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# **Embodied Reflexivity: Discerning Ethical Practice through the Six Part Story Method**

## **Abstract**

Early reflective practice drew on the work of Dewey (1916, 1938) and the concept of learning-by-doing involving individual reflection on, and in, action. Bradbury, Kilminster, Zukas, Frost and Zukas (2010) take the practice of reflection into a more socially constructed sense of knowing where the individual ‘reflexes’ in and through experiences as felt ways of knowing. This concept forms the basis of this article. We will explore a process of learning called the 6 Part Story Method (6PSM). Originally created in the field of Dramatherapy as a diagnostic tool to enable child victims of trauma to be supported (Lahad, 1992), Author 1 further developed it (2015) to support the development of self awareness and practice the enhancement of education professionals and leaders. Author 2 then utilized it in teaching a course on ethical practice in a graduate programme; the course’s epistemological underpinning is the concept of “ethical know-how” (Varela, 1999). We then include the work of Author 3, a student in the programme, as she explores the story she developed through the 6PSM and then analyzes the effect of it on herself one year later.

**Keywords:** embodiment, reflexivity, storytelling, ethical practice

## **Introduction**

The concept of reflection as part of professional practice has evolved considerably since the early 1980s. Schön's (1983) concept of reflection was as an individual activity that would enable the developing professional teacher, social worker, or health care worker to engage in life-long learning practice, involving processes of introspection and evaluation (Fook & Gardner, 2007). Schön considered the "reflective practitioner" as an individual who based professional growth and development on their reflective processes. He explored the potential for a radical shift towards professionals digging into and under the behaviours, attitudes and experiences that had shaped their delivery within a range of settings. Schön's original concept of critical praxis opened up the idea of questioning assumptions inherent in the practitioner in order to move the self forward (Bradbury *et al.*, 2010). Conceptualising reflection-in-action – individual's awareness of their actions in the moment based on knowledge created through action – and the supporting reflection-on-action after the event – providing new insights and learning from a temporal and spatial distance – encouraged a dual layer of self-knowledge development moving from tacit to explicit knowledge-in-action (Schön, 1983).

The lexicon of reflection has also developed into somewhat of a tricky (or "sticky" – Cunliffe, 2004) mix of critical thinking and active change, giving birth to a multitude of terms such as critical reflection, reflexivity, or critical learning (Fook, 2010). This, in turn, has generated a range of overlapping discourses about the definition, place and purpose of reflection within professional practice.

Bolton (2010) echoes the view that reflection on its own is not critical (Fook, 2010; Mezirow, 1991) and that, instead, it requires inductive reasoning, analysis drawn from theoretical understanding and practical experiences and the concept of metaphorical bootstrapping (Gentner, 2010, Saltiel, 2010). To distinguish further between reflective practice and critical reflection, Fook (2010) argues that the former is a broader and more overarching container for a range of different critical processes and the latter is focused on transformational learning experiences (Linds & Vettraino, 2015).

Reflexivity suggests an act or action, that of flexing, flexibility, the capacity to see around and beyond what is in front of you; a sense of turning or bending back (Steier, 1991) thus involving the idea of the transformative 'stop' moment (Appelbaum, 1995; Fels, 2012, 2015). This is the ability to halt the action and think about what is working or not working and how understanding and acting on that can make a useful change in the process. The "stop" is the advent of intelligent choice (Appelbaum, 1995), a moment of critical and aesthetic reflexivity that appropriates the aesthetics of the experience (the emotions, feelings, sensations) and uses them to transform action from that point.

Creating these moments is a process of performative articulation, a 'bodily boundary that makes movement, positioning, and positional change possible' (Aoki, 1996, p. 408) which requires being open to experience and willing to engage in dialogue with that which troubles or challenges us, thus risking confusion and uncertainty. These moments of tension involve

resistance, often emotionally felt, embodied experiences that are focused on being in the moment, experiencing and acting based on lived incidents.

Arguably all reflexive action is embodied and is a type of knowing; a category of reflective practice (Kinsella, 2007). 'Organisms create their own experience through their actions' (Hutchins 2014, p. 428). Embodied action is also not purely about the self or the individual learning from experiences around them; it is also about understanding the influence actions, thoughts, words have on others. Embodied reflexivity is about being wholly conscious of one's own feelings and emotions in order to be fully immersed in the here and now (Finlay 2005; Linds, 2008; Varela *et al.*, 1991). It is about acknowledging that no one *just* observes, an observer is impacted on, and impacts, the actions taking place (Halling and Goldfarb, 1991).

### **The 'How' of reflecting**

Considerable literature exists focused on the use of story creation and telling as a tool for reflecting on practice (for example, Abma, 2003; Hunt, 2001; Hoban, 2000). Narrative and story creation and telling are integral elements of postmodern approaches to reflection, critical reflection, reflexivity and embodied reflexive processes. They are modes of communication and connection that can act as mirrors into one's life. As such, stories can then provide important and accessible vehicles for reflexive learning. They require us to take 'a stance of wondering, of expansion, of partial perspective, and of being uncertain' (Keevers & Treleaven, p. 513). One way of conceiving of this metaphorically is the prism rather than the mirror. Here reflection-on-practice process is called a prismatic dialogue (Bird, 2006). Experiential and embodied as

well as cognitive, this engages practitioners at the edge of their knowing and brings forth their imaginations. As the name suggests, this does not aim to mirror or look back but to refract and diffract in order to encourage embodied understanding of the effects, possibilities and impossibilities created from intra-actions. Prismatic dialogue highlights the importance of the body and emotions in reflective practice that enables the practitioner to feel the questions. Knowing becomes a way of engaging with the world so such an approach requires 'critical and self-reflexive participation in the production of such practices in order to take responsibility for the fact that the world becomes differently through different practices. (Cunliffe and Jun, 2005; Rouse, 2002)' (p. 509).

One method of such a relational approach through story creation and telling is Lahad (1992, 2013) and Ayalon's (2007, 2013) Six-Part-Story Method (6PSM).

### **Introduction to 6PSM**

The 6-Part-Story Method (also known as 6-Piece-Making and 6PSM) (Lahad and Dent-Brown, 2012), is a story creation and telling approach that originated in the field of Dramatherapy in the 1990s. It was developed by Mooli Lahad (for example, 1992), a Dramatherapist and psychologist living and working in Israel, alongside his colleague Ofra Ayalon (2007, 2013). The model was originally designed as a dramatic and therapeutic tool for working with individuals and groups (Lahad, 1992). However, as it evolved, Lahad developed the 6PSM as a diagnostic tool during his work as a Dramatherapist with children traumatised by the experience of war.

Lahad's original investigation into stress and coping mechanisms highlighted that, when faced with trauma, individuals will revert to particular ways of coping that might see them making use of a ways of behaving. Lahad collated these approaches into a multi-modal model called BASICPh (see Lahad 1992 for more information on the BASICPh matrix). The 6PSM created, which would be potentially mythical or fairytale-like in nature (Lahad, 1992, 2013), has six elements which are:

1. A main character,
2. A task or problem that the character has to cope with,
3. A helpful force – something that will aid the character in their task,
4. A hindering force – something that will cause the character more difficulty,
5. The action of the story – how the character copes with the problem or task, and
6. The 'ending' of the story – not necessarily a conclusion but an indication of what happens after the problem has been dealt with.

Although the 6PSM has predominantly been used within the profession of dramatherapy, there are synergies between the model and models of reflexive practice used in other professional fields, such as health and social care, education and, increasingly, business and management. Storytelling as a way of understanding the self is a traditional method of passing forward knowledge and unpacking experiences to better connect with the world around us. In Author 1's research, she adapted the concept of the 6PSM as a vehicle for embodied reflection-in-action (reflexion) and placed it into the field of education, working with leaders and practitioners from

a variety of educational settings to support enhanced professional practice. Using the 6PSM approach, along with Image Theatre methods (Boal, 1979; Linds & Vettrano, 2008), participants in the research created, told, listened to and explored each other's fictional realities with the goal of supportive and collaborative restorying to find better ways of being and doing.

In the original 6PSM model, clients would draw the six elements of their story eg: character, task and so on. In Author 1's research, and based on an initial adaptation of the model by Dent-Brown (1999), she used picture cards, very much like a deck of playing cards. Each card in the deck had a different image and often these were abstract in nature. Participants in the research process were given six of these cards at random and as each card was turned over to reveal the image hidden, the stories emerged from within.

Author 2 participated in some of Author 1's research process, exploring his own work as a university professor. Having been introduced to the process, he has used it over recent years with a graduate class to guide students in their exploration of their learning during a course exploring ethical practice in process consulting (which will be described later). Below is an example of the 6PSM approach which evolved out of this class facilitated by Author 2, where Author 3 explores her story as a fictional piece within the context of ethical practice. She was responding to the prompt, 'tell a story about ethical practice' in the last class in that year-long course.

*Once upon a time there was a tree growing out of the rock wall of a mountainside all alone. Her trunk was thin and her top branches were bent away from the mountain because of a force of wind blowing against her growth.*



*The tree was searching for the source of constant wind pushing against her, causing her trunk to painfully bend back, barely able to hold her roots' grip onto the rock. The wind appeared in the sky as a woman's face with bright red hair and matching red lips. She was blowing and whistling forcefully in direction of the tree.*

*Seeing the tree struggle, along came her friend, a two headed creature whose body looked like a mix of a deer and kangaroo. It climbed down to the mountain rock on its hind legs to update the tree about its latest journey in the search for answers on the source of this force, the wind weighing down on the tree. Seeing that the tree could not uproot herself, the two-headed animal was committed to helping the tree find her truth. Since the struggling growth of the tree, this friend had been leaving the rockside and returning each time with new direction, hope and insight towards helping the tree bounce back. But the tree remained stuck in her clenching for survival against the rock.*

*Every time the tree's animal friend left for another search, down below appeared a large blue whale in the sea beneath the hanging tree. Even though this whale carried a smile, it actually instilled fear in the tree as it tried to convince her that her helping friend was not coming back. Behind the smile represented mischief and a false desire to help. The whale would try to prevent the tree from seeing and understanding the sources of the wind, encouraging the tree to surrender, let go and fall into the sea below. The whale would hide again beneath the surface when the animal friend would return to comfort the tree.*

*One day the tree found herself waiting for her two-headed friend to come back with some insight, as it had been a long time since it last left and both the wind and the whale were weighing heavily on her. As she waited, she knew that she had to muster strength against these*

*two forces. She closed her eyes and took deep breaths to quiet the noise to focus on holding on tight. In that time of inner silence, the image of a golden key suddenly emerged in her mind.*

*Holding onto this key image, the tree realized that the animal friend was not a real being and she has created it with her mind, actually representing herself, her true self. She became aware that only she held the key to her own struggle.*

*Alone in her ongoing battle against the wind, in a state of rumination, she had created the two-headed character to give her strength. As its journeyed away, sources of hope were becoming longer apart as they left her alone to realize that the obstacle was herself. She had not been able to see or listen to the observer within, discern the source of the wind, and visit voices below.*

*The tree had little time to reflect on her own, and began to recognize that she had been distracting herself, living vicariously through the stories she created of the animal friend, while at the same time being tempted to surrender to the whale below, who shadowed her with doubt and an illusion of false freedom. She understood that she held the key to her own struggle.*

*In this moment of pause and realization, the tree began to take deeper breaths and stretched her trunk upright in alignment with the rock. For the first time, she was able to see the silhouette of the still mountains behind a sunset sky of orange and gold. Looking out to this image, the wind began to die down and she could feel peace. The tree knew that while her roots were deep into the mountain, she could reach a place of stillness through mindfulness, accessing her potential as the tree she was meant to be.*

This article will elaborate on the story and its implications as Author 3 reflects on its impact both a few weeks later in a final course assignment and then one year later. It will also reflect on the challenges of this method and future work needed to explore the nature of this approach.

## **Ethics Course context**

The Human Systems Intervention (HSI) program, which Author 3 was a student in, integrates theory, values and skills in organization development and human systems intervention. It is designed to develop the expertise of students as process consultants (Schein, 1999) for future organizational leaders and consultants who are interested in facilitating change processes within human systems. An understanding of this approach to consultation evolves through developing a learning community where students engage with theory in order to reflect on their experience and interaction with others.

Taylor, De Guerre, Gavin, and Kass (2002), who developed this cohort program based on Schein's approach, write that the purpose of intervention 'at a process level is to enable the client system to catalyze its own learning and renewal, to change normative patterns to be more proactively adaptive; that is, to become a learning system' (p. 361).

'The change process is one not merely of transmitting ideas but of changing values... the process consultant is concerned about passing on his skills and values' (Schein, 1999, p. 191, 194). While this involves the consultant passing on values, the student becoming consultant is often unaware of his/her personal values and ethical practices.

Therefore, the *teaching of* ethical practice in process consultation does not just involve *knowing-what* set of techniques or activities to lead a client group through; learning, *knowing-how and when* to use them is just as important.

One of the required courses in the first year of the program and taught by Author 2 is the Ethics and Philosophy of Human Systems Intervention. The design is rooted in the concept of “ethical know-how” (Varela, 1999) which means that the development of an understanding of our values requires us to become attuned to, and act appropriately in, our environment. Through repeated engagement, our ethical know-how is employed and, through feedback, modified. What we experience is determined by what we do and what we know how to do is determined by what we are open to doing. This is further understood when we approach this process through *enactive* and *embodied knowing*. *Enactive knowing* means that ethics develops not only as principles, but emerges collectively through engagement with others in joint and shared action. *Embodied knowing* means our ethical practices depend upon being actively attuned to, and in, the world.

According to Dewey (1922), all human action is *moral* action because it has an impact on, and implications for, both self and society. Furthermore, moral action is not objective, ‘the knower is not standing over against a situation that he merely observes; he is directly confronted with what he sees. It is something that he has to do’ (Gadamer, 1999, p. 314).

Varela (1999) calls our lived situations 'microworlds' (p. 10) which is the repertoire of habitual behaviours that ready us to act in every specific lived situation, and each of these situations involve interactions with other people. Moreover, we are constantly moving from one situation to another. Being ready to act is part of a person's identity; the corresponding lived situation is the microworld which invites us to act. Thus 'who we are' cannot be separated from the world and people we are in relationship with. The point is to notice their recurrence, and to become adept at responding to them. It is that noticing which is the foundation of the use of 6 PSM in the course.

When these microworlds break down, ethical know-how is generated through a 'commonsensical emergence of an appropriate stance of the agent's life' (Varela, 1999, p. 11). What is "appropriate" is determined through inquiry into the context of past actions, present stances, and plans for the future. In the course of any work as a consultant in a system (be it through data gathering, design, or intervention), one is faced with a multitude of decisions without recourse to planning, deliberation, or reflection. This requires thoughtfulness, which 'leads to ethical awareness. When such ethical awareness is followed by ethical action in any sphere where action is needed, then we live and act as responsible citizens in our communities' (Speicher, 1998, p. 432).

Moment-to-moment decision-making is the performing and enacting of ethical practice. Principles emerge in spaces that integrate the purposes, processes, and outcomes of practice. In the day-to-day activity of a process consultation project contracted with a client, we do not

stand back from the system as an observer and impose our plan on it. We are in a much tighter relationship, as (inter)acting is experienced as a steady flow of skilful activity in response to our own sense of the situation. We must learn to continually adapt to the situation in an embodied way. As we respond to the situations in which we work in, we 'skillfully cope' (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1999, p. 111) within the steady flow of the living/lived experiences of the system. This process, which Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1991) have described as letting go ('rather than to struggle to achieve some particular state of activity, then body and mind are found to be naturally coordinated and embodied' [p. 29]), we begin to pay attention to what we are thinking feeling and doing in the moment of (inter)action with others. This means we often must do things out of the range of conscious thought. Varela et al. (1991) refer to this as embodied and compassionate action, avoiding harmful actions and performing beneficial ones.

It is this 'out of the range of conscious thought' that 6PSM helps students access.

### **Author 3 Looking back at her story:**

Here Author 3 looks back at the story told through the cards a month after creating the story in class:

“I was/the tree was looking for answers as to what the source of the wind was.”

“*Committed to helping the tree find her truth.* I am intrigued as it seems like the creature has come back to report on its search on the source of the wind, and then I write that the creature is helping the tree to find *her* truth. What is the connection between the source of the wind and the truth of the tree?”

“.....*struggling growth of the tree.* I am cautious to overthink...but wonder whether this was a time in my learning journey when I felt like I was struggling, rather, was struggling.” “*Helping the tree bounce back.* This gives me pause. I imagine now the tree as always having grown out of the mountainside cliff. Inquiry, I wonder what bouncing back looks like? – especially if she was always there.”

Story – “*but the tree remained stuck in her clenching for survival against the rock.*”

“I am sobered by re-reading this sentence. At times, when I first wrote this story, I thought I was clenching for survival professionally through work and in the MA program. Reading this sentence again reminded me of the force of the wind in my life and how I was gripping onto the rock.”

Story – “*the whale would try to prevent the tree from seeing and understanding the sources of the wind as it was encouraging the tree to surrender, let go and fall into the sea.*”

“when I read *fall* in the first sentence, I actually read out loud *fail* instead. Humph..... I take a deep breath and sigh. I ask myself, who would try to *encourage* someone to *surrender, let go and fall*? Hello ego, is the first thought that comes to mind, or hello to a darker voice that visits people, myself, in a vulnerable state.”

*“While she waited, she knew that she had to muster strength against these two forces. Waiting. She knew she had to muster, gather strength against two forces....as I read this part again, I catch myself empathizing for the tree, the person I was, or can find myself being.”*

### **Reflecting/Diffracting on the Story**

Author 3: I am now going to reflect on the story after a year has past:

**I am a Tree** Inspired by the symbolism expressed above, I am affected by the story, realizing that I am the tree. I also see myself within many other components of the story and have since reflected on these parts of me. Evolving from Varela’s (1992) discussion on self and the embodiment of emptiness, and the insights from this story, I am reminded that 'our sense of a personal ‘I’ can be construed as an ongoing interpretive *narrative* of the parallel activities in our daily life, whence the constant shifts in forms of attention typical of our microidentities' (p. 61). My interpretation of microidentities speaks to internal identities as well as how they emerge externally in my social interactions with the outside world. Embracing this story encourages me to continue working on enabling and being more attuned to be the observer. Already, as I enable the observer in me, I have caught myself saying, *“oh hello wind, or I see*



*you whale,*” depending on the external context or quality of inner thoughts I am faced with.

Even more, throughout the ethics class and on-going program journey, I continued a practice of journaling and writing. When I encountered this story again, I realized that it related to another moment in my masters journey where I addressed and listened to my true self, through metaphor, being captain of my own ship:

*February 14th 2014, Dear Captain, It is time to get back onto your ship. You have been jolted and you have swam back up to air. The weight off your ankles has let go. There's much work to be done. Look to the horizon. Slow down. What is still weighing you down? What can you take off of your ship? The lens of your telescope has been cleaned. It may need fine tuning, but that can only happen once you set sail again. I know that you are not ready to take off just yet, but you are ready to climb back on. We are here with you and are helping prepare you for your continued journey. Come back on, take your time. My hand will be there to reach yours when it is time to pull you aboard. Breathe deeply. Dry off. Rest. Smile. The sea awaits.*

I wanted to include this entry to make a connection to how powerful the experience of the story telling was, and is, to my journey throughout the graduate program. Reading this entry was another sign of encouragement and awareness that I have the power within me to continue learn to surf the waves, or steer the ship when need be. The decision to explore these connections spoke to a need within me to make sense and make meaning of my journey as a blossoming process consultant.

Reflecting on the image of myself grasping on the rocks, perhaps I am holding on too tightly. Varela's work on ethical know-how and ego reminds me that, 'when the reasoning mind no longer clings and grasps, ... one awakens into the wisdom with which was born, and compassionate energy arises without pretense' (1992, p. 69). Further, one of Varela's core positions that I am subscribing to is that, 'ethical know-how is the progressive, firsthand acquaintance with the virtuality of self' (1992, p. 63). While I acknowledge that this feels like a complex and difficult task, I recognize that it will be an ongoing actionable journey, one that I have already begun. How I choose to be in this world is what I need to shape next, including reincorporating the ingredients in my life that sustain and serve me moving forward.

Noticing this recurring pattern of insights in me, gained through storytelling and active reflection, towards nourishing my unfolding passions and potential, I have reestablished a relationship with a meditative practice.

Complimenting this new habit, I have begun to see that, through mindfulness in the moment, I will be able to continue to develop myself as someone working as an intervenor in human systems. For example, as a result of this experience in 2014, in 2017-2018 I have incorporated the use of images in interventions in groups I work with as both internal and external consultant to help surface or deepen what is going on for participants. In addition to this new way of being has been the transformative lesson of how I learn in relationship and in a community with others, through the scaffolding of the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Many

of the readings in the graduate program speak to this phenomenon in learning communities, and in an effort to move forward, I honour this source of support in my learning, acknowledging Kahane's (2010) closing thoughts that, as human system interveners, we 'need companions on this journey, but no one can make way for us. We must use both of our legs; we must put one foot in front of another. We must step forward' (p. 140).

### **Reflecting on the Methodology**

Author 1: From Author 3's exploration of the storying process, there is a sense of struggle, isolation, and yet a commitment to truth seeking. The author's own exploration of these elements comes as new knowledge to her as she flexes or bends back (Steier, 1991), considering where she was at the time of the story's creation. These moments of stillness, of temporal and aesthetic distance, are like pauses that allow for conscious processing; the kind of "tug on the sleeve" that Fels (2012) refers to.

In my research into the 6PSM with education practitioners and leaders, I found that moments of transformation were socially constructed through the sharing and re-shaping of the initial story. When I read Author 3's comments on her own experience of the model, I am struck by her evolving knowledge that she has the power within herself to navigate her journey; to "surf the waves". I am reminded of Henley's verse 'I am the master of my fate/I am the captain of my soul' (1888, p. 57). Story creation and telling is a social act, originating in the need to communicate with others (Fels, 2009) and one that often leads to the building of connections

with others through the concept of bootstrapping (Gentner, 2010), an attachment of experiences to those experiences lived by others. Author 3's journey through her experience of the 6PSM also raises questions for me about the non-linearity of story creation and how that appears to sit in opposition to/with the process of 6PSM. The story creator/teller participants in my research used the model of 6PSM to scaffold the conceptualising of their stories, but in the first telling of each, the stories emerged as what Allbon (2012) and Boje (2001) would describe as ante-narratives; connected and yet nonlinear descriptions. Throughout the process of their storied reflections the stories created all contained elements of a standard story structure and the 6PSM components, but still the linearity of the 6PSM was bent by the participants, with them moving around the structure.

Author 3: Yes, the initial attempt at writing this story first included a description of how I flipped and placed each card, then an attempt to explain what the image was on the card for the reader, lastly I continued to explain what was happening in the story based on the set of emergent images. Adding my way to the process felt was choppy and laborious. I decided to rewrite each section from my perspective as the writer, whose outcome felt like a fragmented story trying to capture experience, description, analysis and reflection all at the same time. I then realized that this process spoke to a larger part of my learning goals in the program, whereby as an intervener I wanted to articulate my truth, my offering, in a way that was seemingly more brief, concise and clear for my audience (readers in this case). For instance, I noticed how my speech could sometimes come out in a tangled way in dialogue (storytelling) with others, as I added layers of context about why I was speaking (intervening) so that the

listener might not have needed to make their own meaning of what I shared. As I intended to share an insight or intuition, I found myself also trying to make sense of my inner narrative, (stream of consciousness) and externalize in the moment, therefore lessening the impact or value of my original offering. I began practicing ways in which I could intervene and create space for others to fill in the blanks of the story unfolding before them, or trust that others would ask for questions of clarity if needed. The sections below provide an analysis of the story above from my perspective as a writer who was beginning to shape her own living ethical philosophy.

I remember the class setting experiencing the story card exercise, struggling with the symbol for each card, as I was quite surprised with each unfolding image, unsure what was coming through me at the same time. My initial experience with letting the story unveil itself also emerged through more of a circular sequence of placing down the cards instead of laying them out in a line in order. I remember placing the tree card down first and then placing the with the wind card on its right back in the first position to show it blowing and pushing against the tree.

Next the two-headed animal card was placed above the tree card, with the whale beneath it, seemingly representing a paradox for the tree. Next flowed the key on the left of the tree, and the last image, the sunset over the mountain, representing meditation and stillness. The cluster of cards did not really look like a circle, but a chaotic path emerged for me at first and then with the key and mountain silhouette, a sense of direction.

Author 1: In this process, embodied reflexive action is action taken from a physically understood way of knowing, feeling the change within one's body and acting on that change. Participants in my research engaging in storytelling embodied the process by connecting with the development of the roles and characters that came alive in their stories. As the stories were told, the teller and listeners evidenced a range of physically felt connections with what was occurring. The fluency with which they spoke as and about their characters suggested that through the act of embodying, they were discussing part of what they subconsciously already knew (Smears, 2009). Both of Author 3's reflections show this kind of felt response and in that way she is embodying the emotions felt through the filter of the character created, witnessing herself as both "actor" and "character".

Author 2: In the ethics course, we try and accomplish enactive and embodied knowing by drawing attention to our skilful action through the challenges we face. Using a process called *The Discipline of Noticing* (Mason, 2002), we begin to pay attention to situations as they evolve. Thus one notices a possibility for the future, what is going on in the present moment, and reflects on what has been observed previously to prepare for the future. In this context, if something is not noticed, then it is unlikely that a response will be forthcoming. On the other hand when something is noticed, and how and why, this influences not only the nature of reflection but also the action(s) as a result of reflection. As Wright (2005) suggests,

without some consciousness of my own becoming – my own transformative experience of being, which exists in part through my naming of it – it is impossible to appreciate

any becoming or transformation beyond my self: indeed, to appreciate change and the systemic boundaries within which change occurs (p. 89).

Noticing through our senses and writing that down through a story enhances, and brings forth, our experiences in the world, compelling us to not simply feel, listen, or see but bring heightened consciousness of these actions, in language and emotion. 'This is the initial movement in the feedback system we encounter and identify ourselves within' (Wright, p. 90). Reflective analysis helps us to capture the types of experience we have within ethical practice and 'the dynamics of the activity that could have been responsible for its emergence' (Hauw, 2009).

This noticing is illustrated in Author 3's story as her story moves between the world of the story and the world of her professional and personal life. In another class in another year, I used this method to explore ethical dilemmas that students were facing. I frame these ethical dilemmas by asking the students to think of a time where their "espoused theory" (ie values people believe their behaviour is based on) and "theory-in-use" (the values implied by actual behaviour and actions) (Argyris & Schon, 1974) were not congruent. I then gave them the cards and used the same process as outlined here. One student remarked to me, 'how did the cards know my story?', meaning in the act of telling their story of an ethical dilemma the cards were absolutely appropriate. Or, alternatively, the cards enabled her story to emerge in a coherent way. I like the term "metaxis" (Boal, 1979) which is 'the state of belonging completely and simultaneously to two different, autonomous worlds: the image of reality and the reality of

the image.' (Boal, 1995, p. 43). We practice and maintain coherence without the urge for interpretation 'in the second world (the aesthetic) in order to modify the first (the social)' (p. 44), in rehearsal for real life. In other words, the story of ethical practice emerges through the cards and the cards enable the story of ethical practice to emerge. This is the case with Author 3's story, too.

## **Conclusion**

As we see through the story told by Author 3, each story told reverberates beyond the storytelling. The model itself arguably enables learning to 'stick'.

In the context of a course within a graduate program with a heavy emphasis on personal discovery as it relates to professional practice, the story process in 6PSM fits a goal of creating a lens for reflection. In creating that fictional, yet not fictional, world (as it emerges in relation to actions in the "real" world story), the storyteller is in a moment of uncertainty, or, what Haskell calls, "freefall", 'an embracing of unexpected moments that 'open up a "space" for arousing insight or possibilities' (Haskell, 2004).

6PSM has been an appropriate tool to deepen student and professionals' understanding of their own approaches to their work. A limitation of the method is perhaps the structure itself. This structure serves as a scaffold for learning process as it provides a framework from which to hang a story. In the telling of the story, the structure tends to be disrupted or worked around by the people particularly in the process of re-telling, creating ante narratives (Boje, 2001) where stories



are in a 'complex, ambiguous, fragmented state' (Allbon, 2012, p. 62) which exists before a linear narrative process.

The model is also a diagnostic tool rather than a technique for understanding and then adopting coping mechanisms during periods of stress. To understand individual's innate coping approaches, it would be useful to employ Lahad's BASICPh matrix. When using the method in other contexts, we would need to develop this further as in teaching about reflecting about ethical practice, we have found this would add to the 'case study' methods or 'simulations' that are currently used (for example, see Gellerman, 1990).

In summary, reflexive processes are bound up in the narrative containers for the stories that individuals and groups create and tell. These stories once shared become lived experiences for both teller and listener in which new knowing is formed through the story-worlds which emerge in the minds of those sharing the experience.

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**Dr Elinor Vettrains (Corresponding author)**

Programme Leader: Business and Enterprise

Bishop Grosseteste University

Newport Road

Lincoln, LN1 3DY

United Kingdom

Email: [elinor.vettrains@bishopg.ac.uk](mailto:elinor.vettrains@bishopg.ac.uk)

Tel: +44(0)7731489797

LinkedIn: Dr Elinor Vettrains

Twitter: @BGU\_BusinessTE

**Dr Warren Linds**

Associate Professor

Department of Applied Human Sciences

Concordia University

Montreal, H3G 1M8

Canada

Email: [warren.linds@concordia.ca](mailto:warren.linds@concordia.ca)

LinkedIn: Warren Linds

Tel: +1 514-848-2424 ext. 2203

ORCID: [orcid.org/0000-0002-6379-2338](http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6379-2338)

**Helen Downie**

Change Management Lead

MA Human Systems Intervention

Department of Advancement and Alumni Relations

Concordia University

Montreal, H3G 1M8

Canada

Email: [helen.downie@protonmail.com](mailto:helen.downie@protonmail.com)

Linkedin: Helen Downie

Tel: +1 514-848-2424 ext. 4372

<http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7813-4410>

Dr. Elinor Vettraino is academic lead for business and enterprise at Bishop Grosseteste University, England, and Tiimiakatemia team coaching master. She has worked extensively with applied theatre processes, recently using storytelling as a method of embodied reflexive practice generation with educational practitioners. She is founder of Active Imagining ([www.active-imagining.co.uk](http://www.active-imagining.co.uk)).

**Dr. Warren Linds** is Associate Professor of Applied Human Sciences, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada and uses applied theatre to explore social justice issues and as a method of reflection into the ethics of professional practice. He teaches facilitation and diversity in the undergraduate program in Human Relations and ethics and philosophy of human systems intervention (HSI) in the Masters program in HSI. He has conducted arts-based research into wellbeing with Indigenous youth in partnership with a Canadian Indigenous health organization. He was a Co-Principal Investigator on the research team in the Canadian Institutes for Health Research and the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation funded project *Acting Out! But in a Good Way*. Warren is co-editor of *Playing in a House of Mirrors: Applied Theatre as Reflective Practice* (Sense Publishers, 2015) and *Emancipatory practices: Adult/youth engagement for social and environmental justice* (Sense Publishers, 2010).

**Helen Downie** holds a BA in Political Science and an MA in Human System Intervention from Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. Continuing to refine her craft as a change practitioner, she has completed a Personal and Professional Coaching Certificate (PPCC) and a certificate on Strategic Communications and Change. She is currently change management lead for Concordia University's Advancement Services software database implementation project. Since the successful deployment, she has been helping the teams transition into the era of a new software and sustain desired technical and culture change.