installations)	It interested me before and I liked the sound of the course	cyanotypes but also a more structured way of teaching digital editing	quicker but also at a higher quality and I can also evaluate my own work a lot better	Ti ot
Photography shows me different perspectives of life. It can show different views of what people perceive than what I see of everything.	Yes, because Photography helps up build our creative side and explore more about ourselves.	How cameras work, different ways to produce a photo and how to edit pictures.	I liked taking pictures so I wanted to improve on how I take pictures to make it look more better along with other skills I learn in Photography.	Include many types of ways to produce photos, and how effective they are depending on what the student wants to make in their work.	A little bit, it can help me how to angle the camera and if I should come up close or not when taking pictures.	N fr ca w ta ec
It's a way of exploring new things and capturing the beautiful things	Yes I think it is as it can help unlock an open mind and really open your eyes	Ways people manipulate images to make them see what it's really	I was interested in the subject and I saw the past work and wanted to do something equally amazing		Angles , lighting and really thinking about the detail being captured	N
a school subject	yes, because it's a type of art that everyone can try	i think we should learn about different photographers and techniques	i enjoy the subject a lot	lots of trying new techniques	i understand compositions and other types of art better	n
			free time, I got to			

Figure 17: Examples of responses to questionnaire

Transcription

Transcription was an important consideration, understanding that the transcription approach offers different interpretations and representations of the data (Paulus et al., 2013). Recording audio and transcription was key, as I wished to remain present and engaged in the interview and discussion stage without having to take large amounts of notes during what was a time-restricted discussion or having to rely on my own recall skills after the event (McMullin, 2023). Transcription processes and subsequent interpretation involve judgement of the data, and therefore prior knowledge may impact on these judgements (Hammersley, 2010). However, the prior knowledge of the subject has shaped the research. It is important to note that inferences or non-verbal cues were not of interest, so a detailed transcription of these cues was not necessary. Transcription and other methods freeze what is a continuous moving thing in time - suggesting something much more transparent and structured than it appears (Leander and Rowe, 2006)

Construction of events during transcription was a consideration, given my familiarity and prior knowledge of the environment and participants. To minimise construction, the transcripts are used as a tool amongst other methods and will not be 'exhausted' or over analysed (Hammersley, 2010 p.565). I firstly considered a

naturalised, or strict, transcription process, where all verbal utterances, vocalisations and non-verbal gestures are recorded (Shelton and Flint, 2019; Hammersley, 2010). It felt important to include all the details. Details transcribed may identify the participant through accent cues, incorrect grammar, cultural references and so on (Oliver et al. 2005). The research aims to enquire into the phenomena of a photography classroom and into the relationship between teacher identity, pedagogy and environment, so the discussion and interview transcripts did not require this level of detail to achieve those aims. Figure 18 (below) shows an example of the transcription process, a full example of which can be found in Appendix O.

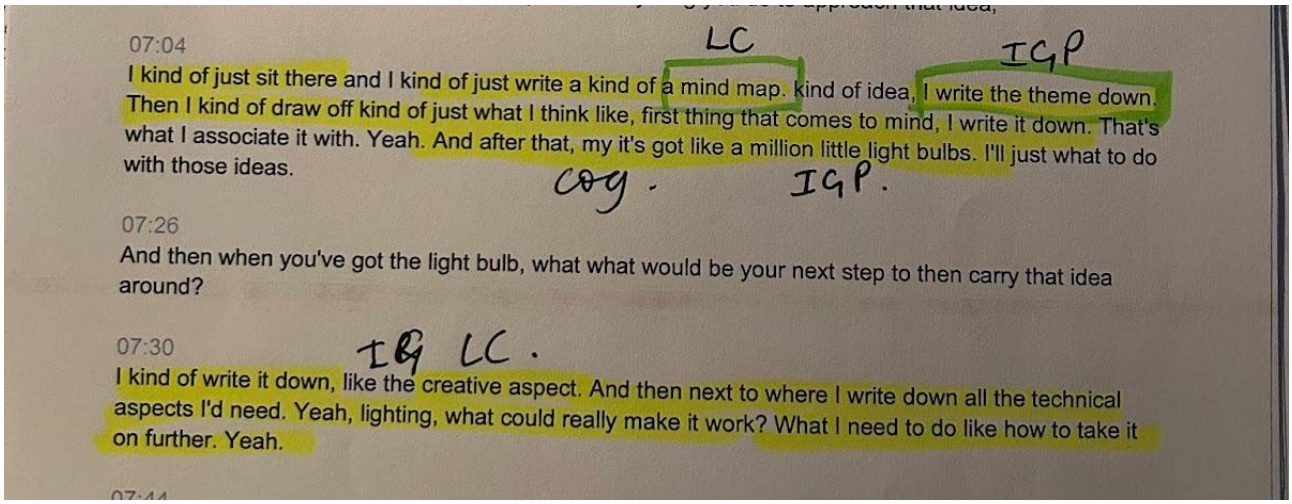


Figure 18: Example of transcription process (Appendix O)

By using denaturalised transcription and standard orthography (Oliver et al., 2005) I am positioning myself at a place of privileging the participants' words and not making prior assumptions (Oliver et al. 2005). To ensure rigour in the transcription process, it is suggested by Point and Baruch (2023) that the researcher considers potential distortion of the data. The multimodal approach of this research ensured that the work was triangulated through multiple data sources, timings and participants within the study. The data were considered through a reflexive approach and revisited at regular intervals during their interpretation and analysis. It was useful to have support from a critical friend, who was a participant in the research project.

6.2: Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is an analytical approach for use with qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2022). It is flexible and can be used on many types of data. It is a six-stage process that comprises collection of data, familiarisation, coding, theme generation, reviewing themes and writing a report (Braun and Clarke, 2022). It allows for reflexivity and assists in identifying and organising themes in data. Thematic analysis can be used as an introductory analytical tool in giving meaning to data, whilst being able to acknowledge the subjectivity of the researcher. The use of thematic analysis aims not to capture participant voice or produce final

representations, but rather to deconstruct an entanglement for me to continue the research, exploring more deeply the aspects and phenomena that are constructing reality through interrogation of the liminal spaces through rhizoanalysis.

Choosing and using thematic analysis

Analysing discussion transcripts in this manner allowed me as the researcher to establish 'tracings and reflections' in themes and patterns that demonstrate what photography education looked like at the time of research (Baldus et al. 2024). Establishing these areas of interest allowed me to turn this foundational learned knowledge into collage maps, emerging from tracing and reflections (Baldus et al., 2024). It was key for me to understand the space from the perspective of the students undertaking photography education, rather than make assumptions based on my learned knowledge of what I think the educational landscape looks like. These shared experiences allowed individual thoughts and voices of the students to become collective and 'construct identities' in a safe, collective manner (Merill and West, 2009 p.144). The following sections outline the thematic analysis process and the resulting themes.

Familiarisation and coding

Familiarisation, described by Braun and Clarke as 'engaged-but-not-yet-systematic' (2022, p.53), involved printing and reading hard copies of interview transcripts. Codes were then developed to address the initial patterns that sat within the data. To begin with, the codes I selected were *teacher identity*, *student identity, student choice making,* and *environment.* The initial codes were descriptive in nature to introduce a more 'deductive orientation' to the data and to help organise the data and provide insight (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p.52). Given the ethnographic nature of the research, and my familiarity with the research themes and positionality with the data, coding in a deductive manner allowed me to detach from the data and 'become an agent in the production of knowledge' (Trainor and Bundon, 2021, p.707). I was able to visually view and manage the data through a different lens, detaching myself from the interview process and being able to view the data and the repetition of meaning that began to emerge. This allowed room for interpretation to occur as a systematic process once the initial research codes had been recognised. These broad codes encompassed multiple meanings, and although they highlighted the research themes, they did not provide any insight, depth or potential of the data, and could be seen as a 'quick and dirty' analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p.54) or overgeneralisation, and led to *analytic foreclosure* (Morse, 2015). After I had begun to develop themes later on, these four overarching initial codes came to be topic summaries rather than themes or codes, and provided a useful overview of the data that was linked to the topics of teacher identity, pedagogy and environment.

To construct the codes (and the code labels, the shorthand versions a sample of which can be found below in figure 19, and the full list in appendix A), I returned to assemblage theory (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) and considered the different aspects of photography education. The codes for the dataset were semantic in their initial stages, as mentions of explicit research themes were actively sought out to then influence and explore more latent, or implicit meanings which were introduced through further codes. I kept a log of the code labels in a notebook and referred to the notebook when a code required editing or removing (figure 19).

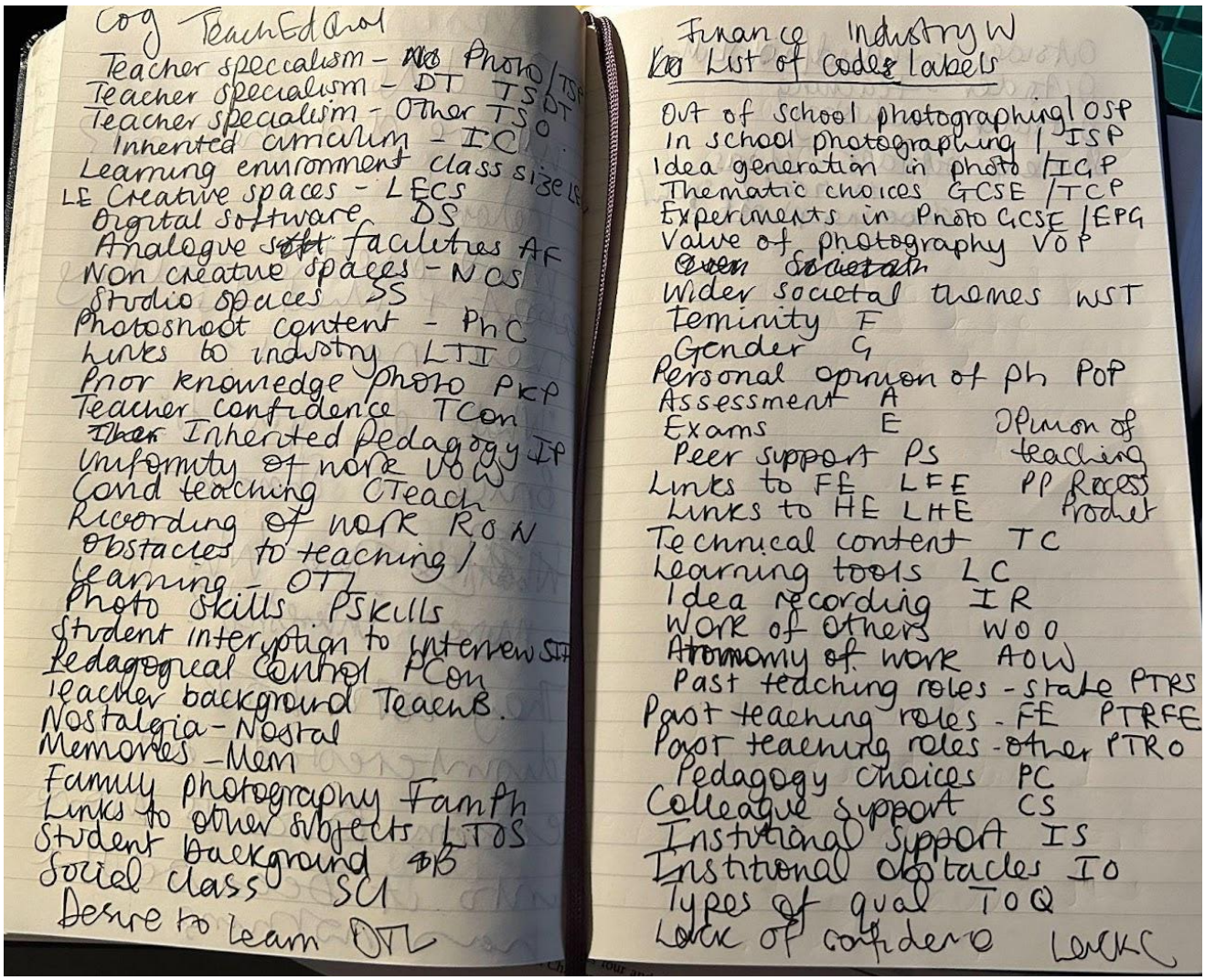


Figure 19: Potential code labels

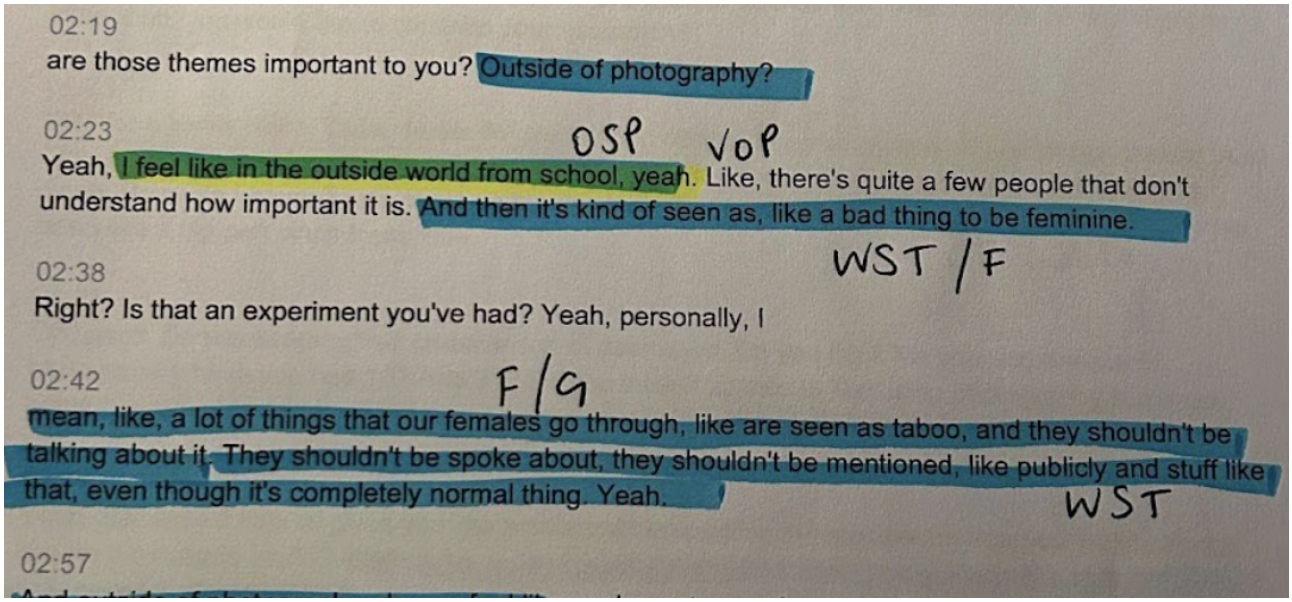


Figure 20: Highlighted transcripts showing shorthand code labels, and highlighting that indicates the first broad code labels that later became topic summaries

To organise the code labels and data into a way that could be easily examined for insights, I used a table with columns for the code labels, student responses and staff responses, an example of which is below (table 9) (see appendix A for full table). At first, I logged the page and identified data such as initials or page number of the transcript. After reviewing this, I realised this information was irrelevant to the data itself and was taking a lot of time up unnecessarily.

Developing themes

The work of a critical friend (also a participant) was vital to the development of what I believed to be initial themes drawn from thematic analysis. Having a critical friend who was knowledgeable in photography education provided reassurance that the possible themes and ideas that were emerging from the data were not seen from a place of researcher bias. Possible themes, sub-themes and topic summaries were written on coloured card and cut into strips for ease of organisation and discussion. It was through this open conversation that I was able to realise some of the themes I had ascertained were not themes at all but could be looked at as simply ideas or nuanced changes to the key topic summary headings. This process helped draw out themes at this early stage (as discussed further in *Chapter Seven*). Developing a critical friend protocol can help strengthen both validity and confidence in decisions made in research analysis (Blake and Gibson, 2021). Supported by Kember (et al., 1997) and initial seminal writing from Stenhouse (1975), critical

friends take on an important role when reviewing, recapping, introducing and challenging ideas and themes that emerge from data. Being part of a wider collaborative learning community is a notion that is also supported by Shulman (2005) and Irwin (2005) and has been shown in both theoretical frameworks to build confidence in teachers when undertaking the role of a researcher.

This discussion then informed further thoughts on the patterns being drawn out of the thematic analysis. To connect ideas and potential themes (figure 21), visual maps were utilised in the reviewing of the data, and questions were then asked of the data, such as:

> Is this pattern a viable theme?
> Do I understand the boundaries of the theme?
> Is there enough meaningful data to evidence this theme?
> Is the data contained within each theme too diverse and wide-ranging?
> Does this theme convey something important?
>
> (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p.99)

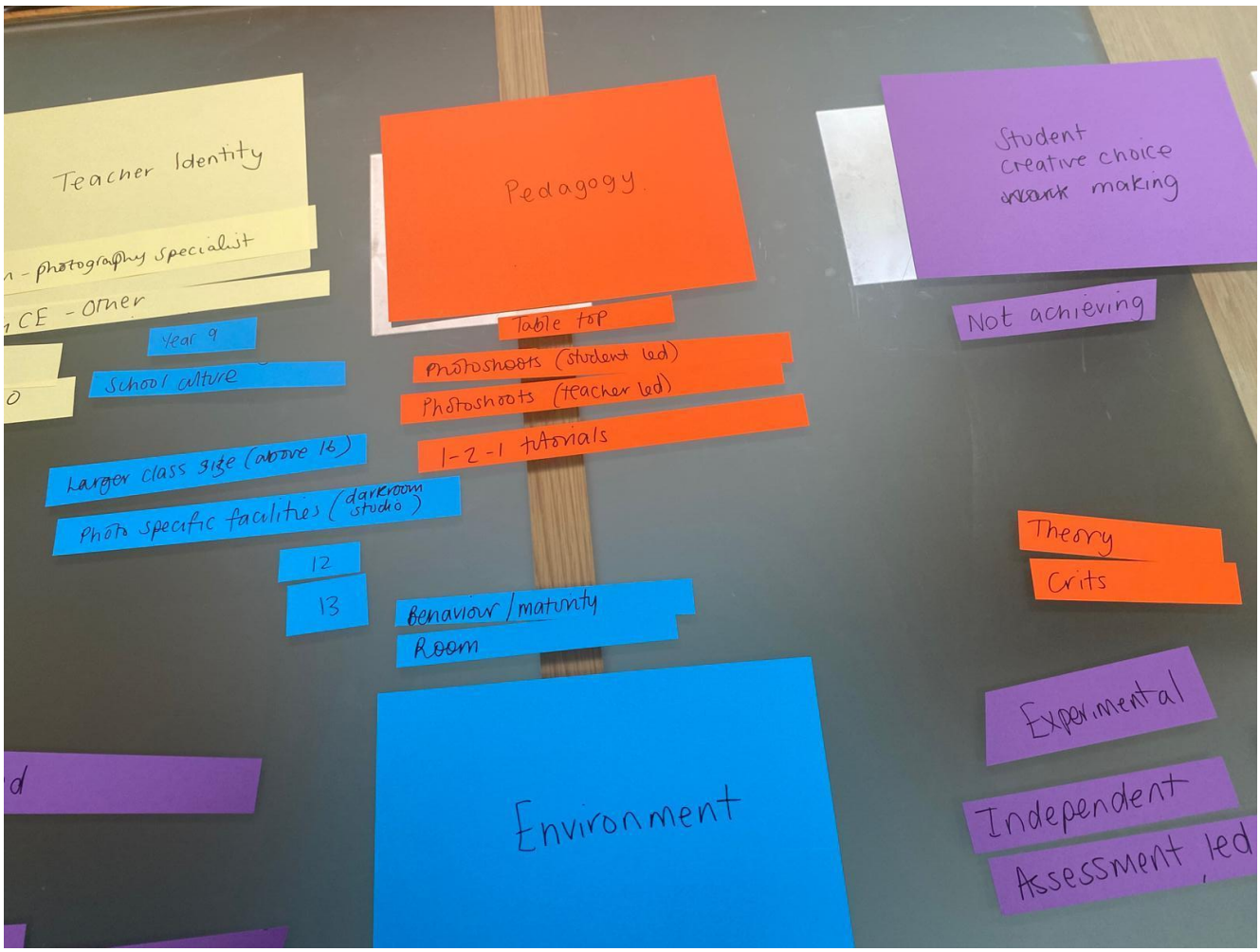


Figure 21: Photograph of theme discussion (2024) Author's own

Table 8 below outlines the four final themes that were chosen because of the thematic analysis. This process of re-questioning and revisiting the data with the research questions in mind led to the generation of a thematic map (see section 5.2). Deleuze and Guattari discussed immovable interconnecting ideas as 'plateaus' (1987, p.24). The four final themes form the plateaus of photography education that can move, dis- and re- connect, and interplay with one another to inform how an education in photography could be viewed. These themes are discussed in depth in the following chapter (in sections 7.1-5) and conceptualised and interpreted through collage to aid further understanding.

This section has outlined the flexible nature of thematic analysis and why it was used in this early, foregrounding part of the research enquiry. It has demonstrated which parts of the data set were analysed in this manner (informal discussions, questionnaire responses) before outlining the process of thematic development. Following Braun and Clarke (2022)'s structure of familiarisation (reading of data), coding (developing code labels), developing themes (thematic mapping), and reviewing themes (discussion with critical friend), four final themes were decided upon and are discussed further *in Chapters Seven* and *Eight.*

Figure 22: Mapping out potential themes, (2024) Author's own

Table 8: Final themes as a result of the thematic analysis

Creativity and Expression
Collaboration and Community
Adaptation and Response
Identity and Belonging

These four themes were then conceptualised and interpreted through four thematic collages to provide further ideas and insights for the enquiry to develop, as the excerpt below demonstrates. The full interpretation of the themes can be found in *Chapter Seven* and *Eight.* The full table of code labels with their corresponding theme can be found in Appendix A.

Thematic analysis data sample from Creativity and Expression (full version available in section 7.2)

The following table shows quotations from the transcript that were labelled with the 'value of photography' code label. The following paragraph begins to interpret a quote that indicates a belief in the wider lack of value in photography as a subject, due to the detail of job advertisements not being subject specific.

Table 9: Sample of thematic analysis data organisation

Code label	Shorthand	Student	Teacher
Value of Photography	VOP	photography is something familiar [choosing to study it] Photography plays a big part in my life as it allows me to show off my skills of my work and I also enjoy. It's a type of art everyone can try. Photography is a basic skills that will be used in many situations and due to this, I believe having enough knowledge to work with a camera and knowing the basic components of it is necessary and should be taught in the education system. The idea that art is a large field with no limits and that it's alright to 'think outside the box' since that defines creativity (sometimes)	She reduced the subject by that. 'Oh well, I can you know, it's not that hard. I can do it. So she's reducing the subject. Do you think that is believed across the board? That anybody could teach it? Yeah. Because look at adverts for photographer teachers. It is art teacher with photography. It's just different. And it's not recognised It lacks substance when its nothing past the good picture They're failing in maths, they're all failing in English, and then we're gonna get pulled out to go into do various extra lessons.

			I remember a moderator coming in and being like, well photography's easier isn't it? Because like its more immediate. And you don't have to spend the time Visual literacies of telling stories? We are seen as an easy option. Its a disservice to the course from us [not having equipment for year 9]

This quote from the *value of photography* code states a key issue identified with the recruitment of teachers in the subject of photography. One of the key interests of this research is identifying the connection between disciplinary backgrounds of teachers in photography and how this may affect the pedagogy and curriculum chosen. The quote raises the point of recruitment of teachers in the subject and the way that the emphasis is often placed on the need for art skills, therefore potentially perpetuating the circle of photography education continually being seen as an extension of art and design.

> Do you think that is believed across the board? That anybody could teach it? Yeah. Because look at adverts for photographer teachers. It is art teacher with photography.
>
> It's just different. And it's not recognised [photography education]. (Informal discussion with Duncan, 2023)

The process of *Part I* has formed an understanding of the photography education research space, and the thoughts and thematic patterns that exist within it. The following section, *Methods: Part II, Creative Meaning Making* now outlines how the research continued into a visual and autoethnographic enquiry, using the thematic understanding as foregrounding knowledge of the area.

6.3: Part II: Creative meaning making

In this second part of the chapter, I introduce creative meaning making through visual and written methods. It begins with a vignette that provides a rationale for how the research progressed into creative methods from a beginning that could be considered a conventional research design. A section on visual ethnography discusses the potential difficulties of using photographs as a method in a research focus that is exploring the education of photography itself, before outlining some of the methods chosen (photographing objects, environment). Turning to using writing as a method, the following section theorises how writing became a large part of the research process, in interpretation, understanding and dissemination. Then, a section on collage as a conceptualisation, as an interpretative and research tool outlines how this creative method has interwoven into all parts of the enquiry.

Table 10: Data for Part II

Data type	Duration	Words
Photographs of space	Photographs of classroom spaces, collaborative work	
Documents	Scans of teaching resources (author's own)	
Journal/Sketchbook	Scans of journal/sketchbook	
Vignettes		5000-6000

Vignette Nine: October 2024 (Appendix J) On students moving, and me remaining still

One of the realisations I have had during the research when considering movement, is that the students who were part of the initial discussions left school before I had finished the research. I realised that the core group of participants I had begun the research with are now in different parts of the world, some at university, some in employment, whilst others have grown from young adolescents to young adults and are in the final throes of completing their education.

Visual Ethnography

On the inclusion of visual ethnography

Photographs were used to capture the detailed nuances and organisation of space within learning environments (Pink, 2021). Photographing spaces allows multiple reviews, for different reasons and to notice phenomena that may be missed through textual recording only. Photographs provide social context to the moment captured (Rose, 2016). It is also much less time consuming to take photographs than sit and observe lessons or organise discussions. As a teacher in the research setting with institutional and wider responsibility, I had to consider this when continuing gathering data. I was able to take the photographs at any time of day, and without anyone present. This meant I was able to research beyond the confines of the school day and manage my workload as both teacher and researcher around the data generation. Ethnographic research is not planned, and insights unfolded without prior knowledge of it happening. The consistent absorption in the setting meant that at any moment, research could happen, and often this was captured through photographing.

Bringing the concept of visual ethnography (Pink, 2021) into a study of photography education begins to feel unwieldy and difficult to untangle. Is there room for distancing research through photographs when it is looking at the study of the very same subject? I have grappled with visual ethnography and moved between feeling entirely comfortable with its usage in the study and running away from it entirely. I realised when engaging with Ingold's work that I may have been confused with visual culture approaches of seeing, rather than visual ethnographic observing, or non-representational (Ingold, 2022). The meaning, materiality and purpose of photographs means that their use is fluid and disconcertingly difficult to understand. Who is to decide whether a quickly snapped photograph on a phone is to be kept, treasured, used as academic evidence for qualification, or for research purposes? Pink (2021) has been in my life theoretically for some time now. Her text *Doing Visual Ethnography* (2021) has cropped up time and time again, both in my masters study and throughout my doctoral studies. My concern with using visual ethnographic methods would be that the photographs collected would eclipse the real needs and representation of an education in photography. Some way into the study, I have realised this comes from my own built paranoia about the state of photography education and how it is valued as a subject across the curriculum.

As Pink (2021) advocates succinctly, images play a huge part in the disruption of what are considered conventional research methodologies. This may feel like a bold claim, but as Pink states, this was a radical disruption to the norm during the 1990s research sphere (2021). The use of images in interdisciplinary ethnography allows the researcher to realise patterns and interpretations of a rich social environment and reveal 'observations of reality' rather than communicated 'stories' (2021, p.25). Ethnographies are not whole

truths. Adopting visual ethnographic methods as part of the constructed narrative generates further representation, and often a fourth wall style entry into the environment being researched.

Artefacts photographed

The decision making behind choosing to photograph something can be difficult to articulate beyond the lifting of the camera (or phone) and framing a composition. These choices can be quick and deliberate, or slower and planned. In photography education, the process of photographing is broken down into tiny fragments - the choosing of technology, whether digital or analogue, the choosing of the equipment, the teaching of the skills needed for that intention, the lighting, the planning, the gathering of items, people, props. By doing so, the process does not necessarily mean the photographs are considered any more successful than a mindless picture taken with little consideration of the aesthetic output. However the photograph is taken, the choice of doing so has symbolic meaning, according to Collier and Collier (1986) and can provide further insights into what, and how, people interpret their environments.

Choosing to photograph the spaces in the research setting demonstrates a 'shifting materiality' (Pink, 2021, p.97) as these spaces only looked in this way at that particular time. By choosing visual ethnographic methods, the capturing of the research setting allows for revisiting, for reimagining, and allows for a continuous dialogue between the related methods being drawn together by the threads that connect them (Pink, 2021).

Change(s) in environment

To explore existing pedagogies in photography education, and how disciplinary backgrounds may impact on their creation, section 7.9 discusses in depth the construction and delivery of a teaching resource designed for a school trip. This teaching resource was (re)designed by me in direct response to an exhibition guide collected on a *recce* trip. The inclusion of this resource and commentary on the pedagogy employed is of note due to its relationship to another part of the research focus, the learning environment. Up until this point, the research had solely focused on the photography classroom. The trip was planned, organised and led by me and one other teacher who is also part of this study, and it was focused on the photography curriculum. When making journal notes on the days leading up to the trip, I realised that removal of the day-to-day learning environment (of the classroom) had impacted on how I had chosen to deliver the content (the pedagogy and resources).

As the research is framed ethnographically and naturally has adapted to the everyday contexts of learning in photography education, the inclusion of the school trip resources and reflection on them felt appropriate and relevant to how the alteration of the environment changed the teaching of the subject. This part of the

enquiry consists of scanned images of the teaching resource, and an accompanying autoethnographic text. During the research, there was a fire in the building where photography normally was taught, which disrupted the learning environment. Again, this disruption in the environment is included as an autoethnographic reflection on how this impacted the teaching of photography. Examples of the teaching resource can be found below, and an excerpt from both texts. The full texts can be found in the findings chapter with the accompanying rhizoanalytical discussion. The outcomes of these elements of the research are synthesised in *Chapters Seven* and *Eight.* After the excerpts are presented here, the next section considers writing as method, and how the autoethnographic vignettes have unexpectedly become the thread of reflexivity, meaning making and understanding throughout the project.

Excerpt from disrupted environment

Figure 23: Page from Tatebook resource (2024). Author's own

> This gap in investment, collaboration, pride and commitment to resource making may impact the teaching/learning that occurs in the photography classroom. This is particularly pertinent to the subject being taught by non-specialists. A familiarity with subject knowledge in photography means that specialist teachers can enter the more conceptual, risk taking and disruptive activities such as the *Tatebook*…Given we have interjoining doors in our department, staff and students move freely between the spaces and this creates a community feeling. Staff would often interject positively in one another's lessons and knew the students even if they were not in our timetabled classes. (excerpt from section 7.8-9)

These excerpts provide an insight into how ethnographic methods have been used in the changing everyday contexts of photography education in the research setting. These observations and inclusions of teaching resources add to a rich data collection which when interpreted together, can develop insights in line with the research focus, found in sections 7.8-9, 8.2 and 9.2. The following vignette offers some thought on the patchwork element of how these methods and data can be brought together.

Vignette Ten: October 2024 (Appendix K) Being and becoming

A beautifully eloquent way of describing this (especially as a visual thinker) is Cardoza's description of making 'the [patchwork] seams visible' (Cardoza et al., 2021). Hayden brings another beautiful metaphor of how to view patchwork methods in the context of women researchers. Patchwork quilts have traditionally been a female vocation. The patches are made individually and brought together to tell a bigger or fuller story (Hunter, 2019). The patches work alongside one another to communicate, but not imitate, each one bringing something different to the conversation. The patchwork metaphor can be linked to the use of a/r/tography enquiry. Springgay et al. (2005) describe the unfolding of living enquiry as threads of fabric being untangled and looked at, before being rewoven, perhaps differently, perhaps more tightly or loosely, with additions or subtractions dependent on what the observation has detailed. Throughout the research, there is a theme of joining together, through assemblage, through collage, through photography education being perceived as a put together curriculum of sorts, through my own roles being joined in an a/r/tographic way.

6.4: Writing as method

'In pursuit of in-between-ness and at the bliss of writing' (Guttrom, 2012, p.598)

Writing allows the space for what is 'experienced outside or beyond language into language' (Cook, 2013 p.207). Writing as a method can articulate experience in a way that I felt other methods could or would not. Writing (as a verb) and the resulting writing (as a noun) cannot be anchored to a set of rules or procedures but can be seen as a 'means of discovery' (Cook, 2013). Relating back to section 5.3 discussion on making the familiar strange, writing can help in combining a familiar practice (of typing or handwriting) with a moment (the strange) bringing the tangled unknown closer to the known, which as Cook (2013) describes it, 'reaches back into experience and forward into form' (p.204). To use the thread of becoming here, writing is experience becoming form.

Writing requires the process of drafting, revisiting and editing to ensure clarity and understanding for the reader. Drafting or rewriting is a paradox, as the conditions in which it is written change and therefore may impact how the writing is edited. Each draft will present new ideas and discoveries, moving through time with the writer and their experience of the research.

Micro-ethnographies

My creative work into the everyday (see section 1.7) could be described as micro-ethnographies according to Bayeck (2023), as it provides insight and expanded detail of what could be considered very small aspects of everyday life, often unnoticed. This practice of free writing, collection, comment, self and cultural introspection has formed a foundation of noticing how things are happening in the moment in which they occur. Autoethnographic methods such as the use of vignettes can be considered a 'creative analytical process' that helps 'marry science and art' (Rådjesö, 2018, p.72) through the presentation of interrelationships of photography education, and appear to be 'emotionally revealing' (Richardson and St Pierre, 2008). Creative autoethnography allows for a subjective view into liminal spaces and 'fragmented layers' of the research as it unfolds (Rifeser and Ros i Solé, 2022, p.222).

Autoethnographic vignettes

To be considered a 'good' autoethnography, there is an expectation that authors prioritise sharing experience and reflexivity about their process and decision making. It also does not ignore the fact that people experience emotion. The choice of autoethnography acknowledges that the space between 'auto', 'ethno' and 'graphy' can be understood that the '[you the] researcher, are the research tool' (Adams and Herrmann, 2023 p.6) made up of your own senses, voice, interests, perspectives and values. Ethnography of this nature aims to 'facilitate a nuanced understanding of these cultural phenomena' (Adams and Herrmann, 2023, p.3) and results in a demonstration of how photography education is experienced when looking at it through the chosen theoretical and philosophical lenses.

The use of autoethnographic vignettes in this research adds 'representational richness' (Humphreys, 2005, p.840) and moves the researcher closer to the research process (Pink, 2007). The inclusion of vignettes assists in including the researcher's 'own taken for granted understanding of the social world under scrutiny' (Van Maanen, 1979) or the 'doing' that researchers have been doing for many years prior to conducting the research (St. Pierre, 2016). Comparatively, the use of autoethnographic vignettes has been suggested to 'ask the readers to relive the experience through the writer's or performer's eyes' (Denzin, 2000, p.905), which could be suggested to bring closer the binary oppositions of researcher and reader, or research and author. The use of autoethnographic vignettes may 'facilitate fresh conversations about the complexities of learning, identity and inclusion in the field of educational research' (Rådesjö, 2018, p.69). Autoethnographic writing 'extends understanding [and] ruminations' (Brooke et al., 2024, p.5) moving what could have been

considered a personal viewpoint into an in-depth cultural understanding when interwoven with the other methods in the study (Rådesjö, 2018). This space that is implied could be likened to the space between the teacher and their teaching, the student and their experience, the writing and speaking of a teaching practice. It is the space between a learning environment being designed and furnished and the 'outcome' of the learning that takes place in liminal spaces. Using autoethnographic vignettes in research can offer insight into these spaces, into reflexivity of the research process, and to 'display the multiple levels of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural' (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p.733). Grant and Zeeman (2012) suggest that the use of personal experience in the inclusion of autoethnographic vignettes transforms the researcher 'from a distanced spectator to a present and emotional human being' (p.1).

Losing and gaining confidence

Doctoral work comes with a lot of 'feelings of despair and false starts' (Wellington et al., 2005, p.845) or as Coryell et al. (2011) set out, doctoral students suffer anxiety during the learning processes of becoming educational researchers. The use of vignettes in this research did bring up questions of whether the way I was approaching writing as a method was suitable in telling the story of my research. At first, my writing did not contain any personal style of prose. I kept these as a sketchbook, research notes, notes on my phone, and as a private, password protected blog. The confidence I had in this voice being valuable to the research was low, if present at all. My mind and learning to this point had kept them separate, in two worlds, like that of teacher/human. My own thoughts and understandings did not seem to rank in the same academic hierarchy I had become accustomed to, and I referred to them as 'just notes'. However, as discussed in section 6.1 and 8.1, many of my doctoral epiphanies happened in the liminal spaces, when I had put away my Macbook, usually after a period of intense fogginess and frustration, and clarity came when I was walking alone, dog walking, travelling, exercising, commuting in complete silence, commuting whilst listening to podcasts, lying in bed awaiting sleep or collectively, *becoming.* These different processes could be described as 'academic writerly identities' (Bradley, 2025 p.58) and the imagined readership of the thoughts or notes having an underlying impact of the style or confidence in which I write. Each action I describe is the space between doing, the space between locations, the space between knowing and unknowing, the space where consciousness gently disappears and reawakens with the morning, or as Bochner states 'stimulates more discussion of working the spaces between subjectivity and objectivity, passion and intellect, autobiography and culture' (2000, p.761).

It was at these points that I realised my musings on what had happened during research were valid as part of the process, and more importantly, in the application and documentation of it in this thesis. The ability for me to be able to 'perform the magical feat of transforming the content of consciousness into a form that others can understand' (Eisner, 1997, p.4) came in the form of including the autoethnographic vignettes that told the story of the research from a place of rich representational authenticity, rather than self-indulgence

or navel gazing. Feminist theorists would question why I had such low confidence in my own research insights, or why an 'inner voice' was telling me the contributions were not valid (Aiston and Fo, 2021). Luke (2000) suggests 'women's lack of voice is a social consequence of the absence of her reflection in the mirror of history' (p.218). Using a personal voice in research can demonstrate a positive and committed engagement with the research, according to Creswell (2009).

Reclaiming 'vanity ethnography'

Autoethnographic vignettes raise questions, in terms of rich representational writing as guiding the reader, or self-indulgent practice under the guise of research, or egotistical (Chang, 2008) or even 'navel-gazing' as Sparkes suggests (2002, p.215). Furthermore, Walford commented that he found these self-indulgent accounts 'that record every detail of their [doctoral students] own learning process very boring to read, and I see them as the worst kind of 'vanity ethnography'' (2002, p.5).

Referring to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of a body without organs, providing a research narrative without emotion and personal insight in the form of vignettes would be a body without organs. The vignettes form a fleshy reality of the research, or organs to the empty body, if utilising Deleuze and Guattari's terminology (1987). Recounting my research without the fleshy organs would create more space between the reader and me as author, rather than moving towards the learning of knowledge into an already underrepresented field of photography education, therefore bypassing the aims of the research, that were to unpack the impact of teacher disciplinary backgrounds and learning environments on pedagogy and curriculum. I am part of the research setting and the data I have collected are from what before research - was the mundanity and everydayness of my professional identity.

Journalling

'Counterpractices' such as journalling are actively engaged within feminist methodologies, to 'repeat the familiar and normalised' (Lather, 2001, p.204). Taking on multifaceted roles in research means 'both getting out of the way and getting in the way' (Lather, 1997, p.24). When visualising this concept in my mind, I see myself *getting out of the way* by observing thoroughly, and constantly. *Getting in the way*, in my interpretation, is the noticing of what is happening and what *is not* happening, around me, letting it occur as it would. Allowing space in the research for smaller aspects of the enquiry to serve different purposes meant that it did not become a 'vanity ethnography' (Van Maanen, 1988) with an overfocus on my involvement in the work. This concept became a topic of thought for some time for me, as I was still grappling with the confidence of writing authentically in a voice that reflected scholarship and in a way that could be considered doctorately (Bradley, 2025). Because of this trajectory, I had landed on the conclusion that if I were to approach the research in a different manner, the work would not have accurately and

appropriately reflected the unfoldings of the research and subsequent findings. To ignore my own role in the research, or downplay to avoid the risk of *vanity,* would have been done to the detriment of the enquiry. If this in turn means the work is viewed as vanity ethnography, then this is a concept I accept, given the authenticity and reflexivity that has been executed in the work.

The commentary on participant voice never intended to speak for the participants through the role of an 'expert' and neither did I wish to convert it into something that it 'really meant' (Lather, 2001, p.209.) Thematic analysis allowed the space for the interview transcripts to be interpreted, but not retold, to be used and heard, rather than speak their words on their behalf. The use of diverse methods foregrounded the multiple stories and subtexts in play at any one time, exposing aspects of the rhizomatic structure without prioritising any one point, path or tracing. I was able to 'read against myself' for 'difference rather than sameness' and to be 'unsettled by the otherness' (Lather, 2017, p.8) through the exploration into the multiplicities, getting lost, finding myself, only to discover I was in a whole new place than where I started.

Journalling and collage share qualities in enabling recording of ideas that may emerge, links between observations, texts, thoughts, conversations and musings (Holman Jones, 2007). Combining written and visual techniques in the generation and analysis of data provides the opportunity to create 'webs of connection rather than linear ones' (Butler-Kisber, 2018, p.5) and enhance reflexivity through multiple interpretations or 'another layer of vision' (Gerstenblatt, 2013, p.12). Writing down, or recording insights can show times of discomfort, being uncomfortable and uncertain in the research, as well as illuminating areas of breakthroughs and idea forming (La Jevic and Springgay, 2008). Inclusion of the liminal experiences in autoethnographic writing reveal the fractures, sutures and seams of self-interacting with others in the context of researching lived experience' (Spry, 2001, p.712) and La Jevic and Springgay (2008) refer to the 'fabric of everyday life' (p.70).

The data samples from this part of the enquiry are already demonstrated throughout the thesis, through the inclusion of vignettes. They are in turn included as part of the data corpus and are considered further in *Chapters Seven and Eight.* The full versions of all vignettes can be found in Appendix B-M. I have included an extract of *Chapter Eight: Discussion*, where a vignette has been considered through rhizoanalysis (sections 8.1, 8.2) alongside the findings from other parts of the enquiry.

> When retracing the data, I noticed the student interruptions. This is quite literally a liminal moment. Often students would enter lessons earlier than the timetabled session or wish to talk to me and the other teacher participants whilst data were being gathered. This engagement with the subject and confidence in the teacher-student relationship demonstrates that they place value on the subject. Roorda et al. (2019) found that in their study of Dutch secondary school students, students were more likely to have positive teacher-student

> relationships with the subject they found easiest, or with the skillset with which they felt most comfortable. (autoethnographic writing excerpt from 8.2).

The choice making and use of visual ethnographic methods and writing as method has been considered in the preceding sections. The difficulty of maintaining scholarly writing and authenticity was discussed as part of reflexive thinking in response to 'vanity ethnography' (Van Maanen, 1991). The use of writing as a method through autoethnographic vignettes has also been considered as giving the 'flesh' to the body without organs, to use Deleuzian terminology, or to provide detail and insight to the ethnographic framing of photography education in the research setting. Data excerpts have been included for context and illustration of what has become a rich patchwork of methods (Cardoza et al. 2021). The following section discusses collage as a research method.

6.5: Collage

This section introduces the use of collage as a research method, beginning with theoretical understanding that the bringing together of elements in collage provides opportunity to illuminate previously unseen ideas and insights. Following this, I include a section that conceptualises the process that I undertook when making four collages relating to the four outcomes from thematic analysis.

On cutting and pasting: collage as interpretation, understanding and dissemination

Collage and research share non-linearity, both are layers of 'theoretical, artistic and intersubjective knowledges' (de Rijke, 2023, p.304). To liken collage with rhizomatic thinking, there is a shared lack of finiteness - a collage possesses the characteristic of unlimited additions and possibility, and the nature of a rhizome is constantly evolving from many different points.

As a collage artist, I understand how pieces of the actual and pieces of the unknown can come together to create something new or representational. Most collage is not radical, but the idea of its speed and ease makes it an efficient tool to disseminate ideas using found or repurposed materials and imagery (Lucero, 2013). Conventional research methods maintain 'linear thinking' whilst collage can present 'visual juxtapositions' (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p.3), constructing new knowledge, unearthed understanding on a previously unseen or passively comprehended topic, or turning to Greene (2005) 'to point out what is not yet noticed' (p.116). Collage has been described as able to engage an audience in multiple possibilities of understanding through its unlimited visual juxtapositions (Butler-Kisber, 2018).

Visual methods have been critiqued for their lack of rigour. Often this is unfounded, given the lack of empirical criteria that exist for 'measuring' or testing qualitative research overall. In turn, the open nature

of qualitative research suggests that the critiques of rigour and quality are based on largely quantitative or scientific research (Hammersley, 2007; St Pierre, 2024). The critique continues when research asks for validity, reliability and transferability to other areas (Morris and Paris, 2022). This can be linked to over reliance on reference to positivist and post-positivist research, in which there are supporting arguments for the challenging nature of a/r/tography and post-qualitative studies, embodiment of the researchers, and the version of rigour for qualitative research that can be interdisciplinary rather than transferable in a limited fashion (Holbrook and Pourchier, 2014).

Being able to use collage in this way in this research helps mirror the multiplicities of the key areas of interest, the theory and the methodologies adopted. The likeness between unconventional, post-structural studies and collage is drawn upon by de Rijke, commenting on its inclusivity, its interdisciplinary nature and its ability to disseminate the 'unknown' (2024, p.307). I particularly enjoyed de Rijke's reference to modern day collage - the attachment to an email, symbolised by the small paper clip icon- the art of putting together. Moving out of dominant research methods into a visual enquiry tool such as collage could assist in exposing creative and critical meaning (Stouffer et al., 2004), as the act of producing visual enquiry breaks away from textual data alone, a method connected with familiarity. Collage slows down the perception of the everyday to which senses have accustomed, making the familiar strange and opening avenues for nomadic thinking, as suggested by Deleuze (2000).

Connecting subjectivities

Self-efficacy within this process is key to this discussion around collage. Once the research methods came naturally, I was able to apply this foundational knowledge to wider thinking, data dissemination and pedagogical application. This in turn led me to make artistic choices, collages, and, thus, the process ebbed and flowed in line with the creative process. Translating the work creatively meant I evolved my understanding of what photography education should and can be. Just as Deleuze and Guattari (1981) theorise with assemblages and rhizoanalysis, using collage as a research method enabled me to make connections between subjectivities in the data that perhaps did not appear when remaining only as textual data. The act of collaging different aspects of imagery and found materials together has been described by Butler-Kisber (2018) as working alongside one another to 'produce new connections and illuminating ideas' (p.4).

Juxtaposition-ing education and collage

Garoian (2006) describes the art of collage as a 'disjunctive narrative' of everything in modern society, and the practice itself, in Deleuzian terms, allows us to experience living everyday by bringing together fragments of culture, society and the media into one 'unifying whole' (p.74) or in Deleuze and Guattari's description, 'disjunctive synthesis' (1983, p.12). In common with the idea of assemblage, collage allows things or

fragments to co-exist, rather than attempting to possess an entire truth, or a finality. The combination of collage changes if the juxtaposition of the pieces change, just as photography education changes when the assemblage blocks are rearranged in a rhizomatic fashion. This silent 'dialectical tension' (Garoian, 2006 p.74) of collage provides the same 'perspectival multiplicity' needed to engage with research and research data. Disseminating data and producing findings in a collage medium allow the same space for new developing ideas to be identified in the way rhizoanalysis allows for textual space when looking at data (Garoian, 2006, p.74). Collage can be identified as an unstable practice, one that is unbound and resists the formality of more traditional art forms. The use of collage is described by Kuspit as making 'uncertainty a method of creation' (1983, p.129). The use of collage metaphorically in education is the disruption that hierarchical educational models, or performance pedagogy models, wish to avoid. The implication of potential subjective pluralities can be echoed in the chosen poststructural framework of this research.

Collage, like photography, is widespread and has multiple uses, values and meanings across subject areas and age groups (Lucero, 2016). Collage can be misunderstood as a simplistic practice of cutting and rearranging pieces of paper randomly. In contrast, making and discussing collage practices alongside students in a collaborative way may allow for students (and teachers) to open creative and unearthed lines of enquiry (Garoian, 2006; Biggs and Büchler, 2012). The lack of finality of a collage evokes an idea of possibility lying in wait, or the pause in creating may suggest that 'silence keeps things open' (Sontag, 1969, p.20). When teaching photography, I have often discussed this space, or silence, as looking behind the photograph, asking students to consider what is behind it, came before it, what was happening to the side of the photographer, or simply in the world at that time. Allowing students into these unknown spaces mimics the creative freedom through which collage allows me to understand complex meaning or data, life events or simply concepts and ideas. The next section describes the process of thinking through research using collage.

6.6: Process of making, thinking, sticking, doing - thematic collages

Creativity and Expression

Producing data collages, or maps, allowed me to look closely at and uncover other tracings and connections between different elements of the research. The starting point for this was a handwritten paper note of the theme title *Creativity and Expression* and its connecting subcategories; social media, thematic choice making, experimentation, idea generation, the value of photography, and the work of others (see appendix A for-code labels and subsequent categories). These subcategories were my aesthetic lead point when looking for found materials to collage. The materials I use are largely secondhand books and magazines, bought in charity shops, and quite often, the charity donation bookshelf in the Tesco near where I live. These materials are often selected at time of purchase because of a link to my interests - photography, nature, education and so on, but always with the intention of them being repurposed in collage. I also select books and magazines if

they demonstrate visual features that are of particular interest to me as a collage artist; for me, this is often of a variety of hand gestures. These are found in how-to manuals popular in the 1980s and 1990s, usually in topics such as home DIY, cookery, massage and tai chi. I have a particular favourite book that I have bought multiple times, teaching the reader how to do magic tricks. This is a signature collage style I have come to adopt, and features on the *Identity and Belonging* collage discussed later in this section. It is interesting to note at this stage the interdisciplinary nature of the collage material feeding into the visual depictions of the plateaus, a rhizomatic approach to using material that can make different connections depending on how they are assembled, providing a visual metaphor of a photography being open ended, and rhizomatic rather than finite and complete.

The first part of collage making is the consideration of different potential books and magazines. I make collage in a loft space, and all collage books are arranged on a shelf. The space is a creative one, filled with materials for sewing, printmaking, writing and collage making. It is decorated with posters, photographs and exhibition postcards. I have a set of drawers filled with blank paper, cut up pieces of work that may come in useful, and the relevant stationery for me to collage quickly and effectively. I started with the British Journal of Photography from 1981. My thought process is purely visual at this stage, as the background to the collage requires connection to cameras, photography and so on. I do not search for imagery but make quick decisions when I spot something I feel is relevant, and often literal, at this early stage in any collage. In this case, I stop for images of cameras, people using cameras, clean sheets of what looks like graph paper, reminiscent of that used in a school setting. I am making the connections between the themes when selecting these materials. Once the layout is formulated, I begin to write the connected quotations from the interview transcripts on found materials. I also cut up printouts of the interview transcripts. This is a time heavy practice and one I quickly leave behind before making the next collage.

Figure 24: Creativity and Expression collage. (2024) Author's own

Collaboration and Community

The second collage was focused on the theme of 'Collaboration and Community' and included subcategories of peer support (students), support of colleagues, working together/working environment, industry links and links with other subjects, as summarised in the table in appendix B. My main creative focus for this collage was the idea of school communities, maps and networks. I was inspired by the idea of working together and collaboration being a product of locations, schools, and being a team. The idea of community made me imagine travelling locally, helping and supporting others. I include a vintage image of birds in flight, above an old image of two school children eating crisps, wearing teal anoraks. I have replaced black and white images of children with maps of the local area. This imagery evokes nostalgia and a sense of support. At this stage of creating the collages, I had begun to develop a creative language, in that I was producing collaged imagery with the quotations from the discussions and interviews around the edges or collaged within the imagery itself. Having begun the creative flow of making, the second collage process felt much more organic. Having established that the cutting of the transcripts was time heavy and not in line with the overall aesthetic, I chose to combine handwriting and digital text to add in the quotations from the data. This added a further layer to the collage, as I had to photograph and edit it using a digital program. I was much happier with the outcome of this collage.

Figure 25: Collaboration and Community collage. (2024) Author's own

Adaptation and Response

I selected found materials in a similar manner, using the subcategories as my initial starting point. The main background image is of my daughter, painting during the Covid-19 pandemic. This work was part of a wider project I produced whilst being furloughed from teaching. Other aspects of the collage include primary word flash cards, assembled to create new sentences of 'We want to see/give/fun'. Whilst creating the collages, I came across a folder of my old school reports. This felt serendipitous, when considering how education could be re-examined in non-linear inquiries. The inclusion of my examination grades aged eight show assessments taking place in reading, English, spelling and free writing, mathematics and times tables. I found the following inclusion interesting 'the grades and scores given are solely based on the results of the examinations. They may not reflect the general standard of the child's work'.

Figure 26: Adaptation and Response collage. (2024) Author's own

Identity and Belonging

By this stage, the creative choice making had become embedded and rhythmic. I understood the visual narrative between the collages by this point and wanted to continue this flow. The imagery was chosen in reference to the two main female characters facing away from the viewer and therefore hiding their identity. I enjoyed the playful notion of them belonging in the small, forgotten space of a phone box, once commonly used, and now rarely spotted without a defibrillator, or village library instead of its coin operated telephone. It was important for the brightly coloured balloons to be hidden in the phone box, partly visible, creating an idea of hidden identity, or obscured identity. I liked the childlikeness of the balloons, smiling and plastic in texture. This reminded me of the playfulness in education and the idea of students feeling a sense of belonging in creative environments due to their strong identities. The hand moving into the side of the frame is, as aforementioned, a visual signature when I create collage. I enjoy the visual depiction of influences on identity and belonging, a not-so-subtle metaphorical nod to the idea of education being impacted, swayed and directed by several micro and macro influences. As you can see in the figure above, I struggled to determine the layout of this collage, and the one for *Community and Collaboration*. This inability to distinguish between categories allowed me the space to realise that the rhizomatic nature of photography education and its subsequent themes could exist however I wished to assemble them, and the visual images could represent one or all the overall themes.

The last section has demonstrated the reflexive process and creative choice making that has been undertaken when developing thematic collages from the outcomes of Part 1. These collages act as a visual coming together of thinking, to develop insights as part of the methodology, and for use in further analysis. Before moving to the ethical considerations of the research, the following section introduces rhizoanalysis and the way it has been used to synthesise the different parts of the enquiry.

Figure 27: Identity and Belonging collage. (2024) Author's own

6.7: Rhizoanalysis

Rhizoanalysis (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) allows the researcher to look in the liminal, around and through familiar structures and helps to view them as incomplete discourse. It also allows the researcher to see them with a level of disruption, and in turn these well-trodden structures can be reconstructed, reconsidered, or in Derrida's terms, 'reinterpreted, re-stored, reinscribed' (1995, p.256). Rhizomatic thinking encourages this exploration of the middle rather than the beginning or end (Buchanan, 2021) and analysing in this manner allows for the understanding and interpretation of texts in ways that engage differently to that allowed by conventional analytical tools. Matching with the unfolding and *becoming* nature of the research, the use of rhizoanalysis allows for unpredictability, dynamic relations and connectivity between the pieces of data and methods chosen that may have been viewed more singularly. Following Leander and Rowe (2006), rhizoanalysis can provide the space to be less interpretive, but acknowledge the 'multiplicity of relationships within a single system' (2006, p.41). It can unfold in an 'endless dance of co-emergence'. In a poststructural framing, recognising and identifying meaning in the research focus moves away from considering stability and instead through the gentle shift of rhizoanalysis, generates movement and process (Hordvik et al., 2019).

By introducing this rhizoanalytical shift, the pieces of data generated through differing methods are brought together alongside their contexts and become a moving combination of considerations rather than a 'static representation' (Collier et al., 2015, p.401). Illustrating the research focus in this way allows space to advance the thinking around the assemblage of photography education rather than to change it, or to suggest alternatives (Hordvik et al., 2019). The choice of methods for the research meant that I was continuously kept in the complexity of data, moving in, out, between, beyond and besides it. Similarly, rhizoanalysis has no set of preconceived rules and therefore has been able to be interwoven within these emerging research processes. It does this by acknowledging *affect* by *forces* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988). Here, *forces* are understood as 'feelings, senses' and combinations of often inanimate elements that apply themselves to one another (Collier et al., 2015, p.397).

Rhizoanalysis acknowledges interconnectedness involving 'personal, social and hierarchical dynamics' (Collier et al., 2015, p.397). The case of this research, the experiences within the photography education assemblage, a classroom, for example, are made up of forces that *affect* (or change) one another - the teacher, the student, the weather, the time of day, the furniture. Each combination of these experiences is unique and therefore irreplicable. The discussion on *becoming* (sections 4.1, 5.4) is important to return to here, as the ever-changing nature of *force* means it is in a consistent undertaking of *becoming* something else.

Becoming rhizoanalytical

Writing about the ethnographic data *is* rhizoanalysis, as the writing was the connection between the different methods, bringing them together in ways that were not considered previously. The structure of photography education can be theoretically set out in the static of curriculum maps and assessment criteria or a 'schooled *becoming*' (Fels, 2004, p.76). However, the reality of the day-to-day events of the model in motion is more akin to the unpredictability of the rhizoanalysis, or the consistent interaction with ongoing social *forces*. The inclusion of writing as a method allows the space frame my own interactions and understandings of/with the data, as part of the rhizoanalytical process, given that I have experienced the fine interrelationships within the research.

Considerations of rhizoanalysis considered the interactions of the unseen; for example, if considering the student (their maturity level), the teacher (their prior knowledge of the subject), or the learning environment (is it familiar, comfortable?). Each element considered in a rhizoanalysis is continually in flux, transforming the composition of photography education, making each moment unique, and each reflection only partial (Leander and Rowe, 2006). Questions were asked of these data, such as what dynamic relationships of the people, the space, or the objects are forming? Who or what are these relationships or connections affecting, or what is it presenting when considering emergent meanings? (Leander and Rowe, 2006). Responses to these questions, or experiences that could be considered away from the normal structure or routine of photography education could be considered as *ruptures. Ruptures* can be described as disruptions of already established routines, structures or interrelationships (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). A *rupture* opens new possibilities that may emerge from the new direction (referred to as *line of flight* in Deleuzian terminology, 1987). An example of a rupture in this research could be the unexpected change of routine and classroom due to a building fire during research collection, as it disrupted the 'normal' learning environment (see section 7.9). This *line of flight* impacted facilities, pedagogies, furniture, temperature, even down to the scent of the new rooms.

Rhizoanalysis and writing as reflexivity

Reflexivity is vital to be able to self-analyse and maintain a constant questioning of how the research is remaining responsible to those involved, and to acknowledge discomforts within the process (Pillow, 2003). By conducting this research in an ethnographic manner that responded directly to the needs of the enquiry, it was possible for reflexivity to become part of the research process. Using writing as method and rhizoanalysis has provided the opportunity and space for difficult questions, to generate ideas and extend enquiry where appropriate and necessary (Collier et al., 2015). Adopting it has presented a truthful representation of reflexivity *as a research* process, integrated with theory, method and interpretation, rather than as an activity being conducted in isolation.

The initial planning and knowledge production using informal discussions and subsequent thematic analysis became what is now clear to be the first phase of research. The visual ethnography and writing as method formed the second phase. The third comprised the rhizoanalysis and collage as conceptualisation and interpretation (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005). This part of the methodology chapter has introduced rhizoanalysis and its suitability for the methods employed for the enquiry through its non-prescriptive and flexible nature, but mainly because of its strengths in bringing together multiple areas of data to establish interconnectivities and relationships between the diverse elements. The following section presents the ethical considerations of the research, before concluding with a chapter summary.

6.8: Ethics

This section outlines the ethical aspects that were considered in the planning, generation and recording of the research. This section begins with the journey of gaining consent, and this is followed by a discussion of the potential risk of harm to both students and teachers. There is a short section on Covid mitigation considerations, before concluding with the aspects of a visual enquiry that require ethical attention. The section on ethics concludes the chapter, and *Chapter Seven* presents the findings of the research.

Gaining consent

As the research took place in a boarding school with a large international student population, parents of students were often overseas, and English is often not their first language. The school's standard communication procedure involves contacting UK-based guardians first, who usually also speak English as well as the native language of the families they are representing. There are also several international liaison officers who speak native languages of the biggest international student groups: Chinese, Russian and Thai. Language, or comprehension of the communication, could have been a potential barrier or delay to receiving consent, due to the need for two-way correspondence rather than a broadcast of information. The school communicated with parents via email, so there was a risk of the consent request being lost or delayed. To avoid this happening, I scheduled a follow up email. If requested or needed, translations of the information sheet and consent forms could be produced by school international liaison officers, who often translate documentation for parents. Their authority in the school community and interdepartmental checks on translation meant documents were trusted but deemed not required, and I had no request for further multilingual information.

In the first instance, the documents were sent in English, as all other communication from the school is. I decided to contact the parents/guardians of students first, before approaching the students for their informed consent. The reasoning for this was that if parents do not give consent, or if they do not engage with the communication, I was able to approach only those students whose parents agreed, potentially saving confusion, time, and unnecessary paperwork. Although the research study took place in an English-

speaking school where all teaching and communication is in English, I considered the role of consent in other cultures and how this may have been viewed. In Western cultures, signatures provide consent or agreement. This is not always prevalent elsewhere, as Onvomaha Tindana et al. (2006) found in their study examining the role of consent in rural Northern Ghana. Traditionally, individual consent is not given in Northern Ghana but is a joint community decision and often is a verbal agreement when nonliterate persons are present. The school in which the current research has taken place has over 47 nationalities. Consenting to research in a Western tradition may have not been familiar and may be considered unusual. To overcome any potential confusion with my initial request email, the follow up email offered an online Zoom call for parents and guardians to voice any issues or questions they wished to raise. No parents attended the Zoom call with further questions.

Trust and consent

As a teacher I had already gained trust from the intended student participants in what Silverman (2003) describes as 'everyday ethics'. As the students were familiar with me, my presence and teaching practices in photography lessons, gaining specific access for the research to commence was not a barrier I had to overcome. However, formal ethical approval had to be gained for the research to comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and TUoS guidelines (University of Sheffield, 2024) by being able to prove informed consent has been acquired, and to ensure there was no confusion between the trust gained through a teacher-student relationship and the new researcher-participant relationship. Without this clear and concise informed consent process, ethical issues may have developed whereby students felt they had been taken advantage of, or the teacher-student relationship damaged. Through the initial experience of gaining informed consent, I quickly realised there was an unpredicted occurrence. Students were approaching me on behalf of their parents to ask what I had emailed about, despite the information sheet being attached and preceding introductory email explaining what it was. Students often ask questions on their parents' behalf, especially when from multilingual families. This was of ethical concern, as I did not want the existing rapport and trust as teacher-student to be damaged by introducing the new power dynamic of researcher-participants. However, this existing relationship and trust in being able to ask these questions directly was a result of a positive teacher-student relationship.

When developing the project aims, I was concerned that as a 'insider' teacher in the setting the further role of 'outsider' researcher would mean the project may not be taken seriously enough, but the concerns from students made me consider that perhaps the opposite may be a risk, with the emphasis on the introduction of research formality invoking trepidation in them (Masny, 2016). However, accepting my fluid role as artist, researcher and teacher, I realised I did not take on a different role in the view of the student. The research was approved by the school principal, aligning with TUoS ethical guidelines.

My existing role as a teacher could have also potentially affected how parents felt about giving consent, as someone familiar to them may put 'undue pressure' to participate (Busher and Fox, 2019, p.7). It occurred to me that if large numbers of students did not wish to participate in the research study, it may cause difficulty in observing and collecting data in a classroom environment where non-participating students are present. This was an ethical dilemma that Smette (2019) found when researching community and lines of boundary in schools in Norway. After receiving some last-minute refusals to consent, she was left with the dilemma of how to record the participating students correctly, given her research themes of community and interaction. Her conclusion was to refer to any social dynamics through a labelling system but to remove any reference to the individual whatsoever. Smette (2019) felt this assisted her in representing the groups in an accurate manner, whilst retaining the wishes of those not wanting to participate or consent. An exception to this could be found when descriptive information only applied to one or two students. If there was only one student of a certain nationality for example, that nationality could not be used to reference the student in the abstract as anonymity could not be provided. This method employed by Smette (2019) could be applied to the classroom observations that I have made in the research, in the case of mixed consent being received. One suggestion would have been not to include the students who had chosen not to participate, by providing them with a different activity. This was not a possibility, as it would have disrupted their timetabled learning and may have impacted on their academic achievement or learning.

Of 42 student potential participants, I received 15 parental consent forms and 15 student consent forms. Of these 15, 10 participants took part in the enquiry, either through informal discussions, being in observed classes, or answering an online questionnaire. The other potential participants did not actively refuse consent, but rather did not return the consent forms. I considered whether the lack of returned forms is an active refusal of consent, or due to other unknown reasons (BERA, 2024). This is in line with the University of Sheffield's ethics principles (University of Sheffield, 2024).

Risk of potential harm to student participants

Students may have felt as if they must participate in the research, under the misapprehension that they would gain reward from the experience or be disadvantaged if they did not. Participating in the research project was in no way connected to the assessment or academic achievement in lessons. This was addressed through detailed ongoing informed consent and continuous offers to discuss any part of the research. My role shifting to researcher instead of teacher could have shifted the perception of my authority in the classroom and may come across as negative or intrusive (Mannay, 2016). My presence as a researcher may have prevented normal classroom behaviour and may have had an impact on student progress overall. This is of particular concern for those studying towards formal qualifications such as GCSE or A Level. This ethical consideration was addressed through the choice of employed methods, for example observations of photography lessons if they did not alter scheduled activities, meant their education continued as planned.

Participating in the research project was not connected to the assessment or academic achievement in lessons, and neither were the research aims or focus.

Participants have been found to offer *socially desirable* answers to please researchers (Faddar et al., 2018). This was a consideration, as students are eager to succeed and please. In contrast, students employ escape strategies from research, such as answering 'don't know' or ending interviews early (Kvale, 1996). Familiarity and context lowered the risk of a new power imbalance in existing relationships. To minimise these risks, students were reminded that the research was not connected to their academic study throughout data collection, and interviews were informal with open questions to allow students freedom to discuss or deny discussion as they wished.

Using their familiar and usual photography classrooms for discussion minimised this potential harm. Ongoing informed consent and the option to discuss the research has also ensured student participants understand the research thoroughly, with students asked throughout the process whether they were still happy to take part, and offering to share insights into what the research entailed whilst maintaining professional relationships and boundaries of sharing. Conducting research using visual methods may have reduced this power shift, as creativity can provide scope for a different and more relaxed output (Packard, 2008). Informal discussions were organised in line with the student participant's availability and conducted outside of lesson time to avoid disruption. Students had the option to remove themselves from the research at any time. The research was conducted during the academic year rather than the lead up to formal or mock examinations, to ensure the disruption was minimised further. A timetable was formulated and distributed for student participants to understand when the research was going to be taking place.

Student participants may have felt they could not express themselves creatively due to the research taking place. Anonymising of participants has helped overcome this, as well as ensuring students had the ongoing option not to take part, either in part or in full throughout the entire study. Students were given the opportunity to give consent to parts of the study, and not to others, such as inclusion of their visual work in the analysis and subsequent write up. Using visual ethnographic methods such as photography and autoethnographic contributions can help personal narratives be communicated in a less challenging way (Lenette et al., 2018). In addition to this, students were reminded of the purposes of the research project, and that their work was not under scrutiny or assessment.

Risk to teacher participants

Teacher participants may have felt concerned by being observed or with by presence of another adult in the room, given its likeness to teacher quality accountability measures of Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) or Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and therefore may have

attempted to change their teaching planning or behaviour. The risk of potential harm was addressed through informed consent and information sheets, plus formal and informal discussions to ensure that the teacher participants understood the aims and research focus. Teacher participants were made aware that I was also part of the research study, and that may have provided teachers with reassurance (BERA, 2024) that their work was not being judged or criticised in any way, and did not refer to the Teachers Standards (the standards that teachers are measured against in formal classroom observations), Ofsted or ISI observations. Reassurance to teacher participants was given to ensure they were not under the misapprehension that they would gain reward from the experience or be disadvantaged if they did not, and that any identities are anonymised when photographs are included in the findings. In the case of visual data, any distinguishing features such as uniform or faces has been pixelated or edited to anonymise. Anonymity has been provided to all participants, and pseudonyms have been used in the analysis and subsequent write up of the data. Invitations were given to review data during discussion periods following data generation. Ongoing informed consent was sought throughout the research. Teacher participants were able withdraw their consent for all, or any part of the research at any time, whilst retaining any part they remained comfortable with. They were not expected to provide an explanation for withdrawing consent at any point. Anyone who did not wish to participate in the study did not form any part of the research.

A new shift in power relationship emerged blurring the distinctions between me being both a colleague and a researcher. To address this ethical dilemma, ensuring the teacher participants were able to input with their own past knowledge and experiences whilst having the option to withdraw from the research at any point ensured they felt valued, and that they were participating in the research, rather than being treated as research objects. The reasoning and intention of the research remained available for teacher participants as part of the information sheet to help teachers gain understanding of what was required in their role. The research has addressed the individual emotional needs of teacher participants throughout and has been flexible, to offer a caring research environment (Bergmark, 2020).

Participants had the option of attending a debrief of the research on exit, at whatever time this occurred during the research. They were also given the option to ask any questions regarding the research throughout, and as a researcher, I conducted regular verbal and visual welfare checks. This provided an opportunity to recognise any signs of distress in the participants should it have occurred. Those that did participate in the study were given the chance to review their contribution to the study to ensure they were happy to proceed with the content.

Organisation of data

To ensure the data gathered were organised and manageable, all journal notes, sketches, videos, photographs and transcripts were converted into digital files and named in a methodological and organised manner. File management procedures ensured this was clear, consistent and easy to navigate both during and after research. To do this, file names included the date, a descriptive identifier, a version number and name of participant/group. Any data that had been analysed and completed were stored separately to work that was ongoing. Version control is important, and version control was used through the University Google Drive system. Google Drive is a cloud-based system, allowing files to be safely stored and encrypted. An inventory of files was kept to track the data content. An inventory was also kept of the equipment, software, systems and any third-party data used in the research. This safeguards any process undertaken during the research and makes all data traceable. British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2024) guidelines state that anonymity needs to be maintained in the organisation of data, and any identifiable details anonymised with suitable pseudonyms or similar. Teacher and student pseudonyms were used in the recording of data. Using photographs as part of a visual enquiry also requires ethical attention according to BERA guidelines (2024), to ensure that visual identifiable data is also not present. This consideration has been implemented in photographs by obscuring identifiable details such as school badges, school names, and student and teacher faces or visual features.

Covid mitigation

The research was proposed before the Covid-19 pandemic had occurred, but data generation ended up commencing in 2022, which avoided having to implement a Covid-19 mitigation. However, I have kept this ethical consideration in, as it still places the research contextually.

If there were to have been a further lockdown related to Covid-19, the following mitigation strategy was going to be implemented. If the lockdown were to be in September to December 2021, the research would have still taken place but using online lessons to observe rather than in person ones, and online interviews would have taken place rather than face to face. If this had of happened, then the potential harm of the global pandemic on participants would have been considered when gathering data. This could have included a detrimental effect on performance or creative output due to situation stress and lack of adapted teaching resources if the lockdown were to have occurred suddenly (Adedoyin and Soykan, 2020). If the lockdown had occurred during or after the data collection, the research study would have continued as normal with the amount of data that had been gathered to that point. This was unlikely to happen, given that in the UK, restrictions had been moved to a 'living with Covid-19' status (Cabinet Office, 2022).

Visual enquiry/ arts-based ethics

In terms of ethics and arts-based enquiry, following Cole and Knowles (2008) I asked two questions at the start of the research: 'how do the arts inform the research process, and how do the arts inform the research representation' (p.65). The answers to these questions deemed the use of arts-based methods to be relevant and ethical as part of the enquiry. Arts-based methods are central to the enquiry in multiple ways. The focus of the research is concerned with a creative subject - photography, in which arts-based methods are common practice. Collage and photography are embedded in my practice as an artist and teacher so align with the needs of both the research and the researcher (Kara, 2015). The research is broadly framed in a poststructural lens, with an a/r/tographic framing (Irwin, 2013), which by its nature encourages an artistic approach to enquiry and generating understanding. There are eight aspects that could be considered in the ethical production of a visual enquiry such as this (Coles and Knowles, 2008). These are listed in the left-hand column of the table below, with the research responses being applied in the right-hand column, to ensure they have been met. After the table, a chapter summary concludes the methodology

Table 11: Ethics of a visual enquiry

Intentionality	To contribute further discourse to the field of photography education; 'a moral commitment to make a difference' (Butler-Kisber, 2018, p.45)
Researcher presence	Authenticity in the authorship aligning closely with my practice as an a/r/tographer throughout
Aesthetic quality	Produced in line with University of Sheffield guidance on ethics, doctoral work and postgraduate guidelines to ensure rigour
Methodological commitment	Transparency throughout, ethical treatment of participants throughout the study in line with University of Sheffield guidelines, continued researcher reflexivity
Holistic quality	'Truthfulness and sincerity' to the process of the research (Butler-Kisber, 2018, p.45)
Communicability	Accessibility through written word, visual methods and differentiated writing styles (vignettes/academic) ensure multiple audiences can access the research
Knowledge advancement	Outlined in the significance of the study in section 7.7
Contributions	Outlined in the research contributions on section 7.7

Chapter Conclusion

Chapter Six began with the initial research design presented in two formats; visual mapping collages made for me to make sense of the research and how it would look, and then a conventional research table to offer summative context to the use of methods and methodology moving forward. The issues of confidence and writing the methodology were addressed here, and tidal shifts of getting closer yet further in the methodological untangling. Following these reflexive statements, the choice making of ethnographic research was outlined due to the methodological flexibility it offered. The ability to adapt and unfold in accordance with the everyday contexts of the school research environment meant ethnography was the most suitable and appropriate choice for this research. The framing of research from an a/r/tographic perspective followed, due to the emphasis on *becoming* between elements of research, my own role, the changing environment, the constant flux of the educational landscape. After the overall methodological framing of the research, the context of the research setting and participants was introduced. The first part of the methods section addressed the reasoning for requiring an understanding of photography education through informal discussions and an online questionnaire, and the subsequent thematic analysis to foreground knowledge of the research focus at the time. Thematic analysis processes are introduced, and an excerpt of collage as conceptualisation was shown here to understand how the themes were understood. In the second part of the methods section, the uses of visual ethnography and writing as method were presented, before an in-depth section exploring collage as a research method in interpretation, conceptualisation, understanding and disseminating. The use of rhizoanalysis preceded the ethical discussion. Next, *Chapter Seven: Findings* presents the understandings and insights gained from the combination of these outlined methods, through rhizoanalysis and writing and collage as method.

Chapter Seven: Findings

Chapter Introduction

The structure of this chapter is in three parts to follow the research design and chosen methodology: thematic analysis of informal discussions, writing as method, and visual ethnography. Drawing into the theoretical framing of the inquiry, the first section of this chapter addresses the findings of the thematic analysis to provide the foregrounding understanding and knowledge for the enquiry, introduced through written interpretation and collage. Next, utilising writing as method and rhizoanalysis (Deleuze and Guattari, 1981), a section presents findings from ethnographic observations during the study, including the change of learning environment and the impact on pedagogy when on a school trip, and an unexpected change to environment when a fire broke out. Here, a synthesis of the autoethnographic vignettes that appear as excerpts throughout the thesis is provided. Finally, the photographs that were taken as part of the visual ethnographic enquiry are discussed in relation to the research focuses. A/r/tographic, rhizomatic and assemblage led research all share a common indicator of illuminating meaning from multiple sources and approaching all information in a way that considers them not to be of a hierarchy, but of equal potential importance to the overall meaning making. The findings chapter utilises this lens, allowing the research to unfold through ethnographic observations, experiences and methods. *Chapter Eight* consolidates and discusses the findings in line with the research questions: What is the impact of disciplinary understandings of teachers and chosen pedagogies on photography education? How does the learning environment affect teaching and learning in photography?

7.1: Part 1: Foregrounding of knowledge through thematic analysis

Drawing from the findings of the transcripts of the student and teacher informal discussions, I present the four themes that were generated through thematic analysis and the foregrounding of knowledge around photography education in the research setting that it subsequently illuminated. Informal discussions with students and teachers helped 'guide enquiry' in photography education (St. Pierre, 2023, p.23) by illuminating the four thematic areas. Doing so, even in the broad frame of poststructuralist thinking, allows for a 'practice of reason' (St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000, p.10) and for me to return to the original aims of the research, of contributing new knowledge around the current understanding of photography education by both teachers and students experiencing the subject in schools. For ease of navigation, the collages that was first presented as part of the methods chapter, are presented again here, in figures 28-31. The first theme is *Creativity and Expression* (C&E), which was generated through a combination of five code labels (value of photography, idea generation, thematic choice making, experimentation, and work of others). Full page examples of the transcripts can be found in Appendix O.

Figure 28: Creativity and Expression collage. (2024). Author's own

7.2: Creativity and Expression

Value of photography

One of the key interests of this research is identifying the connection between disciplinary backgrounds of teachers in photography and the way in which this may impact the pedagogy and curriculum chosen. There are currently no subject specific teaching routes for photography in England (Department for Education, 2024). Linking with Davies et al. (2016), it has been suggested that a lack of specialist mentors on initial teacher training routes has an impact on subject specific curriculum and pedagogy in schools, and given there are no photography routes, this may have an impact on photography education. Considering this, the quote from code *value of photography* below highlights the point of recruitment of teachers in the subject, and the way that the emphasis is often placed on the need for art skills, therefore potentially perpetuating the circle of photography education continually being seen as an extension of art and design. An alternative consideration would be the emphasis on art skills being a demonstration of the gap in initial teacher training, and an attempt to recruit in a manner which maintains the highest level of closely matched skills given the gap. However, this gap between students studying photography and specialising in it and then training as teachers without the specialist mentoring on a subject specific pathway, could have an impact on the creativity and expression of students and teachers in photographic curriculum and pedagogy. The idea that photography is suggested as an additional skill set on a job advertisement, as illustrated below, could be linked with the societal and economic needs of education being prioritised over progressive and holistic education models (Bates, 2010; Douglas-Gardner and Callender, 2023).

> Do you think that is believed across the board? That anybody could teach it? Yeah. Because look at adverts for photography teachers. It is art teacher with photography (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023)

> It's [photography education] just different. And it's [photography education] not recognised (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023)

The beliefs and opinions expressed in these quotes may be intrinsically linked with the wider overall value of photography education being lessened amid a lack of governmental support for maintaining arts-based subjects in schools (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2021). The contrast between creative subjects such as photography and commonly perceived academically challenging subjects like those favoured in the English Baccalaureate (House of Commons briefing, 2010), or the more recently suggested Advanced Academic British Standard (House of Commons, 2023) is echoed in the quote from a teacher, who states 'we [photography education] is seen as an easy option'. In this quote the value of the subject is viewed from a different perspective - this time, through the lens of the educational value within an institution, at subject

and student level. Similarly, this quote from a discussion with Tabitha demonstrates this lack of confidence in how photography is seen as an easier educational option, when students are pulled from traditional academic subjects such as maths and English when underperforming at an institutional or examination accountability measure and placed into photography. 'They're failing in maths, they're all failing in English, and then they're gonna get pulled out to go into various extra lessons' [photography] (informal discussion with Tabitha, 2023).

Continuing with the *value of photography* at institutional and examination board level, an anecdotal recall of what an examination moderator had mentioned had upset Tabitha. It was recalled that the exam moderator had said that photography was easier than art and design, and as a result was more easily awarded higher gradings than art. The final quote presented below is another anecdotal example from Duncan, from a previous colleague who had, in his opinion, 'reduced the subject' by stating that it was not that difficult to teach it with training in a different disciplinary background. The preceding discussion has demonstrated a knowledge in those in the area that may have been learned as a result of governmental, societal and educational priorities not aligning with the subject specialist needs of photography education. In turn, this inherited or learned lack of value, and lack of requirement for a subject specialist teacher training to teach photography, may directly impact the creativity and expression that is subsequently delivered in schools.

> We [photography] are seen as an easy option. (Informal discussion with Duncan, 2023)

> I remember a moderator coming in and being like, well photography's easier, isn't it? Because it's more immediate. And you don't have to spend the time [doing it] (informal discussion with Tabitha, 2023)

> She reduced the subject by that. 'Oh well, I can you know, it's [photography education] not that hard. I can do it. So, she's reducing the subject (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023).

Staying with the *value of photography* code within the theme of C&E, the following quotations demonstrate a contrast between the value of photography from the viewpoint of teachers and students. It is evident there that when considering the value of photography, they do not immediately see the economic and societal impact discussed and highlighted by teachers above, but the value of the medium in a more holistic way. One student describes photography as 'something familiar' whilst another considers it playing 'a big part' in their life (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023). A parallel is drawn with the lack of governmental and societal commitment to creative education as outlined by Cultural Learning Alliance (2021) and the third student quotation in which photography is described as a 'basic skill that will be used in many situations' and therefore deeming that it 'should be taught in the education system'. The idea of cross curricular

photography skill teaching is echoed by the 1990s influx of literature funded by the Arts Council England (Brake, 1996). Furthermore, students have highlighted the inclusivity and importance of photography education by stating that 'it's a type of art that everyone can try'. There is a pattern of attributing photography to wider thinking, with words like 'familiar', 'plays a big part in my life', 'used in many situations' and 'a large field', demonstrating the understanding of transferable skills in the subject.

> Photography is a basic skill that will be used in many situations and due to this, I believe having enough knowledge to work with a camera and knowing the basic components of it is necessary and should be taught in the education system. (Informal discussion with a Y9 student, 2023)

This section has highlighted the quotations attributed to the value of the photography code label, contributing to an understanding of how photography is seen at a personal, institutional, examination and economic level. The next section considers idea generation in photography, remaining within the theme of C&E.

Idea generation

The code of *idea generation* was considered part of the creativity and expression theme, given its key role in photography education, and creative thinking more widely. Assessment for GCSE and A Level photography (below) both reference idea development and recording as part of the four main criteria, echoing its presence in the creative process (Czikszentmihalyi, 1996).

> AO1: Develop ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.
> AO2: Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.
> AO3: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.
> AO4: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

(AQA, 2024, para.5)

When discussing idea generation in photography education, students demonstrate ownership of their own ideas and do not refer to any influence or prior engagement leading to those ideas. The ownership of and confidence in idea generation may suggest that their experience of photography was made up of adaptive, or progressive pedagogies. Teaching in a progressive, student centred way requires confidence from both the teacher and the institution (Hirsh and Segolsson, 2020). The second student quotation describes the

process as ‘a million little lightbulbs’, suggesting that their idea generation is abundant, pointing towards a link with the use of progressive pedagogies over traditional ones. Traditional pedagogies that favour accountability and performance were found by Eisner (2002) to be restrictive and limit creative processes. The following short sections continue with photography making, and introduces the theme of photographic experimentation, exploring how the work of other photography practitioners is used in the photography curriculum.

Experimentation, and the work of others

A pattern of student confidence and ownership, and differing value of the subject, continues in the code of *experimentation*, where students assert their independence in planning their experiments (‘I’ve been planning a big experiment’), whereas the teacher response is more assessment focussed with inference to time-pressured, accountability measured environments (Wilkins, 2015): ‘because you need to tick the box of experimentation’. It is pertinent to note that the student is not discussing the work made for this particular teacher, and vice versa.

> I’ve been planning a big experiment. I’ve printed the images, I’ve sewn them together (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023)

> Do this, copy this, you know? Not very experimental. So, when we get work [manipulation] it is because you need to tick the box of experimentation. It works for that. (Informal discussion with Duncan, 2023)

The last code of the C&E theme, *work of other* photographers featured as an inspiration for developing the students’ own style in photography, with quotes stating, ‘it kind of lets me put my own little twist’, and ‘recreating the techniques might be useful in your work’. The teacher's response raised further questions about the choices teachers are making when introducing the work of others to students, with comments made on the diversity and suitability for the student, rather than linking solely with their own interests or learning in photography. The use of photographers’ work for students to copy or replicate resembles the definition of photographs being defined by how the consumer responds to them (Edwards, 1992). Following Benjamin (1936), being able to replicate a photographer’s style does not equal the ability of the original photographer, given the time and distance between conception and subsequent interpretation by students (Becker, 1995). There is potential in the age of mass image reproduction for a passive ‘perpetual deconstruction and reconstruction’ (Sweeny, 2005, p.49) of photographer work through its inclusion in educational settings, even if that is not its intention or purpose. The demonstration of movement between photographer context and the teaching of their techniques is illustrated in the third quote below: ‘so many poor examples of people looking at a photographer and not really understand[ing] what they’ve done’.

The final quotes presented as part of the C&E theme are from teacher participants. The first recognises a change in pedagogical thinking in photography and demonstrates how previous experience was largely based on their own preferences. Questioning and being reflexive about this application to the students shows a potential shift or *unfolding* in their teaching style towards student centred learning, and away from their own preferences (Strom and Martin, 2017). The second quote focuses on repetition of pedagogy, and the lack of inclusion in the curriculum being provided, and a lack of consideration for the needs of the student but rather relying on inherited curricula: 'we need to photograph these mechanical bits'. 'Them' in this quote refers to teachers who are teaching photography in ways that are not student centric but instead favouring repeated curricula models for whole classes. The reference to 'same pretty white male examples of photography' suggests that photography education has not progressed and is trapped in an outdated model (Brake, 1996). There is a necessary need for photography education to be adaptable and malleable due to the rapid changes in digital innovation and image usage (NSEAD, 2024).

> Before, I wanted everyone to do British documentary style… whereas I'm like, actually, is that the best thing for the student? And it's not always (informal discussion with teacher, 2023)

> I think in lots of photography… just do regurgitating like the same pretty white male examples of photography. You know, we need to photograph these mechanical bits. That is interesting to them, but not the kids (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023)

> I see so many poor examples of people looking at a photographer and not really understand what they've done. (Informal discussion with Duncan, 2023)

Summary of theme - Creativity and Expression

C&E has illuminated how students and teachers value photography as a subject, with a contrast being revealed in the perceived undervaluing within schools from teachers, whereas students spoke highly of it as an essential and inclusive skill. Students demonstrate ownership of generating ideas, which could be evidence of employed pedagogies being learner-focused (Burke, 2020). Teachers regularly make connections between class tasks and examination needs, suggesting that this may lead their curriculum and pedagogical choices. Furthermore, the wider socio-economic pressures and lack of specific teacher training in photography may strengthen the connection between exam driven models, rather than teachers having confidence in more open and holistic curriculum models. Overall, this theme has provided a foundational understanding of what creativity and expression in photography education is influenced by and how it is felt

by teachers, students and wider networks. The next theme to be introduced is *Community and Collaboration* (C&C).

Figure 29: Collaboration and Community collage. (2024) Author's own

7.3: Community and Collaboration

Within this theme, codes of *peer support (students), support of colleagues (teachers), links with other subjects, teacher ownership and student ownership* are introduced through selected quotations from informal discussions with teachers and students. The code labels were attributed to the overall heading of C&C given the connections with other people, subjects, and the way teachers and students approached work from a collaborative or independent nature. The process of making the collage thematic map is discussed in section 6.5 and is presented here for reference.

Peer support and support of colleagues

In the code *peer support*, the students demonstrated how they approached peers ('I usually ask X or X who I sit next to') for initial support over teachers in photography lessons. They go on to say that they 'ask them for their opinion and see how it goes', demonstrating a confidence in the creative process having both successes and potential failures (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023). Following Downing et al (2007), the confidence needed to foster open creativity in students requires the teacher to have had first-hand experience of creative meaning making themselves, illustrating that their photography teacher has been able to enrich such practices in the classroom, embracing the unpredictable outcomes that often accompany creative educational models (Walker, 2015). The second student quote, 'I put myself in my little bubble' (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023), uses language that suggests self-motivated safety and comfort when involved in photography education, strengthening Thomson and Hall's (2021) work describing the feeling of 'sanctuary' (p.601) when in creative learning environments.

A similar pattern was found in teacher participant responses that were coded as *support of colleagues,* demonstrating an emphasis on teachers of differing disciplinary backgrounds needing extra guidance in subject specific work, and having a level of confidence to ask for this. In a comparison to a role in a previous school, Fred stated that he observed a difference working in the research setting due to his ability to 'ask you to check whether things look alright, and ask you questions'. In context, this teacher taught in the classroom that was adjacent to and communicating with my own, and classes were often taught with the interjoining door open, creating a supportive and open environment to share work, issues and potential problems. Fred's use of language suggests a confidence in being able to access support or combine thought to become a 'synthesizing mind', as suggested by (Gardner, 2007, p.45), but a potential lack of confidence in his ability to make accurate assessment of photography work independently. Fred undertook teacher training in a subject other than photography, thus creating a skills gap of his own admittance when recommending photographers to students ('but that's when I'll come sometimes come shuffling to you'). Institutional differences are compared in the quote from Fred, suggesting he had gained more knowledge ('I've picked up more from

you') whilst working in the research setting due to time constraints and pressures in his last role. Fred describes the experience as being 'left to it', suggesting that he was working in isolation, rather than side-by-side working or collaborating. Working in creative processes with others encourages joy and excitement, MacDonald and Moss (2015) found, suggesting that the change in environment influenced how Fred experienced the teaching of photography.

Links with other subjects

Both similarities and distance between photography and traditionally academic subjects were apparent when considering the code *links with other subjects*. A quote 'I can't spell', taken from an informal discussion when students were writing about photography, with another student replying, 'don't worry, it's not an English test', illustrates the student's view of the distance. Understanding this further, the first student who claims to be unable to spell may be making a subconscious link to the continued assessment of spelling in English in schools, whereas the second student creates the distance in expectation from academic to vocational. The distance is also apparent in a quote from a teacher participant who displays an element of anxiety in maintaining parity with the types of education offered in traditionally academic subjects and photography:

> As a teacher, I've found that I've had to mix it up because they have got, they don't feel like they're again, in the same sort of education as they do in English or geography (informal discussion with Tabitha, 2023).

Students made active connections to how photography could be utilised across different curricular subjects, but in a way that was more akin to the 1990s Art Council funded work from Isherwood and Stanley (1995), Brake (1996), and Newbury (1996). Here, the *passive* or documentary use of photography is described: 'to see human body parts' in science, to add visuals to describing images in English 'how we like to talk about pictures like English, they describe them…in photography you see the actual image', and '...okay yeah. Marketing. Graphics' (informal discussions with KS3 student, 2023). The notion of supporting cross curricular learning is further strengthened by a quote from a teacher participant who presses the idea of being able to target similar skills but in different ways: 'take something that's like done in English and apply it differently', describing it as a 'really big crossover'. The idea of photography skills being shifted in an interdisciplinary fashion can be likened to the progressive higher education models at the RCA introduced in Chapter Two, whereby no medium is studied in isolation, but students are encouraged to experience all elements of creativity and to see what is suited to their own personal intentions (Richon, 2018).

Teacher ownership

The next code attributed to the C&C theme is *teacher ownership,* which takes into consideration the balance of teacher-led and student-led pedagogies or experiences. The first student quote is taken from a GCSE student who discusses the start of a project. The language suggests a teacher-led opening when approaching a new project, in the use of 'now when you start', but implies that the balance in role may shift to student-led by stating 'you don't really know what to do at the beginning'. The shifting of roles in creative processes is common given the unpredictability of outcomes when creatively making, according to Irwin et al. (2006). The student states 'you just follow the lead of the teacher', recognising trustworthiness and expertise in the student-teacher relationship. Strengthening this notion of students allowing teachers to lead them into ideas that interest them in photography is the second and third quotes from students, in which the language indicates a scaffolded and supportive pedagogical approach rather than entirely teacher-led throughout: 'Miss really helps me draw out more creativity' and 'my teachers direct me to the right pathway'. A distinct contrast can be found in the teacher quotations selected as part of the *teacher ownership* code, relating to obstacles found in educational landscapes. Talking about teaching photography in a previous school, one teacher participant spoke of highly structured curriculum models: 'yeah everything was boom boom boom boom, do this', likening it to a military exercise, '...and it was sort of? Militant'. The structured model was linked to the socio makeup of the school, 'because there were like massive behaviour issues with these kids', suggesting that student-led pedagogical models were not compatible. When considering the balance of teacher-led pedagogies such as 'tabletop' photography (see section 2.3), one teacher participant described the lack of cognitive thought from students: 'Tabletop still life, or the tabletop set up. So it's been given to them. So, they haven't had that kind of thought process'. Continuing, the teacher participants consider how this may be perceived by the students' experience as: 'I'm just going to do this because you told me to rather than like, having that interest or agency about it' (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023), which adds further evidence to the idea of photography education being examination driven, as discussed in C&E.

Student ownership

The next section considers *student ownership* of learning in photography education. The following student quote outlines the balance of their student-teacher relationship and the confidence they feel in their ownership over their creative work: 'they [teachers] support and guide me but they don't change my choices' (informal discussion with KS5 student, 2023). The element of maintaining control is echoed in the second quote, in which a student makes a strong statement 'I can do what I want with it, I'm in control of it, and nobody else' (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023). These examples of students feeling in control of their learning corresponds with the previous code label of *teacher led,* where students felt supported to make early decisions but comfortable enough to experiment.

A structure of learned pedagogy is apparent in the third quote where a clear format is being followed by the student to carry out photographic work, commenting on planning, ensuring successes and then the subsequent development of the idea: 'I write down all the technical aspect I'd need. Lighting, what could really make it work? What I need to do like how to take it on further' (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023). Similarly to this, the second quote below claims entire ownership of the conception of their work, stating that they do not look at other works, but rather 'just kind of think[s]'.

The following quote is from a teacher participant and summarises the ownership of ability that the previous student quotes have demonstrated, suggesting that holistic aims for photography education are to develop resilience and independence. In the second and final quote of this section, we see a demonstration of how the student-teacher relationship shifts with conceptual scaffolding and initial teaching, before the student can apply those skills independently. There is a link made here between skills of scaffolding and initial teaching being attributed to the 'strongest students', suggesting that the student-teacher ownership of learning may be impacted by a student's perceived ability in photography. The following section summarises the theme of C&C and moves on to the theme of *Adaptation and Response* (A&R).

> This is what's different in photography education, because we're expecting them to go and apply that knowledge without us there… if a good teacher taught them to learn to be resilient enough to learn from mistakes or keep going. If they go away and take the message…you've given them enough skills to do the things that you're expecting them to do, like a confidence to overcome any problems that they will face (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023).

> I feel like that my strongest students, I talked to him about the ideas and then the technical stuff, they kind of pick it up themselves, so then it becomes a teacher led project conceptually (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023).

Summary of Theme- Community and Collaboration

The featured quotes of C&C show students being able to ask their peers for support, demonstrating a feeling of trustworthiness, a trait that Irwin and O'Donoghue (2012) found to be key in being able to produce creative work alongside one another. This was supported by a teacher comment saying they would ask for support too. Comments from teachers demonstrated the different ways that teachers approached the teaching of photography, ranging from 'militant' to entirely teacher-led activities such as the use of table-top photography because of socio-economic demographics of their classes. Students and teachers made comments about the transferable nature of photography as a skill across the curriculum, highlighting the sustained value it has held for many decades, since the Creating Vision document outlined its potential usage in the NC subjects (Isherwood and Stanley, 1999). However, comments from teachers did suggest some

anxieties about photography education being repetitive and not matching that of academic subjects, an overhang perhaps from the wider value of creative subjects in English schools (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2021). Appendix A presents the full table of categories that are considered under the theme of C&C.

Figure 30: Adaptation and Response collage (2024). Author's own

7.4: Adaptation and Response

The third theme that was developed was *Adaptation and Response (A&R)*. This category encompasses codes of *working together/environment, obstacles to learning, pedagogical choices, institutional obstacles, Covid teaching, teacher background* and *student background*. These code labels were attributed to A&R when the quotes demonstrate a change, or need for adaptation or response to an environment, a situation or idea. The collage for A&R which is introduced and conceptualised in section 6.6 is presented here in conjunction with the written interpretation of the findings.

Working together/environment, obstacles to learning

In the first code of *working together/environment*, a student comments on one of their peers being absent and how it affects the atmosphere of the class: 'when X isn't here, it is silent'. A KS3 student comments on their frustration when another student opens the back of an analogue camera, prematurely letting light onto the film 'and they open the back when you're not supposed to open the back'. Both these quotes begin to indicate the presence of other students impacting on the learning environment, demonstrating the liminal spaces, or *ruptures* of the expected routine of the assemblage blocks. The rupture here is the student being absent and therefore changing the atmosphere. Whether the student's absence has a positive or negative affect on the class is unknown but could be considered either way. In a similar way, the student who has opened the back of the camera prematurely has unknowingly intervened in the process of learning, causing a *rupture* of a different kind. The film that has been exposed will have to be reshot, and the original photographs lost. The impact of this may be upsetting to the student or may be educationally detrimental if the photos were irreplaceable, or both. It also may require a change in planned lessons by the teacher, to regain the film that needed to be developed.

Moving now to the code of *obstacles to learning* but remaining on the theme of having to adapt and respond whilst in the learning environment, there was a recurring pattern of facilities and equipment. One student highlighted an obstacle to learning as having to order materials to school if they were needed for their photography work. This student was a boarding student (remaining on campus all term) and felt that the time it took to order materials affected their learning. Furthermore, they were a Wren School student, meaning that they were undertaking their GCSE in one year so felt that time was not something they had much of: 'you can't really get over this barrier, because it takes time, which we don't have really as this is a one-year course' (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023). The reduction in time for the one-year GCSE course is found in a further teacher comment: 'the one year is ridiculous' (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023).

In contrast, a teacher commented on students who attended as day students (returning home from the school premises each evening rather than boarding) forgetting to bring in equipment for photoshoots and therefore having an impact on what they can do during planned lessons: 'and they're not bringing stuff into school is kind of another problem.' They go on to state that this is not a problem specific to a boarding school, but in photography education more widely 'but that problem is faced in this school as well as any other school' (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023). The *rupture* of students not accessing or bringing equipment is further complicated by whether it is purposeful (to avoid work) or whether it is a genuine lack of availability. Students conducting photoshoots outside of class time is key to being able to maintain fluidity in upcoming lessons and allows for the student-led creativity and idea generation. A teacher participant comments on the result when a student does not carry these tasks out as planned, describing it as a battle: 'they have that battle where they don't want to do it, if they don't make, they don't do homework, they have to make it in the classroom' (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023).

The consequence of teachers having to then adapt their teaching and learning plans due to the last-minute lack of equipment or photoshops, can be anxiety: 'We haven't got stuff to get out. They haven't been out. What do we do?' (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023). The rupture then extends back to the lack of equipment in the classroom: '...so then they have this limitation of its then the teachers providing this stuff, which is normally just junk that they found, like bottles or you know, is really like quite poor' (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023), demonstrating the impact on creative output and the planned lesson content. The spaces between teacher input and student output are illustrated further in a quote that shows enthusiasm and willingness to make photos, but then takes longer than anticipated, meaning there is further disruption or delay to the work and planned teaching: 'you have students like H, who you'll suggest ideas and he is like oh yes, but actually want to do this. But then it will take him a week to do it' (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023).

Pedagogical choices, analogue learning and Covid teaching

Turning now to the *pedagogical choice* code as part of A&R, personal opinions of teaching preferences are candidly expressed: 'I can't stand teaching [Adobe] Photoshop from the front of the room. Like everybody watch, is everybody there?' (informal discussion with myself and Duncan, 2023). Teaching digital software in a step-by-step manner may more closely resemble traditional teaching methods rather than student-centric ones (Bernstein, 1996). The teacher goes on: 'awesome. We're just gonna click the click. Yeah, I don't know what you've clicked', emphasising their frustration with teaching in this manner. Another teacher commented about students with a perceived lower ability in the subject: 'some will be completely, have no clue and have to spoon feed them' (informal discussion with Tabitha, 2023); an implied comparison of their pedagogical workload with the care of a young child, and having to do most things for or with them, most of the time, therefore draining time and resources of the teacher in question. Repetition of work processes due

to the assessment or time pressures emerged in further quotes such as 'it was a case of, learn the process, do the thing', and 'I can bring in all this stuff and put it in front of you. You can do a photoshoot for everything. And you can get loads of pictures in one lesson that we can, then that fits in my timetable of like my plan for you to move on to the editing and to learn that process' (informal discussions with Duncan, 2023). The student response and frustration with the pedagogical repetition is seen here, with concern from the teacher at having to undertake such choice making.

> Students go, are we just doing this again? You know, because the repetition of them having to work through ideas or because the act of going back to your sketchbook and uploading images and reviewing that is very much the same process. (Informal discussion with Tabitha, 2023).

The mixture of digital and analogue processes in photography education are not consistent across schools, with some institutions having access to a darkroom and others working entirely digitally. Rubinstein (2009) commented on the crossover of photography with other multimedia subjects without the inclusion of analogue processes, suggesting that the removal of such practices may reduce the subject to 'economies of reproduction' in humanities and the sciences (Rubinstein, 2009, p.141). The code of *analogue learning* focuses on the discussion of traditional photographic processes, with teachers reminiscing positively about their own photography education: 'I did the darkroom the whole time' and 'we regularly spent all night in the darkroom, just printing and playing and talking' (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023), and KS3 students recalling it as a memorable experience, despite not remembering the terminology surrounding it immediately: 'to the black room? And the dark room? And we made those photos?' (informal discussion with KS3 student, 2023). The passage of time from when analogue processes were the only technologies available, to more recent times where they have become a desirable yet not essential contribution to the subject taught in schools, is articulated in this teacher quote describing the transition of reintroduction:

> We did have a darkroom at that point, but we weren't able to use it. It was ridiculously old. Health and safety wise, ventilations etc etc. We kind of wanted to get it reinstated. The idea was when we moved over here, we could have one (informal discussion with Tabitha, 2023).

In another comment discussing a previous teaching position, a teacher recalls not having a darkroom 'or if there was one, it was never used' (informal discussion with Fred, 2023). The suggestion of it not being used may indicate an absence of specialist knowledge in the area for the facility to be used, or perhaps a lack of interest in the skills at a time where digital skills were more popular.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, photography education in the research setting was moved online, reducing access to photographic facilities and forcing teachers to change the way they delivered content, disrupting

traditional modes of education that have been commonplace in England since the 1960s (Hargreaves et al., 2019). One teacher participant started their teaching role in the research setting during this time and remembers the structured pedagogies during Covid-19: 'I started to teach live online. So I got to know the kids and getting them to set PowerPoints out through online and focused examples' (informal discussion with Fred, 2023). The changes in pedagogical choice making during this time is reflected further in comment praising the challenge presented: 'it meant I had to be more resourceful. I started making videos and recording my screen' (informal discussion with me and Duncan, 2023)). The resourcefulness continued through the choice to move away from digital software and to more universally accessible resources: 'we don't even use photoshop. I was like finding maps to use on phones and stuff. I could record, like how to do things. I think it is easier [teaching online]'. The stark contrast of being more exposed whilst teaching online follows, with a comment suggesting a switch between the interwoven roles of personal and professional (Taylor, 1989): 'if you have to do drawing, then you suddenly have to be a teacher sometimes and show what is in front of you' (informal discussion, 2023).

The loss of the shared creative community space (Ingalls Vanada, 2017) during Covid-19 was apparent when a teacher realised that their online teaching was cross-continental, and a stark comparison to the usual structured school routine: 'I didn't even know where the kids were', followed by 'I had a couple that were in a classroom, and you might hear them running about and then I'd hear someone and they're just like 'I am in China'' (informal discussion with me and Duncan, 2023).

Teacher background/student background

Thematically, teacher *background* and *student background* could have been applicable to the other three themes presented here. However, when the data were revisited, the responses that were coded felt more in place in A&R due to the adaptations needed to teach subjects outside of a specialist area, or the way in which the background has been responded to in and out of photography education. The teacher quotes focus on their own specialism, whereas students focus on family members with an interest in the subject. One teacher describes their multifaceted teacher career with photography remaining a constant throughout: 'I did graphics then I did art and design. And I did industrial design… Then I became mainly a graphics teacher. I ended up being a textiles teacher. An art teacher. I've always used photography, especially in graphics' (informal discussion with Fred, 2023). The thread of photography in a multidisciplinary background is apparent in the following quote from Tabitha: 'I'd done some photography at college, like darkroom. So, and then carried on as part of my foundation, but didn't specialise in that. So that is when I went into like fashion' (informal discussion with Tabitha, 2023). Photography specialist Duncan was 'the first to go to university' in his family, a value that may be carried through to his own enthusiasm or motivation for being in teaching (Apple, 2019).

Students focused on their familial connections with photography, such as visiting museums: 'I'm in Inverness and there is like, [a] big museum of art? My dad likes to go to museums quite a lot too because he loves like history and stuff,' and photography as a hobby: 'my stepdad has a lot of cameras. He's like a photographer, however he doesn't have a degree' (informal discussions with KS3 and KS4 students, 2023).

Summary of theme: Adaptation and Response

Largely, as the name suggests, this theme focused on how students and teachers react, adapt and respond to different situations in photography education. It has contributed to the foundational understanding of photography education by providing evidence of how teachers and students adapt to *ruptures* in their normal routines. Quotes from teachers commented on not having the right equipment, instances when students have not been out to take photographs, or when students are unwilling to complete the amount of work required and being able to support students with individual ideas whilst maintaining a scheme of work and teaching digital skills effectively. These honest and personal insights demonstrate a small number of the questions teachers consider when making pedagogy and curriculum choices, and how students react to different environments and situations. It shows the patchwork of multiplicities that surround the photography education assemblage (Masny, 2014; Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). Appendix A shows all the categories that are listed under the theme of *Adaptation and Response*. The fourth and final theme, *Identity and Belonging* is now presented, before a summary of the four themes. A standalone category of *suggested reform* is discussed which draws together the quotes that allude to a photography education of the future. Part II of the findings follows.

Figure 31: Identity and Belonging collage (2024). Author's own

7.5: Identity and Belonging

The fourth theme to be interpreted here is *Identity and Belonging* (I&B). I&B consists of codes of *wider societal themes, prior knowledge in photography, cultural links, gender, outsider [to teaching], being unskilled/skilled,* and the *school/world divide.* The collage choice making, that was made in response to the thematic analysis, is discussed in section 6.6 and is presented here to accompany the interpretation.

Wider societal themes, gender and school-world divide

Although I have experience and understanding of photography education having the ability to address wider societal themes in ways that other subjects may not, I was still surprised by the openness students demonstrated when discussing such ideas. In the key literature for this research, authors Isherwood and Stanley (1999) discussed the need for students to be both a 'sophisticated consumer and a maker' of photographs (p.22), and Levi-Strauss discussed the over-consumption of imagery in 'the golden age of search' (2014, p.9), meaning that consumers have less and less time to retrieve or consume images at all, but rather receiving them passively as information. The following quotes demonstrate a depth that does not align with Levi-Strauss's (2014) suggestion but shows students recalling themes that they feel are pertinent, therefore strengthening the inclusion of photography as part of their world-view understanding.

There was a clear pattern of femininity and celebrity in these quotes and personal opinions of what it is like to be feminine in 2023: 'and then, it is kind of seen as, like a bad thing to be feminine' (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023). The student quoted here was discussing a photoshoot during which she had emptied and photographed the contents of her bag, to visualise identity without using conventional portraiture. Within the items were sanitary pads and tampons. She goes on to address the idea that menstruation is still seen as taboo, and that it is not discussed openly despite it being normal:

> Like a lot of things that females go through are seen as taboo and they shouldn't be talking about it. They shouldn't be spoke about, they shouldn't be mentioned, like publicly and stuff like that, even though it's completely normal thing (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023)

She went on to demonstrate strength and control through photographic expression of menstruation: 'photography is the kind of the main way [expressing views about feminine taboo] because it is very, like, I can do what I want with it, I'm in control of it, and nobody else' (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023). Students demonstrated their understanding and experiences of passive photography (Thistlewood, 1996). Issues including body image, body positivity and the use of photo editing are also addressed regarding celebrities Kylie and Kendall Jenner 'still [being] edited to be paper thin' (informal discussion with KS3 student, 2023). They go on to express their own opinion of photo editing being part of society today: 'I guess,

it shouldn't be like that. I know the world's getting more body positive now, but it's still, I don't think Photoshop should be used in photoshoots'. They stress in a closing remark that 'it's important to see the beauty instead of the phoney' (informal discussion with KS3 student, 2023). Another student comments about an international trend seen on social media relating to unhealthy body image and ideals: 'yeah, you know this trend in China? It's just like, girls, they tried to get what waists the size of like, A4 sheets of paper' (informal discussion with KS3 student, 2023). In a separate informal discussion, a teacher comments on the ability of photography education to teach students the type of maturity that is presented here, and states that this is not apparent across the entirety of the curriculum: 'it [photography education] was to give them maturity, because they don't get it from everywhere' (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023). In contrast, a student comment opens a line of enquiry about the perceived purpose of photography education, mentioning how her friends wanted to get involved in photoshoots with the promise of new, higher quality social media content: 'Yeah, my friends are really happy to attend. Like oh my god, we are going to have such a nice picture' (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023).

The application of such maturity outside of school was represented by a notable use of language, where students referred to spaces outside their learning environment as 'the outside world', suggesting a barrier and difference between the school setting and all other environments, and linking back to Thomson and Hall's idea of creative sanctuary (2021). When asked whether they felt if the aforementioned themes were important to them outside of photography, a student replied: 'I feel like in the outside world from school, yeah' (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023), and another student commented that photography 'kind of gives you a different perspective on how you look at things in the outside world' and 'it [photography] can unlock an open mind and really open your eyes' (informal discussions with KS4 and KS5 students, 2023).

Whilst students were drawing on societal themes such as body image, historical documentation ('gives us a perspective of what life used to be like at that time. And how much it's changed over time. Like World War 1') (informal discussion with KS3 student, 2023)), the quotes attributed to this code from teachers held a yearning, or sense of loss. By being a teacher of photography, they were less in touch with the creative community associated with freelance photography: 'the less you're in touch with the creative community of being a freelance photographer' (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023). A longer teaching career is further linked with a growing distance between the teacher and their students, with younger early career teachers '[coming] across more current to the student, so have more believability' (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023).

Prior knowledge of photography, outsider/skilled-unskilled, outsider subject

Turning now to codes of *prior knowledge of photography, outsider/skilled-unskilled,* and *outsider subject,* these areas are part of I&B due to the tensions that occur when approaching the teaching and learning of photography from the perspective of a teacher trained in a different field, or as a student coming to the lessons with no prior knowledge of the area. Students openly discussed their previous lack of skill in the area: 'I don't know how cameras work' (informal discussion with KS3 student, 2023), whilst others commented on educational models of other countries not including photography as part of their curriculum: 'they [previous school in Russia] didn't have particular [photography] lessons like ours' (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023). The language of 'ours' in this quote suggests a sense of belonging to the photography community in the research setting, and then links to a familial teaching of photography from a family member: 'He was just like, helping me to play around with the camera, show me the best composition and teach me to look at things in a different way' (informal discussion with KS4 student, 2023).

When discussing teachers with disciplinary backgrounds in subjects other than photography, a disparity in understanding is apparent between a student and a teacher when accessing higher level photographic concepts: 'she didn't understand the photography…he understood what he was doing more than the teacher and she wasn't allowing it to happen' (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023). He goes on to state that the subject is split into 'two very big camps', being 'technical and the process' and 'the thinking and self-critical exploration' (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023), a combination of which is recommended in the NSEAD's 2023 *Big Landscape* document, suggesting curriculum ideals in order to meet the examination criteria requirements of GCSE and A Level (NSEAD, 2024). Teachers who are working in photography education with different disciplinary backgrounds may have a deficit in key skills required by the subject, such as the use of *contact sheets,* as the next quote illustrates: '...sort of introduced me to the concept of contact skills and I didn't know they existed' (informal discussion with Fred, 2023). It is apparent from the next quotes that students have a trust in their teacher's experience in the subject, with a view it will enhance their work: 'if the teacher has a lot of experience with a certain aspect of my project I am more likely to use their ideas so it depends on the project or the teacher' (informal discussion with KS5 student, 2023). A student goes on to make a link between prior experience and being able to draw out relevant suitability in project work, indicating a belief that all teachers possess a level of experience in the area, 'since teachers are experienced in the field, they have a higher and better understand on what would be most suitable and what matches with other pieces and materials within your work' (informal discussion with KS5 student, 2023).

Summary of theme: Identity and Belonging

This category was far reaching, with intimate quotes commenting on how being female is perceived to others, right through to celebrity trends that evoke comparisons with student experience of photography more widely outside of the classroom. From teachers, there were comments on the distance created when one gains substantial teaching experience and the creative practice that perhaps was once maintained regularly. A key takeaway from identity and belonging was that students feel the themes of their photography work are applicable to them outside of the classroom, demonstrating a wider impact that the choice of pedagogy and curriculum may have. Appendix A outlines the categories that are included in the theme of identity and belonging.

7.6: Suggested reform

One subcategory of the data was the mention of suggested reform in photography education. Here, both students and teachers comment on what photography education could look like. There is discussion from students about including photography earlier in the curriculum in 'younger years', and not 'having to just jump in at GCSE', further suggesting that it is a key skill across an entire educational experience rather than an examination addition when students reach KS4.

The idea of being 'free' or having activities that were more open ended was mentioned by both students and teachers, with limiting language used such as 'closed the whole time', and 'we get more to explore'. This use of language from students, along with statements from teachers describing the curricula as 'militant' and as a tick box exercise may provide insight that the current models are restrictive, where a common understanding is that creative subjects are more liberal, 'chill' and open. An unexpected and rare viewpoint was raised as an alternative; creating a new version of photography through development of an academically rigorous course, bringing in skills that are commonly associated with sciences, humanities and core subjects in the English curriculum. The alternative model is outlined in the quote here.

> There is the other option of making it into a really academic course to where like, writing is marked for both grammar, spelling, quality, fair, given back with corrections, and it's much more like even the geography kind of checking sources, is where what's the source come from? Have you done a compare and contrast? Yeah have you used like these certain key words like all that kind of teacher bringing that teaching into the environment? (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023).

Given the technical history and nature of the subject, there was an understandable suggestion of further skill building in the future of photography education, and there is scope for further 'dissection' of the technology

involved. Additionally, a focus on key camera handling and analogue darkroom skills are emphasised in the quote below from a subject specialist teacher, to enhance photographic understanding. Describing it as 'as a shock' to them (the students) may suggest the lack of practical processes students may be familiar with in photography, within a generation more familiar with digital technologies than printing.

> GCSE should start with a manual camera. Like, even turning the screen off, but like, its camera and learning how to use a camera. Have successful pictures from it, taking hundreds of pictures. And in the same time, they're learning that like the camera can't, you can't just stand there. And that might take a while. But I think if they got that, they can understand that they've learned that they understand why their picture's dark.
>
> Darkroom I think is very important to do. Understand to use it at year 10. I think it'd be intense, but I think that would like, be a shock to them.

Summary of section

The resulting four thematic collages have formed a foundational understanding of photography education in the research setting. This is a contemporary view into photography education, something that has not been contributed to the research field for many years (see section 2.5). There is a further, synthesising discussion of these findings and how they form understanding in relation to the research questions, in section 8.1. The following section is a vignette exploring the process of becoming a researcher addressing the complexities of using multi modal methods and the obstacles it entailed. Following this, Part 2 presents the ethnographic observations that impacted the learning environment and is presented through autoethnographic writing and photographs.

7.7: Part 2: Ethnographic observations (learning environment changes)

Turning now to part 2, this part of the findings chapter addresses observations during the research period that were recorded through writing as method and illustrated through visual ethnography. These observations occurred without plan or design, but through the lived day to day experiences of photography education. These observations are presented through autoethnographic narrative. Part 2 begins with a section detailing the process of making a pedagogical resource for a school trip to London, and how both the making of the resource and the change of learning environment impacted on the teaching of photography. Staying with the research focus of the learning environment, a further narrative is presented outlining a change in the learning environment, this time entirely unplanned and not linked to enhancing the teaching of photography.

7.8: Pedagogy and Resources (and moving from the day-to-day learning environment)

In this section of the chapter, the research turns to an autoethnographic narrative about the change of learning environment during the data generation period. Although not originally part of the research design, it became a moment of realisation that the change of learning environment impacted the pedagogical choices from planning through to delivery. Educational visits have been recognised in research to be a significant contributor to students engaging in subjects, particularly creative subjects, given the inspirational nature and new ways of learning outside of the traditional classroom setting (Jose and Moseley, 2017). The aim of the trip was to extend the curriculum of GCSE and A Level students in photography and followed examination recommendations of students accessing primary resources (sections 2.3, 7.2) and including work of other practitioners in their projects (section 2.3). Several factors of the normal day to day routine of the photography education assemblage were altered in taking this trip and will be covered in depth in subsequent sections. The first of these sections describes a 'recce' trip that inspired the planning of the resources created. The second outlines the planning of the resource in detail and the student engagement in this process. Following this, an account of the trip itself is presented, before a final section outlining the insights and understandings gained.

Notes on looking rhizomatically

I chose to adopt a mixed methods approach to this research because of my tacit knowledge of the day-to-day changing landscape in the school setting. Choosing these methods meant that the flexibility of adapting the data collection was apparent from the conception of the research idea, and I was able to adapt quickly to student and staff time restraints, institutional obstacles, as well as my own time and life commitments. Doing so meant I established a 'middle', or a connection between interpretations and the school environment. Without doing so, the lack of flexibility and adaptability could have been a barrier to a stricter

qualitative research design. Rhizoanalysis creates a similar space between experience and interpretations and asks in, around and beside the happenings to enhance meaning, therefore creating a rich tracing rather than a beginning and end understanding.

However, choosing to use rhizoanalysis in this way comes with some limitations, one of which is the lack of other examples that exist in empirical research. I feel this is something Deleuze and Guattari would support wholeheartedly, as it means there are no beginnings, blueprints or 'final versions' for researchers to obediently follow. This limitation was highlighted in a reassuringly honest chapter by Alvermann (1999), who revisited research data with a rhizoanalytical lens. Alvermann (1999) spoke of the freeing nature of rhizoanalysis, and how it enabled her to revisit data that felt done, or complete (1999). It has been suggested that rhizoanalysis should only be used in the abstract rather than a singular analytical approach, which may suggest why so few studies adopt it (Alvermann, 1999). The use of rhizoanalysis alongside other methods and analysis tools feels as if it allows researchers to look around liminal spaces, without an innate fear of deviating from strict research design or methodology.

Gathering, becoming, knowing- a/r/tography, trips and disruptive pedagogy

Educational trips are administration heavy, time consuming and quite frankly (anecdotally) stressful for teachers to plan and deliver outside of their normal working hours (see image 8; an early start to the day and late finish due to a blocked motorway, meaning a 21-hour working day). Health and safety and safeguarding of students outside of the school environment takes time and rigour to feel confident that the planned activities will keep all involved safe, whilst reaching the goal of learning outside of the classroom (Hunter-Jones and Hunter-Jones, 2007). Changes in the political and social landscape, such as the rise of terrorist attacks and the global pandemic has meant the 'red tape' for trips has become more stringent. For this reason, at school, it is recommended that we visit the trip location prior to taking a group of students. This was not common practice prior to the trips hiatus imposed by Covid-19, so has not been something I have had to undertake in prior trips planning. However, as this next section outlines, the recce trip proved valuable in the resources created for the trip.

The recce/Gathering

London was the trip location of choice, and we planned to take a cohort of photography, art, 3D design, fine art and fashion students to museums to experience exhibitions of practitioner work. On a recce trip, a colleague and I embarked on the journey as researchers. The aim was to view the day and planned activities from the dual perspective of a student learning and a teacher maintaining and managing the group, whilst spotting and observing any possible 'lemons', as the Royal Geographical Society (2024, para. 23) calls them on their *Off-Site Safety Management* course, or potential issues to the layman. At this point, the role of being a creative practitioner did not seem relevant or important. However, while discussing possible activities for

the trip, the idea arose to make specific resources that directly related to the environments that we experienced across the day, including travelling by coach, boat and on foot. We began by considering how this would look, and whether it would be thematic or open ended.

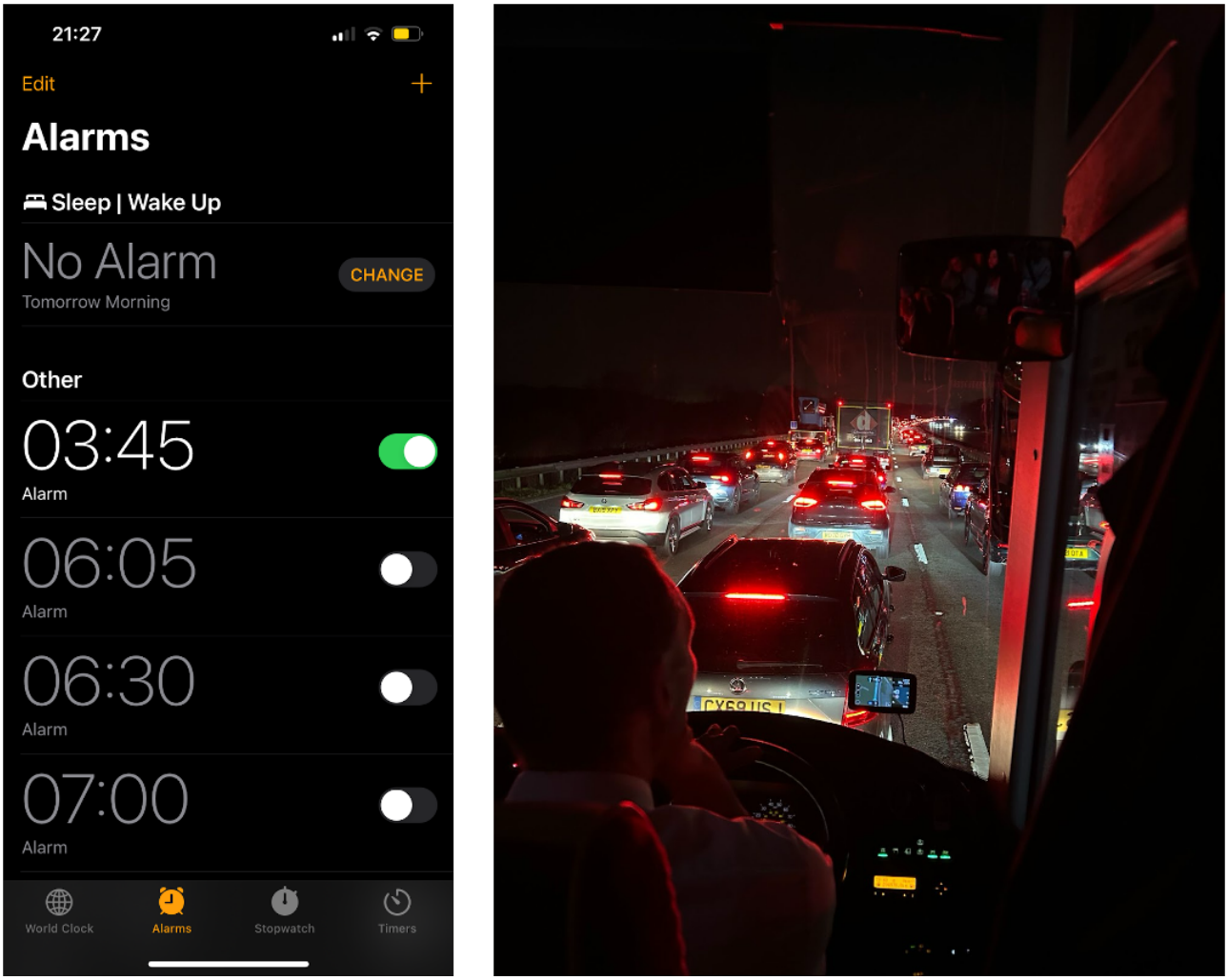


Image 8: Screenshot of early alarm on trip day, photograph of blocked motorway on return journey (2024) Author's own.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the cohort, and mixture of subject specialist, non-subject specialist and non-teaching staff attending the trip, it was determined that the resources should be open for interpretation and student-led. From the start of the train journey, I organically began to gather ephemera from the various aspects of the day, including timetables, found paper materials, photographs, and written notes about observations and experiences. This is a practice that comes naturally to me and is embedded through years of collage making. I collect without specific purpose, and at this point I was unaware that my subconscious collecting as an artist would be intrinsically linked with my role as a teacher.

The main visit was centred around Tate Modern, on the South Bank. Tate Modern is a vast museum, and at the time of visiting had several relevant exhibitions relating to the various disciplines students were undertaking. Myself and my colleague who were on the recce trip are both photography specialists, so we were particularly interested in the exhibition *Capturing the Moment*. Tate Galleries have a rich learning program with high quality learning materials available. On arrival, I collected brochures and documents relating to teacher visits, student visits and exhibitions, switching roles between artist and educator with little differentiation. Collaborative discussion whilst in the gallery, combined with taking photographs of areas, meant we were able to map some potential activities that would link our student cohort with work they are seeing in the gallery, work they are completing back in the classroom, or work they could potentially undertake in the future.

Due to the size and trustworthiness of Tate Galleries as an institution, we were both grateful and excited that their learning team had already produced learning materials we could then appropriate. Teachers are time pressured (sections 4.1 and 4.3) and are likely to rely on pre-made resources if they felt it would save them time, and if they have been produced by industry professionals. My colleague and I appreciated the design and scope of the original material but could recognise with an educated view that it would not be age appropriate (the group was 14-19) and not in line with the potential educational interests of these students. The next section describes the making of the resources in the usual learning environment at school.

Figure 32: Tatebook extract 1 (2024). Author's own collaged teaching resource

Transforming

On return to school, in the photography classroom that is described in section 5.6, I gathered the materials I had collected from the recce trip, along with appropriated collage materials from the photography classroom (not specially chosen for this purpose, but what was to hand) and the tacit knowledge of what the students had studied previously or were expected to learn in the future. I began to rip apart the materials, tearing and cutting them, rearranging them and using the Tate student guide as a template only. I was at this point working as an artist and a teacher simultaneously, producing resources that doubled as collage works but considering the transfer of knowledge required by the trip objectives. This process was undertaken in the school day, and the creative flow was disrupted somewhat by the default pedagogy needs of the school day; the bell rang midway through for an A Level Photography class to begin. Students in this class began to enter, taking an invested interest in seeing teachers acting as practitioners, fascinated by the cut and paste process

going on. Questions were asked of us about the purpose of what we were doing, and more interestingly, what was inspiring us, or what instructions we were following. It felt to me at this point they were unable to comprehend the freedom of the creativity, or perhaps that they were able to witness it as a paradoxical view of what they imagined their 'teachers' to be (Lather, 2001). The group who entered the space for their lesson made up a large number of the trip's cohort, so their investment in the activity began a few days prior to the trip commencing. The result of this creative activity was a resource nicknamed *Tatebook,* referencing the collaged front page revealing words to that effect (pictured below in figure 33). Leaving the name maintains credit and authorship, indicating that the resource belongs to Tate, rather than claiming it as our own, and therefore maintaining the trusted quality of the resource and keeping it as 'pedagogical enhancement' (Chapman et al., 2019, p.960).

Becoming

The *Tatebook* was entirely deconstructed (staples and all) to provide the creative freedom of disassembling and reassembling. The process was difficult and tiring, but in a way that felt positive, like an extra tricky yoga class, or a long bike ride in the sunshine. The sense of fatigue and pressure came from the institutional constraints previously mentioned, such as timetabled lessons and trying to find a time where this creative process could take place. The lessons in the research setting are marked by a traditional and very loud school bell that can be quite startling, even after nearly a decade of it sounding at predetermined lesson times. Creative processes can take time to create the messiness needed to discover new knowledge, in a similar fashion to research of this nature. The *Tatebook* was a collaborative process, and we worked quickly but methodically. I drew comparisons with the collaborative reimagining of an existing text by a group of artist-teachers, 'make[ing] visible the work of pedagogy - the thought processes of, and decisions and directions that educators make and take about content and experience' (Irwin and O'Donoghue, 2012, p.106). Whilst tearing pieces of booklet, paper and ephemera, we would discuss the needs of the students we were taking on the trip. Will this be suitable for that group? Will they understand that concept? These were some of the questions we asked whilst working on the resource. Everything was stuck down temporarily with Blu Tack so it was easy to edit. I tend to stick in this way during collage, sometimes to preserve a particularly precious piece of found material, or sometimes through laziness, as it makes the piece more immediate on arranging.

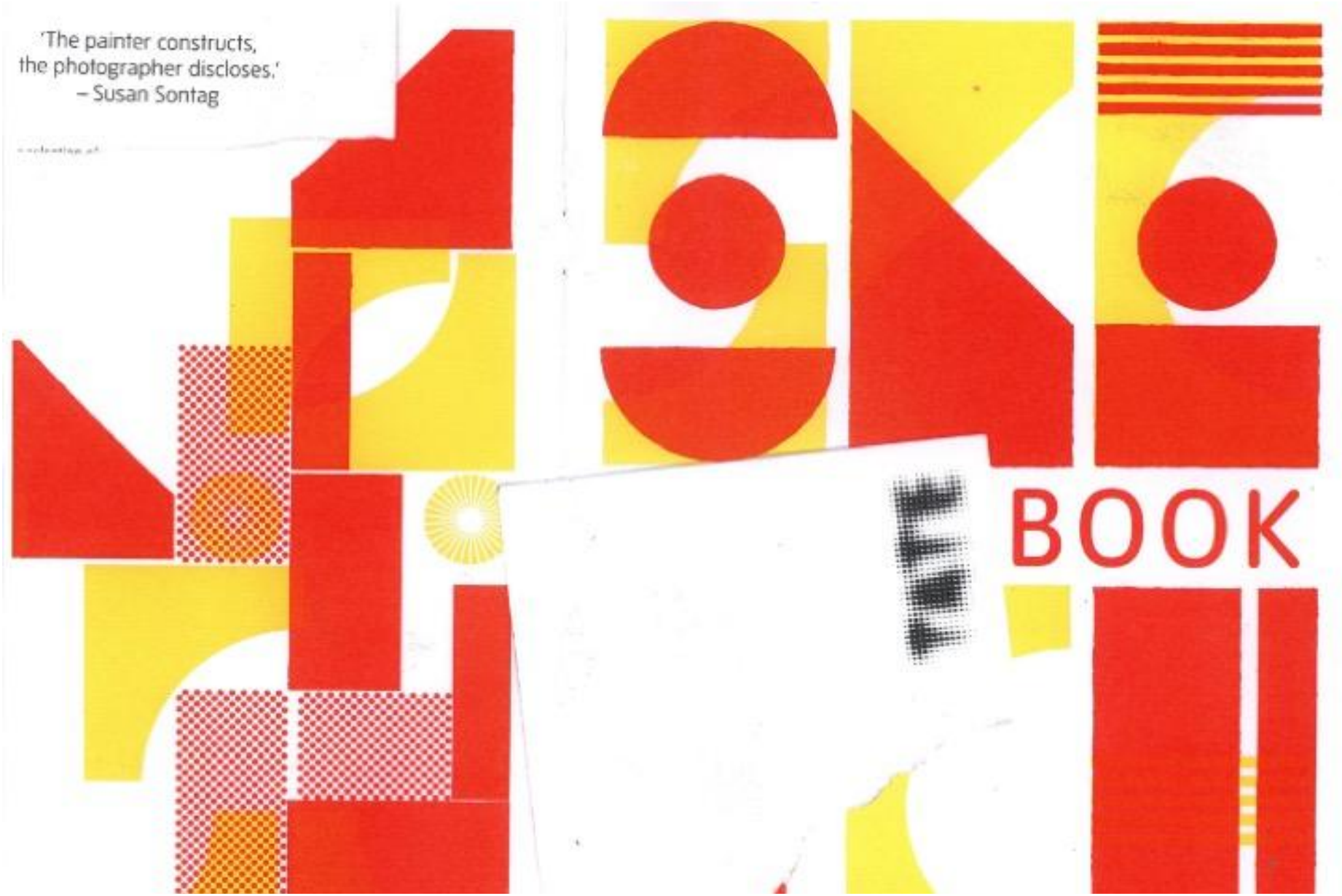


Figure 33: Tatebook front cover. (2024) Author's own collaged teaching resource

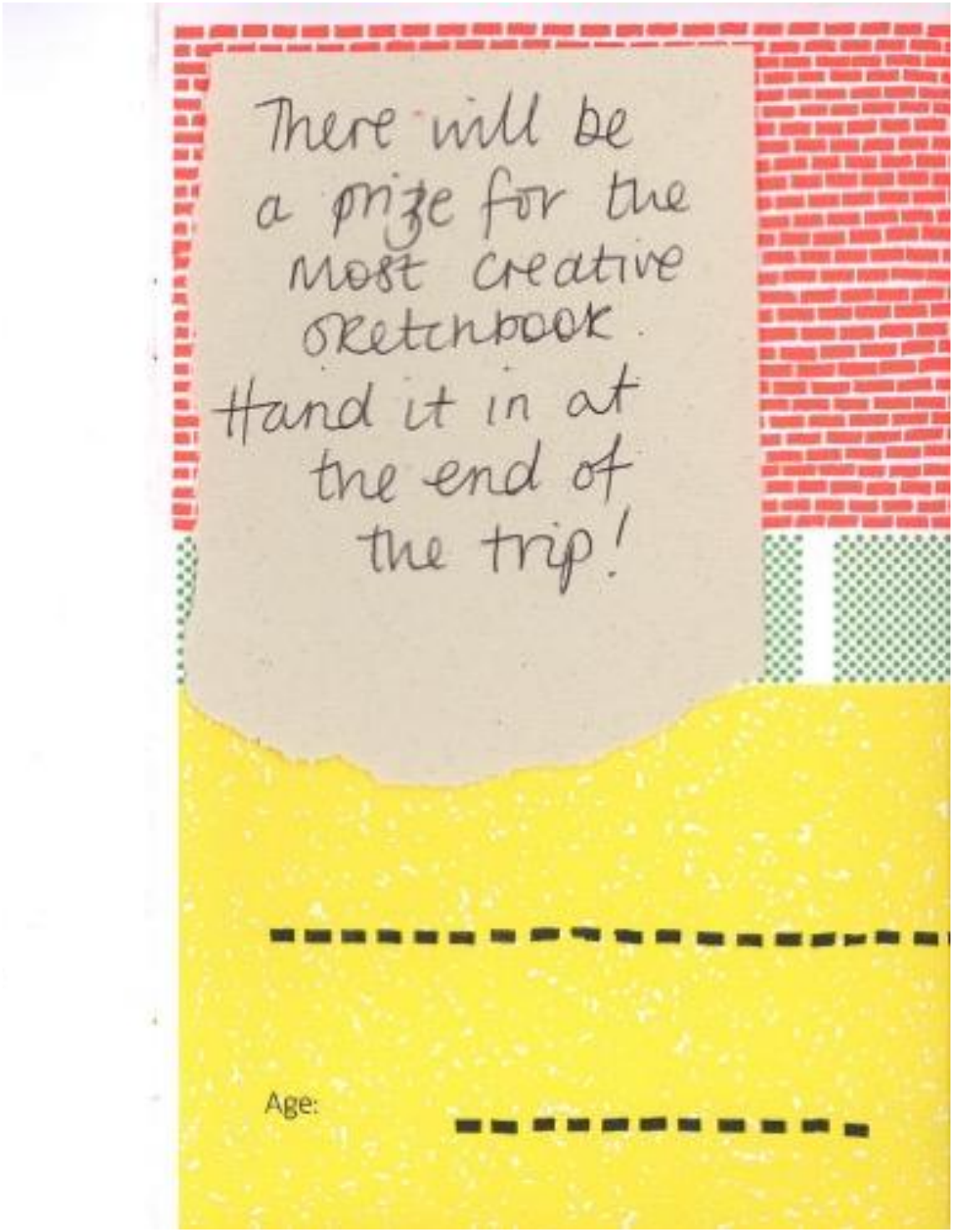


Figure 34: Tatebook (2024). Author's own collaged teaching resource

There were few to no breaks in the rhythmic making of the *Tatebook*. The work was positioned on the large open glass topped tables in the photography room, a place where I often work as it provides clarity and space for ideas and work to happen. The space allowed for messiness of pieces and layout, with each double page spread occupying its own part of the table. A collaborative environment can activate different mindsets and unlock the potential of being creative without the hesitation of an ordered space, thus allowing students and teachers to feel encouraged and supported in their choice to join in with the collaboration (Vohs et al., 2013).

Figure 35: Examples of command words from Tatebook (2024). Author's own

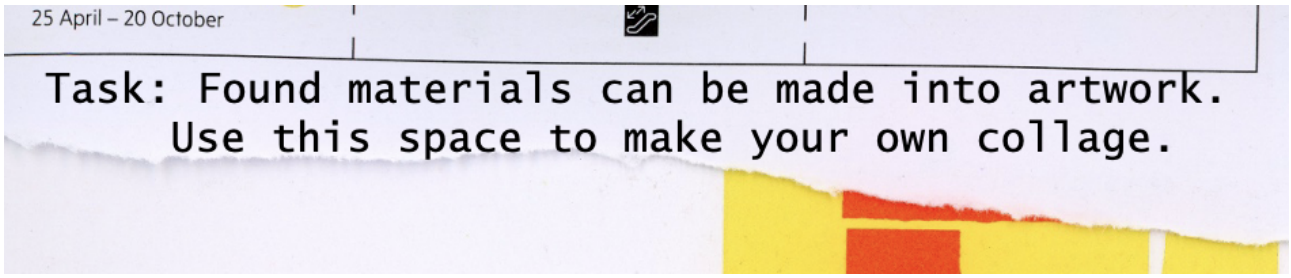


Figure 36: Examples of command words from Tatebook (2024). Author's own

Differentiated language and instruction

Figures 35-36 illustrate how original elements of the Tate materials were utilised alongside new additions. The aim was not to be prescriptive with tasks, given the interdisciplinary nature of the cohort of students that were taken on the trip. Figures 32 and 36 above demonstrate this. The work that students were expected to complete were indicated by the word 'Task', a pedagogical choice carried over from their classroom teaching, to provide connection and familiarity for students to be able to navigate what is being asked of them. The fluidity of language allows for comparisons with the practice of 'learning objectives' in a classroom setting, a process that Fan (2022) found effective in increasing positive student engagement and

performance in lessons. Command words such as 'sketch', 'photograph' and so on were used interchangeably to reflect the interdisciplinary opportunities to students. Doing so ensured that students felt there was at least one activity that connected to their discipline but also was a possible opportunity for students to explore a medium that they may be unfamiliar with or have not used for a while. *Disrupt* (figure 32) is not common vocabulary, and neither is there an explanation of what *flow* might be. Although open to creative interpretation, the use of unfamiliar language may have left some students feeling unsure or anxious about what the task meant. In contrast to this, some tasks shown here were instructional and used simpler, non-complex language, such as 'make 10 photographs' or 'found materials can be made into artwork. Use this space to make your own collage' (figure 36) which makes use of simple verbs and command instructions, with language that students have been introduced to and regularly use in prior learning, accessible to all learners.

As teachers, despite best efforts and assessment criteria, outcomes and the like, it is never entirely possible to pinpoint the transfer of knowledge, or the development of new knowledge as result of the education provided. A quote from Deleuze states that 'it is so difficult to say how someone learns', and that there is 'an acquired practical familiarity with signs' (1994, p.23) in education. Differentiation and multiplicities of learning methods are used to try and ensure that all students can access the learning materials. However, as Maslow (1943) stated, learning cannot take place if other needs are not met, regardless of the resources and differentiation provided. The students on this trip had begun their day at 4am and travelled on a coach for nearly six hours before undertaking the tasks asked of them in the gallery. According to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, the early start and the subsequent tiredness did not provide the optimum environment for learning. The *rupture* of fatigue on the trip could be likened to an unexpected change in the school day affecting student learning when in the day-to-day learning environment.

I subconsciously chose to include some of the Tate material that could be interpreted as practical instruction (not taking flash photography, for example), context about the exhibitions, and maps leading to exit routes (see figure 37). When reflecting on the making of this resource, I noticed that these inclusions were markers of information that differed from usual practices when in the day-to-day learning environment, and were elements of the trip that students needed to understand to take part safely (maps for exit routes), and socially (not being told off for taking flash photographs), whilst being able to meet the aims of their visit (gathering primary resources and producing work). The mixture and presentation of the material aimed to get the students to look closely at the *Tatebook*, to investigate and interrogate it.

Figure 37: Example from Tatebook, (2024). Author's own

Practically, students would have their *Tatebook* to hand during the visit, so would have information and instruction when they required. Unlike the day-to-day learning environment, the inclusion of practical information was linked to tasks; for example, in figure 37, where a small map of an exit is paired with a task asking students to map their journey. When at school, tasks would rarely consider or include day-to-day routine and safety, such as the fire evacuation procedures or the exits from the building, demonstrating the novel inspiration and newness of all aspects of a temporarily changed learning environment.

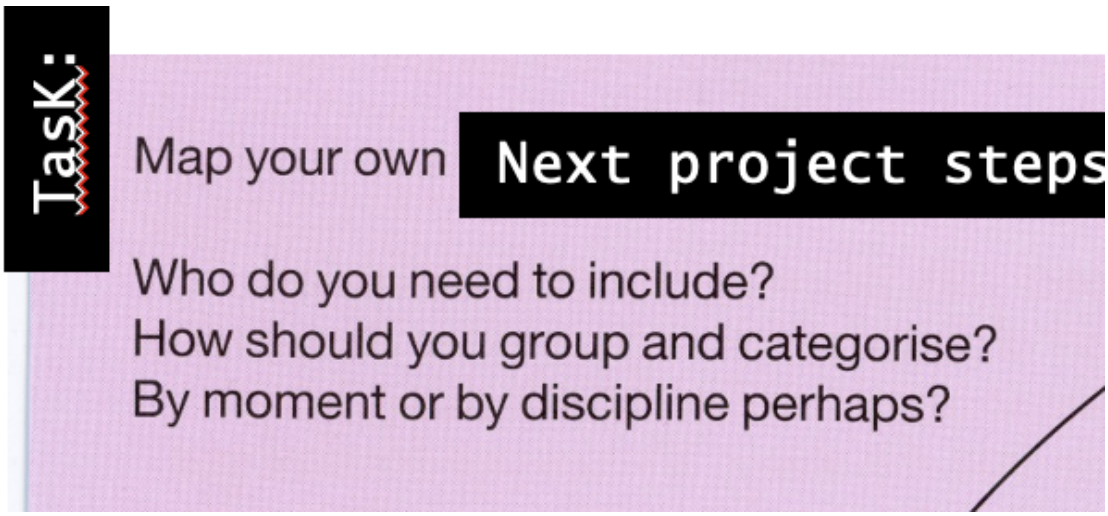


Figure 38: Example from Tatebook, (2024). Author's own

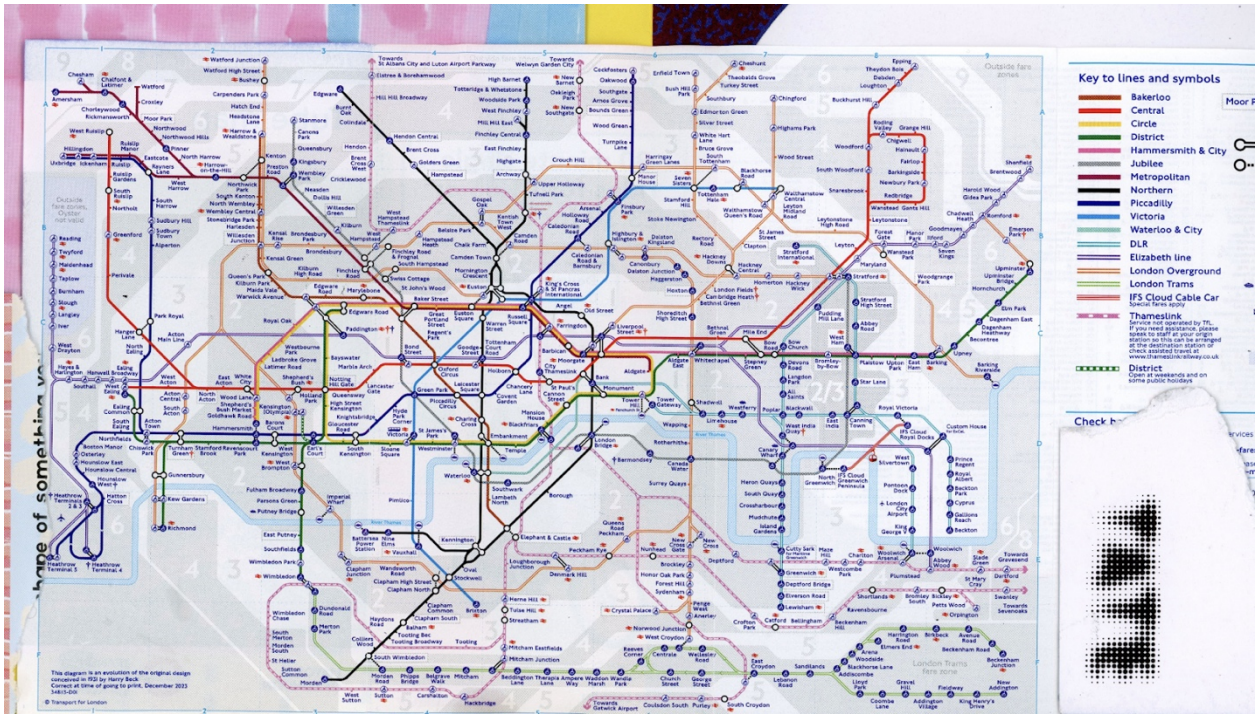


Figure 39: Example of London Underground map in Tatebook (2024). Author's collaged resource

Maps, mapping, alternative pathways

On reflection of the making of *Tatebook*, I have been able to understand my own values impacting on the pedagogical choices I make in designing resources. As a teacher, I value holistic and student-centred education, facilitating open ended learning and being able to guide without imposing hierarchical structures on the learning of photography. Mapping, or encouraging students to build their own cartography of ideas, has evidence of the rhizomatic, open ended learning we hope to utilise.

The idea of maps appeared on multiple occasions in the *Tatebook,* as demonstrated above in figure 36. As Masny (2013) describes, using rhizomatic practices such as this can encourage students to uncover 'alternative pathways to received ways of thinking' (p.5). Maps allow the space for both teachers and students to make new connections, to visualise ideas they have previously not connected, to explore tracings without fear of moving away from set linear structures that are so often promoted in photography education. Wallin (2013) describes this style of pedagogy as 'transversal' and states that it challenges education to get 'out from behind the desk' (p.50) and in turn encourages teachers and students to work alongside one another collaboratively, as suggested by Irwin's a/r/tography model and Holt's (1984) suggestion of fluid authority in disruptive unschooling settings. It is important to note at this stage that the *Tatebook* was designed to be completed in situ, at the gallery, to encompass the thoughts, feelings and understanding that occurred at that time, to embody and embed into the outcomes. It can be argued that these disruptive

pedagogies were easier to implement on a school trip rather than within the institutional restraints of a school setting and attempting to replicate such practices in the school setting would in turn move them directly into the hierarchical and accountability measures that exist as arbitrary boundaries in schools. In contrast, it could be shown to highlight the potential for disruptive pedagogies and experiential learning, away from the constraints of institutional pressures and accountability measures.

It was important to maintain the playfulness of the design of the *Tatebook*. Its design was colourful, used bold graphic shapes and interesting short questions that evoked humour and a childlike approach. In an anonymous collaboration with Tate as a starter in the creativity of these prompts, further instructions were added such as 'Task: Choose a Shape. Collect that shape' (figure 40). Reconnecting students with play and recognising that we as teacher practitioners also value playfulness can engage imaginative creative responses in young people and can be a stark contrast to what is expected of them in other curriculum subjects that may operate a more traditional pedagogy (Kane, 2011). Rather than reserving play for games, social time or hobbies, playfulness in everyday life can be argued to counteract the rigidity and linear motion of moving into adulthood may impact, stifle or even eliminate creativity (Kane, 2011).

Knowing

The *Tatebook* was distributed to students on the coach to London, a long and early journey. This became a 'project in a day' style activity, with a reward being offered for the strongest submission at the end of the day. Originally, the project was implemented to try and ensure students engaged with the content and did not rush around the planned exhibitions, maybe to be viewed as an interdisciplinary behaviour management and creative output tool, but when the process of making began, the project became a key example of how teaching, learning, creativity, research and practice can disrupt pedagogies to inspire students in creative subjects such as photography.

Figure 40: Example from Tatebook. (2024). Author's collaged teaching resource

Student engagement with the project varied but was mostly of a good level. Given our trip began in the early hours of the morning, and the visit to Tate Modern (and subsequently, Tate Britain) spanned over six hours, the students engaged for a lot longer than a set lesson time. They were given autonomy over their engagement with the project, but were encouraged, given the independent learning opportunity afforded to them to take part in the project. The reward for the strongest booklet was typical of a behaviour-reward model, favoured in education, popularised in psychology by Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, where children were shown to imitate behaviours when positively reinforced by rewards. In school environments, this model is often used in the form of 'points'; students who meet a set of criteria that is categorised as good behaviour are rewarded by the allocation of points to their accounts, and that in turn can be converted into monetary value and spent on material goods. As practitioners and teachers, we had spent time and energy producing the *Tatebook*, so had a vested interest in the students' participation. The reward may have been an unspoken consequence of this time and energy, but it did mean there were a few students discussing the project and possible reward throughout the day (figure 32).

Collaborative pedagogies

Comparatively, default pedagogies and learning environments in the school day do not always allow for this autonomy, time and energy to be invested into the production of learning materials, meaning teachers often reuse, or borrow resources from previous study, their colleagues, or wider online networks such as Times Educational Supplement (TES), PhotoPedagogy or NSEAD. As aforementioned, they may have specific time restraints or other pressures amounting from accountability measures or institutional pressures. This gap in investment, collaboration, pride and commitment to resource making may impact the teaching/learning that

occurs in the photography classroom. This is particularly pertinent to the subject when being taught by non-specialists. A familiarity with subject knowledge in photography means that specialist teachers can enter the more conceptual, risk taking and disruptive activities such as the *Tatebook*. My colleague and I were familiar with the photographers and work displayed in the Tate Modern exhibition, as well as photographic knowledge, outcomes and requirements of the examination qualification. This combination of confidence and tacit knowledge meant we did not have to invest time in the foundational learning, language and understanding of photography as a medium, but on wider conceptual and applicable use of photography in larger visual literacies and language. Non-specialist teachers who are affected by institutional constraints may have an over reliance on the existing resources made by others. Online resources such as TES and Pinterest have been found to be used in favour of curriculum documents written by subject experts (Chapman et al., 2019). In their Australian study of teachers sourcing material to teach arts-based education, they found that the accessibility and ease of finding the resource material on the internet and social media to be easier and effective when planning new material. Being able to search for material in a succinct fashion on websites such as TES and Pinterest mean teachers can access relevant and specific resources quickly. Chapman et al. (2019) raise the issue of digital algorithms in these guided searches, as they may limit resources offered to teachers, and in turn may limit the resource material sourced for the curriculum overall. Any issues associated with sources from the digital sphere would thus carry over into the photography curriculum. Issues such as copyrighted material, authorship and lack of diversity should be considered when using online searches.

Returning to the earlier point of non-subject specialists relying on this type of material to gain confidence in the foundational photographic knowledge, this practice may mean that the resources have not been checked for their overall quality. This is an issue that Eisner (2002) discusses in his work regarding resource use in creative education. Lack of accountability in resource making in this way may reduce or eliminate criticality or connoisseurship when making, delivering or sharing photography education materials. Educational institutional policy and standards strive for many accountability measures for classroom delivery, teacher behaviour and student outcome, but there are few to no measures when the source material or curricula are developed in photography education (or education overall for that matter). Chapman et al. (2019) go on to argue that subject specialists add a layer of 'richness and discernment' to resource materials, as they are able to combine knowledge of student need in the subject with the requirements of the curriculum, and most importantly, as found in the formation of the *Tatebook* - the difference between 'the significant and fundamental elements of an activity' (p.959). In the study by Chapman's et al, (2019), the use of online resources such as *Pinterest* was described by teachers as 'knowledge supplementation' and 'pedagogical enhancement' (p.960).

Subject specificity

This act of knowledge supplementation from online sources in this way cannot be directly linked or interwoven into curriculum and assessment when it has not been interrogated by the user sufficiently. Doing so could lead to disempowerment in teaching photography effectively, or to suiting the needs of the subject or students undertaking the study. One issue that may lead non-specialist teachers of photography to rely on what they consider to be trustworthy and useful sources, is the disparity between the creative nature of the subject and the subjective written examination criteria for assessment. Being able to translate the written criteria into visual aspects involves a level of knowledge, understanding and confidence, according to Gates (2017). With this notion in mind, it can be quite easy to see why teachers may look for wider visual examples of learning rather than relying on written curriculum documents or resource guidance. This is found because of the multi-modality of digital languages, as humans can understand meaning through multiple modes (visual, audio, and textual together) rather than text alone (Kress, 2003). Instantaneous understanding of a resource is bound to be attractive to a time poor teacher. Relating this point to the formation of the *Tatebook*, the process was collaborative and made away from the restraints of what is demanded by default pedagogies. Coupled with the rich existing understanding of the prior subject knowledge and availability of time, the construction of the resource could be considered good, or near perfect conditions for disruptive pedagogies to be conceived under Eisner's notion of connoisseurship.

The snowball effect of weak resource making in photography means that graduate teachers, or non-specialists coming into the subject, could develop an over reliance on them (Sullivan, 2010). This is particularly true of early career teachers who are learning to manage their time, behaviour and classroom management whilst being expected to plan, deliver and assess an industry relevant curriculum applicable to the needs of every student in their classroom (Roberts, 2020). It is suggested that if examination bodies wish for coherence and consistency in a taught curriculum, they should invest in multimodal texts for teaching staff to be able to comprehend it in a similar manner to the way they do with 'borrowed' resource material (Chapman et al., 2019).

Interim conclusion

This section has described the process of gathering, becoming and knowing in the making of the *Tatebook* resource for an educational trip. It has outlined the role of the teacher identity, pedagogy and environment in relation to photography education, and how the movement of any aspect of the assemblage impacts on the outcomes or experiences of both students and teachers. It has identified these outcomes as findings in the rhizoanalysis, or in the happenings around the research study, occurring in parallel to the data collection and subsequent writing up. The next section discusses another *rupture* that occurred during the research process and disrupted the learning environment in an entirely different manner. Following this section, the final part of the findings chapter turns to visual ethnographic insights through photographs of the learning

environment, and a sketchbook kept during the period of data generation. It references the autoethnographic rhizome of vignettes that exist through the thesis.

7.9: Disrupted Environment

The previous section examined the impact of a planned change to the learning environment, through a carefully mapped and designed trip. The following short, autoethnographic section details an unexpected change to the learning environment, removing the normal facility usage and pedagogies for photography education overnight and without warning.

On return from half term in October 2023, the building where the photography classrooms are based had caught fire. This meant the rooms were entirely inaccessible, as were our resources, work and equipment. Staff and students were expected to work in non-specialist rooms with little to no equipment other than electronic devices. The staff and students struggled with the displacement. Linking with Thomson and Hall's (2021) work describing the 'sanctuary' atmosphere of the creative rooms (p.601), I quickly realised how much time students were spending in the photography department outside of timetabled lesson times, and how staff worked more collaboratively than previously thought. It was no longer the lessons that seemed as important, but the unspoken and unrecorded elements surrounding them that were gone without warning. I noticed that students had used the communal workspaces in corridors nearby before/after the lessons, used the classrooms to work in free periods, and before and after school. It was at these times that teachers were available for one-to-one conversations informally, away from the lesson environment. Given that there are interjoining doors in the department, staff and students had been moving freely between the spaces and creating a feeling of community. Staff would often interject positively in one another's lessons and knew the students well, even if they were not in their timetabled classes.

During the period away from the building, this community element was removed and as a result, students struggled to work and be creative, and staff struggled to maintain the same level of communication or to implement planned pedagogies and lessons. Observing such a struggle demonstrates the importance of the learning environment when considering photography education, and the wellbeing of students and staff in general. Staff were given a temporary base that was neither a classroom nor a creative space. It was interesting to see how quickly we familiarised ourselves with the space, moving tables and chairs to sit alongside one another and maintaining the same breaktime routine of making cups of tea and sitting down with each another to discuss the day.

Students, although clearly displaced by the incident, seemed to find solace in our nomadic ways, and comfort in that our behaviours as staff had not changed despite the upheaval. The importance of student-teacher

relationships was key here, as all creative materials, spaces and work had been removed to reveal the bare bones of the environment and the people within it. Revisiting the idea that creative spaces are often cluttered, colourful and inspiring, it was also frightening to see how quickly an unused, uncreative and frankly uninspiring space became what embodies 'an art space', as Thomson and Hall described (2019), with creative imagery adorning the walls, art materials strewn across tables and celebrated work pinned to workspaces.

7.10: Part 3: Visual ethnography

Learning environment - photographs

Repeated readings of the environments led to patterns; this meant revisiting the classrooms, the spaces, rereading the notes, journals, walking in thought. My doing so was disrupting the familiar, but reworking the lines of sight, tracing back and forth, moving through multiplicities of ideas when they arose. I played with my data, I moved it, repositioned it, rephotographed it, created unintentional digital montages by piling the photographs onto digital pages and making connections through scribbles and thoughts out loud, a process that went beyond the boundaries of the text, dwelling in cracks that appeared, and hauling together new possibilities (Springgay et al., 2005).

The revisiting of photographs in the findings draws these memories out for me; it becomes a strange and distant professional family album of sorts. I remember the lessons, the struggles and successes of these students during their photography education. I wonder how they are doing; what they remember of the same lessons I can recall. The occupied space of the learning environment changes in decor and detail, but the structure rarely alters. But the students come and go. I have remained static. The work students make often remains in my static space rather than their fluid ones, a marker of their education that I end up bearing for a lot longer than they do. Here, a clear marker of photography not crossing a boundary from artefacts of a photography education into visual culture is demonstrated (Edwards, 1997).

Support

The following photograph (image 8) was taken when some of the participants in year 11 were nearing the end of their GCSE course. The group was quite large that year, with a high level of pastoral and wellbeing needs. The students had mixed ability and motivation with photography and required a lot of support from me as their teacher. This photography evokes feelings of pressure and sheer willingness for the students to succeed, however that looked for them.

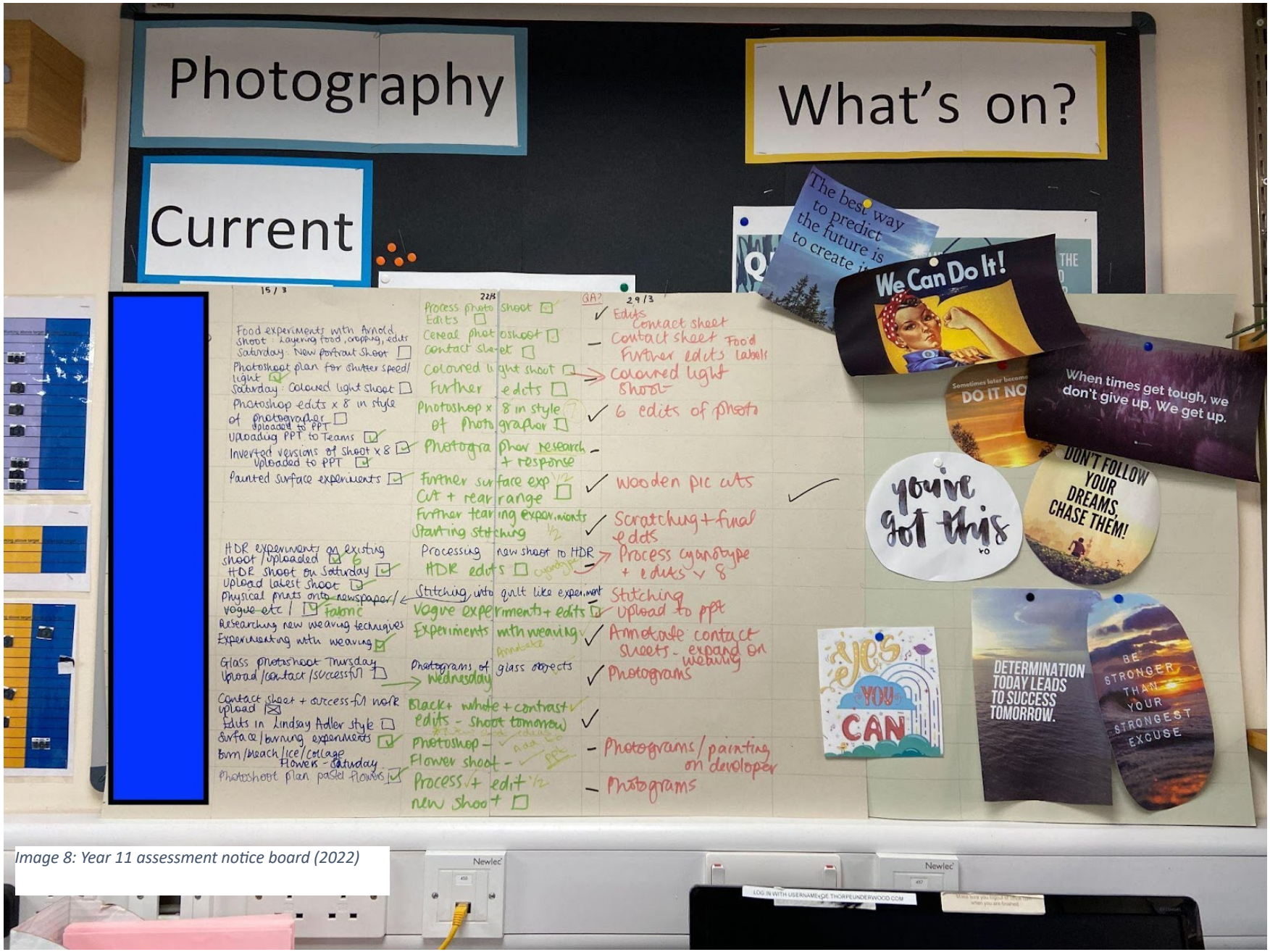


Image 8: Year 11 assessment notice board (2022)

Encouraging spaces

The notice board in the photograph was usually used for displaying the current tasks for students, exhibitions in the local area to promote extracurricular learning, and other activities going on in the subject. At exam time, this board was surrendered to my support measure of choice for both me and my students - a big list. These targets were set in collaboration with the students, and we took great pride in ticking them off one by one, focussing on the successes and not on the things we had not achieved. I began one session with a very clichéd inspirational quote. The class of 15–16-year-olds found this cringeworthy and hilarious. I enjoyed the conversation away from examination pressure, away from target grades and future expectations, and they shared this sentiment. I began adding further inspirational quotes to this board daily, to the point where students would print them off themselves or ask when I was contributing to it. This narrative of collaboration and support lessened the power play between teacher and student. I was no longer a figure of authority, in that my behaviours were not trying to control or maintain their level of work, but a figure of mutual support and collaboration. I was on the journey with them, and I believed in their success. Just out of shot to the left is an institutional 'assessment tracker' with categories such as 'working towards', 'working at' and so on. These trackers were rarely interacted with, by me as a teacher or by students as a target for success. I feel this is due to the impersonal nature of the language used, and the unfamiliarity with it from both me as a teacher, and them as students. The large handwritten list is very similar in format and content and provides more detail. Students may engage with this more given the handwritten nature of it, or the collaborative aspect.

Whiteboards

Image 9 demonstrates what is typically known of whiteboard usage by teachers. A form of communication in teaching and learning, the whiteboard can be used in instructional formats, disciplinary formats (writing names on the board as record of warnings), collaboration, assessment and so on. Images 9 and 10 show the whiteboard space in the photography classroom at a time where it also doubled as a place where digital resources could be projected. This meant I was unable to use both at once, and space for writing was extremely limited when the projector was connected. Demonstrating software in photography, such as Adobe Photoshop, also took place on the board.

Image 9 was written shortly before the GCSE examination took place. A countdown was a reminder to students of how long was left. This action could prove anxiety inducing or led some students to experience further pressure. The countdown was highlighted with a cloudlike shape, and some basic tasks described. The instructions here are minimal, given the extra support materials, one to one tutorial plans for students, and the late stage in the academic year. A level of autonomy is given to students at this stage of their photography learning, and an understanding that they comprehend what needs to be completed.

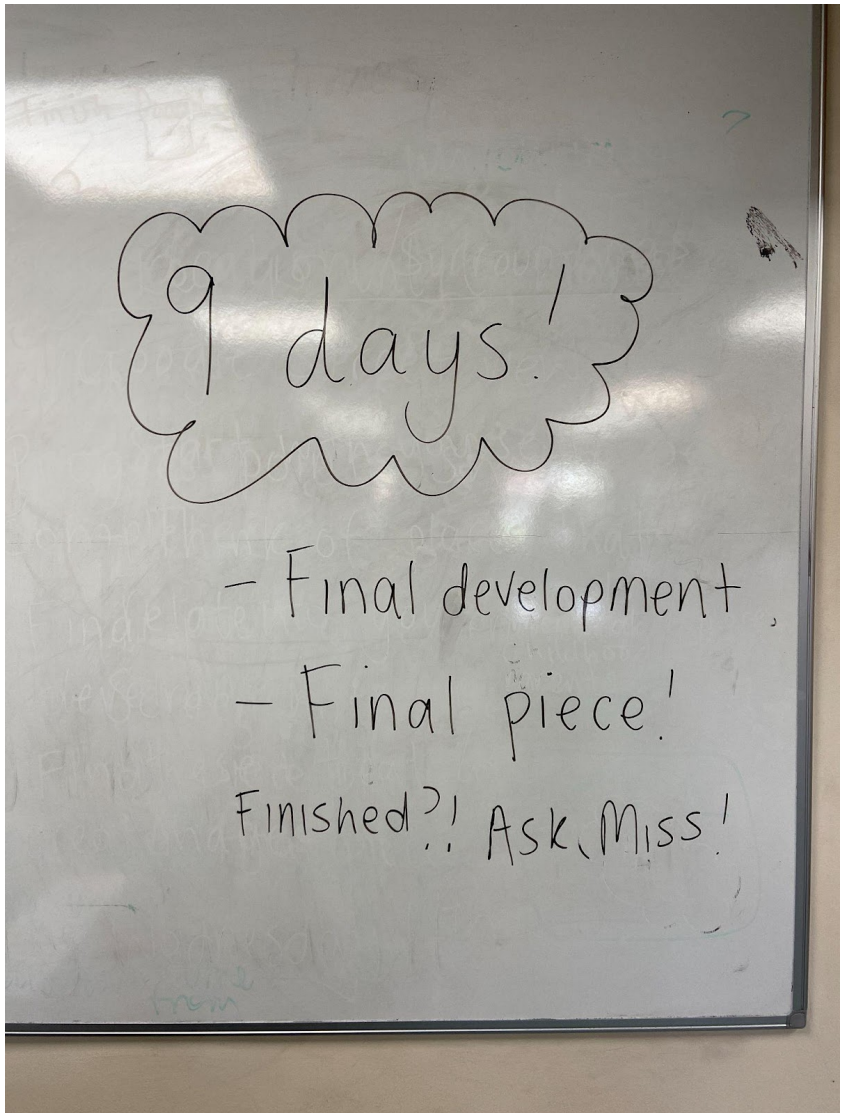


Image 4: 9 days left whiteboard (2022) Author's own

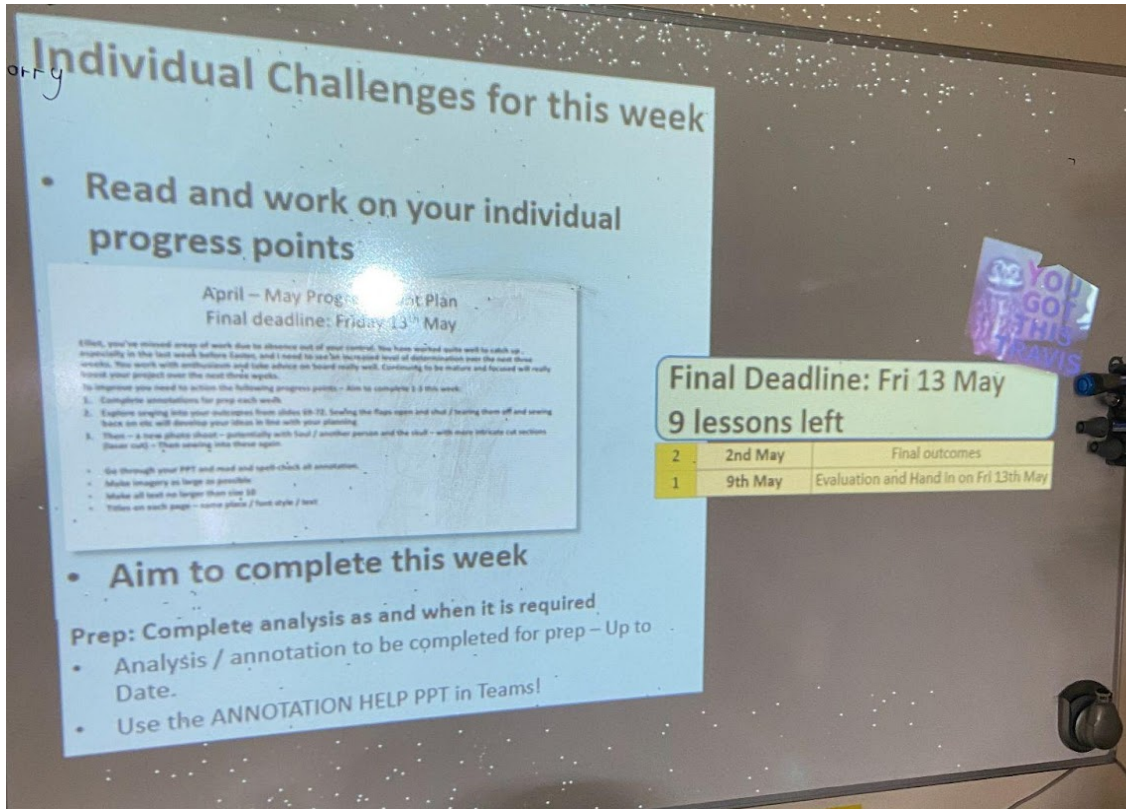


Image 10: 9 lessons left whiteboard (2022). Author's own

Assessment written on a board, with pencil or dry-wipe marker, can easily be rubbed out in an act of rebellion (Sutton, 2014) and can become 'tokenistic' in its quest to meet markers of external organisations or institutional policy. There is a distinct polarisation of how attempts are made to harness education, its structures and rituals, however the unpredictability of learning in classrooms does not listen to such constraints.

Image 10 shows a lesson for another GCSE examination group in the adjacent room, taught by a non-specialist who had expressed lack of confidence in his photography teaching ability. This board is a projected digital slide and refers to the work as 'challenges' rather than tasks or activities. The term challenges encourage students to believe the work is outside of their normal working range, which may provide a level of discomfort for some. There are several dates, tasks, command words and subject specific terminology on the board, asking students to complete multiple things multiple times. The text on the slide was almost illegible in the room, and coupled with the digital marks on the board, it was difficult to read. I enjoyed the tokenistic use of an inspirational quote to the right-hand side of the slide: 'you've got this'. In comparison to the first use of the whiteboard, there is no reference to individual student targets, or evidence of human involvement in the tracking, progress and monitoring of how these students will achieve their goals in their examination in just nine days' time.

Whiteboard, exhibition, collaboration

As discussed in section 7.9, there was an incident during data generation that meant we were away from our usual facilities and equipment, with no access to them whatsoever. This incident had meant significant damage to electrical equipment. As a result, our projectors and computer systems were removed. This meant we had televisions as monitors installed, and these were now positioned on the classroom wall, leaving the whiteboard free to use in any sense we wished. Image 11 (below) shows how the whiteboard has become a creative and collaborative environment, almost a collage. Here, there are clear examples of teachers working as artists, researchers, colleagues, tutors and mentors. The board is partly a celebration of student work, with visual outcomes being displayed here (temporarily and with little regard to exhibition conventions). There are several scanned darkroom negatives that were found on an undeveloped roll of film in an old camera. This piece of work started conversations with students surrounding analogue photography. There are a few pieces of work that staff members have collaborated on and continue to add to. Found materials, everyday experiences and ephemera make this a layered working journal of the everyday in the teaching environment. Juxtaposed with these pieces are institutional documents that are required to be displayed- the sanction system for example, in the bottom right-hand corner (names are hidden for anonymity purposes). However, this sanction system has not been used by the teachers using the room, but the students themselves. This interactive playfulness has seen them put themselves on the board for warnings, despite having zero behaviour issues in class (image 13).

Image 11: Collaborative whiteboard (2024) Author's own

Image 12: Close up of collaborative whiteboard (2024). Author's own

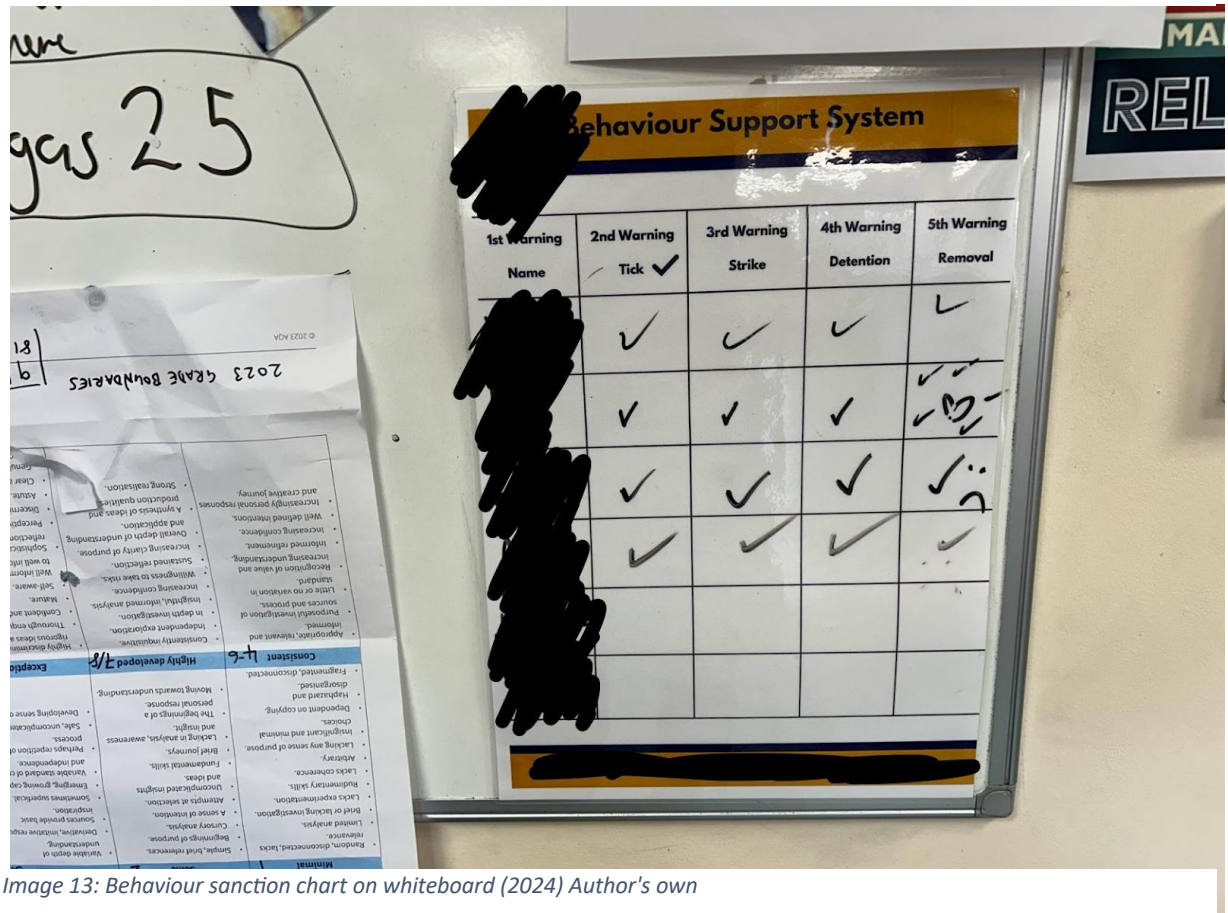


Image 13: Behaviour sanction chart on whiteboard (2024) Author's own

Creative spaces

The play, role play, and creativity are representative of the photography classroom environment where students can feel confident to take part in this ever-changing juxtaposition. There are markers of life away from the classroom, such as links to the UCAS website and examination marking criteria, albeit displayed entirely upside down. The temporary nature of the work is highlighted through single pieces of Blu Tack and pieces of work held in place at jaunty angles. Thank you cards to the left-hand side demonstrate the mutual respect and value that students have held for the teachers of photography and their education in the subject. Vohs (et al, 2013) found, in their study of order and disorderly spaces, that a disordered and 'cluttered' space such as this whiteboard could open up parts of the mind, encouraging behaviours such as seeking novelty and stimulating creative ideas through the joining of unexpected aspects, and reducing potential fear of an ordered and pressured environment, indicating that it could be a positive contribution to a photography classroom when encouraging playfulness and creative thinking. If the example of the whiteboard is considered a collage, then the intention of making it may not be rooted in demonstrating an idea, but in fact to 'express a feeling or send of an experience or phenomenon' (Butler-Kisber, 2018, p.5), in this case, a sense of playful collaboration and a level plane between students and teachers.

Artist, teacher, researcher (mother)

I discuss my role as teacher, artist, researcher at length in this thesis and comment on my role as a mother as a parallel to this research in section 6.3. This visual depiction of multiplicity of roles was important for me to include as part of the identity and belonging theme. Teachers spend a lot of time in their classrooms and institutions. It is known that people try to make work environments feel more homely by the introduction of photographs, familiar objects, and in this case, a child's drawing (image 14). I brought this drawing in from home, a token from my daughter. She had specifically said it was for me to put up at work. I did put it up, but wanting to maintain a degree of professionalism, chose a place behind what was then a smaller monitor. After the monitors were changed, the drawing remained there, now entirely hidden from view. I felt this was a fitting metaphor for how the different roles we encompass in education can differ in priority depending on the day, need, or time of year.

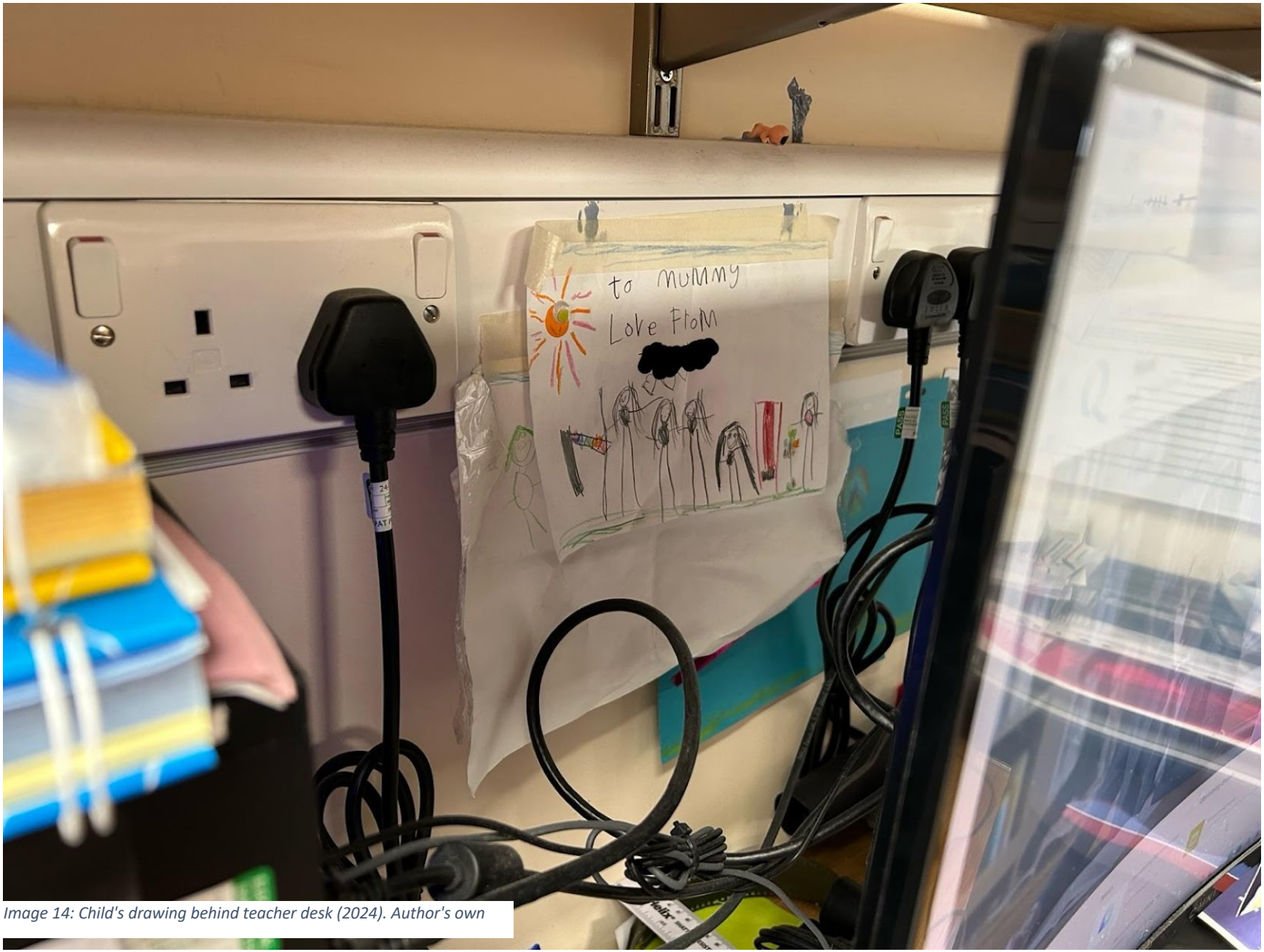


Image 14: Child's drawing behind teacher desk (2024). Author's own

7.11: Journaling, writing and considering the inbetween

The autoethnographic act of keeping notes, journals and sketchbooks allowed room for reflection. The practice acted as a crossing of boundaries in a visual representation of identity; me as a teacher, at home, the personal, as a researcher, and as a creative practitioner. The main sketchbook contains photographs printed using a thermal printer, creative writing and paper ephemera. Autoethnographic methods such as these begin 'the act of bringing the 'processes of the researcher into the research frame'' (Merrill and West, 2009, p.5) and can contribute to authenticity of the research process, not only for the reader, but for me as well, allowing myself the time and reflexivity to examine why and how I was conducting this research, and the subsequent influences, obstacles and barriers.

Through a reflexive a/r/tography approach to the research, I was keeping this visual sketchbook/journal in parallel to the research rather than as an intended part of the data. When considering why I kept this sketchbook, I concluded that it was to retain an artistic practice whilst maintaining the role of the teacher and researcher (although doing so subconsciously). Using visual ethnography can be complicated given the multiple meanings that photographs, and visual work can hold (Pink, 2021), and their contexts can change depending on how they are viewed and who they are viewed by. The documents shown in images 14-18 below could be viewed as art pieces away from the context of the research. Equally, they could be strictly used for documentation purposes and never be considered artwork at all, depending on the context. A/r/tographic practices encourage the process of artmaking to build on facets of identity (Barney, 2019), and I felt that keeping a journal/sketchbook not only helped reconnect me with a consistent collage practice, but also to feel more aligned with the students who were undertaking photography education whilst being researched. When I studied photography, the expected documentation of work was through sketchbook practice. This continued through degree and MA study, so the habit of recording the work around me is ingrained in this way. To remain connected in the conceptualising and thought processes of how research was coming together, it was useful for me to reflect on how this sketchbook documented these passing through spaces, interweaving with elements of research, work, art practice and life (Laszcik Cutcher and Irwin, 2017), and acting as a tracing. The following photographs are accompanied by sections of autoethnographic writing utilising notes taken during data generation, analysis, in times that are not considered 'research', such as on personal trips, or when working creatively. Interwoven into these sections is reference and reflection upon the autoethnographic vignettes that appear throughout the thesis. Bringing these elements of research together disrupts an expected research structure (St. Pierre, 2018,) but considers how the different parts intertwine, cross and reveal new or enhanced understanding around the focus questions. Here, micro-ethnographies, or small aspects of the everyday research happenings (Bayeck, 2023) are brought together as a creative analytical process, drawing out the connection between

conventional and artistic methods (Rädjesö, 2018). Returning to the focus of photography education, the combination of these elements help to reveal the 'fragmented layers as it unfolded' (Rifeser and Ros I Solé, 2022, p.222) and creates what could be considered, in Barthesian terms, a *text* rather than a *work,* as the development of understanding through micro-ethnographies is resisting the finite, and becoming dynamic with the interactions with ideas and experiences (Barthes, 1971). The following section introduces the photographs and how they are presented.

Looking at looking

I purposely left the following photographs uncropped, with signs of paper, pens and a computer keyboard just in shot; evidence of the journal being photographed on my desk at school. I enjoyed how this choice symbolised the overlap of environments from work to home, and how visually, this also represented a restraint of my own time, overlapping research and work practices. In image 15, there is a juxtaposition of paper ephemera collected from the photography trip to London (discussed in section 7.8), business cards from local coffee shops collected in the school holidays and at weekends, photographs taken of my day-to-day life at home, as well as pieces collected purely for their aesthetic value from weekends away. The collage, however unintentional, shows multiple layers of me, the photography teacher, the parent, the artist, the friend. The creative process I embody to create these works are not of interest when considered individually, but the situatedness (Pink, 2021) of the processes provides meaning to how I try to approach teaching photography education. The work printed and stuck in the sketchbook are captured moments of the banalities of the everyday, pleasing and interesting for reasons often unknown to me. The work is playful, and collaborative, even if the people that I have encountered are unaware of their inspiration and value to me. Drawing on Barthes' (1971) idea of the author's intentions being defunct once the work is read by others, it could be suggested that these subconscious collaborations are co-constructions between me as reader and the original author *becoming* writer, making the pieces interactive and participatory.

Maintaining creative practices

My engagement in consistent creative open-ended, low pressure making processes such as this sketchbook, and autoethnographic writing practices demonstrated through vignettes, could have inspired and influenced my pedagogical decisions in the photography classroom. Returning to Irwin (2006) and a/r/tography, seeing and interpreting the world through interwoven understandings or *becomings* such as writing and sketchbook practices are indicative of viewing the world through an artistic enquiry, in which all parts of information may contribute to enhanced meanings or new discovery. When reflecting on the process of the sketchbook for the research, I kept returning to the feeling as if like I was in the 'flow' as described by Czikszentmihalyi (1996), which subsequently may have meant I was more prepared for experimentation and playful, open-ended approaches to how I taught photography, as I was already

involved in similar practices myself. Doing so may have impacted on the shifting of focus of teaching away from accountability measures and performance-based outcomes that are often leant on heavily by teachers (Hall et al., 2007), instead building my own confidence and credibility in employing such pedagogies. This draws on *vignette two* (section 1.8), exploring the meaning and definition of education, and why the secondary definitions of creativity and curiosity are not at the fore. My practice of keeping a sketchbook reflects my own teaching practices, which encourage looking at the everyday in a way that could be inspiring to students. A/r/tography suggests the same of those who choose to approach all aspects of research as a creative meaning making practice. It may be misalignment with these values and those of the socioeconomic direction of education more widely that causes disparity in what education is defined as, and what it exists as when viewed through the lens of photography education. The following sections look at pages of the sketchbook individually through autoethnographic writing, to interpret their contribution to the overall understanding of responses to the core research questions; What is the impact of disciplinary understandings of teachers and chosen pedagogies on photography education? How does the learning environment affect teaching and learning in photography?

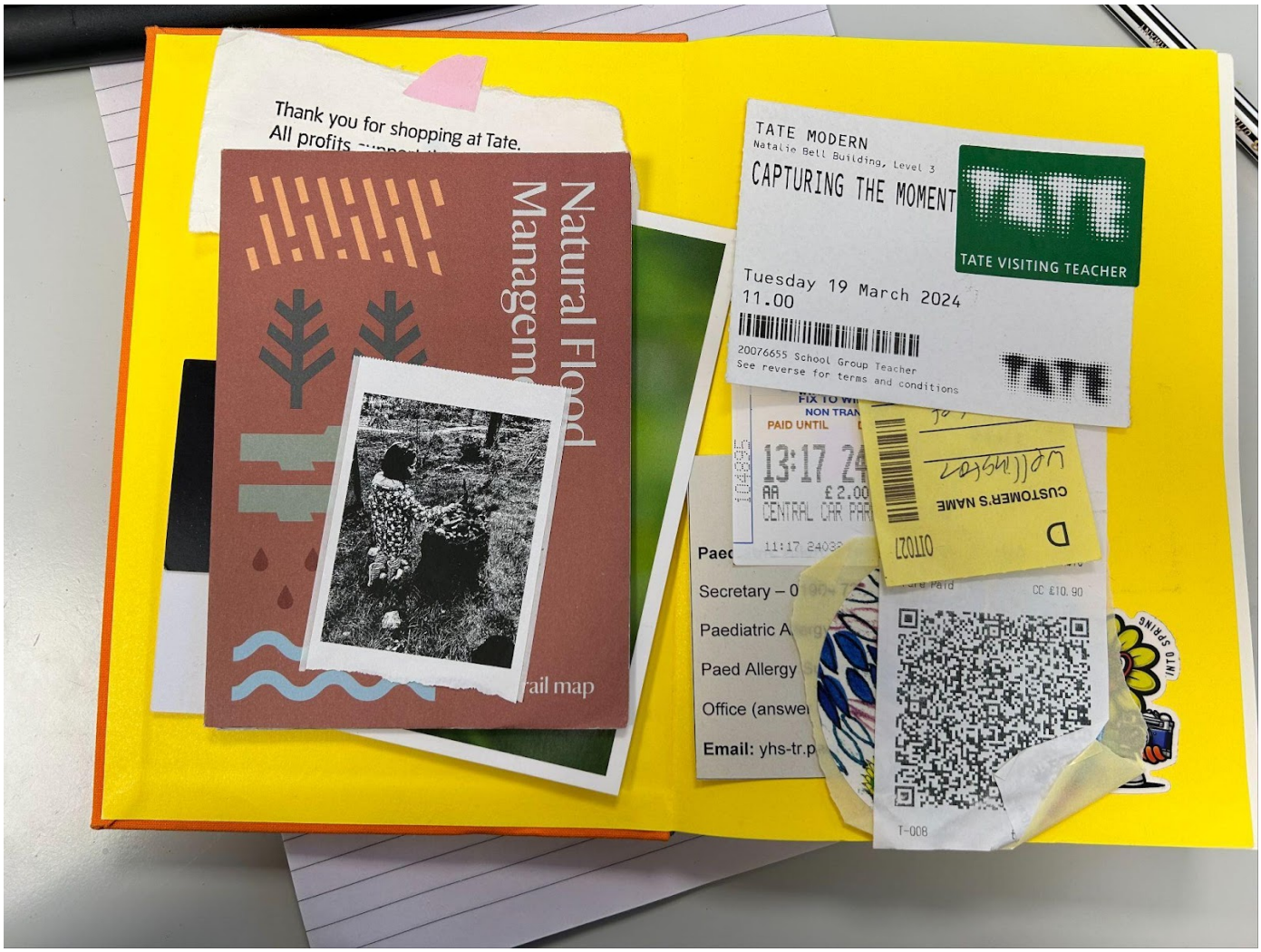


Image 15: Natural Flood Management. (2024). Author's own

Natural Flood Management (image 14)

When deciding on the title for this section connected with the image below, *natural flood management* felt as if it encompassed a metaphor of the research, as well being as a fitting title for the collection of ephemera pictured here. The practice of titling in this manner is part of the creative exhibition practice I have become accustomed to, whereby titles and captions of photographs and artwork can add a further layer of depth and understanding to the work, sometimes deterring the viewer from the most literal or obvious meaning, evoking further thought and discussion from them. Drawing on Barthes (1978), the addition of this layer can illustrate the space created between artist and viewer, or writer and reader, whether the text remains open and dynamic, inviting the reader or viewer to participate in the interpretation, or whether it is considered work, where the author retains its meaning. On reflection, I have spent time considering thoughtful titles of the vignettes in the thesis in a similar manner, evoking meaning, hoping to inspire or invite wider thought in a practice that is brought from that of a gallery or exhibition space. The brown leaflet was taken from a personal trip taken in the school holidays, a puncture in time between the busy terms, a

time where both students and teachers can reflect, recharge and prepare for the work that came before and is to come after. Referring to *vignette three* (section 3.1), where I try to unpick my inability to follow linearity of work practices, the leaflet is a marker of this break in academic time and where a lot of the thinking around research and pedagogical practices seems to heighten, or when walking in the environment serves to embody the knowledge in which I am on the cusp of understanding (Ingold, 2010).

Desire paths

There is a link here to the Deleuzian nomadic wandering away from the structure of 'seen' education, the metaphorical breaking of traditional paths in education and creating *desire paths* (paths created away from planned infrastructure routes) in how pedagogical practices look in photography education. The creation of desire paths through to tangents and ideas in vignettes and autoethnographic wanderings are part of a post structural research design that encourages the vast movement of thinking, rather than a strict educational model that disallows freedom and independence in its development (Leckie and Prior, 2022). Collage, school trips, holidays, art practice, dry cleaning and parking - the banalities of the everyday are presented, alongside an allergy appointment reminder for my peanut allergic daughter. The juggling act of maintaining multiple roles in life that are often unspoken neither separated nor viewed in conjunction with one another is illustrated through the multiplicities of paper ephemera. Photos are printed but not stuck with adhesive, suggesting a lack of time, or an overspill of material. The presentation of such pages suggests that the disciplinary background of a photography teacher is not one that ends on receipt of a degree or similar but is a constant unfolding and juggling of the roles that influence the day-to-day pedagogical choice making.

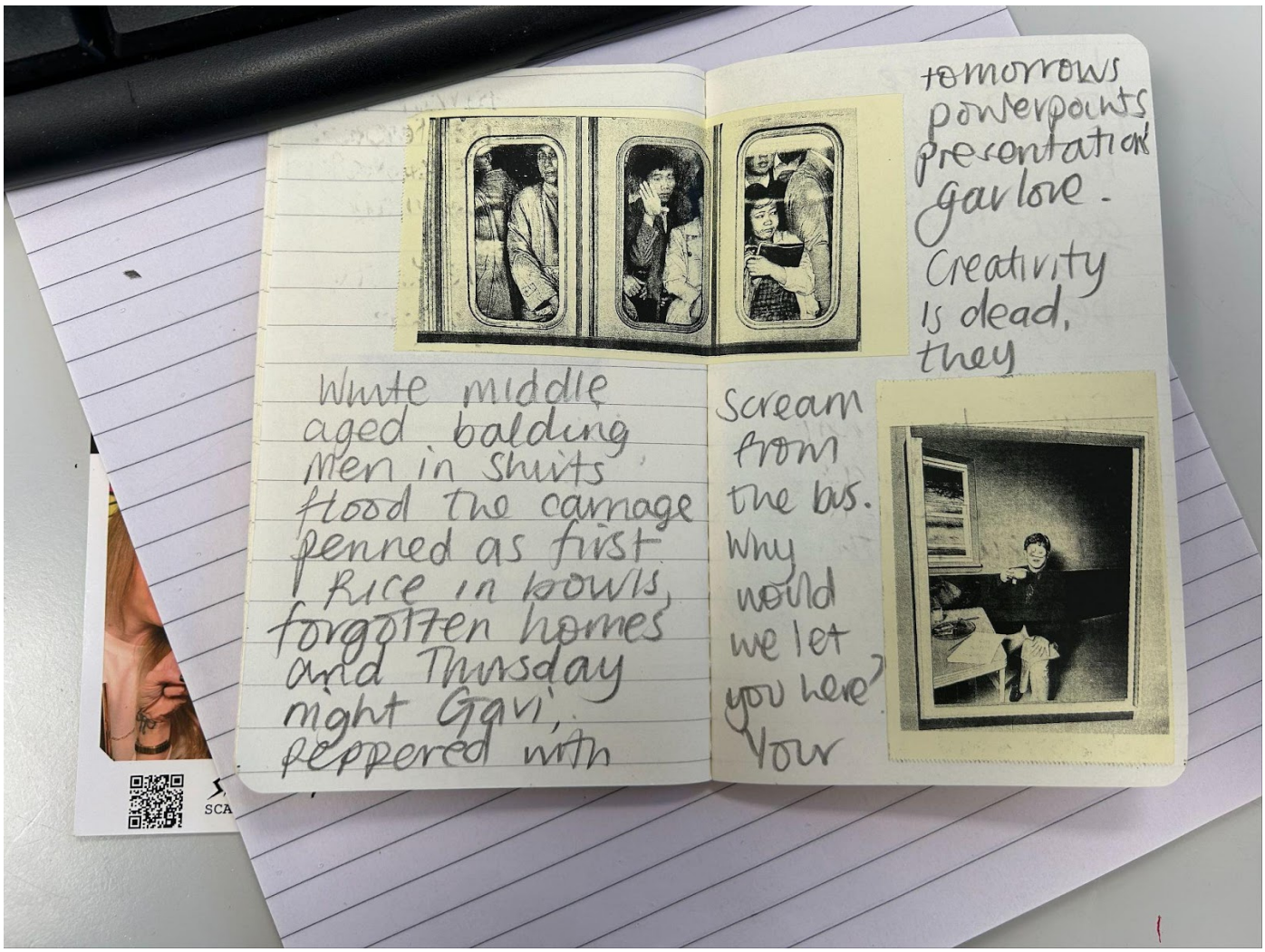


Image 16: Creativity is dead, they scream from the bus. (2024). Author's own

Creativity is dead, they scream from the bus (image 15)

Image 16 shows two thermally printed images of *Fragile Beauty* at the V&A museum in London, an exhibition of images from Elton John's vast personal collection. This exhibition was large scale and lacked a thematic thread. I felt so much nostalgia and a pull to some of the original imagery that first got me interested in photography, during A Level study. The works of Nan Goldin, Robert Frank, Sophie Calle and others stood out to me, and memories flooded back of photocopying their work from books and gluing them into my sketchbook. The thread between this memory and standing in this exhibition, mirroring the process of photographing, sticking them into a sketchbook was one that spanned over 17 years yet felt closer than ever. The photograph that is just out of view to the left-hand corner is of me and two close friends who I have known since the age of 11. They were at the same college whilst I was studying A Level photography, and the visual juxtaposition draws the thread or tracing between the passing of time closer together in a new and different context.

The writing was added on the train journey back from London to York, and was inspired by the observations around me, coupled with the images I had chosen to include on the page. Train journeys have always felt transformational to me, like a space that exists which defies that of normal time keeping, or routine. Going to exhibitions has a positive influence on my own teaching of photography as it reminds me of my own passion for the medium, whilst introducing new practitioner work to utilise in lessons. Attending exhibitions can help maintain a contemporary and up to date knowledge in the subject, whilst being a key personal reminder of why I chose to teach the subject in the first place.

When considering *vignettes one, nine and eleven* (sections 1.5, 6.3, 8.1), where I discuss the difficulties of becoming a researcher but subsequently realising that openness and honesty through writing was authentic in terms of my own research voice, I reflected on what I first considered the role of a teacher to be. On completion of my own teacher training, I remember thinking I had to *become* what was seen as a teacher; I felt I had to embody the stereotypes, develop organisation skills overnight that I did not possess, discover knowledge in areas I did not have, and change facets of my personality. I draw on the vignette again, and the discussion surrounding patchwork ethnography. The 'fabric of my everyday life' (La Jevic and Springgay, 2008, p.70) meant I was unable to maintain the static representation of this stereotype for long, and the acknowledgement of my own difficulties and strengths as a teacher (and a researcher) positively impacted on pedagogical choice making, curriculum, as well as the writing of this thesis, in a way that is authentic to my own voice (Günel et al. 2023). I did not intend for the research to be as autoethnographic as it has become, but as Hayden (2024) asserts, ethnography of any kind is a huge personal undertaking, and to ignore this would not have been truthful to the research process. For me as the researcher, this was the discovery of the 'breaks and jagged edges of methodological practices' (Lather, 2001, p.202), as discussed in *vignette eight,* (section 6.1), which allow the 'stories to be found in the moments' (Sutton, 2020, p713). Moving to *vignette eleven* (section 8.1), where the willingness to engage with novel methodological practices and allowing the research to unfold in new forms of delivery are done in such a way as to present the work in its most authentic way (Honan and Bright, 2016).

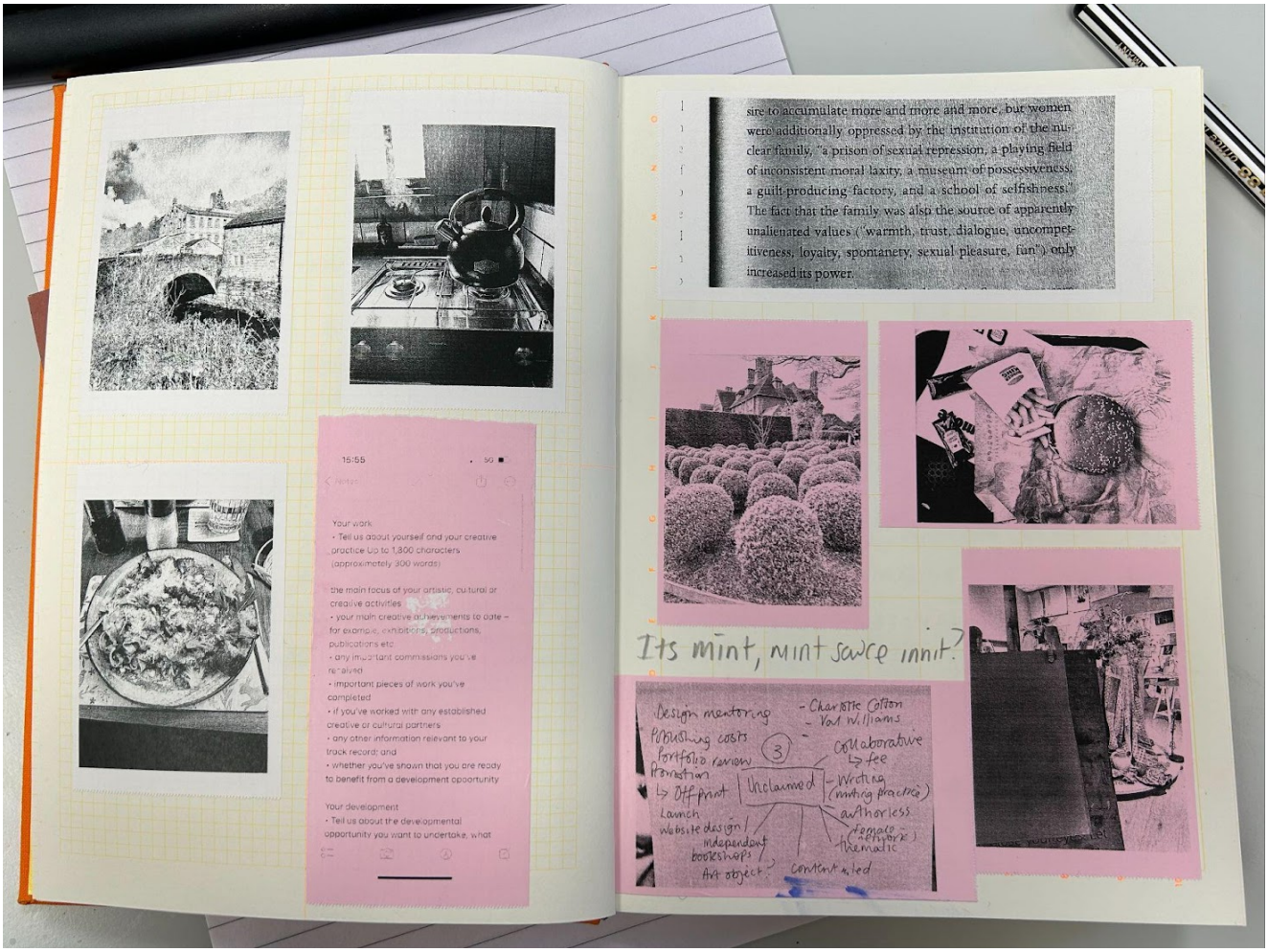


Image 17: It's mint, mint sauce innit? (2024). Author's own

It's mint, mint sauce innit?

Image 17 shows a range of images that were all taken during the school holidays. The writing that is displayed on the left-hand page on a pink background is taken from an ACE document that indicates what to include in a Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP) funding application. The text on the right-hand page is taken from Susan Sontag's *On Women (2023),* and the mind map to the bottom of the right hand page is a mind map of a personal creative project that I hoped to undertake if successful with the aforementioned DYCP application. There is a focus on this sketchbook page of my own continuing artistic practice, and aspirations to move it further with the help of government funding. A thread is drawn here from the large body of existing literature on photography education from the 1990s that was funded by ACE. The overlapping of roles is visually represented here, their influence on one another difficult to entirely untangle, illustrating a rapid movement in time. Referring now to *vignette five* (section 3.5), the sketchbook page here could be seen to demonstrate the unfolding of my own living enquiry, the threads of which are looked at closely before being added to or rewoven constantly, depending on the growing understandings (Springgay et al., 2005). The likenesses can be drawn here with differentiated teaching practice using multiple pedagogical approaches (Deppeler, 2015). I never ended up applying to the DYCP funding, due to

a lack of time commitment because of a teaching role with high demands. The liminal spaces that exist between artist/teacher, teacher/researcher are described in *vignette eight* (section 6.1) as cracks. I began to 'dwell in the cracks' (Schultz, 2017, p.509), which brought the elements of my own creative practice much closer and interwoven with my own values as a teacher of photography in playfulness in everyday life (Kane, 2011) and 'social, contextual and exploratory learning' (Ingalls Vanada, 2017, p115).

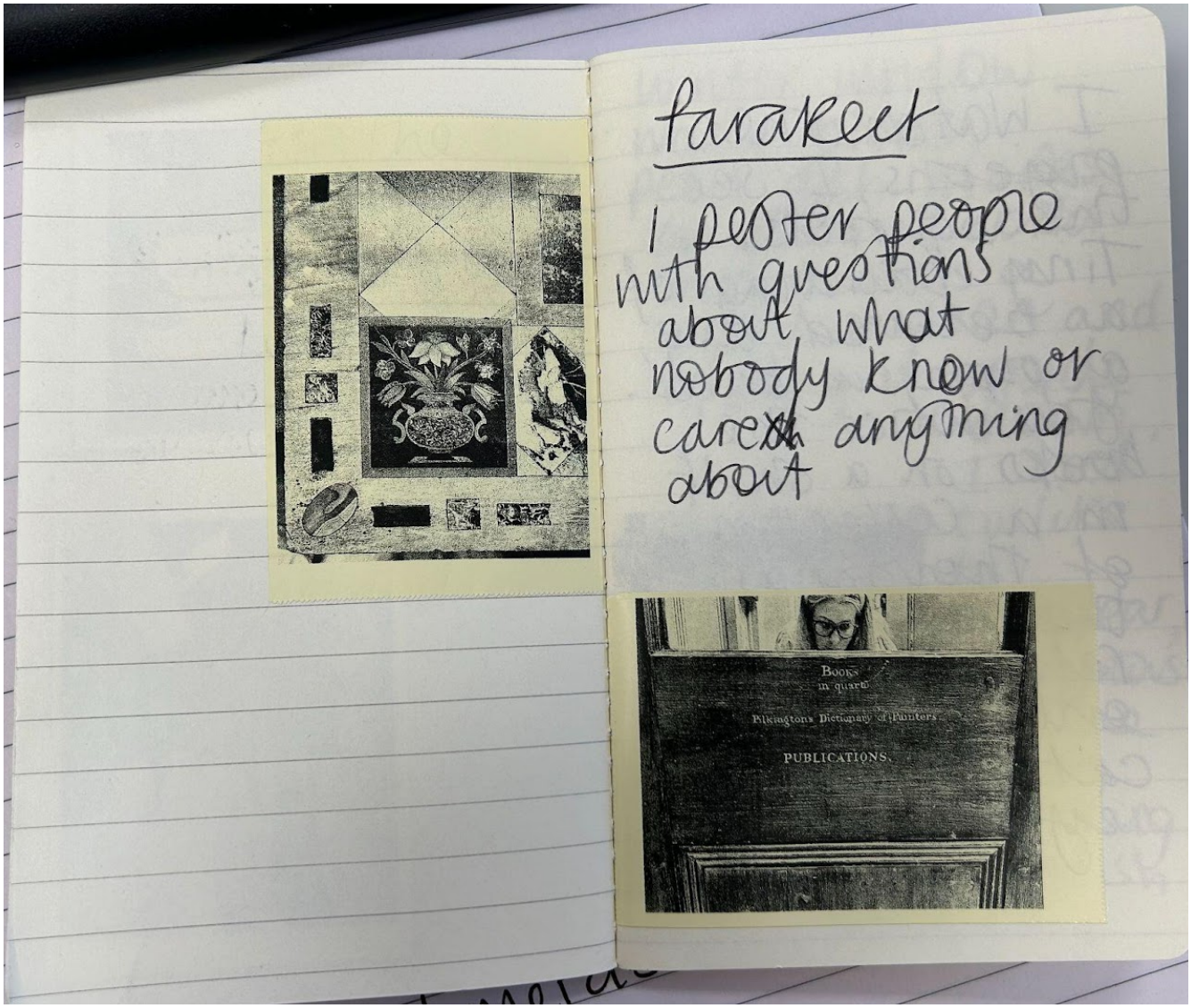


Image 18: Parakeet (2024). Author's own

Parakeet - I pester people with questions about what nobody know[s] or care[s] anything about

I interact with the world around me differently, considering the sights and banalities as potential inspiration, as cultural nourishment to feed and encourage imagination. The joy of seeing a green parakeet is a metaphor for the simple joys in seeing something exotic, unfamiliar and unknown. My own curiosity is fed through such discoveries. I hope in my own teaching practice that I am encouraging students to see the world in a similar fashion, questioning what they think is known to them and considering information in differing ways. Drawing on the practices of a/r/tography and rhizoanalysis, it is this consideration of information in new and novel ways that may influence new, or enhanced thinking. The choice of language used here may be interpreted that I view my own curiosity as negative, as the word 'pester' suggests persistent and potentially unwanted interactions. 'What nobody know[s] or care[s] anything about' suggests that the questions are centred around topics that are not the norm or expected. Creative enquiry encourages the new and novel, the repositioning and framing of information. New understanding, new

practice, new artwork is created when practitioners ask 'What if'. This is the basis of the curiosity on which my teaching practice is built, and where my drive for research in the area originates. I close this section by referring to a quote from the prologue to the thesis, where my own motivations for the research focus are considered. Reflecting on this quote towards the end of the research, the thread of similarity between the '*I pester people with questions about what nobody know[s] or care[s] anything about*' and the 'interconnectivity, the *what ifs*' and the curiosity of the asking of questions, 'the joining together of aspects' not intended to go together, to me, summarises the rhizomatic unfolding of the research and interwoven nature of how photography education is influenced. To provide context to the wider environment and research richness, or as Irwin and O'Donoghue (2012) suggest, 'learning in the margins', has the potential to be a 'productive place to think about processes of teaching and learning' (p.108).

> My mind works in tangents, in interconnectivity, in *what ifs*, in questions and the joining together of aspects that perhaps are not destined to be joined together. I act on impulse and try to find fun and playfulness in the everyday. I think out loud; I write in continuous prose. I move between formal and informal language during periods of hyperfocus to get my ideas onto paper stemming from a fear of losing them.
>
> (excerpt from prologue, 2025)

Chapter Conclusion

This discussion has contributed a close reading of and engagement with the multiple methods employed in this research. In the first part, collages that were produced as an interpretation of the thematic analysis were presented with the foregrounding knowledge they generated. Here, four thematic areas were discussed, with the related quotations from their attributed code labels. The four overarching themes were Creativity and Expression, Community and Collaboration, Adaptation and Response, and Identity and Belonging. Moving to part 2 of the chapter, the shifting and fluid learning environment of photography education was considered in two separate accounts, the first being the consideration of a school trip and how this impacted on resource making and engagement from staff and students, before considering an unexpected change in environment when the photography facilities were suddenly out of use. Finally, in part 3, a focus on visual ethnographic findings was presented through photographs of the learning environment to consider the seemingly static, yet highly impactful nature of the photography classroom. To conclude part 3, autoethnographic writing presents pages from the journal kept throughout research, with references to the vignettes that are rhizomatically presented throughout the thesis. Turning now to the synthesis of such rich and diverse data, *Chapter Eight: Discussion*, presents a unification of the findings into a set of reconciled research statements.

Chapter Eight: Discussion

Introduction

The gathering of the paper ephemera for making a collage takes time and is a rhythmic, sometimes frustrating, yet rewarding process. The creative process pivots after the ritualistic gathering, and the pieces are adhered together on a foundational base of paper or card in a way that is considered, questioned, and nurtured in line with its intention. Research and collage have been closely entangled practices for me throughout the shaping of the thesis, with the creative flow of both journeys colliding and gently moving apart. The discussion chapter presents similarities to the collage process, in that it is the bringing together of several loose ends of the multimodal findings into a more cohesive narrative, with the theoretical appreciation that this is an open narrative, impacted only by the experiences of this research and those involved within it. Like the rhizome, it is not presented to be replicated but to inform understanding of photography education moving forward. I begin the chapter with a vignette that somehow marks both the start and the end of my own journey *becoming* Deleuzian as a researcher. Following the vignette, the first part of the discussion presents a synthesis of findings through a set of research statements, broadly categorised into the two research areas; what is the impact of disciplinary understandings of teachers and chosen pedagogies on photography education, and how does the learning environment affect teaching and learning in photography? I revisit assemblage theory to situate the research whilst considering photography education as rhizome. I present my own rhizomatic understanding of the research through a diagrammatic map of the synthesised findings, visually through a series of three collages, and practically (and professionally) as a learning resource. Following the discussion, *Chapter Nine: Outcomes* presents the significance of the research more widely.

Vignette Eleven: August 2024 (Appendix L) Becoming Deleuzian

When undertaking periods of doctoral writing, I found that the assemblage and collage aspects of working were starting to influence how I was putting words down on a page. No longer being able to navigate the 100+ page document that sat before me, I began to work on individual sections according to day, thoughts or theme choice. This made me feel calmer and more organised as a researcher, as it meant I could focus more closely, could navigate it more easily, and could make more sense of where it should (or could) be positioned in the longer body of text. I have swapped paragraphs, whole chapters and sections around continuously. I had started to think in only rhizomatic and assemblage fashions. I found myself subconsciously working on creating collages with found materials in meeting rooms, by adding to documents that existed around me. I started to map ideas and concepts more often rather than list them. I started to connect ideas together, move them around, cut them up and ask… What if? I had begun to become Deleuzian.

8.1: Research focus 1: What is the impact of disciplinary understandings of teachers and chosen pedagogies on photography education?

Collective interdisciplinarity

The research was premised on my own observations of and curiosity about photography being taught by teachers trained in different disciplinary areas, with the chosen pedagogies and curriculum subsequently being situated in art and design rather than photography as a standalone subject. The research has found that there are positives of teachers teaching photography with mixed disciplinary backgrounds, as it brings different approaches, thought, and practitioner knowledge to teaching and learning.

Teacher participants were trained in diverse areas; industrial design and graphics (Fred), fashion and textiles (Tabitha), and photography (Duncan). The breadth of knowledge that has been combined in the setting when teaching photography extends the possibilities of cross-curricular skills becoming part of a rich interdisciplinary model is like the RCA model explored in section 2.4. Furthermore, the indescribable, rhizomatic chains of where the participants' knowledge of teaching photography originated (in other teaching roles, where photography is not their specialism; see section 7.4) impacts on the disciplinary understanding too. In section 1.5, a vignette exploring my own journey into teaching, I discuss my experience on a non-subject specific teacher training route in which I was influenced by a mixture of traditionally non-creative subjects such as health and safety and midwifery. Despite my skills-based training being in photography, the teacher training I undertook was not a secondary art and design or technology route, meaning that before I took a full-time role teaching in a school, I had never taught in that setting. Similarly, Duncan undertook a photography degree but trained as a teacher through design and technology. Drawing on Harvey et al. (2022) the rich mix of rhizomatic entry points to what has become photography education in the setting could be described as disrupting the perceived disciplinary borders and is acknowledging the deep intertwining of identities becoming as one in the 'power of the collective' (Harvey et al., 2022, p.103).

The research has value in the simultaneous ethnographic multimodal methods alongside my own role as an a/r/tographer exploring the focus areas through studies of the everyday, allowing for subsequent understandings allowing for the mixed disciplinary backgrounds to be considered in a way that may have only been 'passively comprehended' (Butler-Kisma and Poldma, 2010, p.3), and have allowed for space to consider the fluid nature (Irwin, 2024) of photography education in the setting. In sections 2.3 and 7.2, a deficit of photographic skills is suggested when curricula are inherited or learned by non-specialists. However, as the research has found, a collective of disciplinary backgrounds means the balance of rich interdisciplinarity in photography education is seen as a positive, not only for teachers from a supportive and wellbeing perspective, but also allowing room for students to access a multiplicity of different skills to support in differentiation, or an open-ended approach to creative thinking, as suggested by Hallward (2006).

Collaborative a/r/tography

An a/r/tographic model is premised on identities working side by side with the intention of harnessing inspiration or understanding from multiple areas (Irwin, 2013), and I have considered it to be 'my' role in the research. However, the a/r/tographic model can be considered more widely, with both students and teachers who are working alongside each other taking on different roles, all with the same aim and intention; of teaching (and learning) photography (Heaton, 2018; Irwin, 2013). Co-construction and collaborative practice in photography has been discussed in the research as part of sections 4.2, 7.3, and 7.10. It is evident in the findings, that on occasions of 7.2, 7.3 and 7.8 the role of artist is undertaken mostly by the students producing the photographic outcomes as a result of the research of the teachers, which in itself is a rich collaboration between the teachers - some bringing pedagogical routine (Fred/me in section 7.10) and some providing photographic knowledge (Duncan in section 7.2). Students are also acting as researchers, bringing in their rich contemporary experiences of photography in their generation (section 7.5), that other generations can only observe, or bring their own experiences in conjunction. The role of the teacher is one that language denotes to be straightforward, given that the identity of the 'teacher' is one that is embodied and professionally expected. Despite this, the findings demonstrate the role of the teacher is fluid, and the liminal space between the binary of teacher/student is small when considering the co-construction of photography education (Derrida, 1976).

Students are actively teaching teachers with their own experiences and observations of photography, but modelling behaviour with their own interaction with the learning environment, demonstrating playful practice (sections 7.8, 7.10, 7.11) and inhabiting a calm and trusted creative space (section 7.10). Their engagement with the environment builds a safe and comfortable space for teachers to be confident in their pedagogical choices, allowing for creative risks to take place (section 7.10). Teachers are teaching one another, continuously and often unknowingly in the research setting, given the interjoining community of classrooms (sections 5.6, 7.3), sharing of curricula or 'pedagogic knowledge' (Hall et al., p.616), (section X) and discussions reflecting on the suitability of their pedagogies (sections 7.4 and 7.5), therefore strengthening their creative risk taking in pedagogical design (Thomson et al. 2019). Drawing on the C&C theme, teachers in the study have leant on photography specialists ('that's when I come crawling to you' (informal discussion with Fred, 2023) to furnish or extend their subject specialist knowledge in the area. There are likenesses to the overarching structures of schools more generally, which will often write a mission, values and ethos statement to promote the character and culture of the school itself. In the liminal space between the mission, value and ethos being presented on a school website, and in a secondary school specialist classroom, there is a shift in thinking that moves from a suggestion of growing the whole student, or child, and the reality of this being a product or performance led model (Bernstein, 2000).

It has been found in this research that the community created in a photography classroom, and the collaboration between teachers, can positively impact their level of professional curiosity, skill sharing and resource making. Taking activities such as school trips together can have a positive impact, as the trustworthiness and understanding extends beyond the classroom. Irwin and O'Donoghue (2012) found that in a research project where art educators resided together, walked together, and ate together, found that there was 'the potential for the emergence of new artistic possibilities' (p.102), and recognised, together, that 'patience, trust, generosity, uncertainty, chance, respect, complexity, free organisation, consensual decision-making and ambiguity' (p.102) underpinned their art making practice, but in fact could also be the underpinnings of pedagogy and teaching practice.

Reflecting on teaching and being self-taught

When reflecting personally on the research findings, I have realised, to paraphrase Morrissey (2014), that I have been writing myself into spaces that I would not have otherwise occupied (p.838), and exploring my own experience of being in education has impacted much more on my own decision making as a teacher. My passion and core values to make photography education enjoyable have stemmed from some less than satisfactory experiences whilst studying at undergraduate level. Meanwhile the drive and core principle of making education valuable for all stems from my own experiences of secondary education being the one influencing aspect that allowed me to see the world beyond a charming and lovable yet defunct seaside town upbringing, and my own adolescent experience of my parents' divorce, just as Webb (2013) found in the close knit relationship of personal/professional in the making of the *becoming* teacher.

Student disciplinary contributions

The research focus does not directly address the influence of student disciplinary understanding, but the findings have suggested that they are a contributing factor, whether passively or actively, when it comes to the choices which shape photography education. Students brought their own influences through familial interests in photography and visiting museums (section 7.5), through their exploration of themes that are pertinent to them (section 7.5) and the values they hold in the subject, which were often idyllic and focussed on nostalgia and the wide application of the medium (section 7.5). Students were found to bring in their own experiences of the 'golden age of search' (Levi-Strauss, 2014, p.9) in section 7.5. Such a rich variety of student influence is driven by curricula and pedagogies that support and allow the space for them to explore, and engendered by collaborative trust (Ingalls Vanada, 2017) and a building of an environment that is considered perhaps as a sanctuary (Thomson and Hall, 2021). Students felt comfortable enough to regularly interrupt research conversations in their classrooms, bringing further evidence of their trust and familiarity with the spaces and rapport with teachers in the settings (discussed further in this section).

Students are found to identify a more positive teacher-student relationship when the teacher is confident in changing their instructional practices, or pedagogies (Dietrich et al., 2015). This would correlate with the current research findings in which the teachers felt more comfortable with changing pedagogies to suit the needs of students and lesson content, and students felt comfortable to act playfully in their learning environment and engage in teaching and learning practices (section 7.10). When retracing the data, I noticed a pattern of student interruptions during times of discussion or data generation. This is quite literally a liminal moment. Often students would enter lessons earlier than the timetabled session or wish to talk to me and the other teacher participants whilst data were being gathered. This engagement with the subject and confidence in the teacher-student relationship demonstrates that they value the subject. Roorda et al. (2019) found that the Dutch secondary school students in their study were more likely to have positive teacher-student relationships in the subject they found easiest, or with the skills in which they felt most comfortable. Given that photography education consists of a mixture of mostly open ended, independent and collaborative skills, students may align this skillset with a more positive relationship with the teachers involved. Roorda (2019) goes on to comment on the idea that positive teacher-student relationships can potentially be fractured in subjects that rely on summative, or examined content, as the pressure or 'failure' at assessment may cause rupture in engagement, trust and confidence. Photography education is largely assessed formatively, and in the research setting, verbal feedback is offered in most lessons, as are one to one tutorials, and then written feedback is communicated every three weeks. This formative assessment model may benefit teacher-student relationships, and in turn, create a trustworthy and comfortable learning environment. The consistency in support can show increases in motivation for learning.

Barriers

The previous sections have focused on the positives that interdisciplinary richness and collaboration can provide to photography education. However, when paired with any limiting factors, or obstacles, the aforementioned preparedness or confidence to teach photography can be eroded, the personal/professional binary (Palmer, 1998) becomes much more blended, and any trained confidence can be hindered. The preparedness to teach is not directly linked to the disciplinary background that the teacher has experienced, nor can it be directly linked to their teacher training route, but rather an interwoven 'fabric' of experiences, motivations, values and beliefs alongside their formal education and training that has brought them to this point.

Lack of specific training

Within the traditional frameworks, educators in photography have very little to assist them to build pedagogies, and the value of arts of education in the UK does not lend itself to the generation of national educational support for widespread guidance on teaching of the subject in a particular way. There could be benefits to the collaboration occurring here through this rhizome of resource sharing. The first of these is

that it is happening amongst subject specialists, rather than educational leaders or policy makers with little experience in the field. However, the need for help with resource sharing amongst trained educators could be attributed to their teacher training in the first place. Thompson (2014) reported that although initial teacher training was thorough, there was a gap in subject specialist areas, leaving teachers unprepared for the institutions they would be employed by in the future. Thompson goes on to comment on the difficulty in offering such a singular subject specialist training, when in reality no subject is the same as another in a different educational setting, as the environmental, social and economic factors differ. Resource sharing amongst experienced professionals in photography may be assisting in plugging this gap left open by initial teacher training. It could also be in part building a shared curriculum for the subject, building on a framework of essential skills that are identified by those who are experiencing it first-hand. This in turn may better prepare students in further education for that transition to higher education. Alternatively, it could develop to be too prescriptive and therefore squeeze out some individuality and creativity that is available to educators when working in their own local environment.

Autonomy

In the development of foregrounding knowledge through thematic analysis, the impact of wider limiting factors is illustrated through the lack of support in teaching job advertisements - 'because look at adverts for photography teachers. It is art teacher with photography' (section 7.1). The lack of subject specific teacher training pathways has meant that teachers are found to learn photography teaching skills from other professionals in their field. Often, this is without direct intention to teach photography from the teacher, but rather as an additional responsibility within roles that are like the ones quoted above. The underlying and often unintentional lack of value given to photography education can lead to the reliance on inherited curricula and pedagogies, giving little to no control over the quality and consistency of provision offered in the subject; an issue in arts education more widely, highlighted by Chapman et al. (2018). This barrier is paradoxical, given that the freedom allows for the growth of an interdisciplinary nature and provides teacher autonomy over their subject beyond a performance-led model (Bernstein, 2000) yet does not allow for the subject to be driven by signature pedagogies (Thomson et al. 2019) or create the need for specific teacher training routes to be developed in photography. Drawing on the ever-changing widespread usage and prevalence of photography sharing, it can be suggested from this section of this discussion that a specific teacher training route may not be a necessary recommendation, but rather that what is required is continual development of resources to reflect the socio-economic and cultural needs of the subject. Developing a teacher-training route in photography may limit the pedagogic knowledge being transferred and discount many important trends and changing in a field that is fluid and continually changing. Often, the preparedness to teach photography is learned from others in the field, whether they are specialists or not. Teachers enable their preparedness to teach through non-specialisms by harnessing their 'core values' or 'core qualities',

listing examples as ‘courage, clarity, empathy, spontaneity, compassion, love and flexibility’ rather than disciplinary specialisms (Morrissey, 2014, p.842).

Time restraints

The impact of time restraints was a pattern that emerged from the research findings. On a day-to-day routine level, the school day was determined by hour-long lessons and the school bell, meaning the creative learning of a photography lesson was restricted. More widely, teachers are reported to be time-poor, and teaching is known to be an admin-heavy profession. Time restraints from examination and coursework deadlines can impact on teachers as it means they often must rely on ‘safe’ or tried and tested pedagogies (sections 4.3, 7.4). Language used by teachers in informal discussions described the curricula as ‘militant’, and the description of a ‘tick box exercise’ is suggestive of a time-restricted exam-led model that may lack creative freedom at times. Removal of these routine restraints, but the application of others (in the sense of having to produce work in a single day on a school trip) can lead to the development of different types of resource and pedagogy, as seen in the conception of the *Tatebook* (section 7.8). The removal of normal day-to-day timings during Covid-19 also demonstrated changes in pedagogy and curriculum development. During Covid-19 it was found, as part of *Adaptation and Response,* that students were accessing their learning at different times of day as students were not just residing in England during the lockdowns. The differences in time meant teachers were recording tutorials for content they would normally demonstrate multiple times, and utilising different software and innovative use of everyday technology (such as maps - section 7.4) to make their teaching accessible for all.

More broadly, it was found that teachers felt that the length of the course that students were on had an impact on their experience of learning photography (section 7.6), with the one-year course in Starling School being too short. Students reported a desire to be able to go out more to take photographs, something that a longer duration of study would allow despite being impractical from a continuous learning perspective.

Accountability measures

Regardless of disciplinary background, teachers hold opinions and beliefs about how the institutional restrictions/facilities or learning environment affect teaching photography education; this is reflected in the findings in sections 2.2 and 7.2, in which teachers are discussing the value of the subject in schools, highlighting advertisements for ‘art teacher with photography’ and that photography was ‘seen as an easy option’, stating ‘it’s not that hard’. Inherited curricula presented more of a hindrance than lack of subject specific knowledge. In contrast to this, students demonstrated a belief that photography was a ‘big part of my life’ and described it as ‘familiar’ and as a ‘large field with no limits’, showing elements of real value being placed on the subject. Students did not comment on specifics of curriculum or pedagogy, but did positively respond to different pedagogical choice making, such as the making of *Tatebook* (5.6).

Teacher participants of all disciplinary backgrounds felt pressure when teaching photography to choose pedagogies and curricula to meet the needs of examination criteria, as demonstrated in section 7.2 where the teacher states 'you need to tick the box of experimentation' when discussing manipulation technique experimentation in photography. The accountability measures in schools have been found to move staff away from maintaining contemporary practices in their subjects (NEU, 2024) which in turn may affect their overall morale in keeping up their own performance (Radesjo, 2018). Furthermore, the ripple effect of teachers feeling pressure from accountability measures may mean they are less likely to undertake experimental or new pedagogical practices through lack of time, support or confidence to do so, even if they are trying to engage with continued professional learning (Murray, 2021). This is further supported by a quote in section 7.5; 'The longer you're a teacher, the less you're in touch with the creative community of being a freelance photographer', drawing a direct connection between the experience you are gaining in teaching directly with influencing maintaining a creative practice outside of education.

Inherited curricula

Both specialist and non-specialist teachers in photography commented on the obstacles that inheriting a photography curriculum posed, an example being found in 5.2.1, [teachers] just do regurgitating like the same pretty white male examples of photography. You know, we need to photograph these mechanical bits. That is interesting to them, but not the kids'. Photographing 'mechanical bits' refers to photographing a preconceived still life setup, usually planned and organised by the teacher. A colloquial term for this type of photography education is 'tabletop photography' (SquareShot, 2024, para.2) and usually stems from a lack of photographic facilities in a school setting, or a reliance on commercial photography styles. This is further reflected in the quote about teacher-led pedagogy removing student participation in cognitive skills:'...tabletop still life, or the tabletop set up. So it's been given to them. So they haven't had that kind of thought process'. However, this style of pedagogy can prove efficient for teachers who are maintaining a level of professional accountability whilst ensuring students are meeting their academic targets, reflected in this quote from section 7.2:

> I think it's like, well, I can bring in all this stuff and put it in front of you. You can do a photoshoot for everything. And you can get loads of pictures in one lesson that we can, then that fits in my timetable of like my plan for you to move on to the editing and to learn that process.

Alternatively, the choice making of pedagogy in photography may be influenced by the cohort of students and the teacher's experience in being able to get the most of their engagement, which is found to be related to motivating teacher behaviours, rather than restrictive curricula (Cents-Boonstra et al., 2020). A teacher participant discussed a previous role where behavioural issues were prevalent in their class, so when

speaking of teacher ownership of the lessons, it was described as 'Yeah everything was boom, boom, boom, do this. And it was like, sort of militant'.

An inherited curriculum can also be part of a teacher's 'educational biography' that they bring to their teaching practice unwittingly (Irwin and O'Donoghue, 2012, p.106). This inherited curriculum may include photographer references that are textual only, meaning it is not always clear whether one is employing a diverse and inclusive mix of practitioners for students to engage with, and as part of an Anti-Racist curriculum (NSEAD, 2023, para.1). This may be a learned curriculum as suggested in the quote from section 7.2: 'Before, I wanted everyone to do British documentary style… whereas I'm like, actually, is that the best thing for the student? And it's not always'. This quote demonstrates an alignment with a specialist photography teacher's own personal preference of style and genre in the subject. The quote shows a sense of teachers *becoming* critical of the practice and broadening their opinion on what is more suited to the learners. Being able to interrogate existing curricula and possessing an in-depth knowledge of practitioners in photography, may be a skill that a teacher with a photographic disciplinary background may be able to bring to the interrogation and criticality of the pedagogy and curriculum choice making (Tran and Reid O'Connor, 2023). A non-specialist teacher participant commented on the lack of confidence they had when it came to recommending photography practitioners, comparing themselves to a specialist photography teacher: 'The other thing I worry about is I don't have this, like a repertoire of you could look at this person. Yeah name dropping all these people.' Furthermore, feeling unequipped for a subject may impact on a teacher's overall wellbeing, and therefore their morale in teaching as a whole, as found by Toropova et al. (2020), and illuminated in this quote in which a teacher candidly shares their concerns about failing their students: 'When I've got things mixed up… but I like worry if I'm telling the right thing… little technical things… am I failing you? Technically? So that's when I feel a bit limited.'

Default pedagogies

One obstacle of an inherited curriculum may be the reliance on default pedagogies (Thomson et al., 2009) in photography education, as highlighted in the quote below, commenting on the repetitive content. Accountability measures and lack of time raise a requirement for teachers to be efficient in their pedagogy and curriculum choices, and a lack of specific knowledge in an area may lead to an over reliance on pedagogical methods that work well, as leaving space for creative freedom may reveal a gap in what the teacher knows, leading to anxiety around being competent (Tran and Reid O'Connor, 2023).

> Essentially like similar format to lots of curricula where it's like artist research complete, copy the artist… nowhere in her, like, plan for the students was any personal response time. So…her way of getting achievable passes was look at the research, reflect on the research, copy it. If it isn't good

enough, copy it again. And that's it. Next artist. Do that again, four times. That's the coursework (informal discussion with Duncan, 2023).

In addition to this, another teacher describes having to 'mix up' their pedagogical choices due to students making comparisons between the repetitive nature of the work and 'the same sort of education they do in English or geography', saying 'are we doing this again?'. Interpreting this quote in another way, it implies that the student intrinsically expects a different type of learning in photography, differing to that of more traditional academic subjects. This could be linked to Thomson and Hall (2021) finding a creative classroom, pedagogy and curriculum having a different feel, and perhaps holding a different value in their overall view of education.

Like the rhizome, the teacher's disciplinary background has no start or end

Like the rhizome, the teacher's disciplinary background has no start or end. It cannot be traced, and it is continually developing as a fluid and malleable entity. Whether the teacher is trained in photography or not, there is little to no control to be had over all other influences on the minute of a lived life and how these ebb and flow into the fabric of how photography education is taught. To consider the disciplinary background of teachers as rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980) it must meet the six considerations that were introduced in section 3.4. The teacher makes connections with their own disciplinary background and the pedagogical choice making (section 7.2), but also with the student groups, learning environment, and wider tangible and intangible aspects of education structures (sections 7.8, 7.9, 7.10). It can be heterogeneous, made up of multiple parts that work together in complex and often subconscious ways. The third consideration asks for the disciplinary background of the teacher to evolve into different intensities. This is pertinent in the research, as some elements of teachers' own learning are more impactful than others on their chosen pedagogies and curricula, due to their lasting influence or wider importance at any given time. An example of this in the findings is my own reliance on the photographers I was first introduced to during A Level study (section 1.5). For a long time, these photographers had a much greater influence on my own teaching practice than any other learning I had experienced since. Over time, I have learned to give more intensity and space to a more diverse range of photographers who are relevant to student interest, meaning the intensities are in a constant state of flux.

The disciplinary background of the teacher cannot be replicated. All elements exist as a body without organs (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) when considering them at face value; governmental policy, teacher qualification, or student socio-economic makeup for example, but once you apply the 'organs' to flesh the 'body' out, or the discrete subjects, priorities and capabilities (Brooke et al., 2024, p.1) such as the political party and policies in play at that one time, or the university and year that the teacher attended, or the fact that the student population were all part of the Covid-19 pandemic, the combination becomes impossible to

replicate, and therefore incapable of resolving itself, or being able to be traced directly from point to point. However, without the 'flesh' of the organs, the disciplinary background could be transferred. If combinations of disciplinary understandings and pedagogical choices were perceived as successful against whichever criteria it is being measured, they could, in theory, be transferred or used more widely in, besides and beyond, photography education.

Making space for the death of the author

I am fond of a quote that I return to often in my own writing outside of doctoral research, which describes the use of photographic theory in education as the 'endless drawing up of rules for a game that is never played' (Bates, 2018 p.195). The quote feels relevant here due to the idea that educational structures are consistently being written, rewritten and changed with the intention of shaping education for the better each time, often by people who are not directly involved with the student-facing relationship in a classroom. The space between the theory of doing this and practice of it in reality is vast, and as discussed in sections 2.2 and 4.1, the intentions that are embedded in such models are left through the *death* of the author (Barthes, 1971) as the teachers and students experiencing the reality are the ones in fact who react to, and shape them (section 3.5). The changes to the structures (whether institutional or governmental) happen within the space between construction and delivery, and are intangible, unable to be accurately mapped. Like rhizomes (and collage), the impact of these intangible aspects does not have identifiable beginnings and endings, but rather just 'middles'. Without the movement that the death of the author allows for, photography education would be a strict and immovable practice that would not encourage differentiation or any iterations (Butler-Kisber, 2018).

8.2: Research focus 2: How does the learning environment affect pedagogy and curriculum resources in teaching photography?

Increased student and teacher engagement through playfulness in (and out) of the learning environment

Moving outside of the classroom contributes to students being inspired and engaging in different ways of learning (Behrendt and Machtmes, 2017). Whilst discussing what more photography education could give them, a student commented on the desire to be able to travel and explore different places (section 7.6). As part of the findings, a written account of a school trip demonstrated the changes in pedagogies and engagement whilst on a school trip to London. Students who attended the trip were engaged with the making of their learning resource in their normal teaching classroom prior to their departure. Here, they witnessed their photography teachers moving between roles of artist, researcher and teacher, showing higher levels of engagement through the asking of questions (section 7.8) and subsequent participation in the activities. As

the school trip also included students from other disciplines, the resource was specifically designed to be open to interpretation and student led. Using collage methods in the resources assisted in providing new meaning through juxtapositions of familiar classroom instruction such as instructional language such as - *task* (Fan, 2022) with colourful pieces of other paper ephemera, maps and textual information. The *Tatebook* was constructed playfully, with bright colours, invitational language, shapes designed to ignite the imagination of students (section 7.8). *Tatebook* was used over the course of six hours on the trip, rather than a set one-hour lesson, disrupting the pedagogy further by breaking time boundaries that exist in school. The resource was also tactile, and not kept digitally, meaning it took on the role of an object that students had to take care of, transport and physically engage with.

Keeping a personal journal/sketchbook as part of the research encouraged a continued playful practice and allowed for the space to engage with everyday instances (section 7.11). Keeping a sketchbook has long been a practice of a student studying a creative subject (section 6.3, 7.11). Carrying out this practice as a teacher gave me the opportunity to reflect on the processes and observations that became pertinent and therefore brought my own practice closer to that of the students. Allowing for the visible vulnerability and personality can help in building rapport and trust with students in the learning environment, as found in the discussion with students found in sections 4.1 and 7.5. Creative risk taking, or playful pedagogies, feel more accessible after a period of continued engagement with creative practices outside of the classroom.

Notably, being able to produce pedagogies of an experimental nature demands a knowledge of photography and its wider application into abstract terms and tasks, meaning this may be something that teachers with a disciplinary background in photography could access more easily when making subject specific resources, or a collaboration between multidisciplinary teachers as suggested in the previous section. More generally, these collaborative and non-hierarchical interconnectivities can be utilised to influence ecological thinking in wider education in a way that could be 'professionally supportive and sustaining' (Brooke et al., 2024 p.12).

Reimagined spaces

Playfulness and creativity share similarities, and this is demonstrated through the reimagining the meaning of a whiteboard in section 7.10. The adaptation of what is considered a standard teaching space demonstrates the disruption of orderly spaces, which in turn can open parts of the mind that seek novelty, imagination and curiosity (Vohs et al., 2013). The term 'learning environment' evokes ideas of a border around the learning, a threshold that is crossed metaphorically when entering a space. A whiteboard is like this, and as mentioned below with the example of the table, it may be considered through a deconstruction of intended meaning, as its own learning environment. If the whiteboard was considered a frame, rather than a whiteboard, its contents would need to be filled. Putting work, photos and other documents onto a whiteboard makes it feel as if it is being utilised in a way that is not intended, when in fact, it is empty white

plastic. Treating this as a working live collage of sorts engages students in a creative process that is separated from the production of curriculum led outcomes and could evoke feelings of belonging and community in the photography classroom, or of a 'sanctuary' as Thomson and Hall (2019) stated. However, the use of the whiteboard in this playful manner suggests that it is not required for more formal teaching practices. The data in 7.10, image 11 shows a teacher with a background that is not in photography using the whiteboard for a more traditional structured lesson, with aims and objectives listed for students to engage with.

Breaking down the meaning of what we see as elements of environments opens opportunities for 'infinite substitutions' (St. Pierre, 2024, p.6) like the processes found in play. Secondary school structures have been found to be an opposing environment for educational playfulness (Huzinga, 2014), so the breaking down of formalities that contribute to this may open opportunities for curiosity, joy and meaning (Mardell et al., 2019). These traits are identified in students being immersed in what Czikszentmihalyi (1996) describes as the creative flow process, likened to play, which may be influenced by the playful learning environment surrounding them and the unlocking of potential creative traits (Sullivan, 2010).

Collaborative spaces

Having an open space that does not have a set purpose, such as the table that sits in the main photography classroom, can encourage collaboration, activating different mindsets without having to deal with an ordered and tidied space. Work that was undertaken on the middle table began to feel invitational, with students often observing practices, approaching, or joining in with activities, as was found with the formation of the *Tatebook* (7.8). Invitational creative practices such as this can impact the way in which meaning of existing roles in a learning environment may be considered, with a teacher/student binary being disrupted, working alongside one another towards the same goal; creating learning resources. The empowerment of doing so may be demonstrative of a student *becoming* engaged. The fluidity of movement between the teacher *becoming* artist in this role allows strength in combining their multifaceted roles in an a/r/tographic fashion (Irwin, 2006). Doing so brings the creative inquiry and often unseen process of making learning resources more to the fore, in the space with the people who are going to undertake them. This co-construction of knowledge between teacher/student maintains movement in the learning process (Hoffman-Kipp, 2008) with shifting identity constantly folding, unfolding and refolding (Strom and Martin, 2017) and 'making visible' the work of pedagogy by doing so (Irwin and O'Donoghue, 2012, p.106). The learned understanding here is that teachers prepare, plan and deliver photography education to students who may passively or actively engage in producing work as a result. Having a part in the pedagogical design of lessons, resources and delivery may raise engagement.

Teachers who explicitly comment on their values and pedagogical choices allow the room for students to do the same in their learning experience and offer a safe space for them to discuss their 'moments of struggle' (Ellis and Buchner, 2000, p.774). Furthermore, in sections 6.6 and 7.10, it was highlighted in the photographic data that during observation of lessons, teachers and students would discuss work and feedback using this middle table, without being prompted to do so. Metaphorically, the middle table in this learning environment may represent a liminal space in this photography education learning environment. The space shifts in meaning, usage and need, sometimes being utilised as a makeshift workspace for writing on (6.6), an exhibition space (7.10), collaboration space (7.8), and a place where social rest is taken (8.1). The middle table produces multiplicities (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980) of use depending on who is using it, who is occupying the room, and what activity is taking place. Looking through Derrida's (1985) meaning of 'language lens', it begins to make me think of whether this table could be considered a learning environment of its own, holding different values to the traditional idea of a classroom.

Safe spaces

Photography is a subject that deals with wider societal themes (Thomson and Maloy, 2022) that impact on the everyday wellbeing of young people. It is a communicative tool, and students are often encouraged to explore personal narrative in their work, if it is of interest to them (Göttert et al., 2023). It has been suggested that this type of safe space increases maturity in students in comparison to other subjects (section 7.5) An example of this from the data is that a student commented on the theme of femininity in their work (section 7.5), before displaying ownership through the ability to explore it in their photography work ('I can do what I want with it, I'm in control of it, and nobody else'). In contrast to this, the same student expressed a belief surrounding the inability to mention female taboos in public. It is interesting to note the subconscious difference between 'publicly' and then feeling able to explore it in photography, presenting a created safe space in the learning environment where the taboo subject was allowed, and the student felt in control. In discussion about similar themes, students were confident in discussing their thoughts on celebrity image editing (section 7.5) before moving into a conversation about distorted body image that has been observed on social media (section 7.5).

Photography has instigated these conversations surrounding women's health and body image, allowing safe creative spaces for students to explore wider societal themes may impact positively on their wellbeing, Chemi (2017) found. Engaging in arts-based activities such as photography can encourage students to talk about sensitive and complex topics, Tinner (2024) found, and in turn, helps alleviate symptoms of some mental health issues (Stevens and Spears, 2009).

Drawing on section 7.9, teachers and students were removed from their usual photography learning environment due to an incident in the building. It was noted during this period how little colleagues in the department saw of one another, and how students spoke of missing being able to be in the department

outside of timetabled lessons, affecting the wellbeing of both staff and students. Although the learning environment had changed, it was quickly adapted into an art space, with creative imagery pinned up and art materials in temporary homes. Some of the teacher participants likened this to learning through the Covid-19 pandemic, when the learning environment was different for each student, and often crossing continents (section 7.4). A supportive and positive learning environment was created when teachers felt comfortable to collaborate with one another and work effectively in interjoining rooms (section 7.3). This safe space may lead to confidence in taking creative or experimental pedagogical approaches.

Students felt comfortable in their environment, so much so that they felt able to interrupt meetings and research discussions on a few occasions (section 5.4), treating the space as their own 'sanctuary' (Thomson and Hall, 2019). The incident that meant we moved buildings identified the fact the students used the photography classrooms as much more than a learning space, as they lost their space for break, lunchtime and after school sessions (section 7.9). The interconnecting doors of the photography classrooms creates a feeling of collaboration, community, and an invitation to be curious about what others are working on. This free roam style setup is often encouraged and seen in nursery and preschool settings, where play is encouraged, and independence sought. Having collaborative spaces, such as a whiteboard that takes on multiple uses, can give students and staff an opportunity for discussion, contribution and celebration within the environment (sections 7.3, 7.9, 7.10).

8.3: Collage conceptualisations

Linking back to a previous section on authorship (section 3.5) following Barthes (1967), the birth of the following collages as a bridging moment in research may act as the starting point of interpretation for the reader, and therefore the beginning of the death of my own role as the author of the work. The collages act as an interpretation and conceptualisation, and 'provide broader, deeper understandings into the questions of meaning' (Sameshima, 2009, p.48) as an artist, researcher and teacher.

The first and second collages (figures 41-43) pay homage to a photography education as a whole, and the teachers and students of all disciplinary backgrounds who bring their wealth of background and experience to the teaching of photography in schools. I chose imagery of cake as the ingredients are changeable, fluid and a variety of different textures, flavours and combinations. Aesthetically pleasing colours represent a playfulness, whilst the hand is supporting a group of students sitting underneath a botanical glass house. I have chosen a diagram of an analogue camera without its external casing to provide a metaphor for the inner workings of education, research, and the vulnerability that taking pedagogical, creative and educational risks can result in. The roof of the glasshouse is fed through the shutter button of the camera, to mark the rich interwoven nature of photography education. The image of the students is taken from a charity shop book from the late 1980s/early 1990s, a subtle nod to the ACE literature of the 1990s (section 2.2), and the work from Newbury (1996) that formed a substantial foundation, that this research leaned towards when trying to understand the field of photography education. The act of making this collage represents my own role in it, bringing my own collage signature style to the 'overlapping visual worlds' (Pink 2021, p.90) of those who dedicate their teaching careers in whole or in part, to the assemblage of photography education.

In figure 41, an interconnecting set of images with no set start or beginning overlap one another. The photographs are taken from photography 'how to' books bought from a charity shop. These images represent a different type of photography education, one of self-teaching and one that existed only in book, magazine or pamphlet format, rather than the instantaneous access to online videos found today. Instructional diagrams demonstrate the development of photographs in a darkroom, a home DIY manual, and a plant propagation book. The crossing of environments between home/education represents the many roles that are undertaken when embodying the role of a teacher or student, and the multiple influences that shape the day-to-day events and experiences. The mixture of natural and manmade objects may serve as a marker of the rhizomatic nature explored in the research, and the nurture and nourishment needed in both pursuits, however different they may seem.

The third collage (figure 43) represents the future of photography education, and how when the existing structure is questioned, decentred and dismantled, new understandings, ruptures or tracings can be explored to further the subject, the research and the field. The development of colour photography is complex and

requires each of the three core colours to be developed individually. If this colour balance is not achieved, then one colour will feature more heavily than the others. I included the separated colour image in the top right-hand side to represent the ways in which photography can impact on a student's life in differing intensities.

Figure 41: Cake/collage: teaching/learning (2025). Author's own

Figure 42: Many hands make light work (2025). Author's own

Figure 43: Photography today/tomorrow/forever. (2025). Author's own

Chapter Nine: Outcomes

Chapter Introduction

The following section addresses the first research question (what is the impact of disciplinary understandings of teachers and chosen pedagogies on photography education?) in three key areas; collective interdisciplinarity, collaborative a/r/tography, and the micro/macro factors that impact both concepts. As an interim conclusion, teacher disciplinary backgrounds are philosophised through rhizomatic theory. The micro/macro factors that impact on collective interdisciplinarity and collaborative a/r/tography are conceptualised into a version of Webb's (2009) micro/macro impact model, adapted to reflect the findings and to be applicable to photography education more widely. The rationale behind the presented model is articulated using research findings, situating it in the context of the study.

I turn then to the second research question (how does the learning environment affect teaching and learning in photography?) through two intrinsically linked areas; the effects of changing learning environments, and the way that the learning environment is a fluid element of the assemblage. The findings presented here are responded to through the development of a learning resource that can be utilised in the shifting learning environment, and in a collective interdisciplinary model of photography education. The final chapter, Chapter Eight, follows, illuminating the contributions to methodology, literature and practice and the significance of the thesis to the field of photography education. The recommendations for further study are presented through a rhizomatic diagram of the research as an endpoint to the work.

9.1: Research focus 1: What is the impact of disciplinary understandings of teachers and chosen pedagogies on photography education?

Collective interdisciplinarity

The rich, mixed disciplinary backgrounds of teachers in photography have been found to positively impact education of the subject (sections 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.10), as they allow multiple rhizomatic entry and exit points to the chosen pedagogies and curriculum through the wide variety of skills and knowledge. Breadth and depth of teaching skills allow teachers to be confident in their own ability (Shulman, 1986). It has been found that students also contribute through their own world view (sections 7.4, 7.5) and their willingness to take ownership of their learning (section 7.2). The combination of cross-generational knowledge and mixed disciplinary backgrounds create a safe space for both teachers and students to take creative risks when working comfortably alongside one another (section 7.3). The multimodal approach to the research has allowed the space to reveal these understandings through the patchwork ethnography (Cardoza et al., 2021) of everyday experiences. To simplify these findings, I now use the term 'collective interdisciplinarity'.

Approaching the research through a period of generating foregrounding knowledge in thematic analysis revealed four key themes: *Creativity and Expression*, *Collaboration and Community*, *Identity and Belonging*, and *Adaptation and Response*. These themes summarise the areas of informal discussions that highlighted the collective interdisciplinarity with teachers and students within the research setting (section 7.1-7.5). Autoethnographic writing as method worked in liminal spaces between periods of research generation (section 6.3, 7.11), and meant I was able to 'dwell in the cracks' (Schultz, 2017, p.509) of data generation to realise that discipline specificity was not directly a large influence on the day-to-day photography education pedagogies and curriculum, but part of a wider, fluid combination of tangible (section 3.2, 4.1, 5.6, 7.3) and intangible aspects (section 4.2, 6.4, 7.10, 7.11).

The research was premised on my own observations of the subject being taught by those with non-photography backgrounds, in direct contrast to those who were trained with specialist backgrounds, like me. Through periods of reflection in autoethnographic writing (section 6.4 and the 12 vignettes in appendix B-M), it appears that I had a subconscious presumption of the disciplinary background being a fixed entity. The teacher's disciplinary background is described as rhizomatic, constantly evolving and influenced by multiple, often unconscious factors, being only one part of the collective interdisciplinarity. It can shape their pedagogical choices, but these change over time based on personal experiences, student interests and behaviours, the value of photography at an institutional and governmental level, the teaching community around them, and their own engagement with the subject (section 7.3). The following section summarises the idea of collaborative a/r/tography, a factor which contributes directly to the ongoing fluidity of collective interdisciplinarity in photography education.

Collaborative a/r/tography

I have discussed the multiple roles that I have embodied during this research and the subsequent impact this has had on my own teaching practice (sections 1.5, 3.4, 4.1, 3.5, 7.11), my own personal circumstances (sections prologue, 1.5, 3.5, 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 7.11), and the research itself (section 6.4). In common with the realisation in the previous section, it was through a period of data reflection and revisiting that it became clear the roles of a/r/tography were not in fact unique and restricted to me but included those who are involved in photography education more widely (section 4.2, 5.4, 7.3). Teachers and students were passively (and sometimes actively, section 7.8) taking on these roles as part of a co-construction that fostered engagement and creativity in curriculum, pedagogies and outcomes in photography education.

The dynamics of teaching and learning photography through an a/r/tographic model encourages collaboration. Teachers and students were found to work side by side (section 7.8), sharing roles and influencing each other's practices (section 7.8, 7.10, 7.11), taking on roles of artist, researcher and teacher interchangeably and often without clear distinction (section 7.10). Those working in photography often draw from each other's expertise through inherited curricula (section 3.5, 4.3, 7.3, 7.5, 8.1), colleagues in proximity

(section 7.3) or wider influences (section 7.8, 7.11). Positive teacher-student relationships are nurtured through flexible pedagogies, in learning environments that are considered safe and trusted by those who inhabit them (section 4.3). Teachers' continued engagement in artistic practices was found to influence the chosen pedagogies and curricula (section 4.3) and meant that playful and experimental pedagogies were accessible as part of a collaborative a/r/tography model. The following section outlines the barriers that affect both collective interdisciplinarity and collaborative a/r/tography in photography education.

9.2: Micro/macro environments of photography education

Both collective interdisciplinarity and collaborative a/r/tography are impacted by wider micro and macro factors in photography education. I have visually represented these factors through the collage in figure 44 below, and the following section utilises the research findings to provide a rationale for its conceptualisation. It is a reimagined version of Webb's (2009) model demonstrating micro and macro environments that affect education (section 2.3). My version of the model was created in response to both research focus areas to illuminate and shape the understanding that has been generated because of the multimodal findings. In line with assemblage theory (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980), the reimagined model allows for agency to be given to the 'wholes and parts' (Walker, 2015, p.195) of what can be considered the 'molar', or larger, more visible, aspects of photography education (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). Making it helped me, as a researcher, understand the wider aspects of the assemblage that were influencing photography education, and the experiences of the teachers and students, and helped form a key tracing between the research findings. Assemblages without some organisation are at risk of being viewed as 'an ever growing heap of fragments' (Buchanan, 2021, p.119). Positioning the molar aspects of the assemblage into the reimagined, malleable model below provides the organisation, without instruction or explicit order.

Despite appearing as a top down, hierarchical model with culture/climate in the centre and governmental influence at the very top, the model can in fact be viewed as rhizomatic. The pieces of paper are not equal in sizing or distribution. They do not appear fixed, they overlap, they stray off the page. Some edges of the pages are ripped, and some straight. The shapes might move, separate, be treated individually, change shape and remain unfixed, depending on the socio-political climate of individual schools, government, or needs of industry in photography education.

Pedagogy and Curriculum

The findings highlight that one of the most significant (and most immediate) factors in photography education is the pedagogy and curriculum used. A playful, collaborative, and open-ended approach, like the *Tatebook* project (section 7.8, 8.2), fosters student confidence and engagement. Positive teacher-student relationships further enhance this experience, as demonstrated by the photograph in section 5.7. In contrast, inherited curricula, often developed by non-specialist teachers, tend to be more conventional, 'safe' and academically focused, as seen in the '9 days' board comparison in section 7.10. These teachers are building their own knowledge while adhering to institutional accountability measures, which can sometimes limit experimental creativity and playfulness. Pedagogical choices can be shaped through the disciplinary understandings of a teacher (section 4.1), which in turn can be constantly moulded through student interaction (section 6.4, 7.3, 7.7, 8.1), further training, personal circumstance and wider intervention (Hoffman-Kipp, 2008).

Teacher identity (disciplinary background)

Teachers with non-specialist backgrounds (despite being part of other creative disciplines, such as design technology, fashion or art) are more likely to use an inherited curriculum or base theirs largely on assessment needs or borrow from their subject specialist areas, as demonstrated in sections 7.2 and 8.1. This in turn influences the photographic skills and concepts being taught in an interdisciplinary manner. The dynamic role of a teacher, made up of their experiences, learnings and values (Bullough, 2005) is constantly evolving, as is their disciplinary background, as found in the research (sections 7.2, 8.1). Teachers who actively take on multiple roles in the classroom, as artist, researcher, teacher or practitioner, will more likely be invested in the pedagogies and curriculum development. Teachers who have identified key experiences in their own educational background, or their 'educational biography' (Irwin and O'Donoghue, 2012, p.106), especially if they have overcome obstacles (sections 4.1, 8.1), barriers or sought value in creativity (section 7.5, 8.1), are also likely to possess confidence in adopting a progressive photography pedagogy and curriculum, as their reasons for being in the profession is influenced in this past experience.

School environment

As the environments begin to widen to an institutional level, the school environment is particularly driven by academic results; this may affect the chosen pedagogies and curriculum, leading to a more 'performance-based' model rather than a 'competence' model, as demonstrated by Bernstein (2000). Physical environment affects how students will receive the photography curriculum and pedagogies chosen by the teacher. This is demonstrated in the continued collaborative use of the middle glass tables in the photography classroom, for group work, individual work, class discussion and mind map making (section 6.1, 7.10, 8.1). Students feeling comfortable and safe in their surroundings encouraged a safe space to engage with collaborative pedagogical practices (section 7.10, 8.1). In contrast to this, out of the classroom environment, it was

evidenced that resources such as the *Tatebook* and working in London provided further opportunities to learn in different ways, and across different focuses and disciplines (sections 4.3, 7.8, 8.1, 8.2).

Student demand

Student demand refers to the overall need for the subject within a school curriculum. This is applicable to the research setting, as it is an independent school where the numbers can fluctuate more than state-controlled schools year on year (section 5.6). Should a student population not wish to study photography, it would no longer be included in the curriculum. The value that students hold in the subjects is illustrated in section 7.2. Their comments about its wider application in their lives may be intrinsically linked to the value they hold in the subject in their curriculum offering. An added pressure of maintaining a subject can add to the accountability pressures which teachers in photography feel, meaning they may move away from repetitive or more conventional pedagogies for fear of losing student engagement and motivation (section 2.2).

Creative industries

In the research setting, which has a predominantly international student body, many students prioritize subjects like business, marketing, maths, and science, aiming for careers in management, law, or medicine. These fields, seen as more prestigious, shape the curriculum focus, as highlighted in section 4.3 with Wren School's English baccalaureate model, which emphasises conventional academic subjects over the more holistic approach of Starling School.

Photography is often viewed as an accessible subject, attracting students who may be underperforming in other subjects (section 7.4). Teachers felt out of touch with the creative industries because of their employment in teaching (section 7.5), and felt the subject was inherently undervalued at a governmental level (sections 2.2, 7.6, 7.4, 8.2). As a result, the influence of the creative industries on photography education in the research setting is minimal, although it does play a larger role across the discipline. The creative sector has faced challenges post-Covid-19, with job cuts and diminishing confidence in its future (section 2.2, 7.6, 7.4, 8.2).

Problems (and subsequent opportunities) with value

The language that surrounds the value of arts is often negative, even when supporters are reporting on it from a perplexed and fraught point of view, such as 'local arts funding remains in crisis, and implied cuts to public spending could be disastrous' (Campaign for the Arts, 2024), and 'We're barely hanging on' (Thorpe, The Observer, 2024). The *Augar Review* (a review of post-18 education and funding, 2019) set out its suggestions to cut 'low value' degrees following which students were not earning a 'premium' wage in the five years after graduation. The language that is then attached to photography education is learned as 'low

value' in the eyes of the government. This belief can in turn affect the subjects students choose, enjoy, and that parents are willing to support their children in studying. It is difficult to undo this type of categorising, which in a circular fashion then puts more pressure on schools, teachers and young people. However, the research has found this is not the reality of how students perceive photography; instead they are holding it in high regard for its transferable skills (sections 2.3, 3.4, 7.2, 7.5,) and its ability to help them convey their own wider societal issues (section 7.5) and to be able to understand a vast image-rich landscape (section 2.1, 4.1-2, 7.6). Instead of reporting on its value, on its place, its worthiness, its credibility, and associating it with negative words, I suggest through the outcomes that a responsive curriculum is one that tries to facilitate the 'how can we do this?'. What aspects of this subject matter? How can we embed skills for subjects that are being negatively categorised as low value into other subjects and give support from a position that all subjects matter, not just those that are seemingly providing whatever it is the governmental, institutional or socio-political focus is at that time? To do this would be to re-engage teacher training models, higher educational models, and in turn, the beliefs of the institution and those who manage.

Teacher training often overlooks creative methods or visual skills, as they are seen as inaccessible, demonstrated here in a statement from the NSEAD manifesto: 'We need to challenge trainees' perceptions of art as an exclusive and inaccessible subject by reengaging them in dynamic artistic exploration, experimentation and play' (Holdstock, 2024, p.25). Doing so may empower teachers to use creative methods in their subjects and age groups, but may also empower them to realise that teaching, like education, should not be confined to the box it may feel it exists within. The play and experimentation may encourage collaboration and better student-teacher relationships, as this research has found (sections 7.3, 7.8, 8.1, 8.2), therefore maintaining a higher level of wellbeing for both students and teachers, whilst ensuring the curriculum and chosen pedagogy are adaptive and suit the needs of the learners. Throughout the research, photography education has fostered collaborative relationships and engagement in students.

Chapter Conclusion

Approaching photography education in a way which fosters 'this *and* that approaches rather than this *or* that' (Brooke et al., 2024) has the potential to 'disengage unhelpful binaries' (Harris, 2023) that teachers feel come because of their teacher training, leaving them without an ability to think or teach progressively. The ebb and flow of collaborative a/r/tography practices encourage teachers to harness the breadth and depth of skill available with colleagues, students and the wider industry in collective interdisciplinarity, enabling them to move between roles both personal/professional (as discussed in section 4.1, 8.1), artist/teacher, and teacher/student, (Burke, 2020).

This section has outlined two key research outcomes, the first being collective interdisciplinarity or the strengths in teachers from different backgrounds sharing knowledge to strengthen photography education,

and the second being collaborative a/r/tography, whereby teachers and students are found to engage with progressive pedagogies when taking on multiple roles in teaching and learning. A reimagined version of Webb's (2009) micro and macro environments (figure 44) was presented to illustrate the impact on both collective interdisciplinarity and collaborative a/r/tography. The following section introduces the outcomes for the second research focus area, presenting a learning outcome for photography education in response.

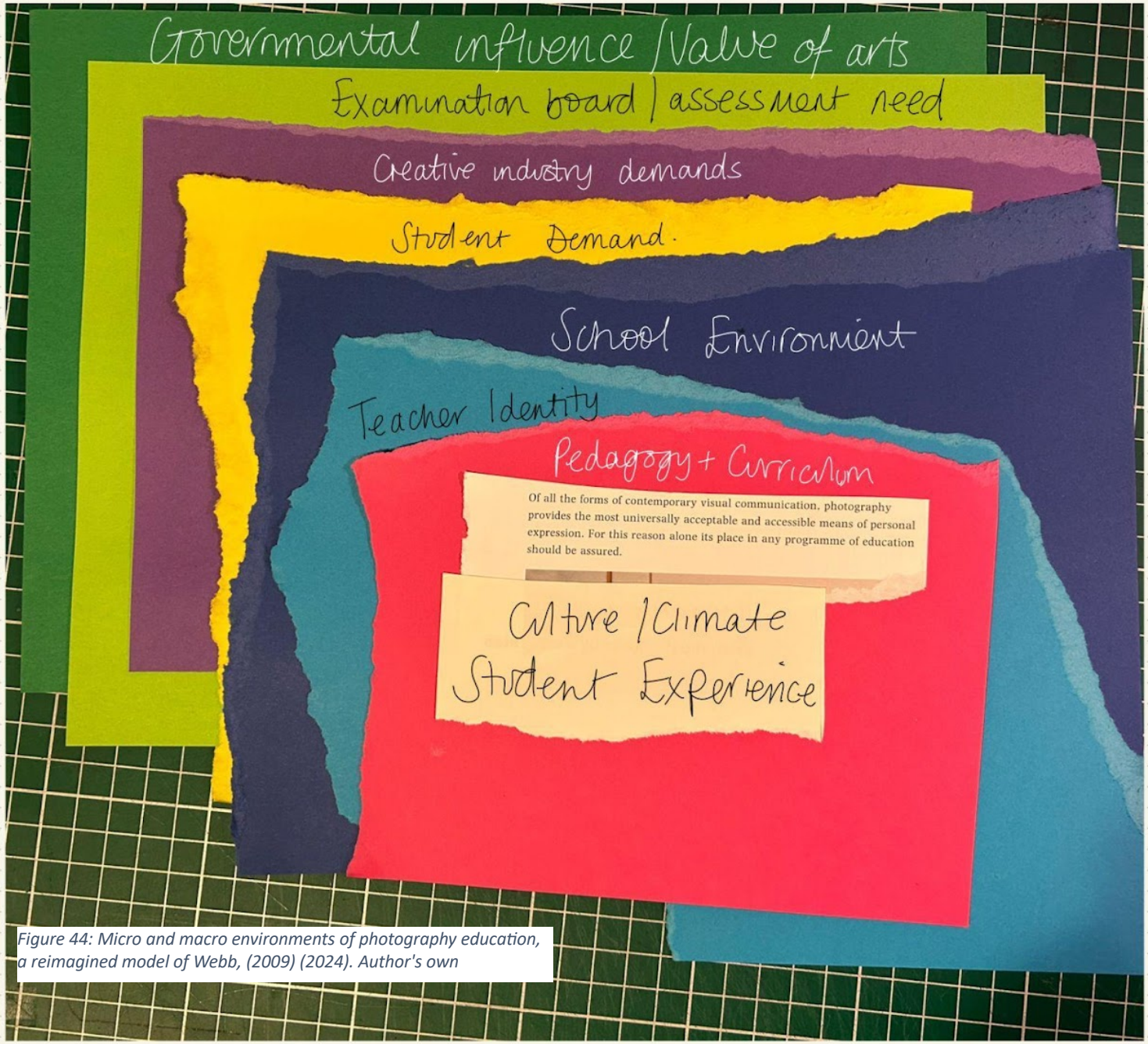


Figure 44: Micro and macro environments of photography education, a reimagined model of Webb, (2009) (2024). Author's own

9.3: Research focus 2: How does the learning environment affect pedagogy and curriculum resources in teaching photography?

The language of a learning environment evokes a classroom space (sections 1.8, 3.3, 4.2, 8.2), and this is often a default or expected area for teaching and learning activities in photography education to take place. These default values and hierarchies are socially understood in education (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980) and could be considered as an example of a world that Derrida (1973) described as 'overcoded'. It is this day-to-day routine that allows for the trust and safety needed to foster collective interdisciplinarity, and for teachers and students to occupy the spaces of different roles in a collaborative a/r/tography model (section 7.2, 8.1-ownership). This in turn influences how pedagogies and curriculum are constructed. However, the learning environment has been found in this research to be fluid, and in a constant state of flux, therefore disrupting the default values and hierarchies (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). The default values and hierarchies are already disrupted, as the classroom contains less order and structure, and more colour and clutter than a traditional academic classroom (sections 4.2, 7.10, 8.2) (Vohs et al. 2013). The research has viewed the learning environment through a poststructural lens, and has 'reinterpreted, re-stored, reinscribed' (Derrida, 1995, p.256) the default models that were considered the structure of photography education (section 4.3).

Shifts (tidal)

Within the research and period of reinterpretation, the learning environment has been found to change in size, disrupting the default value of the 'classroom'. The everyday assemblage of photography education saw shifts in what is considered the learning environment at a micro level, with the use of the whiteboard becoming a collaborative work and gallery space (sections 7.9, 8.2), the table in the centre of the room becoming multi-use (section 6.1, 7.8, 7.9, 8.2), notice boards becoming assessment tools (section 7.10), or on a more personal level, the sketchbook and notes I kept as part of the research process (section 6.4, 7.11, 8.1, vignettes 1-12). These smaller learning environments exerted their own influence on overall pedagogical and curriculum choice making in photography education at all stages of its conception and delivery, with the combinations of student and teacher involvement differing throughout.

An example of a macro learning environment would be the school trip to London referenced in section 6.3 and 7.8, shifting the default value and hierarchy of what is considered the 'normal' classroom. However, in rhizomatic fashion, the trip cannot be considered a single learning environment but made up of several different multiplicities. The trip stemmed from the desire to extend photography learning (section 7.8), and led to a recce trip where teachers were acting as researchers and engaging with photography work (their own learning environment) with the view to create pedagogies that would bridge the gap in relevant and

fruitful learning, without having the control or restraints of the day-to-day environment around them. The result of this was a collaborative resource, *Tatebook* (section 7.8), which could be considered as a micro learning environment and in which both teachers and students have interacted (section 7.8 and 8.2). The research has surmised that learning environments are changeable and fluid, rather than bound by barriers or learned understanding and default perceptions of what a learning environment is.

The micro and macro learning environments here are based around 'process-based experiences', a model that NSEAD (2014) used to describe art and design curricula. The similarities drawn here give further strength to the positive consequences of collective interdisciplinarity to encourage the development and experimentation with what can be considered an environment where learning can take place on many levels for students, teachers, or a combination of both.

Liminal spaces impact on the development of and inspiration for pedagogies and curricula. Sections 7.11 and 8.2 demonstrates the time spent engaged in creative practices when seeing exhibitions, and through the keeping of a sketchbook. Spaces that are bound by time and not physicality, such as the time between the teacher being a student themselves (sections 7.11), or the school holidays (section 7.11, 8.2), experiencing the banalities of life (section 7.11), or time spent reflecting on the research process (section 6.1, 6.3, 8.1, 10.2), are all considered learning environments. These liminal spaces contribute to the wider 'expression' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) of how the photography education assemblage is organised, expressed and held together, all the while remaining in a constant state of flux. Using writing as method (section 6.4) to conceptualise, understand and make sense of the research, and subsequently interjecting these writings as vignettes in the thesis (section 6.4, 8.1, 8.2), are viewed as liminal spaces, and the learning environment for me as a nascent researcher.

The progressive and creative pedagogies that are a result of the shifting learning environment could be a reaction to the reliance on replicated and inherited pedagogies and curricula in photography education (section 2.3, 4.3, 7.2, 7.5, 8.1). As Benjamin (1986) describes, the replication of a subject can cause it to lose its aura. Expanding this notion widely, it suggests that those involved in photography education may lose their spark or continued interest in the subject. The shift and reconsideration of micro and macro learning environments gives the chosen pedagogy, idea or concept (- or *content* - (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) a new purpose, viewpoint or lens through which the teachers and students can reignite their curiosity or passion for the subject or desire, to use the term adopted by Deleuze and Guattari, (1987), noted in section 3.2). The phenomena at play here could be considered a new aura for the pedagogy, theme or topic that was previously tired, or overly replicated.

Resource development

In response to the second research focus, I have created a learning resource that can be utilised in photography education, or education more widely. The learning resource is a direct response to the playful influence of the whiteboard reuse, the playfulness of the trip resource and pedagogies, and the shift in the learning environment. It has been designed to be portable and flexible rather than bound to any thematic barriers, topic, time restraint, age range or institutional or disciplinary background. The following section contextualises the learning resource, in line with the research findings and discussion.

Decentring the structure

Poststructural research disrupts conventional meaning (Belsey, 2002). This learning resource is a reordering of learned values concerning what was considered the photography education structure, including those which I suggest are largely borrowed from an art and design model. The resource below detaches the structure, instead inviting an open endedness or 'meaning-making, critical curiosity and resilience' (Ingalls Vanada, 2017, p. 111) or disruption of what are considered the default pedagogies in photography education (Thomson et al., 2009). These skills are not limited to the discipline of photography, and not bound by academically driven outcomes, age range, or other barriers associated with the known structure of photography education. Creating the resource attempts to decentre the structure not only in theory, but also in practice (Dillet, 2017). In response to Howard-Jones et al. (2008), using creative pedagogical tools such as the one below can foster confidence in teachers, which in turn may impact on how they creatively risk-take in future planning and delivery. The sustained engagement found in section 7.8 allowed for immersion, but encouraged an extension of work that would have normally been restricted to a single lesson (Addison, 2010). The progressive and creative resource encourages 'analytic dialogue' rather than 'communicative dialogue' (Ellsworth, 1997, p.115) between students and teachers, and does require any specific disciplinary background or training to use it in any learning space.

9.4: Cutting, tearing and pasting

Drawing on the findings of the research in sections 8.1 and 8.2, the outcome of this research is a set of learning resources designed not to be student or teacher specific and to aid in the planning and development of photography lessons, or to be used by students who wish to prompt their own making. These resources, outlined in images 18-20 below are rhizomatic in nature, in that they can be used in any combination, singly, all together, individually or collaboratively, with each crossing of the different cards producing a different lesson, or piece of work, designed for co-construction or other. The designs themselves are encouraged to be open ended and read liminally, with torn edges and other details left for engagement beyond the prompts, inspired by the findings in section 7.8, 7.10 and 8.1. Their collaged design invites those using the resource to

interact with it, to layer their own instructions, or to cover up elements with a view to continually develop the resource to suit the changing need and multi-generational input of teachers and students (section 7.5, 8.1).

The textual data found in the thematic analysis have underpinned the four colour coded areas, and the prompts are based on the findings outlined in sections .2-5. These outcomes are also a consolidation of my own a/r/tographic approach to the research, as I have produced them through my own collage practice, I have developed them as a teacher and have been directly impacted by the findings of the research in doing so. The language used in the prompts is intentionally open and invitational and not linked to the assessment criteria lexicon, decentring the purpose and intention of photography education whilst maintaining creative practices and processes to still meet the needs of the qualifications where required (section 2.3, 7.2, 7.4). Using language such as 'pivot' is inspired by the research process itself, in which the flexibility of ethnography meant any unexpected occurrences could shape the research design in line with the day-to-day events (section 5.3, 7.7-9, 8.1, 8.2). Autoethnographic approaches inspired the use of 'personal narrative' and 'tell a story', supported by the findings of the informal discussions where students demonstrated that they value personal thematic choice making (section 7.2) and the storytelling of wider societal themes (section 7.4).

Impact

The collaborative learning resource could inspire and build the confidence, motivation and readiness of teachers of different disciplines approaching teaching the subject through its open-ended approach, its playfulness, and likenesses to creative processes more widely. Allowing the space for photography education in a way considered a/r/tographic, moves pedagogy closer to social practice (Irwin and O'Donoghue, 2012). More generally, these collaborative and non-hierarchical interconnectivities can be utilised to influence ecological thinking in wider education, in a way that could be 'professionally supportive and sustaining' (Brooke et al., 2024 p.12).

The chapter concludes with illustrated learning resources on the following pages. The final research outcomes have brought together complex and multilayered patchwork ethnographic methods and data in relation to the two focus areas. Firstly, *collective interdisciplinarity* was introduced, a multiplicious response to photography education which takes into consideration the positive influence that multidisciplinary backgrounds of both teachers and students bring. Collective interdisciplinarity celebrates the effect the differences and breadth of knowledge can have on the pedagogies and curriculum of photography education, whether gained in subject specialism or in teacher education and experience, and without a hierarchy of age or generational input. C*ollaborative a/r/tography* embraces the different roles that teachers and students play in the making and dissemination of photography education, with both having freedom to engage in creative processes, learn from one another and bring together interests and research to continually develop pedagogies and curriculum. The elements of the existing photography structure that may impact on both

collective interdisciplinarity and collaborative a/r/tography were then presented as a reimagined model of micro and macro environments.

Secondly, learning environments were conceptualised as shifting, malleable and different in size. Micro learning environments, such as whiteboards, tables and sketchbooks were demonstrated to be opportunities for collaboration, learning and inspiration, whereas macro ones, such as school trips or change in facilities were shown to encourage process-driven learning and spark new interest or perspective from both students and teachers engaging in the subject. The idea of a micro learning environment was then introduced in the form of a developed learning resource, designed to be used in any environment or learning space, without limits of age, subject knowledge or disciplinary background. This resource was underpinned by the four thematic areas in the findings (section 7.1-5), using methods and language that has been inspired creatively from the research findings. The following chapter concludes the thesis with the research limitations, and contributions to methodology, knowledge and practice.

Image18: Photographs of repurposed resource packaging. (2025). Author's own

Image 19: Prompt cards for 'Adaptation and Response'. (2025). Author's own

Image 20: Prompt cards for 'Collaboration and Community'. (2025). Author's own

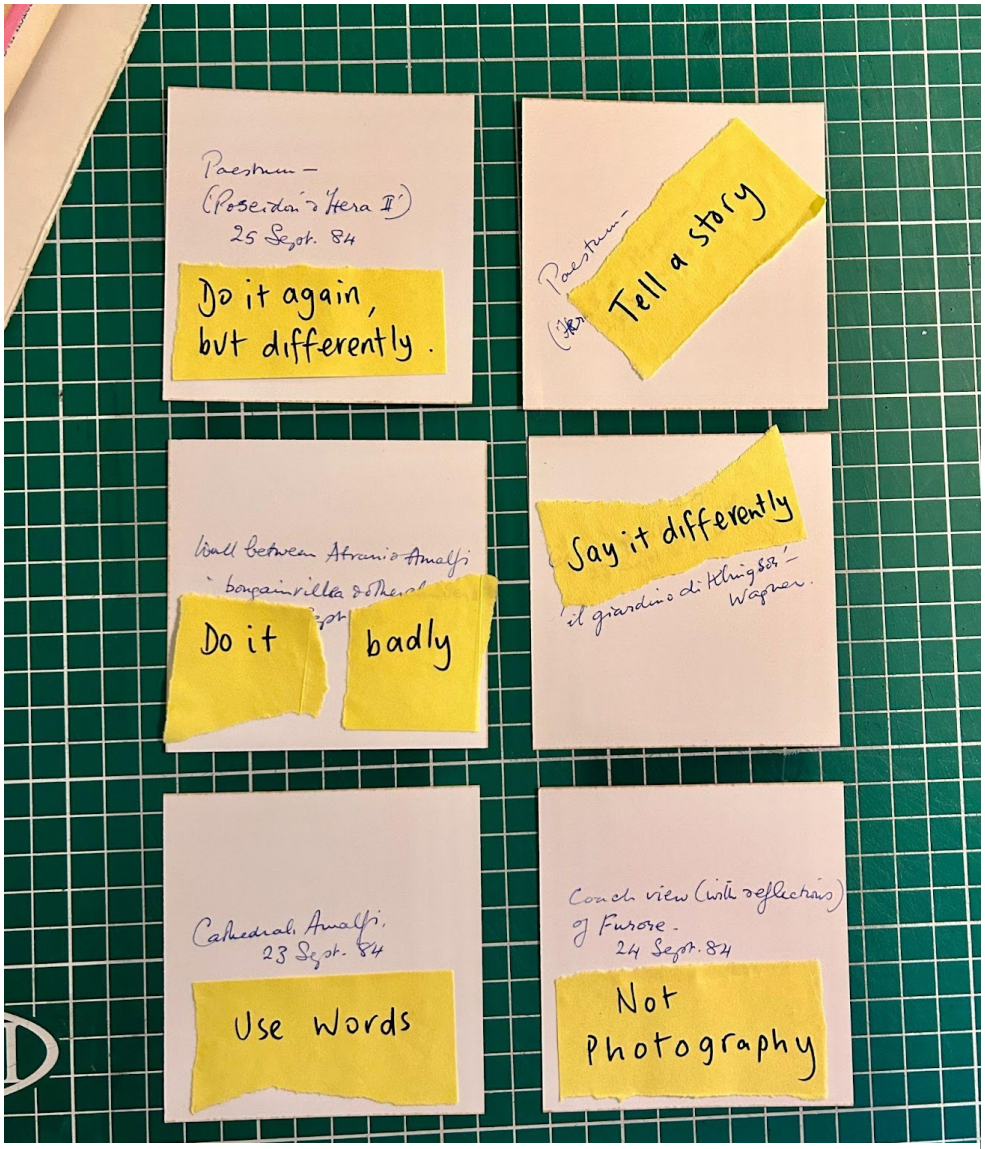


Image 21: Prompt cards for 'Creativity and Expression' (and reverse of cards). (2025). Author's own

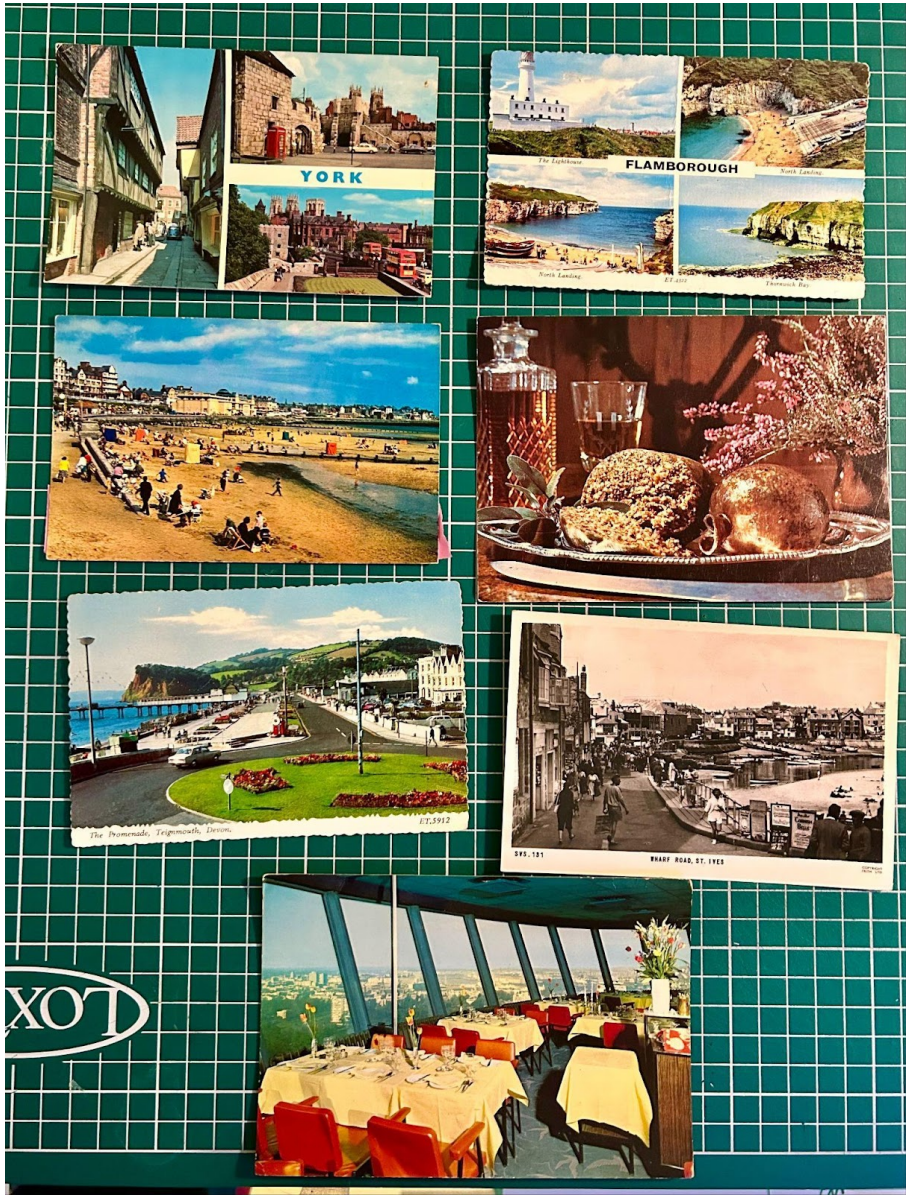


Image 22: Prompt cards for 'Identity and Belonging' (and reverse of cards). (2025). Author's own

Chapter Ten: Contributions and Conclusions

Chapter Introduction

I now present the final conclusions and the methodological, knowledge and practice contributions of the thesis. The chapter begins by addressing the limitations of the study. Then, to conclude the autoethnographic narrative of the research, I consider my own contributions to my practice as an artist, researcher and teacher. Following this, contributions to methodology, research, knowledge and practice are presented. The chapter continues with the introduction of a rhizomatic map outlining the thesis, to provide a basis for the recommendations in photography education practice and research in the future.

10.1: Research limitations

Poststructuralist studies have no clear boundaries and can be viewed as particularly subjective (St. Pierre, 2011). Sharing these characteristics with photography as a subject, means that they possess appropriate values to problematise photography education in research. This disruption to the thinking around photography education could in fact be viewed as useful, and more progressive than the encouraging, yet stagnant, body of research existing in the field currently. Using research to disrupt thinking opens up channels of new discourse, just as the unfolding of research findings uncovers new threads that have come loose from the weaving of fabric. Inclusion of such threads, and examining the ways the fabric is reassembled, is useful to observe, imagine and understand the construction and possibilities of such a complex arrangement.

The research is a small study of experiential style. This may suggest, in conventional qualitative terms, that it does not deem itself to be applicable in wider thinking. I would contest this notion, given the space, thinking and knowledge that have impacted on the development of frameworks which could be useful across multiple audiences. It has developed new empirical discourse in a field that stands stagnant and lacking in real life studies.

10.2: Contributions

As an artist:

The creative work I have made throughout the research revealed so much about ways of thinking, how I conceptualise and understand my own ideas and how much it has impacted on my pedagogy and curriculum choice and overall values. My own shaping as an artist has been formed through *lack* of understanding of how I worked, of how I ask too many questions, how I collect the microethnographies of everyday banalities. The curiosities and ‘what ifs’ in my own practice led me to pursue the research idea that ultimately became

this thesis. I relied on a visual practice to help me make sense of what was going on in the research, never realising that that was the research itself, unfolding in front of me. Having to take ownership of my own collages, to contribute to thinking, has made me feel a vulnerability about my own work, and has developed my understanding of how the students I teach feel when they approach work that takes creative risks. I have become free of hierarchy with students and my colleagues, working in a collaborative a/r/tography model, where a sense of community, and working alongside each other in a supportive environment, had the most positive impacts on photography education as a whole.

As a researcher:

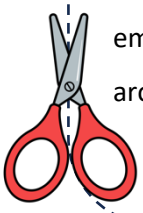
I have managed to dwell in (and fall into) the cracks (Schultz, 2017, p.509) of the research, and at times, was unable to easily find my way out. There was never an intention to include autoethnography as part of the research, as I was looking into a familiar environment, but not consciously looking at myself within it. To remain authentic to the unfolding of the ethnography, taking notice of everyday occurrences, I had to utilise my own writing to harness my own thinking. It was unwieldy, just as a rhizome is, and the map of multiplicities as a result grew faster than I had anticipated. I could not ignore my own life in the research; it was intertwined in a manner that if it was to be ignored, it would not have been truthful. My role *becoming* a researcher told me who I was as a teacher in the first place. I was making the familiar strange at the beginning, but then I realised that the familiar *was* strange, and this became the backbone of how I looked in, besides, and beyond the assemblage.

As a teacher:

Educators can embody a poststructural approach by asking questions in order to produce different outcomes, and as a result of these outcomes, develop 'different ways of living in the world' (St. Pierre and Pillow, 1999, p.1). The research has been a time of reflection and realisation for my own teaching practice. I had subconsciously held a belief that because my disciplinary background was in photography, I must have stood apart from my colleagues in some way when approaching the teaching of the subject. From the start, without knowing, I perceived a distance between those who had studied it, and those who had not. The research process has allowed the space for me to realise this, and then to interrogate it, closing the distance I had imagined as I went. I have become more aware of how my entire being becomes part of the teacher identity that I embody, and every experience can impact on my own pedagogical and curriculum choice making. When reflecting on my own journey into teaching and the part that photography study played in it, I realise that it becomes only a fragment of what can be considered a disciplinary background, alongside the hotbed of accountability, wider values, student needs and day-to-day experiences that continually mould and shape the choices made in photography education. These reflections ultimately allowed me to understand the wider assemblage of photography education from a place of privileged and experienced understanding.

Vignette Twelve: March 2025 (Appendix M) Like the rhizome, the learning environment has no start or end: Autoethnographic becomings (the final vignette)

The research was its own 'thing', I was myself, I was doing the research. The messiness and interconnectivity of this in reality was something I could not have ever anticipated (Masny, 2013). Doctoral study has been an emotional, yet enlightening rollercoaster that has nourished, warped and shaped my ideas and thinking around photography education.



Methodologically:

Studies that use mixed research methods are plentiful, as are those that consider the wider impact on pedagogy and curriculum choice making. I return to collage practice to be able to articulate the methodological contribution of the research. It is the methodological contribution where the death of my authorship is most at the forefront, allowing others to take the fragments, or peel back the scraps of paper that most fit their need. The research has encouraged the asking of questions, the pivoting and shifting of research design, and the subsequent patchwork of ethnography that resulted. This novel way of conducting research has employed mixed methods, each harnessing a different perspective; writing as method - me, thematic analysis - students and teachers, visual ethnography - the space that is being inhabited. By doing this, the resulting interconnections can be traced in different ways and for different needs.

A collage is made of paper ephemera that is to hand at the time. The process happens without prior consideration but instead is shaped by how each layer impacts the overall picture. Similarly, the research design was shaped by following the tangents that occurred throughout the data generation period of 2023-2024. This became a methodological tool that felt familiar, and like my own curiosity and thinking style that I referenced in the prologue, as being indicative of the creative process. Some aspects were more stable, and in the metaphorical lens of a collage, could be viewed as an essential background paper or card, existing to provide stability and grounding to the layers that are then put upon it. Informal discussions, and the resulting thematic analysis, became the background paper. The background paper provided an understanding for the rest of the scraps, or the unfolding of research to rest upon. Allowing the unfoldings and refoldings to happen through naturally occurring tangents in this way meant I retained my own authenticity whilst meeting the aims of the research. Each tangent was a smaller part of the bigger picture 'embedded in the perplexity of the situation…establishing the plurality of unpredictable connections' (Semetsky, 2006, p.73). When read separately, they are rich examples individually and combined together they read differently. Just as the collage was scraps of paper to start with, and comes together to make something brand new, the research can also be read this way. In rhizomatic fashion, there are multiple entry and exit points. To read it

autoethnographically will provide a different methodological understanding to that of the thematic analysis. To solely view the visual ethnography would again be different. When combined, it produces differences again, depending on the context of the reader, like a photograph (Edwards, 1992). The 'thousand little methodologies' that make up the research reflect how photography education is constructed from parts and pieces of inherited curricula, from teachers of multiple specialisms, and from students studying it for differing reasons. It changes with the technology that leads it, with trends and fashions in the digital and analogue world. Because of the number of entry and exit points in the chosen methods, at both a micro (singular method) and a macro (as an entire study) breadth of wider application, the contribution is not limited to a small readership, but to those who work in multiple disciplines, the methodological contribution being an example of the *collective interdisciplinarity* that is referenced in the outcomes (section 8.1- 8.2).

To knowledge and literature:

To present the world photographically is to attempt to ask a viewer to see the world through the eyes of the photographer, without being there to guide them. The research presented here is my version of a photograph left without its context, to see the perspective of these unique pluralities of interconnected events, with the aim for it to continually contribute to those wishing to look further into the area.

It is neither the first multimodal study, nor one that combines visual and thematic methods in a way that could be considered novel. It is not the first to imagine education as an assemblage or lean heavily on collage as both a metaphor and as practice. Research that specifically addresses photography education in school settings is scarce and hard to find, given the saturated research sphere with the often passive and common use of photography as a tool in many disciplines. When it is located, it is outdated (sections 2.1, 2.6), and therefore technologically irrelevant to the current advancements, so it is focussed on higher education (Grove-White, 2003), or speaks only theoretically, or journalistically (Rubinstein, 2009). Looking at the subject from multiple angles and the combination of multimodal methods have enabled the provision of insight and understanding into how the disciplinary backgrounds of teachers and learning environment impact on the pedagogies and curriculum choice making in a school setting. Photography is often bundled into a subject umbrella that considers it an offshoot of art and design, in job adverts, in teacher training, and in the eyes of the examination boards. The research has not offered conclusions to argue otherwise, as to do so was never the aim, but it has been able to provide contemporary insight into how the collaboration between students and teachers works to ensure it continually meets the needs of both, moving forward in an increasingly image saturated world. The rhizomatic nature of the work acts as a jumping off point for future research into the ruptures, the tracings and multiplicities that can be found within the data. It demonstrates the importance of an area of education that is often overlooked due to its consistent passive use in our day-to-day lives. Using assemblage theory (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) has allowed the familiar structures of photography education to be illuminated, for them to be looked around and through, to disrupt the idea of it being a

complete and finite discourse. Photography education will forever be *becoming,* always in the middle; of art and design, of technology, of the widespread usage of photography in day-to-day life (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). It is perhaps because of its consistent state of flux and rich value as a tool elsewhere, that specific studies into the education of the subject are rare, making this contribution to knowledge more valuable in the progression and discourse of the field as a whole.

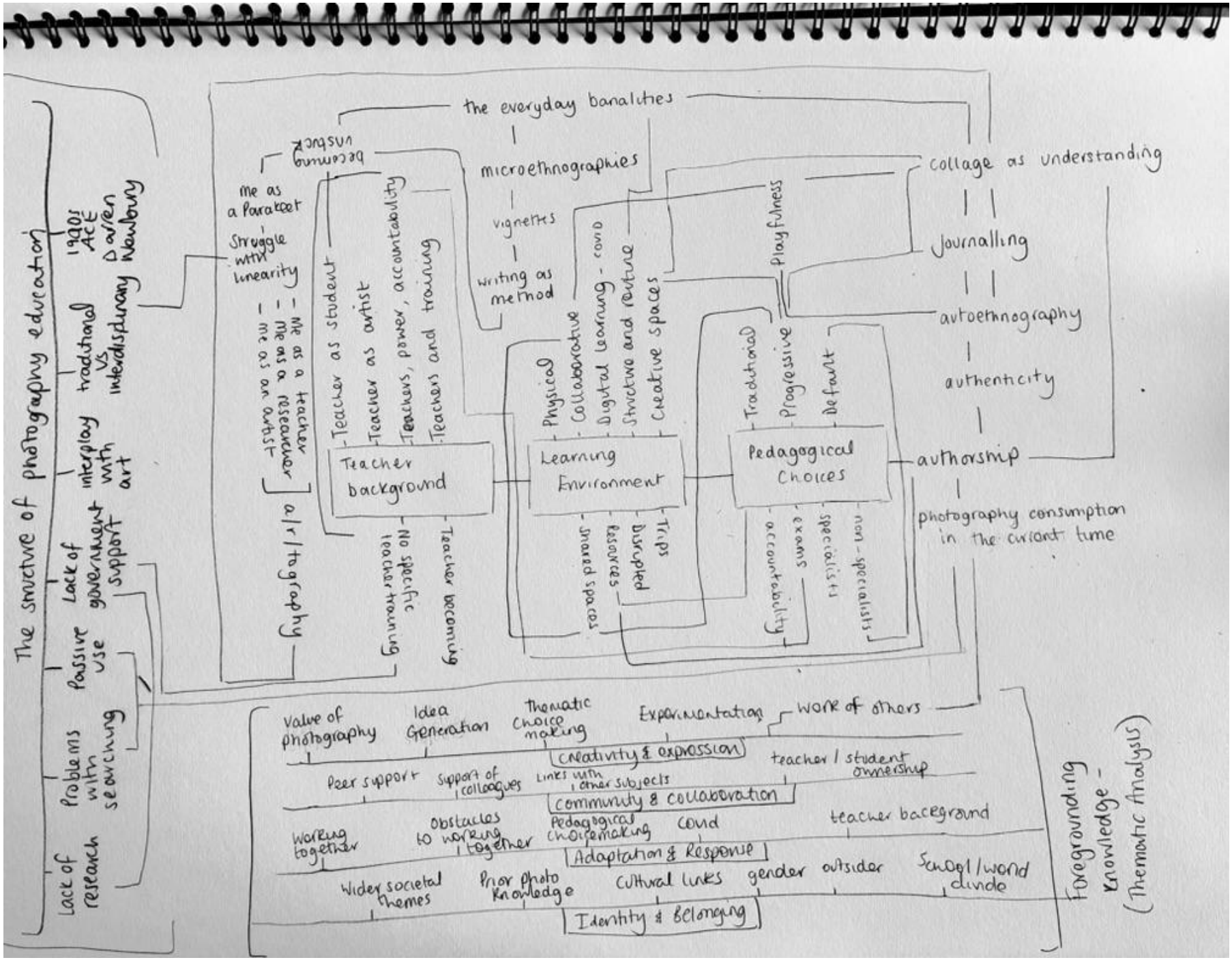


Figure 45: Rhizomatic drawing of research. (2025) Author's own

For practice:

In the current educational landscape, photography education will always be driven by the needs of assessment, accountability and qualification, as this is the *desire* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) that maintains the wider need for education in a society driven by employability and economic success. Photography is a creative subject, built upon nonlinear processes encouraging 'reworking, revisiting, embracing, and allowing change' (Brooke et al., 2024).

The generation of outcomes for this thesis comes in a timely manner. NSEAD (National Society for Education in Art and Design) recently published their manifesto for art education (NSEAD, 2024). Here, the continued lack of value placed on creative subjects in overworked curricula and school systems is addressed in the reasoning for the development of the manifesto. On a national level, the outlook is considerably positive. In a Department for Education curriculum review interim report (2025), the call for further digital skills and media literacy to be prioritised in young people echoes the same need to keep up with technological advancement that the ACE *Changing Vision* had nearly 40 years ago (Brake, 1996). The aim of the curriculum review is to develop a 'cutting-edge curriculum' (Department for Education, 2025, p.10). It was reported in the review that whilst art and design at GCSE (photography included) 'continues to thrive' (p.14), there was evidence given to them that arts-based subjects required more specialist teachers (p.20). The findings of the research would argue otherwise - whilst acknowledging the value and input of specialist teachers, developing teacher training to encourage collaborative working and to harness the skills of a collective body of knowledge, rather than working in isolation, would not only strengthen the confidence in creative teaching, but potentially re-engage teachers with a creative community. Recently, the new Labour government in the UK announced £270 million investment in the *Arts Everywhere Fund,* which has a focus on four major cultural educational programmes (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2025). Funding at a governmental level is a positive move and referring back to the reimagined micro/macro environments of photography education, will impact the pedagogy and curriculum choices in photography. However, less emphasis is placed on the micro learning environments where pedagogy and curriculum can be influenced. This is the place of research in the field, to continue the illuminations of practice in photography education specifically.

Modelling collaborative a/r/tography would mean the teachers of photography could collaborate with students more effectively in their work, retain deeper connections in the student/teacher relationship, and feel more confident when planning and delivering more experiential pedagogical and curricular approaches. Choosing a/r/tography as a pedagogical tool is an approach that Barney (2019) took, to maintain connection and deeper understanding of the subject matter he was teaching.

To embrace the collective interdisciplinarity explored in this research, teachers can look to one another to grow their photography teachings. Reframing the use of resource sharing, of co-construction of resources,

of playfulness, would allow teacher confidence to grow, and for students to understand that creative processes require the interchangeable nature of collaborative a/r/tography. Fostering a positive learning environment where students and teachers are encouraged to thrive would set the subject apart, perhaps contributing to the 'cutting-edge curriculum' that the Government review aims to create. The resource offered as an outcome of this research (section 8.2) allows space for teachers of photography to disrupt their pedagogical practices, to consider their curriculum and its influences in a way that this research has presented (section 8.1, 8.2).

Mapping future connections

Further research into photography education lies in the connections that have yet to be made in the rhizomatic map (figure 45) it is here that unrealised ideas or tracings can be found (O'Sullivan and Banham, 2005). It is in the research map that the 'needed incompatibilities [are] brought together to see against the grain' (Lather and Kitchens, 2017, p.3). Making connections between parts of the rhizome, by exploring in other photography educational settings the ruptures, the tracings and multiplicities suggested because of this research, will add to the breadth and depth of the understandings of an under-researched area. By doing so, the continued interest in photography education research may allow students, teachers, institutions, and wider governmental bodies to know more about the subject and how it is constructed. Using the rhizomatic map as a starting point, any one, or several points could be researched further to broaden the field. The multimodal nature of the research lends itself well to further investigation, embracing collective interdisciplinarity in its multiple entry and exit points. Methodologically, photography education researchers could utilise any of the parts of the assemblage; teacher disciplinary background, learning environment, or pedagogy to conduct further studies. Theoretically, the design of the research could be applied to other photography education settings, to reveal similarities and differences. In teaching practice, the exploration of liminal spaces, trips, micro and macro environments could be observed with a view to establishing further understandings. The research is not technologically bound, so its design and methods could be utilised to develop insights when technology changes and moulds the photography education landscape once more.

Chapter conclusion

Looking into the future involves a circular motion back to the beginning of my thesis, where I introduced the timeline of how photography education has developed into the model, we are familiar with today. In common with the cut and paste nature of collage, no research of this style should be considered finite, and for the model to consistently grow and evolve, the metaphorical pieces need to be consistently reassemblaged or viewed in a way that allows them to be rhizomatic in their ability to grow more organically. To briefly revisit, photography education has moved from a technical and mostly vocational taught skill to a broader theory and practice mix, borrowing pedagogies from art and design education. It is offered as an

academic qualification from secondary education onwards but also exists outside of traditional education in the form of workshops, skill building and informal learning.

The enquiry has illuminated the contemporary photography education landscape, a place where students are facing a post-pandemic, increasingly image saturated world, with rapid technological advancements (such as generative artificial intelligence) continually challenging (and sometimes threatening) creative practices. Making attempts to reconsider hierarchical thinking with 'what ifs' and unknowns is never going to be an easy feat, especially on well-trodden paths such as education and educational research respectively. Disrupting a subject that must serve multiple purposes concurrently in education, whilst maintaining the fragile nature of its value more widely in society, without providing a disservice to those at the heart of it, cannot be done quickly or without support. I leave the work and my own authorship of it at this point, just as the photographer must at the time of disseminating their visual choice making. These assemblages are there to build upon, interpret, add to, and take from; for cutting and pasting the parts that serve to develop the overall: teaching photography.

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Creativity and Expression

Code	Code label	Student response	Teacher response
Idea generation	IG	Just a kind of lightbulb? Then I kind of expand it a bit more and make it a whole idea I write the theme down and then I kind of just draw what I think of. The first thing that comes to mind. That's what I associate it with. Then it is like a million little lightbulbs. …we've started by recreating the photographers in the start of the year. Last term I've been exploring my own ideas and developing my own ideas Because like, I'm creative. I'm following my own ideas. Yeah. However, not every person can do that [with] their ideas, because you know, they are maybe not skilled enough, genuinely not a creative person. So I feel like for some people, there is definitely one side heavier than the other [creative and technical]	Some students have a lot of ideas. For them, we might go off on a tangent.

Thematic choice making	TCM	hidden emotion of femininity and how people feel towards it [Are those themes important to you outside of photography?] 'I feel like in the outside world from school, yeah' I did explore nature a bit	'He was recreating, using Google Streetview to recreate famous like Simon Roberts photographs. She [teacher] said he could not do it any more because it was not using a camera
Experimentation	EPG	I'm planning a big experiment… I've printed images, I've sewn them together' I've been exploring a lot with people modelling… I just love taking pictures of people…	As if it was kind of like, we will know these kids need to have X Y or Z in terms of experimentation Do this, copy this, you know? Not very experimental. So when we get work [manipulation] because you need to tick that box

			of like experimentation. So it works for that.

Value of Photography	VOP	Photography is something familiar [choosing to study it] Photography plays a big part in my life as it allows me to show off my skills of my work and I also enjoy. It's a type of art everyone can try. Photography is a basic skill that will be used in many situations, and due to this, I believe having enough knowledge to work with a camera and knowing the basic components of it is necessary and should be taught in the education system. The idea that art is a large field with no limits and that it's alright to 'think outside the box' since that defines creativity (sometimes)	She reduced the subject by that. 'Oh well, I can you know, it's not that hard. I can do it. So she's reducing the subject. Do you think that is believed across the board? That anybody could teach it? Yeah. Because look at adverts for photographer teachers. It is art teacher with photography. It's just different. And it's not recognised It lacks substance when it's nothing past the good picture They're failing in maths, they're all failing in English, and then we're gonna get pulled out to go in to do various extra lessons. I remember a moderator coming in and being like, 'well photography's easier isn't it?' Because like it's more immediate. And you don't have to spend the time Visual literacies of telling stories? We are seen as an easy option. It's a disservice to the course from us [not having equipment for year 9]

Work of others	WOO	I feel like it's useful because it kind of gives me more ideas. It kind of lets me put my own little twist. …maybe even the last term so we've started by recreating the photographer's in the start of the year.	Before, I wanted everyone to do British documentary style, like Martin Parr. Whereas I'm like, actually, is that the best thing for the student? And it's not always. ..I think in a lot of photography, old school photographs, that are like dark room based, kind of want you

		Obviously looking at the inspiration, recreating the techniques might be quite useful in your work.	know, just do regurgitating like the same pretty white male examples of photography. And you know, we need to photograph these mechanical bits. That is interesting to them, but not to the kids. I see so many poor examples of people looking at a photographer and not really understanding what they've done.

Collaboration and Community

Code	Code label	Student response	Teacher response
Peer support	PS	I put myself in my little bubble When I need help, I usually ask… or J who I sit next to. Ask them for their opinion and see how it goes… …students are lovely to be fair,	

Support of colleagues	SOC		I've picked up more from you than I did then because it was sort of quite quick and was left to it. The main useful difference here is that I can always ask you to check whether things look alright, and ask you questions. 'Will you check this work?' That is the main difference. [on recommending practitioners] but that's when I'll come sometimes come shuffling to you. But like you say, you are a creative teacher, and you have taught it for years before.

Links with other subject	LWOS	I can't spell. Don't worry it's not an English test.	I think that sometimes we actually could take something that's like done in English and

		[or] history or geography. The humanities probably say English as well. Maybe science to see human body parts. Okay, English. It relates to English because like I said. Well you know, how we like to talk about pictures like English, they describe it, in photography, you actually see the actual image, so you don't see the image and what we have to think of. Okay, yeah, marketing. Graphics. Maths is just equations. English and drama help my creativity because they make me think more deeply	apply it differently. Really big crossover with those subjects As a teacher, I've found that I've had to mix it up because they have got, they don't feel like they're again, in the same sort of education as they do in English or geography They do that in English, they do that in geography.

Teacher ownership	TOWN	Now when you start, you just follow the lead of the teacher because obviously you don't really know what to do at the beginning. Miss really helps draw out more creativity and more ideas to really expand. My teachers direct me to the right pathway which I am thankful for. They give me more ideas which I am instantly interested in.	…because there were like massive behaviour issues with these kids. Yeah everything was boom, boom, boom, do this. And it was like, sort of militant? [tabletop photography] that's like a really good way of guiding the student into actually having outcomes. Tabletop still life, or the tabletop set up. So it's been given to them. So they haven't had that kind of thought process. [talking as a student] I'm just going to do this because you told me to rather than like, having that interest or agency about it I think it's like, well, I can bring in all this stuff and put it in front of you. You can do a photoshoot for everything. And you can get loads of pictures in one lesson that we can… then that fits in my timetable of like my plan for you to move on to the editing and to learn that process. I think independent teacher led is better than student led.

Student ownership	SOWN	'It just comes to me really, just in my head, I never really look at anything. I just kind of think' Photography is the kind of the main way [expressing views about feminine taboos] because it is very, like, I can do what I want with it, I'm in control of it, and nobody else. I write down all the technical aspects I'd need. Lighting, what could really make it work? What I need to do like how to take it on further. (WOO) I feel like it's useful because it kind of gives me more ideas. It kind of lets me put my own little twist. [Leading on from being teacher led…] but then as you explore it, you feel like so like, after a couple of photo shoots, I'm like okay I'd love to take a photoshoot in the studio. They support and guide me but they don't change my choices.	This is what's different in photography education, because we're expecting them to go and apply that knowledge without us there… if a good teacher taught them to learn from to be resilient enough to learn from mistakes or keep going. If they go away and take the message…you've given them enough skills to do the things that you're expecting them to do have like a confidence to overcome any problems that they will face. I feel like that my strongest students, i talked to him about the ideas and then the technical stuff, they kind of pick it up themselves, so then it becomes a teacher led project conceptually.

Adaptation and response

Working together/environment	WT	…and they open the back when you're not supposed to open the back. And then it exposes the light into the actual film.	

Pedagogical choices	PC		She basically, left examples, and similar-ish timescales and stuff to what I was doing. I learned how to put PPTs together and stuff because she had left a good example. It is an hour and it's fun. That helps break it down into little chunks. I can't stand teaching Photoshop from the front of the room. Like 'everybody watch, is everybody there?' [on teaching photoshop] Awesome. We're just gonna click

			the click. Yeah I don't know what you've clicked. [on students going on a tangent with ideas] …you have to then think, do I want them to have gone down that tangent, or do I want to steer them back in? Some will just be completely have no clue and [we] have to spoon feed them. I've tried in the last couple of years stepping back and trying to think let's see it for what it is. Possibly the way I've taught it, and there were things that the kids have ended up doing have been more like textiles and art based because of that, because that's like my specialism. It was just a case of like, learn the process, do the thing. I think it's like, well, I can bring in all this stuff and put it in front of you. You can do a photoshoot for everything. And you can get loads of pictures in one lesson that we can… then that fits in my timetable of like my plan for you to move on to the editing and to learn that process. Students go 'are we just doing this again?' You know, because the repetition of them having to work through ideas or because the act of going back to your sketchbook and uploading images and reviewing that is very much the same process. As a teacher, I've found that I've had to mix it up because they have got, they don't feel like they're again, in the same sort of education as they do in English or geography.

			...like expansive pool of students that we've got to learn in different ways.

Institutional obstacles	IO	I'd really like to see like sixth form work, how those turned out and how they kind of follow this idea. What kind of sparked it. I wish to be outside the school, to be able to explore nature. Explore, like different areas, maybe the buildings…	Lots of teachers see it as an opportunity to get another free [schools direct] She was told to teach that course and she was like, I think she was quite proud of what she had taught [on powerpoint styles in previous role] like photography terminology in different colours, stuff like that. They were very much like, 'oh we want all our department work to look like this.' So that is why I took it What I found as a teacher of photography is then the resistance or the limitations, because I agree, that's how I did my training.

Obstacles to learning	OTL	Materials - there is always the opportunity to order them to school. But you can't really get over this barrier, because it takes time, which we don't have really as this is a one year course.	[on teaching photoshop] …especially when you have close to 20 [students]. It's like war. You have students like H, who you'll suggest ideas and he's like, 'oh yes but I actually want to do this'. But then it will take a week to do it. Portrait projects coming out with really bad lighting, because they haven't got the equipment in the classroom. They're kind of fudging it somewhere, yeah. Sometimes they make great results, but it's even more difficult. Yeah like the restriction like the teacher needs to get them to make pictures they have that battle where they don't want to do it, if they don't make, they don't do homework, they have to make it in the classroom

			And [that] they're not bringing stuff into school is kind of another problem. But that problem is faced in this school as well as any other school, like, whether it's infused as a motivation or access to material. So then they have this limitation of it's then the teachers providing this stuff which is normally just junk that they found, like bottles or you know, is really like quite poor. Manipulation comes with lack of equipment. And lack of time and restriction. We haven't got stuff to get out. They haven't been out. What do we do? One year is ridiculous. You can't do crits with big groups. It's also hard because they don't experience the good things like they don't get the cameras and they don't get what the taste of photography is like [year 9] You need to know they're gonna go through that course creating things that they're proud of…yeah and the fun stuff to keep them on board.

Analogue learning	AL	…to the black room? And the dark room? And we made those photos? I have this one camera that is a film camera. I have a Polaroid camera.	[on past study] I did the darkroom the whole time We did regularly spend all night in the dark room just printing and playing and talking. [on previous FE role] No darkroom, or if there was one, it was never used. We did have a darkroom at that point, but we weren't able to use it. It was ridiculously old. Health and safety wise, ventilations etc etc. We kind of wanted to get it reinstated. The idea was when we moved over here, we could have one.

Covid teaching	CT		I started to teach [here] live online. So I got to know the kids and getting them to set PPTs out through online and focused examples. We does not even use photoshop. I was like finding maps to use on phones and stuff. I could record, like

			how to do things. I think it is easier [teaching online]. If you have to do drawing, then you suddenly have to be a teacher sometimes and show what is in front of you. Because it meant I had to be more resourceful. I started making videos and recording my screen. I didn't even know where the kids were. Then it dawned on me, like over there in the school. I just thought they were in their rooms. I had a couple that were in a classroom, and you might hear them running about and then I'd hear someone and they're just like 'I am in China'. [on manipulation] …they haven't been out. What do we do? I did a lot of it in covid.
Teacher background	TEACHB		First person to go to university in my family. So for me, that was really good as I didn't have to get a job. I did graphics then I did art and design. And I did industrial design… Then I became mainly a graphics teacher. I ended up being a textiles teacher. An art teacher. I've always used photography, especially in graphics. I'd done some photography at college, like darkroom. So and then carried on at as part of my foundation, but didn't specialise in that. So that is when I went into like fashion. I worked there a trainee buyer for about a year. And then I left there, moved back to London. I just didn't feel passionately about being in an environment…I just didn't really care about much about like the priorities of it.
Student background	STB	I'm in Inverness, and this is like, big museum of art? My dad likes to go to museums quite a lot too because he loves like history and stuff.	She is very task driven. I don't ever feel like she's got it. She knows what to do. She's an exam technique. I've never known an enthusiasm for the subjects.

		He doesn't go to museums because he can't be bothered. So he's in his bed watching some documentary. My parents told me not to use it that much [Polaroid] Basically, my stepdad has a lot of cameras. He's like, you know, photographer, however he doesn't have a degree.	

Code		Student response	Teacher response
Wider societal themes	WST	[Are those themes important to you outside of photography?] I feel like in the outside world from school, yeah. 'and then, it is kind of seen as, like a bad thing to be feminine. Like, a lot of things that females go through are seen as taboo and they shouldn't be talking about it. They shouldn't be spoke[n] about, they shouldn't be mentioned, like publicly and stuff like that, even though it's completely normal thing. Photography is the kind of the main way [expressing views about feminine taboos] because it is very, like, I can do what I want with it, I'm in control of it, and nobody else. It kind of gives you a different perspective on how you look at things in the outside world. gives us a perspective of what life used to be like at that time. And how much it's changed over time. Like World War 1. I think with cameras as well and like photography, you can like see the supernatural side of things. And how people capture supernatural entities. I know like Kylie and Kendall have like photoshoots, and even they're still edited to be paper thin. I guess, it shouldn't be like that. I know the world's	It felt very safe… [prescriptive experimentation] It was to give them maturity, because they don't get it from everywhere. Some kids just switch off. I think it just learning from your peers, or having a just a strong opinion. The longer you're a teacher, the less you're in touch with the creative community of being a freelance photographer. I think that probably students would attach age to younger ECTS with the arts background, may come across more current to the student, so have more believability [in subject expertise]

		getting more body positive now, but it's still, I don't think Photoshop should be used in photoshoots. And I think it should just be all natural. It's important to see the beauty instead of the phoney. Yeah, you know this trend in China? It's just like, girls, they tried to get what waists the size of like, A4 sheets of paper. Yeah my friends are really happy to attend. Like 'oh my god, we are going to have such a nice picture'. Photography helps us build our creative skills and explore more about ourselves. I think it can help unlock an open mind and really open your eyes.	

Prior knowledge of photography	PKP	I don't know how cameras work. [In previous school] in Russia' they didn't have particular [photography] lessons like ours. He was just like, helping me to play around with the camera, show[ing] me the best composition and teach[ing] me to look at things in a different way.	She did not understand the photography. I had conversations and conversations, He understood what he was doing more than the teacher and she wasn't allowing it to happen. I understand there are two sides of building the very two big camps in photography, there's like the technical and the process, and then thinking and the self-critical exploration. Sort of introduced me to like concept of contact sheets and I didn't know they existed.

Gender	G	hidden emotion of femininity and how people feel towards it	we had a colleague, she went off on maternity leave. We got a cover supervisor on long term cover but I taught a little of [photography] alongside him. Before that, I was involved in the marking of it

		[are those themes important to you outside of photography] I feel like in the outside world from school, yeah. …and then, it is kind of seen as, like a bad thing to be feminine. Like, a lot of things that females go through are seen as taboo and they shouldn't be talking about it. They shouldn't be spoke[n] about, they shouldn't be mentioned, like publicly and stuff like that, even though it's completely normal thing.	I think in a lots of photography, old school photographs, that are like dark room based, kind of want you know, just do regurgitating like the same pretty white male examples of photography.

School/world divide	SCHW	[are those themes important to you outside of photography] 'I feel like in the outside world from school, yeah' It kind of gives you a different perspective on how you look at things in the outside world.	

Pedagogical choices	PC		She basically, left examples, and similar-ish timescales and stuff to what I was doing. I learned how to put PPTs together and stuff because she had left a good example. It is an hour and its fun. That helps break it down into little chunks. I can't stand teaching Photoshop from the front of the room. Like 'everybody watch, is everybody there?' [on teaching photoshop] Awesome. We're just gonna click the click. Yeah I don't know what you've clicked. [on students going on a tangent with ideas] you have to then think, do I want them to have gone down that tangent, or do I want to steer them back in? Some will just be completely have no clue and [we] have to spoon feed them. I have tried in the last couple of years stepping back and trying to think let's see it for what it is. Possibly the way I've taught it, and there were things that the kids have ended doing have been more like

			textiles and art based because of that, because that's like my specialism. It was just a case of like, learn the process, do the thing. I think it is like, well, I can bring in all this stuff and put it in front of you. You can do a photoshoot for everything. And you can get loads of pictures in one lesson that we can… then that fits in my timetable of like my plan for you to move on to the editing and to learn that process. Students go 'are we just doing this again? You know, because the repetition of them having to work through ideas or because the act of going back to your sketchbook and uploading images and reviewing that is very much the same process. As a teacher, I've found that I've had to mix it up because they have got, they don't feel like they're again, in the same sort of education as they do in English or geography. ...like expansive pool of students that we've got to learn in different ways.

Obstacles to learning	OTL	[Materials] - there is always the opportunity to order them to school. But you can't really get over this barrier, because it takes time, which we don't have really as this is a one year course.	[on teaching photoshop] …especially when you have close to 20 [students]. It's like war. You have students like H, who you'll suggest ideas [to] and he's like, 'oh yes but actually want to do this'. But then it will take a week to do it. Portrait projects coming out with really bad lighting, because they haven't got the equipment in the classroom. They're kind of fudging it somewhere, yeah. Sometimes they make great results, but it's even more difficult. Yeah like the restriction like the teacher needs to get them to make pictures they have that battle where they don't want to do it, if they don't make, they don't do homework, they have to make it in the classroom. And they're not bringing stuff into school is kind of another problem. But that problem is faced in this school as well as any other school, like, whether it is infused as a motivation or access to material. So then they have this limitation of it's then the teachers providing this stuff which is normally just

			junk that they found, like bottles or you know, is really like quite poor. Manipulation comes with lack of equipment. And lack of time and restriction. We haven't got stuff to get out. They haven't been out. What do we do? One year is ridiculous You can't do crits with big groups It's also hard because they don't experience the good things like they do not get the cameras and they do not get what the taste of photography is like [year 9] You need to know they're gonna go through that course creating things that they're proud of…yeah and the fun stuff to keep them on board.

Analogue learning	AL	…to the black room? And the dark room? And we made those photos? I have this one camera that is a film camera. I have a Polaroid camera.	[on past study] …I did the darkroom the whole time We did regularly spend all night in the dark room just printing and playing and talking [On previous FE role] No darkroom, or if there was one, it was never used We did have a darkroom at that point, but we weren't able to use it. It was ridiculously old. Health and safety wise, ventilations etc etc. We kind of wanted to get it reinstated. The idea was when we moved over here, we could have one.

Covid teaching	CT		I started to teach [here] live online. So I got to know the kids and getting them to set PPTs out through online and focused examples. We did not even use photoshop. I was like finding maps to use on phones and stuff. I could record, like how to do things. I think it is easier [teaching online]. If you have to do drawing, then you suddenly have to be a teacher sometimes and show what is in front of you. Because it meant I had to be more resourceful. I started making videos and recording my screen

			I did not even know where the kids were. Then it dawned on me, like over there in the school. I just thought they were in their rooms. I had a couple that were in a classroom, and you might hear them running about and then I'd hear someone and they're just like 'I am in China'. [on manipulation] …they haven't been out. What do we do? I did a lot of it in Covid.
Student background	STB	Y9- I'm in Inverness, and this is like, big museum of art? My dad likes to go to museums quite a lot too because he loves like history and stuff. He doesn't go to museums because he can't be bothered. So he's in his bed watching some documentary. My parents told me not to use it that much [Polaroid] 1Y- Basically, my stepdad has a lot of cameras. He's like, you know, photographer, however he doesn't have a degree.	She is very task driven. I don't ever feel like she's got it. She knows what to do. She's an exam technique. I've never known an enthusiasm for the subjects.

Code		Student response	Teacher response
Opinion of photography	OOP	Photography is the kind of the main way [expressing views about feminine taboos] because it is very, like, I can do what I want with it, I'm in control of it, and nobody else. Y9- [photography gives] a new perspective. Showing what life is at present. Photography shows me different perspectives of life. I can show different views of what people perceive than what I see of everything.	Self critical exploration, that side of it, is what I would encourage all students to be doing, because that's where I think photography has its own like power. Some are better at it than others [PPT design] I can't stand teaching Photoshop from the front of the room. Like' everybody watch, is everybody there?' [teaching photoshop] Awesome. We're just gonna click the click. Yeah I don't know what you've clicked. [on an A Level student] then sometimes we're like, that's good. And now, it looks like GCSE work.

		It's a way of exploring new and capturing beautiful things. A school subject.	I wouldn't be able to, as a photographer to sit down and force myself to really think and have good thoughts about work. I think the grading of it doesn't necessarily matter. But it does to them. So then it matters to the school. Yeah it's really important. I think the difficulty is that the teacher might be wrong. The photography teacher coming into it doesn't see all the problems in that, because it's not photography to them I'm like, 'oh that's incredible'. But they are completely unaware of how good that would be in the context of it being in like *Aperture.* But there's some great photography projects that are even, just single pictures they've taken that you take out of context in the GCSE and put into like photography magazine and people would be like 'that's cool' I'm not a big fan of like the manipulation.

Assessment	A		So it was her way of getting achievable passes was look at the research, reflect on the research, copy it. If it isn't good enough, copy it again. And that's it. Next artist. Do that again, four times. That's the coursework. …I think I felt less prepared with was actually the, marking… I had never marked the photography. At the time where the boundaries set, it was like, much harder to achieve certain levels in photography than it was in art. When I first started there [would] be sort of four or five points difference in a boundary between photography and art. I think the grading of it doesn't necessarily matter. But it does to them. So then it matters to the school. Yeah it's really important.
Exams	EXAM	I don't really feel the pressure of the exam rules [in photography]	We're not going to do techniques. That's like exam criteria. You match that with the questions that they get from the paper which are really limiting.

			I think a good photographer experiments in their photoshoots, I don't know if that would get them the marks. Talking about AQA? It's an art paper. Art school like, vibe is always against, like the exam.

Boarding students	BOARD	They came into my room and used my camera. Wasted one of my films. I don't really get to go out…I don't really see new places and therefore have more inspiration. When whenever you go somewhere, you actually like, can look for something interesting Year 11 definitely have more freedom There might be some limitations, for my situation, being a boarder and doing this subject as a GCSE- but generally our brain and our mindset.	[On tteaching online] I found that because we are a boarding school, I found that the students because they were wherever they were, they were more creative. We need to think about what we can actually achieve like its great having these amazing ideas. But now look at your mind map of what you thought you could do and think about how you are going to do them. But then the 3 boarders will say but I'm not going out, I'm not paying to go out of school. I can't go out of school largely because I can't afford it, or I think part of my friendship group doesn't do that. [Day student] …was like, I can go out, I live nearby, I do these other things…but likewise she doesn't have these amazing summer holidays or going back home trips which provides something different. [Day student] would be at an advantage, but like seeing her work, you wouldn't necessarily I don't think…

Lack of confidence	LACKC		She wasn't interested in technical execution, because she didn't understand that. They had cameras, but didn't use them on anything but auto. No real experimentation. The other thing I worry about is I don't have this, like repertoire of you could look at this person. Yeah name dropping all these people. So that's when I feel a bit limited. Whereas I worry I am staring into stuff I like all the time.

			When I've got things mixed up… but I like worry if I'm telling the right thing… little technical things like that where I do feel like I do, right, am I failing you? Technically? And I, I initially, I can remember being sort of like, 'oh no, I've got all of this photography, and actually that's not my specialism'. Exam moderator] and I remember and also because I was like, new to teaching and whatever. And you know, you don't want to have an argument with somebody. I didn't want them all to just turn into me.
Confidence	CON		That is like second nature to me now [contact sheets] [creating online resources during Covid] it helped me because I was like 'oh actually you know, this is the best way of doing this'. …I think art teachers also always lean on their strengths…

Inherited curriculum	IC		I had to take up her curriculum, it was really bad. Essentially like similar format to lots of curriculums where it's like art - research; complete, copy the artist, there was nowhere in her like plan for the students was any personal response time. So [it was] her way of getting achievable passes was look at the research, reflect on the research, copy it. If it isn't good enough, copy it again. And that's it. Next artist. Do that again, four times. That's the coursework. He would plan most of it.
Inherited pedagogy	IP		She basically, left examples, and similar-ish timescales and stuff to what I was doing. I learned how to put PPTs together and stuff because she had left a good example. …It was lots of suggestions of shoots. [PPT style] quite detailed, like photography terminology in different colours, stuff like that. They were very much like, 'oh we want all our

			department work to look like this'. So that is why I took it

Non-creative spaces	NCS		We just made like out of MDF walls and whatever, a little space at the back of a classroom where we could just have our own makeshift room.

Timetable/duration	TID		I have one year every day. It's an hour and it's fun. That helps break it down into little chunks. I think it is important for them to feel like they're in a learning environment like lesson space, kind of for that age group. It is a difficult thing to mature enough to work, maybe in a free space. Some students could struggle with that by not having that rigid, like this is a learning environment. [Do you think it is a restriction on teaching time?] yeah like the restriction like the teacher needs to get them to make pictures they have that battle where they don't want to do it, if they don't make, they don't do homework, they have to make it in the classroom.

Financial	FIN	[Polaroid] my parents told me not to use it because it was expensive.	There just wasn't enough money in it [boat building] I wanted a job with progression, opportunities for family. I applied I had to go through DT bursary Financially savvy way of doing it I actually helped with this, we made a little makeshift art room when I was there…because they just didn't have any space in the school did not really have any money. [Faith school placement] they just had a massive new art block. Even top photographers are still have to diversify their income by doing things like workshops.

Nostalgia	N	We used to have one of those really old cameras. You know, the ones that really nostalgic? …Like film cameras? Yeah. Like the 2000s cameras. It is in the attic somewhere. Interesting images from the 90s or something. You know that the idea of a family album is quite…. Oh, I love a family album. It's quite a forgotten thing though, isn't it?	
Family photography	FP	My mom takes photos all the time. Oh my gosh, don't take so many photos. Yeah she's like no its for memory. You'll thank me later. There's just so many photos from when I was a baby and stuff. Because mom's always away. So I'll go with my dad. I've been doing some photography with my stepdad for a couple of years. We have an album of my brother being one year old. The whole message is my parents wrote to them, so you can read it after when he's like older.	

Cognitive	COG	Just a kind of lightbulb? Then I kind of expand it a bit more and make it a whole idea'. 'It just comes to me really, just in my head, I never really look at anything. I just kind of think' 'Usually ask [peers] for their opinion and see how it goes, or how to take it on and put my own twist on it' I write the theme down and then I kind of just draw what I think of. The first thing	Sometimes it's because I just have an idea and it pops into my head. Photography is making all these mistakes in time to process in terms of thinking in terms of like taking pictures. Like we need them to go and do their own thing, like with their thought rather than my thought. That is the hard thing of getting, like making them think, asking them to think. And then actually like thinking is really… and it's

		that comes to mind. That's what I associate it with. Then it is like a million little lightbulbs. English and drama help my creativity because they make me think more deeply Personal feelings and surrounding environment are usually the two things that have the most impact on my creativity.	hard, that's easier to make them do with having a test?

Pressure	PRES	[On year 11s having freedom] …but they have more exams to be fair.	We're gonna get pulled out to go into do different last extra lessons… it was just like everything has to be done now you know, that sort of environment. I think it's like, well, I can bring in all this stuff and put it in front of you. You can do a photoshoot for everything. And you can get loads of pictures in one lesson that we can, then that fits in my timetable of like my plan for you to move on to the editing and to learn that process. I guess it falls down to this whole, like needing to get them, the need to get the grade, like the pressure on the teacher to need to thinking about the curriculum. And they need to be good. And you need to make sure that they're learning. And that's what universities are like so that's what you prepare them for

Suggested reform	SRE	I think it would like to be done with a lot of perspective because I think like old imagery and like from the past should really be brought up again, and to see how like, you could recreate that. Or how you can make photos with that type of like stuff that they had back then. Like the more technology side of it dissecting. I would have more freedom. Not actually being closed the whole time,	Let me go take some pictures. What are you going to take pictures, how can you make them interesting? What do you think is interesting about them? How can you tell a story with it? Skills that you need to learn, practice, refine, develop, think about how they apply that to what you want to do, and use the ones that fit for you or that you are going to work best with. There is the other option of making it into a really academic course to where like, writing

		or being able to travel to different places work in different studios. So we get more to explore. Yeah and obviously meeting people. Like talk to a famous photographer. I think it could be a good subject included in younger years like art music and drama are included because it allows students to get to know what they're interested in rather than having to just jump in at GCSE.	is marked for both grammar, spelling, quality, fair, given back with corrections, and it's much more like even the geography kind of checking sources, 'is where what's the source come from? Have you done a compare and contrast?' Yeah have you used like these certain key words like all that kind of teacher bringing that teaching into the environment? It may lead more people into the subject in order to then lead them into different pathways perhaps. Yeah but then you might miss the students that are just really good at making stuff. That can't necessarily can't articulate. You almost need like, options with it. The best photography teacher potentially needs to be everything. They need to be really technically good to teach all those skills really well. They need to understand like, the type of subtlety of what could be happening and what and then where to steer them, and also like why other photographers are really good. GCSE should start with a manual camera. Like, even turning the screen off, but like, its camera and learning how to use a camera. Have successful pictures from it, taking hundreds of pictures. And at the same time, they're learning that like the camera can't,...you can't just stand there. And that might take a while. But I think if they got that, they can understand that, they've learned that they understand why their pictures dark. Darkroom I think is very important to do… Understand to use it at year 10. I think it'd be really intense. But I think that would like, be a shock to them. You got the practical side, cos that is what they expect. Then you have this academic stream through it, which is like talking about it, bringing in photographers that they have to break down, connotation, denotation lesson. There's so many photographers who have to come out and provide workshops. Refinement. Resilience, problem solving, thinking differently.

			[Should everyone study it?] because you reduce the impact or reduce the quality of the teaching in that lesson. I feel like you'd have to redesign the course. I've never seen a course that would reflect what needs to be enough, hasn't got enough emphasis and resource to encourage.

Appendix B: Vignette One: January 2023: Straddling the gaps - how did I get here?

This vignette will begin with my own interdisciplinary background to provide context and an understanding of how the research focus was reached. This will situate my motivation for the study, and my position moving forward.

The photograph below was the first one I had taken, apparently by chance, in my maternal grandmother's garden. I have no memory of taking it, yet the photograph elicits the same conversation each time it is viewed; *'Isn't it great?' Fancy being able to capture such a thing.* I am unsure whether I actually did take it, or whether the invented narrative has now superseded the truth.

Image 23: Photo of mouse [n.d]. Author's own.

My journey studying photography started with me being obsessed with taking photos whilst at secondary school and always carrying a disposable camera with me. As clichéd as this sounds, it is genuinely how my interest started. I wanted to be an extreme sports photographer, mainly because I could not skateboard, and made pitiful attempts at trying. *Sidewalk* magazine inspired me to get behind the camera at skateparks, and people wanted photographs of them doing tricks. All my friends loved extreme sports, and it was very much the age of Tony Hawk, and American skate bands like Blink 182, Sum-41 and NOFX. It is important to note that this was in 2002-2004, when the use of digital cameras as common practice among the general public was evolving rapidly. The technology felt exciting, and the creativity provided an ability to access other spheres (such as the skateparks) perhaps previously hidden from view. I was a girl with zero talent in the

sport, but I knew I had a creative vision. Skating was still predominantly a male centric activity, in my own experience at this time, I occupied a grey area in relation to the activity. Photography bridged the gap between wanting to be in a world and being able to be in it. This sparked the idea of studying it at A Level when I started further education in 2004, as it was not available as a GCSE subject at the school I attended in the North of England.

I went on to do a combined honours degree with photography and psychology at an almost 'chosen at random' United Kingdom (UK) university, as I had no clue what to study and had little to no support with choosing the 'right' degree. I was the first to go to university in my family and was brought up in a very working-class household; two of three elements that Yu (2022) has found to impact on the choice to go to university, and the choice of institution, if that path is chosen at all. I was in the grey area again by making the unusual decisions of straddling multiple disciplines, yet going to university, which is seen in a traditional sense as a marker of academic success. I have never committed to a single area of expertise, either through lack of education, or stoicism in wanting to learn about the world in many different ways. Many of these viewpoints are learned thinking and societal norms/expectations.

I did not have the greatest experience of studying at A Level or at undergraduate degree level. I think I was too young, too immature, and in hindsight, should have taken some time out to figure out what I actually wanted to do. I had some brilliant tutors who helped shape my view of the world photographically. But this all being said, I loved learning about photography theoretically more than I liked taking photographs, and I was glad to be able to remain in a position to continue writing academically.

I graduated in 2010, and after some non-photography non-starter jobs in fields as far reaching as governmental hotel booking, retail, and medical recruitment, I started a part time MA (Masters of Arts) Fine Art where I was able to focus my photographic practice in line with my interests away from technical teaching or expectation. The choice of studying Fine Art was driven by the lack of availability at universities in the North of England that offered MA photography, and to enable me to survive financially, as it afforded me the option of living at home with my partner and so avoided the cost of having to fund accommodation elsewhere. I studied for my PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate of Education) in Further Education (FE) at the same time as my MA, to maximise my time studying, as well as working part time in retail. This shows a further example of straddling disciplines, maintaining a creative fine art practice whilst learning how to teach in a non-subject specific PGCE course. On this MA course, I was free here to explore mixed media, artists books, writing and collage. It allowed me to spend time on all the things that I really loved about photography but had not fitted within the expectation of a conventional photography degree. Like the aforementioned skating, I lacked the technical ability or drive to be a 'photographer' but I knew I had the creative vision. The entanglement of my studying towards a creative postgraduate degree and my teaching degree meant I was able to combine many of the themes, ideas and concepts, and sparked a growing interest in education as a

whole and how approaches can be applicable to many disciplines and not confined to subjects, learning styles or environments.

The first teaching post I held was in a large FE college where I taught foundation diploma art and design (a qualification taken after A Levels but before undergraduate study), academic writing, study skills and functional skills English (an alternative to GCSE English, often taken by students who do not pass their GCSE exam). I taught academic writing and study skills across a number of courses, from art to midwifery and nursing. Experiencing this wide range of subjects was really useful for me to understand how different areas of teaching and curriculum were planned and then executed. In parallel to this, the PGCE course I studied was not subject specific. The cohort I was part of varied widely, from general secondary subjects through to hairdressing and health and safety. This experience also helped me gain a deeper understanding of different pedagogies in different fields, and the way that the same pedagogies can be applied across multiple areas, and helped build on the curiosity aforementioned from studying MA and PGCE simultaneously.

I realised throughout my career that photography was mainly being taught by non-specialists, and in my experience, by teachers trained in art and design, or design technology. This distinction was quite obvious to me as a photography specialist through my observations of chosen pedagogies offered and subsequent student output. The teaching was usually thematically-led, with teachers often leading students in projects with open titles based on past GCSE papers, such as light and dark, natural forms, or places and spaces. Foundational photography skills such as aperture, depth of field and composition were explored, focussing mainly on digital skills. The photographs were used in experimental ways such as cutting and reassembling images, weaving or sewing, and combining to produce final imagery. Editing on programmes such as Adobe Photoshop was often destructive or manipulative in nature (creating fragments of imagery, rearranging, removing parts of image) rather than complementary (adding to, or refining the imagery). Editing photographs with mixed media additions gave an impression of moving towards an art piece, a final outcome - rather than to develop the photographic work in a technical manner. Aesthetic quality seemed to be more prevalent than photography technical ability such as camera handling, shutter speed, aperture, and lighting. Working across art and photography, I realised that the pedagogy and curricula was almost identical in both areas despite being different media. At the time of submitting this thesis in 2025, I am a teacher of photography and creative media in a British independent school in the north of England. I encourage creativity, collaboration and play as methods of education and enjoyment, and hold the belief that playfulness is underutilised within society as a whole (Kane, 2004). It has been suggested that someone with a playful personality is:

> …guided by internal motivation, on orientation towards process with self-imposed goals, a tendency to attribute their own meaning to objects or behaviours, a focus on pretence and non-literality, a freedom from externally imposed rules and active involvement (Barnett, 1991, p.52).

Creativity, collaboration and play are factors in experimental pedagogy, teaching, and learning techniques that could suggest a learner centred approach in photography teaching, in which room for 'social, contextual and exploratory learning' is introduced, rather than 'discipline content alone' (Ingalls Vanada, 2017, p.115).

Appendix C Vignette Two: March 2023, (Appendix C): The meaning of education

What do we actually understand as a school or university? Why is education defined as systematic instruction? A system is defined as 'done or acting towards a fixed plan, methodical', and instruction as 'a direction or order' (Oxford Dictionary, 2024). Systematic instruction, when these definitions are combined therefore means; 'a fixed plan of a direction of order'. This sparks feelings of Victorian schooling, and conjures images of miserable children sitting in rows, writing on slate and hearing the *click click click* of a teacher's chalk on their rolling blackboard. Why is the second definition of education, the more poetic and holistic version of 'an enlightening experience', not more widely associated with schools and universities, rather than the first? Similar terms to education include 'bettering', 'cultivation', 'guidance', 'indoctrination'. The latter suggestion of indoctrination, or teaching someone a set of beliefs until they no longer question or criticise them, is a concerning alternative to education. Disrupting education for positive reform requires the questioning of what we consider is socially learned through repetition of exposure. In this sense, at what stage would words associated with a more modern education such as 'creativity', 'curiosity', 'growth' and 'play' be introduced to these dictionary suggestions for similar terms? At what point do we flick that switch from the Victorian vision to one more aligned with forest schools, with free play, with creative pedagogies? Or would Paulo Friere's (1970) critically conscious model of unschooling, student centric education, be considered an education if we examined it under the guise of these definitions? If we are not receiving or providing an education, is the societal understanding that we are then a failure rather than a success, using language like 'dropped out of school'? This implies a downwards motion, rather than 'risen above' or other positive language.

Education is a societal expectation, and a governmental requirement for younger people, and takes up space in their lives for a large amount of time. Most decisions in educational landscapes are controlled by adults, at many levels, before the children and young people are part of the model. Playgrounds are a good example of how adults attempt to maintain a hierarchical and often arbitrary control over younger people. Playgrounds are prescribed as an adult version of what play should look like- safe, contained, and containing equipment with purpose. Playgrounds are intrinsically not what children would choose to play on, given the chance. The equipment is still largely focussed on a Victorian belief of 'character building gymnastic exertion' and modern day paranoia surrounding health and safety (Harper, 2017). There is a similar situation with toys. My seven-year old daughter has the most incredible room, filled with every toy imaginable. Despite this, her objects of play, the ones she revisits day in, day out - are…wait for it… the downstairs sofa cushions. She uses her dusty and (often expensive) toys to make walls in 'rooms' for her dolls and teddies. She uses her imagination to repurpose, reuse and reimagine those prescriptive toys, and turn the sofa cushions into dens, obstacle courses and houses. If we can use this comparison in play, then I imagine a child centric version of education would look similar. Younger people have no agency; they are rarely allowed the liberty of being

free, but rather enveloped in societal impressions of remaining safe and in view, interacting with our choice of play things, educational toys, spaces and environments. What would education look like if children and young people had the opportunity to build it themselves?

Appendix D: Vignette Three: May 2023, (Appendix D) Thoughts on Derrida's text speech and writing - language, lexicon and meaning

Words on a page appear the same to those who speak that language. Reading exam specifications, or educational policy without thought or application holds the same value to all who encounter it. The application of meaning and interpretation is laced in the reader's personal experience, or their standpoint, or their upbringing, or their background, or any particular value or belief that they knowingly or unknowingly place onto the written word, or as Bojesen (2021) comments 'writing and teaching may reach destinations for which they were not explicitly intended' (p.118). Just as with the vision of a teacher being different in everyone's mind, the reading of educational policy or guidelines for examination criteria is different depending on experience. Teachers then have the power and ability to speak this interpretation to their students, or colleagues, laced with their own understanding and interpretation. Playfulness is a way of interpreting meaning differently (Olusoga, 2019), yet it is absent from many secondary school pedagogies (see section 3.4.3). This, in Derrida's understanding, makes the speech more powerful than the writing. The interpretation allows for new thought and development to happen. The way in which the written information is delivered cannot be harnessed in the writing of the information, but only through the speaking of it. Omissions, additions, and emphasis may change how the text is perceived, delivered and understood. Teachers of different disciplinary backgrounds apply their own learnings onto photography pedagogies and curricula. Poststructural thought illustrates the instability of text on its own to evidence truths, as [poststructural thought] 'is always threatened by another substitution, another interpretation' (St. Pierre, 2024, p.6).

Make a map, not a tracing. The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome … The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, p.12)

I have constant thoughts surrounding maps. They seem to crop up in everything. I am used to using mapping as a pedagogical tool for students, for them to mind map their initial ideas. What the use of these mind maps is, whether they are valuable to the student, to me to understand their ideas, or as an assessment, is another question to be asked. They are deemed useful in organisation of ideas, knowledge acquisition and idea generation according to Periera et al. (2018). I find it difficult to organise myself, remember appointments, understand sequencing in curriculum, assessment and the calendar year. Writing lists, making maps and making connections between points help me as a teacher, in planning projects and cementing understanding or suggesting connecting themes. Mind maps help me organise my thoughts. I am constantly thinking of maps to organise thoughts for this research. As mentioned in the prelude, I struggle with the linearity of a document as vast as this, so being able to make connections in maps assists me in working through emergent ideas. Thinking in a Deleuzian way and through the lens of assemblage theory, I think of everything as tiles, interchangeable in sequence, order and hierarchy, depending on the need. But whilst looking at it singularly, students are themselves rhizomes, whilst the education model itself does trace things that came before, but often in too rigid of a sense. A map with a singular route (curriculum map) does not allow the exploration of altering, reversing, modifying, in time and space, that O'Sullivan (2006, p.35) suggests. Creativity maps its own terrain by following these steps. Do we restrict this with the photographic education model and/or exam frameworks? Is the education model the root to the rhizome, and the creativity sitting above this? Creativity could exist above structure and central systems, as Irwin suggests (2013). When searching for collage materials, I am drawn to vintage maps in charity shops. There is something beautifully nostalgic and cinematic about an old map of a European country, or a hillside in Yorkshire, that has been worn to simply folds of paper, the symbols remaining the same, the dashed paths, light blue rivers and tiny place names that conjure pastel coloured houses and unexplored woodland. I use old maps in my own collage practice, as a literal nod to places when the collage is based around a geographical space. There is a link to the Deleuzian nomadic wandering, the metaphorical breaking of paths in education and creating desire paths, and Tim Ingold's walking in the environment to embody knowledge (2010). Barbara Leckie (2021) likens the creation of desire paths (paths created away from planned infrastructure routes) to tangents and ideas created when committing to a research design that does not allow for movement of thinking, or perhaps not committing to a strict educational model that disallows freedom and independence in its development.

Appendix F: Vignette Five: June 2023, (Appendix F) Thoughts on interconnectedness, collage and authorship

For me, the joining of information happens in the making of visual work. In order to make sense of what is happening, I need to pull things apart and put them together. I realise that positioning collage and assemblage in a relationship is risky, given the easily misconceived notion of assemblage being the putting together of things. There is a beginning and an end to the way I collage. I start with nothing, I gather materials, I arrange, I rearrange, I stick, and then more often than not, I do not revisit them. The idea of adding to collage works is not something I would do personally, but I would be happy to collaborate on a collage if that were the intention from the start, moving the piece back and forth, choosing, sticking, carefully considering what would add to the overall value of the piece. Having someone add to a collage I have considered finished feels like an act of vandalism, like a motivated act of violence towards my choice of creative output. This feeling surprises me, given the collaborative nature I possess more generally. I talk openly, I like to discuss ideas, and I have been described to 'as wearing my heart on my sleeve' emotionally. I ask students continually to revisit work, to refine it, to add to it, to develop it further. If this is so important to practice, why was it so difficult for me to do it in my own collage practice?

Appendix G: Vignette Six: February 2025 (Appendix G) Some notes on using 'on'

Using the title 'on' a subject alludes to expertise in an area, making comment on a subject of interest. I see it more as an indication of musings and thought processes on a subject, rather than the finiteness of being an expert. 'On' poses a suggestion of caution, and conjures a visual of balancing, on an edge, on a shape, on an idea, visiting and passing through, rather than remaining still for a period. I pondered around the reason I felt it was necessary for me to occasionally adopt the use of it in my own writing; I remember being part of a seminar or lecture that was discussing how to maintain research focus. My memory does not serve me well for the contextual specifics of the session, but I remember writing down 'notes on leaving'. The poetic nature of departing and returning to writing in this way stayed with me and influenced how I then approached my work. From that point on, I would leave myself notes on leaving the work, so that when I returned to it, I would understand what my train of thought or objective was at that time. The result of this was a messy document littered with often shouty capital notes, highlighted in visceral neon yellow in order not to be missed. These notes ranged from the ridiculous, to the motivational, to the exhausted, to the inspired.

Appendix H: (Micro) Vignette Seven: (Appendix H) January 2025

I liked a loose plan in pencil, I liked having the solid skeleton of knowing that the work was going to be framed by assemblage theory, rhizomatic thinking and my role as an a/r/tographer. The rest of the research did not have a plan.

Appendix I: Vignette Eight: November 2024 (Appendix I). Dwelling and falling in the cracks of ethnography

Lather (2001) looks for the 'breaks and jagged edges of methodological practices' (p.202) and 'focus[es) on what is becoming in the data: discontinuities, ruptures, the unexpected, contingent, the stabilised configurations, and the beginnings of the possible (Lather, 2017, p.8).

Ethnography can be situated as a ruin 'to foreground the limits and necessary misfirings of the project' (Lather, 2001, p.202). Feminist thinking and principles have led me to attempt 'disrupting the authority of the researcher as a patriarchal hierarchical science' (Schultz, 2017, p.207) and make attempts to blur the distinction between researcher and researched. My perception of achieving a 'textbook' research study began in the planning of my proposal. Research on paper seems very straightforward: what could possibly change or go wrong? You research the field, you conduct your study, you collect the data, you analysis said data, you talk about the findings, you finish your research. Except, reality has very different ideas. Becoming a researcher is a difficult role to step into. Along with the total and utter imposter syndrome, you are given guidance and handbooks, but nothing can prepare you for the unpredictability of how things will go. For me, it was the time between the steps. Life really, really, monumentally got in the way of research. Sometimes that was a blessing, sometimes that was a curse. I got in the way of my research through procrastination and sometimes, blatant denial. At other times, it was the disbelief it would ever get finished. The process of collecting data seemed simple enough. But, I work in the setting. Moving between the roles of researcher and teacher seemed treacherous; I imagined it like having one foot on a wobbly rope bridge, and the other on a cliff, pulling myself up with every single bit of strength I could muster. Sometimes, the looks I got from students and teachers made me question who in fact they were looking at. Were they looking at me, the teacher, or me the researcher? Could they see the wobbly rope bridge?

The bell went for lesson change and I looked down at my (very official and professional looking) clipboard.

Was this clipboard a prop, a costume, a disguise?

A marker to scream out, hang on, I'm researching, not teaching! It didn't work.

I had written three lines during that observation because I ended up dealing with a pastoral issue and helping someone in a different class with their coursework. But an unexpected outcome of transcribing discussions was noticing the amount of times students would interrupt them, trying to get eagerly to their lessons in a way I had never witnessed before now. 'Hi, Miss, can we come in?' Their safe space, their sanctuary, they enjoyed being there. Either that, or it was pouring down outside. My neatly thought out plan turned out not to be a 'regime of truth' and needed looking at once more (St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000, p.1).Realising I am not superhuman and hearing my plan laughing at me, with its neat little steps and ambitious timelines, setting me out on the wobbly rope bridge, with no looking back. What am I doing wrong? Weeks would go by with overdue assessments, having a cold, finding some long lost project that I

could procrastinate with for a bit longer. I would ask the version of me that was neither researcher or teacher, 'why am I unable to get research right?'

Then, one day, whilst out walking, I realised that all of the things I was experiencing was the knowledge relating to the research focus I was trying to illuminate. I began to 'dwell in the cracks' (Schultz, 2017, p.509) of these so-called failures, shed my clipboard disguise, accepted the research process and took an almighty leap onto the cliff, leaving the wobbly rope bridge behind me. What seemed like failures of my own were in fact 'ruins' of the research methodologies (Lather, 2013, p.761) that I needed to get lost within, and gain the courage to remain in spaces that felt unstable. Looking back at the rope bridge from the safety of the cliff, I realised I needed the wobbles. I needed the big deep breaths that being wobbly made me breathe. I needed the focus points and looking for detail when the world seemed shaky below my feet. I needed the new discoveries of every step on the bridge to guide the next step more confidently. In a similar way to poststructuralism and feminism existing alongside one another in a bid to question 'trouble foundational ontologies, methodologies and epistemologies, in general, and education, in particular' (St. Pierre and Pillow, 2000, p2), I need my multifaceted roles of teacher and researcher to exist beside one another, to help sit in the cracks of the ruins that were appearing, and allow them to become the 'as-yet unnamable which begins to proclaim itself' (Derrida, 1978, p.293) and allow the 'stories to be found in the moments' (Sutton, 2020, p.713).

Appendix J: Vignette Nine: October 2024 (Appendix J) On students moving, and me remaining still

The research naturally moved from student based discussions that helped shape the foundations of the enquiry, to largely visual ethnographic and autoethnographic methods. On reflection, at the time, these decisions were not made consciously but perhaps were influenced by the movement and shift of students within those groups, and my own teaching commitments moving away from teaching photography. Instead of discussing photography education, I subconsciously moved to documenting the learning environment through photographs, the way this environment was in a constant state of flux, and the meaning it contributed to the overall research focus. One of the realisations I have had during the research, when considering movement, is that the students who were part of the initial discussions left school before I had finished the research. I realised that the core group of participants I had begun the research with are now in different parts of the world, some at university, some in employment, whilst others have grown from young adolescents to young adults and are in the final throes of completing their education. The idea of ethnography being a partial knowledge meant that I felt as a researcher that this study was owed to the student participants, so to continue, the insights had to be attributed to what was connected to them - learning environment, pedagogy and their teachers.

Appendix K: Vignette Ten: October 2024 (Appendix K) Being and becoming

Although I exist within a research community as an early career researcher, I have also felt that my method of working as a practitioner has not always fit the traditional role of a researcher. I am much more creative and messy - rather than dependable and careful. Avner et al. (2014) define messiness as being unable to untangle from emotional, values, desires. Creative processes stem from such aspects, plus the physicality of materials, being surrounded by artefacts and clutter, as the stereotypical image of an artist would conjure. When studying how people reacted to order and disordered environments respectively, Vohs et al. (2013) found that personality traits such as being creative and having an open mindedness that would allow for deviation or problem solving were found in those who could be comfortable in a disordered environment.

During doctoral study, I have felt personal pressure to change my way of working to fit the traditional role of a researcher, or the 'conventional, reductionist and sometimes oppressive' format that is recognised by scientific work (St. Pierre, 2011, p.618). But doing this would not be authentic and would not be indicative of the research I aim to undertake. Rejection of the known and the understood in academic research, or engaging with different modes and language in a doctoral thesis, should not be seen as signifiers of success or failure as Honan and Bright (2016) argue, but as the willingness and authenticity to engage with the rhizomatic logic that means knowledge may be required to take on new modes of delivery in order to present itself in the most authentic and engaging ways. This is supported by Kara (2015) and Samishina et al. (2009), who advocate for ensuring that the chosen method is the most appropriate and authentic to interpret and represent data. This is similar to a differentiated teaching practice, to ensure inclusivity of learning and employing multiple pedagogical approaches (Deppeler, 2015).

Introducing the 'new' role as a researcher into the research setting (my place of employment) evoked feelings of stress, anxiety and being unsettled, as what was familiar to me then took on a different strangeness. These feelings then impacted on the other roles in my life; the guilt of having so much time writing and studying, and frustration at not being able to communicate succinctly the ideas I felt so strongly about. These feelings are common in doctoral study, Pollard (2009) writes, and this can be somewhat connected to the ideal of what researchers should look like, and the heroism that can present through the lack of openness and honesty in research. This notion was the catalyst for Cardoza et al. (2021) to establish a patchwork ethnographic collective, when researchers from many disciplines began to discuss their difficulties in working in a non-traditional manner. Reading Günel et al., (2023) assisted me in understanding that all of these feelings, and the things happening around the fieldwork, were contributing to a patchwork ethnography. Drawing parallels between a/r/tography and patchwork ethnography was natural, given the shared idea of acknowledging the difficulties (and joys) of holding multiple roles, and allowing them to exist alongside one

another, rather than rejecting one or maintaining a consistent battle of power for whatever was needed most at any one time (Günel et al., 2024).

Hayden (2024) discusses the role of the ethnographer being a huge personal undertaking, and one that is not discussed as much as potentially it could, or should be. Choosing to include autoethnographic methods helped situate my own responsibilities too, and could be considered a real world view of how it is to exist as a researcher, a teacher, a mother, a wife, amongst all of the other roles we naturally embody throughout our lives. An example of this is my daughter. My daughter was 18 months old when I started to study at doctoral level. At the time of writing, she is 7 years old. As a parallel to the research timeline, I have raised a toddler into a bright, curious child.

Writing a personal account like this may buck the traditional expectation of research theses, but as Alava and Robertson argue, choosing patchwork methods needs a degree of openness and commitment to the gaps, choices and challenges of choosing to research in this way (Alava and Robertson, 2022). A beautifully eloquent way of describing this (especially as a visual thinker) is Cardoza's description of making 'the [patchwork] seams visible' (Cardoza et al., 2021). Hayden brings another beautiful metaphor of how to view patchwork methods in the context of women researchers. Patchwork quilts have traditionally been a female vocation. The patches are made individually and brought together to tell a bigger or fuller story (Hunter, 2019). The patches work alongside one another to communicate, but not imitate, each one bringing something different to the conversation. The patchwork metaphor can be linked to the use of a/r/tography enquiry. Springgay et al. (2005) describe the unfolding of living inquiry as threads of fabric being untangled and looked at, before being rewoven, perhaps differently, perhaps more tightly or loosely, with additions or subtractions dependent on what the observation has detailed. Throughout the research, there is a theme of joining together, through assemblage, through collage, through photography education being perceived as a put together curriculum of sorts, through my own roles being joined. The notion of sewing, joining of seams or patchwork emerges again in the consideration of autoethnographic vignettes. Inclusion of the liminal experiences in autoethnographic writing reveal the fractures, sutures and seams of self, interacting with others in the 'context of researching lived experience' (Spry, 2001, p.712), and La Jevic and Springgay (2008) refer to the 'fabric of everyday life' (p.70). Whilst reflecting here, I find myself looking at a photograph of me with my newborn daughter. What strikes me is the amount of fabric that surrounds us both, the joining of the crochet stitches, and soft texture of the muslin, the organic cotton of newborn baby clothes, my black and white shirt just in view, adapted in order to allow for ease of breastfeeding. These fabrics represent the coming together of multiple roles, a woman *becoming* parent, a parent becoming comfortable, a baby becoming part of the family.

Appendix L: August 2024 Vignette Eleven: (Appendix L) Becoming Deleuzian

When undertaking periods of doctoral writing, I found that the assemblage and collage aspects of working were starting to influence how I was putting words down on a page. No longer being able to navigate the 100+ page document that sat before me, I began to work on individual sections according to day, thoughts or theme choice. This made me feel calmer and more organised as a researcher, as it meant I could focus more closely, could navigate it more easily, and could make more sense of where it should (or could) be positioned in the longer body of text. I have swapped paragraphs, whole chapters and sections around continuously. I had started to think in only rhizomatic and assemblage fashions. I found myself subconsciously working on creating collages with found materials in meeting rooms, by adding to documents that existed around me. I started to map ideas and concepts more often rather than list them. I started to connect ideas together, move them around, cut them up and ask… What if? I had begun to become Deleuzian.

The continual flux that research provides has given me a number of headaches, and a number of times where I have abandoned writing with little regard to when I may return to it. I realise now that each exit from the research was a period of reflexivity and reflection on what was happening or going on in the research. I worked through the data preparation, collection and analysis in a more conventional methodological way. I can now recognise this as the 'long preparation' St. Pierre (2018) discusses as doing what a lot of researchers do, and bypassing intense interaction with theory and jumping straight to what felt like the bones of the study; the methodology. I share St. Pierre's statement that this theoretical lightbulb went off a little too late for me to act in any other manner. However, going through this long preparation, and subsequently being confident that the rhizomatic ideas I had prior to data collection, are still valid, I am able to visualise how this situates the research. The enquiry itself has laid the foundational knowledge that I as a researcher needed, to cement the ideas that I felt were happening in photography education and has provided me an outlook whereby I am now able to see photography education for what it is, and the assemblage blocks that impact on its formation, delivery and future. St. Pierre (2018) mentions that she would not repeat a study in a different style given the chance. Even after a huge stage of flux and reflexivity, I would not change the way the study has been conducted thus far, as it has provided me the aforementioned knowledge from which to now launch into a rhizo- and visual analysis that is situated in poststructuralism. This section of long preparation became a major enquiry, and now, the experimentation became my focus. I felt a physical shift in my mindset, where I was able to rely on the findings and research of this section, in a similar fashion to the assurance that a subject specialist teacher feels when they are confident in teaching foundational knowledge and have the space to take pedagogical risks or create a new educational space in their teaching.

Appendix M: Vignette Twelve: March 2025 (Appendix M) Like the rhizome, the learning environment has no start or end: Autoethnographic becomings (the final vignette)

The Dadaists loved collage, and they made use of non-aesthetically pleasing, or non-conventional materials that surrounded them at any given time (Forcer, 2015). They explored the narrative of the world through assembling paper, text and manufactured items. Dadaists rejected the conventional and the logical, in pursuit of fun and nonsensical work following the horrors of World War 1 (Forcer, 2015). A worldwide pandemic took place shortly before I began to collect my data for this research. The research was planned before the first cases of Covid-19, and one of my last trips away before the enforced lockdown was to discuss it at the UoS. This was at a time during which media channels were writing through positivity and hope, with headlines suggesting Covid-19 would all be over in eight weeks. I then spent my days in the lockdown collaging and being creative, just as the Dadaists did almost a hundred years before. The world was, and is now, a very different place, yet we continue to seek joy, fun and playfulness in testing or confusing times. This need could be likened to the Dada rejection of logic (Young, 2009).

This thesis has found that photography education works well when it is playful, when the collaboration between staff and students becomes a space where all can take creative risks and have fun doing so. Environments that stimulate creativity are often visually detailed devoid of cooler colours and in view of natural environments (McCoy and Evans, 2002). Human interaction and experiences such as the London trip were highly valued, given its proximity to the time of the pandemic, during which no trips were taken. Collaborating with one another on whiteboards was an after-effect of a building fire, a direct result of forced change in the environment (section X). The environment that I still work in has a 2m2 squared box of duct tape on the floor around my desk to try to prevent students from entering whilst we were social distancing, a ghostly marker of the time that has passed.

The research findings have illuminated a safe space for me to reflect on and explore my own teaching practice, motivations, and the doctoral research journey through autoethnographic writing. I never intended for this research to be as autoethnographic as it subsequently became. At its conception my role was multifaceted in terms of a/r/tography, but I still visualised a distance. The research was its own 'thing', I was myself, I was *doing* the research. The messiness and interconnectivity of this in reality was something I could not have ever anticipated (Masny, 2013). Doctoral study has been an emotional, yet enlightening rollercoaster that has nourished, warped and shaped my ideas and thinking around photography education. The distance that I had visualised in the beginning had not fully taken into account my own disciplinary background and its impact on photography education. I had not considered the impact of choosing photography education as a career on my own life, and how my own life had shaped what I thought of as an entirely separate disciplinary background. Everyday experiences of being a mother, a wife, friend, colleague,

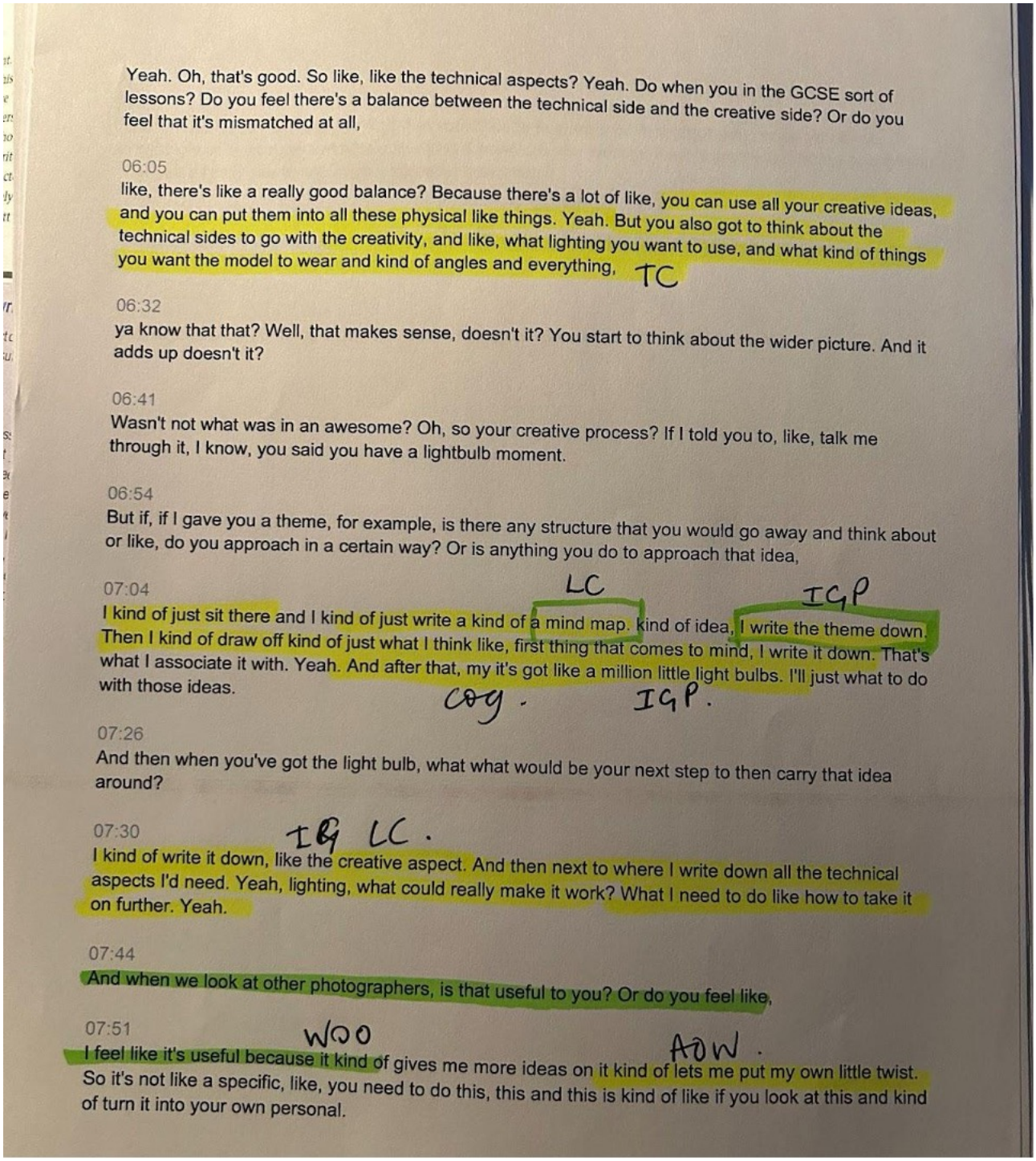
a female, became bigger in the visualisation I mention earlier in this paragraph, and meanwhile the fact that I hold a photography degree began to lessen and fade. I never expected to write about my process as much as I ended up doing, nor that the space that writing allowed would reveal so many openings, understandings and illuminations around teacher disciplinary backgrounds and learning environments being much bigger, complex and unwieldy than I first thought. Transitional spaces that I considered 'non-research' became the areas where my thinking was at its peak; train journeys, dog walks, lying in bed at night Considering both photography education and research poststructurally allowed the space for the research to be fluid, for it to be moulded, and with the boundaries never fixed. The result of all the factors has allowed for an authentic narrative of the research period, and the assemblage that existed within it that made up photography education.

The research has given me a chance to reflect, for the first time in over a decade of working in education, on the decisions often made subconsciously, and on how and why the days unfold in the ways that they do. Seeing this happen through an ethnographic lens was fascinating, each detail a technicolour page turner that I could not put down. In the prologue, I describe my styles of working, my struggles with linearity and how I think in tangents. My life has existed around its own assemblage, with life events and experiences causing their own ruptures to the research process, breaks (both enforced and procrastination) having to be taken, and all the while, the structure of photography education has carried on, both with and without me in it. When approaching the 'end' of the research, I started to make collages to try and visualise the endpoint. I reflected on this as a point of departure, or closure, for what has been a seven year long journey. Collage and research share non-linearity, both are layers of 'theoretical, artistic and intersubjective knowledges' (de Rijke, 2023, p.304) so it felt pertinent for me to conceptualise the journey in this manner.

Appendix N: Questionnaire responses (June-July 2022)

What part does photography play in your life?	Do you think photography education is necessary? Can you give reasons?	What do you think you should learn about in photography education?	For what reason did you choose to study photography?	If you were writing a phoography course, what would you include?	How do you think your education in photography helps you in day-to-day dealings with photography?	Do you think anything restrains your creativity in photography?	In contrast, do you think anything supports your creativity in photography?	Are you going to study photography in your next educational stage? Give reasons for your answers where possible	To what extent does your teachers influence your creative choices in photography?
Creative outlet/started as a hobby	I think it could be a good subject included in younger years like art, music and drama are included because it allows students to get to know what they're interested in rather than them having to just jump in at gcse	What makes a good photo, different ways that photographers change images or use them (in projects, installations)	It interested me before and I liked the sound of the course	Definitely exploring more physical techniques like collage, sewing, scratching etc and a bit of experiment with dark room and cyanotypes but also a more structured way of teaching digital editing	Projects are produced quicker but also at a higher quality and I can also evaluate my own work a lot better	Time restraints and other commitments	English and drama help my creativity because they make me think more deeply	I'm not as I would like to keep it as a hobby rather than a career	If the teacher has a lot of experience with a certain aspect of my project I am more likely to use their ideas so it depends on the project and the teacher
Photography shows me different perspectives of life. It can show different views of what people perceive than what I see of everything.	Yes, because Photography helps up build our creative side and explore more about ourselves.	How cameras work, different ways to produce a photo and how to edit pictures.	I liked taking pictures so I wanted to improve on how I take pictures to make it look more better along with other skills I learn in Photography.	Include many types of ways to produce photos, and how effective they are depending on what the student wants to make in their work.	A little bit, it can help me how to angle the camera and if I should come up close or not when taking pictures.	Not really, It's quite a free subject so you can do anything to do with Photography by taking pictures and editing anything.	Yes it can give me lots of ideas of what to do in anything creative as in Photography, you get many ideas from previous Photographers.	Sadly not, because I want to focus on my main subjects but Photography is a great subject to take in the future.	They can give use examples and ideas we can use in our work, which is great because more ideas the more work I can produce.
It's a way of exploring new things and capturing the beautiful things	Yes I think it is as it can help unlock an open mind and really open your eyes	Ways people manipulate images to make them see what it's really	I was interested in the subject and I saw the past work and wanted to do something equally amazing		Angles , lighting and really thinking about the detail being captured	No	Miss really help draws our more creativity and more ideas to really expand	No I won't due to the overwhelming coursework I am expecting next year but I would love to help the younger students with there's	Heavily
a school subject	yes, because it's a type of art that everyone can try	i think we should learn about different photographers and techniques	i enjoy the subject a lot	lots of trying new techniques	i understand compositions and other types of art better	no	yes, all of the art teachers help and support me	yes I'm taking it next year as an A level	they support and guide me but don't change my choices
Photography plays a big part in my life as it allows me to show off my skills of my work and I also enjoy.	If you are interested in doing photography for the future then yes photography education is necessary as you learn the different areas of photography.	We can learn the different areas in photography such as different media. We should be able to experience a lot of new ideas which will later lead us on our own way. This lets us choose a path which is most suitable and enjoyable for you.	As my dad is also a photographer in his free time, I got to experience a little bit which I instantly became interested in. Because of this, i wanted to experience other types of photography. I chose to study photography as I enjoy taking pictures but also using editing apps to make the image more better.	What media is used, what went well and what when bad, the experiments I did, developments and what i think of my work overall.	It helps me as I learn different types of photography. Whether I like it or not, I would always like to at least experiment it once. By learning more, it helps me understand photography more.	Yes, sometimes my ideas go too overboard which doesn't make the outcome look so nice.	Yes, supporters such as classmates and teachers help me.	Yes, I am taking it for A-level. My interests to photography has grown even more since i first started it. I chose to do it for A-level as it is my favourite subject and enjoy it a lot.	My teachers direct me to the right pathway which I am thankful for. They give me more ideas which I instantly am interested in.
Although I will not pursue photography as my future career, it still has its own important role and place within my life.	From my perspective, photography is a basic and needy skill that will be used in many situations and due to this, I believe having enough knowledge to work with a camera and knowing the basic components of it is necessary and should be taught within the educational system.	Other than exploring through different techniques and themes, the idea that art is a large field with no limits and that it's alright to think 'too outside the box' since that defines creativity (sometimes)	I chose photography since I was highly passionate and interested towards this hobby and wanted to develop my skills further even though I knew my personal free time would be frequently taken away by this subject.	Perhaps some stages of group works (?) because this might help students to see things from different perspectives and view them differently (as well as understanding and respecting their perspective since there is no wrong answer), helping them in both creativity and day-to-day life situations.	It can be used as a way to relieve the daily stress out; develop your creative side which can be used in many crucial and critical situations within general life; or perhaps create new and strong connections with people whom you find interesting and enjoyable to spend the time with.	There might be some limitations - for my situation: being a boarder and doing this subject as a GCSE - but generally, our brain and mindset.	My personal feelings and surrounding environment are usually the two things that have the most impact on my creativity.	Personally, I would love to since I highly enjoy photography as both a hobby and way to spend my time. However, it is highly contrasting with my future aims and ambitions and as a result, I believe it's highly unlikely of me to choose photography as one of my A level options.	Since teachers are more experienced in this field, they have a higher and better understanding on what would be the most suitable and what matches with other pieces and materials within your work. Therefore, I would say from my experience, teachers didn't restrict but rather extend my field of view.

Appendix O: Transcribed page example (2023)



Yeah. Oh, that's good. So like, like the technical aspects? Yeah. Do when you in the GCSE sort of lessons? Do you feel there's a balance between the technical side and the creative side? Or do you feel that it's mismatched at all,

06:05
like, there's like a really good balance? Because there's a lot of like, you can use all your creative ideas, and you can put them into all these physical like things. Yeah. But you also got to think about the technical sides to go with the creativity, and like, what lighting you want to use, and what kind of things you want the model to wear and kind of angles and everything, TC

06:32
ya know that that? Well, that makes sense, doesn't it? You start to think about the wider picture. And it adds up doesn't it?

06:41
Wasn't not what was in an awesome? Oh, so your creative process? If I told you to, like, talk me through it, I know, you said you have a lightbulb moment.

06:54
But if, if I gave you a theme, for example, is there any structure that you would go away and think about or like, do you approach in a certain way? Or is anything you do to approach that idea,

07:04
I kind of just sit there and I kind of just write a kind of a mind map. kind of idea, I write the theme down. Then I kind of draw off kind of just what I think like, first thing that comes to mind, I write it down. That's what I associate it with. Yeah. And after that, my it's got like a million little light bulbs. I'll just what to do with those ideas.

LC IGP COG. IGP.

07:26
And then when you've got the light bulb, what what would be your next step to then carry that idea around?

07:30
IG LC.
I kind of write it down, like the creative aspect. And then next to where I write down all the technical aspects I'd need. Yeah, lighting, what could really make it work? What I need to do like how to take it on further. Yeah.

07:44
And when we look at other photographers, is that useful to you? Or do you feel like,

07:51
WOO AOW.
I feel like it's useful because it kind of gives me more ideas on it kind of lets me put my own little twist. So it's not like a specific, like, you need to do this, this and this is kind of like if you look at this and kind of turn it into your own personal.