Teaching and Learning
Ethical Research Competence
in Qualitative Research:
An Action Research Inquiry

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester
for the degree of Professional Doctorate in Counselling
in the Faculty of Humanities

2008

James William Byrne

School of Education
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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a detailed account of an Action Research inquiry into the teaching and learning of research ethics in a particular university department, in a small university in the north of England.

Because I was concerned that competence in research ethics was not being actively pursued and achieved by my Doctoral peers - and that I also did not know how to proceed to master this area of knowledge and skill - I therefore set out to investigate the teaching and learning of ethical research competence, as defined in the Glossary, in one university department.

My approach was to design and implement a five phase Action Research process, one phase at a time. Each phase included a number of cycles. And each cycle consisted of the following steps: Plan an intervention > Take the action > and Reflect/Conclude about the findings. Through this process, with up to sixteen postgraduate students and one tutor as my research respondents, I found that there is strong evidence of a substantial problem with the teaching and learning of research ethics in the “School of Social Care”; and a logical concomitant necessity for curriculum change. In particular, I discovered that most of my Doctoral student respondents want and need a significant educational input (of two to six days duration) on moral philosophy and research ethics. My results also established that the main tutor with responsibility for curriculum design and implementation on the Doctoral programme agrees with the need to begin teaching moral philosophy as the foundation of research ethics and professional practice.

In pursuing my literature review, alongside my action research activities, I found that there are some indications in the literature that what is required is the teaching of duty ethics and utilitarianism, combined with elements of virtue ethics. The aim is to produce competence in: ethical sensitivity (or the ability to recognize ethical research problems); moral reasoning; ethical decision-making; and implementation of moral research action plans. Other cultural perspectives are accorded parity of esteem in Appendix One.

My principal contribution to knowledge is that, since, initially, Doctoral tutors, as well as Doctoral students, will need to teach themselves ethical research competence – because the current generation of Doctoral research tutors have not been taught research ethics – we need a system to facilitate that self-teaching. For this purpose, I have developed an Ethical Research Thinking Heuristic. That heuristic contains elements of my own “parallel process” of learning to think competently about research ethics. Beyond that, I have developed a six-module, competence based approach to the teaching and learning of ethical research competence, as presented in Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 of Chapter 5.

I have also developed an Ethical Research Decision-Making Model for use in resolving ethical research dilemmas. And finally, I have developed a way to operationalize the concept of ethical mindfulness in Section 3.4 of Chapter 3.
DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Dr William West, at the University of Manchester, for getting me interested in the subject of research ethics.

Dr Clare Lennie, at the University of Manchester, for encouraging me to pursue my interest in research ethics.

“Drs Smith, Jones and Brown, at the University of Minerva, UK, for their permission to conduct my research in the School of Social Care, Welfare and Human Learning, within their university”.¹

“The postgraduate students in the School of Social Care, without whom there would be no data upon which to base this thesis”.

Steph Adam, my peer reviewer, who read my draft chapters and asked some challenging and thought-provoking questions.

And my examiners:

Dr Lynne Gabriel and Dr Richard Fay.

¹ The “University of Minerva” is the fictional name of the actual location of my research. The name has been fictionalized to protect that university, its good name, and the identities of the staff and students who participated in my research. The convention that I use for fictionalized text combines quotation marks and italic text. All other text in this thesis is either my report of a factual or verifiable or socially agreed event or object, or my restatement of the views of respondents in my research, or authors I have reviewed.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James William Byrne holds an MA in Education degree from the Open University (1994); a postgraduate Diploma (With Distinction) in Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy, from Rusland College, Bath (2003); BA credits in Maths and Technology from the Open University (1982); and the Ruskin Diploma in Labour Studies (comprising economics, politics and industrial relations), Oxford, 1975. Other qualifications include certificates in counselling and psychotherapy, and the Further Education Teachers Certificate.

He has conducted eight or more research projects as the principal or sole researcher in a paid capacity, including the following.

1. An action research project in appropriate technology for rural communities, in Bangladesh, 1978;

2. A survey of the training needs of unemployed people at the job centre in Rochdale in 1985;

3. An enquiry into the personal effectiveness training needs of a group of unemployed men in Dewsbury, in 1990.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Setting the scene

“None of us is terribly different from the worst among us, and the banal mechanisms of our ordinary lives can, if we aren’t careful, give rise to the most hideous of crimes”.

(Baggini and Fosl, 2007: 106).

This thesis reports on a systematic attempt to investigate the teaching and learning of ethical research competence in one institution. Ethical research competence is conceptualized as the ability to conduct an ‘ethics risk assessment’ upon a Doctoral research proposal, plan or action. Ethical research competence is defined as comprising certain components, including: the ability to recognize when ethical problems are present, known as ‘ethical sensitivity’; moral reasoning capability, which includes elements of moral philosophy and critical (or logical) thinking; ethical decision making, which includes the use of optimizing strategies; and moral action and implementation of plans, proposal and decisions.

The structure contains conventional elements and unconventional elements. The breakdown of the text into chapters that deal with specific topics follows a fairly conventional format. (See section 1.2 below). However, within chapters there are a number of deviations from convention. In particular, these deviations are driven by the spiral nature of my Action Research (AR) process.

Much as I would like to follow the conventional format in detail, for the sake of simplicity, I am strongly aware of the need to preserve my integrity as a researcher. If I believed that following the conventional structure wholly and completely would result in better research outcomes, I would do just that. However, I do not believe that that is the case. Firstly, as Dick (1993, 1997b) observes, an Action Research study calls for an unconventional thesis structure, because an action research study does not begin from the literature, but rather from an existing practical problem.. Secondly, as Wall (2006) points out:
“What I see as most significant is that traditional research and writing conventions create only the illusion that the knowledge produced is more legitimate…” (Page 4).

The third area of deviation from convention in this thesis is in relation to reflexivity. Because I have located myself at the centre of the research and eschewed all preterence that I can ‘step back’ and let the data speak for themselves, my voice necessarily takes up the stance of the narrator of the narrator’s journey, and not an uncontested voice of truth driven by a ‘god’s eye view from nowhere’, as it is described by McLeod (2001: 29). As Wall (2006: 3) comments:

“The research community is relatively comfortable with the concept of reflexivity, in which the researcher pauses for a moment to think about how his or her presence, standpoint, or characteristics might have influenced the outcome of the research process”.

However some readers might feel somewhat uncomfortable by my constant presence as the narrator of my own journey. My voice is a constant reminder that this is “human science” – McLeod (1994/2003: 191) and in human science the concept of “objective truth” is severely challenged. In my own case, in Chapter 3 I will describe my “contextual constructionist” approach to understanding human knowledge and the nature of reality.

Despite these caveats about so-called scientific objectivity, this thesis is a systematic and rigorous case study of the teaching and learning of ethical research competence in one specific context, “The University of Minerva”.

My thesis is mainly structured by the five phases of my research journey; and within each phase, by my action research spiral – Taylor (1994); Dick (1997a). The five phases are listed and illustrated in section 1.2 below; and the action research cycle is illustrated in Figure 1.1, which follows, on the next page.

2 In this thesis, I have adopted the convention of fictionalizing all references to the site of my research, to ensure anonymity of the staff, students and the institution. To indicate such a fictionalized statement, I have adopted the convention of using both “quotation marks” and “italic” text.
The 'V' in boxes 3, 4 and 5 represents the use of Gowin's V-heuristic – from Novak and Gowin (1984) - in each of these steps. The V-heuristic is illustrated in Figure 2.4 below.


The structure of my thesis – as shown in Section 1.2 below - is designed to take the reader through the five phases of my research journey, from my first questionnaire to my final interview. In the process I will explore ethical research competence; what it may be; how it may be taught and learned; and whether it could be taught and learned more effectively. This will be a journey through a case study, involving some action research and some narrative emplotment; triangulated with dialectical feedback from research participants and observers, and linked to relevant literature.

However, at an early stage in my thinking about this research idea, I realized it would be unethical to engage in this research in my own

---

3 A 'phase' as conceptualized in my action research project is defined by distinction from a 'cycle'. A single cycle of research consists of a few discrete steps as follows: Plan; Act; Reflect/Conclude. A phase, on the other hand, is made up of a number of such cycles: one, two, three or more. One phase is also distinguished from another by: (a) commencing at different points in time; (b) having distinct goals; and (c) having distinct final outputs.
university department, as this could bring me into conflict with my tutors, and could cause some embarrassment for them. Because action research involves intervening in people’s lives, the requirement to think ethically is even higher than with many other forms of research, where harm to individuals may be less likely. (See: Taylor, 1994). I therefore had to find a university department where this idea would work, and also which would be protected by a shroud of anonymity. To ensure that anonymity, I must now tell the tale of choosing that department in the form of a fictionalized story. (Cf: Wellington et al. 2005: 158; McLeod 1994/2003, 2001). The essence of the story is true, but many of the details have been changed, and a storyline constructed, to protect the identity of the university, the department and the staff concerned:

“Over the past several years, I have developed an association with six universities in the north of England. I am acquainted with a number of postgraduate students and their supervisors. One such university is the University of Minerva. At that university I began to approach individuals, both students and tutors, in the School of Social Care, Welfare and Human Learning, with a view to conducting my research with them. In the beginning I worked with two individuals on a Doctoral programme. In my reports I have referred to them as Person No.1 and Person No.2”.

Extract from my Research Journal

I will occasionally use this approach of presenting sensitive information in the form of fictionalized (but essentially true) stories in later parts of this thesis, and wherever I do that I will use a combination of both italic typeface and “double quotation marks” to flag up the fact that I am introducing a fictionalized account. I will also normally, especially on first introducing a particular name or event/object, declare explicitly that it is a fictionalized account. Anything presented in that format is both based on a true core and heavily disguised in the form of a fictional narrative. Anything which is not presented in that format is based on local agreements, truth claims, collected data and/or the literature.
1.2. The Structure of this Thesis

The structure of this thesis is very close to the structure specified by the School of Education, University of Manchester. It is formed as follows:

1. Introduction;
2. Literature review;
3. Methodology;
4. Learning and Reflections (instead of Results and discussion); and:
5. Conclusion.

That is what I call the horizontal structure, as illustrated in Table 1.1 below.

I began to write this thesis on 7th September 2007, at 07.40 hrs, according to my computer records. I had already written more than 150,000 words in the form of mini-papers and narrative write-ups of various research activities, which underpin my research. (That has now risen to about thirty-nine papers, comprising between 250,000 and 300,000 words). Those papers and reports had begun as scribbles in my notebooks and journals, based on research plans and activities and my reading of the literature, and daily reflective activities (mainly in coffee shops, libraries and book shops), which were then collated and developed into academic papers. Those papers were submitted to my supervisors for their information; and sent back to my research participants – where appropriate – for their feedback.

The five phases that my research went through were as follows:

Phase One. Exploratory questions;
Phase Two. Teacher inquiry proposal;
Phase Three. Action research interventions;
Phase Four. Detailed questionnaires;

Phase Five. Two final ‘crunch questions’ for students; an interview with a tutor; and supplementary questions to students.

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<td>Content 3. Found evidence that respondents were largely non-conscious about research ethics and that their data/texts were therefore not reliable. Later concluded autobiographical narratives contain ‘nuggets of truth’…</td>
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**Table 1.1. My revised thesis structure (October 2007)**

The five phases are what I call the vertical structure of my research, as shown in Table 1.1, above. And the word ‘phase’ – as indicated above - is
used in the sense of a particular thread of enquiry, commencing at a specific point, and proceeding to an end point; and containing one, two, or more ‘cycles’ of plan>act>reflect/conclude proceedings. The horizontal structure is given by the core chapters of my thesis: Literature review; Methodology; Results and conclusions (or Learning and reflection).

This then is broadly the structure that I will follow in developing my thesis. The greying of the three columns with different shades indicates that there will be some considerable variation of the structure from chapter to chapter, to take account of the unique content of each chapter.

Table 1.1 might seem to have a linear format to the vertical axis – the five phases. However, in practice, within each phase I went through the steps of Kolb’s learning cycle – action; observations and reflections; forming conclusions; planning the next phase; and back to action. This is shown in slightly modified form in Figure 1.2, to clarify some sub-steps:

![Figure 1.2. Detailed Action Research Model.](Cf: Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 303). This is reducible to the three steps: Plan>Act>Reflect/Conclude.

As part of each phase of my research, I wrote up the cycle that I had worked through, and stored it as a section of my Research Journal. Thus the five phases of my research are, in effect, the five levels of the spiral
journey that I undertook in completing my research. (In Chapter 4, I will show that most of the five phases had three or four spiral cycles within the one phase).

1.3. My Research Questions

My original research questions were about what clients get from successful counselling and psychotherapy ‘treatments’, or experiences. However, I was unable to satisfy myself that I knew how to conduct a convincing risk assessment on the ethical implications of my research proposal. I simply tacked a statement of ‘no harm’ to the end of my research proposal, and added that I was not at all satisfied by this simple, formal statement, which was added for no other reason than that it ‘was required’.

My supervisor agreed with me that this was a problem, and suggested that I might benefit from pursuing that difficulty further. I therefore spent five academic terms studying research ethics, until I satisfied myself that I now knew how to conduct an ethics risk assessment. (See my report in Byrne, 2006a). In the process, I decided that my original research plan was too dangerous to take forward, as at least one of my research participants could have been harmed by the research. (This was published as Byrne, 2007a). The nature of the potential harm was the possibility of restimulating the distressing pain of pre-therapy traumatic experiences. (See Coyle, in Gabriel, 2005: 47. Also Pope, 1999).

I therefore needed to identify a new research project, and decided to investigate the nature of the teaching and learning of ethical research competence. (Since I, an A-grade scoring student, had struggled with this topic, it seemed likely that this would be a general problem for postgraduate students; and that was the inference I wanted to investigate. “However, I knew this would not be practicable or ethical in my own university

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4 At that point I was convinced that there was a problem here – a problem concerning how to think about research ethics – but it also seemed to me that this was not a ‘personal problem’, or a problem that would only affect me. And nothing that I have subsequently learned has changed this opinion. I think there is a widespread inability among postgraduate students to think and talk about research ethics, because they lack the vocabulary and skills to do so.
department; and so I decided to ask for permission to run my research at the University of Minerva"). The following questions emerged – slowly and painfully - out of that idea; initially implicitly; and gradually more and more explicitly and clearly:

1. How is the subject of research ethics taught at the University of Minerva?
2. How well is research ethics taught at the University of Minerva?
3. What’s missing (based on the answers to questions 1 and 2 above), and what could be improved?
4. How do postgraduate students at the University of Minerva try to learn research ethics?
5. Is that approach (described in the answer to question 4) effective, or could it be improved?

My contribution to knowledge will come out of answering those questions; and the extent of my success will be the extent to which I can provide guidance on improving the teaching and learning of ethical research competence. (Sections 4.5 and 4.6, and the recommendations section of Chapter 5 – Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 - show that I did succeed in making such a contribution to knowledge, including the design of a heuristic to guide thinking about research ethics, and another to facilitate ethical research decision-making; plus one competence based curriculum planning guide to the teaching of research ethics, and one to the learning of research ethics. In addition, I developed a way to operationalize the concept of ethical mindfulness, as shown in section 3.4 below).

1.4. The Basis of My Concern

My concern about research ethics exists at two levels: the macro and the micro; and at the micro level, there are two elements to my concern.

1.4.1. The macro level problem

At a macro level, or the level of national/international culture, we (western cultures) seem to be in a period of significant moral decline.
Chaffee (1998: 306) expresses it like this: “We live in a time of moral rootlessness in which idealism has given way to cynicism, altruism to self-interest, and charity to greed”. This can be seen in widespread political and corporate corruption. (See, for examples, Kline, 2008; and Miller, 2008); the increasing inequality between rich and poor; the increasing crime statistics; the disintegration of the family in poor inner city areas, as in Gray (2002: 35); the rise of people trafficking; the sex slave trade; and other indicators. And according to Ariely (2008), medical ethics is in decline, along with professional ethics in general, including the ethicality of professional ethicists. (Pages 110-122).

In West and Byrne (in press), we said: “Counselling and psychotherapy researchers”, and by extension, all forms of social care workers, “do not live and work in a vacuum. They face the same kind of pressures in relation to ethics as do other professionals and indeed citizens. In a recent report on interviews with 3,427 US scientists, Martinson et al (2005) conclude: ‘Our evidence suggests that mundane regular misbehaviours present greater threats to the scientific enterprise than those caused by high-profile misconduct cases such as fraud’. They found that:

- 27.5% reported inadequate record keeping related to research projects;
- 15.5% changed the design, methodology or results of a study in response to pressure from a funding source;
- 15.3% dropped observations or data points from analyses based on a gut feeling that they were inaccurate;
- 13.5% used inadequate or inappropriate research designs;
- 12.5% admitted overlooking others’ use of flawed data or questionable interpretation of data.”

Those figures from Martinson et al (2005) are a shocking indicator of the degree of incompetence and immorality prevalent among US scientists. West and Byrne continued:
“We have traced examples of the above unethical behaviour. For examples:

- Changing data. (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2005; and Mathews and Wonacott, 2005).
- Excluding of ‘unwanted data’. (Curfman, Morrissey and Drazen, 2005).
- Drug studies that hide key data. (Sataline, 2005).
- Forging data. (Toronto Globe & Mail, 2006)."

Additional evidence could be cited, including cheating by a famous British TV psychiatrist, who is accused of plagiarising 50% of an American professor’s article on Milgram’s experiments. (See Sweeney, 2006). At the highest level in Britain, within government and the state apparatus, we have seen recent examples of corruption of the research process by: (a) the production of the ‘dodgy dossier’ cooked up to justify the invasion of Iraq\(^5\); and (b) more recently, the falsification of data about potential pollution and the negative impact on public health of building a third runway at Heathrow Airport, London. (Ungoed-Thomas and Woolf, 2008a; and The Sunday Times, 2008)\(^6\).

The massive amount of business corruption in recent years - e.g. Enron (as discussed in Shermer, 2008a) - is too ubiquitous to require many textual sources to support my claim that we live in times of unregulated capitalist greed, in which corruption in the board room is seeping out into other areas of society, and threatening to corrupt society in general. (See, for examples,

\(^5\) On 29\(^{th}\) May 2008, the Guardian published an article about how “(President) Bush mounted (a) dishonest campaign to sell (the) Iraq invasion, says ex-White House spokesman”. The article begins: “A former senior aide to President Bush claims that the White House deliberately mounted a dishonest propaganda campaign to sell the (unnecessary) Iraq invasion to the US public, in the most damning insider account of the presidency so far”: (MacAskill, 2008).

\(^6\) Further revelations on 20\(^{th}\) July 2008 from these authors - Ungoed-Thomas and Woolf, (2008b) - showed that BAA had invented a "green jumbo jet" with low emissions – which does not exist, and which will never be built – in order to produce estimates of pollution and noise which would not exceed the noise and pollution limits set by law. In other words, because the plans were illegal using valid data, BAA invented invalid data. This is reminiscent of Miller’s (2008) argument that science is undermined by Public Relations scams designed to sell the unacceptable to a gullible public.
Egilman and Bohme, 2005; Kline, 2008; Clinard, 1990; and Miller, 2008). That society in general seems to be contaminated by this tide of corruption is presented by Marrin (2007), as follows:

“Shock and awe greeted the publication of a report last week from two academics at Keele University. ‘The moral majority is a myth’, according to a headline in the (Daily) Mirror. The Express promised to explain ‘Why middle England is a secret hotbed of crime’. It seems from this survey that 61% of the population admit to pilfering and peculation, from paying builders and au pairs in cash, stealing office stationery, padding insurance claims, asking well-placed bureaucratic friends to bend the rules (for us), keeping quiet about getting too much change in shops, selling faulty second-hand goods and failing to pay the TV licence. The middle classes are as bad as anybody…” Page 18.

These may not be particularly extreme crimes, but we do seem to be living in times of relative moral decline. See in particular Grimston (2009: 3), who says: “Britain’s cult of individualism, greed and selfishness has so blighted children’s lives that families and pupils need basic training in love and moral responsibility, according to a landmark report on the state of childhood”. Some authors would trace this development back to the revoking of the post-war settlement by Prime Minister Thatcher in the 1980s. (See in particular Hutton, 1996: 29).

The cases presented above seem to justify the claim that we (in westerner cultures) live in difficult, increasingly immoral times, and that there are powerful immoral influences being brought to bear on all of us, which are highly likely to have implications for how most people engage in research activities; unless some action is taken to reverse this trend.

1.4.2. The micro level

At the micro level of concern, in postgraduate programmes within universities, there are two potential problems: incompetence and immorality. (Cf: Ahearne, 2007: 378; Swazey and Bird, 1997). I believe that both of these problems can be addressed by developing new approaches
to ethical research education and training, combined with tight organisational controls. (Cf: Handelsman, 1986; Friedman, 1990; Roberts et al., 2005; Standish, 2005; Eisen and Parker, 2004; and Bebeau, 2002).

At the “University of Minerva” the micro level problem is that Doctoral students are not seen as being subject to significant problems of incompetence or immorality, and hence pedagogical objectives are limited to a light airing of ethical research issues. On the other hand, among people who understand those potential problems, pedagogical objectives are much more detailed and explicit. The following pedagogical objectives are presented by Schrag (2005: 367):

“Appropriate pedagogical objectives for research ethics education include:

1. Teaching researchers to recognize moral issues in their research;
2. Teaching researchers to solve practical moral problems in their research from the perspective of the moral agent;
3. Teaching researchers how to make moral judgments about actions;
4. Learning to engage in preventive ethics.”

In my experience of observing the Doctoral programmes at the University of Minerva, it seems that:

- objective (1) is addressed to a limited degree in the teaching programme (and to a greater degree in tutorials), but strictly in relation to the individual’s own research, and not in relation to research in general;
- objective (4) is attended to by the students in their own efforts to develop ethical proposals; but without the benefit of a rich body of distinctions;
- but objectives (2) and (3), which depend upon a good understanding of moral philosophy and ethical discourse, are not addressed by the teaching staff to any significant degree.
Thus ethical research *incompetence* is not being effectively tackled, from the perspective of Schrag (2005). (Cf: Rest et al., 1986, Rest, 1990; Bebeau, 2002; and Eisen and Parker, 2004).

1.5. Positionality

Every piece of writing is constructed by somebody, from some perspective or other, with some conscious and/or nonconscious drivers motivating the work. That perspective is what I shall call the ‘position’ of the author in relation to their text. My approach to this kind of ‘positionality’ is thus to see myself as already ‘oriented in the world’ before I began this research. The essence of my perspective on positionality is captured by this quote from Wellington et al. (2005: 21).

“In recent years it has come to be widely accepted that research cannot be disembodied (see Sikes and Goodson, …., p.32). It is impossible to take the researcher out of any type of research or of any stage of the research process. The biography of researchers, how and where they are socially positioned, the consequent perspectives they hold and the assumptions which inform the sense they make of the world, have implications for their research interests, how they frame research questions, the paradigms, methodologies and methods they prefer, and the styles that they adopt when writing up their research”.

It is therefore appropriate to ask what is driving me towards doing my research, and towards shaping it as I am shaping it. Are there any questionable aspects of my positionality that need to be uncovered and dealt with?

I examined this question in great detail in my Research Journal. I wondered if I was being driven by my childhood (Irish) Catholicism, or my early adulthood (British and Irish) Marxism. Was my later (and current) engagement with Zen and Taoism involved? Or was I simply trying to make amends for the ways in which I have mishandled two research challenges in the past?
I considered whether I might be driven by my gender into having a lack of empathy for Doctoral tutors and students in the School of Social Care, but found that, within Professor Simon Baron-Cohen’s system, I show up as higher on empathy than on systems thinking. (This is the so-called ‘female brain’, as described and defined in Baron-Cohen, 2004). In the end, having discovered Keirsey and Bates (1984) and tested myself with the Keirsey Temperament Sorter – a derivative of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator – I concluded that I am being driven mainly by my temperament type. My temperament type is labelled as ‘Promethean’. The ‘core’ of this type is called an NT, or Intuitive-Thinker. I seem to be an Introverted NT with a penchant for Judgement – making me an INTJ. And one of the most important drivers of INTJs, it seems, is the quest for perfection in intellectual competence. (Keirsey and Bates, 1984: 48-49). As far as I can tell, I am pursuing the quest for an understanding of ethical research competence mainly for reasons of “intellectual curiosity”, rather than “moral proselytizing”. That is the core of my positionality. Of course, just like my research participants, I probably am about 95% non-conscious, most of the time, as suggested by the research studies cited in Bargh and Chartrand (1999). So I had better accept the fact that my drivers may be something other than they seem to be when considered by my conscious mind.

The other important elements of my positionality include my attitudes towards the nature of reality and the creation of knowledge. I have examined some questions in these areas of ontology and epistemology in my Research Journal, and I have explored my own perspectives (briefly), in Chapter 3, where I outline my methodology.

My main way of managing my positionality was to operate in a highly reflexive mode, critiquing my own research process as I progressed, and in particular, challenging my own interpretations as they emerged. In addition, I continued to seek feedback from my research participants on my written reports, and to incorporate that feedback into my thesis. I have also continued to seek critical appraisal of my work by at least one of my peers, and at least one of my supervisors.

*Looking ahead*
In the next chapter I present my literature review, which overarches the five phases of my research journey. I focus my attention on those phases and cycles in which literature played the biggest role; or in which literature searching was the main activity; or where literature sources of value to future generations of Doctoral students were discovered. I pay relatively little attention to those phases and cycles in which my work was mainly data driven.
# CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

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CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Chapter Introduction

To conduct a literature review ethically means (for me) to ask:

What is my duty to my readers here? (Cf: Baggini and Fosl, 2007: 64). How can I maximize the benefit of doing this literature review? (Marinoff, 2004: 28-29). Is there a tension between my duty (e.g. to be honest) and my desires (e.g. to benefit myself)? (See Beauchamp and Childress, 1989: 5-6). How can I maximize my social responsibility and minimise my egotistical urges? (Cf: Paul and Elder, 2006).

Because this is not wholly a conventional thesis, by virtue of the action research structure, it has not been possible for me to present a conventional literature review, (as discussed in Dick, 1997b). For example, I did not begin by running a literature review in order to find research questions. I found myself in a research quandary which needed a practical solution, and no obvious literature searches could help me. This is a typical action research starting point. (See Newman, 1998). This chapter is therefore structured according to the five phases of my research journey, with literature showing up as appropriate. Some sections are more obviously literature reviews (e.g. section 2.4), while others show the links between certain research actions or conclusions and certain literature sources; and others show how literature shaped the enquiry.

Murray (2002) explains that a literature review is “an interpretation and synthesis of published research”, (page 101). That is certainly what I intend to present here: an interpretative account of some of the literature I have engaged with, and learned from, which begins to build up a picture of certain elements of the thesis argument which will be presented in Chapters 4 and 5. It is also an opportunity for me to show some of the connections between my work and the work of established theorists in the fields of normative ethics; moral reasoning; teaching and learning; general philosophy and psychology, especially the problem of human consciousness; and some others.
In so far as it has been practically possible, I have structured my literature review according to the five phases of my research; though in one case I located one review *between* two of those phases.

However, following this five phase structure, it is not possible to cover all of the literature that has influenced my research journey. This is an inevitable result of my action research methodology. As Dick (1997b: 7) says:

“To the extent that you can identify relevant literature for the thesis topic, there may be a literature review. However, much of the more specialized literature will be accessed only as the study progresses, and reported adjacent to the relevant findings”.

Thus, some of my literature will be reviewed in Chapter 3 (Methodology) and Chapter 4 (Learning and Reflections); and the action research methodology literature in particular will be introduced very briefly in this chapter, and then presented more fully in Chapter 3 (Methodology). Significantly, there is a substantial review of the literature on the teaching and learning of research ethics in section 2.4 below; and in the other sections of this chapter I have included significant insights from the literature on how people learn; ethical theory; ethical models; moral philosophy; the psychology of memory; human non-consciousness; and other subjects and topics related to my thesis.

2.2. Phase One – Looking for Suitable Questions to Ask

Between May and August 2006, I began to develop a practical approach to finding out what postgraduate students, in the School of Social Care, know about research ethics. On 27th July and 1st August, 2006, I wrote two emails, one each to two individuals from the Doctoral programme in the School of Social Care, University of Minerva. Both emails contained two questions for my acquaintances to answer. (See below). The purpose of my approach was to ask “fuzzy questions” to which I might get “fuzzy answers” so I could refine my approach by developing less fuzzy questions. (Cf: Dick, 2000: 4; Roberts, 1997: 5). I had got the concept of “fuzzy
questions” from Bob Dick, at Southern Cross University, Australia, with whom I had completed eight weeks of online training in action research. I had also found similar ideas in Newman (1998), as follows:

“The feature of action research, therefore, which poses the biggest obstacle for people is dealing with the uncertainty inherent in the process. You don’t usually begin this kind of inquiry with a focused question. You don’t know what matters, what to notice, or what to ignore. You don’t know what information to collect, who to interview, where to look”. Newman (1998: 11)

2.2.1. Fuzzy Questions

I therefore began to work on a couple of fuzzy questions, in the hope that, on the basis of the answers I got, I might later send more refined questions to a larger number of potential respondents from the senior student group on the Professional Doctorate programme at the University of Minerva. Here are the two questions that I sent out:

“Q1. In your opinion, do you think it is fairly easy to think about the ethical implications of your own Doctoral research work, or do you think you could benefit from help in that area?

“Q2. Do you think there would be any advantage to the next intake of first year Doctoral students to have a seminar input by me on what I have learned about research ethics over the past two years?”

Extract from my Research Journal.

For no particular reason, I was reading Gladwell (2006) while working on developing my fuzzy questions, and waiting for my associates to respond to my questions. (Well, actually, I recall that my fascination with Gladwell’s book was the subtitle: ‘The power of thinking without thinking’. I have an active interest in how people think and learn, and also in methods that claim to improve our functioning in these areas). However, reading Gladwell’s book had the surprising effect of undermining my faith in the process of
asking research questions. Why did this happen? Because I came up against the shocking extent of human non-consciousness. Gladwell (2006) argues convincingly that human beings, in most of our skilled performances, do not act from conscious thoughts and decisions, but rather from non-conscious processes of adaptation to the non-consciously perceived environment. (Cf: Smith, M.K., 2003, on Polanyi and tacit knowledge).

I subsequently found that Gladwell’s (2006) view is a minority view within psychology, and that much psychological research is based on the naïve assumption of a wholly conscious individual processing incoming stimuli knowingly, and relating them to their conscious goals. (Cf: Bargh and Chartrand, 1999: 462-464). I have only been able to find one significant text that actively argues against (rather than implicitly denying) the thesis that “humans are largely non-conscious”, and that is Donald (2001). However, Donald’s arguments, which are designed to show that human memory is more extensive than that indicated by many psychological experiments conducted in laboratories, is unconvincing to me, because his implicit assumption, in his example of extended discourse among friends about a film they have just seen, assumes they each are holding all of that conversation in working memory all of the time, and there is no evidence presented to support that implicit assumption. Furthermore, his main argument based upon experimental results is that non-consciousness without the ‘guiding hand’ of consciousness is ineffective, (pages 4-7). This amounts to the claim that humans may be largely non-conscious, but that non-consciousness is largely useless to us if we lose the neurological basis of consciousness. This is plausible, in the context of what we know from cognitive psychology (Eysenck and Keane, 2000), but it does nothing to refute Gladwell’s (2006) basis proposition that we, humans, are largely non-conscious processors of information, most of the time.

I therefore had to wonder if my research participants’ responses to my two ‘fuzzy questions’ were ‘reliable’. This was particularly important as Gladwell (2006) had presented evidence that humans do not always know why they do (or believe) what they do (and believe), but they always think
they do. It seems we have a blind spot whereby we make up plausible stories to account for our actions and beliefs, which have been shown in some convincing psychological experiments to be self-delusions. For example, the famous ‘strings and pendulum experiment’ by Maier, 1931. Maier’s experiment was mainly designed to see if “…the reasoner (is) conscious of the different factors which aid in bringing about the solution (to the string problem)”; and whether or not the solution “…develop(s) from a nucleus or does it appear as a completed whole?” (Page 181).

The experiment involved two strings hanging from a ceiling, and reaching the floor; one in the middle of the room, and one near one of the walls. One string cannot be reached while the participant is holding on to the other string. The challenge is to find the (three) obvious ways, and the one obscure way, in which the two strings can be brought together and tied together, using various pieces of equipment which are lying around in the room: (including “..poles, ringstands, clamps, pliers, extension cords, tables and chairs”: Page 182). The results seem to indicate that, although the (61) research participants are able to find the obvious solutions to this problem, about two thirds need a hint to find the obscure solution. However, when they are asked how they came up with the solution, they seem to invent plausible sounding explanations, such as: “It just dawned on me”; “It was the only thing left”; “I just realized the cord would swing if I fastened a weight to it”; “I tried to think of a way to get the cord over here and the only way was to make it swing”. The most fanciful story was this: “Having exhausted everything else the next thing was to swing it. I thought of the situation of swinging across a river. I had imagery of monkeys swinging from trees. This imagery appeared simultaneously with the solution. The idea appeared complete”: (Pages 188-189). It seems we do not know where our ideas come from; that we have a strictly limited capacity to introspect into our thought processes; but that when asked to account for our ideas, we make up fanciful explanations and do not notice that we are making them up.
Maier, 1931 is in a tradition that began with Helmholtz’s nineteenth century ‘unconscious inferences’ - cf: Eysenck and Keane, 2000: 54 - and continued through the constructivist theories of Bruner, Neisser and Gregory; and is gaining ground in current research in neuroscience. See Frith, 2008.

As I analyzed the two answers to each of my two fuzzy questions, and factored in the ideas I had got from Gladwell (2006), I formed the conclusion that the answers given by my two respondents were not a reliable basis for moving forward, because of the problems of consciousness and recall that I identified above. I was stuck again.

However, one piece of learning that came out of the answers to those two fuzzy questions would later prove to be very useful. This was that Respondent No.2 raised the question of ‘models of research ethics’ for use in decision making, as follows:

“I always find difficulty with the less obvious ethical dilemmas. I think what would be useful is a model to consider research dilemmas. Are you familiar with the Bond/Gabriel ethical decision making model?”

Extract from my Research Journal.

2.2.2. Rational Decision Making Models

At the time, I was not familiar with that model. Furthermore, I did not spot the importance of this response, but Respondent No.2 was pointing towards an idea promoted by Thomson (1999/2005: 1) to the effect that “What each of us needs in order to deal with ethical dilemmas is not a set of answers provided by someone else, but a set of skills to enable us to arrive at answers and make decisions for ourselves”. Later, Thomson (1999/2005: 92-93) would introduce an ‘optimizing strategy’, which is a critical thinking model of decision making, which contains the following elements:

1. “Consider why a decision is necessary (is it necessary?).

2. List the options (i.e. the various possible course of action).
3. For each option:
   a. list the consequences
   b. consider how likely are any consequences identified under 3(a) – ((T)ake account of evidence and assess its reliability)
   c. consider how important the consequences are
   d. decide whether each of the listed consequences counts for or against the option.

4. Judge between the options in the light of your comments under 3(a)-(d).”

As it stands, this seems to be a broadly utilitarian model of decision making. However, if we add in the question of our duties, and the need to do no harm, in sections 3(c) and 3(d), then we have a combined utilitarian and deontological model. But more fundamentally than that, this is a classical five-step rational decision making model, although one of the steps is obscured: (See McGrew and Wilson, 1982/1985 and Heller and Hindle, 2008). Rational models are imperfect but helpful heuristic guides. Jabes (1978/1985: 57) points out that “…at any point in time, an individual has only limited information on the states of nature. (Therefore) It is impossible to know what each choice alternative may lead to in the future”. Consequently, “…what is maximized is not necessarily always that which yields highest utility, but an alternative acceptable to the person…” The value of such models is that they allow maximum possible clarity of the issues, and their working can be published and audited by the reader in terms of their own experiences. However, for our purposes, I will show later, we need to add in ethical values and moral principles to our decision making models if we are to be optimally moral.
2.2.3 Models to guide ethical decision making

As I admitted above, at the time of getting this response about the need for a model, from Respondent No.2, I did not make any of the connections shown in the previous section. I was not familiar with the Bond/Gabriel model, and could not immediately get hold of it. So, on the day that I got the idea of looking at models from Respondent No.2, I went on the internet and looked up 'ethical models', 'moral models', 'models of ethical research', 'research models', and several other such search phrases. I did not find many matches to my search terms; but one informative and helpful source that I did find was a set of overhead projection (OHP) transparencies by an unknown instructor. (See University of South Florida, 2003). That document seems to be a quite thorough review of ethical decision making models ‘across the professions’, but with a strong emphasis on journalism and authorship. From the range of models available, I extracted the one that was obviously most relevant to my research quest. (See Figure 2.1, below). Later on, I extracted another two, which are discussed towards the end of this section.

Months after learning about the Bond/Gabriel model, I realized I did know of Bond’s model – in Bond (2000: 223-229). However, in August/September 2006, I did not access that memory.

Here is how I wrote about some of the University of South Florida models, in my Research Journal, at that time:

“The first two or three transparencies provide general background. The fourth slide is of something called the “Potter Box”, presented by Cliff Christians. (See University of South Florida, 2003).

“The fifth slide shows the five steps in the Potter Box model, as follows:

1. Define the situation;
2. Identify the values;
3. Identify the principles;
4. Choose your loyalties;
5. Make the decision (or start over)."

These five steps are distinctly different, in key respects, from the five steps in the classical rational decision making model – cf: Carley (1981/1985: 60-61); Heller and Hindle (2008: 156) - which are normally more or less as follows:

1. Identify the problem; or identify the issues. (This is not particularly different).

2. Brainstorm solutions; or undertake analysis. (This one is quite different, because we cannot brainstorm ethical solutions, or analyse ethical issues, if we are not clear which values to use).

3. Evaluate the consequences of each solution; or, more simply, evaluate options. (Again this is quite different, because with ethical decision making we need to know the moral principles to use).

4. Choose the best option; or identify choice. (I disagree with the University of South Florida on this one – where they say “choose your loyalties”. When I came to develop my own model, in Chapter 4 below, I made the work of Box 4 relate to weighing up the pros and cons of potential solutions/actions, and making a decision).

5. Make the decision (or start over); or implement any plans. (The University of South Florida – in the Bradley Rawlins model – has a step 5, which is to evaluate the decision; and that is the same in my model in Chapter 4).

The sixth slide expands on the fifth.

The seventh slide shows “The Potter Box, expanded by Jay Black”. Steps 1 to 4 of the Potter Box are now described in greater detail, as shown in Figure 2.1, on page 41.
1: Define Situation
Define the ethical situation or dilemma. Look at it in detail, and from points of view other than your own. As the case develops, recognize that additional insights may cause you to adjust your selections in other quadrants of the Potter Box. You may have to return to this quadrant and go through the cycle again.

2: Identify the Values
Identify the values-beliefs that define what you stand for. Values are helpful in rationalizing or defending your behaviour. They are standards of choice through which persons and groups seek consistency in our values. Some values are instrumental or desirable modes of conduct. Others are terminal or end results.

3: Identify the Principles
Don’t moralize or give inconsistent, dogmatic, ad hoc advice. Use moral philosophy instead, giving general, consistent advice drawn from the wisdom of the ages. The ethical principles, as laid down by philosophers, should illuminate the issues.

4: Choose your Loyalties
To whom are you ultimately loyal, and to whom at intermediate steps? Who gets hurt? Who benefits? You may have competing loyalties to yourself, your family and friends, boss, company or firm, professional colleagues, audience, your news sources (in the case of journalists/writers), (or research participants, in our case- JWB), not to mention society at large.

Figure 2.1. The Potter Box, as expanded by Jay Black - Source: University of South Florida (2003)
The problem with this Potter Box model, in Figure 2.1, is that it does not address two of the central elements in Thomson’s (1999/2005) model above, which are: (a) What are the options? And (b) Make a judgement between them. However:

Step 3 is particularly interesting, as follows:

“3. IDENTIFY THE PRINCIPLES

“Don’t moralize or give inconsistent, dogmatic, ad hoc advice. Use moral philosophy instead, giving general, consistent advice drawn from the wisdom of the ages. The ethical principles, as laid down by philosophers, should illuminate the issues.”

What this indicates is that this use of the Potter Box model is not an easy option. It is not about greatly simplifying the process of ethical decision making, because the person using the model, implicitly and explicitly, must have studied “moral philosophy”, including “the ethical principles, as laid down by the philosophers”\(^7\). (And that was the limitation of Thomson’s model: that an ill informed person listing “the options” will produce a greatly impoverished list compared with somebody who has studied ethical codes and moral philosophies, and has practiced making such lists and weighing up the elements of the list). All that this (Potter Box) model can do is to make the process of ethical decision making maximally systematic and thorough, by laying down a ‘heuristic pathway’ to follow. That is to say, it is a ‘rational optimizing strategy’. But the user must be well trained in moral philosophy in order to be able to use the model. They must also know the principles that apply to their work.

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\(^7\) Some professions have extracted moral principles from moral philosophy because they seem particularly relevant to their profession as moral action-guides. There is thus an overlap between the principles of professional ethics and the principles of everyday ethics: (Beauchamp and Childress, 1989; Seedhouse, 1988). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 72): “The American Psychological Association’s Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct (2002) states five general principles: beneficence and nonmaleficence, fidelity and responsibility, integrity, justice and respect for people’s rights and dignity”. These are very similar to the principles advocated by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy - BACP (2002/2006: 2-3) - as follows: “Fidelity: honouring the trust placed in the practitioner... Autonomy: respect for the client’s right to be self-governing... Beneficence: a commitment to promoting the client’s well-being... Nonmaleficence: a commitment to avoiding harm to the client... Justice: the fair and impartial treatment of all clients and the provision of adequate services... (And) Self-respect: fostering the practitioner’s self-knowledge and care for self...”. 
(including research work) within the codes and standards of their profession. (Cf: Aita and Richer, 2005; BASW, 2001; Bond, 2004a, b; Gabriel and Casemore, 2003, 2006). (And beyond the Potter Box, they will have to ask themselves: What options now seem reasonable and practicable to me? And which of those options must I choose?)

I did find it encouraging that there seems to be an overlap between what Respondents 1 and 2 (to my fuzzy questions) were asking for. They both involve significant inputs of moral philosophy. In doing my own two year study of ethics – 2004-2006 - I had personally concluded that, it was not until I had learned a significant amount of moral philosophy that I was able to conduct ethical risk-assessments on the fourteen ethical dilemmas I faced with my original research idea. (See Byrne, 2006a and Section 4.7 of Chapter 4, below). This conclusion is supported by Bond (2000: 39) who describes the value to professionals of learning moral language and concepts.

Slide 8 (from University of South Florida, 2003) is even more helpful. This is “A model for ethical decision-making, by Bradley Rawlins”. It is very similar to the expanded Potter Box. And box 3 now becomes: “Apply Principles”. Furthermore, box 3 lists the moral principles to be applied, as follows, with my comments in brackets:

1. “Golden mean”. (From Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*).
2. “Categorical Imperative”. (From Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason*).
3. “Utilitarianism”. (As developed by Bentham and Mill).
4. “Agape”. (Which is a higher form of Love, in Greek philosophy)
8. “Veil of ignorance”. (Rawl’s *theory of justice*).

These (implicit) principles are much more general than the principles discussed above. In fact, these eight items are theories – (or ‘frameworks’, as described by Baggini and Fosl, 2007: 56-97) - which espouse particular principles. Some authors confuse or conflate the concepts of ‘values’ and ‘principles’. Values are *concepts that are highly significant for us*. Principles are *general rules*; while theories *try to justify and explain the basis of our values and rules*. (Cf: Beauchamp and Childress, 1989: 30; Hare, 1981: 40-41). For example, the eight theories listed above express particular principles which are predicated on a set of values.

These complex moral philosophies cannot be *intuited* by postgraduate research students. They also do not come as a standard component of the basic professional training of most modern professions. If they are to exist for Doctoral research students, they (or at least some of them) – and how they relate to ethical research issues - have to be *explicitly taught*, or, at the very least, *their learning has to be guided* and *monitored* by the Doctoral research tutors who those students.

The Paul Lester model – from slide 33 of University of South Florida – is considered next. These reflective comments first appeared in my Research Journal.

*The Paul Lester Model*

“Slides 27 to 32 of University of South Florida (2003) are elements of the Scott Geiger model. And the slides from 33 onwards are to do with post-hoc moral analysis, which could be useful for training purposes; and are based on the Paul Lester Model of Systematic Moral Analysis, which involves eight steps as shown in Figure 2.2 below. This could be a very useful model – suitably amended - for the teaching of ethical research competence using case studies.

“In this model, the moral analysis is completed by answering the following eight questions:
1. What are the three most significant facts in the case?
2. What three facts would you like to know about the case?
3. Who are the moral agents and/or stakeholders and what are their specific job and role-related activities?
4. What are the values of the moral agents and/or stakeholders?
5. What are the loyalties of the moral agents and/or stakeholders?
6. What moral philosophies can you apply and why?
   - Categorical imperative
   - Utilitarianism
   - Hedonism
   - Golden mean
   - Golden rule
   - Veil of ignorance
7. What creative and/or credible alternatives can you think of to resolve the issue?
   - Think of four choices (two creative, two realistic)
8. What would you do?
   - Pretend you are one of the moral agents or stakeholders.
   - What actions would you take and why?

**Figure 2.2. The Paul Lester Model of Systematic Moral Analysis**
Source: University of South Florida (2003) – Slide 33

“The Paul Lester Model is clearly designed to facilitate ‘third party analyses’, as would be likely to arise in the work of journalists and other writers. However, social care professionals need a model which applies to ‘first person analysis’: ‘What should I do in my specific research circumstances?’.”

End of extract from my Research Journal

Slide 2, on page one of University of South Florida (2003), originally did not mean much to me, until I had fully digested Hare (1981), Kitchener (1984), Beauchamp and Childress (1989/1994), Haidt (2001) and many others. This slide, which is called ‘Ethical Development: A process’, contains just three elements:
- Gut reaction;
- Rule/Code obedience/Conventions;
- Ethical Reflections and Reasoning.

This suggests that we begin our development with gut reactions, which we take over from our parents (combined with some innate elements) – as in Haidt (2001), Batson (1987), and Hoffman (2000); we then learn to conform to conventions – as in Level 2 of Kohlberg’s rational model (Kohlberg, 1973; Gibbs, 2003); and finally, if we are ‘lucky’, meaning that we get or give ourselves the right kind of education, we may get to be able to engage in ethical reflections and moral reasoning, using moral philosophies and critical thinking skills – as in Hare’s (1981) ‘Level Two thinking’; which is Kitchener’s (1984) ‘Critical-Evaluation Level’, as shown in Robson et al (2000: 543).

I have summarized my understanding of this model in Figure 2.3, which follows:

**Figure 2.3. Ethical development – a process**, (adapted from University of South Florida, 2003, slide 2; plus Haidt, 2001; Kohlberg, 1973; Hare, 1981; etc.)
However, it would be many, many months later, after much more reading, thinking and writing, that this model would come together in my mind as an integration of the rationalist and social intuitionist models.

I did eventually get a copy of the so-called ‘Gabriel/Bond’ model of ethical decision making from a colleague, in the form of Gabriel and Casemore (2006), which effectively makes it the Gabriel/Casemore model. From that publication I got hold of Gabriel (2001, 2003, 2005, 2006). The Gabriel/Casemore model is in some ways similar to the Paul Lester model, shown above. The main difference is that, whereas the Paul Lester model calls for the application of a range of moral philosophies, which are developed theories of action and justification, the Gabriel/Casemore model calls for the application of a set of rules – from a specific code of ethics – plus the application of a range of principles. Those principles are: beneficence; non-maleficence; justice; fidelity; and self-respect, which broadly overlap Beauchamp and Childress (1989).

Months later, I realized that I had, quite some time ago, read the ethical problem solving process in Bond (2000: 223-229). Thinking about it now, I can see that it overlaps Thomson’s (1999/2005: 92-93) model - and Gabriel and Casemore’s (2006) model – in that they all mention identifying courses of action, and selecting a course of action, which the Potter Box omits. This is discussed further in Chapter 4, in connection with the development of my own ethical decision-making model.

All of these models contributed to my ongoing learning about how to think about research ethics systematically. Although I could see some limitations of some of the models mentioned above, especially the frequent lack of reference to moral philosophy, there were also some aspects of the Gabriel and Casemore (2006) model that I found particularly helpful, including some of the questions asked, and the emphasis on a professional code of ethics8. Therefore, I have combined the Paul Lester Model (from Figure 2.2 above) and the Gabriel/Casemore Model, for training purposes, as shown in Figure 2.4 below. (Cf: Gabriel, 2005: 166-172).

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8 Later, in Chapter 4, I would use the Gabriel and Casemore (2006) model to strengthen my own Box 4 structure.
1. Consider the case study of an ethical research dilemma presented to you for training purposes.

2. Analyze the situation in terms of potential risk of harm to key players and/or third parties; and also the potential benefits. Review in terms of your code of ethics.

3. Who are the moral agents and/or stakeholders and what are their specific job and role-related activities?

4. What are the values of the moral agents and/or stakeholders (including yourself if this were your dilemma)? What values are specified in your code of ethics?

5. What are the loyalties of the moral agents and/or stakeholders (including yourself, if this were your dilemma)?

6. What do you consider to be the most important factors, and moral principles, in this situation, and why? What principles are suggested by your code of ethics?

7. Construct a description of the case to discuss with your peers.

8. Which elements of your research code of ethics can you apply; how and why? Specify the rules, values and/or principles.

9. What moral philosophies* can you apply and why?
   - Categorical imperative
   - Utilitarianism
   - Golden rule
   - Universality
   - Philosophies from other cultures
   - A feminist ethic of care

   (*You should have completed the ‘Moral Philosophy’ module before this activity is introduced).

10. Brainstorm possible solutions to the problem. What creative and/or credible alternatives can you think of to resolve the issue?
    - Think of four choices (two creative, two realistic)

11. Choose a solution. What would you do?
    - Pretend you are the principal moral agent or stakeholder.
    - What actions would you take and why?

12. Discuss your conclusions in small groups, and prepare a presentation on your group’s thinking for a plenary session. Appoint a reporter and report back to the main group. Structure your presentation according to the following list: (a) Define the situation; (b) Identify the values; (c) Identify the principles; (d) Identify potential courses of action; (e) Select a course of action; (f) Justify your decision in terms of moral philosophies.

13. End with a full plenary discussion, followed by submission of a written assignment of 2,000 words within 28 days.

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**Figure 2.4.** A combined training model derived from the *Paul Lester Model* and the *Gabriel and Casemore Model* (2006)

However, clearly the training model shown in Figure 2.4 above cannot be employed until the students have been taught (and/or helped to learn) the moral principles/philosophies indicated in step 9 of the model. (Paul Lester
suggested a much longer list, but I suggest a compromise in which we restrict our attention to utilitarianism [or consequentialism] and deontology [or duty ethics], perhaps combined with the approach to ‘character training’ advocated by Aristotle’s virtue ethics. (CF: Meara, Schmidt and Day, 1996; Curren, 2007a; Thomson, 1999/2005). A case could be made for adding a feminist ethic of care, (Cf: Gilligan, 1982/1993; Nebraska Sociological Feminist Collective 1988; Mauthner, Birch, Jessop and Miller, 2002). And some other cultural and political perspective could also be considered as explored in the problem space matrices in Appendix One to this thesis.

From an Ausubelian perspective, students cannot be effectively taught any set of principles and philosophies until such time as their tutor knows what schemas (or cognitive structures) they have in long-term memory under the label of “moral philosophy”, (Ausubel, 1968).

One way to find out what they already know is to have them discuss the core concepts and principles of research ethics and related moral philosophies, and to produce a group presentation on the core concepts and principles. That would reveal strengths and weaknesses, and provide a basis for remedial teaching and the development of learning challenges.

2.2.4. A New Crisis of Conceptualization

As soon as I finished writing of my Research Journal, in which I analyzed the answers to my fuzzy questions, and factored in what I had learned from Gladwell (2006), I moved on to my next piece of reading, which was Haidt (2001). This twenty page article immediately undermined my faith in the rationalist model of moral judgement⁹, as follows:

“This article reviews evidence against rationalist models and proposes an alternative: the social intuitionist model…”

This model suggests that moral reasoning happens ‘after the event’ as individuals try to rationally what they did, or what they decided, rather than as a way of making a decision:

⁹ See ‘Rationalist (approach to ethics)’ in the Glossary.
In the social intuitionist model, one feels a quick flash of revulsion at the thought of incest (for example) and one knows intuitively that something is wrong. Then when faced with a social demand for a verbal justification, one becomes a lawyer trying to build a case rather than a judge searching for the truth”. (Haidt, 2001: 814).

Thus Haidt (2001) takes the emphasis off the private reasoning of the individual – which we find in Kohlberg (1973) – and puts it instead on social and cultural influences, which are internalized by the individual, and reproduced at a later date as a ‘gut reaction’. In this sense, we can see that the rationalists are constructivists, in the tradition established by Piaget; while the social intuitionists are social constructionists, in the mould of Vygotsky, (Cf: Oates, 1994: 29-37).

At the time of discovering social intuitionism, I was very impressed by this theory, and rejected the Kohlbergian tradition. However, over the months I have developed a critical stance towards both models, and now see my research participants through a model which fuses these two views. (Cf. Hare’s 1981 two levels of moral thinking: the intuitive and the critical. Also Kitchener’s 1984 adaptation of Hare’s model). We do not have to go along with the either/or thinking of the constructivists or the social constructionists. It is possible to see the moral agent as an individual who pursues his/her urges and impulses in the context of a reinforcing/restricting environment. Of course, that environment is internalized by the individual through experiential encounters, but we can never rule out the possibility of an act of free will by the individual. (Cf: Baker, 2002). And we also need to distinguish between the intuitive (‘level one thinking’) and the critical reasoning processes (or ‘level two thinking’, Hare, 1981: 25-28).

Individuals probably normally get moral intuitions on the basis of their historically encoded tacit knowledge, which wakes them up to a moral dilemma when a particular stimulus is presented to them. If the situation is straightforward, the moral intuition will determine the individual’s response. That is to say, the ‘right course of action’ will seem like a ‘prima facie duty’. (Cf: Hare, 1981). And if the individual comes from a good moral background, or has had the right kind of education, their moral intuitions will (most likely) be appropriate to the situation: (as described in Chaffee, 1998:...
However, if two moral intuitions strongly apply to the same situation, then the individual also has to use moral reasoning to choose between them. (Cf: Hare, 1981; Beauchamp and Childress, 1989; Chaffee, 1998; Paul and Elder, 2002, 2006; Thomson, 1999/2005; Bowell and Kemp, 2005). But they cannot use such moral reasoning (or cannot use it adequately) unless they have been systematically taught – or taught themselves – to think in terms of (at least some of) the theories shown in Section 9 of Figure 2.4 above; as well as a code of professional ethics.

2.2.5. The Extent of Human Non-Consciousness

Now I want to try to reach a conclusion to this account of what turned out to be Cycle 1 of Phase One of my research. I originally thought it was both safe and important to assume that my two research participants know what they think and why they think it; know what they like and why they like it; and know how they would behave in any given situation. However, these assumptions are contradicted by the research results presented by Gladwell (2006), Haidt (2006), Gray (2003), and Bargh and Chartrand (1999). These four texts taken together put an end to my naïve view of ‘the conscious human being’ as an ‘informative research participant’. Gladwell (2006) presents evidence that most of the time we make decisions based upon our tacit knowledge, and the “we” that makes the decision is not the conscious mind but the ‘adaptive unconscious’; or our nonconscious mind. He also shows that people often have conscious preferences that are at variance with their non-conscious preferences, and that it is most often the non-conscious preferences that dominate our behaviour. We do not know, very often, why we did what we did; but we normally believe that we do, and we unknowingly make up plausible stories to account for our actions.

Bargh and Chartrand (1999) in their summary, argue that most psychological research assumes that humans are normally conscious and systematic in the ways they process new information to form their

\[\text{\textsuperscript{10}}\] There is now some empirical support for my inferences presented here. Nichols (2002) presents evidence in support of his theory that moral judgements are based on the individual having a ‘normative theory’ (or ideas prohibiting or endorsing certain actions) and ‘an affective mechanism’ (or linked emotions): (Pages 221, 222, 226, 227, 233, 234).
interpretations and arrange to respond to incoming stimuli. But they agree with Ellen Langer’s questioning of those assumptions, as follows:

“First, (we) review evidence that the ability to exercise such conscious, intentional control is actually quite limited, so that most of (our) moment-to-moment psychological life must occur through nonconscious means if it is to occur at all. (We) then describe the different possible mechanisms that produce automatic, environmental control over these various phenomena and review evidence establishing both the existence of these mechanisms as well as their consequences for judgements, emotions, and behaviour”.

They go on to identify three significant forms of automatic self-regulation.

“…an automatic effect of perception on action, automatic goal pursuit, and a continual automatic evaluation of one’s experience.

They then conclude that:

“… these various nonconscious mental systems perform the lion’s share of the self-regulatory burden, beneficently keeping the individual grounded in his or her environment”. Page 406.

What does this mean, in the simplest, clearest terms? It means that humans are both conscious agents and nonconscious automata. Not either/or. Both/and. At this point in time, it is the proportions of each that matters most to me. Gray (2003: 66) argues that we are not able to be more conscious of our environmental stimuli because of the small bandwidth of conscious processing of the data of our senses.

“This (bandwidth) is much too narrow to be able to register the information we routinely receive and act on. As organisms active in the world, we process perhaps 14 million bits of information per second. The bandwidth of consciousness is around eighteen bits. This means we have conscious access to about a millionth of the information we daily use to survive”.

That is a startling statistic. So my research respondents probably have access to about one millionth of the data they routinely process in order to orient and move themselves through their daily environmental challenges. Not all of this is in principle ‘knowable’ of course, such as how do I beat my own heart? How am I digesting my food right now? How much do I need to adjust my blood pressure and body temperature? And so on. But Bargh
and Chartrand (1999: 464) quote Tice and Baumeister as saying that consciousness “…plays a causal role (in guiding our behaviour) only 5% or so of the time”. (And Tice and Baumeister were trying to defend consciousness.)

So my research respondents are probably unconscious (meaning non-conscious processors of information) for at least 95% of the time, including most of the time they are interacting with me. Unfortunately for me, I was proposing to interview them about who they are, what they know, what they do, and why they do it (all in connection with ethical research functioning)? And I was proposing to do that:

▪ Even though they take actions for tacit/nonconscious reasons, and can immediately make up plausible stories to account for what they did. (Source: Gladwell, 2006: 69-71).

▪ Even though they see themselves through ‘rose tinted mirrors’. (See Haidt, 2006: 66-69); and cannot see their own ‘faults’ as easily as they can see the faults of others.

▪ And even though Gray (2003: 81) says: “We (including my research respondents – JWB) cannot get rid of illusions. Illusion is our natural condition. …”.

These insights brought me to the point of virtual despair that I could ever find out anything, from any human respondent, anywhere, about anything.

And so I moved on to explore the possibility of developing Phase Two.

2.3. Phase Two – Planning an Action Research Intervention

Phase Two involved designing a ‘teacher inquiry’ process into the moral reasoning skills of a group of doctoral students at the University of Minerva. The main literature sources which influenced this design were: Feldman and Minstrell (2000); Kemmis and McTaggart (1988); Taylor (1994); Dick (1997b); Perry and Zuber-Skerritt (1992); Avison et al (1999); and McLeod (2001). Essentially, the plan was to assess a group of doctoral students, using a qualitative assessment approach; to then make an educational
input to improve their moral reasoning skills; and to assess them again to see how effective/ineffective my intervention had been. However, I quickly ran up against the ethical problem that I was proposing to use one of their scheduled seminar days, which would effectively deny these Doctoral students the right to opt out of my research event, which would have been unethical, as described by Bond (2004b); Banyard and Flanagan (2005); and Taylor (1994). For this reason I dropped the idea, and went on to planning a new strategy.

2.4. Between Phase Two and Phase Three

“…the key objective that all (literature) reviews share is to provide a clear and balanced picture of current leading concepts, theories and data relevant to the topic or matter that is the subject of study”.


I now experienced myself as facing a difficult obstruction, and spent several months trying to design a new way forward. About three months after getting stuck in this way, I began to think about producing a formal, focussed literature review on the teaching and learning of research ethics, to see if that could help me to achieve a breakthrough, or a new opening. To some extent, the timing of this decision was affected by my returning to read Newman (1998), as follows:

“As Gordon Wells (…) explains: ‘There comes a point when the teacher-researcher needs to read about other people’s research and about the theories they have used to interpret their data. Now, those books and articles, that before seemed so remote and irrelevant, suddenly take on a completely different significance. No longer on the receiving end of a transmission line, the teacher-researcher is able to engage with the text with a purpose that makes the reading into a dialogue between fellow researchers.’ (Page 31)”. 
Whether it was at precisely this point, or a little later, I cannot determine from my records; but somewhere around about this point I conducted a comprehensive literature search on the teaching and learning of ethical research competence at several major search engines, and book outlets. These included:

- PsychInfo (at APA Online);
- SwetsWise;
- John Rylands Library, University of Manchester;
- Copac (including British Library), via John Rylands online search;
- Amazon.com;
- “The University of Minerva Postgraduate Resource Centre; and a couple of bookshops in Liverpool”;¹¹
- Waterstone’s (in Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, York and Harrogate) and Blackwell’s and Border’s bookshops, (for books, and for references in the back of books);
- My own book shelves; second-hand book stores (especially the very good, small collections in the Oxfam shops in Bradford and Harrogate);
- Google Scholar (at www.scholar.google.com);
- ERIC online (Education Resources Information Center);
- And other online locations, including PubMed (which is maintained or supported by the US government’s health department).

My initial searches for “Teaching research ethics” AND “Social care” produced very few published sources. However, when I modified the second phrase to “Health and social care” that result changed dramatically. I got 169 sources from PubMed alone; and I found more than 100 additional sources (about teaching research in the fields of management, nursing, science, engineering, etc) from the other searches listed above.

The results of these searches were then listed and edited down to about 120 sources; and abstracts and outlines were collected, organized and filed. From these abstracts and outlines, I developed a classification system through a filtering process. This resulted in the emergence of three

¹¹ Remember, this is “a fictionalized account,” as shown by the fact that it is presented in combined italics and quotation marks.
general themes, as follows: (1) Extrinsic controls on ethical behaviour; (2) Reform of current methods of ethics training; and: (3) Understanding, designing and conducting ethics education and training. I will now review those three themes.

2.4.1. Theme One:

My first theme focussed on external control of research:

Extrinsic Controls on Ethical Behaviour.

The case for external control of research, to ensure ethical design and implementation, goes back to moral reactions against Nazi war crimes committed by German medical doctors (1939-1945); and subsequent scandals in the US, involving black research participants being left with deliberately untreated syphilis (to satisfy ‘medical curiosity’); the injection of radioactive materials into older Jewish patients in a New York hospital; and other outrages. (Cf: Emanuel, Crouch, et al., 2003). Rizk and Elzubeir (2004) report on the continuance of unethical conduct of biomedical research (today) among medical students. West and Byrne (in press) present a catalogue of unethical misconduct among researchers across a range of professions and countries. (See Chapter 1 above). Roberts, Geppert, Coverdale, Louie and Edenharder (2005) make a general case for stricter scrutiny of research proposals and activities. The history of extrinsic control of research in the UK is based in the National Health Service (NHS), and goes back to the 1970s. (Cf: ESRC 2006/2008; Bond, 2004a: 7; Williams-Jones and Holm, 2005: 39). However, there is now a worldwide pressure by governments for universities to expand this kind of extrinsic control to all forms of human-subject research, including all social science research. (Swazey and Bird, 1997; Eisen and Parker, 2004; Bond, 2004a). According to Eisen and Parker (2004: 694) this has resulted from an expansion of private investment in university based research, and the growth of public-private partnerships; and related corruption of research morality.
In 2003, the (British) Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) commissioned two universities – York and Oxford Brookes – to begin a process of consultation and design, using regional workshops, to collect the views of social science academics with a view to developing a widely accepted Research Ethics Framework (REF). (Cf: Williams-Jones and Holm, 2005; Bond, 2004; SATSU, 2003, 2004a, b, c, d; and ESRC, 2006/2008). My process of advocating tighter control of research ethics is in line with that ESRC development.

The major aim of the ESRC’s REF is to ensure that all universities and other research bodies that seek ESRC funding for human-subjects research should have in place a system of Research Ethics Committees which will review all research proposals before they are implemented, and continue to monitor the research activities as the projects unfold. (ESRC, 2006/2008). When I looked for the training component of the SATSU and ESRC documents, I found a minor, marginal mention of research ethics training, and was obliged to conclude that this process is not primarily about training of postgraduate students, but rather is mainly a top-down process of controlling who can research what, and how. In other words, this process is essentially about ‘research governance’ and not about developing ‘internalized’ ethical research competence.

Bond (2004s: 7) had been concerned about the potential negative impact of research governance processes, and in particular, he asked: “Does the total package of governance achieve its aims or give a false sense of assurance…?” Does it produce research projects that are more ethical than before, or does it merely pay lip service to ethics while only guaranteeing bureaucratic interference with the research process? Israel and Hay (2008: 1) take up this theme after the event, now that the ESRC’s REF has been implemented by many universities in the UK. Their take is that researchers now face a clash of needs: to do good research and to look like they are doing good research:

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12 See Tahir (2008) on academic fraud in British universities and a movement to tighten up the reputation of research in universities by involving outside agencies in monitoring claims of fraud.
“These are not always the same. At best research ethics committees and frameworks help researchers respond to ethical issues. Sadly, however there is a considerable international literature … that reveals how ethical research can be compromised by bureaucratic procedural demands, particularly when ‘researchers see ethics as a combination of research hurdle, standard exercise, bureaucratic game and meaningless artefact’ …”

From my perspective, this finding, of how the REF and university wide Research Ethics Committees may work in (some) real life contexts, emphasizes the need for the ‘other side’ of the equation to be further developed. That is to say, it is not enough to control researchers – though some of that is undoubtedly necessary – but also to educate them to understand how to think about ethical principles and theories, and not just rules, in the context of their own research activities. That is to say, in addition to intelligent extrinsic control, we also need educationally induced intrinsic controls; or rather we need to help social science researchers, at postgraduate level, to learn how to think for themselves about research ethics issues, and thus to develop a socially embedded but individually autonomous ethical research competence, based on critical thinking. (Thomson, 1999/2005; Bowell and Kemp, 2005; Beauchamp and Childress, 1999, 2004).

2.4.2. My Second Theme

My second theme takes a look at the kinds of reforms that might be necessary and possible.


The previous section presented the trend towards greater extrinsic control of research ethics, and the case for tighter research governance. However, Standish (2005) draws attention to the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic ethics, and argues against relying too much on either element, as in assuming that an ethics committee can effectively control the moral behaviour of postgraduate students, in the absence of those students
developing high levels of ethical sensitivity, moral reasoning capability, and ethical decision making skills for themselves. (See Bebeau, 2002; Rest et al., 1986, Rest, 1990; Sponholz, 2000). Hence the importance of expanding research ethics training, and improving current teaching and training approaches, in the context of tighter external control. (Cf: Handelsman, 1986; Friedman, 1990; Finn, 1999; Mastroianni and Khan, 1998; Sponholz, 2000; Anestidou, 2002; Eisen and Berry, 2002; Eisen and Parker, 2004).

The Economic and Social Research Council – ESRC (2006/2008) – mentions the importance of research ethics training, but they do not include it in any formal sense in the current requirements of their REF. (Perhaps it will be firmed up once the Research Ethics Framework has been bedded in more firmly). They mention that:

“Many institutions already have ethics training programmes in place, organized either at university level or through devolved structures such as department or faculty-based programmes. However, successful REF implementation requires the development over time of agreed minimum standards of training and competence, which may be achieved through programmes at institutional, faculty, departmental, or research centre unit level”. (ESRC, 2006/2008, page 14).

However, no such requirement is stated in the introduction or conclusion of ESRC (2006/2008). And when I looked closer, I found that the nature of the training (that is mentioned in passing) is quite limited:

“The aim of the training should be to build confidence in individual abilities to recognize the need for ethics scrutiny with regard to social science research; to understand institution’s requirements and procedures for review; and to understand how to access additional help…” (Page 14).

This seems to me to be an entirely inadequate basis for ethical researcher competence, in that it calls for conformity and little else. It seems to me that what is required is the development of the critical faculties
of ethical researchers. That is certainly the view taken by Israel and Hay (2008):

“Rather than relying on the deceptive assurances of ethical codes we argue that we should encourage theoretically informed, self-critical and perceptive approaches to moral matters. According to the Hastings Center (…), an education in ethics should fulfil a number of important goals (including):

- stimulating the moral imagination
- recognizing ethical issues
- developing analytical skills
- eliciting a sense of moral obligation and personal responsibility

Those goals overlap to a significant degree the competencies advocated within the system of ethical education promoted by Rest et al. (1986), Bebeau (2002), Eisen and Parker (2004) and others. Traditional approaches to informal teaching of research ethics (in internships, and using mentors) have been significantly unsuccessful, and the ESRC’s approach to teaching ethical conformity is likely to be just as unsuccessful, because it cannot motivate postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers to actively pursue ethical issues.

As early as 1986, Handelsman (1986) argued that ethics (in professional psychology) was not well acquired by osmosis, and that we should think of “ethical reasoning as a skill that can be taught”.

Friedman (1990) made a similar point (writing in the context of medical practice and biomedical research) when he said that “What may have worked well in the past – mentoring by bench scientists, and student osmosis of good laboratory and ethical practices – is no longer reliable” (page 32). This was so because of the growing number of cases of
“…research fraud and conflict of interest cases” (page 33). “More and more medical schools are recognizing that students require explicit discussion and analysis of ethical issues to assure high standards of professional practice”.

Pollock, Curley and Lotzova (1994) identified 1990 as a turning point in the US government (NIH) mandating of six hours of research ethics training for all post-doctoral researchers in the field of health studies. “The issue is whether it is possible to teach someone how to cope with unethical research pressures; the answer appears to be affirmative. Although it is not possible to articulate a resolution to every ethical dilemma in a six-hour framework, the short course provides a matrix for making ethical decisions based on an analysis of the issues at hand”. (Page 214). Later, Eisen and Parker, 2004, would argue for a two day training workshop in research ethics for undergraduate, postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers in all universities; with follow-up ‘booster sessions’ over time.

In 1997, Swazey and Bird (1997: 2-3) raised two questions: Can ethics be taught to adults? And: Why teach research ethics? They conclude, using evidence from articles by Rest and Bebeau, that ethics can be taught successfully to adults, and that this learning has an impact on their ethical behaviours in their work. Then they go on to why we should teach research ethics to graduate students: “Graduate school deans, faculty, and graduate students have all stated that ‘ethical preparedness training’ – preparing students to recognize and deal with ethical issues they may encounter in their field – should be an important function of their universities and departments”. (Page 3). Swazey and Bird found the level of demand for the teaching of ethics to be dramatically high. (“Overall, 99 percent of the deans, 88 percent of the faculty, and 82 percent of the students who responded to these [US wide] surveys said that their institutions [deans] or departments [faculty and students in the same departments] should take a very active to somewhat active role in such [research ethics] training”. [Pages 3-4]. However, in practice, a very low number of these same people thought that their institutions were actually doing much teaching of research ethics. Thus there is a huge gap between what is seen to be
required and what is actually delivered. I found a similar disparity in the University of Minerva).

One of the few models of competence based training in the literature I have researched is Eisen and Parker (2004) who present their own model for teaching research ethics. This includes the curriculum for a two-day workshop based on:

- half a day of formal input on moral philosophy;
- study and discussion of research ethics codes;
- and the use of small group discussions of personal moral issues to develop Rest’s four competencies of
  - ethical sensitivity (or how to recognize a moral situation),
  - moral reasoning,
  - ethical decision making and
  - moral action.

See my competence based curriculum plans in Sections 5.2 below.

2.4.3. My Third Theme
My third and final theme is the most interesting one for me, because it includes the teaching and learning process.

There is a real need to investigate how to understand, design and conduct ethics education and training. Here are some of my more recent arguments, combined with the arguments that I presented in Byrne (2006g).

(a) Philosophical foundations
There is firstly the issue of determining which philosophical schools of ethics, or moral philosophy, make most sense as a basis for professional practice in social care research. Many authors favour a combination of (Kant’s) deontology and (Mills’) utilitarianism, sometimes combined with a
(post-Aristotelian) virtue ethics component. (See in particular: Beauchamp and Childress, 1989, 1994; Seedhouse, 1988; Meara, Schmidt and Day, 1996; Baggini and Fosl, 2007).

This approach to ethics probably began with Hare’s (1981) ‘universal prescriptivism’, and proceeded through the work of Kitchener (1984) and on to Beauchamp and Childress (1989, 1994). It is now well established in the world of medical research ethics, and other areas that have copied it from the medical world. Baggini and Fosl (2007: 94) say: “In addition to consequentialism (or utilitarianism) and deontological theories, virtue ethics is commonly identified today as the third principal way of thinking about ethics”. Needless to say, fourth and fifth ways can also be added; in particular those related to the feminist ethic of care; class and race perspectives; and wider social and cultural variations. (Cf: The major roots of ethics discussed in Singer, 1993). See Appendix One for a range of matrices which explore these approaches to thinking about ethical dilemmas. See also my Figure 4.3 in section 4.5 of Chapter 4. My approach, outlined in Appendix One and Section 4.5, is an example of meta-ethical relativism (Marinoff, 2004), which involves skilfully deploying a number of different ethical systems in a pragmatic fusion, in the manner of a bricoleur (or canny craftsperson) pursuing a practical goal.

(b) Training the trainers

The next problem that we face under this theme is the ‘training of trainers’ issue. If current postgraduate tutors have not been taught research ethics, and the underpinning approaches to moral philosophy and critical thinking, how are they supposed to teach these knowledges and skills? (Cf: Eisen and Parker, 2004: 694; and Williams-Jones and Holm, 2005: 42). So the first priority is to train the trainers, and in Chapter 4 I will outline a twenty-four element heuristic designed by me for this purpose. That heuristic can be used by postgraduate research tutors to teach themselves the relevant concepts, principles and theories, and allied processes, that they will need to pass on to their postgraduate students.
And I will add some recommendations on teaching approaches in Section 5.2.1 of Chapter 5.

(c) The content of the training

The third problem is determining the content of the training that will be provided to postgraduate students, and especially Doctoral students. An early indication of some potential conclusions follows:

1. Heitman and Bulger (2005) recommend that compliance with research codes be reinstated as a central part of the curriculum for research students. However, active teaching and student centred learning processes are required to make sure that postgraduate students actually learn their research ethics codes. (This was demonstrated in a longitudinal study by Barrett, Funk and Macrina, 2005). We cannot leave the learning of ethical research codes to chance, or to osmosis\(^{13}\). Furthermore, I do not think this would be sufficient in itself, without the inclusion of a sound training in a number of moral philosophies, including at least deontology and utilitarianism; perhaps in the context of a virtue ethics developmental approach. (Sources: Seedhouse, 1988; Meara et al., 1996; Thomson, 1999/2005; Beauchamp and Childress, 1989/1994; Kitchener, 1984; Hare, 1981; Baggini and Fosl, 2007).

2. Eisen and Parker (2004), and Bebeau (2002), recommend the teaching of Rest et al’s. (1986) Four Components Model, as follows:

   - Ethical sensitivity, or how to identify an ethical problem in a research situation;
   - Moral reasoning, or how to think through the elements of a moral dilemma or conflict (using critical thinking and moral principles);

\(^{13}\) See Handelsman (1986); Friedman (1990); Finn (1999); Bebeau (2002: 286); on the failure of the system of relying on learning research ethics by osmosis
See also my ethical decision making model in Chapter 4, Section 4.7).

- Moral action/implementation. The courage or commitment to do the moral thing. The maintenance of integrity between what we ought to do and what we actually do.

(d) Teaching methods:

Next, I want to review the methods of teaching that have been recommended by various authors, as follows:

1. Lectures: Some elements of lecturing will be necessary for the knowledge input sessions on moral philosophy, perhaps using the ‘problem centred structure’ outlined in Brown and Atkins (1988: 33-34). This moral philosophy lecturing element should also show how morality fits into social science research. (Cf: Eisen and Parker, 2004: 699). It should also introduce the major schools of moral philosophy. These inputs should include student participation elements, small group discussions (as in ‘buzz groups’), preparation of peer-presentations, and so on. (Cf: Brown and Atkins, 1988: 28-30; Eisen and Parker, 2004: 699; and PESL, 2008).

2. Group discussions: Group discussions have been found to be highly effective ways to teach/learn ethical subjects. (Smith et al., 2004; Rosenbaum, 2003; Lind, 2004, 2005, 2006). Group discussions should focus on two areas of work:

   (1) Discussing relevant codes of research ethics. These should have been read by the Doctoral students before the event begins. (Cf: Eisen and Parker, 2004: 698). The tutor could use Kolb’s learning cycle to guide the group through consideration of what they have been learning. (Cf: Cowan, 2006).

   (2) Discussing personal moral dilemmas. These should be written up, in anonymized form, by each participant, in one or two pages, the day before the event; and then handed in and shuffled and reissued to students on the
day. This should be a form of case study discussion and debate, which is recommended by Israel and Hay (2008)

(3) Discussing substantial readings in the recommended literature. Case study discussion is helpful. However, because case studies tend to be rather ‘thin’, it is advisable to also have discussions and debates which are informed by a good deal of pre-reading of recommended literature; and these discussions should also be conducted after the writing and submission of assignment papers on research ethics issues. These discussions should show evidence of being able to deploy elements of the moral philosophies taught at the start of the programme.

3. Assigned Writing Tasks: Writing assignments are also a very important way of promoting learning of research ethics. This should involve substantial reading of the relevant literature, and critical reflection upon what is being learned. For example, “… writing well reasoned arguments that apply criteria for judging the quality of arguments…” was found to be an important adjunct to ethical dilemma discussion in Bebeau (2002: 282). And Pimple (2002) recommends four writing strategies for use in teaching research ethics classes. The most important seems to be the ‘logbook’. Ask students to keep a log of what they are learning on the research ethics course. Ask them to write frequent brief entries. Ask them to answer two questions at the end of each seminar: What is the main thing I learned about research ethics today? And what is my big outstanding question. Have them submit their logs anonymously; but keep some kind of check that the process if being kept up. Also, see element Yellow 8, in Figure 4.3 in section 4.5 of Chapter 4, below. Writing must be combined with reading the literature on research ethics and moral philosophy in order to promote the “intellectual virtues” (of understanding, judgement and reasoning, as described in Curren, 2007a: 507).

The preceding literature review will be revisited when I eventually get to the results/discussion (or learning/reflection) chapter of my thesis. In that chapter, which is Chapter 4, I will integrate the relevant literature with the data which I was eventually able to collect. And this literature will also
influence the development of my competence based curriculum plans in Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 of Chapter 5.

In the next section, below, I will consider the literature related to Phases Four and Five of my action research process.

2.5. Phases Four and Five – Two Questionnaires, Two Crunch Questions and One Interview

“The process of reviewing the literature encourages you to work out where your ideas have come from. For, as Murray (2002) points out, as researchers we are unlikely to have come up with something that is entirely new, it is just that we have not yet found out who is already working on this topic. Referring to and discussing existing literature will enable you to make substantiated claims about your area of study, and to avoid sweeping generalizations, by rooting the claims you make for your own research in the context of other studies and previous research”.


Reading widely has been a central feature of my Doctoral research journey, and I continued to read throughout Phases 4 and 5. However, no particular sources stand out as being closely linked to these phases. Two issues that did come up during this time, however, included the importance of studying moral philosophy, and the way my learning from the literature has given rise to an ability to develop a recommended reading list on research ethics for postgraduate tutors and students. Both of these will now be presented.

2.5.1. The Importance of Studying Moral Philosophy

Bond (2000: 48-52) commends moral philosophy to his readers as a help in resolving ethical issues, and he especially commends principle ethics, with the prediction that “other models” are likely to become prominent in time. (Those other models, in my view, and in the view of several authors that I have quoted above, include duty ethics [which is normally labelled as deontology], consequential ethics [especially utilitarianism], and some
elements of virtue ethics. Also, a feminist ethic of care [as in Gilligan, 1982/1993], and other cultural understandings).

Even though McLeod (2001) does not specifically recommend the study of moral philosophy, he does recommend the study of philosophy in general as a preparation for working as a qualitative researcher. (Page 203). He also specifically mentions the need to study phenomenology and hermeneutics as a prelude to developing or applying a qualitative methodology. (Pages 54-63). Logically, it follows from the implications of these recommendations that researchers should study moral philosophy as a prelude to engaging in ethical research. Or, as Baggini and Fosl (2007) say:

“…anyone who wants to deliberate and converse with others about the major moral concerns that occupy people today must be able to draw upon, not just a single well crafted theory but more broadly upon the rich and diverse work of the past 2,500 years of moral philosophy. Competent thinkers simply must have in their possession a well-stocked ‘toolkit’ containing a host of intellectual instruments for careful, precise and sophisticated moral thinking”. (Baggini and Fosl, 2007: xvi).

Eisen and Parker (2004) would support that perspective.

2.5.2. Developing a Reading List

The main achievement associated with Phases Four and Five was the development of a recommended reading list for Doctoral students on the topic of research ethics.

I have conducted several literature searches on many topics which are directly or indirectly related to the teaching and learning of research ethics, and applied some of those ideas, at least in processes of ‘thinking on paper’. This led to my being able to ask myself, ‘What do I consider to be an adequate reading list for postgraduate students to study to ensure that they are well educated to conduct professional level assessments of the risks involved in their own research proposals?’ I can offer the following
suggestions for Doctoral students. The list would have to be suitably - (meaning dramatically) - scaled down for MA students.

2.5.2(a) Advance Organizers

We should always begin with a good ‘advance organizer’ (Ausubel, 1968), which lays the foundations for what will follow. Here are my introductory texts:

- Gregory (2003) provides the most general conceptualization of research ethics that I have encountered, and keeps the structure simple and coherent. He emphasises the principle of integrity in ethical research, and illustrates what that means in practical detail in relation to the four phases of “deciding what to research; setting the research up; conducting the research; and: bringing the research to its conclusion”. (Pages 28-29).

- I mentioned Gregory (2003) first, because I am here concerned with research ethics. However, it is important to review ethics in general before looking at research ethics. A good advance organizer on the subject of ethics in general would be Chapter 1 of Comte-Sponville (2004). This is a very good, general statement of Kantian deontology, or duty ethics, written in a simple style. The topic is very much about treating others as we would wish to be treated – the Golden Rule. And never advocating any principle that we would not wish to see instituted as a universal principle to which we ourselves would inevitably be subjected. This is called ‘universalization’.

- A good advance organizer for the interplay of deontology and utilitarianism is Freeman, Engels and Altekruse (2004), who utilize a case study from Beauchamp and Childress (1989/1994) to clarify the role of moral philosophy in professional practice.

- The next step up is probably Morton (1996, 2004), Chapters 7 and 8.
A good, brief and clear overview of ten systems of ethical reasoning would be Marinoff (2005), who takes the next step of indicating that meta-ethical relativism is a process whereby we can pragmatically combine different moral theories together to come up with an appropriate response to our own complex problems of professional ethics. (This is a form of moral thinking as bricolage.)

A simple introduction to ‘critical thinking’ as a discipline would be Paul and Elder (2006); and a comprehensive training programme in this discipline is outlined in Bowell and Kemp (2005). Furthermore, Thomson (1999/2005) applies critical thinking skills to ethical reasoning contexts.

2.5.2(b) Codes of Ethics

Heitman and Bulger (2005) recommend that compliance with research codes be reinstated as a central part of the curriculum for research students. At least one of the following codes of ethics should be studied, and written about, and debated in seminar time:

- The British Psychological Society’s *Ethical principles for conducting research with human participants* – BPS (2000);
- or the British Association of Social Workers *Code of Ethics* – BASW (2001);
- or the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy’s *Ethical framework for good practice in counselling and psychotherapy* – BACP (2006), combined with Bond (2004a, b);
- or the *British Educational Research Association’s Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* – BERA (2004);
- or similar, as appropriate to the professional background of the

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14 Meta-ethical relativism is not related to ‘ethical relativism’. It is a way of conceptualizing the process of ‘mixing and matching’ principles from more than one moral philosophy, pragmatically.
The selected code(s) should be digested as a group activity for reasons expressed elsewhere in this thesis. (See pages 201-202, and 227-228, below).

2.5.2(c) More Complex Texts

- Once the groundwork has been laid by the advance organizers mentioned above, postgraduate students could then proceed to more elaborate and complex texts, or those with more elaborated and differentiated concepts, such as:

  o Beauchamp and Childress (1989, or 1994, or later), especially Chapters 1 and 2, on morality and ethical theory, and types of ethical theory.
  o McLeod (1994/2003), especially Chapter 10, on the ethics of counselling research.
  o Seedhouse (1988), especially Chapters 7 and 9, on theories of ethics and a model to guide ethical thinking.
  o Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), Chapter 2; on the ethics of educational and social research.
  o Vardy and Grosch (1999) Part One, on theories of ethics.
  o Chaffee (1998), Chapter 7 (called Step 7), on how to develop enlightened values.
  o Hare (1981), who reviews intuitionism, relativism and subjectivism, plus utilitarianism and deontology, to come up with a fusion which he calls 'universal prescriptivism', which seems essentially to be a form of utilitarianism.
with a duty ethics backstop, combined with two levels of ‘thinking’, which are ‘intuitions’ and critical thinking.

- Bond (2000), especially Chapters 4 and 15, on a framework for thinking about ethics, and a problem solving approach (the original ‘Bond optimization strategy’, which was adapted by Gabriel and Casemore, 2003, 2006).

- Mauthner, Birch, Jessop and Miler (eds) (2002) Ethics in Qualitative Research. This is a good, modern overview of an approach to the development of a ‘feminist ethic of care’ in qualitative research contexts.


- I also recommend a selection from the following list:


  # Gabriel, L. (2001) A matter of ethical literacy, about the importance of increasing one’s capacity to think and act effectively.

  # Emanuel, et al. (2003) Ethical and
2.5.3. Phase Five and its “nuggets of truth”

Before I look at some literature-related questions that are linked to Phase Five of my action research, I need to set the scene.

On October 12th 2007, I sent two ‘crunch questions’ to all of the MA and Doctoral students in the School of Social Care. I call them ‘crunch questions’ because they address the bottom line of my research: How were these students taught research ethics, (in their view/recall of that process)?

They could also benefit from reading: West (2002); West and Byrne (in press); Byrne (2006a); Byrne (2007a). These papers deal with practical problems of applied research ethics, in particular, what not to do, and when not to proceed.
And how did they try to learn ethical research competence for themselves, (or what is their story about that challenge)?

Earlier, on the 3rd October 2007, I had sent a request to Tutor T3 at the University of Minerva, to ask if she would be willing to proceed with an interview - about my thesis propositions - which she had originally offered to do.

The collection and analysis of the responses to those two questions – and the interview transcript from Tutor T3 – constitutes phase five of my research. And this will be presented in Chapter 3 (Methodology) and Chapter 4 (Learning and Reflection).

However, there is a problem here. How can I return, in full circle, to asking people for their experiences and opinions? Surely that was invalidated by Gladwell (2006), Haidt (2006), Gray (2003), and Bargh and Chartrand (1999)? Surely I was now supposed to be “coming at them sideways”; and not asking direct questions which they cannot reliably answer?

My attempts to develop indirect ways of collecting data – in Phases Three and Four - did not work out. In the end I was forced to consider that my thinking was still too influenced by the positivist paradigm, in which it is (allegedly) possible for me to observe the ‘truth’ about the behaviour of my research respondents, instead of simply constructing a narrative about their narratives; a discourse about their discourses. As McLeod (2001: 12) points out:

“Although everyone knows that research cannot ‘prove’ anything, and that there are no ‘facts’ in the social sciences, the kinds of research articles that have been published on therapy …” and presumably other areas of social care, “… rely heavily on a rhetoric of facticity and objectivity, with the methods section often being the lengthiest part of a research paper”.

2.5.4. Settling for Subjective Experiences – or the experiences of individuals and groups “in the real world”
Earlier, McLeod had said: “At its heart, qualitative research involves doing one's utmost to map and explore the *meaning* of an area of human experience...”. This requires “…an immersion in some aspect of social life, in an attempt to capture the wholeness of that experience, followed by an attempt to convey this understanding to others”. (Page iix).

Thus I was driven back to the acceptance that all I can hope to do is to ask people about their experiences, and to write up my experience of asking them about their experiences, perhaps contrasted against my own personal experience of the things that they are describing. I can engage in participant observation. I can ask questions, and collect answers. I can form interpretations, and ask for feedback on the level of agreement about my perspective. But none of that is about ‘facts’ and ‘reality’. It is all story about story of experience of ‘something’. But it may still have some social usefulness, and some degree of viability as ‘social knowledge’.

### 2.5.5. A Refinement of the Concept of ‘Thinking without Thinking’

Eysenck and Keane (2000: 222-223) present an interesting insight into just how accurate our memories of past events happen to be. It was made possible by the official inquiry into the Watergate scandal, in the early 1970s, in which US President Nixon authorized some people to break in to, or burgle, the offices of the Democratic nominee in the Watergate building, in Washington. John Dean had been legal counsel to the president at the time, and he was eventually arraigned by the official inquiry, and questioned about various conversations he had had with the president, and/or witnessed between the president and other senior officials. Dean gave a very detailed ‘recollection’ of a conversation on 15th September 1972, about the break in. These conversations involved Dean, President Nixon and Bob Haldeman, who was Nixon's chief of staff. Unfortunately for Dean, he did not know that Nixon had recorded all conversations that occurred in his office, and eventually the tape of that conversation of 15th September surfaced, and was compared with Dean’s testimony. It seems
Dean got some of the ‘nuggets’ of the conversation right, but he got the whole gist wrong. As Eysenck and Keane comment:

“Our autobiographical memories are sometimes less truthful than has been suggested so far. Dean’s memory for the conversations with the President gave Dean too active and significant a role. It is as if Dean remembered the conversations as he wished them to have been.” (Cf: Chancellor, 2007). “Perhaps people have a self-schema (organized knowledge about themselves) that influences how they perceive and remember personal information. Someone as ambitious and egotistical as Dean might have focussed mainly on those aspects of conversations in which he played a dominant role, and this selective attention may then have affected his later recall. As Haberlandt (1999, p.226) argued, ‘The autobiographical narrative…does preserve essential events as they were experienced, but it is not a factual report; rather, the account seems to make a certain point, to unify events, or to justify them’.”

Or, as Willig (2001: 141) points out: “…qualitative research acknowledges a subjective element in the research process”. And, indeed, based on Neisser’s (1976) model of human perception, how can we ever claim to know anything for certain. Ulrich Neisser presented a model in which we seem to combine some elements of ‘bottom up processing’ (from the ‘thing-in-itself’ to its *phenomenon* appearance in consciousness) with some elements of ‘top down processing’ (from our schemas in long-term memory to our percepts).

And that is the premise upon which I have returned to ask questions of some postgraduate students and one tutor: that their accounts will preserve *some* essential events as they were *experienced by them*, but they will *not* be giving me a factual report, in the sense in which ‘factual’ is used in the natural sciences. However, even in the natural sciences, facts are records of events which are no better and no worse than the person or device
registering the event. (Source: Novak and Gowin, 1984). And inevitably, scientific facts are 'transformed' by a process of human interpretation.

2.5.6. Finding Ways to Conceptualize the Training of Ethical Researchers

On page 99 of Urmson and Rée (1991), Gilbert Ryle argues against both empiricism and rationalism, as ways of understanding human learning. He, following Kant’s lead, is in favour of integrating both processes: experience and reflection. (I later found he was even more influenced by Schopenhauer, and had a strongly ‘behaviouristic’ approach to philosophy). There are two statements of note, where Ryle is using competent chess playing as his example of learning, or acquiring/constructing knowledge. This caused me to realize that ethical research competence is a range of skills and knowledges, and quite definitely not merely a set of attitudes and values. If a person acts competently in relation to the ethical aspects of a piece of qualitative research, then that is most likely because they have some previous experience of dealing with similar situations, even if only simulations or role plays. This experience is stored in the form of schemas in long term memory.

If I observe somebody’s research performance and comment that “I think they have demonstrated ethical research competence”, I am also utilizing more than my eyes, for, as Gregory (1973, 1980, 1996) says, we see with our brains, and especially with schemas in long-term memory. (Cf: Neisser, 1976). If I want to understand anybody’s research, I have to focus on key aspects of his or her research report (the ‘event/object’); ask myself a question about it (the ‘focus question’); and answer my own question using relevant conceptual knowledge stored in my long-term memory; as described in Gowin’s V-heuristic. See Figure 2.5 below.
Figure 2.5. Bob Gowin’s V-Heuristic (Source: Novak and Gowin, 1984: 3).

The basic V-heuristic shown in Figure 2.5 illustrates the four elements that I mentioned above, which Bob Gowin hypothesises are the constituents of knowledge construction. (See Novak and Gowin, 1984: 5). At the point of the Vee, the person constructing or investigating knowledge places a particular event or object, such as a particular ethical dilemma. At the top is the ‘focus question’, which is whatever question(s) the individual happens to have about that event or object. The main point is that answering the question requires “an active interplay” between the left side of the Vee, which is the theoretical/conceptual side, and the right side, which is the methodological or practical/methods side. It becomes immediately obvious that any individual, with a limited range of moral philosophies, theories or principles, stored in long-term memory, is going to be greatly hampered, if not totally stymied, in trying to answer a focus question about a particular ethical dilemma at the point of the Vee. (Cf: Hare, 1981; Beauchamp and Childress, 1989/1994; Bowell and Kemp, 2005; Thomson, 1999/2005; Baggini and Fosl, 2007). The more distinctions Doctoral students have about research ethics, including general moral philosophies that underpin ethical judgements, then the more competence Doctoral students are likely to display in debating, discussing and judging ethical dilemmas and problems in research contexts.
For the moment I simply observe that most of the postgraduate students that I have encountered at the University of Minerva have very little conceptual knowledge about moral philosophy stored on ‘the left-hand side of their Vees’. Or, in other words, they lack an adequate basis for ‘ethical literacy’, as described by Gabriel, 2001: 14-15.\(^{15}\)

The skills that are required, according to Rest et al. (1986), Sponholz (2000) Bebeau (2002) and Eisen and Parker (2004) include:

1. ethical sensitivity (or being able to see when ethical issues are present);
2. moral reasoning ability (or being able to think critically about values, principles and moral philosophies);\(^{16}\)
3. being able to solve ethical dilemmas (using ‘optimizing strategies’ like those of Thomson, 1999/2005; Bond, 2000; Gabriel and Casemore, 2003/2006; Gabriel, 2005; University of South Florida, 2003; and my model in Section 4.7 of Chapter 4, below); And:
4. Having the kinds of character traits that are likely to ensure ethical action/implementation, such as integrity, or one or more of the ten principles outlined in Zimbardo (2007: 452-456).

2.6. Concluding Comments

In this chapter I have looked at relevant literature under a number of main headings:

- the literature that influenced my attitude towards, and perspective on, ethical decision making models;
- the literature that influenced my view of human nonconsciousness, and how that relates to the aims of my research;

\(^{15}\) Or as Greene (1987: 145) says: “Experts have more factual knowledge about their own specific domain of expertise”.

\(^{16}\) “Expertise is displayed in the ability to recognize and exploit relevant information within that domain”. (Greene, 1987: 145).
the literature related to the teaching and learning of research ethics, which is of central importance to my thesis;

- the literature that constitutes the basis of a recommended reading list for postgraduate tutors and students; and:

- some literature regarding how to conceptualise the research ethics learner.

This literature review was structured according to the five phases of my research journey, in line with my action research methodology, and not in the more conventional forms indicated by Hart (1998) or Murray (2002). This approach is validated by Dick (1997b).

Overall, my literature searching and reviewing activities supported my research journey, and helped me to get to the point of having a significant contribution to knowledge to make to my research participants, their teachers, and a wider audience within universities in the UK. (See in particular Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 of Chapter 5; section 3.4 of Chapter 3; and section 4.8 of Chapter 4).

In the next chapter I will explore the methodology that I used in conducting my research project. In considering my methodology, I will include various sources from the literature on methodology, which have not been addressed in this literature review. And although I did not begin my work by identifying a gap in the literature, I did eventually find a relevant gap in the literature, which is presented in Section 4.4.6(ii)(6) of Chapter 4.
## CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

“The principle source of knowing in qualitative inquiry is the researcher’s engagement in a search for meaning in relation to the topic of inquiry. It is the struggle to know that generates new and useful insights”.

McLeod (2001: 54).

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. My original plan

My original plan for this chapter was:

(1) To demonstrate an understanding of:
   - methodology (as a philosophical approach to understanding how to conceptualize and justify research; e.g. arguments about ontology and epistemology; weighing up the relative merits of phenomenology and hermeneutics in a particular context, and so on);
   - methodologies (as established practical approaches to doing research; e.g. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis [IPA], Action Research, etc); and:
   - methods (or procedures for conducting research; e.g. use of interviews, questionnaires, etc);

(2) To describe the methodology and methods that I used to conduct my research;

(3) To describe my approach to ontology and epistemology;

(4) To develop a ‘mindful’ approach to reviewing the ethical implications and issues related to each of my five research phases; and:

(5) To review the strengths and weaknesses of my methodological approach.

However, due to my need to devote an adequate amount of space to the consideration of ethical issues, which is my thesis topic, I have had to scale back my plans. Now my main focus will be on item (4) above. In addition, I will begin with some limited methodological considerations; I will justify my methodology; and then briefly review the most important elements of my
research methods/procedures. Then I will describe the heuristic process that I developed to explore how to mindfully assess my research plans and actions for potential ethical risks.

3.1.2. Determining my methodology

I did not determine my methodology in advance and then apply it. Rather it evolved as a kind of *bricolage*\(^{17}\) of action research processes, involving the use of teaching interventions and brainstorming sessions; focus groups; questionnaires; self-reflection; participant observation; journal writing; the writing of reports and getting feedback on those reports from my respondents - (the so-called “member checks” approach: McLeod, 2001) - and one interview with a tutor. Therefore, it would not make any sense to ask, ‘Could I have used a different methodology?’ I will show later that I was familiar with a range of methodologies, and would have been guided by that knowledge tacitly. Maintaining conscious control of that tacit process was one of the functions of my continuous writing of reflective documents about what I was doing, how I was doing it, and the results I was producing. These were distributed widely to collect feedback.

However, it is important to repeat that my tacit knowledge of available methodologies had been informed by a lot of pre-reading. In fact, I spent the whole of my first year of doctoral study – 2003-4 – studying applied ontology and epistemology. (See Byrne, 2004a).

Which methodologies did I consider? I reviewed the five methodological approaches described by McLeod (2001). I then considered the six methodologies introduced by Willig (2001), and chose Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as the one I would prefer to work with. However, I could not proceed with that, because I could not (at that time, in 2005) run an adequate risk assessment on my research proposal. (See Byrne, 2006a).

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\(^{17}\) McLeod (2001: 119-129): “What is meant … (by *bricolage*) … is that the method emerges in response to the task of conducting a study. Rather than imposing a pre-determined method on the topic, the researcher is well-informed about a range of alternative approaches, and selects from these to ‘get the job done’.”
3.1.3. Choosing Action Research

I then considered the seven methodologies outlined by Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall (1994), and chose Action Research as a potentially useful way to proceed. The next step was probably my study of the ‘teacher inquiry’ form of action research in the writings of Feldman (1994) and Feldman and Minstrell (2000). I then studied action research with Bob Dick, at Southern Cross University, Australia (over the internet) – see Dick (1993, 1997a, b, c; 2000) – and formed an action research process out of the approach of Dick (1997b) and Taylor (1994). I subsequently reviewed the eight methodological approaches to educational research outlined by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), and still found action research to be the most appropriate option for my work, given my starting point of needing to explore the situation to find a way into the inquiry.

It is not easy to locate myself within the various strands of action research. My work was somewhat ‘technical’, somewhat ‘practical’, but not particularly ‘emancipatory’. (Cohen et al, 2007: 302). I have engaged in reflection in action; reflection on action; and reflection for action. Phases Two and Three were clearly forms of ‘teacher inquiry’, while the other phases were more general forms of academic inquiry.

In the struggle to know how tutors teach research ethics, and how postgraduate students learn research ethics, at the University of Minerva, I kept asking myself: What questions can I ask? Who can I ask? What actions can I take to test my inferences and hunches? And at each stage, I came up with different methods which seemed to me to be the most effective way, or even the only way, that I could move forward at that time. (Cf: Newman, 1998). In addition to studying Action Research with Bob Dick (1993; 1997a, b, c; 2000), I also participated in a Narrative Inquiry listserv discussion group and thought for a while that my work might develop in the direction of a narrative inquiry into my own research activities. (For Narrative Inquiry applications in doctoral research, see Fay, 2004; Quinlan, 1996). However, over a period of time the pressure of external circumstances pushed me in the direction of action research as the core of my methodology – under the influence of Dick (1997b, 2000); Taylor
(1994); Feldman (1994); Feldman and Minstrell (2000). Nevertheless, a small influence from narrative inquiry continued to manifest itself in my strong adherence to an autobiographical approach to structuring my research journal and my research story construction.

### 3.2. Methodological considerations

In this section I will briefly outline some preliminary questions about methodology and methods; my approach to action research; and my position on ontology and epistemology.

(a) **Some preliminary questions.**

(i) *Is my methodological approach quantitative or qualitative?* I take the view that my approach is essentially qualitative, according to the definition used by Parker (1994: 2), who says: “Qualitative research … is the interpretative study of a specified issue or problem in which the researcher is central to the sense that is made”. Some small accounting for numbers is indicated in Chapter 4, because of the way my research patterns emerged. This is seen as legitimate by Parker (1994: 1).

(ii) *And being primarily qualitative, is my approach empirical or constructionist?* Actually, I do not accept that this divide is absolute. As a contextual constructionist – Willig (2001: 147) – I adopt both empirical (bottom up) and constructionist (top down) approaches to my enquiry. (Cf: Neisser, 1976). Indeed, I maintain that no other approach is rationally possible for a human. We (humans) seem to be both (x%) subjective and (y%) objective at all times, in a world in which it seems impossible to determine the values of ‘x’ and ‘y’ with certainty.

(iii) *How do I justify it?* The justification for my use of action research is primarily pragmatic. I found that it worked for the tasks that I had in hand; and it produced a significant contribution to knowledge. (See Sections 3.4, 4.5, 4.6, 5.2.1 and 5.2.2). I could not have used anything else in Phase One and Two. In Phase Three and Four I could have used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis instead, but the mould had by then been set. In order to maintain rigour, and conscious control, I used
explicit applications of Kolb’s learning cycle (as described in Cowan, 2006) and the V-heuristic (presented in Novak and Gowin, 1984). This is described in section (b) below.

(iv) What methods did I use? I used exploratory ('fuzzy') questions; brainstorming and focus groups; planning of a ‘teacher inquiry’ process; elaborate multi-question questionnaires; brief, two-question questionnaires; submission of reports for ‘member check’ feedback\(^\text{18}\); participant observation; presentations to groups; and an interview with one tutor.

(v) Why did I choose those methods? Mainly I chose my methods because they were the only realistic options available to me at any particular time; or they were the most promising or convincing options available. And, as shown by Maier (1931), and confirmed by Eysenck and Keane (2000: 394), they mainly just ‘appeared in consciousness’ as the solution to my specific experience of being ‘stuck’. That is to say, I chose them for tacit reasons, but managed them consciously.

(vi) How are these methods justified? My methods are justified in the same way that my methodology is justified: pragmatically, on the basis that they work in practice to produce my contribution to knowledge. They are ‘just in time’ solutions to practical research problems; produced as ‘bricolage’ to get the job done. (Source, McLeod, 2001: 119-129).

(b) Action research. Over time I evolved a double-loop action research process as follows:

(i) Firstly I extracted a three-step cycle of Plan>Act>Reflect/Conclude from Taylor (1994), Dick (1997b) and Feldman (1994), and others.

\(^{18}\) McLeod (2001: 185-188) defines ‘member checks’ as follows: “…a report (written or oral) is presented by the researcher to informants or other members of the informant social group. These members can then report on the veracity of what the researcher has produced”. I submitted 37 reports to this kind of member checking process, with 59 postgraduate students and six tutors.
**A: My Generic AR Process (JWB)**

1. **Plan:** In Phases One, Four and Five, I used the process described by Dick (1997b) in column ‘C’ opposite. In Phases Two and Three, I used the process described by Taylor (1994) in column ‘B’.

2. **Act:** Three of my phases involved asking questions, while two involved planning and implementing actions. In Phase Three, the monitoring process occurred during the action; while in all other phases the action involved asking questions, and the monitoring occurred in Step 3, below.

3. **Reflect/Conclude:** I examined the information I had collected by engaging in a process of writing 37 accounts of the process, and using practical reasoning approaches to pattern analysis to analyse the data/texts. I evaluated both my research processes and the outcomes achieved. I tried to devise ways of testing my interpretations in subsequent phases of the research. I had very little choice in the participants who were available to me. I checked my results against the relevant literature in Chapters 2 and 4. In the process of reaching my conclusions, I used Kolb’s learning cycle (Kolb, 1984 and Cowan, 2006), and the V-heuristic (Novak and Gowin, 1984); as discussed later in the section on epistemology, and elsewhere in this thesis. I referred back to my literature reviews at the end of some of those cycles.

**B: Taylor’s (1994) Process**

1. Select the general area. Discuss, observe, read and decide on your first action.

2. Take your action (and monitor the action).

3. Examine the information you have collected.

4. Evaluate (a) processes, (b) outcomes.

3(a). Check the information you collected; devise ways of testing it in the next cycle.

3(b). Interpret the information – what does it mean? Devise ways of testing your interpretations in the next cycle.

3(c). Check the adequacy of your choice of participants and way of collecting information. Amend them for the next cycle if desirable.

3(d). Check your data and interpretation against the relevant literature; you may not do this for every step, but may limit it to every few cycles. (This and the three prior steps are part of reflection).

5. Plan next action…

**C: Dick’s (1997b) Process**

1(a). Decide which questions you wish to have answered; if this is the first step in the process, it may be a very broad question: (e.g.) ‘How does this system work?’, perhaps.

1(b). Decide who to ask, and how to ask them. (This and the previous step are both “plan”).

2. Ask. (This is the “act” component).

3(a). Check the information you collected; devise ways of testing it in the next cycle.

3(b). Interpret the information – what does it mean? Devise ways of testing your interpretations in the next cycle.

3(c). Check the adequacy of your choice of participants and way of collecting information. Amend them for the next cycle if desirable.

3(d). Check your data and interpretation against the relevant literature; you may not do this for every step, but may limit it to every few cycles. (This and the three prior steps are part of reflection).

5. Plan next action…

**Table 3.1, My generic action research process**
Table 3.1 illustrates the links between my primary action research process – in column A – and the processes developed by Taylor and Dick (in columns B and C)\(^\text{19}\). This table is designed to show the first loop of my action research process, which is: \textit{Plan}\textgreater\textit{Act}\textgreater\textit{Reflect/Conclude}. This plan\textgreater act\textgreater reflect loop – when applied to the various cycles of my five research phases – resulted in the production of numerous ‘mini-papers’ (the first of which was over 7,000 words in length, and some were up to eleven, twelve or thirteen thousand words long). Later they were reclassified as research reports, and are now labelled as Sections of my Research Journal. Thirty-seven of those Research Journal Sections were sent out to my database of fifty-nine postgraduate students and several postgraduate tutors in the School of Social Care.

(ii) The second loop of my action research process was encountered when I came to write Chapter 4 of this thesis. This second loop consists of a more elaborate cycle of steps, including:

1. Review the relevant research report (or Section of my Research Journal). (‘White hat’ review)\(^\text{20}\).
2. Make appropriate observations/reflections.
3. Form well supported conclusions.
4. Derive recommendations to present in Chapter 5.
5. Link conclusions back to the literature, whenever relevant/possible.
6. Additional critical reflection.

This double-loop learning cycle had the effect of maintaining rigour in the process of interpretation. Rigour was further maintained in my action research process by the fact that the conclusions and interpretations of one

\(^{19}\) I also briefly considered the distinction between “core project” and “thesis project” identified in Perry and Zuber-Skerritt (1992: 201-205), in their approach to action research, and concluded that this distinction is not helpful in the context of “teacher inquiry” processes as contrasted against “organization development” approaches.

\(^{20}\) De Bono’s (1995) ‘White hat’ heuristic is about collecting relevant information, without any attempt to evaluate it. See the Glossary for further detail.
cycle were carried forward into the start of the next cycle, where they could be inspected and challenged by the participants in that cycle - (Dick, 2000: 6-7; 1997b; 1997c: 3) - and so on through the various cycles. And thirdly, at the conclusion stage of each cycle, a report of the cycle was sent to all participants – plus two supervisors, some other tutors, and one peer reviewer - to ask for their feedback on the conclusions/ interpretations. Thus there was a good deal of triangulation of data (or dialectical consideration of the data), plus a good number of alternative sources of data. (And when I say data, of course I mean ‘texts’, or ‘accounts’, or reports of the events of each cycle, or series of cycles).

In the Results (or Learning) section of this thesis – in Chapter 4 – I will demonstrate the ways in which I have achieved rigour in my action research inquiries.

(c) Ontology and epistemology. I explored my approach to ontology in Byrne (2004a), and satisfied myself and my supervisors that I have a viable grasp of these difficult philosophical subjects. Here I can only present the briefest of indications of my ontological and epistemological positions as they apply to my thesis argument.

(i) My ontology. What is “real”? What really exists? I believe “the University of Minerva” exists, in a physical world, and that it is composed of brick buildings, fleshy staff and fleshy students, paper and electronic library resources, lecture and seminar rooms, offices, curricula and exam processes, and so on. However, I do not believe that anybody can directly experience that ‘noumenal’ reality – Honderich (1995: 657-658) – that ‘thing in itself’ beyond language constructions. Every person who enters the University of Minerva sees a subtly (or significantly) different ‘phenomenal’ reality, depending upon their personal history and experience. Of course, there may be a good deal of agreement between some groups of students, and staff, regarding the ‘nature’ of the University of Minerva, but that can never be total, and often significant differences of perception are hidden beneath the use of imprecise language of description. Therefore, it seems to me that “the teaching and learning of ethical research competence” is a phenomenal process
that will be experienced in subtly (or significantly) different ways by each student and each member of staff.

(ii) My Epistemology. How do people learn, and construct knowledge?

My theory of knowledge is that my constructed knowledge is not based on a firm foundation, but is rather a coherent whole, which is sanctioned by a small, local, social agreement, namely my research participants (or at least, most of them). Thus I am both a coherentist and a contextual constructionist.

My central question in epistemology is this: How can I learn about research ethics at the School of Social Care? How can I construct viable knowledge? In recent years, mainstream cognitive psychology research has not paid much attention to learning – cf: Eysenck and Keane (2000: 421-424; Gregory, 1987: 431) – beyond the field of ‘problem solving’, and outside of those educators who have taken an interest in the psychology of learning, as exemplified in the research work of Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner, and those who have commented upon or built upon their theories.21

![Kolb’s Learning Cycle](image-url)

**Figure 3.1. Kolb’s Learning Cycle**

21 (For examples, Wood, 1988; Novak and Gowin, 1984; Murphy and Moon, 1989; Ausubel, Novak, and Hanesian, 1978; Ausubel, 1963, 1968; and others).
One of the main theories of learning that is linked to action research methodology is David Kolb’s theory of *experiential learning*. (Kolb, 1984). See Figure 3.1 above.

Common incomplete forms of learning are those engaged in by the “activist/pragmatist” on the one hand (who uses the yellow boxes alone), and the “theorist/reflector” on the other hand (who uses the green). (Cf: Honey and Mumford, 1986). A complete, ideal learning experience involves working systematically from box 1 to box 4 in strict sequence; although cycling back along the way is also possible, (especially link ‘A’ from box 3 to box 2, and then forward again; or using link ‘B’ from box 4 to 3, and then forward again, around the loop). (See Curren, 2006). My aim in Chapter 4 has been to engage in complete, ideal learning cycles as described above; to send my conclusions to my research respondents, my supervisors, and to one peer reviewer; to get critical feedback; to take that feedback into account; and thus to achieve a ‘social agreement’ about my research findings (or learning).

![Figure 3.2. An illustration of the first cycle in my action research process](image-url)
I have also relied on cognitive dissonance – Festinger (1957) – as illustrated in Figure 3.2 above.

The process in Figure 3.2 begins with Box 1, the action of asking two ‘fuzzy questions’. It then moves on to Box 2, where I got the answers, and began to infer some kinds of preliminary conclusions from reading them. Then, in Box 3, I began to experience cognitive dissonance between my ‘inferred beliefs’ about the answers, on the one hand, and the beliefs that were suggested by the literature I was reading, on the other hand. This is a good illustration of a tension between the Piagetian (inner self-directed process of learning) and the (Vygotskian) process of taking over new ideas from others; (those others, in this case, being Gladwell, 2006; Haidt, 2006; Gray, 2003; and Bargh and Chartrand, 1999). The tension between these two sources of ideas - the old and the new - are, in my view, the dynamic source of much conceptual learning; as indicated in Piaget’s concept of “accommodation” (of an old schema to a new experience); and Neisser’s (1976) concept of environmental modification of existing schemas. (See also, Eysenck and Keane, 2000: 423-434). Thus it is clear that action research is supported by ideas from both experiential learning (Piaget, Kolb) and social learning (Vygotsky, Bruner, etc). (Cf: Oates, 1994).

3.3. My Methods or Procedure

3.3.1. Background

What methods or procedures are compatible with my ontology, epistemology and theory of research? I had already chosen my methods and almost completed my research before I wrote this section, and so my question now becomes: Are my methods – which evolved pragmatically - compatible with my methodology? My review of this question suggests that there are no contradictions between my methodology and my methods.

---

22 My inferred beliefs about my two respondents’ answers were, initially: that they know what they believe and can accurately relate their experiences, wants and needs to me.

23 Gladwell (2006) suggested that all humans operate mainly non-consciously, and can easily make up plausible explanations for their actions, without being able to see that those explanations are fictional, and bear little to no relation to the facts of the case.
In practice, I chose my research methods/procedures for pragmatic reasons, to do with what was possible in the real circumstances of my situation, and not for theoretically pure (or prescribed, or preordained) reasons.

3.3.2. Detailed Methods or Procedure

My research methods, or procedures, varied from Phase One to Phase Five of my research. In Table 3.2 below, I will present an overview of the various cycles of action-inquiry undertaken in those five phases.

Table 3.2. Overview of methods/procedure used in Phase 1 to Phase 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase No.</th>
<th>Cycle A</th>
<th>Additional cycles (B to D)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What did I do and how did I do it?</td>
<td>Cycle 1B: I sent the report back to those two participants, and to my two supervisors. Because of my conviction – from Gladwell (2006) and others - that people could not be relied upon to tell me 'what is the case', I abandoned this phase of my research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle 1A:</td>
<td>(i) Plan: I planned a questionnaire with two questions about the teaching and learning of research ethics.</td>
<td>Cycle 1C: Later on I realized that individuals' autobiographical narratives contain &quot;nuggets of truth&quot; and so...:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Act: I sent those two questions to two individuals on the Professional Doctorate programme; and collected their answers;</td>
<td>(i) Plan: ...I went back to consulting all the students on the Doctoral programme, on 19th February 2008...:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I analyzed their answers; and wrote a report in the form of Section 'H' of my Research Journal, for distribution. See Section 4.4.1 of Chapter 4, below.</td>
<td>(ii) Act: ...by sending them one question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle 1D: I then...</td>
<td>(iii) Reflect/Conclude: ...I have digested in Section 'ZD' of my Research Journal, and Section 4.4.2 of Chapter 4 below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i) Plan: ... decided to send out the summary of Section 'ZD':</td>
<td>Cycle 1D: I then...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Act: I sent it out on 29th February 2008, to the same (Doctoral) mailing list as before.</td>
<td>(i) Plan: ... decided to send out the summary of Section 'ZD':</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I got 8 responses, and not one challenged my conclusion, that Doctoral students want and need a significant educational input on research ethics and relevant moral philosophies. See Section 4.4.3 of Chapter 4, below.</td>
<td>(ii) Act: I sent it out on 29th February 2008, to the same (Doctoral) mailing list as before.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase Two follows below…
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>hase No.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Cycle A</strong></th>
<th><strong>Additional cycles (B to D)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2.         | What did I do and how did I do it? **Cycle 2A:**  
(i) Plan: I wrote a ‘request for access’ to be allowed to work with a group of doctoral students, to make an action research intervention, based on ‘teacher inquiry’ – Feldman (1996), Feldman and Minstrell (2000). I wrote a detailed rationale for this process, plus a fully developed lesson plan, including handouts, for a one day process of debating ethical dilemmas.  
(ii) Act: (I subsequently abandoned this proposal for ethical reasons given in this thesis). | |
| 3.         | What did I do and how did I do it? **Cycle 3A:**  
(i) Plan: I planned and organized a series of events, at the University of Minerva, to find out what postgraduate students currently know about research ethics: beginning in the Postgraduate Discussion and Research Forum (PDRF), and then creating my own Ethical Research Study Seminar (ERSS).  
(ii) Act: The first event occurred on 27th February 2007, and involved a brainstorming session to find out what the participants knew about research ethics.  
(iii) Reflect/Conclude: This resulted in a report, a write-up in Section A1 of my Research Journal, and a report which was distributed, and from which I received some feedback. | **Cycle 3B:** (i) Plan: I planned a further event, and...:  
(ii) Act: ...I sent out the report from Cycle 3A, above; and advertised an event for 27th March 2007, at which I ran a brainstorming session and a focus group...  
(iii) Reflect/Conclude: ...the results showed limited development of ethical research competence among my participants..  
Then there was a hiatus, because I could not find a way forward. **Cycle 3C:** (i) Plan: I planned an event:  
(ii) Act: which was held on 15th May 2007, and at which the participants were encouraged to develop their own codes of research ethics:  
(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I wrote up the event in a reflective report. This Cycle did not produce any significant results, and then petered out through lack of commitment by the participants. **Cycle 3D:** Months later, I reviewed Phase Three.  
(i) Plan: I decided to write to all the MA students...  
(ii) Act: ...which I did on 29th February 2008, to find out if they think they need a significant teaching input on moral philosophy and help in digesting their code of research ethics...  
(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I learned that at least some of the MA students do indeed want/need such an input. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase No.</th>
<th>Cycle A</th>
<th>Additional cycles (B and C)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4(a)</td>
<td>What did I do and how did I do it?</td>
<td>Cycle 4(a)B:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle 4(a)A:</td>
<td>(i) Plan: I decided to ask the MA students some additional questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i) Plan: I planned to consult some MA students about their understanding of ethical research.</td>
<td>(ii) Act: I sent the report from Cycle 4(a)A, opposite, to my MA respondents, including some new questions, and collected their responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Act: On 21st June 2007, I sent an email and a questionnaire to 24 students, on the MA programme. I collected six responses,</td>
<td>(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I learned something about the narrowness of the reading on research ethics by these students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Reflect/Conclude: Then I analyzed those responses and produced a report for circulation.</td>
<td>Cycle 4(a)C:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle 4(a)B:</td>
<td>(i) Reflect and Plan: This phase was then dormant until 19th February 2008, when I reviewed the collected data again, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i) Plan: I decided to ask the MA students some additional questions.</td>
<td>(ii) Act: I sent a new mini-report with supplementary questions to the MA students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Act: I sent the report from Cycle 4(a)A, opposite, to my MA respondents, including some new questions, and collected their responses.</td>
<td>(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I got just two responses, so this Phase (4[a]) came to an inconclusive ending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I learned something about the narrowness of the reading on research ethics by these students.</td>
<td>Cycle 4(b)A:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4(b)</td>
<td>What did I do and how did I do it?</td>
<td>(i) Plan: I decided to ask the Professional doctorate students two additional questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle 4(b)A:</td>
<td>(ii) Act: On 22nd August 2007, I sent my Section ‘R’ report to the Professional Doctorate mailing list. I appended two questions at the end requesting general feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i) Plan: I decided to consult the Professional doctorate students as a whole about what they knew about research ethics.</td>
<td>(iii) Reflect/Conclude: The feedback was too minimal and sparse to result in any kind of further development of this phase of my research. However…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Act: On 21st June 2007, I sent an email and a different questionnaire (from 4(a) above) to all the participants on the Professional doctorate programme in the School of Social Care, which includes about twenty individuals.</td>
<td>Cycle 4(b)C: On 4th March 2008, I returned to look at Cycle 4(b)A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I collected six responses, analyzed those responses and wrote my report in Section ‘R’ of my Research Journal; in the form of a report for circulation.</td>
<td>(i) Plan: I decided to update my report and link it to my literature review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Act: I amended my Section ‘R’ report, and sent it out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I identified some recommendations: All six respondents welcomed some form of teaching input on research ethics/moral philosophy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase Five follows…
What did I do and how did I do it?

Cycle 5(a)A:
(i) Plan: I focussed in on the two key questions that are most important to me, and decided to consult the Professional Doctorate students and the MA students about them.
(ii) Act: In October 2007, I sent an email to everybody on the Professional Doctorate programme in the School of Social Care, University of Minerva, plus the MA mailing list, incorporating two questions about the teaching and learning of research ethics.
(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I got sixteen responses: being 12 Doctoral students and 4 MAs. I concentrated on the doctoral responses, and analyzed the responses to Question 2 first, on the teaching of research ethics at the University of Minerva. See Section 4.4.6 of Chapter 4 below.

Cycle 5(a)B:
(i) Plan: I planned to send out my report, with five new questions attached, and to ask for general feedback on my analysis of the question about the teaching of research ethics.
(ii) Act: On 9th January 2008, I sent Parts 1 and 2 of Section ‘Z’ to all sixteen respondents. In this report, I had identified five patterns of teaching.
(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I got nine responses to the first draft of Section ‘Z’, and all nine confirmed that I had got my pattern analysis right. See Section 4.4.7 of Chapter 4 below.

Cycle 5(a)C:
(i) Plan: I then decided to analyze the answers to Question 1, about the learning of research ethics, and add some new questions.
(ii) Act: I wrote a report (Part 3 of Section ‘Z’) on the 16 responses to Question 1 (of how the respondents learned about research ethics). I sent this out on 7th February 2008, to the same two mailing lists, and…:
(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I got seven responses who all agreed that I got my analysis right.

Cycle 5(b)A:
(i) Plan: I wanted to interview postgraduate research tutors, but failed to find any suitable opportunities for a group interview, focus group, etc.
(ii) Act: Then Tutor T3, who was aware of the work I was doing in her School at the University of Minerva, offered to be interviewed about the School’s view of how to teach and learn research ethics. I therefore set up an appointment date, prepared three questions, and conducted an audio-recorded interview using those three questions. (See Section 4.4.7(b) of Chapter 4).
(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I analyzed the audio recording, wrote a report on this interview, and sent it to tutor T3. It is discussed in section 4.4.7(b) of Chapter 4, below.

Cycle 5(b)B:
(i) Plan: I would like to get some feedback on my report from the previous cycle (5(b)A), opposite, by consulting tutors and students about it.
(ii) Act: However, I decided not to do so, for reasons of ethical sensitivity.
(iii) Reflect/Conclude: I must not do any harm to Tutor T3: (Element Blue in my ethical research thinking heuristic – Figure 4.3 in Chapter 4).

Table 3.2. Overview of methods/procedures used in Phases 1 to 5
Overall, then, my research procedure fits the pattern of the action research modality of going around the learning cycle - of Plan > Act > Reflect/Conclude – between one and four times within each phase of my inquiry. The main thrust of my research has been to explore these questions: What do postgraduate students in the School of Social Care know about research ethics (or, earlier, moral reasoning)? And: Do they want and/or need a significant educational input on research ethics and relevant moral philosophies? The learning that resulted from analyzing my data/texts will be discussed in Chapter 4, where some of the most relevant links to the literature will also be elaborated.

3.3.3. Participant numbers

(a) Who were my research participants? My pool of potential research participants were 35 Doctoral students and 24 MA students, “in the School of Social Care, Welfare and Human Learning, at the University of Minerva, in the North of England”.

(b) How did I find them? “I have built up numerous associations with different northern universities over a good number of years”.

(c) How many of them participated in my various phases and cycles? My best result was when sixteen students submitted answers to two questions in Phase Five. Earlier, in Phase Three, thirteen students participated in my first brainstorming session; while only four turned up for my second event; and thirteen for the third. Cycle 1A of Phase One involved consulting two Doctoral students; while my question in Cycle 1C received twelve responses.

(d) How representative are they? The most representative outcomes that I got – in Phases One and Five – were that thirteen Doctoral students out of a total of 35 came forward with data; and ten out of those thirteen agreed on a broad perspective which I presented in my conclusions. (See Table 3.3 below for the full breakdown of participant numbers). However, to clarify, I am not claiming that my respondents were representative in the way that quantitative researchers seek such representativeness.
**Figure 3.3. Research participants by phase and cycle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Numbers of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Phase One.** Asking ‘fuzzy questions’, plus follow up clarifications.  
(Although I kept “my own tutors, plus three tutors from the University of Minerva”, on my mailing list for each mailing, virtually all of my research data came from the students, and not from the tutors. My questions were aimed at the students, except in Phase Five(b)). | **Cycle 1A.** Two fuzzy questions sent to two potential participants.  
**Cycle 1B.** Report from cycle 1A sent to 35 Doctoral students and 24 MA students, “plus six tutors”, to indicate that I could not proceed because of the problem of ‘respondent nonconsciousness’.  
**Cycle 1C.** Later I revised my perceptions, and sent a new statement to all 59 students and 6 tutors to ask for feedback. I included one question. I got 12 responses to my question in cycle 1C, which I analyzed in Section ZD of my Research Journal.  
**Cycle 1D.** I sent out Section ZD to fifty-nine students (and several tutors), and got 8 (student) responses. |
| **Phase Two.** Planning a proposed ‘teacher inquiry’ process, which would involve 12 Doctoral students. | This proposed plan was abandoned by me for ethical reasons, and so there were no participants in this phase. |
| **Phase Three.** I planned a series of face-to-face events (brainstorming, focus group, and teaching events) at the PDRF, at the University of Minerva. | **Cycle 3A** included an event which occurred on 27th February 2007, and involved 13 participants, mainly MA students, plus one Doctoral student.  
**Cycle 3B** included an event which occurred on 27th March 2007, and involved 4 participants. (2 MAs and two Doctoral students).  
**Cycle 3C** included an event which occurred on 15th May, and involved 13 participants.  
**Cycle 3D.** On 29th February 2008 I sent a document, plus a question to all 24 MA students, and got six responses to my question. |

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24 PDRF = “Postgraduate Discussion and Research Forum, a research study group and research support forum/workshop in the School of Social Care, University of Minerva.”

...continued...
| Phase Four(a) | Cycle 4(a)A. On 21\textsuperscript{st} June 2007, I sent an email and a questionnaire to about 27 students, of whom 24 were on the MA programme in Social Care. I collected six (MA student) responses. |
| Cycle 4(a)B. I sent my report, in Section ‘N’ of my Research Journal, to my MA respondents, including some new questions, and collected four responses. |
| Cycle 4(a)C. I sent a new mini-report with supplementary questions to the 24 MA students on 19\textsuperscript{th} February 2008. I got just two responses, so this Phase (4[a]) came to an inconclusive ending. |

| Phase Four(b) | Cycle 4(b)A. On 21\textsuperscript{st} June 2007, I sent an email and a different questionnaire (from 4(a) above) to all the participants on the Professional doctorate programme in the School of Social Care, which includes 35 individuals. I got six responses. |
| Cycle 4(b)B. On 22\textsuperscript{nd} August 2007, I sent my analysis of those responses, in the form of Section ‘R’, to the Professional Doctorate mailing list (35 individuals). I appended two questions at the end requesting general feedback. The feedback was too minimal and sparse – with just two responses - to result in any kind of further development of this phase of my research. |
| Cycle 4(b)C. On 4\textsuperscript{th} March 2008, I sent an amended Section ‘R’ report to all 35 Doctoral students, and got seven responses. |

...continued...
3.4. Ethical Considerations

3.4.1. Introductory comments

(a) The importance of research ethics. At one stage on this research journey I worked on the idea of starting my research design with ethics – because ethics is most important - and then looking at the (subsequently arising) research issues. However, I could not find or develop any way to do this; and eventually I accepted that qualitative researchers need to develop the ability to simultaneously pursue practical and ethical research goals. That is the only reason the ethics section can be presented at the end of this chapter. If the chapter was organized in terms of the importance of the ideas within it, then the ethics section would have to be the first
section; or be woven together with the methodology and methods, like a braid.

(b) The stages of learning a new skill. In Section ‘A1’ of my Research Journal, I explored the stages of learning a new skill. (See: O’Connor and Seymour, 1990). This model demonstrates that, in learning any new skill – such as running ethical risk assessments – the individual begins in Box 1 (unconscious incompetence), proceeds through Boxes 2 and 3, and into Box 4 (where they are unconscious again, but this time competently [if they have persisted and practiced consistently enough to have mastered the skill]). See Figure 3.3.

![Figure 3.3. Stages of Learning a New Skill (from Neuro-Linguistic Programming). Illustration by Jim Byrne](image)

Once they make it into Box 4, they now have tacit knowledge – or an unconscious ability to perform the particular skill they have been practicing.

3.4.2. The problem of ‘mindlessness’

However, there is now a new problem. Mindless competence – or tacit expertise – can be highly effective, and highly ineffective forms of human functioning. That is to say, being able to non-consciously make expert judgements is a great asset – (as demonstrated by Gladwell, 2006: 3-17) – but it can also let us (humans) down badly, because it is fallible. (Cf:
Langer, 1991: 15-16, 31). We (normal humans) may utilize the wrong set of experiences, in the form of an unconscious habit. Other emotions, goals and instincts can interfere with our computations, and render our tacit judgements false and unhelpful. And information overload is a further important form of interference with tacit decision making. (Cf: Gladwell, 2006: 99-146). I will say some more about this problem later in this section.

In order to become expert in any area of skill, we must first begin by consciously talking ourselves through the discrete steps. Gradually we develop more and more fluidity, as the discrete components of the skill become more and more unconscious; and more and more automatic. So in developing skill we have no alternative but to become unconsciously competent.

3.4.3. From mindlessness to mindfulness

It follows from this kind of insight that, first we need to become mindlessly expert, by acquiring tacit knowledge of how to perform our professional research functions, including ethical reviews and risk assessments; and then we need to find ways to mindfully implement our expertise. In other words, we need a good balance of conscious and non-conscious competence. Or, to put it another way, non-conscious expertise with conscious control over the process is required. How can we do that? Well, mindfulness means thinking consciously and deliberately about the details of an important situation. Beyond that, Langer (1991) specifies four elements as constituents of the nature of mindfulness, as follows:

- “Creating new categories. Just as mindlessness is the rigid reliance on old categories, mindfulness means the continual creation of new ones”. (Langer, 1991: 73). This is reminiscent of De Bono’s (1995: 6-7) critique of the limitations of logic – which is useful for some purposes (especially in hindsight) – and the need for creative thinking in designing a way forward.

- “Welcoming new information. A mindful state implies openness to new information… (which is) a basic function of living
creatures”. (Langer, 1991: 76-77). This is reminiscent of De Bono’s (1995: 45) description of “white hat thinking”\textsuperscript{25}. “The white hat indicates an exclusive focus on information. What information is available? What information is needed? What information is missing? How are we going to get the information we need?”

- “More than one view. Openness, not only to new information, but to different points of view is also an important feature of mindfulness”. (Langer, 1991: 78). Be alert to the fundamental attribution error. Be aware of our tendency to view ourselves through a rose tinted mirror. (See Haidt, 2006). Be pluralistic in our viewpoints. (See Chaffee, 1998). Be creative in our thinking. (As in De Bono’s “green hat” approach).

- “Process before outcome. “… a preoccupation with outcome can make us mindless. Turning this observation around, as we have with all our definitions of mindlessness, we can see mindfulness as a process orientation. … A true process orientation also means being aware that every outcome is preceded by a process…”” (Langer, 1991: 85) What is the process needed here? Perhaps we could use the To-Lo-Po-So-Go process as a review heuristic. (De Bono, 1995)\textsuperscript{26}.

How can I apply this rough definition of mindfulness to my ethical review? I need to develop a conscious process of thinking, which cannot be

\textsuperscript{25} Edward De Bono’s “six thinking hats” heuristic – see the Glossary, below - is based on the idea that there are at least six different “forms” of thinking, or different “functions” to our thinking. Imagine you put on a different coloured hat for each type of thinking. For example: collecting information (white hat); evaluating the positive aspects of that information (yellow hat); reviewing our thinking critically to ensure we do not make any mistakes or act imprudently (black hat); to brainstorm new creative ideas (green hat); to plan our thinking tasks (blue hat); to review our values or emotions (red hat). De Bono created the very helpful heuristic of thinking in terms of “which hat we are wearing” at any given moment as a way of focusing exclusively on one form or function of our thinking, to prevent confusion and mental overload; or a rush to premature cognitive commitment; or to escape from the ruts of habit. And this seems to be part of what Gladwell (2006: 99-146) is recommending, in Chapter 4, which is on “creating structure for spontaneity”.

\textsuperscript{26} De Bono’s (1995) To-Lo-Po-So-Go heuristic is a five stage thinking process which looks at: (1) Where are we trying to get to?; (2) What is the current situation (or what have we got)?; (3) Positing creative options; (4) Considerations of how to proceed? And: (5) The final action plan.
automated. It has to be worked out anew each time I need to apply it. And it has to conform to Gladwell’s (2006: 141) view that “…truly successful decision making relies on a balance between deliberate and instinctive thinking”. I need to reduce the complexity of ethical research competence to its simplest elements, so they are easily processed. And my new process of thinking has to prevent information overload. (Cf: Gladwell, 2006: 140, 142). Gladwell refers to the need to find, or create, “an algorithm … that protects (us) from being swamped with too much information”. One possibility, in my context, of wanting to assess how ethical my research process has been, and will be in the future, would be to utilize some of the thinking tools developed by Dr Edward De Bono’s Cognitive Research Trust, and described in a number of his books, e.g. De Bono (1995, 2005); and introduced briefly above. (See CoRT Tools, in the Glossary, below).

3.4.4. Creating a control matrix

One way to begin would be to split each of my five research phases into four steps, arbitrarily arrived at by Gregory (2003: 28-29), as follows:

- Deciding what to research;
- Setting the research up;
- Conducting the research;
- Bringing the research to its conclusion.

This would produce a twenty cell matrix, as follows.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 4 steps</th>
<th>The 5 phases</th>
<th>Step 1. Deciding what to research</th>
<th>Step 2. Setting up the research</th>
<th>Step 3. Conducting the research</th>
<th>Step 4. Bringing it to its conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1. Fuzzy questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2. Teacher inquiry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3. AR interventions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 4. Doctoral and MA questionnaires</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 5. Two questions; plus tutor interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.4. The blank matrix provides twenty cells for thinking activities**

In each of the four steps (in the column headings in Table 3.4), within the five phases of my research (named in the five row labels), I would then use a range of thinking tools from De Bono (1995, 2005), which would have to be selected and arranged anew for each of the resulting twenty cells in my matrix. By specifying that the range of tools used in each cell would have to be selected anew, I prevent the possibility of a return to mindlessness, by insisting upon conscious processes of selection. The starting point would always be the use of the “blue hat”, which is the reminder to *plan* the thinking; to *control* it and *manage* it. This would begin by defining the problem and what is to be thought about (on this *specific* occasion - in this *specific* cell). The blue hat is also used to design the sequence of other hats and supplementary thinking tools which are to be used in sequence. I would also use the V-heuristic (from Novak and Gowin, 1984) alongside the blue hat, to manage the planning of the thinking process. The other tools to be used, and from which my twenty selections would be made – in the twenty cells of my matrix - could include:

- **AGO.** What are/were my aims, goals and objectives?
- **White hat.** What information do I need?
- **CAF.** Consider all factors;
- **FIP.** First important priorities. What’s most important here?
- **PMI.** Construct a matrix of the Plus, Minus and Interesting features of the event/object under consideration;

- **C&S.** Consequences and sequels. What consequences are likely to flow from this action/decision?

- **Yellow hat.** Look for the values and benefits.

- **Black hat.** What is the risk assessment? What harm could be done here? What is the downside?

- **Gold and Wood medals.** From De Bono (2005: 36-37): What are the human values here? What are the environmental (third party) values?

3.4.5. *Applying my control matrix*

Let me now present a review of the five phases of my research process, in terms of ethical risk and acceptability. I did that work in my Research Journal, and I now summarize my results below. First I will present a matrix of the tools used in each of the twenty elements of my assessment. Secondly, I will present my list of the ethical issues identified.
The 4 steps ⊗
The 5 phases ⊗

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1. Fuzzy questions</th>
<th>Step 1. Deciding what to research</th>
<th>Step 2. Setting up the research</th>
<th>Step 3. Conducting the research</th>
<th>Step 4. Bringing it to its conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gold and Wood medals; Yellow hat; and Black hat.</td>
<td>AGO; Black hat.</td>
<td>CAF; PMI; Yellow hat; Black hat.</td>
<td>C&amp;S; Yellow hat; Black hat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2. Teacher inquiry</td>
<td>AGO</td>
<td>White hat; ‘Permission value’ (De Bono, 2005: 134); PMI.</td>
<td>Gold medal; Black hat.</td>
<td>FIP; C&amp;S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3. Direct AR interventions</td>
<td>AGO; Yellow hat; Black hat.</td>
<td>White hat; CAF; Black hat.</td>
<td>Gold and Wood medals; CAF; C&amp;S.</td>
<td>White hat; PMI; FIP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 4. Doctoral and MA questionnaires</td>
<td>White hat; Black hat.</td>
<td>CAF; C&amp;S.</td>
<td>FIP; PMI; Yellow hat.</td>
<td>White hat; AGO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 5. Two crunch questions and one interview</td>
<td>AGO; Gold medal; Wood medal.</td>
<td>FIP; CAF; Yellow hat.</td>
<td>White hat; C&amp;S; PMI; Black hat.</td>
<td>White hat; CAF; Gold medal and Wood medal; Blue hat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5. The heuristic matrix for assessing my ethical risk profile mindfully

Each cell in Table 3.5 had to be thought about consciously, mindfully; and because each cell represents just one twentieth of the total field to be considered, information overload was easily avoided. Also, within each cell, the work to be done was divided into a few thinking tasks, thus further simplifying the thinking, and minimizing the possibility of overload.

The thinking skill combination in each cell of Table 3.5 was worked out using the blue hat and the V-heuristic, both of which were brought to bear on one particular step at a time, in each specific phase of my research. The process involved moving forward from Step One of Phase One, in a linear, horizontal, left-to-right and top-to-bottom progression, until Step Four of Phase Five was reached and completed.

Here are the results of applying my heuristic matrix to the challenge of producing an ethics risk assessment on my research plans/actions.
3.4.6. Summarizing the results of my ethical risk assessment

The following list of ethical issues has been extracted from a more detailed risk assessment conducted in my Research Journal.

Phase One. Start-up and fuzzy questions:

- **Step 1. Deciding what to research:**
  
  (1) Yellow hat and Gold medal. *What are the human values here?*  They mostly have to do with this question: How will people *feel* as a result of my decision to investigate the teaching of research ethics in their university department? I could not at the outset see any significant negative impact on the psychology of the research respondents.

  (2) Wood medal and Black hat. *What are the critical environmental and third-party issues here?* I eventually came to recognise that my work would inevitably have *some degree of negative impact* on the psychological state of the tutors whose work I was investigating.

- **Step 2. Setting the research up.**

  ...

- **Step 3. Conducting the research:**

  ...

(2) Black hat. *What is the risk assessment?*  
I do not believe these two (fuzzy) questions could cause any harm to my two respondents.

  ...

- **Step 3. Conducting the research:**

  ...
(2) PMI. What are the plus, minus and interesting aspects of this step, from an ethical viewpoint?

(a) **Plus.** I took a small risk, and it paid off. I knew I was not risking anybody’s wellbeing.

(b) **Minus.** I did not tell my respondents that I was ‘researching them’ when I first sent them my two questions. This could have damaged trust. (Cf: Bond, 2004b; and McLeod, 1994/2003).

(c) **Interesting.** My relationships with those two individuals have improved as a result of this work.

- **Step 4. Bringing the research to its conclusion.**

  ...

  ...

(3) **Black hat.** What is the risk assessment? No harm was done by Phase One.

**Phase Two. Request for access to run a teacher inquiry process:**

- ...

  - **Step 2. Setting the research up.**

  ...

(3) **Do a PMI.** Plus, Minus and Interesting. What are the pros and cons of this proposal?

**Plus.** Conducting this research would be valuable.

**Minus.** Conducting this research would be at the expense of the participants being properly consulted about their participation, and would compromise their right to withdraw, or to receive their regular training day.
Interesting. I decided it would be unethical to proceed to set this research up.

- **Step 3. Conducting the research:**
  
  (1) **Gold medal.** *What are the human values here?* I am committed to a wholly ethical research project, and I would rather not collect any data than compromise my ethical values. Participants must have a right to opt out, and since I am proposing to run a seminar on a regular scheduled research seminar day, for which the participants have already paid, they cannot give their fully informed and freely determined consent. Neither can they easily opt out once they have arrived.

  (2) **Black hat.** *What is the risk assessment?* What harm could be done here? Participants could be embarrassed. Their autonomy would be ignored or discounted. They could feel cheated or compromised.

- **Step 4. Bringing the research to its conclusion:**
  
  (1) **FIP.** First important priorities. *What’s most important here?* The most important thing is to design ethical research. Everything else follows from that decision and action.

  (2) **C&S.** Consequences and sequels. *What consequences are likely to flow from this action/decision?* I have decided to abandon this (Phase Two) research proposal. The consequences that will flow from this are: (a) I have lost some research time. (b) I have lost my core research idea. (c) I have found that I am an ethical researcher, not matter what the cost to me personally.

**Phase Three. Direct action research interventions**

- ...

- **Step 2. Setting the research up.**
(2) CAF. *What factors need to be considered?* In the case of the 27th February event, I had to mislead the participants about my subject of inquiry – research instead of ethics of research – to prevent the demand characteristics of the situation distorting their responses. I clarified that with them in my report, and they accepted the need for this action.

(3) Black hat. Critical evaluation of event. *How does this fit with my values?* Withholding information can cause a breakdown in trust, but it seems to be occasionally necessary; and when it is, it needs to be handled ethically.

- **Step 3. Conducting the research:**

  (1) Gold medal. *What are the human values here?* Respect for the autonomy of the participants. Respect of justice and fairness. Practical considerations. Ensure informed consent and right to withdraw. Ensure confidentiality of all audio recordings etc. Ensure no harm is done to the participants. Send research reports to participants for their feedback.

  (2) Wood medal. *What are the environmental (third party) values?* Protect the reputation of the tutors, the school and the University of Minerva. Send reports to tutors for their feedback.

- **Step 4. Bringing the research to its conclusion:**

  (1) White hat. *What information do I have?* The main ethical issues that unfolded involved how to make reasonable interpretations of the data, so that I did not over-interpret them, especially as my interpretations involved implicit criticisms of how well these students had been taught research ethics at the University of Minerva. Although the identity of their tutors has been protected, those tutors know who they are. And I believe I have a serious
moral responsibility not to say or do anything that could cause any unnecessary psychological distress to those individuals. In particular I have a duty to ensure that I do not make any claim whatsoever which is not well supported by more than one source of evidence.

Phase Four. Questionnaires to Doctoral and MA students

- **Step 1. Deciding what to research:**

  ...

  (2) **Black hat. Critical reflection.** *What could have been dangerous, damaging or unworkable?* I did not consider that my questionnaires to MA and Doctorate students could do any harm. I would ensure that all questionnaires are stored securely, and that all identities are anonymized in my reports. At the end of the process, I do not believe any harm was done.

- **Step 2. Setting the research up:**

  (1) **CAF. Consider all factors.** *What are the factors to be considered?* Demand characteristics. What were the demand characteristics of my research? I do not believe I created the impression that I wanted ‘bad news’ about these courses. In any event, the respondents were very positive about their tutors, if occasionally somewhat critical of their own learning experience in the area of research ethics. And, many of my conclusions about the need for change are based on ‘implicit weaknesses’ rather than ‘explicit criticisms’ of the courses. Thus, I do not think the demand characteristics of this study dictated the outcomes. This is especially so given that my conclusions were confirmed, in different ways, by at least two tutors on the Doctoral programme.

  (2) **C&S. Consequences and sequels.** *What consequences are likely to flow from this research?* It is likely, to some extent, to
confirm my hypothesis that there are deficits in current approaches to the teaching and learning of ethical research competence at the University of Minerva. This could have a negative impact on some of the tutors, who need to be protected from psychological and career damage.

- **Step 4. Bringing the research to its conclusion.**

  ...

  (2) AGO. Aims, goals and objectives. *What were my goals?* My aim with this research was to find out something about the nature of the MA and Doctoral programmes, in an objective sense. What I learned from doing this piece of research is as follows. I can only find out about the ‘experiences’ of my respondents, not about some ‘objective measure’ of what they ‘encountered’ on these courses. I therefore need to rethink my way forward, again. Also, in addition to these practical goals, I had ethical goals, which were to do no harm; promote some benefit; protect confidentiality and ensure informed consent. And, finally, I also aimed to model good ethical research practice.

**Phase Five (a). Two crunch questions to students.**

- **Step 1. Deciding what to research:**

  (1) AGO. *What were my revised goals?* My aim now was to find out about the experience of MA and Doctoral students in relation to research ethics teaching and learning. How were they taught, and how did they learn?

  (2). Gold medal. *What are the human values here?* Freedom from harm for the research participants.

  (3). Wood medal. *What are the environmental (third party) values here?* Freedom from harm for the tutors and the University of Minerva.
Step 3. Conducting the research:

(4) Black hat. Critical reflection on risk and harm. What is the risk assessment? The only risk to my participants from this activity has to do with what I do with the interim and final reports, in terms of maintaining confidentiality.

- Step 4. Bringing the research to its conclusion.

-...

-...

(3) Gold medal and Wood medal. What are the human values here? And what are the environmental (third party) values here? I need to protect my respondents and their tutors from being identified. I need to deal with my respondents and their tutors respectfully, and sensitively. I need to protect the reputation of the University of Minerva. Small universities in the north of England are likely to be particularly vulnerable to negative criticism.

Phase Five (b). An interview with one tutor.

- Step one. Deciding what to research.

(1) AGO. Aims, goals and objectives. Where was I trying to get to? I wanted to find out how one, or more, tutors at the University of Minerva would perceive my research. And what was their take on the teaching and learning of ethical research. I was offered the chance of one interview.

(2) Gold medal. What are the human values here? Human dignity, respect, and sensitivity.
Step two. Setting the research up.

(1) White hat. What information do I need? I designed three questions that covered my data needs.

(2) FIP. First important priorities. What are the parameters of the interview? I made sure the questions were agreed with my respondent; and that it was okay to audio record the session.

(3) Black hat. What is the risk assessment? I think the only real risk here is that of maintaining the anonymity of the respondent, so that her identity does not become known.

Step 3. Conducting the research.

(1) Gold medal. What are the human values here? (a) Respect for my respondent. (b) Simplicity of the interview process. (c) Appreciation and thanks to Tutor T3 for giving the interview. (d) Sensitive handling of the report of the interview.

That is the end of my ethical risk assessment for my own research project.

3.5. Concluding Comments and Reflexive Thoughts

In this chapter, I have:

- Briefly outlined my approach to action research;
- Outlined my position on ontology and epistemology;
- Described the most important aspects of my research method or procedure; and:
- Mainly described my approach to mindfully assessing the ethical risks associated with my research plans and actions.

Can I thus be certain that I have managed this process as well as possible? I have certainly been diligent in designing and developing an approach to my research that is ethical, practical and productive of some
new information about my research topic. I have clearly shown how to operationalize the concept of ‘ethical mindfulness’. Furthermore, it is beyond question that I have made a significant contribution to knowledge, as described in the Abstract and page 19 of Chapter 1, above; and Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 of Chapter 5. This contribution to knowledge is summarized in Section 5.5.2 below.

In terms of my evaluation of my action research methodology, I find that it was pragmatically developed to fit my research needs at each point in my journey. The design is clearly specified. The number of research respondents was sufficient to establish credible patterns of perception and preference, largely confirmed by the key research tutor (T3). Appendix Five gives some indications of how the research was approved, how it was explained to the participants, and how consent was secured. The early cycles were like a set of increasingly refined pilot projects, which helped to home in on the eventual questions which produced the most useful data. (See Chapter 4). The methods used yielded some very interesting and valuable results. In this sense my action research methodology was fit for purpose. It is clear throughout how the data/texts are being generated out of the research activities, and how they are being interpreted, circulated and validated by a small social agreement. In that sense it has to be seen as a largely unqualified success.

In the next chapter, which is Chapter 4, I will present the results of the research enquiries undertaken in my five research phases, and also my analysis and synthesis of those results. I will present my ‘results’ as ‘learning points’; and my ‘discussion’ as ‘reflections/conclusions’. Then, in Chapter 5, I will present my recommendations for change, including a couple of competence based curriculum plans for the teaching and learning of ethical research competence.
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Summative comment

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Part (a) Two focus questions

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4.3.6(ii). The twelve Doctoral responses to Question 2. About the teaching of research ethics

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(a). The primary pattern – minimal, informal and unmemorable teaching

(b). My summary of the four patterns that emerged

(1) Concrete experience

(2) Observations and reflections

(3) Forming conclusions, or abstract conceptualizations

(4) Linking back to the literature

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CHAPTER 4. MY LEARNING AND REFLECTIONS

4.1. Introductory comments

“Finally we reach the point in any productive inquiry where we construct knowledge claims. We cannot say this or that is true; what we can say is that, based on the ... events observed, the kind of data collected, and our data transformations, our knowledge claims are valid, and that we recognise that a different structure of (research) events and/or the collection of different data or the use of alternative data transformation procedures may have led to different ... knowledge claims”.


The main body of this chapter is divided into two parts. Part One deals with my goals and my key learning points from my research. Part Two presents a more focussed, brief reflective discussion of those key learning points, and a summary of this chapter.

PART ONE. THE GOALS AND KEY LEARNING POINTS OF MY RESEARCH

4.2. Goals and planned destination

Step 1. Goals. What do I want to achieve in this chapter?

I want to end up with:

1. A credible and viable presentation of the learning from my research.

2. Some kind of output – or contribution to knowledge - that could be used to improve the teaching and learning of ethical research competence at the University of Minerva.

Overall, I need to make some judgements as follows:

1. Is there a real problem with the teaching and learning of ethical research competence in the School of Social Care?

2. If so, how serious is it?

3. How could it be resolved?

4. Will the improvement be worth the cost?
I will also use De Bono’s *White hat thinking*; plus *Kolb’s learning cycle*, (Cowan, 2006; and Kolb, 1984); and the format of Bob Gowin’s V-heuristic (from Novak and Gowin, 1984: 3); to structure my thinking about the key learning points from my research, and my derived conclusions. This is an illustration of my belief that *thinking is (normally, in the main) a process of asking and answering questions.* (Cf: Paul and Elder, 2000; Byrne, 2003b).

### 4.3. Review data/texts (for key learning points)

This is the main section of Chapter 4.

**Step 2. Key learning points.** In this section I will present the key learning points that I extracted from the numerous reports of my many research activities, stored in my Research Journal.

My overall approach to this task will be broken down into two processes:

(a) Firstly, I will use the White Hat – De Bono (1995: 45) – to select the most appropriate information from various sections of my Research Journal, in which I have stored my research data/texts. Focus questions will include: *What information is available? What information is most relevant to my goals? What information is missing, that could be sought at this late stage (April, 2008)?*

(b) Secondly, I will use Kolb’s learning cycle to filter out the key learning points, as follows: (1) Information available; (2) Observations and reflections; (3) Forming conclusions; (4) Identifying potential material for the recommendations step, which will be presented in Chapter 5 (Conclusion). From time to time I will present one or two additional sections, as follows: (5) Linking back to the literature; and/or: (6) (Additional) *Critical reflection.*

In the next section, below, I will review the information generated by what became Cycle 1A of Phase One of my action research process.

---

27 See the ‘Six Thinking Hats’ in the Glossary. White hat thinking involves the use of questions to collect information.
4.3.1. Learning from Phase One. Fuzzy Questions about Training Needs. Cycles 1A and 1B

(a) White Hat review. What did I learn by using fuzzy questions? What is the most relevant information stored in Section ‘H’ of my Research Journal?

In Phase One of my research, I sent two fuzzy questions to two acquaintances on the Professional Doctorate in the School of Social Care at the University of Minerva, in July and August 2006. The actual questions were as follows:

**Question 1.** In your opinion, do you think it is fairly easy to think about the ethical implications of your own Doctoral research work, or do you think you could benefit from help in that area?

**Two answers**

Respondent 1 said she thought she found it easy, but was not sure; and thought she would “love to learn something new about ethics” in the form of “a philosophical argument on ethics”.

Respondent 2 said “I always find difficulty with the less obvious ethical dilemmas. I think what would be useful is a model to consider research dilemmas. Are you familiar with the Bond/Gabriel ethical decision making model?”

**Question 2.** Do you think there would be any advantage to the next intake of first year Doctoral students to have a seminar input by me (Jim Byrne) on what I have learned about research ethics over the past two years?

**Two answers**

Respondent 1 replied: “With regard to the second question, I am sure the new students would like a seminar along the lines you have in mind. Especially, if it ends with an implied
message that despite how much one struggles with this topic in the end there is a way for an interesting project to be developed and approved, through which personal questions can be answered”.

Respondent 2 said: “I would have liked some earlier discussion, in the Doctoral course, on the topic of research ethics.” … “Yes: an early seminar would assist new students.”

(b) Review with Kolb’s learning cycle. Summation of responses to fuzzy questions. What did I learn overall?

Here are my four considerations about the responses shown above.

(1) Information available. Both respondents would like more input on research ethics than they got from the Professional Doctorate programme. One would like a model to guide his actions, while the other would like some “philosophical guidance”.

(2) Observations and reflections: When I reviewed this issue earlier, in Chapter 2, I concluded that both of these requests are overlapping, in that the models I found for guiding ethical behaviour are (mainly) based on knowing a good deal of moral philosophy. (See Section 2.2.3, Chapter 2 above. Also, University of South Florida, 2003; Vardy and Grosch, 1999: 24; Seedhouse, 1988: 127-149; Kitchener, 1984; Hare, 1981; Beauchamp and Childress, 1989: 10-11; and Bond, 2000). Furthermore, Bond (2000), who presents his own ethical problem solving model (in pp223-236) also says professional ethics is a subdivision of moral philosophy: (pp46-51).

(3) Forming conclusions. I think the Professional Doctorate students at the University of Minerva need a significant teaching input on moral philosophy, and (participative learning) help in digesting their codes of
research ethics. (I have sent this conclusion to everybody on the Doctoral programme\textsuperscript{28}, and will present their responses below).

(4) **Identifying potential material for the recommendations step.** There were only three individuals in “Cohort X” in which Respondents 1 and 2 were enrolled. “The third member of that group was Charles Clarke, who is on record as saying: ‘I found it extremely difficult to think about the ethical dimension of my research proposal. It was a major struggle to make any headway on this topic. I do not believe I am a fully professional researcher, because I cannot easily think or talk about this aspect of research design and implementation’.” This means that 100% of that particular cohort had a problem with the extent of teaching/learning of research ethics on the Professional Doctorate; and all three of them want to see more time and activity devoted to codes and models of research ethics, and relevant moral philosophy.

(5) **Abandoning the working through of Cycle 1B.** I began Cycle 1B by writing a report of my reflections on Cycle 1A; and sent that out to fifty-nine postgraduate students and several research tutors, including my two respondents, to show the results of Cycle 1A. At the same time, I indicated that I must abandon Cycle 1B, for reasons that are written up in my Research Journal. Here is an indicative extract:

(\textsuperscript{Based on my reading of Gladwell, 2006; Gray, 2003; Bargh and Chartrand, 1999; and Haidt, 2006 – as described in Chapter 2, above). It is my conviction that my two Respondents don’t really know themselves – in the sense that they do not know the contents of their “adaptive unconscious” – anymore than I know the contents of my unconscious. They are unlikely to be aware of Forsyth and Berger’s (1982) distinction between ethical ideology and moral behaviour. So asking my colleagues what they would do about a particular ethical dilemma may prove to be a futile act. As Gladwell

\textsuperscript{28} For practical and pragmatic reasons, I use the terms ‘Professional doctorate’ and ‘Doctoral programme’ interchangeably. Firstly, my AOL address book contains a file entitled ‘Doc.Prog.07’. This file consists of all available email addresses for the Professional Doctorate programme in the School of Social Care, plus three or four students on the traditional PhD route. (The total is 34 email addresses; “\textit{plus I have Charles Clarke’s phone number and home address}”). Secondly, I found out from Tutor T3 that the Professional Doctorate students and the traditional PhD students in the School of Social Care are treated as much the same group when it comes to the official attitude towards how they are supposed to learn research ethics. And thirdly, some of the traditional PhD students sit in on some of the Professional Doctorate research seminars.
(2006:38) says: “that’s why, when we measure personality, we don’t just ask people point-blank what they think they are like. We give them a questionnaire … carefully designed to elicit telling responses. That’s why (John) Gottman” – the renowned marriage researcher at the University of Washington – “doesn’t waste any time asking husbands and wives point-blank questions about the state of their marriage. They might lie or feel awkward, or, more important, they might not know the truth”.

And if my two Respondents do not really “know themselves” in this sense of understanding their unconscious minds, I need to be very careful what I assume they can tell me about their approach to research ethics.

For this reason, I abandoned Phase 1B; and did not return to this issue for many months.

4.3.2. Follow up in Cycle 1C. What do Doctoral students think of my conclusions?

On 19th February 2008, I sent an extract from my Research Journal to all the students on the Professional Doctorate programme. That document essentially shows the answers from the two respondents presented in section 4.4.1 above. I appended one question to that extract. The question asked:

“Do you agree with my statement that ‘… the Professional Doctorate students at the University of Minerva need a significant input on moral philosophy, and (participative learning) help in digesting their codes of research ethics’?”

I got twelve direct responses to that question; “and Charles Clarke sent his response some time later”. I have now digested those responses, which can be summarized as follows:

(a) Results of feedback from respondents

I requested results in the form of ‘Yes/No/Maybe’ answers, and ‘Additional Comments’. Here are the numerical results:
• **Answered ‘Yes’**. Nine out of the twelve responses – a majority – agree that they need a significant educational input on moral philosophy (and help in digesting their code of research ethics). (Plus, “Charles Clarke sent a late reminder that he also agrees with such an educational input. So the result becomes 10 out of 13 agree that an educational input of the type described above is needed”).

• **Answered ‘No’**. One out of 13 said ‘no’.

• **Answered ‘Maybe’**. And there were two ‘maybe’s.

**Preliminary Conclusion One**. From these results I conclude that a substantial proportion of the Doctoral students in the School of Social Care agree that there is a need for a significant educational input on moral philosophy and research ethics to be incorporated into the Doctoral programme in the future. The references to quantity in this conclusion are valid within the context of a qualitative study. (Cf: Parker, 1994: 1). This will be elaborated later, when I present an argument about the teaching of research ethics, from Phase Five, and described in Section 4.3.6(iii), below.

A similar training need has been identified by various authors, in other universities, in several countries, as shown in some of my literature sources. (Cf: Swazey and Bird, 1997; Finn, 1999; Anestidou, 2000; Sponholz, 2000; Eisen and Berry, 2002; Eisen and Parker, 2002). And I take the view that all of my data/texts and literature sources contain nuggets of truth, sufficient to justify my current conclusion; until such time as stronger counter evidence is presented.

There were also some additional comments from some of my respondents. Five examples are shown in sections (b) and (c) below.
(b) Additional comments that are supportive and straightforward

**Respondent PD3**

“(The) first year (of a doctorate) is generally one of confusion… *What am I doing here, etc, etc!!!* So maybe something quite structured (on research ethics) would be helpful, and a way to think about the research (ethics) like this could fit the bill”.

“Certainly it would improve the solidity of the base of our research journey”.

“If we are required to spend time on all the other aspects of methodology then there is a glaring omission if the inclusion of ethics remains ad hoc”.

**Respondent PD6**

“…given the privilege of reading your (Jim Byrne’s) work (in draft form) I am, by chance, learning about ethics in relation to research. The thing that strikes me is the importance of philosophical constructs which most of us may not have had to consider previously, even at diploma and masters level. I think the training gap goes further back than the doctoral stage, although the gap is probably more obvious now. Training at diploma level introduces students to a prescribed code of conduct but without the opportunity to consider philosophical influences which may clash with these codes. I suppose what I am saying here is that *good habits need to start early*, but that’s my (particular professional) perspective driving that one. It’s therefore no surprise that most of us are unsure about the place of ethics in research”.

**Respondent PD1**

“…thinking about ethics is always 'something I can do later, after this crisis, and this one, and this .......... ’. Having a seminar makes it happen. And having a seminar makes it faceable in a swirling,
difficult life, because you're then not entering a great unknown forest alone. … (B)ut (I) am glad your word is 'significant' rather than 'large' - probably a lot of my stuff about fear-of-overwhelm/overload there”.

At the end of Cycle 1C of Phase One of my research, my conclusion is as follows:

**Preliminary Conclusion Two.** The evidence presented above seems to mainly indicate that the Doctoral students in my study agree that they need (and want) a significant educational input on moral philosophy related to ethical research.

However, as suggested by Respondent PD1, this input should not be so onerous that it will overload or overwhelm the Doctoral students. Perhaps 10-20% of the total seminar time on the programme, which is to say 10-20% of 30 days, which amounts to three to six days over the first three years; plus 30% of the writing requirement in the first two years, or 30% of 20,000 words, which comes to approximately 6,500 words.

The content of the seminars, debates and written assignments will need to be determined by the Doctoral tutors, and, in Part Two of this chapter, I will present some ideas about how they might begin to do this, when I come to present the details of my *ethical research thinking heuristic*, in Figure 4.3 and its descriptive legend (or key). (See also, Eisen and Parker, 2004).

**4.3.3. There was no learning from Phase Two.** This planned phase of my research - (which involved designing an elaborate ‘teacher inquiry’ process [of a type described by Feldman and Minstrell, 2000; combined with ideas inspired by Lind’s 2004, 2005 *Konstanz Method of (Moral) Dilemma Discussion]*) - was abandoned by me for ethical reasons (to do with the impossibility of achieving fully informed consent on the part of my potential research participants); and so there is no learning from this phase; except that, without my own self-training in research ethics, I *would almost certainly* have tried to proceed with Phase Two, thinking it to be ethical.
4.3.4. Learning points from Phase Three. Brainstorms and a Focus Group.

(i) Cycle 3A. A brainstorming session of 27th February 2007; and

(ii) Cycle 3B(a). A brainstorming session on 27th March;

(iii) and 3(B)(b). The focus group of 27th March 2007.

(Cycle 3C – a focus group on codes of research ethics – on 15th May 2007 - did not produce any significant learning and is not discussed in this thesis).

4.3.4(i) The 27th February brainstorming session. “What is Research?”
Cycle 3A

(a) White Hat review. What is the essence of this action research activity, as described in Section A1 of my Research Journal? My first face-to-face action research intervention occurred on 27th February 2007, at the Postgraduate Discussion and Research Forum (PDRF), in the School of Social Care, Welfare and Human Learning, at the University of Minerva. I was allotted one hour and twenty minutes for this event. During this event, I ran a brainstorming session for twelve MA students (and one doctoral student), using the stimulus question: ‘What is Research?’ This group generated ten answers, none of which was explicitly related to a recognizable principle of research ethics in social care, though two had a vague moral flavour. They were: ‘Levels of integrity’, and ‘Story telling [Integrity and Validity: is it valid?’).

Of course, I then realized they could have a different schema (or ‘mental map’) for ‘ethical research’, so I needed to investigate that possibility.

4.3.4(ii). The 27th March brainstorming session. Define ethical research!
Cycle 3B(a)

(a) White Hat review. Building upon the 27th February action research event, I planned a second event for 27th March. What are the key elements
recorded in Section A2 of my Research Journal? The second action research event occurred on 27\textsuperscript{th} March, in the same place at the University of Minerva. The umbrella this time was my own group, entitled the Ethical Research Study Seminar (ERSS), and this is how part of the event was written up in my Research Journal:

…

**Brainstorming Session**

I informed the four individual participants – two doctoral and two MA students - that I wondered if there might be different schemas for ‘What is research’ and ‘What is ethical research?’ I said I really wanted to know what they thought of when they were asked ‘What is Ethical Research?’

During this brainstorming session, the participants produced eighteen responses of which 22\% referred to ethical matters. This was disappointing. When asked specifically to think about the question, ‘What is Ethical Research?’, this small group produced eighteen responses, almost 80\% of which did not refer to ethical principles or ethical considerations.

Here are the results of that brainstorming session:

1. “To identify a solution to a known problem”.
2. “To seek the answer to a problem”.
3. “Deciding on the topic that you are going to research, and then deciding on how you are going to go about it”.
4. “What methodology you are going to choose, etc”.
5. “A process of discovery”.
6. “Something to do with an attempt to prove or disprove a position or an assumption”.
7. “With a potential to discover”.
8. “Sample size”.
“It would inform society in some way”.

“It would propose possible changes”.

“Insight”.

“Progress”.

“It has to be qualified in terms of time and context; i.e. it might not be true in ten years time. It isn’t always true”.

“Are my intentions from the outset integrous” (where I assume ‘integrous’ means acting with integrity - JWB).

“And, despite my intentions being integrous, that could lead into all kinds of things that were unplanned”.

“Being sensitive to the (actual) effects of our research efforts, and not just our stated goals”.

“The importance of (a relatively objective) research supervisor, to (stand on one side and) monitor the effects”.

“Sensitivity to the relationship with participants; e.g.: avoiding opening up a conversation in research participants, and then not taking the time to let them complete that, once we have got our data”.

(b) Review with Kolb’s learning cycle. How well did my participants perform?

(1) Information available. What is the most relevant information here?

Items 14, 15, 16 and 18 seem to me to have a moral flavour, which is to say four items out of 18, or 22% of the list; while almost 80% of these responses were about the practical aspects of research. However, the question they were responding to was, What is ETHICAL research? Twenty-two percent of responses being about ethical issues is a very small
proportion given the question asked. This seems to me to indicate that this
group did not have many distinctions to do with the ethical dimension of
research, and thus they gave answers about what they do understand, the
design and implementation of the data gathering activity.

(2) Observations and reflections. My main observation was that the
group was made up of one person from the Professional Doctorate, one
from the traditional PhD route, and two from the MA programme. The fact
that not one of them has much of an idea of the kinds of concepts that are
called for in describing the ethical dimensions of research is a bad sign in
terms of what is being taught and what is being learned on those
programmes.

(3) Forming conclusions. If I was one of the tutors responsible for the
ethical research training of these postgraduate students, I would be
concerned at how little they seem to have learned of this subject.

(4) Identifying potential material for the recommendations step, below.
Can these results be combined with other, later results, to produce a
recommendation to the relevant tutors? I don’t think so. The premise that I
need to establish as factual is that the MA students in the School of Social
Care feel the need for a teaching input on research ethics and related moral
philosophy – to parallel my learning about the training needs of
Professional Doctorate students in Phase One above.

(5) Additional critical reflection. How can I act on my conclusion in
paragraph (4) above? I can send a summary statement to everybody on
the relevant (MA) mailing list, saying that:

“I have previously issued reports that demonstrate that the thirteen
individuals (of whom twelve were from the MA programmes) who
participated in my research event of 27th February 2007 - and the
four individuals (two of whom were MAs) who participated in my
research event of 27th March 2007 - failed to demonstrate a rich set
of concepts related to ethical research competence. My inference
from this evidence is that:
“MA students (much like doctoral students) need a significant teaching input on moral philosophy (relevant to research ethics), and (participative learning) help in digesting their codes of research ethics.”

(6) Summarizing Phase Three. Despite sending out the summary statement described in paragraph (5) above (on 29th February 2008) to twenty-four MA students, I only got six responses, four of whom agreed that the MA programme needs a significant input on moral philosophy and research ethics. That brought Phase Three to an inconclusive end. I had some elements of learning that I could triangulate with later learning points, but for the moment, my direct action research interventions were at an end.

However, moving back in time (to March 2007), I still need to report on the focus group of 27th March, which occurred directly after the brainstorming session reported above.

4.3.4(iii). The 27th March focus group. What do they know about ethical risk assessments? Cycle 3B(b)

(a) White Hat review. What information do I have on file? Once the brainstorming session was over on the evening of 27th March, I ran an impromptu ‘focus group’. It had actually been planned as a seminar input, combined with group discussion, but it had to be changed in the light of conditions on the day. This activity was designed to test the ability of this group to make a reliable assessment of the ethical risks implied by a particular research proposal. In practice, they seemed to be too complacent about the possibility of causing harm to their potential research participants. Here are two extracts from my Research Journal that illustrate their lack of ethical sensitivity (as defined by Rest et al., 1986; Bebeau, 2002; Sponholz, 2000; and Eisen and Parker, 2004):
Extract 1

Then Person No.1 said, “I have to say that whenever I’ve been damaged in some way, there has always been some kind of personal growth or learning. So to me, while I will use the word damage in that moment… I recognise that I’ve kind of learned something good or bad out of that”.

(I was somewhat concerned by Person No.1’s view that “damage” is not a “bad thing”, just because he normally learns/gains from it. But I let it ride, wondering how to tackle it).

Extract 2

Back to (transcribing) the (audio) tape.

Jim: “Looking at the ethical issues that I identified…does it look to you like a project that’s viable, or not? Is it something that somebody could do at some point?”

…Long silence… 2 mins…3 mins… Participants reading…thinking…

Person 1: “They’re all kind of valid points. I had real difficulty in numbering them (in order of importance or significance)”

Jim: “Because…?”

Person 1: “They are all potential…”

Jim: “No.1’s?”

Person 1: “…points. Either No.1s or No.6s…”

Jim: “Yeah!” (I could understand that interpretation…in a sense).

Jim: “Did you find the same (Person 4)?”

Person 4: “Yeah, I just put a mark against them all”.

Jim: “Yeah”. (Accepting, non-committal; wondering).

(With the benefit of hindsight, looking at this again, on 18th April [2007], this is not quite right. For example, issue No.2 is “Potentially restimulating memories of pre-therapy unhappiness”; while issue No.3 is “Possibility of restimulating memories of trauma”. Surely unhappiness and trauma cannot be equated as being equally important or significant. (Newman, Gefland and Walker, 1999, would certainly draw such a distinction, between minor harm and major harm; and Pope, 1999 would agree that we must not restimulate
(some) memories of trauma, because recalling trauma is a form of experiencing trauma). I would further state that I might be willing to proceed with a research project that could, potentially, restimulate memories of pre-therapy unhappiness; but I definitely would not be willing to proceed with a (non-therapeutic) research project that could, potentially, restimulate memories of trauma! The fact that nobody in this foursome picked up on that point seems to me to be highly significant).

**Preliminary Conclusion Three.** In this practical test of moral judgement, these two Doctoral students and two MA students failed to distinguish between the ethical seriousness of restimulating memories of pre-therapy unhappiness and pre-therapy trauma, which result suggests a poor ability to judge moral decisions about the relative seriousness of various forms of harm to human participants.

(b). Identifying potential material for the recommendations step, below. I may be able to combine these results with some others, from above, and later, to provide a credible basis for some rational persuasion regarding the necessity for curriculum change.

Let us now move on to Phase Four, which involved sending multi-question questionnaires to a total of fifty-nine MA and Doctoral students.

**4.3.5. Key learning points from Phase Four. Questionnaires to MA and Doctoral students**

**4.3.5(i) MA Students’ Questionnaires.** Cycle 4(a)A

(a) White Hat review. **What is the most important information in Section ‘N’ of my Research Journal?**

On 19th February 2007, I wrote to the twenty-four students on the MA programme at the University of Minerva. In my email I asked that MA students to take about 20 minutes to complete my questionnaire, which would help me with my research data; help the tutors who teach on the programme; and help future generations of students on that programme.
(Please see my questionnaire in Appendix Three). In the event, five valid questionnaires were returned to me.

(b) Review with Kolb’s learning cycle. Is the current MA training in research ethics adequate?

1. Information available. How good is the information available to me, in Section ‘N’ of my Research Journal? The available information in the completed questionnaires is inadequate to reach a clear conclusion either way.

2. Observations and reflections. What have I learned, and what can I learn, from this cycle of my research? The questions that I asked the MA students were not well thought out. They are too direct. They asked the students to provide answers that they do not have an obvious ability to easily evaluate. How is an MA student to know that they are sufficiently well trained? Unless they run into an insurmountable problem – which demonstrates that their training leaves something to be desired; or they spend two or more years succeeding in conducting research which is acclaimed for its ethicality, in which case they would know that their training had been more than adequate, or even excellent. (Later, I realized that the way they should [logically and morally] find out if they have been adequately trained, and have engaged in adequate learning experiences, is in getting feedback from their tutors, during the course of their MA training year, in which they should be tested for ethical research competence, and the test results should be assessed and communicated to them! As Phillips and Pugh, 1994 say [when talking about PhD students], they should not apply any skill for the first time in their dissertations. They should have opportunities to learn, practice and perfect all such skills during their postgraduate training).

3. Forming conclusions. What is my most justifiable conclusion? These data/texts are weak and inadequate, because the questions were too direct. They did not “come at the respondents sideways” as practiced in the work of John Gottman, as described in Gladwell (2006: 39).
(4) Identifying potential material for the recommendations step. What can be inferred from a triangulation of all of the collected data up to this point?

The number of respondents from the MA programme has been too low to be representative of the programme as a whole. Therefore the only recommendation I can justify is this: It seems from the data I have collected that it is possible that the MA students do not get enough input on research ethics; that they do not read enough on the subject; and that they have no developed ability to debate research ethics. These inferences, from small, unrepresentative samples, could be worthy of being considered by the MA tutors, if those tutors think that there might be any doubt about the current state of their research ethics training programme. This is clearly not a highly persuasive argument. It is more like a statement of my intuitive hunch, based on limited experience of the MA students. Therefore, in the remainder of this thesis, I will restrict my attention to the situation concerning the teaching and training of the Doctoral Students, for whom I have more complete data/texts.

4.3.5(ii) Doctoral Students’ Questionnaires. Cycle 4(b)A

(a) White Hat review. How does this cycle follow on from the previous cycle? And what information do I have available in my Research Journal’?

As soon as I sent out my questionnaire to all MA students on 19th February 2007, I realized I had made a mistake. My questions were too direct, and my respondents would be unlikely to be able to answer them accurately/informatively. I had, in my haste to collect some new data, forgotten my earlier insight about the importance of coming at them ‘sideways’, or questioning them indirectly29. I therefore decided to adopt a different approach with the design of a questionnaire for the Professional Doctorate students. (See Appendix Four, attached).

Two hours later, on that same day, (19th February 2007), I sent an email to my Doctoral mailing list for the School of Social Care, (which comprises thirty-four individuals, mainly on the Professional Doctorate, with a few on

29 See ‘Indirect Questioning’ in the Glossary.
the traditional PhD route. It included the following statement, among others:

“I know you are likely to be very busy, and I would not bother you if there was any alternative. However, I have shifted my research focus slightly towards the teaching of research ethics, and I think you would be well placed to make recommendations for potential future changes in the ethics component of the Doctoral programme. I wonder if you would mind taking about 20 mins of your time to review my questionnaire, which is attached, and consider sending me the requested information… …”

I hoped that by getting them to think about how to design an ethics component for the Professional Doctorate programme, they would reveal their real perceptions and values about this area of study.

Over the following several days, five questionnaires and one email were returned to me. (A sixth questionnaire was returned some time later). The email proved to be just as valuable as some of the questionnaire responses, especially as the author of the email admitted that he had made three mistakes in assuming that research ethics was a straightforward matter for somebody who had previously studied professional ethics in social care practice.

I will now present the answers to the first three questions, because these seem to be the most important and most helpful responses.

Q1. How many **hours** or **days** of taught input on **Research Ethics** would you recommend?

The responses ranged as follows:

- **Two days per year for three years, which equals 6 days on research ethics.** (1 respondent)
- **Minimum of 3 days.** (1 respondent)
- **2-3 days.** (1 respondent)
- **Several dedicated hours per semester.** (1 respondent)
At least one day, if not more. (1 respondent)
Six hours minimum. (1 respondent).

My comments

These recommendations of between one and six days dedicated to direct teaching of Ethical Research is much more than anything that occurs at present. Most accounts of current practice speak of occasional references in seminars, or individual help in tutorials, but no mention is made of formal educational or training inputs with groups.

Q2. What form should the teacher directed input take?

Responses

- Seminars and experiential activities. (2 respondents). (One said: “The first part of the day could be devoted to a theoretical description of the topic with the students participating by asking questions. In the second part of the day, the students could form smaller teams and each team could concentrate on a hypothetical research project. [E.g. Design an ethical research project, and have it checked for acceptability]).

- Lectures for input; discussions to promote understanding; talks with examples of ethical dilemmas from social care research practice; thinking/moral reasoning challenges. (1 respondent).

- A mixture of forms of teaching/learning. (1 respondent).

- Seminars, lectures and discussions. (2 respondents).

My comments

All seven respondents welcome some form of teacher directed activity. Variety seems to be the key. The idea of discussions seems to be very important, and there is some evidence from my literature review that this is effective. For examples, Smith, Fryer-Edwards, Diekema and Braddock (2004) compare two teaching methods – the first of which was
written case analyses, the second being written case analyses with group discussion. They found that group discussion may be the best way to optimize the learning experience. A similar result was found by Rosenbaum (2003); and Lind (2004, 2005, 2006) presents a debating process that claims to be highly effective in teaching moral reasoning. Furthermore, Chen (2003) found that “…small-group, case-based discussion is best for teaching ethics problem-solving skills”. For the foregoing reasons, I think it would be good for teaching staff in the School of Social Care to experiment with the kind of approach to debating research ethics that was developed by Lind (2004, 2005, 2006). Of course, other forms of discussion and debate could be equally worthy of investigation and experimentation.

Q3. Should Doctoral students have to submit written material on Research Ethics?

Responses

- Yes. _Half of one of the written assignments (or half of 10,000 words) could be in the form of a critique of the ethical part of a hypothetical research project._ (1 respondent).
- Yes, _to clarify the mind_. About 2,000 words. (1 respondent).
- _This might make the workload excessive; so incorporate it into existing word-limits for set assignments._ (1 respondent).
- Yes, _as part of an assignment_. (1 respondent).
- _Perhaps a short essay._ (1 respondent).
- _A short assignment._ (1 respondent).

My comments

The second respondent understands the importance of writing “to clarify the mind” – or to come to a better understanding of an issue; although his limit of 2,000 words seems to me to be inadequate. The first
respondent’s guideline of 5,000 words may be a better guide, or some point between two and five thousand. In fact, writing is a crucially important part of the process of thinking, is argued by De Bono (1995); Buzan (1973); Cameron (1994); Murray (2002: 36). Indeed, Wellington et al (2005: 138) described writing as a form of thinking. This is confirmed by a study done by Colin Lago with international students. (See Lago, 2004: 95-105). (See element Yellow 8 in the legend [or key] which elaborates the elements of my heuristic model in Part Two of this chapter, in Section 4.5 below).

Attempting to think about complex issues without writing them down is an inefficient and predictably ineffective form of thinking. It follows that the more we “think on paper” about research ethics, the more developed our ideas and attitudes towards doing ethical research will become.

**Summative comment**

These seven Doctoral students, in their designs for a Research Ethics module for a Doctoral programme, have built in very much more teaching of research ethics than is currently delivered by the Doctoral programme in the School of Social Care. Their answers are an implicit critique of the extent and intensity of current teaching arrangements.

### 4.3.6. Phase Five of my Research. Two questions and an interview

Phase 5(a) was the first step in Phase Five of my research, in which I consulted the Doctoral and MA students with two focussed questions.

Phase 5(b) involved an interview with one tutor.

**Part (a). Two focus questions**

4.3.6(i) My learning from two questions to my student participants.

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30 They submitted six questionnaires and one email.
In Phase 5(a) I narrowed my research focus down to two questions, about the teaching of research ethics, and the learning of research ethics.

Cycle 5(a)A. On 12th October 2007, I sent out a questionnaire to all of the thirty-five Doctoral students, and twenty-four MA students, in the School of Social Care. My questionnaire consisted of the following two questions:

**Question 1.** How would you describe your experience of *learning* to think about ethical research issues?

**Question 2.** How would you describe your experience of *being taught* about ethical research issues, codes, rules, theories etc?

I got sixteen responses to my questions, of which, twelve were from Doctoral students and four from MA students.

As indicated earlier, I decided to concentrate on the data/texts generated by the Doctoral students, and so I set the MA students’ responses aside. Having thus reduced my number of respondents to twelve Doctoral students, I decided to analyze their responses to Question 2 (on the teaching of research ethics) first, because that seemed like the easier task, and it is perhaps more immediately interesting. That analysis is presented in section 4.3.6(ii) below.

I will then go on to present my analysis of the twelve Doctoral responses to Question 1, and my analysis of the seven responses to my report about Question 1.

4.3.6(ii). *The twelve Doctoral responses to Question 2. About the teaching of research ethics*

I analyzed the twelve responses to Question 2 for significant patterns, and four coherent patterns emerged. Initially, I will present the primary pattern in full, and then present an overview of all four patterns.
In order to look for patterns in these answers, I utilized the basic idea of
the V-heuristic, by Novak and Gowin (1984), which posits that all
knowledge is constructed by asking focus questions about a particular
event or object, and utilizing existing knowledge to conceptualize a data-
answer. See Figure 4.1.

This data-answer is then normally subjected to some kind of process of
‘transformation’, in which it is turned into a more usable form, (e.g., items 1
to 3 on the right hand side). In the case of my Doctoral students’
responses, I looked for patterns in several ‘trawls’ through the answers. (In
practice, I identified four patterns, which are somewhat overlapping).

My focus questions were as follows:

1. What is the most obvious pattern in these answers?

2. Are there any patterns related to my inferences about the lack of
teaching of research ethics at the University of Minerva?

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**Figure 4.1. My rendition of Bob Gowin’s V-Heuristic, as applied to moral philosophy and ethics. It can, of course, be applied to any body of knowledge.** (Adapted from an illustration on page 3 of Novak and Gowin, 1984; and using the structure of knowledge about moral philosophy provided by Singer, 1993; and the concepts provided by Baggini and Fosl, 2007).
3. Are there any patterns that contradict, or deviate from, my original imputation of teaching deficits?

(a) Primary pattern. Minimal, Informal and Unmemorable Teaching

In searching for the primary pattern in my collected data, I will now scan the answers to Question 2, as presented in my research Journal, and record those answers below:

**Respondent TL15.** (In the final stages of the Professional Doctorate).

“My experience of being taught (research ethics) is minimal. There is currently no formal ethics training in the Doctoral programme. The teaching has happened when I have made a direct request to the tutors for information.”

**Respondent TL14.** (In the fourth year of the Professional Doctorate).

“I struggle to remember being taught about ethical issues, including Codes, rules, theories etc. I believe that ethical issues were not given due weight on the Taught Doctorate. I have just gone through the Research Panel, and one of the comments about my Research Plan was regarding ethics, something that hadn’t really surfaced in supervision or feedback from the draft Research Plan. So I would recommend that for future students on the Taught Doctorate that a component on Ethics be made an integral element of the teaching.”
Respondent TL10. (Completed first year of Professional Doctorate).

“Of what we have done till now (as mentioned before: after only one year), the memory is vague... It probably proves your point from earlier of your observations that the teaching of ethics is not a priority, unfortunately... I would definitely like to see more of an in depth approach.”

Respondent TL2. (On the Professional Doctorate programme).

“My experience of being taught about ethical research issues is easier to write about. I don't have any sense of being taught at all. I think odd references have been made during the Doctorate sessions but I have no recollection of any formal teaching. I don't think I can say any more than that. Sorry.”

Respondent TL7. (In the final stages of the Professional Doctorate programme).

“Cannot remember ever being ‘taught’ about ethics…”

These five respondents seem to be pretty sure they were not taught about research ethics on the Professional Doctorate programme in the School of Social Care; or that the teaching was minimal; or done on an informal one-to-one basis in tutorials; or were unmemorable or insufficient. That squares with my own experience as a participant observer, which I will now present in a fictionalized form, to protect the identity of individuals and institutions involved. “I have experienced the general teaching on the Professional Doctorate at the University of Minerva, in Cohort ‘Y’, as a guest participant observer, with Tutor’s T3 and T4, ... My appraisal of (those) experiences is this: Those Doctoral (seminars) do not teach research ethics in any formal sense of that
Of course, as argued in Chapter 2 of my thesis, on my literature review process, autobiographical memory is fragile, but it most likely contains “nuggets of truth”. Because I have personally experienced – as a participant observer - what these five respondents claim to have experienced, their claims have a great deal of credibility for me.

(b). My summary of the four patterns that emerged

I will now present my summary of all four patterns detected in the twelve Doctoral responses to Question 2. I will do that by applying Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle – Cowan (2006: 46) - to my results, to distil the essence of my learning so far.

(1). Concrete experience. I have reviewed the twelve (Doctoral) responses to my Question 2, and classified them into four ‘patterns’.

(2). Observations and reflections. Here are the four patterns that emerged:

Pattern 1. Minimal, informal and/or unmemorable. Based on five of the twelve Professional Doctorate respondents, this pattern suggests strongly that research ethics is not actively taught on the Professional Doctorate programme, to any significant degree, and the minor elements that are presented are minimal, unmemorable or insufficient. The fact that some people reported not being able to recall any ethics teaching is taken as evidence that it did not happen, or was very occasional or minimal; or was mainly available on a one-to-one tutorial basis, by request of the student; or as developmental feedback from a tutor during a tutorial. This confirms my own participant observation experiences, and other statements I have collected, including some from Tutor T3.

Pattern 2. Limited tutoring and coaching. Based on responses from two PhD students and two Professional Doctorate students, this pattern suggests that there are sometimes some inputs on research ethics on the Doctoral programme, but that they seem to be quite limited, and insufficient; often amounting to little more than pointing the student towards the relevant
code of ethics. (There is some evidence that informal teaching of research ethics can be arranged on a tutorial basis; and that ethical weaknesses in research proposals are [normally] spotted and dealt with in this way). I have also heard these assertions before, from other postgraduate students during my present inquiry.

**Pattern 3. “Not trained here”**. Based on responses from two professional doctorate students, this pattern is about those cases where students got their (unspecified) research ethics training (of unspecified duration and effect) at previous universities, (and did not get anything significant at the University of Minerva).

**Pattern 4. “At this high level...”**. This response came from just one taught doctoral student (in this phase). This student questioned how much we should be taught, and how much we need to research for ourselves, “at this (academic) level”. (This view cropped up three or four times during my research). In some of my distributed reports, which were seen by my fifty-nine postgraduate students and several tutors, I have argued against this view of our “adequacy” as researchers which is based on the idea that “our level” of study somehow impacts our level of ethical research competence, in and of itself. *Ethical research competence* seems to be a set of skills, quite distinct from ‘everyday ethics’, and from *professional* ethics (e.g. the ethics of ‘clinical practice’), and is not just an expression of a generic academic level. (See ‘Ethical research competence’ in the Glossary).

3. **Forming conclusions, or abstract conceptualizations.** No significant formal teaching of research ethics occurs on the Professional Doctorate programme. (Some informal teaching occurs in tutorials, or in other individual encounters). It would be less surprising to find that there are no significant taught inputs on the traditional PhD route, given some attitudes that suggest the traditional PhD is supposed to have no taught elements. However, this is no longer the case, and there are increasing pressures on universities to provide substantial training in research methods to traditional PhDs. (Source: Murray, 2002). In the case of the University of Minerva, it
seems there is a three hour introduction to research ethics offered to all PhDs. This, however, seems to be totally inadequate to teach/learn ethical sensitivity; moral reasoning; ethical decision making; and moral action/implementation. (Cf: Bebeau, 2002; Rest et al., 1986; Eisen and Parker, 2004; Meara, Schmidt and Day, 1999; Sponholz, 2000). It may also be that the Professional Doctorate is treated as an (old fashioned) traditional PhD in the area of ethical research competence, in that it may be assumed the Professional Doctorate students should just get on with training themselves to be competent researchers. [However, Phillips and Pugh, (1994: 52; 2005: 54), were talking about the traditional PhD route when they said that no skill that is required to be used in the thesis should be practiced there for the first time. All essential research skills must be practiced before they are needed for the doctoral research process and the thesis writing. This calls for simulations, or practice situations, to be set up in all relevant skill areas; and I would argue that ethical risk assessment is one such skill area]. It may therefore be that, in addition to the Professional Doctorate, the traditional PhD route in the School of Social Care, in the University of Minerva, also needs to improve its inputs on research ethics; and this has certainly been requested by my three PhD respondents).

4. Linking back to the literature. The teaching of ethical research competence at postgraduate level is not widely practiced, is often patchy or superficial, and is not well understood at the moment. (Sources: Kessel, 2003; Fine and Ulrich, 1988; Swazey and Bird, 1997; Rizk and Elzubeir, 2004; Eisen and Parker, 2004). Too often students are expected by their tutors to learn research ethics ‘by osmosis’ during practica and internships – as described by Handelsman (1986); Friedman (1990) and Finn (1999) – whereas those tutors “…need to think of ethical reasoning as a skill that can be taught and studied…” just like clinical/professional practice, as recommended by Roberts, et al. (2005). Those authors demonstrate the superiority of criteria-based training over learning from practical experience; e.g. apprenticeships or practica.
Where criteria-based training courses have been developed, they often produce positive outcomes that indicate significant increases in the ability of course participants to reason at professional standards using sound ethical and moral concepts. (Cf: Al-Jalama and Fakhroo, 2004; Sponholz, 2000). (For this reason, I have developed competence based approaches to curriculum plans for the teaching and learning of ethical research competence, in Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 of Chapter 5). However, the validation process if far from complete, especially in relation to changes in moral behaviour; and empirical testing of a comprehensive approach to training is an outstanding need. (See Eisen and Parker, 2004; Bebeau, 2002; Roberts et al., 2005).

4.3.6(iii). My analysis of the nine responses to my report about Question 2

(a) White hat review. Did my respondents agree with my pattern analysis?

On Wednesday 9th January, I sent my report about Question 2 (concerning the teaching of research ethics – from section 4.3.6(ii) above) to my original mailing lists.

This is what I said to them:

“I would greatly appreciate it if you could afford to take the time to read my report, and to answer the little questions at the end. (Did I get it right? Did I get it wrong? What's missing? What can you add?)”

I will now trawl through those nine responses to my report, to see what patterns emerge. I will analyze those patterns next.

The patterns that I am looking for are implicit in my four questions, above; and in practice proved to fit into the primary pattern alone, as follows:

(1). **Primary pattern. Confirmation that I got my analysis right in my report.** I reviewed those responses that confirm the accuracy of my original report.
Six of my nine respondents fit into the primary pattern, and I will quote two of them here as illustrations.

**Respondent PE1.** (On the traditional PhD route).

“I think you have this basically right. It seems that if we get to doctoral level studies that there is some kind of unconscious assumption that we either know all the ethics that we will need or it is of so little consequence that we need not bother about it. I don't know what this says about the importance of understanding ethics (and not just merely abiding by the codes) in the higher levels of academia”.

**Respondent PE8.** (Third year of the Professional Doctorate programme).

“Thanks for the feedback about the questionnaires. I don’t think that you have missed anything or necessarily got anything wrong. The respondents’ answers speak for themselves, don’t they? You have presented the findings in a straightforward and succinct way. Hope that future students benefit!”

(b) **Forming conclusions.** In order for me to form a conclusion, it is necessary to integrate the divergent patterns of responses that have been generated. For this purpose I will utilize an element of quantification, which is not incompatible with my qualitative approach. (Cf: Parker, 2004: 1); and incorporate that in the construction of an argument in standard form (as described in Bowell and Kemp, 2005: 8-9). This is presented in Argument One, which follows.

**Argument One**

Premise (1). Five Doctoral students classified their experience of ethics teaching in the School of Social Care as “minimal, informal and/or unmemorable”.

Premise (2). Four Doctoral students classified their experience of ethics teaching as “limited tutoring” and “some one-to-one coaching available”.

Premise (3). “Charles Clarke reported having to teach himself research ethics, because such teaching was not on offer”.

Conclusion. Therefore, most\textsuperscript{31} of my Doctoral student respondents found the teaching of research ethics in the School of Social Care to be too limited and insufficient for their needs.

(c) Identifying potential material for the recommendations step. I have shown above that most of my Doctoral student respondents (as at December 2008 - following Korzybski’s dating advice) - believe they do not currently have an adequate educational experience of being taught research ethics and relevant moral philosophy\textsuperscript{32}. My inference from that result is that they do not currently seem\textit{ to have} the level of research competence that is needed to conduct safe, professional research, relevant to contexts in which real risks of harm are possible, (as at this writing in December 2008). I think it has been shown that this situation arises out of the (apparent) fact that serious steps are not currently taken to present a sufficiently extensive and intensive teaching programme on ethical research competence in the School of Social Care.

(d) Critical reflection. My conclusion - that most of my Doctoral respondents agree with my analysis – seems to be a sufficiently strong

\textsuperscript{31}“Most” here means 10/13 (or 77%). According to Parker (1994: 1): “…it is not necessary to set quantitative and qualitative (research) traditions in diametric opposition to one another, and we would lose sight of the value of much qualitative research if we were to do so. It would be wrong to assume, for example, that a qualitative researcher will refuse to summarize data numerically…” Therefore, I will to some limited degree call upon quantitative summation processes to bring some of my disparate findings into a summative whole; without making that the basis for a claim about statistical significance.

\textsuperscript{32}Please note that, in line with Korzybski’s (1933/1958) advice, this claim cannot be reduced to the simpler, Aristotelian claim that “Therefore their research ethics education IS inadequate”. It certainly SEEMS to be; and so I am prediciating to their ethics education the quality of SEEMING to be inadequate (in December 2008), based on the nuggets of truth that probably exist in the data/texts which I have collected.
basis for calling on the tutors in the School of Social care to implement some form of curriculum change. And later I will show that Tutor T3 agrees that there is a need to change some elements of the programme, and to begin to teach moral philosophy related to research ethics.

That completes my analysis of the responses to my Question 2, on the Teaching of Research Ethics; and I will now proceed to analyze the responses to Question 1, on the Learning of Research Ethics.

4.3.6(iv). The twelve Doctoral responses to Question 1- (Learning research ethics)

(a) White Hat review. What information do I have on file about this subject, in Section ‘Z’ of my Research Journal? What is the most compact summary I can produce?

As mentioned in section 4.3.6(i) above, I got sixteen responses to both of my questions, and subsequently discarded the four responses from MA students. I began to analyse the twelve Doctoral answers to Question 1 on 5th and 6th February 2008. This was what Question 1 asked:

Question 1. How would you describe your experience of learning to think about ethical research issues?

In order to analyze the twelve Doctoral student responses, I used the same process that I used in section 4.3.6(ii) above, as follows:

In order to look for patterns in these answers, I utilized the basic idea of the V-heuristic, by Novak and Gowin (1984), which posits that all knowledge is constructed by asking focus questions about a particular event or object, and utilizing existing knowledge to conceptualize a data-answer. This data-answer is then normally subjected to some kind of process of ‘transformation’, which turns the data into a more usable form.

I looked for patterns in several ‘trawls’ through the answers. (In practice, I identified three significant patterns).

My focus questions were:
1. What is the most obvious pattern here, in these answers?

2. Do these answers confirm or deny my inferences about the lack of emphasis on research ethics in the School of Social Care?

3. What do these answers tell us about the respondents’ understanding of how to learn about research ethics?

Having completed those trawls, I will now present the responses of the top three out of five respondents in the primary pattern; and then I will summarize the content of the remaining patterns.

4.3.6(v) Primary Pattern. Experience, Reflection and Consultation

The primary pattern of responses, which involved five Doctoral students, indicated that these individuals seemed mainly to learn from experience, and/or reflection on experience, and/or consultation with their tutors/supervisors (regarding specific points about their own individual research plans and processes). There was very little (stated) evidence of reading, debating, discussing or writing as modes of learning about research ethics. “And this confirms my observations, in the School of Social Care, over a period of two years”. I will now present one example of a Doctoral student learning by experience.

(I). On the role of experience

Respondent TL15. (In the final stages of the Professional Doctorate).

“My experience of learning has been a bit ‘ad hoc’, largely provoked by what I have learnt on route initiated by myself”.

Respondent TL15 does not say what she learned, or even how she learned it, other than that it was by ‘ad hoc’ experience, which means experience gained from pursuing a particular goal, or aimed at a particular end. So she seems to have learned from the experience of trying to learn about ethical research. She does not mention reading anything that helped with the learning. (And I found in Phase Four that Doctoral students do not seem to read much on research ethics). This is significant, as I am arguing that people need to have moral philosophies, ethical theories, principles
and concepts stored in long term memory, in order to adequately answer their “focus questions” about particular research events/objects which may be ethically problematical. To do this, they almost certainly need to read widely in research ethics, moral philosophy, and the experience of their profession in ethical research matters; to discuss their learning in groups; and to write at length on this subject.

(II) On the role of reflection

This next respondent seems to be pointing towards a reflective approach to learning about research ethics, at least in part:

**Respondent TL14.** (In the fourth year of the Professional Doctorate).

“I only really began to think about the importance of ethical issues when I began writing my Research Plan towards the end of my third year. Up to that point it wasn’t fully in my awareness, and it hadn’t really been a strong element in the taught modules. Whilst writing up my Research Plan I became more aware of the gaps in my knowledge base regarding ethical issues, as a result of which I began to frantically trawl around, mostly the internet, but also my own professional organizational Codes of Practice – so I guess you could say that I was self taught.”

This sounds like a reflective approach, because it was while writing up his research plan that Respondent TL14 became aware of the gaps in his knowledge on research ethics. This led him to consult some written materials, mainly on the internet, and his own professional code of research ethics. That is an improvement on what has (apparently) gone before, but it still leaves a lot to be desired in terms of the extent of the reading, especially about moral philosophy, and about the ethical research experiences of the relevant profession(s).
On the subject of consultation

Respondent TL1. (On the traditional PhD route).

“My continuing learning on (research) ethics has been ad hoc....talking with Tutor T3 mostly as and when it comes up in whatever bit of research I am doing. …”

Respondent TL1 has learned by experience, and has a pragmatic approach to research ethics. Consulting others on an ad hoc basis may prevent an ethical error or misdemeanour, but it does not promote an attitude of professional autonomy, and does not provide the basis for self-correction in the absence of a skilled consultant. Respondent TL1 also acknowledges that the philosophical basis of his ethical thinking is weak. This is the main point of my study; that the University of Minerva does not currently provide the kinds of educational experience that would take this respondent into a state of having a strong philosophical basis for moral reasoning and normative ethical judgements about research dilemmas.

4.3.6(vi) Review with Kolb’s learning cycle. What are the patterns and arguments that emerged?

(1) Information available. The primary pattern of responses, which involved five Doctoral students, indicated that these individuals seemed to mainly learn from experience, reflection on experience, and consultation with their tutors/supervisors. There was very little evidence of reading, debating, discussing or writing as modes of learning about research ethics. Implicit in this situation is the idea that these students were trying to make sense of the ethics of their own research proposals with a quite limited range of concepts, a limited number of principles, and no theories of moral philosophy.

(2) Forming conclusions. Once again, I need to integrate the different patterns that emerged from this element of my research. Firstly, I want to present an argument in standard form, as a means of summarizing my results, and determining their implications.
Argument Two

Premise (1). Five Doctoral students learned about research ethics on the basis of experience, and/or reflection and/or consultation (with their tutor, about specific, personal research problems).

Premise (2). Five Doctoral students reported that they did not learn about research ethics at the University of Minerva. (“Learned elsewhere”).

Premise (3). “Charles Clarke reported that he had to learn for himself, with little or no input from tutors”.

Conclusion. Therefore, most of my Doctoral student respondents did not learn research ethics from formal educational inputs by their tutors in the School of Social Care (SSC).

In addition to my conclusion above, I have found in other phases of my research that Doctoral students in the School of Social Care do not study moral philosophy, which is an important foundation of ethical thinking and behaviour - (as argued by Oxford, 2008: 42; Baggini and Fosl, 2007; Beauchamp and Childress, 1989/1994; Eisen and Parker, 2004) - and their knowledge of research ethics is minimal. They need positive guidance on what reading to undertake; some processes to ensure that they digest the learning from their reading, in the form of: (1) extended writing activities; and (2) supervised group discussion and debates, in the context of case studies involving challenging ethical research dilemmas. (See Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 below).

(3) Identifying potential material for the recommendations step. I would recommend that the Doctoral tutors in the School of Social Care take the following actions:

33 “Most” here means 11/13 (or 85%). This is an “incidental quantification” because that is the way the data “fell out” of the pattern analysis.
(a) Review the potential approaches to academic learning at Doctoral level, and decide upon a set of guidelines to be issued to all Doctoral students, on how to study research methodology, including research ethics. This should include guidelines on: What are the focus questions? What are the key concepts/principles to study? What code of ethics to learn, and how to present evidence of having learned it. And how to prepare for scheduled debates and discussions, etc.

(b) Include a recommended reading list on moral philosophy and ethical research competence. (See Section 2.5.2 of Chapter 2 above).

(c) Monitor the learning of their students, by requiring that they submit written assignments on moral philosophy and normative ethics, as applied to research issues, including the students’ own research proposals.

(d) Provide written and verbal (one-to-one and group) developmental feedback on those written assignments, with advice on the next steps.

(e) Facilitate active learning in groups, during seminar days, using such approaches as:

   (i) Debates;

   (ii) Whole group discussions;

   (iii) Individual presentations; and:

   (iv) Small group discussions; etc.

(4) Linking back to the literature. There is very little material in my literature searches on how to ‘learn’ about research ethics. The emphasis is strongly on ‘teaching’. This is not surprising. There is not much research work going on in cognitive psychology on the topic of learning in general. (Sources: Aitkenhead and Slack, 1985/1990; Eysenck and Keane, 2000). However, interestingly, Aitkenhead and Slack (1985/1990) suggest that it takes about 5,000 hours to develop expertise in any complex topic. If we consider research methods to require 5,000 hours to master, then what proportion of that time should be spent on the ethical component of research skills and knowledge? Certainly a lot more than the current
cursory treatment the topic seems to get in the School of Social Care (and elsewhere, as indicated by Swazey and Bird, 1997; Eisen and Berry, 2002; Handelsman, 1986; Friedman, 1990; Finn, 1999; Eisen and Parker, 2004; and others).

Doctoral students need to know what to learn, and for that purpose I recommend that they be introduced to Rest et al’s (1986) Four Components model. (See my six competences in Figures 5.2 and 5.3 in Chapter 5). In order to develop competence in relation to the first three components – ethical sensitivity, moral reasoning and ethical decision making – they need to be presented with structuring activities involving reading, writing and debating. In Part Two below, I have presented a thinking heuristic to guide that activity (in Figure 4.3 and the related legend). But it needs to be supported by teacher inputs, and teacher guidance. A potential approach is outlined in Reece and Walker (1997: 111-113). However, my competence based curriculum plans in Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 below are custom designed for the present context. Furthermore, tutors can support and guide their students through the stages of Kolb’s learning cycle - (cf: Cowan, 2006: 46-50) – when actively learning their codes of research ethics.

Brown and Atkins (1988: 160)\textsuperscript{34} present a set of guidelines for tutors to use in facilitating active learning in their students. And Baldwin and Williams (1988)\textsuperscript{35} present a model for structuring training events in terms of: (1) building support (with educational inputs); (2) presenting an appropriate challenge (in the form of ‘applying the input’)\textsuperscript{36}; and (3) reflecting on the results.

Other helpful sources may be found in Section 2.5.2 of Chapter 2, above; and in Section 5.2 below.

\textsuperscript{34} Reprinted in 2002. No new edition available.

\textsuperscript{35} No reissues or new edition available.

\textsuperscript{36} An ‘appropriate challenge’ must not involve too big a step beyond the support provided.
4.3.6(vii). My analysis of seven responses to my report (above) about Question 1. How did they learn?

(a) White Hat review. What information is available, and how can I summarize it for maximum clarity and ease of communication?

On 7th February 2008, I sent my report about Question 1, concerning the learning of research ethics, from the previous section above, to everybody on my original mailing lists. I got seven responses. All seven responses confirmed that my report on how Doctoral students in the School of Social Care learn research ethics was “sound”, “a fair and representative analysis”, “very accurate”, “clear”, etc.

(b) Review with Kolb’s learning cycle.

(1) Forming conclusions. What conclusions have I arrived at as a result of my research journey so far?


“Ethical thinking seeks to stop flight into judgement. It involves the systematic use of the thinking skills that can be developed. Ethical thinking involves…” verbal thinking (about duties and
2. Secondly, Doctoral students need supervised practice in “...thinking about moral dilemmas, problems and paradoxes”, specifically in relation to research matters. (Cf: Eisen and Parker, 2004; Swazey and Bird, 1997; Hare, 1981; Thomson, 1999/2005; Beauchamp and Childress, 1989/1994; Seedhouse, 1988: xiv-xvi; Morton, 1996: 91-122; and others). That supervised practice should include debates, discussions and presentations, based on extensive reading. (See Smith et al., 2004; Eisen and Parker, 2004). (See also the source of my conviction, on page 236, below). Supervised practice should also include the submission of written assignments on ethical research issues, which are assessed, and upon which developmental feedback is provided. (Based upon ideas in Murray, 2002; Lago, 2004). See my reasons on pages 237-238 below.

3. Thirdly, Doctoral tutors need to incorporate the emotions in this education because a combination of emotion and cognition appear to be the basis of moral judgement. (Sources: Nichols, 2002: 227; Gibbs, 2003: 115-116; Hare, 1981; Meara, Schmidt and Day, 1996; Rest et al., 1986; Thomson, 1999/2005: 146-152)\footnote{Thomson (1999/2005: 146-152), arguing against Paul’s (1990) rationalism, claims that reason and emotion are both valid and important components of moral decision making: involving sympathetic emotion and critical reasoning. And Nichols (2002: 227) has presented some scientific evidence in support of this claim.}. Cognition and emotion, respectively, are what Aristotle called “…the rational and desiring parts of the soul…”. (Curren, 2007b: 507). And Aristotle sees the moral (affect laden – or ‘feeling based’) virtues as habit based, and a result of training. Curren goes on to say that “…moral learning is properly concerned with developing virtues of character and requires supervised practice of the right kinds”. (Ibid, page 508). However, as Cowan (2006: 136) says: “Those dealing with the affective domain have not yet assembled a pedagogy. They need a methodology with associated practical
applications to enable them to generate on the part of the students, belief in, rather than mere adherence to, critical professional values”. This problem is considered next.

How can Doctoral tutors engage the emotions of postgraduate students during training in ethical research competence? This may be possible through the debating of ethical dilemmas during the consideration of case studies in supervised groups, but only after the group members have learned a reasonable body of distinctions from moral philosophy, and mastered the code of research ethics that applies to their profession. It may help to debate the development of moral courage, as described in Chapter 16 of Zimbardo (2007). It may also be helpful to use the ‘Possible Selves’ exercise presented by Meara et al. (1996), as reproduced in Appendix Two, attached. Additionally, Doctoral students need to learn to listen to each other respectfully, which can be achieved using Lind’s (2004, 2005, 2006) Konstanz Method of (Moral) Dilemma Discussion (KMDD) process.

The way these debates might impact the emotional level of the individual is explicated by the social intuitionist model shown in Haidt (2001: 815).

Figure 4.2. Jim Byrne’s rendition of Haidt’s (2001) model of moral judgement

“The numbered links, drawn for Person A only, are (1) the intuitive judgement link, (2) the post hoc reasoning link, (3) the reasoned persuasion link, and (4) the social persuasion link. Two additional links are hypothesized to occur less frequently: (5) the reasoned judgement link and (6) the private reflection link”. (Haidt, 2001: 815)
This figure, which is “a plausible alternative” to the rationalist model of Kohlberg et al., rather than an established psychological theory, suggests that Person A’s Judgement and Reasoning (in the top row of the model), impact Person B’s (present and future) Moral Intuitions (via link 3 [the reasoned persuasion link] and link 4 [the social persuasion link]). On a future occasion, then, Person B is highly likely to be influenced by this new Intuition, which will affect his/her Judgement and Reasoning, and thus his/her moral action.

It thus seems very important – following the social intuitionist model (Haidt, 2001), and Aristotle’s perspective (Curren, 2007a)\(^{38}\) - to have a good deal of social intercourse – in seminar time - around the development of a personal code of research ethics; review of research proposals from an ethical perspective; discussions of moral theories and principles relevant to professional research ethics; working in groups on case studies and moral dilemmas; and so on. (These debates and discussions need to be preceded by a good deal of reading of the specialist literature detailed in Section 2.5.2 of Chapter 2 above; and they need to be well managed).

4. Fourth, the School of Social Care needs, (and probably already has), a system of transparent planning and review of proposals.

5. Fifth, Doctoral tutors need to promote commitment to ethical research, rather than mere conformity. Commitment depends upon a process of ‘enrolment’ – or drawing the individual postgraduate students

\(^{38}\) Aristotle proposed that the moral emotions were a product of explicit social training, character training, or training in the moral virtues; while the intellectual virtues (including reason and rationality) were a product of education. (Sources: Curren, 2007b; Urmson and Rée, 1991; Baggini and Fosl, 2007). And while Aristotle’s binary logic system, and other aspects of his approach to science, have long been challenged and modified – cf: Losee (1993: 67); Kosko (69-70); De Bono (1995: 10-11); Korzybski (1933: 5-9); Aune (1995: 151) – his approach to ethics has been salvaged and modernized, and is experiencing a rebirth (as neoAristotelianism), since the 1980s: (cf: Curren, 2007b: 494; Hooft, 2006: 49-82; Singer, 1993: 249-258; Baggini and Fosl, 2007: 94-97).
into a “community of agreement” about the importance of research ethics, and the importance of morality to good research design and execution. This requires a good understanding of the moral philosophies which demonstrate why Doctoral researchers must avoid harming others with our research; why they must strive to promote the greatest good of the greatest number; why they must strive to promote justice and autonomy for their research participants; to care for them; and so on.

6. Sixth, the School of Social Care needs a model of research ethics and moral philosophy which can be used by both Doctoral tutors and students. Doctoral tutors can use it to educate themselves in the subject of research ethics and moral philosophy, before the commencement of teaching; and then for curriculum planning and lesson preparation. Doctoral students can use it to promote their own learning of research ethics and moral philosophy; and to structure their ethical risk assessments on their research proposals. My heuristic model, shown in Figure 4.3 below, and explained in educative detail in the attached legend, is a possible contender for this role. Eisen and Parker (2004) outline a model for the teaching of research ethics, but it would not serve our current purposes, because it assumes trained staff exist to do this job. (In addition, I will also present an ethical decision-making model, in Figure 4.4 below, as a further aide to developing ethical research competence).

7. And finally, I have also provided draft curriculum plans for competence based approaches to the teaching and learning of ethical research competence, in Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 of Chapter 5.

(2) Identifying potential material for the recommendations step

The list of seven conclusions, above, will be referred to the attention of the Doctoral tutors in the School of Social Care. There is solid evidence that those conclusions need to be considered by the Doctoral tutors, and I am
requesting that the MA tutors do me the honour of considering my ideas, 
even though there is not sufficient evidence in my research data that they 
need to do so\textsuperscript{39}.

I will now move on to presenting my interview with Tutor T3.

Part (b): One interview

4.3.6(b). An interview with Tutor T3. Phase 5(b). Cycle 5(b)A

(a) White Hat review. What information is available? “On 5\textsuperscript{th} November 2007, I met Tutor T3 in the residents’ lounge of the Charter Hotel in Beckfield, to discuss my three research questions. The reason for this location was to avoid a diary entry in a University of Minerva department diary, which could later be checked by a secretary to see who was interviewed by Jim Byrne on 5\textsuperscript{th} November, to reveal Tutor T3’s identity”.

Over the next forty-five minutes we had a wide ranging discussion, arising out of my three questions. It was a rich and rewarding discussion, and my challenge then was to extract those bits of the transcript that relate directly to my three questions and to reconstruct just that part of the conversation. In the process, a good deal of the richness of the conversation, and the diversity of topics and conversational elements, was inevitably lost. That is unfortunate, but it is important to distil the essence of the direct answers to the three questions; which I did in my Research Journal. In the next element of my thesis, I will present some very brief extracts from that section of my Research Journal, and comment on those extracts.

My first question was this:

\textbf{Jim Byrne. Question 1. What is the best way for a postgraduate tutor to teach research ethics?}

\textsuperscript{39} There is evidence that a small proportion of the MA student body is convinced they do not get sufficient training in research ethics, but the amount of data seemed to me to be too thin to justify proceeding with the development of any particular arguments or truth claims.
“… tutors in this school teach on programmes for other parts of the faculty or other programmes within the school. … Sometimes we teach on programmes we have inherited from others. All those factors affect how we tackle the teaching. … different teachers have different teaching styles. … but overall I think the best way to teach research ethics is … to have a chunk of time with the label ‘research ethics’ on it. And the next thing is to get some ethical dilemmas… Of course, with the Professional Doctorate, … we don’t always do that. I tend to think they are at a higher level than the MA’s, and that they will go off and pursue any questions we raise with them on seminar days. That is to say,… if I raise the question of research ethics, I expect that they will … take that away and work on it, … sometimes … I get them to discuss their research plans with their year groups, … to see if it is doable and ethically sound. This is not always made explicit, but that’s what I’m looking for. …”

The “levels argument” is repeated here, and was refuted by me in a number of circulated reports. The second questionable element of this statement is that Doctoral students will go off and work on the subject of research ethics without some definite structure, guidance, and assessment of their results. My data suggest that this does not happen; and that some definite ‘learning contract’ is needed to begin to structure this work, which is not currently being done.

JWB. Question 2. What do you think is the best way for postgraduate students to begin to learn for themselves about research ethics?

“Well… … they need to learn their code of ethics…and to think about their own research proposals… and to come up with justifications for their research design… It’s important to give them … reading material, and to get them thinking about it. And … one of the things I do … is to share with them my perceptions of … unethical behaviours … or what seem to me to be unethical … that are currently going on in health and social care
The idea that ‘learning a code of research ethics’ is a quite simple and straightforward matter came across to me; and I see it quite differently. For example, Bond (2000:44) says this:

“Codes (of ethics) are written in fairly general and abstract terms in order to condense the experience and thinking behind them and to make them as widely applicable to a variety of circumstances as possible. This means that codes are unlikely to be read for their literary quality or narrative pull. Unfortunately, this discourages some people from reading them in advance of an ethical dilemma”.

My experience of working with the Doctoral students in the School of Social Care suggests that almost nobody takes seriously the task of learning the details of their ethical research codes and guidelines. And Tutor T3’s response also does not take account of the following fact. Even if every Doctoral student went off to study their code of research ethics on their own, they would make little progress, because it is not easy to digest so much material in such a way as to get it into long-term memory. (Cf: Maddox, 1988: 188; Davies and Houghton, 1991: 120-123). Therefore, if they do not have to do it, they will (probably, normally) avoid doing it. And if they attempt it on their own, most of them are likely to fail, because this is a very boring and difficult challenge.

Eisen and Parker’s (2004) recommendation is to tell graduate students which codes of ethics they must read in preparation for specified discussions on a specified date. Thus they must come prepared. My own recommendation for what happens in the subsequent group discussion of codes is as follows. Each individual is told to read a specified (small) section of the entire code, and to extract a small number of the most important principles; thus dividing the code among the whole group. Each individual then discusses their (let us say) four principles with one colleague; they reduce their eight principles to five; they then meet with
another couple and discuss their (five plus five) ten principles, and reduce them to the most important seven. Each group of four students then presents their list of seven principles to a plenary session of the whole group, as their Group Code of Research Ethics. (This is called the ‘snowballing’ technique’. See Table 5.2 and its footnotes, in Chapter 5). Then, once again, each individual takes responsibility for compiling their own Personal Code of Research Ethics from the most important elements of all of the presented codes.

Tutor T3 also thought that writing up the research plan would help to focus the minds of the Doctoral students on research issues, and complete their learning. However, the Doctoral research plan currently has a requirement to write 375 words on research ethics. This compares unfavourably with my recommendation of 6,500 words, in terms of providing the students with sufficient scope to explore ethical and moral philosophical issues in some depth.

**JWB. Question 3. What do you think of the data that have been coming out of my research, as described in my circulated reports?**

**Tutor T3. “… there is a strong argument for exposing (our postgraduate students) to philosophy in their professional training and in their research training, and so far we have not engaged with that need. This comes back to the ‘good life’… and ‘What is it to be a good professional carer?’ and ‘What is it to be a good professional researcher?’ We need to … engage with those questions, … and any philosophy that can help with those questions … has to be taken seriously in the future”.**

There are two senses of “the good” that could have been implicated here. The first is Aristotle’s concept of the “good life” – or humans developing their innate capacities to their fullest expression. The other is the concept of “the good” as distinct from “the right”. (Routledge, 2000: 772). My take is that “the good” as defined by Aristotle is problematical, since we have to
ask “What is the correct ‘end’ of human existence?” and this question may produce different answers from different interlocutors. Mine, for example, is that I have an obvious duty to be a moral citizen of my community, without succumbing to political naïveté. Currently popular capitalistic values might say that “the good” is to get lots of material things, and to hell with those who fail to do so. There is therefore a big issue here, regarding the potential role of virtue ethics, and I have explored that issue in a number of circulated reports and in Section Two below; especially in the legend that elaborates on the elements of Figure 4.3.

(b) Review with Kolb’s learning cycle

(1) Information available. Tutor T3 talked in terms of “best practice”, and identified some ways in which current procedures do not always facilitate conforming to that best practice. She acknowledged that there was scope for changing some practices and introducing some new approaches, most notably the teaching of relevant elements of moral philosophy for both professional practice and research ethics.

(2) Observations and reflections. “Tutor T3 indicated to me that she and her two colleagues (Tutors T4 and T5) think about the goal of the Professional Doctorate in a way which is quite distinct from the way my respondents seem to see it, and also how I see it”. For Tutor T3, the purpose of the Doctoral programme is “to get students through the process successfully”. That is to say, to maximize the number of completions.

This differs from my view, which is that “The purpose of the Doctoral programme should be to produce fully professional researchers, including the full achievement of ethical research competence”.

My research participants probably see the Doctoral programme in some way that lies between my perspective and the perspective of Tutor T3.
(3) Forming conclusions. Given that Tutor T3, my research participants, and I, each see the purpose of the Doctoral programme differently, we would each be likely to design the curriculum differently, and prioritise different teaching/learning activities. This is a problem, but it will be resolved in practice by the decision made by Tutor T3, which will very likely include some teaching of moral philosophy.

There is currently a good deal of disagreement in the UK regarding how to design and implement a doctoral programme. According to Phillips and Pugh (2005: 107), a doctoral programme “…is a thorough training in doing research and learning the criteria and quality required for becoming a fully professional researcher in a chosen field”. However, Murray (2002: 28) quotes Plomin to the effect that, “The UK system assumes undergraduate education provides students with all they need to know to begin researching…” But she goes on to add that “The UK government has called for more formal training in the doctorate, partly in order to improve the research training component…”. I need to find a way to present my recommendations so that they are seen as a contribution to the ongoing debate among colleagues as to what to do and how to do it in taking forward the development of the Doctoral programme in Social Care. I need to be sensitive to differences in teaching styles, educational goals, and workload issues.

(4) Identifying potential material for the recommendations step

In my Research Journal, in the middle of 2007, I was developing a quite specific curriculum, which I thought would address the needs of the postgraduate students in the University of Minerva. However, having reviewed Moon, Murphy and Raynor (1989), and especially Elmore (1989) I decided it was unwise to be too prescriptive about needed changes. This problem is highlighted by Andrews and Fay (2000) when they say “Even where there is a willingness to change… actual change may not take place either because the outcomes cannot be predicted or because they are known but unacceptable”. Therefore I prefer to promote the concept of
self-actualizing teacher\textsuperscript{40}, and to suggest a thinking heuristic which could be used by postgraduate tutors if they wished to explore the possibility of bringing about changes in their own curriculum. That idea, based on the *kaizen approach* to change in small easy steps - (Maurer, 2004) - will be explored when I introduce my heuristic in Figure 4.3, in Part Two, below, and expand upon it in the attached legend. Beyond that idea, I have also taken a couple of further steps, again based on the kaizen approach, of beginning to develop some draft curriculum plans for the teaching and learning of ethical research competence, in Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 below. Those draft plans might be taken up by some tutors, while others might use the earlier idea of finding their own way, using my Ethical Research Thinking Heuristic. The choice has to be theirs.

**PART TWO. SUMMARY DISCUSSION OF MY KEY LEARNING POINTS**

### 4.4. Introductory comments

I have already included a great deal of discussion of my data/texts in Part One above. The function of Part Two is to narrow down the focus of that discussion and to summarize it. The overall shape of Part Two is as follows.

- I begin by focussing the discussion using four questions about just how serious the problem of research ethics seems to be at the University of Minerva.

- I then present an argument to the effect that there is strong evidence of a substantial problem with the teaching and learning of research ethics in the School of Social Care. Most Doctoral students I consulted attest to wanting and needing an expanded and deepened teaching/learning programme in research ethics.

- Then I introduce, in Figure 4.3, my heuristic device which I have developed and recommend to Doctoral tutors and students for

\textsuperscript{40} This is "...a pedagogically driven conception of curriculum change as a process dependent on teachers’ capacities for reflection..." which involves "...the generation of (new) theory from attempts to change curriculum practice...". (Zeichner, 2001: 275).
managing their thinking about research ethics, and their learning of ethical research competence. This is followed by a detailed legend (or key) which describes the twenty-four elements of my heuristic in educative detail.

- In Section 4.6, I present my ethical decision-making model, which is designed for use in reaching ethical research decisions by Doctoral students who have fully explored the developmental possibilities of the twenty-four step thinking heuristic in Figure 4.3. This new decision making model is shown in Figure 4.4.

- Section 4.7 is a summary of this chapter, including my conclusions.

**4.4.1. Step 3. Focussed Reflection and Discussion.** *What do my key learning points tell us about the present situation regarding the teaching and learning of research ethics in the School of Social Care? What do they indicate about the necessity for change?*

*4.4.1(a). A brief discussion of my key learning points.* I will begin by turning my attention to the discussion of my key learning points. Some focus questions that were identified above were as follows.

1. Is there a *real* problem with the teaching and learning of ethical research competence in the School of Social Care?
2. If so, how *serious* is it?
3. How could it be *resolved*?
4. Will the improvement be worth the cost?

Here are my responses.

1. **Is there a real problem with the teaching and learning of ethical research competence in the School of Social Care?**

   I believe there is sufficient evidence in Part One above to indicate that there are very real problems with both teaching and learning of ethical research competence among Doctoral students in the School of Social Care, at the University of Minerva.
2. If so, how serious is it?

(a) In one very specific sense, it is not very serious. The sense in which it is not serious is that, as far as I can tell, unethical research is not being conducted there, based on the evidence I’ve seen. Also, the management of the postgraduate research activities in the School of Social Care is dominated by a group of tutors who seem to be strongly committed to preventing unethical research proposals being approved; and so, from the perspective of Zimbardo (2007), unethical behaviour is highly unlikely to emerge, as this normally seems to be directed and facilitated by the “system”, to which the individuals conform as passively as they did in the Stanford Prison Experiment (Zimbardo, 1971), and the ‘electrocution’ experiments of Professor Milgram (in Milgram, 1974). In other words, what Zimbardo and Milgram seem to have demonstrated is that, far from moral outrages being committed by bad apples in good barrels, they are most often committed by malleable apples in bad barrels. (Cf: Shermer, 2007a).

(b) However, in another sense, the problem with the teaching of research ethics on the Doctoral programme in the School of Social Care is a serious problem, in the sense that the students who are passing through this highly moral system – in which they are individually coached with their ethical difficulties (if they request it, or are identified as needing it), instead of being encouraged to become independently capable of reasoning about research ethics issues; and instead of being socially trained to have moral intuitions that are relevant to professional research – are less likely to be able to stand up to morally corrupting pressures in post-University contexts. Paradoxically, what is inadvertently being reinforced is their tendency to conform to authority figures’ directives and guidance, rather than learning to think (critically) for themselves.

3. How could this problem (on the Doctoral programme) be resolved?

I will argue that there are curriculum changes that could resolve this problem, by encouraging more reading of moral philosophy and ethical codes; more discussion and debating of research ethics issues; writing at
much greater length, and more often, on this topic; and some other changes. I will develop this argument around the application of my heuristic for ethical research thinking, which will be presented in Figure 4.3 below, and elaborated in the linked legend.

4. Will the improvement be **worth** the cost?

The costs will be in terms of (some) additional work by tutors and students. If I had more space, I could explore the cost-benefit issue in greater detail, using the ‘practical reasoning’ approach described by Bowell and Kemp (2005: 201-207). As a general principle, I have to show that the benefits will outweigh the costs. However, because I am going to advocate a **kaizen-based approach** to curriculum change – which means small changes, in slow, easy steps – the costs in terms of human labour are likely to be quite small in any particular academic term. (Cf: Maurer, 2004). And any such changes will be entirely based upon engaging the interest and academic curiosity of the relevant Doctoral tutors.

4.4.1(b). What formal arguments can be presented, on the basis of my work in Part One above? I will now summarize the two arguments that I developed earlier, combined with Preliminary Conclusion One, from above, and add some additional premises for a final summative argument.

**FINAL SUMMATIVE ARGUMENT**

- A substantial proportion of the Doctoral students in the School of Social Care agree that there is a need for a significant educational input on moral philosophy and research ethics to be incorporated into the Doctoral programme in the future.
Most of my Doctoral student respondents found the teaching of research ethics in the School of Social Care to be too limited and insufficient for their needs\(^{41}\).

Most of my Doctoral student respondents did not learn research ethics from formal educational inputs by their tutors in the School of Social Care (SSC).

The conclusion that I draw from those three premises is as follows.

**Conclusion.** There is strong evidence of a substantial problem with the teaching and learning of research ethics in the School of Social Care. Most Doctoral students I consulted attest to wanting and needing an expanded and deepened teaching/learning programme in research ethics.

**Additional premises**

How should this evidence be handled, in terms of developing a solution? There are at least two additional premises for the development of a more refined argument, as follows:

- Significant authors advocate the teaching of some theories of moral philosophy\(^{42}\); and debating and writing about ethical research dilemmas\(^{43}\); as the basis of ethical (research) competence among professionals (including research professionals).

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\(^{41}\) As stated earlier, according to Parker (1994: 1): “...it is not necessary to set quantitative and qualitative (research) traditions in diametric opposition to one another, and we would lose sight of the value of much qualitative research if we were to do so. It would be wrong to assume, for example, that a qualitative researcher will refuse to summarize data numerically...” Therefore, I will to some limited degree call upon quantitative summation processes to bring some of my disparate findings into a summative whole.

\(^{42}\) Including: Eisen and Parker (2004); Sponholz (2000); Bond (2000: 36, 46-49); Beauchamp and Childress (1989: 9-10); Seedhouse (1988); Vardy and Grosch (1999: 3-5); University of South Florida (2003); and others.

\(^{43}\) Smith et al (2004); Schrag (2005); Daniels (1992); Roff and Preece (2004); Sponholz (2000); Rizk and Elzubeir (2004); Eisen and Parker (2004); Chen (2003); Beresin, et al. (2003); and others.
• Other authors advocate developing critical thinking skills (or ‘intellectual virtues’)\textsuperscript{44} and moral intuitions (or ‘moral emotions’)\textsuperscript{45}.

From this I conclude as follows. A number of authors around the world have found problems with the teaching and learning of research ethics, as indicated in the previous two premises. (Cf: Handelsman, 1986; Friedman, 1990; Finn, 1999; Swazey and Bird, 1997; Eisen and Berry, 2002; Eisen and Parker, 2004). I will take their recommendations into account in constructing my ethical research thinking heuristic, in Figure 4.3 and the related legend, below.

My next two premises concern external pressures, and the intrinsic interests of the Doctoral tutors in the School of Social Care, as follows.

• The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and other funding agencies (in Britain) are now beginning to talk up the agenda for more rigorous and extensive governance of research ethics; and ‘the development over time of agreed minimum standards of training and competence’ is part of that evolving agenda. (Sources: ESRC, 2006/2008: 14; Bond, 2004a; SATSU, 2003; 2004a, b, c).

• The Doctoral tutors in the School of Social Care are assumed (by me) to have a professional interest in maintaining control of their own teaching, while at the same time responding positively to the pressures for change.

Those two premises lead me to the conclusion that, if the Doctoral tutors want to retain control of their own curricula, then they must (logically) reform them in line with the historical trend.

And my final, overall conclusion is that, logically, the Doctoral tutors in the School of Social Care should implement a process of curriculum change to expand and deepen the teaching of ethical research competence to their Doctoral students.

\textsuperscript{44} Paul and Elder (2002, 2006); Chaffee (1998); Bowell and Kemp (2005); Thomson (1999/2005); Curren (2007a, b); and others.

\textsuperscript{45} Haidt (2001); Fullinwider (2007: 499-500); Curren (2007b: 507-509); Aristotle (1908); and others.
4.5. My ethical research thinking heuristic

4.5.1. Introductory comments

I have recently – meaning early 2008 - developed an ethical research thinking heuristic which could be used as a guide to action by Doctoral research tutors and students. It consists of two main parts: The illustration in Figure 4.3 below, and the elaboration in the legend (or key) that follows the illustration.

The illustration follow next, in Figure 4.3 below.
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Figure 4.3. My ethical research thinking heuristic

My thinking heuristic, in Figure 4.3, consists of twenty-four elements, including values, principles, processes and events/objects. This structure was inspired by a significantly different (though somewhat overlapping) twenty-element model in Seedhouse (1988: 141)⁴⁶. My heuristic is organized into five hierarchical levels, working outwards from a core of four red requirements. Those four elements are surrounded by four rectangular

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⁴⁶ Seedhouse’s (1988) model is designed to guide healthcare workers in their professional roles; and has the following four elements at the core: Create autonomy; respect autonomy; Respects persons equally; and Serve needs before wants. The first rectangular ring in his model contains four elements as follows: Promise keeping; Minimize harm; Intent to enable (beneficence); and Truth--telling. The second ring contains: Increase of individual good; Increase of the good of a particular group; Increase of social good; and Increase of self-good. The final outer ring contains: The responsibility to justify all actions in terms of external evidence; Effectiveness and efficiency of action; Wishes of others; The risk; Legal rights of others (the law); Codes of practice; Disputed facts; and The degree of certainty of the evidence on which action is taken. These are clearly mainly different from my elements.
rings. The first three of those rings each contains four elements; while the outer ring contains eight elements.

(a) **How to use it.** In essence my heuristic is a way of graphically displaying a hierarchical list of the most relevant values, principles, processes and events/objects. The aim is to optimize the territory to be explored and covered by Doctoral tutors and students, by providing a map of the most important elements of the territory that need to be considered, plus some guidance on how to relate to those elements.

This heuristic can be used for the following purposes.

1. To conduct a self-training programme in research ethics (for Doctoral tutors or/or students);
2. To design the ethical research component of a Doctoral research programme;
3. To plan a scheme of work.

Before I present the legend which elaborates and explains each of the twenty-four elements in Figure 4.3 above, let me explain the best way to use this heuristic. This step represents ‘author as teacher’, promoting effective learning; or modelling some approaches to teaching research ethics.

1. Look through the twenty-four elements of the heuristic model above, and select up to seven of them (plus or minus two) – cf: Miller (1956) – that are of most interest to you at this moment in time.
2. It would be better to choose five or six of them rather than eight or nine, because of the small size of human working memory. (Simon, 1979).
3. List your (let us say) five elements in priority order (for you), with the most important at the top of the list.
4. Against each element, write a question or two about that element, in terms of what you hope to learn from this heuristic; or what you think it will cover\textsuperscript{47}.

5. Then read through the legend, which follows; reading each element in turn; and noting down anything that comes to your attention that is relevant to your questions and goals. (There may be things of relevance to your five elements in any or all of the twenty-four elements, so it is important to read the whole of the legend).

(b) My descriptive legend (or key) – Colour-coded elements

This heuristic has a hierarchical structure, beginning in the centre with the \textbf{four, red core elements}, or requirements. The idea is to work outwards from the centre, reading each element in numerical order.

\textbf{1. Ethical goals.} Ethical research is unlikely to result from activities that are not driven by explicitly ethical goals. I became aware of this principle after one Doctoral seminar at the University of Minerva, which is written up in my Research Journal as follows:

On the way out (of that seminar), I talked to Person No.2, and told him that the main thing I had learned from Bond (2004) was the need to engage in ‘informed consent as a process’. When I explained that this meant providing multiple exit points for the research participant, so they could leave at any point, without the need to give any explanation or excuse, Person No.2 looked shocked. “But that could mean you would end up with no research data”, he said; and went on to indicate that he would not be willing to do anything that compromised his practical goal of collecting data.

That encounter caused me to realize that we need explicit ethical goals in research, alongside our practical research goals.

\textsuperscript{47} Buzan (1973) presents evidence that more material is noticed, retained and recalled by a reader who looks for just one or two pieces of information from a text than is retained and recalled by a reader who tries to extract “all the information” from a text. Northedge (1990: 25) argues that it is questions that make our reading interesting, and help us to engage with what is on the page.
Focus questions: What are some ethical goals that could guide good research? (Think about sources in codes of research ethics and in moral philosophies). Which books might help? (See pp70-74)

How could your research goals be subjected to some kind of analysis with some principles of moral philosophy? These are questions to be considered, debated and resolved. (See also Appendix One).

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 58), “…while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better”. Therefore, when there is any clash between ethical considerations and practical considerations, the ethical goals should be given priority. (How would you feel about ‘you’ if you gave priority to the practical goals? And how would you justify that priority to a committee of your peers?)

2. Appropriately trained. I have argued in this thesis that it is important that Doctoral students are appropriately trained for the task of thinking, consciously, about the moral implications of their research proposals; as well as being (socially) trained to have the right kind of moral intuitions about research dilemmas. This involves a form of transformation from being a ‘novice’ to being an ‘expert’ in research ethics. (Sources: Green, 1987: 144; Eysenck and Keane, 2000: 412-426)

My insights into the importance of being trained in research ethics occurred because I did not receive any formal training in research ethics on my MA or Doctoral programmes, at two different universities. I then found I could not conduct an ethics risk assessment on my first research proposal for my doctorate in 2004-2005. I then spent five academic terms training myself in ethical research competence. This is how that is described in my Research Journal:

“It was only after engaging in a substantial amount of study of moral philosophy – especially Hare (1981), Marinoff (2004), Blackburn (2003), Emanuel et al., (2004), Harrison-Barbet (1990), Chaffee (1998), and many other texts; and applying them to my original fourteen potential ethical dilemmas, that I began to feel that I was at last developing real competence in thinking about ethical issues”.
What seems to be required is character education; teaching of critical thinking skills; moral reasoning skills; all based on appropriate reading, writing and debating challenges.

Finally, any training programme in research ethics needs to take account of the four components of ethical research competence identified and elaborated by Rest et al. (1986) as follows.

1. **Ethical sensitivity.** This involves being trained to recognize *typical examples* of ethical research problems and dilemmas in a particular field of research activity. (Focus questions for directing the teaching/learning activities: What kinds of issue have come up in the past? What kinds of issue are potentially around?)

2. **Moral reasoning.** This involves knowing how to weigh up the right course of action to take in the light of conflicting principles, or conflicting intuitions, by considering the **rights** and **duties** of the actors in the situation; plus the **consequences** of proceeding; the guiding **virtues** to use; the **caring** option; and so on; and how to **evaluate a conclusion** on the basis of the evidence available. (Focus questions: How does the Golden Rule apply to this context? What is the balance of costs and benefits here? How can I be a good person in my current research task? How can I demonstrate that I put caring for my research respondents, and my relationships with them, before my interests in producing systems and patterns of data? How good are my skills in identifying and thinking through how my conclusions [about ethical research issues] relate to, and are supported by, my arguments?)

3. **Ethical decision making.** This involves working through a heuristic model to arrive at an optimized solution to an ethical problem. (See Section 4.6 and Figure 4.4 below).

4. **Moral action/implementation.** This is the most difficult piece of the jigsaw. It is the difference between ethical theory and moral practice. But it must be addressed, if we – Doctoral tutors and students - are to make significant progress in the teaching and learning of research ethics. (Focus questions: How can I be reasonably sure I will **act** on my ethical ideology in
the future? (See Zimbardo, 2007: 451-456). How can tutors maximize the possibility that their Doctoral students will act on their moral education in research practice when they encounter problems and dilemmas, and external pressure and conflicts about self-interest, in the future, outside of the university? [See Zimbardo, 2007: 446-451]).

In Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 of Chapter 5, I have extended these four into six core competencies in draft curriculum plans for the teaching and learning of research ethics.

3. Trustworthiness. This is the core value expounded by Bond (2004b: 10-11). How can Doctoral students be trained to want to develop trustworthiness in the eyes of their research participants? Should they want to demonstrate trustworthiness in the eyes of their tutors? And what would it look like when they had achieved it? This component would also need to be incorporated into element Red 2 (appropriate training). Here is an illustration of how I grappled with this value in Byrne (2004a):

I no longer believe that this rationalization (about withholding information) is acceptable, and I will discuss my new thinking here.

- Firstly, I do not believe it is okay to withhold the information from my participants that I am investigating some way to invalidate the proposition that their (therapy) gains resulted from a pure placebo effect; even though this research cannot be conducted without withholding this information. (See Banyard and Flanagan 2005: 4; Willig 2001: 18; McLeod 2001: 197-98; Bond 2004b: 12-14).

- Secondly, withholding the information that I am trying to invalidate the placebo explanation would tend to undermine my trustworthiness in the eyes of the participants, and as such had better not be done. (Cf: Bond, 2004b: 10-11).

4. Ethical mindfulness. This principle was expounded by Bond (2000), and further promoted by West (2002); but it was not defined by either author, except in so far as Bond (2004) thought that reading his ‘educative
principles’ would promote ethical mindfulness. However, I showed that this was not a likely result. (See Byrne, 2006a: 6-9). In Chapter 3, (Sections 3.4.1 to 3.4.5 above), I modelled how this mindful state of consciousness might be achieved, using a heuristic matrix that I constructed for my own purposes. But how could Doctoral research tutors promote it further? Here are three possibilities.

- By teaching: (1) moral reasoning (as in Baggini and Fosl, 2007; Marinoff, 2004; Paul and Elder, 2006; Thomson, 1999/2005); and (2) critical thinking (as in Bowell and Kemp, 2005; Paul and Elder, 2000; Chaffee, 1998).
- By teaching utilitarianism and deontology, in a dialectical tension, as a basis for a form of virtue ethics. (Beauchamp and Childress, 1989/1994; Seedhouse, 1988; Curren, 2007a, b). And:
- By ‘scaffolding instruction’ - (Meara, Schmidt and Day, 1996) - in which the tutor thinks aloud to show how they work through an ethical dilemma, and thus models an approach to thinking for postgraduate students.
- And by use of my heuristic matrix – in Tables 3.4 and 3.5 – or similar or adapted models that promote active approaches to being consciously ethical.

The blue ring in Figure 4.3 contains four principles that are commonly emphasized in social care research contexts.

1. **Avoid harm.** This is the number one principle to deploy in practice. If harm is avoided, then a good deal of the researcher’s aim will have been achieved. Or as stated by Bond (2004b: 12), “The avoidance of harm to research participants should be the overriding ethical concern”.

What does ‘harm’ look like? Is ‘restimulating trauma’ a form of ‘causing harm’, and if so, why did some of my Doctoral and MA student-respondents not know that? (I showed earlier in this thesis that some of my
respondents seemed to be insensitive to the problem of potentially causing harm).

Assessing the risk of harm in research projects is a core skill. I recognized that as my main problem back in 2003–4, but I had to do a lot of work to figure out how to conduct a credible “risk assessment”. Here is how I wrote about that in Byrne (2006a):

“No that I have done a substantial amount of work on the background to ethical thinking, (20th February 2006), I want to review the notes I have taken (in my pocket notebook) on the fourteen ethical problems, or issues, that I have identified with my research project idea. My intention is to list all of these problems, and then to reflect upon them, and make some kind of risk assessment of each of them.

“Initially my idea was to use Hare (1981), Bond (2004b), and my learning from the immersion process described in the previous section, to make it possible to think about these ethical issues.”

Extract from Byrne (2006a)

2. Informed consent. According to Oliver (2003: 28), “A central feature of social science research ethics is the principle that participants should be fully informed about a research project before they assent to taking part”. Informed consent is often found to be in conflict with the researcher’s urgent sense of the “absolute necessity” to collect those crucial data. In element Red 1 above, I presented an illustration of a Doctoral student resisting the idea that informed consent is more important than the urge to collect data. (Focus questions: How can the ethical researcher be taught, and learn, to put the interests of the potential research participant before their own self interest? How can we be reasonably sure that a Doctoral student will “let their respondents go” if the respondent shows signs of discomfort or distress?)

In one discussion with (X), I got the distinct impression that she would have great difficulty encouraging her research participants to leave if they feel like doing so. She is ‘hungry’ for data.

Extract from Research Journal
“The principle of informed consent arises from the subject’s right to freedom and self-determination. Being free is a condition of living in a democracy, and when restrictions and limitations are placed on that freedom they must be justified and consented to, as in research”. (Cohen et.al, 2007: 51). It would be better to collect no information at all than to collect it without consent.

3. Confidentiality. This is the least contentious issue in social care research, and, based on my recent experience, it may be the one most often highlighted by Doctoral students as the one they have looked at in their research planning. Most social care researchers, because of their professional contexts and experiences, expect to have to protect the confidentiality of any information they collect from research participants. (Focus questions: Do I have any blind spots regarding confidentiality? Do I always remember to delete identifiers; to ‘aggregate’ individuals into ‘average persons’; or to use ‘error inoculation’ by keeping the aggregate data while scrambling the individual records to make identification of individuals impossible. Cf: Cohen et.al., 2007: 65).

4. Anonymity. “The essence of anonymity is that information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity”. This can be guaranteed, for example, by returning questionnaires that carry no identifying marks, signs or details. In my own research, I made a special effort to separate returned texts from their email addresses, in such a way that, in most cases, I would not later be able to identify which participant had sent which text – apart from their submission code. However, there were a few respondents who always made it clear who they were, and I had no way of offering anonymity to them.

When research reports are not written with sufficient caution, it is sometimes possible for an astute reader to determine the identity of an institution, and/or the identity of some of the research participants. This can be harmful to the research participants, or to the host institute of the research activity. (Source: Hadjistavropoulos and Smythe, 2001: 165).
Furthermore, it is often found that third parties’ identities are not protected in qualitative research reports, (as demonstrated by Hadjistavropoulos and Smythe, 2001: 168-170). (Focus question: How can I improve the protection offered by anonymity?)

**Next is the green ring.** This ring represents the most important four questions arising out of the utilitarian perspective on moral philosophy. The utilitarian philosophy advocates the principle of trying to achieve “the greatest good of the greatest number”. (Cf: Baggini and Fosl, 2007: 56-59; Vardy and Grosch, 1999: 63-72; Beauchamp and Childress, 1989: 26-35; and Seedhouse, 1988: 103-112).

1. **Social benefit?** We cannot justify doing harm, no matter how much good we do – especially in pursuit of a postgraduate degree qualification. On the other hand, we should strive to make our research beneficial for the community in which the research is being conducted. I have tried to do this in my own research by developing some useful tools which should be helpful to Doctoral tutors and students in the School of Social Care.

   Social benefit may not always be possible. (Focus questions: What will the social benefit of the research be? Does it justify any discomfort/effort involved for the community or group being researched? Will there be any social harm? This must be avoided).

2. **Participant cost/benefit?** We must not harm the participants in any way, and we should ideally strive to help them. To understand this tension, (between doing good to others and avoiding harming them), it would be helpful to read Beauchamp and Childress (1989, or 1994), especially Chapters 1 and 2, on morality and ethical theory, and types of ethical theory. I personally found the reading and digestion of Bowell and Kemp (2005) and Thomson (1999/2005) to be particularly helpful in developing
my sensitivity to participant cost/benefit issues. (Focus questions: Will there be any benefit for the participants? Should we think in terms of projects that benefit the participants? Will there be any harm to the participants? If your conclusion is that there will not be any harm to the participants, what are the explicit premises upon which this conclusion is based? And what optimization strategy can you use to maximise participant benefit?)

3. **Researcher benefit?** Doctoral research students engage in research projects for their own benefit, to gain a postgraduate degree. In theory, this potential benefit may set up a conflict of interest between the interests of the researcher and those of the participants. In my Research Journal I wrote about one research project that I managed badly, because of my focus on my own benefit, as follows.

It was to be many years before the whole story came together in my consciousness. I had (probably) mainly been responsible for this (economic) harm, which may have had a knock-on effect in terms of harming the parents and children within that particular family. I had been so focussed on getting the work done, and the book published, and the next career step organized, that I could not see that I was a potential threat to the safety of the people I was supposed to be helping.

*Extract from Research Journal*

We have seen in Forsyth and Berger (1982), Darley and Batson (1973) and other sources that when such conflicts of interest (or pressures to complete) are investigated in psychological experiments, the self interest often causes the participants (in very high proportions) to abandon their ethical ideology and pursue their self interest. (Focus questions: Am I committed to putting the interests of the research participants before my own? What kinds of conflict of interest are likely to arise? And how should I deal with them, to protect the interests of the participants? Finally, how can I make sure that I am not harmed by the research process; that I achieve a reasonable personal benefit; and that I do this ethically?)
4. **Benefit to profession/institutions?** When Doctoral students engage in research, they often produce benefits for their profession and/or their university or other institution(s). Once again, I need to consider whether there are any conflicts of interest here. In my Research Journal I wrote:

> On a couple of occasions in the past I have run research projects where there was a strong institutional pressure to produce a particular result, in terms of getting funding or maintaining the organization’s reputation, where this goal became all important, and some questionable behaviour occurred that I now see as highly regrettable.

Extract from Research Journal

(Focus questions: How will my profession benefit? What about the research institute/university, or other institutions? Are there any conflicts of interest here? Is there pressure for questionable, or outright unethical behaviour? And could the profession or institutions be harmed? What should I look out for?)

**Next is the orange ring**, which is based on deontology, or (Kant’s) duty ethics.

1. **The Golden Rule.** The Golden Rule – that we should not do anything to others that we would not be happy to have them do to us – goes back to at least ancient China, where it was enunciated by Confucius. In the modern world, it is mainly associated with the duty ethics theory of Immanuel Kant (in the *Critique of Practical Reason* – Kant, 2004. See also Part Three of the Preliminary Note, in Kant, 1790/1987). (Of course, the Christians also employed the Golden Rule). You can find a brief overview of this element in pages 100-107 of Blackburn (2003). (Focus questions: Would I be happy to be subjected to my own research instruments/interviews/etc? How exactly would I like to be treated as a research participant? Have I designed my research so as to treat others as I would wish to be treated? If not, do not proceed!)
2. Participants as “ends” in themselves, and not just “means to an end”. According to Oliver (2003), “If we wish to attain a particular goal in life, then we may refer to that as an ‘end’. In order to achieve the ‘end’, we will almost certainly have to follow certain procedures or take certain action. That is referred to as the ‘means’…”. Research participants should not be seen as means to an end; “a disposable bridge” over which we cross in order to get to our destination of collecting useful data. They are not to be thought of as “tools” of our trade. Treating participants as only means to an end is to ‘objectify them’; to turn them into things to be used; to deny their essential equality with the researcher; and to deny them the same consideration and concern as the researcher. (Focus questions: How well are my research participants treated? Or how well will they be treated, as a matter of committed principle? How much concern is, or will be, shown for their welfare? How is this achieved?)

3. Duty of care. The duty of care can be seen to come out of one of several aspects of Kant’s Categorical Imperative, and out of the principle of not treating people as means to an end only. The duty of care is a reciprocal obligation to take care of each other, although Kant did not formulate it as “an unrestricted obligation to others”. Nevertheless, if we enter into a relationship with somebody, for the express purpose of conducting research, we have a duty to care for that person for the duration of that relationship. This overlaps Gilligan’s (1982/1993) ethic of care – which is predicated on the importance of ‘relationship’ and ‘responsibility’. (See Appendix One, attached, for a fuller consideration of the feminist ethic of care). (Focus questions: How do I propose to manage my relationships with my research participants? Do I tend to put systems and data before empathy and the emotional aspects of relationship? [Cf, Baron-Cohen, 2004] How will I take care of my relationships with my research participants [or co-researchers]? And how will I feel about ‘me’ if I fail to care for them properly/adequately?)
4. Universability. This principle is another expression of the *Categorical Imperative*, which says that any maxim that I cannot will to be universalised, and thus to come to affect my own life, must not be applied to the life of another. The essential implication is that I must not design any research project to which I would not be willing to be subjected in all its obvious implications. But more than that, I must not design any research project which, if universalized, would be unworkable socially. For example, if I fail to act in an honest way, then I am implying that anybody and everybody else may also relate to me in a dishonest way. This would not work, socially, as it would destroy the *institution of truth telling*, upon which trust in others is based. (Focus questions: Would it work for the world if everybody, beginning today, began to relate to each other as I am proposing to relate to my research participants; or to do the kinds of things I am proposing to do to [or with] my research participants? If not, then I must not proceed).

These four elements – (Orange 1-4) above – could be integrated using the following matrix; which asks, What must I do, and what must I not do, based on my code of research ethics and my understanding of duty ethics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Based on my code of research ethics…</th>
<th>Based on my understanding of duty ethics…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What I Must Do…</strong></td>
<td>Box 1…</td>
<td>Box 2…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What I Must Not Do…</strong></td>
<td>Box 3…</td>
<td>Box 4…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1. Matrix for distinguishing what I must do from what I must not do

I should, of course, be guided by the contents of Boxes 1 and 2 – informed by a code of ethics, such as BASW (2001), BERA (2004), or Bond (2004a, b); and a philosophical combination of deontology, utilitarianism and virtue ethics, as in Beauchamp and Childress (1989) and Seedhouse (1988) – which could be modified by consideration from Appendix One. And I should desist from doing anything that falls within either Box 3 or Box
4. Further clarification of these ‘problem spaces’, in Boxes 1 – 4, can be worked out by working through the matrices in Appendix One, attached.

And finally we come to the outer, yellow ring; which contains eight topic areas, or elements, beginning with consideration of a code of professional ethics, and ending with the importance of writing about ethics and morality.

1. Professional code of ethics. It is my contention that codes of ethics are not widely read, because they are relatively boring documents. Or, as Bond (2000: 44) writes: “Codes are written in fairly general and abstract terms in order to condense the experience and thinking behind them and to make them as widely applicable to a variety of circumstances as possible. This means that codes are unlikely to be read for their literary quality or narrative pull. Unfortunately, this discourages some people from reading them in advance of an ethical dilemma”. My own process of learning a code of research ethics was described in Byrne (2004a), and included the construction of a large (5 feet by 3 feet), wall-mounted matrix consisting of 29 principles from McLeod (1994/2003), on the x- (or horizontal) -axis, and 91 principles from Bond (2004b), on the y- (or vertical) -axis. Here is a brief description of a small part of my process of learning this material:

I have now reviewed all of the principles on both axes a total of 12 times since constructing the matrix. I also reviewed both sets of principles several times prior to that operation, in reading them, typing them, and reviewing them. We could therefore assume that I am now quite familiar with these principles. However, as a person with an MA in Education, which affords me some understanding of how people learn, I have my own doubts about that. So I intend to continue this immersion process. This is about over-learning the principles of ethical functioning in qualitative research. I have already had a very thorough education and training in general moral principles; but I have not so far had a sufficiently deep education in the specific ethical principles of qualitative research.

Extract from Byrne (2004).

Not alone are research ethics codes relatively boring, and difficult to read; they are even more difficult to memorize and recall. For this reason I
have no hesitation in recommending that codes of research ethics should be digested as a group activity. Individuals should read specific parts of the code for key points; and a new, group-code should be assembled using discussion in pairs, fours, and small group presentations to a plenary session. The derived group codes should then be taken away and converted into personal codes of ethics, and those personal codes should be written about, and submitted for assessment and grading.

2. **Compare moral principles.** In moral philosophy, “principles” are the building blocks from which ethical theories are constructed. Principles are more general than “ethical rules”, from which most codes of ethics are constructed. (Cf: Beauchamp and Childress, 1989: 6-7). Principles are less general than theories, and more general than rules.

This classification also exists more widely, in educational theory, in that philosophy in general is seen as comprising theories; and theories are comprised of principles/conceptual systems; while principles are made up of concepts. (See Novak and Gowin, 1984: 2-3).

An experience of comparing moral principles is essential to the development of moral reasoning capability. If we don’t know the principles, we cannot know from where the rules have been derived; and we are obliged to follow rules unthinkingly. (See also Beauchamp and Childress, 1989, 1994).

3. **Moral philosophy and Critical thinking.** The history of moral philosophy goes back at least two thousand five hundred years. (Baggini and Fosl, 2007). The most important phases, from my perspective, were the ancient Greeks (especially Aristotle’s virtue ethics); then Kant’s rational system (and especially his ‘categorical imperative’, which is the foundation of his ‘duty ethics’ or ‘deontology’); and the utilitarians (Hume, Bentham and Mill), who gave us the concept of “the greatest good of the greatest number”.

The Christians came between the Greeks and Kant, but their justifications for moral behaviour are all predicated upon a belief, not just in
gods, or a god, but in “their God”. So that cannot easily be accommodated within a secular education system.

There are at least ten systems of moral philosophy in current vogue. (Cf: Singer, 1993; Marinoff, 2004: 54-82; Vardy and Grosch, 1999: 6-142). However, as I said above, “The ‘middle way’ between the extremes could be to restrict our education to two moral philosophies – deontology (or duty ethics, e.g. Kant) and utilitarianism (or consequentialism e.g. J.S. Mill); instead of the six, eight or ten moral philosophies recommended…” by others. And the promotion of those two moral philosophies could be done according to Aristotle’s approach, which involves the training of character and the training of intellectual [or critical thinking] skills. Cf: Curren (2007a, b); Urmson and Rée, (1991: 30); Bowell and Kemp (2005); Thomson (1999/2005); Paul and Elder (2000).

Furthermore, it was not until I had developed a good grasp of moral philosophy, as described above, that I began to feel confident that I could think about research ethics, and conduct an ethics risk assessment on my own research proposal. At the start of the Doctoral programme I had difficulty thinking about morality to any significant degree (though I am a ‘moral citizen’):

‘About a year ago (probably March/April 2004) I had a strong emotional reaction against the idea that I should study ethics at all. I saw myself as ‘a moral person’; and ‘why would a moral person need to be taught how to be moral?’ It must have been six months before I realized that, actually, I didn’t have the slightest idea of how to think about moral issues, as opposed to merely emoting! That was the origin of my research journey which has now resulted in (Byrne, 2006a).’

Extract from Research Journal

And at that point I had to abandon my original research proposal, because it turned out that, once I could conduct a reliable risk assessment, my research proposal proved to involve some risk of harm to my research participants. (See Byrne, 2006a; 2007a).

Let us now look at ‘critical thinking’, before moving on to the next element. How do I define critical thinking? According to the Foundation for
Critical Thinking, “Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: (these include) clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness”. (See also Curren, 2007a, b).

One approach to teaching critical thinking is exemplified in Bowell and Kemp (2005) which focuses on logical analysis; while another is exemplified in Paul and Elder (2006) and Thomson (1999/2005) which focuses on ethical reasoning. Both of these approaches have been helpful to me in dealing with the ethics of my research journey, and both could be useful to Doctoral students in general. Indeed, some of the arguments in this thesis would not have emerged so clearly and unambiguously if I had not studied Bowell and Kemp (2005). However, the approaches to critical thinking mentioned above probably work best in combination with a good grounding in moral philosophies, such as deontology and utilitarianism, and a commitment to being a virtuous researcher. This is so because, just as in science we reason about evidence and data, in ethics and morality we reason about duties, consequences, relationships, care and virtues, in the main.

4. Consultations. According to reports that I have received from some of my research respondents, it seems to be fairly common for Doctoral students in the School of Social care to consult their supervisor/tutor when they get stuck with ethical problems in their research, and to expect that their supervisor will resolve the problem for them. The first part of this approach is commendable. Consult your tutor when you run into difficult ethical dilemmas. But the second part seems to be self defeating. If we rely on our Doctoral tutors to solve our ethical dilemmas for us, how will we proceed when we move beyond the university to conduct more autonomous research?
It also seems from those reports that these same Doctoral tutors and supervisors tend to adopt a particular kind of coaching approach during those consultations. As I have been informed about it, it seems this coaching approach involves helping Doctoral students to know what to think, rather than how to think. Doctoral tutors and students need to move away from this approach towards a system of challenging support, in which the tutor presents the student with questions rather than answers.

5. The literature on research ethics. I have begun the process of specifying an ideal reading list on research ethics, for Doctoral students, in Chapter Two, Section 2.5.2 above. Focus questions: How could research tutors decide which of those titles to allocate for set readings? How can those readings be digested and assessed in debates, discussions and extended writing work? How could Doctoral students best select a range of those sources for their own self-education? Which of those sources do you need to consult first?

6. Conducting Ethics Risk Assessments. The requirement to conduct an ethics risk assessment on our research proposals appears in Bond (2004a: 7; and 2004b: 11). A risk assessment is a rational review of a research proposal to evaluate the cost/benefit ratio. (See Cohen et.al., 2007: 51; and Beauchamp and Childress, 1989: 234-236). How can Doctoral students learn to conduct ethics risk assessments? Do they need to work on simulations, role plays or case studies, of reasonable levels of difficulty, given that their own research plans may be too simple and safe to represent stimulating ethical challenges? (See Eisen and Parker, 2004; Bebeau, 2002; and Sponholz, 2000). One example of an ethics risk assessment can be found in Byrne (2006a), section 7; and also in Section 4.6 below. Beauchamp and Childress’s (1989: 234) present a risk assessment matrix, which could be helpful, combined with other ideas from this thesis, such as the matrices in Appendix One, below. (Focus questions: How can tutors further develop the process of teaching ethical
risk assessment? Is it all down to reading, writing and debating/discussing, or can tutors make didactic inputs on this subject? What about ‘scaffolded instruction’? (Meara et al., 1996). What is the first step you need to take to assure yourself you understand how to conduct an adequate risk assessment on a research proposal?)

7. Debating Research Ethics and Morality. Debating and discussing are ways of getting Doctoral students to surface their values, to look at them, to consider their adequacy and applicability in specific contexts; to refine them; to learn from reflection; to learn from each other and to grow a body of knowledge by a process of hearing it, reflecting on it, forming conclusions about it, trying those conclusions out on others, and getting feedback from them in the form of suggested modifications or amendments. In my Research Journal I noted some of the limitations that I found in the debating skills of my research participants, as follows.

The (27th March) focus group event was supposed to run like a debate of the issues, and although I did not try to run the formal debate I had planned, I still tried to get them (the two Doctoral and two MA student participants) to debate the six ethical dilemmas to see how their moral thinking worked in practice. However, I saw very little evidence of a developed sense of how to debate or discuss issues in a group. It was very much four individuals clashing, mis-communicating, misunderstanding, and generally failing to develop coherent, verbal arguments.

In (well run) debates and discussions, there is also the strong probability that Doctoral students will hear arguments that contradict their normal way of seeing a moral issue, and they may then have a problem of ‘cognitive dissonance’ with which they must struggle, in order to make sense of the contradiction. (Cf: Festinger, 1957). Out of that struggle can come improved understanding. Also out of this social process can come deeply ingrained, socially-induced moral intuitions that can guide our gut reactions to research ethics dilemmas in the future. (Cf: Haidt, 2001).
8. Writing about Research Ethics and Related Moral Issues. Writing focuses our attention; clarifies our thinking; refines our conceptions; and extends our working memory, as well as helping to get material reliably into long term memory. (Cf: Phillips and Pugh, 2005; Murray, 2002; Wellington, et al., 2005).

Writing as a general academic study strategy is important because of the small size of our ‘working memory’ (Kahney, 1993). When we (humans) write about a particular concern, e.g. the development of some ideas about research ethics, we are effectively expanding our working memory, by placing some concepts and considerations on paper. Or, as Kahney (1993: 43) expresses it: “Although working memory capacity limits performance, the limitation is considered to present only very general constraints on problem-solving in everyday life because a solver may extend the capacity of short-term memory by writing and referring to notes or intermediate results during the course of problem solving”. My Research Journal contains the following relevant comment.

Because I found it impossible to run an ethics risk assessment on my (original) research proposal, I had to go away and read widely, and write a 20,000 word paper – Byrne (2006a) – in order to make sense of this aspect of Doctoral research thinking skills…

However, it is unlikely that it would be necessary to write such an extensive piece in order to make adequate progress in most cases; and I have suggested above that 6,500 words on ethical research issues, written over three years, would probably be a reasonable target.

...END OF LEGEND.

4.5.2. Reflection on the legend

Once the (Doctoral tutor or student) reader has surveyed and reflected upon the entire legend above, several possibilities are then indicated.

The first possibilities follow on from the activity interested readers were asked to do at the beginning of this heuristic; which included the selection
of five elements, etc. The following comments are addressed to those interested readers, to illustrate for the general reader how this heuristic could be used.

1. Now you have completed the first reading of the legend, and noted down anything that struck you as being relevant, you have a personally meaningful list of ideas to take forward.

2. In reviewing your list, do any action items suggest themselves? If so, they need to go on your action list for further work/enquiry.

3. Whether or not action items suggest themselves, you might also want to ask yourself: How am I going to apply these ideas to my ethical research concerns and goals?

4. When you have worked this list into your life, you might want to go back and re-read the legend, with some new questions in mind, and mine it for the next tranche of ideas that are relevant to your priorities.

Here are some additional ideas that interested readers might find helpful or useful:

1. Discuss the legend with a colleague or friend.

2. Write a summarized form of the heuristic for personal research purposes.

3. Apply what you have learned - from your first reading of the heuristic - to your professional research work and see what results you get.

4. Plan a talk on the subject of the content of this heuristic.

5. Write a refutation, or improved model, and promulgate it.

6. Send your queries/questions/comments to Jim Byrne at abc4rebt@aol.com.

7. Keep reviewing this heuristic every month or two until it is ‘worn out’ for you, or until you have incorporated its essence into your professional practice.
8. When you are ready to move on, review the competence based draft curriculum plans in Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 in Chapter 5 below.

The worst thing for a reader to do with this heuristic would be to read it once, fail to apply it, and assume they now know something significant about research ethics. (Cf: Eysenck and Keane, 2000: 421, on the Power Law of Practice. Practice makes perfect; thus repetition and review, and active processing, is essential to learning of academic and other cognitive material). The human mind does not seem to favour learning from a single reading. It requires repetitive engagement with new material, over and over again, to get it reliably into long-term memory. (Cf: Buzan, 1973; Reece and Walker, 1997: 19-20). Reliable learning and recall require active engagement with the text; and that seems to remain true no matter what “level” of academic competence the learner seems to have achieved. (Cf: Brown and Atkins, 1988: 173-177; Greene, 1987: 147; and Eysenck and Keane: 412-426)48.

4.6. My new ethical decision making model

The ethical research thinking heuristic shown in Figure 4.3 above – and elaborated in the legend which I have just reviewed - seems to be a sound basis for a good level of self-education in ethical research competence, for Doctoral tutors and students, and others interested in ensuring that their research is reliably ethical.

To make good use of my thinking heuristic it would be necessary to work through it several times, applying the recommendations for reading and action. However, at the end of that process, it seems helpful if a more compact model could be used for evaluating individual ethical dilemmas.

48 Greene (1987: 147) says: “One point on which there seems to be general agreement is that, the more problem-solving schemas are stored in long-term memory, the less likely it is that working memory will become overloaded. If people learn rules for solving logical problems, these can be run off without using up too much limited processing capacity”. And Eysenck and Keane (2000: 420) clarify the following facts: “Problem-solving expertise relies on acquiring knowledge structures and strategies appropriate to a particular problems situation. … “Experts’ superiority is based on knowledge, not on some basic capacity. • Experts become expert through extensive practice”.
For that reason, I went back to the relevant literature, including University of South Florida (2003); Bond (2000; 2004a, b); Gabriel and Casemore (2003, 2006); McLeod (1994/2003); Seedhouse (1988); Beauchamp and Childress (1989/1994); Baggini and Fosl (2007); Hoffman (2000); Robson, Cook, et al. (2000); Welfel (1998) and Cottone and Claus (2000); and began to develop a new process; following on from the work I did on decision-making models in Section 2.2.3 of Chapter 2, above. This is shown in Figure 4.4 below.
See reverse of this page for

Figure 4.4. My new model for ethical decision making in qualitative research
220.

A. Doubt or concern caused by an ethical dilemma

B. Consult code of research ethics, organization policy, and the law. Does this help?

C. Yes

D. Apply code, rule or law to resolve the problem. … End of dilemma.

E. No.

Box 1: Describe the situation:
What is the problem? Is it about people or processes; events or objects? How many different perspectives are possible? Does it seem to be against your duty? Or are some of the apparent consequences unacceptable? Does it contradict some virtue(s)/value(s)? “Pull the problem apart” into its component elements. Write about it.

Box 2: Identify and apply relevant values:
What are the relevant values specified in your code of research ethics, if any? For examples: Confidentiality; Informed consent; Right to withdraw; Human rights; Safety of participants; Ethical conscientiousness; Trustworthiness; Enhancing the quality of professional knowledge; Dealing with data and publication in ethical ways; etc. (Prudence, integrity, respectfulness and benevolence: Meara et al, 1996).

Box 3: Identify and apply moral principles:
For examples: Respect the autonomy of research participants; Avoid harm to participants and third parties; Behave honestly; Treat people fairly; Respect yourself; Promote social benefit; Maintain the integrity of the research process; and so on. (Beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, fidelity: Bond, 2000; Gabriel and Casemore, 2006).

Box 4: Weigh up the pros and cons, and make a decision.
1. Proceed or do not proceed?
2. If multiple options seem possible, what are they? (Brainstorm them: Gabriel, 2005: 170).
3. What are the consequences of each option, relative to the values and principles below?
5. Proceed to Box 5, or back to Box 1.

Box 5: Appraise the decision:
Q1: Would this decision survive being publicized to a broad audience of potential critics? (Bradley Rawlins’ model in University of South Florida, 2003).
Q2: Does the decision seem ‘intuitively’ (in your ‘guts’) to promote what seems to be “good” over what seems to be “bad”? (Hoffman, 2000; and Robson et al. 2000)
Q3: Universability: Could this course of action be rightly recommended to all others in similar circumstances? (Bond, 2000: 228).
Q4: Have your supervisor and peers approved this decision? (Welfel, 1998; Cottone and Claus, 2000).
Q5. Is the decision “just” — meaning “fair” to all parties? (Seedhouse, 1988; Baggini and Fosl, 2007).

6(a) If the answers to Questions 1 to 5 are all “Yes”, then you can implement your decision knowing it to be ethical. … End of decision making.

6(b) If the answer to ANY of the 5 Questions is ‘No’, then you need to re-work your process of thinking in boxes 1 to 4. (Do not proceed).

Adapted, with significant modifications, from University of South Florida (2003). © Jim Byrne, 2008
See above for Figure 4.4. My new model for ethical decision making in qualitative research

I developed my new model for ethical decision making in my Research Journal, between 9th and 14th May 2008, and then tested it by applying it to the original fourteen potential issues and dilemmas discussed in Byrne (2006a, 2007a).

4.6.1. Applying the ethical decision-making model

In 2006, while running an ethical risk assessment on my original research proposal, I found two reasons not to proceed with my research plan. (See Byrne, 2006a; 2007a). In my Research Journal, I ran a new ethical risk assessment, using the model shown in Figure 4.4 above. Upon reflection, it seems I have become more ethically sensitive between the time of completing my first and second risk assessments on my original research proposal, because my number of “Do not proceed” decisions has increased from two to six.

Here is an illustration of how I tested this heuristic in practice, on one of my original fourteen potential ethical dilemmas:

Issue 9. An additional problem, when we get beyond the interviews with research participants, concerns the (psychological) effects on participants and third parties of what we write in our reports. “Smythe and Murray (…) discussed one pervasive risk factor in narrative research in terms of ‘the subtle and often unforeseeable consequences of writing about people’s lives’ (p. 321)”, according to Hadjistavropoulos and Smythe, (2001: 165).

a. Box 1. Describe the situation. I am writing about the teaching and learning of ethical research competence in a particular university department. Although I have anonymized the university and
department, the tutors and students involved know who they are, and what I am saying about them.

b. **Box 2. Identify and apply relevant values.** I am happy that I have covered all the values listed in Box 2 of this decision making model. The value that I was most focused on was being respectful. The moral distinction that I am most concerned about is one mentioned by Seedhouse (1988), which is “dwarfing”, or damaging the self-concept of one or more of the tutors or postgraduate students involved in my research. I have been careful in my writing to avoid this outcome.

c. **Box 3. Identify and apply moral principles.** The principles I am most concerned about are these: Avoid harm to participants and third parties; and: Treat people fairly. I think I have succeeded in doing that in my writings.

d. **Box 4. Weigh up the pros and cons, and make a decision.** Proceed or do not proceed? I can proceed in the knowledge that I have written about my research in a respectful, prudent and balanced way. (There are not, in my view, multiple possible outcomes; just proceed or do not proceed – so brainstorming solutions is not appropriate).

e. **Box 5. Appraise the decision.** 

   Q1. *Would this decision survive being publicized…?* I cannot imagine any critic being able to fault my decision to proceed to publish my writings on my doctoral research activities.

   Q2. *Does the decision seem intuitively to promote what seems to be good…?* I think it does. I am writing about an anonymized institution, in measured tones, demonstrating respectfulness and prudence.

   Q3. *Could this course of action be universalized…?* So that Tutor T3 could take the same approach towards an evaluation of my work? Certainly. That eventuality would not cause any difficulty for me. And what if some of my peers wrote about my
I also found my model for ethical decision making to be easy to use, and helpful in focusing my mind. I did not run into any difficulties in using it, and have not come up with any changes that I would want to make to it (apart from a few minor changes to Box 5, arising out of my reading, e.g. Cottone and Claus, 2000; Robson et al. 2000). I have thus “field tested” my model shown in Figure 4.4 above, with the result that it seems to promote greater ethical sensitivity, and to facilitate defensible and viable ethical judgments about qualitative research risks. I will therefore recommend this ethical research decision making model to the Doctoral tutors and students.

4.6.2. Feedback from Doctoral students on the use of this model

A few Doctoral students have already offered positive feedback on the use of this heuristic and my twenty-four element heuristic above. Here are some examples:

3rd July 2008

From Fred. "I read the model you attached and later, when an opportunity arose, I applied it to an ethical consideration. It is very clear to follow - maybe the 1-4 boxes could have a coloured background to differentiate them. I would call it an ethical policy and by keeping it on the
cover of my research folder it would keep me mindful to be ethical and a good reference point. The content covers all that is necessary”.

**From John.** "What useful material. Can I give you feedback after the summer because that will give me time to try out the model? I have changed my mind about research ethics coming at the beginning of the course because it is only at the end of the second year when I have begun interviewing that I am so much more conscious of things like informed consent. Before that ethics seemed an academic concept and it is only now that its relevance is striking home .... The (professional body's) ethical code informs my (professional) practice, but the research ethics (approach that you have talked about) is only now informing my research. Hope this makes sense. My eureka moment has only just arrived".

**From Joyce.** "I really like your model and found it very helpful".

A few days later, I got the following feedback from Respondent CJG, this time commenting on the multi-coloured Ethical Research Thinking Heuristic shown above, in Figure 4.3.

“I have had a go at your ‘Ethical Thinking Heuristic model’ and found it very interesting.

“I worked my way up through the first three layers in a progressive manner and found that the questions it posed me were useful….. And indeed would have been very useful when I was considering the structure of my research.

“I found it useful now as I am at a sticky patch with my action research group and what to do could easily become manipulative on my part to gather in the data. It has made me go back to the question about ‘What is for the good of the group participants?’ What course of action will cause least harm? What is harm anyway? Is some psychological disturbance OK as they will grow personally through that? They may also become better practitioners etc etc.”

“How do I apply the universality principle here?”
“When I came to the outer layer of your diagram I felt there was a ‘step change’.

“This is the stuff of the backbone of everything else. Knowing and reading some of this would put the principles in one’s head before the actual research question is attempted.

“I do think this is the place for participatory learning… discussion, writing, case study etc in groups.

“All of us have to choose our own ethical principles in the end, but without some structure to think through them it is too difficult to really do this. I think what most do is, if they think at all, is to take one or two basic principles ‘off the shelf’ and apply these as they stand.

“So these are my thoughts. I have attached my workings through the first three layers … just in a few areas. I am encouraged to go back now and ask myself some more questions………..”

C.J.G.

And finally, (1) Tutor T3 (in the presence of Tutor T4) said she had “learned a lot” from reading about my models and theories; and Tutor T4 did not resist or object to that view. And (2) I did not receive any negative comments from any of my reviewers.

4.7. Chapter summary

The main body of this chapter was divided into two parts. Part One outlined my goals and key learning points, while Part Two presented a focussed reflection upon, and discussion of, the most important insights from my action research project.

Part One reviewed the five phases of my action research project, resulting in the development of three arguments, seven conclusions, and a range of potential recommendations.
My conclusion to Phase One was this: From these results I conclude that a substantial proportion of the Doctoral students in the School of Social Care agree that there is a need for a significant educational input on moral philosophy and research ethics to be incorporated into the Doctoral programme in the future.

Phase Five of my action research inquiry provided further support for the conclusions from Phase One, as follows.

In Phase Five, two arguments were advanced, the conclusions of which were as follows.

**Conclusion to Argument One.** Most of my Doctoral student respondents found the teaching of research ethics in the School of Social Care to be too limited and insufficient for their needs.

**Conclusion to Argument Two.** Most of my Doctoral student respondents did not learn research ethics from formal educational inputs by their tutors in the School of Social Care (SSC).

In Part Two of this chapter, I used four questions – about the seriousness of the problem and how it could be resolved – to focus my discussion. That resulted in my argument that there are curriculum changes that could resolve this problem, by encouraging more reading of moral philosophy and ethical codes; more discussion and debating of research ethics issues; writing at much greater length, and more often, on this topic; and some other changes. (Part of my resolution of the problem is to advocate the use of my ethical research thinking heuristic by Doctoral tutors and students to educate themselves in the subject of research ethics).

I went on to present a formal argument about the teaching and learning of research ethics in the School of Social Care, for consideration by the Doctoral tutors, the conclusion of which was as follows:
**Conclusion to my Final Summative Argument.** There is strong evidence in my research texts of a substantial problem with the teaching and learning of research ethics in the School of Social Care. Most Doctoral students I consulted attest to wanting and needing an expanded and deepened teaching/learning programme in research ethics.

It was also interesting to find evidence in the literature from Section 2.4 that this problem of under-education of Doctoral students, as well as MA and undergraduate students, in the subject of research ethics, may occur in many other universities around the world. (See in particular: Handelsman, 1986; Friedman, 1990; Finn, 1999; Swazey and Bird, 1997; Eisen and Berry, 2002; Eisen and Parker, 2004).

Then, based on the fact that the ESRC is moving towards pressing for more rigorous and extensive training in research ethics – as described in Bond (2004a), SATSU, (2003, 2004a, b, c) and ESRC (2006/2008) – and that the Doctoral tutors probably want to retain control of their own curricula, I concluded that, logically, the Doctoral tutors in the School of Social Care should implement a process of curriculum change to expand and deepen the teaching of ethical research competence to their Doctoral students.

This led on to a presentation of my ethical research thinking heuristic, in Figure 4.3 above, which I then fully elaborated in the attached legend.

And finally I outlined my new ethical research decision-making model, in Figure 4.4, and described how I had field tested it.

In the next chapter I will present a summary of, and key conclusions from, the whole of my thesis; plus a couple of competence based curriculum models for the teaching and learning of research ethics, based on a range of professional skills and underpinning knowledge.
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CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Summary

5.1.1. Origins of my research idea

My research idea arose out of my own practical experience of trying to think about research ethics risk assessments in the absence of substantial teaching/learning experiences in that domain of knowledge. Research ethics expertise (on the pattern of all professional expertise) is based on specific research ethics knowledge, and practice in applying it, as described in Greene (1987) and Eysenck and Keane (2000).

My discovery of the importance of moral philosophy to research ethical thinking came out of my own practical learning journey, described in Byrne (2006a, and 2007a). It was then confirmed by some sources in my later literature review, including Beauchamp and Childress (1989), Seedhouse (1988), Meara et al. (1996), Bond (2000), Eisen and Parker (2004).

My original working hypothesis – that other Doctoral students (including those at the University of Minerva) would have similar problems and difficulties to my own, when they encountered the need to think through an ethics risk assessment – was confirmed by my Doctoral research participants, in their answers to my questions, and in some informal conversations.

That hypothesis led on to my research questions, which evolved slowly at first, and eventually came out as follows (and brief answers have been added pending presentation of the fuller conclusions in the next section).

6. How is the subject of research ethics taught at the University of Minerva? My research results in Chapter 4 support the conclusion that there is very little research ethics teaching going on in the School of Social Care at the University of Minerva. The PhD route, but not the Professional Doctorate, has a three hour lecture each year. Occasional references are made to research ethics in seminars from time to time, sometimes referring students to their code of research ethics. There seems to be a reliance on
coaching in one-to-one tutorials to pick up problems with research ethical issues.

7. **How well is research ethics taught at the University of Minerva?** My respondents considered the bits of teaching that occasionally occur to be too limited and insufficient for their needs.

8. **What’s missing (based on the answers to questions 1 and 2 above), and what could be improved?** Active digestion of a code of research ethics in groups; reading significant texts; and writing at length on the subject of moral philosophy and research ethical case studies;

9. **How do postgraduate students at the University of Minerva try to learn research ethics?** Mostly not from their tutors; but sometimes by ad hoc reflection on experience; sometimes by consulting their tutors with individual problems; and limited reading.

10. **Is that approach (described in the answer to question 4) effective, or could it be improved?** There is strong evidence in my research texts of a substantial problem with the teaching and learning of research ethics in the School of Social Care. Significant changes are required to the teaching and learning of research ethics in the School of Social Care.

Those brief answers to my research questions came out of various elements of my five action research phases, which will be explored in more detail in the next section.

5.1.2. **Thesis structure and conclusions**

In this thesis I have presented the five phases of my action research project, and the outcomes from those phases. In Chapter 1 the phases were briefly defined. (See Table 1.1). In Chapter 2, my literature review was structured according to the temporal line of the five phases. In Chapter 3, Phases 1 to 5 of my research were presented, showing the
methods/procedures used. (See Table 3.2). In Chapter 4, my key learning points from each phase were listed along the time line of the five phases.

In Phase Five, two arguments were advanced, the conclusions of which were as follows.

**Conclusion to Argument One.** Most of my Doctoral student respondents found the teaching of research ethics in the School of Social Care to be too limited and insufficient for their needs.

**Conclusion to Argument Two.** Most of my Doctoral student respondents did not learn research ethics from formal educational inputs by their tutors in the School of Social Care (SSC).

I went on to present a formal argument about the teaching and learning of research ethics in the School of Social Care, for consideration by the Doctoral tutors, the conclusion of which was as follows:

**Conclusion to my Final Summative Argument.** There is strong evidence in my research texts of a substantial problem with the teaching and learning of research ethics in the School of Social Care. Most Doctoral students I consulted attest to wanting and needing an expanded and deepened teaching/learning programme in research ethics.

Some elements of the literature from Section 2.4 above support the conclusion that the problem of under-education of research students, in the subject of research ethics, occurs in some other universities, in the UK, the USA and Germany, at the very least. (See in particular: Handelsman, 1986; Friedman, 1990; Finn, 1999; Swazey and Bird, 1997; Eisen and Berry, 2002; Eisen and Parker, 2004; Sponholz, 2000; Anestidou, 2002). In particular, Roberts et al. (2005) emphasize that there is not currently an empirically validated method of preparing professional researchers, across the professions, to attain *the skills needed to assess the ethical aspects of their research proposals and projects.*
Then, based on the fact that the ESRC is pressing for more rigorous and extensive regulation, or governance, of research ethics – as described in Bond (2004a) and SATSU, (2003, 2004a, b, c); and that increased pressure for more research ethics training may be further back in the same pipeline (cf: ESRC, 2006/2008: 14); and that the Doctoral tutors probably want to retain control of their own curricula; I concluded that - logically, politically and practically - the Doctoral tutors in the School of Social Care should implement a process of curriculum change to expand and deepen the teaching of ethical research competence to their Doctoral students.

This led on to a presentation of my ethical research thinking heuristic, in Figure 4.3 above, which I then fully elaborated in the attached legend. This was primarily designed to help Doctoral tutors to educate themselves in ethical research competence. And finally I outlined my new ethical research decision-making model, in Figure 4.4, and described how I had field tested it. That model will be helpful for both Doctoral tutors and students.

5.2. Problems and recommendations

The main problems that I found with the research ethics component of the Doctoral programme in the School of Social Care were:

(a) the narrowness of the reading undertaken;

(b) the lack of a debating culture;

(c) the lack of a strand of ‘critical thinking’;

(d) the lack of a teaching input on moral philosophy as related to research ethics;

(e) the lack of opportunity to write at length on research ethics;

49 These insights were gleaned from participant observation activities, questionnaires and face to face encounters.

50 375 words in the research proposal, and a few hundred words in the methodology chapter of the thesis, are just about enough to hide what I don’t know, rather than to explore what I need to learn.
(f) the fact that ethical research competence is not assessed during the course of the early years of the programme; and:

(g) the fact that there is no explicit or overt attempt to inculcate good habits of ethical thinking from an early stage, which could form the basis of reliable moral intuitions at a later date. (Cf: Curren, 2007a: 507-509; Chaffee, 1998: 335-337; Haidt, 2001: 818, 822-827).

Most of those shortcomings were addressed to some extent in the construction of my ethical research thinking heuristic, as shown in Chapter 4, above. I developed that heuristic, for use by Doctoral tutors initially, because, having reviewed Moon, Murphy and Raynor (1989), and especially Elmore (1989), I decided it was unwise to try to bring about curriculum changes. Instead, I decided to suggest the use of a thinking heuristic which could be used by Doctoral tutors if they wished to explore the possibility of bringing about changes in their own curriculum. (This is justified on the basis of (a) Eisen and Parker’s [2004] statement that the current generation of researchers is not qualified to train the next generation; and: (b) my own conclusion to Argument One, which was that “…most of my Doctoral student respondents found the teaching of research ethics in the School of Social Care to be too limited and insufficient for their needs.”). To fully comprehend this area of work, Doctoral tutors could benefit from reading and assessing the content of my ethical research thinking heuristic, in Chapter 4 above.

5.2.1. Recommendations for tutors

Arising out of the weaknesses listed in sub-paragraph 5.2(a) to (g) above, plus the insight from Eisen and Parker (2004: 693-694) that current researcher tutors have not been trained as ethical researchers, I would recommend that the Doctoral tutors in the School of Social Care use the kaizen approach, of change in small, easy steps, to produce two phases of change. The first phase would be modest changes that are immediately practicable. The second phase would be much bigger changes that require time to plan, pilot, amend and fully implement.
Tutors who have considerable experience of working with groups in a participative and facilitative way will have no problem taking this agenda forward in their own way, and I would not want to patronize them with detailed guidance. However, less experienced tutors, or those who have traditionally worked in more didactic ways, may need a more explicit guide to relevant teaching tasks, and that is what I shall present next. I will do that by presenting two phases of potential curriculum change.

**Phase 1: Immediately practicable changes:** Tutors who recognize that they need some explicit guidance should proceed as follows:

(a) Use the heuristic model and legend in Chapter 4 above to teach themselves how to be (more) competent teachers of research ethics.

(b) Apply the ethical research decision making model - (which is also presented in Chapter 4 above) - to practical research dilemmas, and learn how to teach the use of this model to their new Doctoral students.

(c) Review the potential approaches to academic learning at Doctoral level, as described in Brown and Atkins (1988, 2002); Cannon and Newble (2000); and Clark (2008). They should consider what activities they could generate with the following goals, adapted from Clark (2008):
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<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Expand your students’ knowledge of the subject of research ethics, based on your current understanding. (Tell them what you think and what you know).</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Help them to develop critical thinking skills. (What evidence can they present that they understand research ethics?)</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Encourage them to think for themselves about ethical research dilemmas. (Get them to analyze one case study each week from the Appendix to Beauchamp and Childress, 1989, 1994. Ask them to discuss their results in seminar time).</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Present challenging questions and issues. (For example, ‘Which are the three most important principles in your code of research ethics?’ Or: ‘What moral theories can you find that could help you to think about research ethics?’ In response to both of these questions, they would have to go away and find the answers).</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. And model the cognitive processes of a more knowledgeable individual, by thinking out loud about how you resolve a particular ethical research problem. (Cf: Meara et al., 1996; and Appendix 2).</td>
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Table 5.1: Informal planning of teaching activities

(d) Teach them how to use my research ethics thinking heuristic;

(e) Decide upon a set of guidelines to be issued to all Doctoral students, on how to study research methodology, including research ethics. This should include guidelines on: (1) The focus questions to be
(2) The key concepts/principles to study. (3) Which code of ethics to learn and how to learn it [e.g. in writing and debating activities that are scheduled and assessed]; and (4) How to present written evidence of having learned it. Also, (5) How to prepare for scheduled debates and discussions, etc.

(f) Begin to experiment with new approaches to presenting information on research ethics, learned from this thesis, and develop confidence and competence by a process of trial and error.

(g) Issue a recommended reading list on moral philosophy and ethical research competence. (See: Section 2.5.2 of Chapter 2 above).

(e) Monitor the learning of their students, by requiring that they submit written assignments on moral philosophy and normative ethics, as applied to research issues, including the students’ own research proposals.

(f) Provide written and verbal (one to one and group) developmental feedback on those written assignments, with advice on the next steps.

As mentioned above, small incremental changes over time are easier to set in progress than major wholesale changes; they are easier to maintain; and they soon mount up to become significant qualitative changes.

Phase 2: Longer term planning for major changes. Curriculum change takes time, commitment, planning, reading, developing ideas, preparing a syllabus, planning a scheme of work, preparing lesson plans, resourcing the plan, testing the plan, and so on. I therefore recommend that the longer term, major changes be done one module at a time. I have outlined six new modules on the teaching of research ethics below. Each one should be planned individually, allowing at least one term for the reading, planning and refining process. It could then be presented in the following term, while the second module is being planned. And so on. And if that is too much pressure, on top of existing commitments, then a two month planning process could be adopted. In this way, it will take between two and four academic years to implement the six modules.
I will now present the six modules that I have generated out of my research journey, including my reading of Sponholz (2000); Bebeau (2002); Eisen and Parker (2004); Bond (2000); Zimbardo (2007); and De Bono (2005).

These modules include the core competencies of ethical researchers, as conceptualized within the tradition begun by Rest et al. (1986); and those competences seem to have a broad acceptance among authors in the literature I reviewed: for examples Eisen and Parker (2004) in their two day research ethics seminar; Sponholz (2000) in a research ethics training programme in two universities in Germany; and Schrag (2005); and others.

Ethical research competence. My concept of ethical research competence comprises the five elements identified by Sponholz (2000), which are shown in the table that follows below; plus one that I have added.

Table 5.2: A six-module plan for the teaching of ethical research competence

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<td><strong>Module 1. Teaching Moral Philosophy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Competence No.1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competence of judgement:</td>
<td>Complete relevant background reading from the recommended reading list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>To know ethical theories and to take an active role in weighing arguments.</em></td>
<td>Present an overview in a mini lecture; and get the Doctoral students working on a couple of Morton’s questions, such as: <em>What arguments can be used to defend utilitarianism? How can you defend the idea that there are things no one should ever do?</em></td>
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51 Students should have read Chapters 7 and 8 of Morton (1996, 2004) before the seminar day arrives. They should be issued with the questions, and they should have their own copy of Morton with them. They should work out their answers individually; then discuss them in pairs; then in fours; and then appoint a reporter for their group, who will report back to a plenary session on how the group agreed (or failed to agree) on the answers to the two questions. See footnote 6 for the label of this process.

52 Study the management of small group discussions before this event (using the sources cited in footnote 7 below); and set them up with proper ‘groundrules’ (as described in
This competence defined by Sponholz (2000) also seems to relate to Eisen and Parker’s (2004: 698) second question: “How does one identify what is ethical, and reason through ethical issues?”

- Issue copies of Freeman, Engels and Altekruse (2004), and have the students read and discuss this case study in twos, fours, eights, and then report back to the plenary session. 53
- Supervise the small groups as they work. 54
- Link this module to a writing assignment, based on the ‘brief and simple’ approach of Pimple (2002).

**Module 2. Teaching Critical Thinking:**

**Student Competence 2.**

**Competence of analysis**

From Sponholz (2000):

*To see and recognize moral problems.*

This is what Bebeau (2002: 271) calls “sensitivity” (or ethical sensitivity):

“Individuals need to know whether they can reliably interpret ethical issues…”

(Bebeau, page 289).

This may also relate to Eisen and Parker’s (2004: 698) question: “When is a situation unethical and what are the ethical dimensions to consider? …”

- Read Chapters 2 and 5 of Morton (1996), and complete all the activities.
- Read Thomson (1999/2005) and Bowell and Kemp (2005) and complete all the activities.
- Plan a mini lecture on Critical Thinking and Ethical Decision Making.
- Plan some small group activities from Morton (1996, 2004), Chapters 2 and/or 5.
- Run the group sessions as a ‘snowballing’ session, ending in presentations to a plenary session.

**Module 3: Teaching Codes of Research Ethics**

**Student Competence 3.**

**Competence in citation of research codes**

*To know the basic structure and key clauses of their research ethics code*

From this author.

Bond (2000) acknowledges that, by their very nature, ethics codes are difficult to read and digest. For this reason they

- Identify and digest one or two relevant codes of research ethics.
- Plan a mini lecture on your synthesis.
- Break the group down into individuals, and allocate a few ethics clauses to each individual, and have them read and digest them, and then discuss them in twos, fours, and eights, prioritizing the most important elements, eliminating a small number at each stage in the snowballing

---

Brown and Atkins, 1988: 58-60; Brandes and Ginnis, 1986: 39-41). There are also now considerable resources for developing group work skills for tutors available on the internet, including video clips of tutors discussing how to run small groups. See also footnote 7 below.

53 This process is called ‘snowballing’ in Brown and Atkins (1998: 61) and in Cannon and Newble (2000: 45).

54 See Chapter 4 of Brown and Atkins (1988/2002: 50-90) on ‘Effective small group teaching’. See also Cannon and Newble (2000: 38-57), Chapter 3, on ‘Teaching in small groups’. There are also considerable online resources for developing group work skills for tutors, including video clips of tutors discussing small group teaching strategy. (See in particular, PESL, 2008).
should be digested as a group activity, using the snowballing approach.

- Facilitate presentations to the plenary session.
- Assign a homework activity as follows: **Write your own code of research ethics, based on the presentations at the plenary session, and plan a presentation on your own code for the next session.** (They will be presented briefly, and discussed).

### Module 4. Moral reflection, reading and writing challenges

**Student Competence 4. Competence in reflecting upon one’s own system of values.**


*To be able to relate personal and social values to professional values and to social science research values.*

This seems to overlap Bebeau’s (2002: 271) concept of “role concept” (which includes “professional values”).

- Read De Bono (2005) and develop a good understanding of his metaphorical “six values medals”.
- Read Zimbardo’s (2007: 451-456) Ten Step Programme to Resist Unwanted Influences, and add these to the four virtues advocated by Meara et al (1996) – which are prudence, integrity, respectfulness and benevolence.
- Develop a 6 x 3 matrix, with the six medals on one axis and the following items on the other axis: 1. My duties; 2. My perspective on consequences; and: 3. My virtues (adapted from Zimbardo, 2007; Meara et al., 1996, and your own habitual virtues).
- Within the resulting eighteen cells, reflect upon: 1. My personal history; 2. My professional history; and: 3. My developing sense of ethical research competence.
- Extract the three or four most productive, or valuable, or meaningful cells, and write an account of those contents.
- When you are happy that you have a good understanding of this process, present a mini lecture to your students on this subject.
- Then break into small groups. Get them to **begin** completing this 18 cell matrix for themselves in a snowballing group process – twos, fours, eights and plenary session.
- Assign a homework essay to your students on this subject: **Work through the eighteen cell matrix and then write 2,500 words on the topic: ‘What I learned from the matrix for reflecting on my own values’**.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHICAL RESEARCH COMPETENCIES RELATED TO TEACHING MODULES</th>
<th>RELATED TEACHING TASKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Module 5. Moral discourse, discussion and debate**    | - Now that you and your students have worked through Modules 1-4 above, Module 5 becomes a potential source of rich learning.  
- Study Lind (2004, 2005, 2006), and other approaches to managing debates and discussions.  
- Plan and manage a debate/discussion on a relatively controversial topic in research ethics.  
- Participants are required to display evidence of their learning this far, from Modules 1-4 above. |
| Student Competence 5. Discourse competence             |                        |
| From Sponholz (2000).                                  |                        |
| *To be able to listen to other persons, to argue, to respect involved persons and their arguments.* |                        |
| This seems to be more of Bebeau’s “reasoning”, and “articulating the norms”. (Perhaps best promoted by debating and discussing experience). |                        |
- Relate Thomson’s ethical decision making model to my Figure 4.4 above, and the models in my Chapter 2.  
- Prepare a mini lecture on Ethical Decision Making in Doctoral Research.  
- Set up a snowballing process with this challenge:  
  - Use the allocated Decision Making Model to resolve the set ethical research dilemma.  
  - Work as individuals, then in twos, fours and eights; and appoint a reporter to report back to the plenary session.  
- At the plenary session, manage the feedback, and provide some developmental feedback on the results produced.  
- Issue a homework assignment as follows: *Produce a paper on your own ethical research risk assessment of your own research plan, and show the use of a decision making model to resolve one or two identified dilemmas.* |
| Student Competence 6. Problem solving competence       |                        |
| From Sponholz (2000):                                  |                        |
| *To be able to work through an optimizing strategy to produce a defensible research ethics decision about a presented dilemma.* |                        |
| This seems to be related to Bebeau’s (2002: 271) “ethical implementation” (which she relates to “character and competence”). |                        |
| As suggested by Eisen and Parker (2004: 698), it may be related to finding the location of the relevant guidelines and regulations researchers must know; but it is also, as I have shown in this thesis, related to having some kind of training in moral philosophy and ethical theory, of the type described in my twenty-four element heuristic; and a decision-making model based on values and principles, like my ethical research decision-making model, in Figure 4.4. |                        |

After a number of presentations of this curriculum, experienced tutors will no doubt begin to develop their own variations on the theme, while still ensuring that the six core competences are achieved by their Doctoral Students.
5.2.2. Recommendations for Doctoral students

(a) A limited programme of change to learning approaches

With regard to the more specific question of recommendations concerning the learning of research ethics, I would suggest that postgraduate students begin in a small way by attending to the following elements of my heuristic in Chapter 4:

(1) Yellow 1. **Professional code of research ethics.** Read and reread your code of research ethics; take notes; abstract the principles that you want in your own personal code of ethics for your research journey. Discuss your personal code with at least one colleague, (and preferably in your seminar group; and preferably more than once).

(2) Yellow 5. **The literature.** Allocate a reasonable block of time to the studying of research ethics. After all, it is an important part of becoming a fully qualified professional researcher. Read a selection of the ‘advance organizer’ books and articles listed in section 2.5.2 above. Make notes. Aim to arrive at a ‘theory’ of research ethics; write it up; and discuss it with at least one colleague. (Again it would be better to discuss your reading in your seminar group, and preferably more than once).

(3) Yellow 6. **Ethics risk assessment.** Here is a proposed risk assessment model:

(i) Identify all potential problems with your research proposal. (Cf: Byrne, 2006a, section 7). See also Table 4.2 on page 220 above.

(ii) Apply your personal code of research ethics to each potential problem. If that does not help, go back to your professional code of research ethics, and extract anything that is relevant.

(iii) Study the ethical research thinking heuristic in Figure 4.3, and apply it to your research plans and activities.

(iv) Apply the principles in the Green and Orange rings to each potential problem. **(How can you maximize the benefit of your research to others? How can you avoid causing any harm, no matter**
Select some of the other elements of the heuristic in Figure 4.3, and think through those elements, on paper. If that does not help, apply common sense and ‘everyday ethics’. Seek supervision, not as ‘a word from the oracle’, but rather as a guide to further learning and action on your ethical problem/dilemma.

Additionally, Doctoral students should be advised to experiment with my ethical research decision making model – as shown in Figure 4.4 above – but not until after they have used the twenty-four-element heuristic a few times, and learned to think philosophically and critically about duties and consequences.

Finally, each Doctoral student is potentially a ‘moral self-project’; or a ‘self-creating self’, with a necessary moral dimension. An important question for Doctoral students is this: **What kind of ‘moral person’ do you want to become, and be seen to become? Or, rather, what kind of ‘moral researcher’ are you aiming to be?**

(b) A more extensive learning programme

Beyond this ‘first-aid’ approach to developing research ethics competence, it is also important to tackle the following challenge. In the right-hand column of the following table, against the six ethical research competences that I have listed, Doctoral students should show the evidence that they have achieved these competences; or list the work they need to do to achieve them in the future.
Table 5.3. A detailed guide to learning ethical research competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 1: Learning Moral Philosophy:</th>
<th>Evidence of achievement; or notes of work to be done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competence of judgement:</td>
<td>List theories studied:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Sponholz (2002):</td>
<td>Define moral reasoning:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>To know ethical theories and to take an active role in weighing arguments.</em></td>
<td>List the norms, values, laws and codes that govern research practice:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Answer Eisen and Parker's (2004: 698) second question: “How does one identify what is ethical, and reason through ethical issues?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 2: Learning Critical Thinking:</th>
<th>Evidence of achievement; or notes of work to be done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competence of analysis</td>
<td>How sensitive are you to ethical aspects of research contexts or plans? (On a scale of 1-10, where 1 means careless and 10 means ‘saintly’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Sponholz (2000):</td>
<td>How have you tested your ability to interpret ethical issues reliably?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>To see and recognize moral problems.</em></td>
<td>Answer Eisen and Parker’s (2004: 698) question: “When is a situation unethical and what are the ethical dimensions to consider?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 3: Learning Codes of Research Ethics</th>
<th>Evidence of achievement; or notes of work to be done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Competence 3.</td>
<td>How many principles are there in your code of research ethics? (Read it and check).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence of citation of research codes</td>
<td>Next, write a list from memory of what you consider to be the core principles of your code of research ethics, and then check your official research ethics code and list those you omitted or overlooked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>To know the basic structure and key clauses of their research ethics code</em></td>
<td>If you could only have seven clauses in your code of research ethics, what would they be? Write them out and post them on a wall near your desk or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From this author.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Module 4. Moral reflection, reading and writing challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study area.</th>
<th>Ask a fellow student to list their top seven research ethics guidelines, and then compare their answers with your own. Who needs to change, and what do they need to change?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Student Competence 4.**

**Competence in reflecting upon one’s own system of values.**

- Write a list of your personal values. (How do you think you should live; and what goals do you consider to be valuable for you and other humans?)
- Compare this with a list made by a fellow student.
- Write a list of your professional values. (How do you think a good professional should work, and behave in their role?)
- Compare this with a list by a fellow student.
- Write a list of your research ethics values. (What is safe, ethical research? What should not be done?)
- Compare your list with a fellow student’s list.
- What have you leaned? What do you need to change or learn?

Module 5. Moral discourse, discussion and debates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse competence</th>
<th>To be able to listen to other persons, to argue, to respect involved persons and their arguments.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Sponholz (2000).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Competence 3.**

**Discourse competence**

- Get the phone number of two of your fellow students.
- Get their agreement to phone them to discuss your ethical research questions and quandaries.
- Phone both of them once each week for seven weeks; for about 30 minutes each time.
- Make sure you have at least two ethical research issues identified and written down for each telephone conversation.
- Try to mainly ask questions and explore the reasoning of your fellow students during these phone calls.
- But also state your own positions and values in a rational manner, supported with reasons and evidence.
5.3. About the curriculum

The curriculum is ultimately controlled by the teachers who implement it. Unless they want change, it will not happen. And they will not want my ideas for change, unless they are intellectually interesting; realistic in terms of time and effort needed for implementation; intrinsically rewarding to work with; and have a high level of credibility. The most relevant link to the thinking of Tutor T3 is as follows. Seedhouse (1988) takes up the question of “pursuing the good”, and expands it into a very interesting consideration of how to use deliberation, based upon the dialectical tension between Kantian deontology and Mills’ utilitarianism, to achieve Aristotle’s vision of ‘ethics as deliberation’. (See the green and orange rings of Figure 4.3 above). Beauchamp and Childress (1989, 1994) advocate the integration of virtue ethics with utilitarianism and deontology. Beyond that, Meara et al (1996) outline a schema for integrating principle ethics and virtue ethics. The outstanding issue is how to achieve this kind of integration. Zimbardo (2007: 451-456) presents a practical programme for developing virtues to resist unwanted (immoral) pressures; and in Appendix One below, I explore the integration of various theories of morality using a set of matrices.
5.4. Limitations of my scope, validity and viability

5.4.1. Scope

The main limitation of my research project is that it concentrated on just one university department, and secured a minority (of 13 out of 35) of the Doctoral students as respondents. However, the literature that I reviewed suggests that there is a widespread problem with unethical research, and inadequate training in some countries. (Sources: Finn, 1999; Roberts et al., 2005; Anestidou, 2002; Ariely, 2008; Eisen and Berry, 2002; Martinson et al., 2005; Kessel, 2003; Rizk and Elzubeir, 2004; Sponholz, 2000; Eisen and Parker, 2004; Swazey and Bird, 1997).

5.4.2. Validity and viability

In this section I want to remind myself and my readers of some of the caveats that rationally and morally must be applied to my research conclusions, as follows.

I spent a considerable amount of time reflecting upon potential limitations of my research. This is what I came up with:

1. My research orientation and approach may have been influenced by my (INTJ) temperament type (as described in Keirsey and Bates, 1984). However, all of the sixteen temperament types have their strengths and weakness, and therefore this limitation would apply to all research if it applies to any.

2. My participants have limitations on their consciousness and recall abilities, as discussed in Gladwell (2006) and elsewhere. But their accounts probably also contain nuggets of truth, as described in Eysenck and Keane (2000). And finally:

3. It is very much easier to specify desirable curriculum changes than it is to bring them into effect, as described by Moon et al. (1989). Nevertheless, there are some signs that the relevant Doctoral tutors are interested in my ideas, and may be inclined to make some changes, especially by introducing the teaching of moral philosophy to their Doctoral students. By
emphasizing the two-phase kaizen approach, outlined in Section 5.2.1 above, I hope that I will be able to persuade the relevant Doctoral tutors that this work is manageable, in terms of time and effort, and that it will be professionally rewarding.

5.5. Strengths of my research, and contribution to knowledge

5.5.1. Strengths. I have achieved most of what I set out to achieve in my Doctoral research. On pages 18 and 19 above, I listed my questions about the teaching and learning of research ethics. I recognized that my contribution to knowledge would come out of answering those questions. My answers to those questions have been presented in sections 5.1 and 5.2 above; I have tested any weak points found in my research; and I have scheduled some future research work on this topic, as described in section 5.6 below.

Another strength of my work is the coherence of the storyline of my thesis, which is an expression of my strong focus on the essence of my quest, which can be expressed as follows.

\textbf{Figure out how to research these questions:} How is it possible to teach and/or learn ethical research competence? How is it currently done? And is it important/possible/relevant to improve that approach?

A third area of strength is that I have had lots of positive feedback on my work; I have published one article – Byrne (2007a) - and I have another two ‘in press’, which are Byrne (in press), and West and Byrne (in press). I have plans for a co-authored book on \textit{Teaching and Learning Ethical Research Competence in Qualitative Research}. And I have circulated thirty-nine research reports to my research participants and others. Those reports include original research plans, reflective discussions, plus theoretical models and schemes. Several of those documents, taken together, offer the possibility of developing at least six future articles for publication in professional journals.
5.5.2. Contribution to knowledge. What is my contribution to knowledge? My research was an exploratory enquiry into what postgraduate students – and especially Doctoral students in the School of Social Care - know about research ethics; how they were taught, and how they tried to learn research ethics for themselves; and how (theoretically) to teach and/or learn ethical research competence, and to make ethical research decisions. My thesis involves what Phillips and Pugh (1994/2005: 61/63) describe as “Setting down a major piece of new information in writing for the first time”. That major piece of new information relates to the teaching and learning of research ethics in just one university department, but it may have relevance to many other university departments around the UK, and elsewhere, as there is some evidence in my literature review that there are widespread gaps in the provision of research ethics training in universities in the UK, the USA, Germany and elsewhere. (My main sources include Finn, 1999; Swazey and Bird, 1997; Eisen and Berry, 2002; Eisen and Parker, 2004; Sponholz, 2000; Al-Jalahma and Fakhroo, 2004; and Rivera, Borasky, Rice, and Carayon, 2005; Bebeau, 2002; Rizk and Elzubeir, 2004).

My main contributions to knowledge are:

(1) The conclusion to my final summative argument, which shows that:

There is strong evidence in Chapter 4 above of a substantial problem with the teaching and learning of research ethics in the School of Social Care. Most Doctoral students I consulted attest to wanting and needing an expanded and deepened teaching/learning programme in research ethics.

(2) The clarification that the problems in (1) include the following:

(a) The narrowness of the reading undertaken;

(b) the lack of a debating culture;

(c) the lack of a strand of ‘critical thinking’;

(d) the lack of a teaching input on moral philosophy as related to research ethics;
(e) the lack of opportunity to write at length on research ethics;

(f) the fact that ethical research competence is not assessed during the course of the early years of the programme; and:

(g) the fact that there is no explicit or overt attempt to inculcate good habits of ethical thinking from an early stage, which could form the basis of reliable moral intuitions at a later date. (Cf: Curren, 2007a: 507-509; Chaffee, 1998: 335-337; Haidt, 2001: 818, 822-827).

(3) In addition, I have determined that:

(a) moral philosophy and critical thinking seem to be essential underpinnings of ethical research competence, as illustrated in my ethical research thinking heuristic in Figure 4.3; combined with (affective, or emotive) social intuitions which need to be trained into the Doctoral students during the course of their training in research skills. (See: Meara et al. 1996; Haidt, 2001; and Curren, 2007).

Furthermore, I maintain that:

(b) ethical research dilemmas can be resolved by the use of deliberations based on values and principles from moral philosophy, as illustrated in my ethical research decision making model (in Figure 4.4 above) – but only after the individual has mastered the contents of Figure 4.3 and its elaborative legend. See also Appendix One, for feminist, political and other cultural considerations. And thirdly:

(c) I have also added to our knowledge of ‘ethical mindfulness’, which was originally mooted by Bond (2000: 242-243), and advocated by West (2002: 266). However, the concept of ‘ethical mindfulness’ was not developed to a usable state by Dr Bond, in Bond (2004a, b). In Chapter 3, section 3.4 above, I defined that concept operationally for the first time, and showed how it can be a

375 words in the research proposal, and a few hundred words in the methodology chapter of the thesis, are just about enough to hide what I don’t know, rather than to explore what I need to learn.
useful concept when applied to conducting ethical risk assessments on research plans, proposals and reports.

(4) Finally, I have constructed immediate and longer term plans for competence based reforms to the teaching and learning of research ethics, as shown in Section 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, and especially in tables 5.2 and 5.3.

Overall, my work is an original synthesis of moral philosophy, research ethical theory, critical thinking combined with reports from students (and one tutor) about their experience and needs; plus some insights from the (somewhat limited) existing literature on the teaching of research ethics.

5.6. Future plans

I was very disappointed that my Teacher Inquiry plans did not work out, as I think that work could have been highly productive. (See Phase Two in Table 1.1, on page 16; and section 4.4 4 on page 153). Therefore, I intend to pick up that work plan again in the near future, by offering my services to teach research ethics, on condition that I can generate research data from my teaching activities, and that postgraduate students have an explicit right to opt out of my classes at any time for any reason whatsoever, which does not have to be stated. The content of this work would include experimenting with the teaching of the use of my ethical research thinking heuristic and my ethical research decision-making model, to see how effectively they work. This could be combined with pre- and post-teaching tests, possibly utilizing the Defining Issues Test (DIT, developed by Rest, 1990)⁵⁶, and other tests mentioned by Bebeau (2002: 286-288) and by LTSN (2006). A literature review is needed on available instruments for measuring moral reasoning and moral judgement, followed by the testing out of some of the most promising instruments in the context of practical efforts to teach research ethics.

⁵⁶ Rest was originally involved in the development of a Neo-Kohlbergian approach to moral reasoning (which was primarily cognitive) while I advocate a post-Kohlbergian approach which implicates both emotion and cognition in moral reasoning: (Gibbs, 2003; Nichols, 2002; Thomson, 1999/2005; Haidt, 2006). However, Bebeau (2002) and Meara at al. (1996) clarify that Rest includes both cognition and affect in his Four Components model. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen whether the DIT can measure emotional components of ethical judgements.
I had also planned to develop a model of ‘the mind of the ethical researcher’, mainly from the literature, and I began the construction of a list of relevant literature in my Research Journal. Some of the most interesting elements for such a model include sources like Forsyth and Berger (1982) who emphasize the conflict between self-interest and moral self-concept; Haidt (2001) who writes about human performance in terms of the ‘emotional dog and its rational tail’; Gladwell (2006) who emphasises the role of the ‘adaptive unconscious’; Ellis (1962/1994) who writes about how emotions can be calmed by cognitions; Haidt (2006) who draws attention to both the fundamental attribution error and ‘moral hypocrisy’; Bargh and Chartrand (1999) who write about the ‘unbearable automaticity of being’; Paul and Elder (2006) who detail the distinction between the good (prosocial side) and the bad (egotistical side) of the human being; and several other relevant authors and texts. However, because of pressure of time, I had to abandon this element of my work plan. I hope to continue with this during my post-doctoral work.

The benefits of both elements of this future work would be the further development of the teaching and learning of ethical research competence as a new and growing discipline. Given government pressure for change in this field, there are likely to be major expansions in interest, funding and various forms of activity over the next five to ten years.
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Liddle, R. (2007b) Froth away, Paxo – but it’s viewers who will put TV in order. The Sunday Times, August 26<sup>th</sup>, page 15.


Switzer, D. (2003) All medical physicists entering the field should have a specific course on research and practice ethics in their educational background. For the proposition. Medical Physics, 30(12): 3049-50.


In writing this thesis, I became aware that I think and write on the basis of a specialist vocabulary derived from psychology and philosophy, in the main. Some of my readers might wonder precisely how I intend them to understand a particular statement which contains ‘specialist words’. I therefore concluded that it would be important to attach a glossary of those words as an aid to communication. (Communication is often very difficult because of divergent definitions and differing interpretations of concepts).

**GLOSSARY**

**GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS**

**Accommodation/Assimilation.** I use this distinction to conceptualize how the moral schemas of Doctoral students probably are affected by teaching/learning experiences; and how essential those teaching learning experiences are to the development of ‘expert schemas’. This distinction was created by Jean Piaget, who contributed enormously to child-centred developmental psychology in the early part of the twentieth century. He posited that acting in the world, and gaining experience, resulted in the child (person) developing mental ‘schemas’ of their experiences. Those schemas were like ‘maps of the territory’, or ‘packets of information’ about situations, events, objects, social mores, and so on. He suggested that when the child (person) has an experience they comprehend it by ‘assimilating it’ to an existing schema. However, when they came across a novel experience (event or object), they did not have an appropriate schema to make sense of it, and so they had to ‘accommodate themselves’, or ‘accommodate some apparently relevant existing schema(s)’ to the novel experience. Thus we are always either interpreting our experiences in terms of past experience, or accommodating our interpretations to novel elements of our experience/environment.

**Action research.** This approach to practical research goes back to at least the Second World War, and was mainly pioneered by Kurt Lewin. The process normally involves a real intervention in a problem situation, often involving team work problems. An intervention point is identified. This if followed by the steps: Plan; Act; Reflect/Conclude; and then moving on to the next Plan step. It is thus a systematic spiral process, or iterative process, in which experience is accumulated and tested. The approach that I have used mainly comes from Bob Dick (1997a, b, etc); Taylor (1994); Feldman and Minstrell (2000); and Judith Newman (1998); in which the context of intervention is an educational establishment (Newman/Feldman) and the object of inquiry is academic (doctoral level) learning (Dick/Taylor). Action research can be applied in a quantitative or...
qualitative paradigm. Rigour is maintained by passing the outputs from one cycle back to the participants for feedback on accuracy/acceptability of interpretations/constructions.

**Actor/observer effect.** The problem of ‘moral hypocrisy’, in which we attribute badness to other people’s research endeavours, while attributing goodness to our own, can be understood in terms of this distinction. This is closely related to the *Fundamental Attribution Error* (Jones and Nisbett, 1971) – see below - which exaggerates the contribution of the individual in the individual-environment interaction. In the actor/observer effect, the observer judges the actor (who we assume to have done a conventionally bad thing) as being a bad person because of their actions. While the observer, when he/she in their turn performs the same bad action, concludes they themselves are not bad, because they can think of all kinds of internally known pressures to behave as they did, and they know that, given an ideal set of circumstances, they would function like the ‘moral person’ that they know themselves to be. (Nisbett, Caputo et al, 1973). The actor/observer effect is thus a good illustration of the point that all humans seem to be ‘moral hypocrites’. (Haidt, 2006).

**Advance organizer.** My ethical research thinking heuristic is an advance organizer for the Doctoral tutors in the school of social care. The concept of an Advance Organizer was created by David Ausubel (1968), an American educational psychologist and educational theorist. This is related to Piaget’s concept of mental schemas, but focuses on the relationship between individual schemas as embedded within a network of schemas. Ausubel argues that we need a ‘map of the territory’ (or ‘advance organizer’) before we set off into the detailed learning of a new body of knowledge. The advance organizer provides a kind of cognitive matrix into which we subsequently place our individual bits of new learning.

**Assimilation/Accommodation.** See Accommodation/Assimilation above.

**Argument.** In this thesis, I present three key ‘arguments’. According to Soanes (2002) an argument is a set of reasons given in support of something, (normally in support of a conclusion). Bowell and Kemp (2005: 8) offer the definition that an argument is “a set of propositions of which one is a conclusion and the remainder are premises, intended as support for the conclusion”. An argument is quite distinct from an explanation, although it might contain some premises that are explanations. The structure of an argument requires that the conclusion must follow logically from the premises, such that, if the premises are true,
then the conclusion must also be true.

**Ausubelian.** This refers to the work initiated by David Ausubel, and described in ‘Advance organizer’ above.

**BACP.** The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) is one of ninety-nine organizations representing counsellors and psychotherapists in the UK. It is probably the largest.

**Bivalence/multivalence.** This distinction refers to the process of distinguishing phenomena from each other. Bivalent phenomena have two poles, e.g.: black/white; up/down; good/bad; right/wrong; etc. Multivalent phenomena have a range of values between zero and one; as in highly probably; not so likely; highly unlikely; virtually impossible, etc. The bivalent perspective on ‘life’ is most closely linked to the philosophy of Aristotle; while the multivalent perspective is most closely related to the philosophy of the Buddha. In modern terms, multivalence is characterized as ‘fuzzy logic’ by Kosko (1994). In terms of my study, using fuzzy logic we could say that all humans seem to be both good and bad – not either/or, but both/and. That is to say, they are probably – at any given moment – x% good and y% bad – in terms of their current/recent behaviour, and in terms of their character and commitments. And most research actions are probably some percent good and some percent bad. The aim then is to help to develop characters who mainly aim to maximise the good and minimize the bad.

**Black hat.** Please see ‘Six Thinking Hats’ below.

**Blue hat.** Please see ‘Six Thinking Hats’ below.

**Bottom-up processing.** This concept comes from Gibson (1950, 1966, 1979) who developed a theory of ‘direct perception’ in which it was assumed that our eyes pick up a rich pattern of information from the environment which impresses itself upon the mind in a way that is unmistakable. Imagine looking down on a cup and saucer on a table. According to Gibson, the ‘bottom up’ information – from the external object, up to the brain - is all we need to perceive the external cup and saucer, without any help from the unconscious part of our brain/mind. This was later challenged by Gregory (1973, 1980, 1996), who developed an opposing ‘top-down’ theory. (Neisser, 1976, integrated these two concepts of human perception, and I favour Neisser’s model).
**Bricolage.** This concept comes from McLeod (2001), who introduces this French term to define an assemblage of research methods, put together pragmatically 'to get the job done'.

**Bricoleur.** When a researcher uses the research strategy defined as 'using a bricolage', they are seen to be functioning like a 'bricoleur', or a 'canny craftsperson' who uses whatever 'tools' are necessary (and acceptable) to get the job done.

**Cognitive dissonance.** This concept comes from Festinger (1957), and describes the emotional discomfort we experience when we meet a situation that does not fit our cognitive maps of that 'area of reality'. It is the discomfort of realizing that something is not right here, with the 'reality' or our 'map' of that reality. When I finished reading Gladwell's (2006) and Bargh and Chartrand's (1999) description of the largely nonconscious nature of humans, I experienced cognitive dissonance about my preexisting assumption that my research participants were conscious enough to be able to know where they have been and what they have done and what they have experienced, and to be able to tell me about it in an 'objective narrative'. This was destroyed by Gladwell and Bargh and Chartrand, and I was left with a discomfort which had to be resolved by a process of 'accommodation' to this 'new reality'.

**Conscious (as opposed to nonconscious) thinking.** For me, conscious thinking seems to be a process of asking and answering questions; and is probably normally supported by nonconscious thinking. Conscious thinking seems to be subject to the limitations of working memory (7 plus or minus 2 chunks of data: Miller, 1956). This can be expanded by ‘thinking on paper’.

**Constructionism.** In educational theory, the idea that knowledge is 'socially constructed'. Bruner and Vygotsky are constructionists, while Piaget is a constructivist. That is to say, the constructionists see learning as having a social and instructional dimension, while Piaget and his followers see learning as an individual endeavour. (See Social constructionists/constructionism).

**Constructivists/Constructivism.** Bartlett (1932) was probably one of the earliest known constructivists, in the sense that he saw human perceptions, memories and learnings as actively constructed by the mind, rather than passively received from the environment. However, in Bartlett
there is a sense of the social influence on these mental constructions – making him more of a social constructionist – while in Piaget this is changed to an individual exploration of the world, resulting in the construction of personal schemas of those exploratory experiences. My perspective is closer to social constructionism than it is to individual (or ‘radical’) constructivism. (See Colman, 2002: 162).

CoRT Tools. This range of thinking tools is described in De Bono (1995: 49-52). CoRT-1 tools are ‘attention directors’, and are as follows:

- **PMI:** Plus, Minus and Interesting. Direct your attention to the Plus points, then the Minus points and finally the Interesting points. The result is a quick assessment scan.
- **CAF:** Consider All Factors. What should we take into account when we are thinking about something? What are the factors involved here?
- **C&S:** This tool directs attention to the ‘Consequences and Sequels’ of the action under consideration. The request is for a forward look at what will happen later. Different time scales can be requested.
- **AGO:** What are the Aims, Goals and Objectives? What are we trying to do? What are we trying to achieve? Where are we going?
- **FIP:** First Important Priorities: Direct attention to those things which really matter. Not everything is of equal importance. What are the priorities?
- **APC:** Alternatives, Possibilities and Choices. Create new alternatives? What are the possibilities? What are the choices?
- **OPV:** Direct attention to Other People’s Views. Who are the other people involved? What are their views?

“The tools are used explicitly and directly. They are a formal way of directing perceptual attention in a defined direction”. (Page 51).

Critical thinking. Critical thinking seems to be a form of ‘informal logic’. (Honderich, 1995: 171; and Bowell and Kemp, 2005: vii). Informal logic “examines the nature and function of arguments in natural language, stressing the craft rather than the formal theory of reasoning”. (Honderich, 1995: 500). In my thesis, the system of critical thinking deployed is directly taken from the teaching of Bowell and Kemp (2005); supplemented by various heuristics, including De Bono’s To-Lo-Po-So-Go; Kolb’s learning cycle; Gowin’s Vee Heuristic; Thomson’s (1999/2005 approach to argument assessment); and other sources.
**Deontology.** This word comes from the Greek root ‘deon’, meaning ‘duty’ – hence the term ‘duty ethics’, as applied to Kant’s work in particular. Deontology calls on us to ask ourselves: “What is my duty here? What must I do, and what must I not do?”; as opposed to the questions from utilitarianism, which are: “What consequences could flow from this action? Would this action maximize utility (or human happiness)? Which of these actions (or rules) would produce the best possible social results?” My duty is to do no harm, and to promote the best interests of my research participants, as well as aiming to produce valuable research insights.

**Dialectical.** The concept of ‘dialectic’ goes back to at least the time of Socrates. (Magee, 2001: 23). For Plato’s Socrates, dialectic was a process of questioning everything, including the answers to our latest questions, in the hope of arriving at the truth. In recurs in Hegel, in his view that the process of history is driven by a dialectical tension between dominant nations and those they dominate. It was then taken over by Marx, and presented in the form of class struggle as the basic dialectical tension that drives the historical process. I use it in the sense of an active tension, which is dynamic, and likely to be productive of some kind of synthesis, which succeeds the original terms of the dialectical tension.

**Duty ethics.** See Deontology.

**Epistemology.** Theory of knowledge. How is it possible to know anything? How do we learn? My own view is that we are thrown into a family which is already languaging a culture, which we take over as empty categories to be filled out in time, with more and more experience. We therefore learn ‘what to think’ long before we learn ‘how to think’. A really good education is therefore one that dismantles the entire learning history of the individual, and rebuilds it consciously, selectively, by a series of choosings. I also employ the concept of top-down-and-bottom-up-processing developed by Neisser (1976), who integrated the models of Gibson and Gregory. I therefore have learning experiences, comprising perceptions, reflections, conclusions and memorizations which are partly driven by my past experiences and partly driven by the apparent ‘external reality’ with which I am engaging today. My social constructions of new knowledge are therefore mixtures of subjective-objective and objective-subjective, and I see no way to get beyond that point.

**Ethical research competence.** My concept of ethical research competence comprises the five elements identified by Sponholz (2000),
as follows:

1. **Competence of analysis** (to see and recognize moral problems). This is what Bebeau (2002: 271) calls “sensitivity” (or ethical sensitivity): “Individuals need to know whether they can reliably interpret ethical issues…” (Bebeau, page 289). This may also relate to Eisen and Parker’s (2004: 698) question: “When is a situation unethical and what are the ethical dimensions to consider? …”.

2. **Competence of judgement** (to know ethical theories and to take an active role in weighing arguments). This seems to be what Bebeau (2002: 271) calls “reasoning” (or moral reasoning): Or how to “…articulate the norms, values, laws and codes that govern” research practice. (Page 289). This competence defined by Sponholz (2000) also seems to relate to Eisen and Parker’s (2004: 698) second question: “How does one identify what is ethical, and reason through ethical issues?”

3. **Discourse competence** (to be able to listen to other persons, to argue, to respect involved persons and their arguments). This seems to be more of Bebeau’s “reasoning”, and “articulating the norms”. (Perhaps best promoted by debating and writing experience).

4. **Competence in reflecting upon one’s own system of values**. This seems to overlap Bebeau’s (2002: 271) concept of “role concept” (which includes “professional values”). And finally from Sponholz(2000):

5. **Problem solving competence**. This seems to be related to Bebeau’s (2002: 271) “ethical implementation” (which she relates to “character and competence”). As suggested by Eisen and Parker (2004: 698), it may be related to finding the location of the guidelines and regulations researchers must know; but it is also, as I have shown in this thesis, related to having some kind of training in moral philosophy and ethical theory, of the type described in my twenty-four element heuristic; and a decision-making model based on values and principles, like my ethical research decision-making model.

Indeed, all five competences listed above are encompassed, however embryonically, within my recommendations in this thesis.

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**Ethical sensitivity.** See Sponholz’s (2000) competence No.1, in the definition of Ethical Research Competence above.

**Ethics.** Ethics can be characterised as a process of thinking/talking about human systems of morality, where morality is (1) about regulating social behaviour to minimize harm and maximize happiness: (which is utilitarianism). Or (2) to determine logically necessary rules of reciprocal respect and concern: (which is called deontology, or duty ethics). Many other approaches to thinking and talking about morality have been developed, including the Aristotelian approach to character training combined with education in practical wisdom; and the feminist ethic of
There is no universal agreement as to how to think/talk about human morality, and yet there is surprising agreement across the globe regarding what is “good” or “acceptable” and what is “bad” or “unacceptable”. The ethics of research morality are explored in my thesis, especially in the form of my ethical thinking heuristic and my ethical research decision-making model.

**Fundamental attribution error.** There is widespread agreement in social psychology that human behaviour is an outcome of a complex interaction of individual variables and environmental variables. However, most of us in our daily observations tend to oversimplify what is happening to actors in our environment. We tend to attribute too much influence to personality factors over environmental factors. Except when we are the actor in question, when we tend to attribute too much influence to the environment, because, after all, we are ‘essentially good’, and only deviate from good behaviour because of ‘pressures’ from our environment. This is the fundamental attribution, error, which Jones and Nisbett (1971) consider to be part of our fallible human nature. We seem to have a bias towards preferring simple to complex explanations, and to seeing ourselves as better than others.

**“Fuzzy questions”:** According to Dick (2000): “You can begin action research by asking initially fuzzy questions using initially fuzzy methods, thereby gaining initially fuzzy answers. You may then use those initially fuzzy answers to refine your methods as you proceed. To say it differently, research content and research process both develop as the research proceeds”. Another way to clarify the meaning of “fuzzy questions” is that they tend to be quite general, or global, and not well focussed, because the action researcher has not yet developed a focus in action. Out of the action of pursuing those initially general questions, more and more specific questions, and ways of pursuing them, will be refined.

**Gestalt formations.** Gestalt formations are automatic attempts by the brain to organize our perceptual experiences. We perceive things as organized wholes. Some things seem more important than others to particular individuals at particular and different points in time. The important thing stands out as a ‘figure’ in the foreground (‘gestalt’) against the less important background (or ‘ground’). The figure is what we attend to at any given time. Our perceptions ‘happen to us’. We do not consciously construct them, and have limited capacity to intervene in them.
**Green hat thinking.** See ‘Six Thinking Hats’ below.

**Hermeneutics.** This is “the art of interpretation”. (Honderich, 1995: 353). As used in my work, hermeneutics refers to my ‘top down processing’, based on previous readings, reflections, conclusions, etc. This type of processing is distinguished from “phenomenological constructions” which are driven more by the data of my senses. However, logically, it is impossible in practice to separate out these two processes – as implicit in the theory of Neisser (1976), who integrated top-down and bottom-up processing; and in Kosko’s (1994) ‘fuzzy logic’. My hermeneutic and phenomenological constructions are conceptualized as being integrated in my application of Gowin’s Vee Heuristic.

**Heuristic.** A heuristic device is a guiding structure for the purpose of controlling progress through a “problem space”. The classical five-stage problem solving model – Carley (1982/1985: 61) – is a typical heuristic, which produces the best possible outcome in conditions of imperfect knowledge. Heuristics thus differ from “…algorithms or procedures which guarantee success if followed faithfully”. (Kahney, 1993/2001: 47). A simpler example of a heuristic would be the Skilled-Helper Model, by Gerard Egan – in Egan (2002) – which at its simplest level has three stages, as follows: 1. What’s going on? 2. What solutions make sense for me? 3. How do I get what I need or want?

**Historical thrownness.** From Heidegger, the idea that we are thrown into a culture which is already **languaging a ‘reality’** about which we are not consulted. We must somehow digest the culture into which we are thrown, and make sense of it for ourselves. As researchers, we are always working in somebody else’s ‘reality’, and may come under pressure to behave immorally to serve some expedient goal of our funders or managers. Somehow we have to learn how to be moral beings in a world that may be more concerned to have us conform than to consult us about our perceptions. Can we develop a narrative outside of the ‘**intersection of narratives**’ into which we are thrown at birth? Arguably, if we develop **ethical mindfulness**, as defined in this thesis, we can.

**Indirect questioning:** Direct questioning of research participants presumes they have a capacity to honestly and accurately answer those direct questions. In Gladwell (2006), Gray (2003), Bargh and Chartrand (1999) and elsewhere, there is evidence that this view may be rather naïve. Gottman (1995) found that, very often, individuals and couples...
don’t even know how they sound, or communicate with each other, until they see themselves on video. Therefore, in Gladwell’s view: “…how much value can there be in asking them direct questions? Not much, and this is why Gottman has couples talk about something involving their marriage – like their pets – and without being about their marriage. He looks closely at individual measures of how the couple is doing…” using a high-tech lab, called the marriage lab, at the University of Washington. “Gottman comes at the issue sideways, which, he has found, can be a lot quicker and more efficient path to the truth than coming at it head-on”. (Gladwell, 2006: 39).

Gottman comes at the issue sideways, by asking indirect questions that are designed to reveal things about the couple that they may not know, may not want to reveal, or might even lie about. Thus ‘coming at them sideways’ means, for me, being indirect in my methods of asking for information, to try to find out things that might not be revealed (or might not be reveal-able – because they are held non-consciously) in response to direct questions.

**Intuitionism.** (In ethical theory): According to Baggini and Fosl (2007: 31) intuitionism is the ethical theory that we just know, by direct perception of an event, whether or not it is moral. This is “a direct and unmediated route to the truth”. However, the social constructionist view would be that we learn what is moral from our parents, teachers, peers and general social environment, including the mass media, before we have any thought of choosing a moral position for ourselves. We are probably mainly deploying our “top down processing” when we experience a “social intuition” or gut feeling that something is either good or bad.

**Kohlberg/Kohlbergian.** Lawrence Kohlberg was a cognitive-developmental theorist about moral development in children, following in the footsteps of Piaget. Whereas Piaget saw morality developing through a set of developmental stages, Kohlberg saw those cognitive developments as a necessary but not sufficient condition for moral development. For him, moral development was a function of the moral philosophy of the individual, and so teaching moral reasoning can facilitate the development of moral standards within individuals.

**Kolb’s learning cycle.** This is a four stage heuristic for the control of the learning process, devised by David Kolb (1984). It consists of focusing on the following four questions: 1. What is the experience under consideration? 2. What are my observations and reflections about it? 3. What are my conclusions about those observations and reflections? 4. What is my plan for the next step/stage/phase (or my generalization about my learning)?
Learning. Learning for a behaviourist is about developing new behavioural repertoires, which are supported by a reinforcing environment. Learning for a cognitivist is a reorganization of cognitive structures through the mechanism of experience and reflection upon that experience. Learning for a Social Learning theorist is modelling the behaviour of another. Learning for me is a socially-embedded process engaged in by an individual who may or may not be a member of a learning group. The process is described best in Gowin’s Vee Heuristic (Novak and Gowin, 1984); in which we ask questions about a particular event/object, and use our stored (social) knowledge to formulate data-answers, which we then transform into a presentable form. For teachers to maximize the learning of their postgraduate students, they could benefit from reading sections 9.6 and 9.7 of Reece and Walker (1997: 110-114). And the learning of ethical research competence on Doctoral programmes might best be conceptualized as moving from “novice” to “expert” status, by acquiring the right kinds of knowledge from reading, debating and discussing, writing, and getting various forms of developmental feedback, including from the experience of completing and reflecting upon the eventual research project.

Learning cycle. Kolb’s learning cycle is a way of separating out the theoretical components of a full learning experience, which is both cognitive and experiential. The steps are presented in the form of a heuristic that can be used to guide our learning process, without being able to articulate what the internal cognitive processes are that underpin the actions at each stage in the process. The classic stages are Concrete Experience > Observations and Reflections > Forming Conclusions > Generalizing from those conclusions and/or planning the next step. And thus back to a new Concrete Experience… (See Kolb’s… above).

Level One and Level Two Thinking. This distinction was created by R.M. Hare (1981). Level One “thinking” is a kind of visceral intuition resulting in a sense of what is the right action to take on a prima facie basis. Level Two thinking involves the use of distinctions from utilitarianism, deontology and other sources, and moral reasoning skills, to come up with a reasoned argument in defence of a particular moral conclusion.

Morality (and moral philosophy). Morality – which is commonly seen to be the set or sets of principles people use to define or determine the difference between right and wrong, and good or bad behaviour - is the ‘content’ that ethics discusses. At its simplest level, morality is ‘good, pro-social behaviour’ in which the rights and needs of others are given high priority. See Ethics above…
**Multivalence/bivalence.** See the entry for *Bivalence/multivalence* above.

**Noumena and phenomena.** These concepts date from the time of Kant and possibly a little earlier. The ‘noumenon’ is, for Kant, the ‘thing-in-itself’ which is ‘reflected’ in our minds in the form of a ‘phenomenon’. In my research, the noumenal reality is what is actually happening in the realm of teaching and learning research ethics at the University of Minerva. The phenomenal reality is how that ‘concrete reality’ is reflected in the minds of my research participants, and in my own mind, through both top down and bottom up processes of perception/inference/interpretation. My phenomenal schemas are my mental maps of the noumenal territory through which I have (apparently) been travelling.

**Noumenal world.** See previous entry.

**Objectivity/objectivism.** In metaphysics, ‘objectivity’ is taken to be more than ‘mere social agreement’; whereas in modern science, post-Kuhn and Popper, objective means ‘widely agreed’ by relevant authorities; or an ‘unrefuted conjecture’. (Losee, 1993). In my work, I assert that there is an objective reality called the state of learning of research ethics in the School of Social Care, at the University of Minerva. However, I do not think there is any way to ‘unearth’ that objective reality, as it is only accessible by human subjects via a process which combines top down and bottom up processing, which necessarily combines ‘objective’ (noumenal) and ‘subjective’ (phenomenal – from pre-existing schemas in long-term memory) components, in a ratio that is unknowable.

**Ontology.** This concept concerns itself with the question: What exists? Or: What is real? Or: What is ‘being’? I had an ontological question at an early stage in my research: What kind of being is a postgraduate research student? I asked myself this question because I suspected that some tutors were applying distorted models of their students – such as ‘my students are particularly moral because they are care workers’ – which ignores the Cherokee Indian view that all humans contain a “good wolf” and a “bad wolf”. It also ignores the early Christian concept of ‘original sin’, which is comparable to the ‘bad wolf’ idea. And it ignores the research experiments of Zimbardo and Milgram on conformity and obedience to authority, which demonstrates that apparently ‘good’ humans will often do very bad things when placed under pressure to do so. Having a sound ontology concerning the nature of research students is central to being a good teacher of research ethics.
**Paradigm.** According to Colman (2002: 528): A paradigm is “A pattern, stereotypical example, model, or general conceptual framework within which theories in a particular area of research are constructed”. In relation to this thesis, my paradigm is “contextual constructionism”, meaning that I construct my story of my experiences, but not in a sterile room. I construct my story of my research experience on the basis of an active engagement with people, problems and ideas; and I feed my conclusions back to people (both postgraduate students and tutors) for critical or developmental feedback. And I relate my points of departure and my conclusions to the (modest) literature of the growing field of study of the teaching of research ethics, and other related fields. Nevertheless, other paradigms of research ethics could be constructed, which would not be coterminous with mine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase (in my research).</th>
<th>There were five ‘phases’ in my research, which are characterized as follows: (1) They each have a distinct starting point in time, and a distinct goal; (2) Each phase was designed to inquire into some aspect of the teaching and learning of research ethics in the School of Social Care; (3) One was abandoned; and the other four consist of a number of action research cycles (or Plan, Act, Reflect/Conclude cycles); and (3) They each resulted in some findings/conclusions. Only Phase 1 and Phase 5 resulted in significant, viable outcomes or conclusions.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phenomena and noumena.</strong></td>
<td>See the entry for <em>Noumena</em> and <em>phenomena</em> above.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phenomenology.</strong></td>
<td>Phenomenology as developed by Husserl is concerned with ‘bracketing off experience’ – or dumping top-down processing – and ‘seeing directly’ or ‘intuiting’ the ‘thing in itself’, without the intervention of preconceptions from past experiences. In other words, Husserl was attempting the impossible. A human is essentially an accumulator of experiences who lives and acts from that experience. If humans could discount every experience they had ever had, they would have to be placed in a nappy and looked after by a parent substitute. They would not be able to speak or think, since speaking and thinking are based on past learning and experience. According to Routledge (2000: 670) there are four modern forms of phenomenology. Of those four, the existential and hermeneutical tendencies have been influenced by Heidegger’s existential phenomenology. In my thesis, when I refer to phenomenology, I am referring to sensible, applicable forms of that kind of combination of the Husserlian and Heideggerian perspectives, in which the ‘contents of mind’ are partly based on top down processing and partly based on bottom up processing. (Cf: Neisser, 1976).</td>
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**Piaget/Piagetian.** See Accommodation/Assimilation, Constructionism, Constructivists/Constructivism.

**Principles** (in ethics/morality). *Principles* are ‘general rules’, such as ‘You must not lie’. A ‘rule’ is more specific, as in ‘You must not lie to clients’.

**Qualitative research.** According to Willig (2001: 9) “…there are empiricist as well as social constructionist qualitative researchers”. She goes on to say that “Qualitative researchers tend to be concerned with meaning. That is, they are interested in how people make sense of the world and how they experience events”. In this sense I am not a qualitative researcher, though I think of myself that way. I am concerned with meaning, in that – for a human – all there is is meaning. Or all that seems to exist is the meaning they attach to their actions and experiences. It seems we can never get to the noumenal layer – the “thing in itself” - that gives rise to that meaning. I am not so much interested in how students and tutors at the University of Minerva “make sense of the world” as I am in what sense they seem to have made of it; and what they actually do together, in relation to research ethics. Of course, I accept that I cannot find out in absolute terms what they “do”. I can only find out what they “think they do”; or what they “remember doing”; or would like to think that they “did”. Willig proceeds to say that qualitative researchers tend to be interested in “the quality and texture of experience” and “the meanings attributed to events”. I was not really interested in those aspects of the teaching and learning of research ethics. I was interested in questions like these: *Did it happen? How was it done? How extensive and effective was it?* These seem to be empirical concerns.

Nevertheless, I know I am not a positivist, in that I am a “contextual constructionist”, and I am essentially doing qualitative research with a small sprinkling of quantitative elements. I am a qualitative researcher to the extent that I asked my participants to talk about their experience; and the extent to which I looked for patterns in narrative answers. And I am a quantitative researcher to the extent that I tried to find out the extent of their teaching and learning, the amount of reading they had done, etc. But my overall approach to my thesis is qualitative, being about investigating narratives about experiences; and trying to identify the (ethical research) schemas that Doctoral students have in long-term memory, as revealed in their statements.

**Rationalist** (approach to ethics). Rationalism, in the world of moral philosophy, probably began with Plato, who held that it was possible to get beyond the limitations of relativism by rising to a level of pure reason about ‘the good’. In modern times, rationalism was developed into a more scientific view by Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz. This provided an
alternative to religious dogmatism. And, of course, Piaget and Kohlberg (see entry above) developed rationalist models of moral development in children.

According to Baggini and Fosl (2007: 87): “The term ‘rationalism’ also has a broader ethical meaning, one that characterizes much of western philosophy – namely, the idea that the very activity of reasoning about things, especially moral matters, cultivates a kind of moderation and even mastery of the passions, emotion, and feeling. For rational thinkers, then, not only does reason apprehend moral truth. It also disciplines, orders, and habituates feeling and structures character. Even philosophers of moral sentiment like David Hume share in this view”. Impressive as this view may sound, I am not a rationalist. I have tried to develop a position in the middle ground between rationalism on the one hand and social intuitionism on the other. In other words, I see socialization, moral education, ethical thinking and gut reactions as all being important, in the context of a social environment which calls for more or less moral behaviour.

**Realism.** According to Routledge (2000: 744-745): “The basic idea of realism is that the kinds of thing that exist, and what they are like, are independent of us and the way in which we find out about them; antirealism denies this”. Thus I am clearly a realist, in accepting that phenomenal realities are generated by noumenal realities which can never be directly known. However, I am not a ‘naïve realist’ – Willig (2001: 145-146) – or positivist. I am actually, as a contextual constructionist, in the middle ground between naïve realism and radical relativism.

**Red hat thinking.** See ‘Six Thinking Hats’ below.

**Reflexivity.** According to Willig (2001: 10): “There are two types of reflexivity: personal reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity. *Personal reflexivity* involves reflecting upon the ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research. … *Epistemological reflexivity* requires us to engage with questions such as: How has the research question defined and limited what can be ‘found’? How has the design of the study and the method of analysis ‘constructed’ the data and the findings? … Thus epistemological reflexivity encourages us to reflect upon the assumptions (about the world, about knowledge) that we have made in the course of the research, and it helps us to think about the implications of such assumptions for the research and its findings”. Both types of reflexivity are demonstrated in my thesis.
Relativism. (In ethical theory). According to Baggini and Fosl (2007: 89): “In its broadest sense, a moral relativist is anyone who rejects the view that moral rules and principles are absolute and universal, applying to all persons in all places, and at all times… Relativists can reject absolutism on any number of grounds. Non-cognitivists who criticize absolutism focus on questions of knowledge and intelligibility arguing that moral rules are not the kinds of things that can be meaningfully said to be known. Non-realists hold the metaphysical thesis that moral facts, at least objective moral facts, simply don’t exist. Others argue that morality changes and evolves over time and place, and the moral codes appropriate for one set of circumstances may not be appropriate for another”. Does this cause any problems for my thesis? No. I am perfectly happy to apply a pragmatic fusion of various moral philosophies, underpinned by codes of research ethics which are binding on the profession in question. Just as I am a contextual constructionist in relation to empirical issues, I am a contextual constructionist in relation to professional research ethics. In other words, I am in the middle ground between relativists and realists.

Relativism. (In general philosophy). Epistemological relativism, in its most extreme form, is the claim that what seems to me to be true is ‘true for me’, and that no other form of knowledge is possible. However, if you and I agree that we are in the presence of a black cat; and a vet confirms that it is indeed a cat; and it ‘meows’ when we try to pick it up; for most practical purposes you and I and everybody we consult about it are likely to agree that this is ‘in fact’ a black cat. That kind of widespread agreement about the existence of a phenomenal reality, which also seems to have a physical existence outside of us, is the best possible rejection of relativism. Radical relativists seem to take the relativity of our interpretations to absurd extremes of denial of an external reality, while naïve realists take our social agreements to absurd lengths in insisting there is an unproblematical external reality that can be directly observed. It seems to me that it is only in the middle ground of contextual constructionism, by whatever name we know it, can we escape the nightmare dialogue of the ‘reality deniers’ and the ‘interpretation deniers’.

Research. According to McLeod (1994: 4-5), there are six aspects to the definition of research:

“I. The concept of critical inquiry. Research grows out of the primary human tendency to need to learn, to know, to solve problems. These impulses are fundamentally critical; the need to know is the counterpoint to the sense that what is known is not quite right.

“2. Research as a process of inquiry. Any research involves a series of steps or stages. Knowledge must be constructed. There is a cyclical process of observation, reflection and experimentation.
“3. Research is systematic. … any investigation takes place within a theoretical system of concepts or constructs. … research involves the application of a set of methods or principles, the purpose of which is to achieve knowledge that is as valid and truthful as possible.

“4. The products of research are propositions or statements. …

“5. Research findings are judged according to criteria of validity, truthfulness or authenticity. To make a claim that a statement is based on research is to imply that it is in some way more valid or accurate than a statement based on personal opinion. …

“6. Research is communicated to interested others; it takes place within a research community. No single research study has much meaning in isolation. Research studies provide the individual pieces that fit together to create the complex mosaic of the literature of a topic”.


Schema. According to Colman (2001: 653): A schema is “A plan, diagram, or outline, especially a mental representation of some aspect of experience, based on prior experience and memory, structured in such a way as to facilitate (and sometimes to distort) perception, cognition, the drawing of inferences, or the interpretation of new information in terms of existing knowledge”. All Doctoral students have schema in long term memory relating to ethics and morality. However, we cannot assume we know what they are unless we explore them educationally to find their strengths and weaknesses. It seems probable that all postgraduate researchers have moral schemas (or schemata) in mind – or mental maps of moral scenarios. These include the schemas of the ethical citizen (in relation to everyday ethical issues); the schemas of the ethical professional (in relation to the tasks and clients of their profession). However, they will not have any significant schemas for ‘how to be an ethical researcher’, unless they have been specifically taught how to think about such issues, or they have systematically trained themselves in this domain of knowledge, and stored experiences in schema, in long-term memory, of conducting ethical risk assessments on research plans or proposals, etc.

Schemata, or Schemas. Plural of schema, above.

Six thinking hats. This heuristic device was developed by Dr Edward De Bono many years ago to guide thinking. The assumption is that there are six different types of thinking task, and we disadvantage ourselves as
thinkers if we try to conduct all six type of thinking at once. The heuristic works by making the assumption we have six hats, each corresponding to one of the major thinking tasks, and that we put on the appropriate hat for a particular task, and then replace it with a different coloured hat for the next task, and so on. The six hats are as follows, as described in De Bono (1995: 44-49):

- **White hat**: Collecting information: What information is available? What information is needed? etc.
- **Red hat**: “The red hat allows the free expression of feelings, intuitions, hunches and emotions without apology and without explanation”. What are your feelings about this? What are your intuitions? What are your values?
- **Black hat**: The black hat is for caution, prudence; also for risk assessment. What is wrong with this idea? Why might it not work? What harm could result? etc.
- **Yellow hat**: “The yellow hat is the logical positive hat”, just as the black hat is the logical negative hat. We are naturally cautious, therefore “the yellow hat requires effort” to go against our cautious traditional, self-preserving instincts. What could be beneficial about this idea or action? What could we gain? What are the values and benefits that we have not noticed before?
- **Green hat**: “The green hat is the creative (thinking) hat”. What are the alternatives? What new ideas could we try? What are the possibilities here? How do we move forward from here?
- **Blue hat**: The blue hat is for managing and controlling the thinking process. What is the problem, and what is being thought about? How should we structure our thinking in order to reach our goals? What sequence of hats should we use? What other (CoRT) tools should we use – see CoRT above - and how?

A good way to proceed is to “…start with a blue hat and end with a blue hat, and choose any reasonable sequence in between”. (De Bono, 1995: 49).

---

**Social constructionists/Social constructionism.** Vivien Burr (1995: 3-5) provides a four-element definition of the fundamental beliefs of a social constructionist, as follows:

“1. A critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge: Social constructionism insists that we take a critical stance towards our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world (including ourselves). It invites us to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature to us, to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world…

“2. Historical and cultural specificity: The ways in which we commonly
understand the world, the categories and concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific. …

“3. Knowledge is sustained by social processes: If our knowledge of the world, our common ways of understanding it, is not derived from the nature of the world as it really is, where does it come from? The social constructionist answer is that people construct it between them. …

“4. Knowledge and social action go together: These ‘negotiated’ understandings could take a wide variety of different forms, and we can therefore talk of numerous possible ‘social constructions’ of the world. But each different construction also brings with it, or invites, a different kind of action from human beings…”

The perspective taken by me in this thesis fits broadly into this definition, though almost all social constructionists probably differ from each other to some extent, if only because they are constructing their understanding from a unique personal experience base. And in my work, I am inviting a different approach to the teaching and learning of research ethics, by inviting my readers to view the problems and prospects for the development of research ethics from my research-generated story of the current reality.

**Social intuitionism.** According to Haidt (2001), “The central claim of the social intuitionist model is that moral judgement is caused by quick moral intuitions and is followed (when needed) by slow, ex post facto (‘after the event’) moral reasoning”. In other words, people take moral (or immoral) actions because of gut reactions to a stimulus, and they rationalize their actions after the event. This idea goes back to the thinking of David Hume, who maintained that, unless we cared about others, our thoughts that our actions might cause them harm would not lead to moral action. It is the caring, the moral sentiment, that drives our moral decisions.

My own view is that it is not either/or (emotion or cognition) that counts in our moral development, but both/and (or both emotion and cognition). Neither on its own is sufficient to drive our moral actions, because we are essentially cognitive-emotive beings, and cognition and emotions are almost never significantly separated from each other. (Ellis, 1962; Le Doux, 1996; Damasio, 1994; Gibbs, 2003; Nichols, 2002).

**Subjectivity/subjectivism** (in epistemology). Subjectivity is defined by Honderich (1995: 857) as “Pertaining to the subject and his or her particular perspective, feelings, beliefs, and desires. The term pervades modern philosophy, usually contrasted with ‘objectivity’, but it plays various and sometimes ambiguous roles in epistemology, in contemporary Continental philosophy, and in cognitive science”. As used in my thesis, subjectivity means top-down processing, or using schemas from the past to interpret events and objects in the present. The resulting interpretation may or may not be a ‘good fit’ to the noumenal reality being
Subjectivism. (In ethical theory). Honderich (1995: 631) also defines subjectivism, in the context of a contrast with objectivism: “There is a range of views about moral judgements. At the subjectivist pole, they are taken to be discrete feeling-responses of individuals to situations actual or imagined”.

This view is in danger of ignoring the social education of the ‘subject’, who had parents and teachers who taught them socially specified moral rules, and modelled certain types of moral behaviours.

Subsumption (Ausubel’s concept). The concept of subsumption, as used by David Ausubel (1968) is very similar to Piaget’s concept of assimilation, in which the individual classifies the stimuli that s/he encounters in terms of ‘mental boxes’ (or schemas) created in the past.

Tacit knowledge. This concept originated with Michael Polanyi (Infed, 2006), and refers to the way in which professionals develop non-conscious bodies of knowledge and skill, which they deploy without conscious effort in appropriate situations. (Cf: Gladwell, 2006: 11, 12, 107, 111, 115 – on the ‘adaptive unconscious’, and making good decisions under pressure). When I use the concept of tacit knowledge in my thesis I am referring to this kind of competent decision making, ‘informed’ by the adaptive unconscious of the individual actor.

Teaching. Reece and Walker (1997) distinguish two approaches to teaching: the inductive and deductive approaches, which are characterized by whether the teacher helps their student to inductively learn, or deductively learn. These two approaches are said to be related to the humanist and behaviourist traditions respectively. I have no doctrinaire position on the use of either position, but I consider that the humanist tradition, as expressed by Rogers’ famous quote – ‘I know I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only create an environment in which they can learn’ – can result in unnecessary time wasting and a sense among students of being lost, and without guidance. In terms of teaching research ethics, I think it is important to use both active and passive approaches; but mainly to use facilitative approaches which will ensure that the students read what they need to read; actively reflect upon it; write about what they have read; debate what they have read and written about; and apply their learning to practical problems of research ethics in order to become skilled moral researchers.
Top down processing. Gregory (1980) popularised this idea, which was apparently first introduced by a couple of American psychologists called Norman and Rumelhart. (See Colman, 2002: 747). According to Colman, top-down processing is a form of "...information processing that proceeds from information already stored in memory, especially general assumptions or presuppositions about the material being processed, as when a person forms a hypothesis on the basis of existing schemata and prior experience about what an object might be and then uses sensory evidence to corroborate or disconfirm the hypothesis".

Universal prescriptivism. This is the central concept in the moral philosophy of R.M. Hare (1981). Hare maintains that a moral statement is not a statement of fact, but neither is it a simple statement of a sentiment. It is, he maintains, a prescription. The speaker intends that the hearer should follow the directive: Do not murder; Do not steal; or whatever is prescribed. Universal prescriptions are those prescriptions that we would prefer to see implemented by others in relation to ourselves, and as such we logically must implement them ourselves in our dealings with others. This philosophy owes a lot to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, with some elements of prima facie duties and some utilitarian elements.

Utilitarianism. Act utilitarianism was developed by Jeremy Bentham, and proposes that before performing any act, we must think of the consequences, and choose to do those acts that will maximize the greatest good of the greatest number of people. J.S. Mill refined utilitarianism by emphasizing not acts but rules. We must follow that rule which will, in the circumstances under consideration, produce the greatest utility, where the greatest utility is broadly the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people.

Values. "A value can be defined as an enduring belief that a specific end-state or mode of conduct is preferable". (McLeod, 2003: 386). Examples of values might include: freedom, autonomy, equality. Egan (2002: 45) sees values as "what people prize" – e.g. personal security. Soanes (2002: 931) defines values as "(3) ... standards of behaviour". The following values are listed in Gabriel and Casemore (2006: 209): "Beneficence... Non-Maleficence... Justice... Autonomy... Fidelity... and Self-respect...".

Virtue ethics. Virtue ethics was originally developed by Aristotle, and it a form of character development. It is based upon a sound training in moral behaviour, (normally) during childhood, followed by an education in how
to deliberate about the practical wisdom that supports virtuous living. Virtue ethics is probably the third most common or popular form of ethical theory after Kant’s deontology and Mills’ utilitarianism. There are problems in defining the virtues to be pursued by ethical researchers, but in principle I am committed to finding ways to incorporate virtue ethics into my proposed curriculum development model for the School of Social Care. Meara, Schmidt and Day (1996) recommend four virtues – two self-regarding and two other-regarding – as follows: Prudence and integrity; plus respectfulness and benevolence.

**Vygotsky/Vygotskian.** Vygotsky deviated from Piaget’s view of child development by emphasizing the role of instruction. Piaget had assumed that children learn for themselves, but this ignores the ways in which they are helped by adults, and by more expert children, and the ways in which they model after adults and older children. Vygotsky was therefore a social constructionist, while Piaget was an individual constructivist. In particular, Vygotsky emphasised that the teacher can assist the learner to reach their ‘zone of proximal development’ – or the next step along their learning path – by utilizing assistance from the more differentiated schemas of the teacher. This approach is called ‘scaffolding’, or ‘scaffolded instruction’, and normally has a social dimension – ‘learning together’. In terms of teaching research ethics, the lesson here is that the teacher must know where the student currently “is”, and what the “zone of proximal development” is for them, in order to be able to assist them to “cross the bridge”. If this is true for primary school pupils, is it necessarily also true for doctoral students? Not necessarily, but I hypothesize that it probably is the case; or that some very similar level of care needs to be taken in linking new knowledge presentations to old knowledge schemas.

**White hat thinking.** See ‘Six thinking hats’ above.

**Yellow hat thinking.** See ‘Six thinking hats’ above.
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Appendix One

Feminist, anti-racist and class considerations; and the integration of politics, morality and methodology

Introduction
Silberbauer (1993: 27) argues that virtually all moralities seem to be predicated on human traits of sociability and reciprocity – or what others would call innate empathy. (Cf: Hoffman, 2000; Gibbs, 2003; and others). Silberbauer goes on to say that it is probably the need for social order that drives the creation of moralities. However, he also draws attention to the possibility that there seems to be a difference between large-scale and small-scale societies, in that the latter seem to mainly emphasise the preservation of healthy relationships, while the former can seem to promote morality as an end in itself.

Paradoxically, Gilligan (1982/1993) found that relationships were at the foundation of the moral judgements of her female research participants in the USA, in the 1970s. This contradicted the findings of her mentor, Lawrence Kohlberg (1973) who had found that his male research participants mainly emphasised a kind of “ethic of justice” – while Gilligan was now saying that perhaps females, because of their earlier experiences with their mothers being fundamentally different from the experiences of males, were cognitively wired for connection, concern, care, responsibility and relationship. The males, on the other hand, because their gender is different from their mothers, had to in some sense psychically, or psychologically, separate from their mothers at a very early stage, relative to girls, and thus had formative experiences of separation, distance, individuality, and, eventually, competitive games with their peers. This, Gilligan argued, gave rise to fundamentally different forms of morality in males and females.

Chaffee (1998: 311) defines the difference as follows:
“The Ethic of Care involves judgements of moral value, those actions or qualities that display moral ‘goodness’ or ‘evil’. Who is a ‘good person’ and what is a ‘good action’? What can we do to promote the happiness and well-being of others?”

“The Ethic of Justice involves judgements of moral obligation, those actions which are morally ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. What moral obligations do we have toward other people? When should we be held morally responsible? How do we determine which choice in a moral situation is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, ‘just’ or ‘unjust’?”

There have, not surprisingly, being lots of controversies about this theory; and some later authors have sought to integrate an ethic based on justice and one based on care. Again, Chaffee (1998: 311) has something to say on this topic.

“Although we can distinguish between the Ethic of Care and the Ethic of Justice theoretically — and as we will see, it is a useful distinction — in the practical arena of daily living these two approaches to ethical thinking work together in partnership. For example, we expect a normally ‘good’ person to make the ‘right’ choice when they are confronted with an ethical dilemma, and to have a clear vision of ‘justice’ and ‘injustice’.”

Or, we could say, we care about justice because we care about the victims of injustice. And we advocate care of our families and others because it seems not only the empathic thing to do, but also the just and right thing to do.

However, not everybody takes this integrationist approach, and some authors have advocated a distinct “feminist ethic of care”, to rival the Kohlbergian and neo-Kohlbergian ethic of justice. (See for examples, Nebraska Sociological Feminist Collective, 1988); and Mauthner, Birch, Jessop and Miller, 2002). Some Doctoral students might wish to explore this approach further, and I wanted to make sure I covered this possibility in this appendix to my thesis.
**Commencing the process of integration**

My own approach is integrative, and I will now turn my attention to the ways in which a reader might consider the integration of the feminist ethic of care with the deontological, utilitarian and virtue ethics approaches that I have mainly advocated in the main body of this thesis.

I will begin with a small matrix that presents an integration of feminist interests and political considerations, and the practical goals of the reader's own research, plus their pre-existing ethical goals as gleaned from the legend of Table 4.3 on page 211-239 above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D. Feminist interests and considerations</th>
<th>A. Research Aim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Practical research goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.</td>
<td>Q.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A1.1: A matrix for integrating feminist interests (based on an ethic of care) with practical and ethical goals (based on duties and consequences)**

In Table A1.1, two 'problem spaces' are opened up to feminist considerations: 'P' and 'Q'. In those spaces, postgraduate research students could consider how feminist interests and considerations (as they, individually, understand them) interact with their practical research goals (B) and the kinds of ethical research goals (C) that they got from working through my ethical research thinking heuristic, in Figure 4.3 in Chapter 4 of my thesis. As a general rule of thumb, problem spaces (or decision spaces) are interrogated by asking a series of relevant questions, or by looking for specific, relevant problems. This could be done using the standard questions from De Bono's (1995) Six Thinking Hats, and/or the CoRT Tools. (Both systems are described in the Glossary, above).

Simpler, intuitively obvious questions could include: *How are my practical research goals impacted, or modified, by feminist interests and*
considerations? How are my ethical goals affected by feminist interests and goals?

In some cases, that consideration of ethical dilemmas arising in problem spaces ‘P’ and ‘Q’ could then be processed through my ethical decision making model (in Figure 4.4, in Chapter 4 above). In this way, I have incorporated the importance of feminist interests and considerations into my overall approach to the teaching and learning of ethical research competence, and into the design of research projects.

This task could be taken further, as indicated in Table A1.2, next, which adds a feminist ethical of care, explicitly, plus virtues that are compatible with feminist issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D. Political and moral considerations</th>
<th>A. Research Aim</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Practical research goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Feminist political interests and considerations</td>
<td>P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A feminist ethic of care</td>
<td>R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Virtues that are compatible with feminist issues</td>
<td>T.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A1.2: An expanded schema for considering feminist ethical research issues

This opens up six problems spaces that can be considered individually and then aggregated, or balanced against each other. Obvious questions may suggest themselves in relation to each problem space, such as, in problem space ‘U’, What virtues am I aware of, which are compatible with feminist issues, could also have an impact on my pre-existing ethical research goals?. In addition, questions and tools from De Bono (1995) may also be helpful here.

Time moves on:

It is now Sunday 14th September, and I spent a good deal of last night dreaming about structures and shapes that would not work. I know it had something to do with this appendix, and the problem of integrating feminist
considerations into my schema for ethical research thinking and planning. Therefore, I have returned to work on this appendix, and have just come up with a way of producing a tripartite fusion of relevant factors, as follows:

It now seems to me that the following three pairs of factors are relevant to our considerations of feminist ethics:

1a. Duty ethics and Consideration of consequences. (Figure 4.3 of Chapter 4).

1b. Practical research goals: What are we trying to achieve?

2a. Feminist political power considerations.

2b. A feminist ethic of care (relationship and responsibility)

3a. Virtue ethics.

3b. Critical thinking skills.

Elements 1a and 1b are important for reasons that I have fully explored in my thesis. Elements 2a and 2b are important for reasons explored in Nebraska SFC (1988) and Mauthner et al. (2002). And elements 3a and 3b are important because Mauthner et al. (2002) see an overlap between feminist ethics and virtue ethics, and they implicitly favour a process of reasoning about feminist issues.

These three pairs of elements can be considered in one illustration, to open up a complex problem or decision space (Orange Space 1x2x3), as shown in Table A1.3, next:
1. Jim Byrne’s approach to ethical research thinking/planning/deciding

2. Feminist issues

2a. Feminist political power considerations.

2b. A feminist ethic of care (relationships and responsibility)

3. Moral and intellectual virtues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space 1x2x3</th>
<th>Blue x green. Blue x red. Green x red</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

A1.3: A tripartite consideration of feminist and related considerations

The problem or decision space (Orange 1x2x3) can be explored in several different ways, by combining the blue and the red considerations; the blue and the green considerations; the green and the red considerations; and all three together.

**Politics and morality**

The interesting thing for me about the activity that I have just undertaken is this: I began with a concern about including feminist interests and considerations in my thesis conclusions about teaching and learning ethical research competence, but I quickly went beyond that to other progressive political considerations, as shown in the next matrix.
A. Research Aim

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D. Political considerations</th>
<th>B. Practical research goals</th>
<th>C. Ethical research goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Feminist interests and considerations</td>
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<td>Q.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Multicultural and anti-racist considerations</td>
<td>R.</td>
<td>S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social class issues</td>
<td>T.</td>
<td>U.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sexual orientation and sexuality issues</td>
<td>V.</td>
<td>W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Age issues; including ageism and child protection, etc.</td>
<td>X.</td>
<td>Y.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A1.4: A matrix for the integration of practical, ethical and political goals in qualitative research

This reminded me that feminism has a solid history of contributing to the development of more viable research methodologies, as indicated by Willig (2001: 5). Having presented a critique of positivism, ‘scientific method’, empiricism and inductivism, and other problematic features of modernist science, Willig goes on to say: “Many of the problems and limitations associated with the established epistemologies outlined above were identified by feminist scholars”. The influence of feminism seems to me to open up a space for the entry of progressive politics more generally – especially in relation to race, class and sexual orientation. I am therefore pleased to have been able to find a key location within the matrices in Tables A1.1, to A1.4 for feminist considerations.

Postscript

Having completed my consideration of how postgraduate students can take account of feminism in utilizing my heuristic devices (in Figures 4.3 and 4.4 of Chapter 4) for developing and/or enhancing their ethical research competence, it occurred to me that the heuristics in Tables A1.1 to A1.4 above could be expanded further, to take account of methodological
considerations, and some other sources of professional ethics outlined by Bond (2000: 39). This I have done in Table A1.5 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D. Political and general moral considerations</th>
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<th>C. Ethical research goals&lt;sup&gt;58&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Multicultural and anti-racist considerations</td>
<td>PS.3</td>
<td>PS.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social class issues</td>
<td>PS.5</td>
<td>PS.6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Sexual orientation and sexuality issues</td>
<td>PS.7</td>
<td>PS.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Age issues; including ageism and child protection, etc.</td>
<td>PS.9</td>
<td>PS.10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Other vulnerable populations</td>
<td>PS.11</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Virtue ethics</td>
<td>PS.13</td>
<td>PS.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Methodological considerations</td>
<td>PS.15</td>
<td>PS.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ethics and values implicit in (professional) models</td>
<td>PS.17</td>
<td>PS.18</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. University policy on research ethics</td>
<td>PS.19</td>
<td>PS.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Host institution’s (e.g. NHS) research ethics policy</td>
<td>PS.21</td>
<td>PS.22</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Professional codes of ethics and research guidelines</td>
<td>PS.23</td>
<td>PS.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

…13 follows…

<sup>57</sup> These are the ‘knowledge seeking’ goals of the researcher, such as: “1. To find out what population ‘X’ thinks about phenomenon ‘Y’. 2. To find out if they want or need change”.

<sup>58</sup> These are moral action goals derived from Figure 4.3 in Chapter 4 – including: Do no harm; Protect confidentiality; Get fully informed voluntary consent; etc., etc.
13. Other moral philosophies, apart from those in column ‘C’; including moral philosophies from other cultures.

14. The law

15. Ethical stands taken by research participants

16. The researcher’s personal ethical considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>PS.25</th>
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Table A1.5: Relating the outputs of Figure 4.3 to a broad range of additional considerations

I am not saying that every Doctoral student should consider every problem space, from PS.1 to PS.32. But they could benefit from asking themselves: *Which of these problem spaces do I need to consider, and what questions do I need to ask myself in each problem space?*

It is probably imperative for every qualitative researcher to give some consideration to problem spaces PS.1 and PS.2, given that we seem to live in primarily patriarchal societies. It seems unethical to conduct research which affects perceptions of women, or which impacts the balance of power between men and women, without considering the feminist political agenda.

It is also probably a good idea for every qualitative researcher to work through problem spaces PS.13 to PS.16, concerning virtue ethics and methodological approaches, and how they interact with the practical and ethical goals in columns ‘B’ and ‘C’. And PS.23 and 24, on codes of research ethics, are also essential. Apart from those problem spaces mentioned here, it seems to me that it is up to the individual researcher, and their supervisors, which other problem spaces they investigate.
Appendix Three

JIM BYRNE’S RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR PARTICIPANTS ON THE MA IN SOCIAL CARE
21st June 2007

CONFIDENTIAL

1. Have you studied research ethics on your Masters’ programme?  
(Please place a ✓ or a capital X after the option that you choose):
   - Yes
   - No

2. If yes, for how many hours (or days)? (Please use a ✓ or an X to select your option):
   - One hour
   - Less than half a day
   - Half a day
   - One day
   - One and a half days
   - Two days
   - More than two days
   - Other: ______

3a. Do you think you have had enough tutor input on the subject of ethical research to allow you to cope with the ethical issues that arose (or are arising) in your MA research?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Maybe
   - Don't know
3b. Do you think you have had enough tutor input on the subject of ethical research to allow you to believe that you have achieved a professional standard in thinking about research ethics, sufficient to cope with your post-MA research study in the real world?)

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Don't know

4. Have you written about ethical dilemmas, issues or difficulties in counselling research?

- Yes
- No

(Again, please indicate your option with a ✓ or a capital X)

5. If yes, please describe that written work:

6. Have you read any books or articles on research ethics?

- Yes
- No

7. If yes, can you recall the titles or authors? If so, could you briefly list them here:

8. Have you debated research ethics in seminars or other classes?

- Yes
- No

9. Do you feel comfortable thinking about issues to do with ethical research? (Please place a ✓ or a capital X next to the number which applies):

   Very comfortable: 5  4  3  2  1 : Very uncomfortable

10. Do you find ethical debate interesting or boring? (Please place a ✓ or a capital X next to the number which applies):
Very interesting:  5  4  3  2  1 Very uninteresting

11. Do you find ethical debate easy or difficult?
Very easy:  5  4  3  2  1 Very difficult

12. If you find it relatively difficult, why is that, in your opinion? (Please explain):

13. Do you consider that research could be a dangerous activity, which could harm participants? (Please place a ✓ or a capital X next to the number which applies):
Very dangerous:  5  4  3  2  1 : Not at all dangerous

14. What is your overall impression of the teaching of ethics on your Masters programme? (Please elaborate):

15. Any other comments:
Appendix Three

JIM BYRNE’S RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS ON THE MA IN SOCIAL CARE
21st June 2007

CONFIDENTIAL

3. Have you studied research ethics on your Masters’ programme? (Please place a ✓ or a capital X after the option that you choose):
   - Yes
   - No

4. If yes, for how many hours (or days)? (Please use a ✓ or an X to select your option):
   - One hour
   - Less than half a day
   - Half a day
   - One day
   - One and a half days
   - Two days
   - More than two days
   - Other: ______

3a. Do you think you have had enough tutor input on the subject of ethical research to allow you to cope with the ethical issues that arose (or are arising) in your MA research?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Maybe
   - Don’t know
3b. Do you think you have had enough tutor input on the subject of ethical research to allow you to believe that you have achieved a professional standard in thinking about research ethics, sufficient to cope with your post-MA research study in the real world?)

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Don't know

4. Have you written about ethical dilemmas, issues or difficulties in counselling research?

- Yes
- No

(Again, please indicate your option with a ✓ or a capital X)

14. If yes, please describe that written work:

15. Have you read any books or articles on research ethics?

- Yes
- No

16. If yes, can you recall the titles or authors? If so, could you briefly list them here:

17. Have you debated research ethics in seminars or other classes?

- Yes
- No

18. Do you feel comfortable thinking about issues to do with ethical research? (Please place a ✓ or a capital X next to the number which applies):

Very comfortable: 5 4 3 2 1 : Very uncomfortable

19. Do you find ethical debate interesting or boring? (Please place a ✓ or a capital X next to the number which applies):
Very interesting: 5  4  3  2  1  Very uninteresting

20. Do you find ethical debate easy or difficult?
Very easy: 5  4  3  2  1  Very difficult

21. If you find it relatively difficult, why is that, in your opinion? (Please explain):

22. Do you consider that research could be a dangerous activity, which could harm participants? (Please place a ✓ or a capital X next to the number which applies):
Very dangerous: 5  4  3  2  1 : Not at all dangerous

14. What is your overall impression of the teaching of ethics on your Masters programme? (Please elaborate):

15. Any other comments:
Appendix Four

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES
ON THE PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN SOCIAL CARE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MINERVA

By Jim Byrne

21st June 2007

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Doctoral Candidate,
Recently, my research interest changed somewhat towards the teaching of research ethics. It occurred to me that you, having completed some part of the Doctoral programme, would be very well placed to indicate the kind of teaching programme that the teaching staff might want to consider using in the future. Would you therefore be so kind as to answer the following seven questions, which will greatly help the teaching staff and future Doctoral students, as well as informing my research?

Guarantee. Your name will not appear in my research, and your identity will be protected.

* What year of study have you just completed: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th? (Please place an ‘X’ after one of the six options above)

###

Question 1. How many hours or days of taught input on Research Ethics would you recommend?

Please specify: …
###

**Question 2.** What **form** should the input take? (For examples: seminars, lectures, discussions, talks, debates, etc…)  

Please specify: …

###

**Question 3.** Should students have to **submit** any **written material** on this topic?  

If so, please specify: …

###

**Question 4.** What should the **content** of the taught inputs be? (For examples, codes of ethics [if so, which?], moral philosophy, case studies, professional experience, etc…)  

Please specify: …
###

**Question 5.** What *reading material* would you recommend? (For example, names of books, articles, websites, etc…)

Please specify: …

###

**Question 6.** Should the students be *assessed* on the subject of Research Ethics? (For examples: Before the course begins; during the course; at the end; and if so, how?)

Please be specific: …

###
**Question 7.** Do you have any other ideas/recommendations/thoughts on this subject?

If so, please specify: …

###

Thank you for taking some time to complete this questionnaire.
**Introductory Comments**

This appendix contains a couple of documents related to the ethical approval of my research, by my own university department; plus a couple of illustrations of the documents I used to ensure that the process of informed consent was conducted properly with my research participants.

Appendix 5(3) below outlines my Summary Research Plan, and details the dates of approval by my Research Review Panel and by my supervisors. My plan was subjected to strict scrutiny, and approved in stages, to ensure that sufficient detail was available before consent was agreed. That plan received outline approval on 13th February, at my Research Review Panel; and was subsequently approved by my supervisors on 22nd March 2007.

Appendix 5(1) is an illustration of the types of Information Sheets I produced to inform my potential research participants. I produced a number of different Information Sheets for a number of different research events.

Finally, Appendix 5(2) is an example of a Consent Form that I used for one such research event. I have stored all signed Consent Forms in a secure cabinet, and will destroy them by the end of 2009.
INFORMATION SHEET

For Research Participants
In the Ethical Research Learning Group (ERLG)
27th March 2007

by Jim Byrne

You are being invited to participate in a research study as part of my doctoral research programme. Before you decide whether or not to opt in to this research, it is important that you understand what the research is about and what will be expected from you.

Basically, the research is about How Ethical Research Competence is Taught and Learned; and whether it can be taught and learned better.

All that is expected of you is that you have a genuine interest in participating as an active postgraduate student in a learning experience which corresponds to the aim of the previous paragraph.

Please take the time to read the following information carefully, and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask me for clarification if there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information. Take whatever time you need to make your decision whether to opt in or to opt out. There is no pressure to participate! If in doubt, opt out!

1. Name of researcher: Jim Byrne, MA(Ed), Doc.Couns (cand)

2. Aim of research: To find out how postgraduate students think and learn about research ethics, and how they could think and learn this topic more effectively. The corollary (for tutors) is to try to find out how to more effectively teach the topic of ethical research competence.

3. What I will do: All that I will do, on 27th March, is to introduce you to some ideas, in the form of a seminar/workshop, which will cover the following elements:

   (a). To review the Group Schema – for ‘What is Research?’ - that we constructed on 27th February, at the CRG event;

   (b). To update that schema in the light of your subsequent learning about the importance of the ethical component of research;

   (c). Looking at how to do ‘Ethical Risk Assessments’ in counselling research; which will involve introducing you to, and getting you to think about and discuss, a real counselling research project proposal, and its ethical implications;
(d). Small group discussions of a real-life research proposal, and some obstacles to pursuing it;

(e). Two questionnaires on group perception;

(f). A debate on whether or not it would be morally acceptable to proceed with the sample research project, in the light of the obstacles we have identified. (This debate will follow the structure of the KMDD (Konstanz Method of [Moral] Dilemma-Discussion), devised by Professor Georg Lind, at the University of Konstanz, Germany. Dr Lind believes that the KMDD debate structure is one of the best methods of teaching greater moral reasoning ability, and so I want to try this approach out to see if it helps you significantly).

The overall aims of the session will be:

(a). To provide you, the participants, with an insight into ethical research which will serve you well when you come to doing your own research project; and:

(b). To provide feedback/debriefing about a key aspect of the event on 27th Feb.

(c). To provide me, Jim Byrne, with an opportunity to collect research data/information for my own research, which is on how postgraduate students think and feel about ethical research, and how they learn and are taught.

(d). To run an event that allows you to develop your ethical research competence.

Your identity will be kept out of my research records, and confidentiality of material will be protected at every stage of my work.

You are under no obligation to attend this event, and may leave at any time without the need to offer any explanation, or even to speak. You are free to opt in or opt out.

4. Recording of discussions: I will ask you for your consent to have your group discussions of research issues audio recorded. You do not have to agree to this, and can either prevent audio recording taking place, or personally/individually withdraw from the group at any time, without any need to explain your actions. The third possibility, of course, is to stay in the group but refuse to speak. (Anybody can say “pass” when it’s their turn to speak).
5. **Risks/pain etc:** I will implement a set of ground-rules to prevent any loss of face on your part during this seminar/workshop. I will keep all audio recordings and texts confidential. Your name will never be published in connection with this research, and your identity will be protected for being guessed-at.

6. **Your role:** During this seminar, you will be asked to participate as an active student, and to discuss research issues as you understand them.

6b. **The data/information collected:** What will I do with the data/information that I collect? I will anonymize it, so that your name does not appear in any transcript of this session. I will use it to develop texts for inclusion in my doctoral thesis. And I may subsequently abstract some information from my thesis for use in writing articles. Your name will never appear in any of my writing about this event. Your identity will be kept out of my writings.

7. **Right to withdraw:** As stated earlier, you have the right to withdraw at any time; and indeed you are not under any obligation to participate at all.

7b. **Duration of the research:** I am now proposing to run three events on the teaching/learning of research ethics, face to face at the “University of Minerva”. These events will be held on:

- Tuesday 27th March 2007 - 4.30 to 7.00pm
- Tuesday 24th April 2007 - 4.30 to 7.00pm
- Tuesday 19th June 2007 - 4.30 to 7.00pm

The location will be room A5.14.

8. **Payment:** There will **not** be any payment in connection with this research activity. Payment-in-kind is a possible way to construe the fact that this seminar/workshop is designed to help you, the participant, to improve your own research skills. And I will be offering a follow-up online seminar group (or possibly face-to-face seminar group) to support you if you want to pursue this inquiry further. And I can offer some telephone consultations to help you with problems with your research project.

9. **Further information:** I am willing to answer any questions you may have.

10. **Consent Form:** Please sign the Consent Form, attached to this Information Sheet, if you are willing to participate in this research, and willing for the data to be incorporated into my thesis, and/or articles, without any mention of your name. (HO No.3). It would help enormously if you sign the Consent Form before coming to the event on 27th March, so it can be handed in at the start of the event, thus saving time. However, if you have any questions, do not sign the form until you have discussed them with me at the start of the event on 27th March.
11. **Complaints:** If you have any complaint to make about your experience of participating in this research project, then please direct your complaint in the first instance to Dr William West, at william.west@man.ac.uk.

12. **Distress:** If you experience any emotional distress as a result of participating in this research, which seems unlikely, then please turn for information about how to get counselling help to Dr Clare Lennie, in the first instance, at Clare.lennie@man.ac.uk.

Jim Byrne  
Email: Abc4rebt@aol.com  
Tel (office) 01422 - 847 882  
Tel (home) 01422 - 843 629

**Correspondence:** Jim Byrne, 27 Wood End, Keighley Road, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX7 8HJ.

###
Appendix 5(2)

School of Social Care, Welfare and Human Learning, University of Minerva
Consent Form for Participants Taking Part in Student Research Projects

Title of Project: A model of human moral functioning, and how it relates to the teaching and learning of research ethics among postgraduate students in counselling.

Name of Researcher   Jim Byrne

School/Department: Doctoral programme,

Participant (volunteer)

Please read this and if you are happy to proceed, sign below.

The researcher, Jim Byrne, has given me my own copy of the information sheet about the 27th March event, which I have read and understood. The information sheet explains the nature of the research and what I would be asked to do as a participant. I understand that the research is for a student project and that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded unless subject to any legal requirements. Jim Byrne has discussed the contents of the information sheet with me and given me the opportunity to ask questions about it.

I agree to take part as a participant in this research and I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, and without detriment to myself.

Signed:………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Date:……………………………….

Family Name BLOCK
LETTERS:……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Other Name(s) BLOCK
LETTERS:……………………………………………………………………………………………………

(If the participant is under 18 or a vulnerable adult a parent/guardian or other responsible adult must also sign the form: Not applicable to this higher education research project.)

Researcher
I, Jim Byrne, the researcher, confirm that I have discussed with the participant the contents of the information sheet which was issued to each of them individually.

Signed:..................................................................................

Name: Jim Byrne

Date:..........................................................
Appendix 5(3)

MY SUMMARY RESEARCH PLAN

Jim Byrne, DCouns (cand), MA(Ed), Dip.CP.Psych
15th March 2007

1. Introduction

On 24th December 2006, I submitted a twenty-thousand word research proposal, which had taken many months to research and write.

On 2nd February 2007, I submitted a 3,500 word Research Plan, with substantial appendices, for my Research Review Panel.

I am now submitting a 1,300 word summary of the research outlined in those two documents, in the light of the experience of my Research Review Panel, and subsequent reflection. (There are no appendices attached to this document, but the appendices from my previous documents may prove to be relevant to a reading of this document).

This document needs to be read in conjunction with my larger, more substantial proposal and plan. In particular, all the philosophical derivation and soul-searching of the first two documents have been omitted from this summary.

This plan received outline approval on 13th February; at my Research Review Panel; and was subsequently approved by my supervisors on 22nd March 2007.

The complete proposal follows below:
MY SUMMARY RESEARCH PLAN

Jim Byrne, DCouns (cand), MA(Ed), Dip.CP.Psych
15th March 2007

1. Introduction

On 24th December 2006, I submitted a twenty-thousand word research proposal, which had taken many months to research and write.

On 2nd February 2007, I submitted a 3,500 word Research Plan, with substantial appendices, for my Research Review Panel.

I am now submitting a 1,300 word summary of the research outlined in those two documents, in the light of the experience of my Research Review Panel, and subsequent reflection. (There are no appendices attached to this document, but the appendices from my previous documents may prove to be relevant to a reading of this document).

This document needs to be read in conjunction with my larger, more substantial proposal and plan. In particular, all the philosophical derivation and soul-searching of the first two documents have been omitted from this summary.

2. What am I proposing to research?

I am proposing to research the question of how postgraduate research students – in the School of Social Care, University of Minerva - learn how to be ethical researchers; and how their tutors teach them. Also, how they could respectively learn and teach this subject more effectively.

My main research question is:

“How can we understand the mind and behaviour of postgraduate research students, such that:

- If you are a postgraduate student, you will know how to learn to be an ethical researcher?; and:

- If you are a postgraduate research tutor, you will know how to help your students to become ethical researchers?”

My main contribution to knowledge is likely to be: *A model of human moral functioning, and how it relates to the teaching and learning of research ethics among postgraduate students in counselling*. This is likely to be of help to future generations of postgraduate research students and their tutors. The main gains are likely to be:
(a) Safer research;

(b) Better coaching of students in the subject of developing competence in ethical research; and:

(c) Better systems for tutors to employ in promoting the ethics-learning of their postgraduate students.

3. How am I proposing to research it?

I intend to offer a training programme to postgraduate students at the University of Minerva, aimed at teaching them to be more effective as ethical researchers. This will resume (post pilot) on 27\textsuperscript{th} March and run for at least three or four months. In the process I will measure how developed they are as ethical researchers at the start of the programme and at the end of the programme, to see how much improvement has been achieved. That measurement will be done qualitatively, as I am not convinced that any of the quantitative tests of morality are valid and reliable.

I also intend to share my learning from the student group with a group of postgraduate research tutors, to see if I can learn anything about how they (the tutors) think about the task of teaching ethical research approaches to postgraduate research students.

With both groups I will be using Teacher Inquiry methods (from Action Research), and writing up the results on an Action->Reflection->Conclusion->Planning->Action spiral, with about four to six loops or cycles. I will audio record substantial sections of each of my educational interventions.

4. Who will be involved in my research?

I will be working with a group of about 13 postgraduate research students, mainly from the MA in Social Care, who have opted into my proposed training programme. This group has been called ‘the Ethical Research Study Seminar’. I hope also to be working with a group of ten or more tutors identified by “Dr Brown”. If and when this group emerges, it is likely to be called ‘the Ethical Research Teaching Group’.

5. How will I collect my data?

Some of my data will be collected in the form of audio recordings of discussions, among groups of students and groups of tutors. Some may also be in the form of some appropriate questionnaire responses. And, of course, there are lots of data in the results of my literature review.
6. How will I analyze my data?

Firstly, I will be conducting four to six cycles of action research, and I want to analyze the data/texts at the end of each cycle. I will do this by a process of immersion→externalization-(in-writing)→active-reflection/interpretation→conclusion-formation→planning the next step.

Secondly, part of the “next step” will be to take my interpretations to a “new group” for evaluation/appraisal, which may throw up elements of validation and/or disconfirmation. In other words, I will take my learning from the student group to the tutor group, and use that as a stimulus for a tutor-group discussion. I will then take my learning from the tutor group, and use that to improve my working with the student group.

Third, I will be looking for “patterns that connect”: Newman (1998: 7). Pattern making seems to be a basic human cognitive (or cognitive-emotive) process.

Fourth, with regard to the details of immersion: I will immerse myself in the data/texts, and allow my unconscious mind (or “adaptive unconscious”) to process it into whatever patterns emerge. (McLeod, 1994: 89). This immersion process could involve listening to audio tapes several times, and extracting whatever stands out on each listening, instead of transcribing everything.

Fifth, I may use elements of ‘conversation analysis’ when interpreting certain elements of the audio tapes of discussions and the qualitative questionnaires, if any. (McLeod, 2001: 91-99). And I may combine this with aspects of ‘argumentation analysis’, as described in Hart (1998: 79-108); or critical thinking skills.

7. Ethical considerations

The main ethical issues in my proposal are:

1. Maintaining confidentiality of research texts and audio tapes. These will be stored in a secure filing cabinet, and destroyed as soon as possible after my viva.

2. Maintaining informed consent as an ongoing process. This will be achieved by designing a no-pressure entry process (see point 3); plus multiple exit points; and explicit permission for anybody to leave
the research at any time without any need to explain or excuse themselves.

3. A no-pressure entry process. With regard to informed consent, I will send out Information Sheets and Consent Forms for each educational intervention that I run. These will be despatched to potential participants at least ten days before the event is due to take place. Therefore, each individual can decide, in the privacy of their own home, whether or not to attend the event, thus avoiding any peer pressure to participate which could arise if the consultation took place after their arrival at an educational event.

4. Protecting research participants from ego-anxiety or threats to their self-esteem; and other emotional disturbances. This depends upon two aspects: Ground rules for participant behaviour towards each other; and sensitive communication strategies by me. (For example, no sarcasm, no put-downs).

5. Ensuring that I do not harm the good name of the University of Minerva and its postgraduate tutors and students. This involves ensuring that I handle the information I collect in a sensitive manner, and publish nothing that could be misconstrued, misinterpreted or misapplied to the detriment of teachers in general or the tutor-participants in this study.

8. Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is clear that I have a viable Action Research project, and that I am likely to be able to collect some good quality data from the student group. Hopefully, it will also be possible to get volunteers for the tutor group, or, if that is not possible, to develop a less formal approach. I will also link and interrelate my learning from my Action Research interventions with data and ideas from my Literature Review.